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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Terrorism Talks

Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "US TALKING TO N. KOREA ON TERRORISM," Washington, 3/13/00) reported that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, at a joint news conference with ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn, announced the opening of US- DPRK discussions on terrorism. Albright said that the talks between the US and the DPRK in New York have recessed for the two delegations to consult with their governments. Lee said that the ROK has not been a target

of DPRK terrorism for years. UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said Monday that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed "the increasingly positive signs" on the Korean peninsula and strongly endorsed the quick resumption of a dialogue between DPRK and ROK. Eckhard said, "while the issues in question remain most challenging, he believes that they can be successfully addressed through dialogue and determination." Eckhard also said that Annan was ready "to contribute to the efforts aimed at reducing tensions and promoting mutual confidence in the region."

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREA TWISTS US CALL BY BACKING FELLOW STATES ON US PARIAH LIST," Seoul, 3/12/00) reported that the DPRK's Rodong Sinmun, the newspaper of the ruling Workers Party, on March 12 criticized US sanctions against Sudan, Cuba and Iraq, who are also listed as terrorism-sponsoring states. The newspaper said, "the US sanctions are, in essence, crimes against ethics and humanitarianism, which inflict misfortune and pain upon the people." The DPRK made no direct comment on the US sanctions against it. However, the paper claimed that about 1.27 million Iraqis died after the US imposed sanctions on Baghdad in 1990 and that it was a criminal act that the US placed sanctions against Cuba in the name of helping "the Cuban government to respect humanitarianism and take the road of democracy." The paper continued, "if the crimes of the United States are allowed any longer, humankind cannot achieve equality and happiness any time, but may lose dignity and value forever. The world people should, thereafter, resolutely stand up against the US sanctions."

2. DPRK-Japan Talks

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA AGREES TO LOOK INTO 'MISSING' JAPANESE DURING AID TALKS," Beijing, 3/13/00) and the Associated Press ("N. KOREA TO SEACH FOR JAPANESE," Beijing, 3/13/00) reported that Japanese sources said that the DPRK agreed on Monday to start investigations into "missing" Japanese while Japan formally announced the resumption of food aid to the DPRK. An anonymous Japanese official said that DPRK officials thanked Japan for its offer to pass on 100,000 tons of rice to the DPRK through the countries' relevant Red Cross organizations. A one- day talk is being held under the auspices of Japan and the DPRK's Red Cross organizations, but the meeting might focus on the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. Japan-based experts on Monday were not hopeful about the diplomatic prospects of the Red Cross talks, stating that Japan is unlikely to find out what has happened to the citizens it believes were kidnapped, and had only a slim chance of establishing diplomatic ties with the DPRK any time soon.

3. US Troops in Japan

Associated Press ("JAPAN WANTS TO DISCUSS U.S. MILITARY," Tokyo, 3/13/00) reported that Akitaka Saiki, spokesman for Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, said on Monday that Japan intends to pursue a proposed reduction in the US military presence in Japan during US Defense Secretary William Cohen's visit this week. Saiki said that Japan "will have to continue its efforts to gain understanding" from the US in talks with Cohen. During his visit, Cohen will meet with Japan's Defense Agency chief Tsutomu Kawara and Foreign Minister Yohei Kono. Saiki also said that the two sides are expected to discuss the US-Japan agreement, among other topics. He continued, "even between closest allies such as the Americans and the Japanese, there are differences in views ... on many issues, that's quite natural. We are not worried about differences between the two allies in the defense area." Saiki also said that Japan hopes to "make progress soon" on the issue of relocating a US Air Station on Okinawa.

4. US Arms Sales to Taiwan

The New York Times (Erik Eckholm, "CHINA, CITING TENSIONS, ASKS U.S. TO END TAIWAN ARMS SALES," BEIJING, 3/11/00) reported that PRC foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan on March 11 blamed the US for creating tensions between Taiwan and the PRC. Tang said that the US arms and other support for the island have "inflated the arrogance of the separatist forces in Taiwan. Therefore, the United States bears unshakable responsibility for the tension in the Taiwan Strait. If the United States had not sent in the Seventh Fleet in the 1950's, then the question of Taiwan would have long since been resolved." Tang said that the PRC ambassador in Washington had lodged a strong protest on March 9. He added, "the United States should immediately stop the sale of weaponry to Taiwan." Tang said the US was in violation of written commitments to scale back arms aid and had increased the quantity and quality of weapons that it sold to Taiwan. He also said that the US must not include Taiwan in regional missile defenses and has to defeat the proposal in the US Congress to increase military ties with the island. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 13, 2000.]

5. US View of Cross-Straits Tensions

Singapore Straits Times ("COOL DOWN, COHEN TELLS TAIWAN AND CHINA," Hong Kong, 3/11/00) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen on March 12 urged the PRC and Taiwan to cool their war of words over the island. Cohen said there was little chance the rhetoric would flare into a military confrontation as it did in 1996. He said, "the evidence is that an escalation into a military confrontation is not likely. We expect China to pursue its relationship and these negotiations with Taiwan peacefully. As far as firing words as opposed to taking action, that's certainly a change from what they've done in the past. But we want to make sure they continue to work the peaceful way." Regarding a commentary in the Liberation Army Daily recently which warned US policymakers against getting into a fight with the PRC because of its "long-distance attacking capabilities," Cohen said, "I don't believe it reflects official policy, but in any event the US is not going to be intimidated by such rhetoric. We will maintain our obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act with Taiwan and will continue to insist that the Taiwanese resume negotiations peacefully and not seek independence which we don't support." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 13, 2000.]

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "COHEN DOESN'T SEE PARALLEL TO TAIWAN IN HONG KONG VISIT," Hong Kong, 3/11/00) reported that US Defense Secretary William S. Cohen said on March 10 that the status of Hong Kong as a largely autonomous region of the PRC is not necessarily a model for how the PRC should handle Taiwan. Cohen said, "I think the way in which Hong Kong has functioned under its relationship with China - the 'one China, two systems' - is unique to it, and I don't think it could be used as any kind of model for any other country." In an interview with the Cable News Network (CNN) in Hong Kong, Cohen dismissed PRC charges that the US is to blame for heightened tensions. He said, "for China to suggest that we are somehow at fault really exaggerates the situation." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 13, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-US Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Shin Jung-don, "FINAL SCHEDULE FOR US-NK TALKS," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that DPRK and US representatives met at the UN headquarters in New York on March 8. The meeting wrapped up details for the high-level DPRK delegation's visit to Washington in April. The

delegation's itinerary was discussed, including schedules, number of visiting delegates, and other issues concerning the visit. A US official said on March 7, "Pyongyang has been asking the U.S. to drop North Korea from the list of terrorist-sponsoring nations and wants this to happen before the Washington visit in April. For North Korea, this would be a great step forward, helping to shed their dangerous image and also helping to procure international loans. The chance is small that the US will take North Korea off the list, but we're not ruling it out."

2. DPRK-PRC Relations

Chosun Ilbo (Jee Hae-bum, "NK FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT CHINA," Seoul, 03/10/00) reported that a spokesperson for the PRC foreign ministry announced on March 10 that it has invited the DPRK foreign minister to formally visit the PRC from March 18 to the 22. Analysts said that the visit by the DPRK foreign minister is seen as a "necessary preliminary step" for a visit by DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to the PRC to meet with PRC president Jiang Zemin.

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "WAN YOUNG XIANG RETURNS TO BEIJING," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that Wan Yongxiang, PRC ambassador to the DPRK, returned to the PRC on March 11 after his term ended. The DPRK's Public Central News Agency reported that Park Kil-youn, the DPRK vice-minister for Foreign Affairs, as well as several PRC embassy staff accompanied ambassador Wan to the airport to see him off.

3. Construction of Light-Water Reactor

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-gu, "NK DEMANDS PAY HIKE FOR REACTOR WORKERS," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that the DPRK is refusing to send more workers to the Keumho light water nuclear reactor construction site because it is demanding that the DPRK workers' wages be raised from the current average monthly wage of US$110 to US$600. The refusal has caused a setback in plant construction, which went into full operation this month. An official of the light water project team said that the DPRK threatened to remove all DPRK workers since last September and October and has continuously asked for wage increases. The source said that only 60 percent of the work has been completed and construction will be behind schedule. An official said that the 200 DPRK workers currently employed will need to be increased to 400 immediately, adding that DPRK workers were doing simple jobs such as delivering materials, stacking bricks and cutting iron bars.

4. Meeting of DPRK and ROK Ministers

Joongang Ilbo ("VICE MINISTERS OF SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA TO MEET IN JULY," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that the vice ministers of the ROK and the DPRK will meet in Beijing in July, amid rising anticipation of the reopening of diplomatic communications between the two Koreas. According to Yonhap News Agency, the Ministry of Finance and Economy (MOFE) announced on March 10 that the fifth meeting between the PRC, Russia, Mongolia, the ROK and the DPRK regarding the Tumen river area will be held in Beijing in July. Vice ministers of the five countries, including the ROK's MOFE vice minister, will participate in the meeting. A source within the MOFE said, "this will be the first meeting between South and North Koreas' vice ministers since the first meeting of the five countries in 1996."

5. DPRK-ROK Dialogue

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "UNIFICATION MINISTER PREDICTS POSITIVE; N. KOREAN

RESPONSE TO KIM'S PROPOSAL," Seoul, 03/13/00), The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL EXPECTS POSITIVE N.K. RESPONSE TO KIM'S CALL FOR OFFICIAL DIALOGUE," Seoul, 03/11/00) and The Korea Times (Lee Soo-jeong, "P'YANG LIKELY TO ACCEPT BERLIN PROPOSAL," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that a top ROK unification policymaker said on March 10 that the DPRK would likely respond positively to ROK President Kim Dae-jung's call for government-level dialogue. A senior ministry official said that the ROK's optimistic prospects were based on growing demands from the DPRK for more ROK economic assistance. However, the ROK is set to take further steps only after the DPRK makes an official response to its proposal. He dismissed claims that the government would soon send fertilizer aid to the DPRK as a follow-up to Kim's announcement.

The Korea Times (Lee Soo-jeong, "NORTH KOREA EASES HARDLINE STANCE AGAINST SOUTH: MINISTRY," Seoul, 03/10/00) reported that the ROK Unification Ministry said on March 9 that the DPRK media recently dropped its verbal attacks against the ROK amid increased ROK-DPRK economic cooperation and renewed diplomatic ties with the West. A senior official from the ministry's Information Analysis Bureau said, "we believe that North Korea is restraining from using aggressive words and behavior that can create tensions in the relations, as they are wary of causing a reduction in South-North economic cooperation."

6. International Investment in DPRK

The Korea Times (Lee Chang-sup, "WORLD BANK INVITED TO INVEST IN NK," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung announced that the ROK will invite the World Bank and foreigners to invest in the DPRK. Kim said that there were various ways to attract the necessary capital to fund the businesses and that "the Seoul government can make investments, and if there are good business prospects, then the people will buy shares and the World Bank and foreign investors will participate, too."

7. ROK Investment in DPRK

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "INVESTMENTS IN N.K. INFRASTRUCTURE BENEFIT SEOUL, PRESIDENT KIM SAYS," Seoul, 03/13/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung returned home on March 11 from a 10-day European tour, which officials said helped strengthen economic cooperation with major European countries and garner support for his engagement policy towards the DPRK. Kim said that proposed government-level investment in the DPRK's infrastructure was not a form of aid, but a business venture. Kim said that he was dealing with inter-Korean issues in a pragmatic manner, "but what we genuinely hope to gain through inter-Korean economic cooperation is the protection of the lives of 70 million Koreans, by preventing a war on this peninsula."

8. DPRK-ROK Railway

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Dong-sup, "MT. KUMKANG RAILWAY HOPED TO CONNECT TWO KOREAS," Seoul, 03/10/00) and The Korea Times ("SEOUL SET TO RESTORE SEVERED RAILWAY LINE," Seoul, 03/10/00) reported that the ROK Ministry of Construction and Transportation (MOCT) announced on March 10 that it plans to restore the 24.5-km ROK section of a 75.3-km railway leading to Mount Kumkang in the DPRK, as part of a long-range plan to connect the two Koreas by rail. The ministry said that it would begin work on the ROK section of the Mount Kumkang Line so that it would be ready when the opportunity to build an inter-Korea line arises. The move is a follow-up of ROK President Kim Dae-jung's March 9 announcement in Berlin that the ROK would press on with social overhead capital projects in the DPRK. MOCT said that it decided to submit a request to

the Ministry of Planning and Budget to earmark 10 billion won in next year's budget so that land could be purchased to complete the ROK portion of the railway. The ROK section connects Churlwon and the demilitarized zone.

9. DPRK-ROK Internet Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo (Ha Jae-Shik, "SOUTH AND NORTH KOREA FIRST JOINT VENTURE THROUGH INTERNET," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that the Chosun Internet, a domestic internet company, announced on March 12 that they reached agreement last January through a meeting with DPRK authorities in the PRC for an internet cooperation project with the Pan-Pacific Korean Economic Development and Cooperation Committee. The committee has close ties to the DPRK and provides news and information about the ROK's northern neighbor through the internet. Se-hyung Yoo, president of Chosun Internet, said they had submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Unification on the March 11 and are awaiting approval. Yoo also said that he plans on providing the ROK with information on the DPRK's economy, culture and other areas through the internet. Both signers of the agreement decided that Chosun Internet will be able to use the contents of "Chosun Infobank", the website that the Committee is now operating on the Internet.

10. DPRK Requests of More Aid

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-gu, "NK SEEKS MORE CATTLE AND TRUCKS," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that the DPRK has requested additional aid of 500 cattle and 50 trucks during negotiations for a visit by Hyundai's honorary chairman Chung Ju-yung on March 12. An official for Hyundai said, "North Korea has been asking for more aid but we pointed out the problems that arose from North Korea's complaints of having found rope in the cattles' stomachs from the 1998 shipment and so we refused." Sources also revealed that the DPRK had converted Hyundai's last shipment of trucks had been converted to military use vehicles, leading Hyundai to deny any further truck shipments. Hyundai has been negotiating chairman Chung's visit with the DPRK's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee at Mount Kumgang since February, but so far, little progress has been made.

11. Withdrawal of Aid Organizations from DPRK

The Korea Herald ("SOME RELIEF ORGANS LIKELY TO WITHDRAW FROM N. KOREA," Seoul, 03/13/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Kim Sung-yong, "ANOTHER RELIEF AGENCY QUITS NK," Seoul, 03/10/00) reported that an ROK official at the Unification Ministry said on March 12 that some of the 16 international relief agencies currently active in the DPRK may withdraw in order to extend a helping hand to nations in more dire straits, like Mozambique. The official said that organizations discouraged by the DPRK's bureaucracy and restrictions on their contact with residents were Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) and Oxfam who withdrew from the DPRK last year, and ACF recently.

12. DPRK-ROK Concert

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONCERT IN PYONGYANG AND SEOUL," Seoul, 03/12/00) reported that a concert titled "Pyongyang- The Year 2000 International Concert for Peace" will be held in Pyongyang on April 5. Soprano Jo Su-mi and cello prodigy Jang Young-joo (Sara Jang) will take the stage. Central News Agency Korea chairman Bae Kyung-hwan said, "we have reached an agreement with the North Korean Asia-Pacific Peace Committee about which performers will be present and the program schedule." The two groups have also agreed to

hold another concert at the Sejong Cultural Center on April 8.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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