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I. United States

1. Four-Party Peace Talks Briefing

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JANUARY 13," USIA Transcript, 01/14/97) would not confirm reports from the ROK that the agreed briefing of the DPRK on the Four-Party Peace Talks Proposal has been scheduled for January 29 in New York. Burns said, "I know that there was a meeting Saturday in New York between State Department diplomats and North Korean officials from the North Korean mission to the United Nations. They did talk about the briefing on the Four-Party Talks, but they have not yet arrived at an agreement on the date or the venue for that meeting, and we're hopeful that we'll be able to work that out very soon. When we do have an agreement, I'll be glad to announce it."

2. ROK Strikes

Reuters ("S. KOREAN STRIKES FIZZLE AS WORKERS RETREAT," Seoul, 01/14/97) reported that participation in Tuesday's scheduled collective strike in protest of new anti-labor legislation, anticipated to be the largest in ROK history, was falling short of expectations. Numerous white-collar workers j

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The Associated Press (Ju-yeon Kim, "STRIKING S.KOREA WORKERS MARCH," Seoul, 01/14/97) reported that the Federation of Korean Trade Unions and the outlawed Korean Confederation of

Trade Unions staged separate marches through major ROK cities on Tuesday, symbolizing that the two labor umbrella groups remained divided over whether to press ahead with the labor law protest strikes. Following a meeting Tuesday, the head of the government-sanctioned group said there were no plans to extend strikes by his member unions beyond the scheduled two-day protest this week, disappointing the hopes of the illegal group, which has spearheaded the recent strikes and had hoped that the larger group would lend its full support by agreeing to join an extended nationwide strike. The two leaders instead issued a vague promise to work together for the common goal of seeing the labor law abolished. The new law, in addition to curbing workers' employment guarantees, also extends for the next five years the government-approved group's monopoly as the ROK's only legal labor organization, giving it little incentive to cooperate with the outlawed organization.

3. ROK Demands Japan Compensate Women Enslaved in WWII

The Associated Press ("SKOREA DEMANDS SLAVE COMPENSATION," Seoul, 01/14/97) reported that the ROK on Tuesday demanded that the Japanese government take responsibility for the World War II enslavement of up to 200,000 women in its military-run brothels. Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha expressed his discontent during a meeting with Japanese Democratic Party delegates and is expected to repeat his comments when he meets with his Japanese counterpart, Yukihiko Ikeda, on Wednesday, ministry officials said. The latest dispute results from the secret Japanese payment of \$17,000 each to seven ROK former sex slaves on Saturday. They were the first ROK women to receive the money. The ROK government and women's groups are angry because the compensation comes from a private Japanese fund, not the Tokyo government. The Korea Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery has said that refusal to make direct government payment equals Tokyo's unwillingness to recognize its role in the slavery.

4. Taiwan Constitutional Change Moves Away from Reunification

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "TAIWAN EYES END TO PARLIAMENT," Taipei, 01/14/97) reported that a package of proposed constitutional reforms that would abolish Taiwan's National Assembly reflect the decline of the dream of reunification in Taiwan. The National Assembly, sometimes known as the "10,000-year parliament," was designed to freeze history in place by sitting as the parliament of all China, awaiting reunification, while Taiwan was ruled by the continuing provincial government as a symbol of Taiwan's status as a province of China. The planned changes, emerging from an agreement between the ruling Nationalist Party and its rival Democratic Progressive Party, would leave the central government and a 164-member legislature elected in 1995 as Taiwan's only institutions. The plan builds on trends in the 1990s, during which time Taiwan has become democratic, the political power of mainland emigres has weakened, and island-born Taiwanese like President Lee Teng-hui have taken control of the Nationalist Party. However, the trend -- portrayed by Taiwan's rulers as coming to terms with reality -- is dangerous, as reunification remains a top priority for the PRC, which has threatened to resort to force if necessary to recover what it regards as a lost province.

5. US View of PRC-Russia Relations

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "U.S.: CHINA BUYING RUSSIAN ARMS," Washington, 01/14/97) reported that Winston Lord, the assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said Tuesday that the PRC has become a major buyer of Russian weapons technology but there is no sign of a developing PRC-Russia alliance that could threaten the US. "The Russians are exporting quite a bit of arms technology to China," Lord told a news conference. But he added, "We don't think it has reached alarming proportions." The Washington Times reported last week that Russia sold two guided-missile destroyers to China in December, and that China also bought Russian

anti-ship missiles that could threaten US ships in the region. At a meeting in Moscow last month, PRC Premier Li Peng and Russian President Boris Yeltsin vowed to forge closer military and economic ties to counter the influence of the US in the post-Cold War world. Lord, a former ambassador to Beijing, said he expected Beijing to build a closer but still cautious relationship with Moscow. "There's no way those two countries are going to be close allies," Lord said. "We would like to see solid, normal, positive Sino-Russian relations and I think they are moving somewhat in that direction," he said. "Candidly, we wouldn't want the other extreme of a close, strategic, geopolitical alliance that could upset the balance of power in Asia or be directed against the United States. I think they will stay between these extremes of hostility and a dangerous alliance."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Three Party Briefing Session Reported Scheduled

A deputy minister level three-party briefing session on the proposed four party peace talks reportedly will be held in New York on January 29. The representatives for the session are expected to be Vice Bureau Chief Kim Ke-kwan of the DPRK Foreign Affairs Department, Deputy Foreign Minister Song Young-shik of the ROK, and Charles Kartmann of the US State Department. In addition, US-DPRK bilateral talks will be held on January 30 by the aforementioned representatives. (Chosun Ilbo, Ku Sung-jae, "THREE PARTY BRIEFING SESSION TO BE HELD IN NEW YORK ON THE 29TH," Seoul, 01/14/97)

2. DPRK Officials Reshuffled

The DPRK late last year reshuffled key officials in charge of ROK and external affairs, sources in Seoul said. In the reshuffle, Li Jong-hyok, vice chairman of the Asia-Pacific Peace Committee of the Workers' Party, was named to take charge of working-level operations toward the ROK. The job of handling working-level affairs toward the US and Japan, formerly assumed by Li Jong-hyok, was passed on to Song Ho-gyong, former ambassador to Cambodia. Quoting recent US and Japanese visitors to the DPRK, the source said Li has replaced Chon Gum-chol, vice chairman of the Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland, as chief handler of ROK affairs. Chon, was dismissed apparently because of his failure to obtain additional rice from the ROK. The reshuffle was also believed to have been part of Pyongyang's policy to place a greater emphasis on improving relations with the US and Japan. Asked to comment on the reported shake-up, a National Unification Ministry official said the reassignment seems highly plausible in view of the experiences of the three men involved. "But, we cannot confirm it at the moment," he said. Chon twice tried to resume rice talks with the ROK last spring, but the ROK rejected the overture on the ground that there was no change in the DPRK's hostile attitude. Li Jong-hyok is said known to have succeeded to some extent in his dealings with the US while failing to register any achievement in relations with Japan. Song Ho-gyong, who had been named as ambassador to Cambodia in May 1995, was recalled to Pyongyang abruptly in April 1996. Known as DPRK's leading expert in American affairs, Song has visited the US on many occasions, and was the DPRK counterpart to US Representative Bill Richardson when he visited Pyongyang in December 1994 to negotiate the release of the crewman of a US military helicopter that strayed into and was downed in the DPRK. (The Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREA REPLACED KEY OFFICIALS LATE LAST YEAR," Seoul, 01/14/97)

3. ROK-Japan Relations

The ROK government is reviewing the possibility of canceling the upcoming foreign ministers talks with Japan, due to the distribution of compensation to five "comfort women" by a Japanese civil organization that took place despite the ROK government's opposition. The ROK government has been demanding that the Japanese government issue an official apology and distribute compensation

directly. (Kyunghyang Ilbo, "ROK GOVERNMENT MAY CANCEL UPCOMING ROK-JAPAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S TALKS,"

4. ROK-Canada Relations

The ROK and Canada yesterday concluded two accords to prolong indefinitely working holiday programs and to promote cooperation in the field of development assistance. The accords were signed by ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha and Raymond Chan, state secretary for Asia-Pacific affairs at the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Chan is in Seoul accompanying Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien during his six-day visit here, which began last Thursday. Under the memorandum of understanding on working holiday programs, ROK and Canadian youths aged between 18 and 25 are allowed to accept employment during tourist visits to each other's country. The letter of intent on development assistance cooperation is aimed at enhancing cooperation and exchanges between the two countries' agencies in charge of providing aid for developing countries. (The Korea Herald, "KOREA, CANADA SIGN ACCORDS ON COOPERATION," Seoul, 01/14/97)

5. Russian Documents Show Korean Sovereignty over Tokto Islets

Three Russian documents dating back to the end of the 19th century, and showing the Tokto islets in the East Sea as belonging to Korean territory, have recently come to light. Navy lieutenant Choi Myong-bok yesterday made public the three documents, which belong to the Russian Navy, and which he discovered during a two-year study visit in Russia. Although several foreign maps on which the Tokto islets are shown as Korean territory have been found before, these are the first such Russian documents to be made public. According to Choi, the earliest Russian document that shows the Tokto islets as Korean territory is a report by a naval vessel on the results of its navigation through Korea's East coast, published in the January 1885 issue of Russian Navy magazine. The report reveals that Russia acknowledged the Tokto islets to be part of Korean territory from the moment of their discovery. (Joong-ang Ilbo, "RUSSIAN DOCUMENTS INDICATING TOKTO TO BE KOREAN TERRITORY FOUND," Seoul, 01/14/97)

III. Russian Federation

1. RF Defense Council v. RF Defense Ministry

Izvestia's Igor Korotchenko ("IN THE KREMLIN THERE'S DISCONTENT WITH THE DEFENSE MINISTER," Moscow, 1, 1/9/97) and Izvestia's Viktor Litovkin ("DEFENSE COUNCIL SESSION POSTPONED DUE TO PRESIDENT'S ILLNESS," Moscow, 1-2, 1/9/97) reported that the RF Defense Council session planned for 1/8/96 was postponed indefinitely due to President Boris Yeltsin's illness. However the illness was said to be just a pretext for cancellation, since RF Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin could have presided over the meeting, but refused. "A most acute conflict between the Defense Council members" concerning RF Armed Forces reform was said to be the real reason. The Defense Ministry and the Defense Council staff reportedly prepared contradictory reform conceptions for the meeting. In brief, the Ministry views reform to be possible only with increased funding equal to 15 percent of the RF gross domestic product, which is far beyond the means of the crisis-ridden country. The Council argues that the Armed Forces have to be reformed strictly within the existing budget.

2. RF Security Council Re-Organized

Nezavisimaya Gazeta ("SC RE-ORGANIZATION OVER," Moscow, 1, 1/10/97) reported that the RF Security Council reorganization, initiated several month ago by its Secretary, Ivan Rybkin, is now

complete. The Council now consists of five directorates: information security and forecasting, defense security, international security, economic security, public and federal security. The staff has been cut by 20 percent, now numbering 207 persons, including technical personnel.

3. RF Strategic Purpose Missile Troops Get a New Chief-of-Staff

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Igor Korotchenko ("NEW CHIEF OF SPMT MAIN STAFF," Moscow, 2, 1/10/97) reported that Lieutenant General Vladimir Yakovlev, 42, has been appointed as the new "Chief of the Main Staff" of the RF Strategic Purpose Missile Troops (SPMT). The importance General Yakovlev's position "will immeasurably grow considering the forthcoming integration of all the components of the RF strategic nuclear forces."

4. RF General Staff Problems and Demands

Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye - Supplement to Nezavisimaia Gazeta ("SERVICE AT THE GENERAL STAFF LOST ITS FORMER PRESTIGE," Moscow, 1, 1/11-18/97, # 1(28)) published an article by Major General Gennadiy Borzenkov, Chief of a Directorate of the RF Armed Forces General Staff, on recent RF civil-military relations. The author maintained that both Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, because neither had a serious service record nor a special military education, "have seen and see the General Staff as a conservative and hostile crowd of generals and colonels fighting for their corporate interests rather than the interests of preservation of the state's defense capability." The author argued that the RF Defense Council and Security Council were created to significantly replace the General Staff, and are now "trying to turn the General Staff into their working body ('an errand boy')." The author is highly critical of recent developments and argued in favor of several changes, including: a clear-cut distribution of functions between the Defense Minister and the General Staff; incorporation of internal, border guard, railroad and civil defense troops into the Armed Forces; subordination of the General Staff directly to the RF President, with its Chief becoming the First Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief; provision of a "niche" in the Government for the Defense Ministry; and restoration to General Staff officers of their pre-1987 higher salaries and priority housing. Finally, the author argued that the RF Commission on Highest Military Ranks must not replace the general Staff in the field of personnel policy.

5. RF Diplomatic Results of 1996

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Professor Viktor Anfilov ("TIME OF DYNAMIC POLICY," Moscow, 4, 1/10/97) published an article summarizing the results for the RF Foreign Ministry's 1996 activities. In particular he lauded as "a noticeable step forward" Japan's agreement to consider RF Foreign Minister Yevgeniy Primakov's proposal, made during his November visit there, for joint economic development of the disputed Southern Kuril isles. Commenting on Mr. Primakov's November visit to the PRC, the author particularly referred to the view of the RF Foreign Ministry that it is the PRC that might become the top investor in the RF in the next millennium.

Obshchaya Gazeta ("STRONG REAR AS A BASIS FOR SUCCESSFUL OFFENSIVE," Moscow, 3, 1/9-15/97) published an article by Professor Evgeniy Bajanov, director of the Institute of Contemporary International Studies, Diplomatic Academy, RF Foreign Ministry. The author summarized the RF diplomatic assets and liabilities in 1996, and general trend forecasts for 1997. In particular, he argued that "in the Far East the Kremlin will have to put an end to a dubious nature" of RF-PRC relations. On the one hand their cooperation is so successful that "some hotheads already call for a "Moscow-Beijing 'axis.'" On the other hand there are panic alarms about "demographic expansion" of the PRC. The author called for a new impetus to cooperation with Japan toward economic development in the RF Far East. He also pointed out that "the Korean Peninsula also might become a focus for Russian diplomatic attention in 1997." Both the official inauguration of Kim Jong-il planned

in the DPRK and the upcoming presidential elections in the ROK "might provoke stormy changes in Korea which will concern us as well."

6. PRC Premier's Visit Assessed

Moskovskiye Novosti's Evgeniy Bajanov ("GIANTS' FLEXIBLE DIPLOMACY," Moscow, 5, 12/22-29/96) wrote a commentary on the visit of the PRC State Council Premier Li Peng. The author noted particularly that both countries are aware that a quarrel between them would spell catastrophe for both of them. Hence, they display flexibility in settling old disputes and avoid irritating each other on the Taiwan and Chechnya issues, respectively. The PRC is not afraid anymore of the "'corrupting' influence of immature Russian democracy," while in the RF they respectfully look at "socialism with Chinese specifics." Mutual economic interests also play their role. The author criticized proponents of an RF-PRC military-political alliance and called the idea "both unrealistic and harmful to our interests," because it would mean a joint RF-PRC confrontation against all developed nations. In particular he called for caution concerning RF arms deliveries to the PRC, because those might provoke an arms race among the neighbors. At the same time he criticized the alarmists crying about a "Chinese threat," although admitting that the issue of migration from the PRC to the RF Far Eastern regions is a delicate one. The author ventured that in the future a rivalry between the two powers might resume in some regions, but it could be dealt with in a civilized way, considering that in the twenty-first century they will still have more reasons for cooperation rather than confrontation.

7. RF Far Eastern Energy Problems

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Denis Babich and Vladislav Kuzmichyov ("FUEL HUNGER IN PRIMORIYE," Moscow, 1-2, 1/11/97) reported that yesterday the Primorskiy Area Administration Emergency Situations Commission introduced a limited electricity consumption regime in the Area. In reality this means that the local households may have their electricity switched off for 3-5 hours a day. The authors described in detail the complex problems with pricing, non-payments and fuel shortages that led to the action.

8. RF-US Sea Border Agreement Ratification Problems

Rossiyskaya Gazeta ("AND AFTER ALASKA ANOTHER BLOT," Moscow, 3, 1/14/97) published a full page article with six maps by Mr. Vyacheslav Zeelanov, Deputy Chairman, RF State Committee on Fisheries, in which he analyzed the situation with the sea-border between the RF and the US. On 6/1/90 the USSR-USA Agreement on the line dividing their respective sea territories was signed. The treaty was ratified by the US Senate on 9/16/91 on a vote of 86-6. The Washington Post of 9/17/91 quoted the US State Department as maintaining that under the agreement, 70 percent of the Bering Sea be under US jurisdiction, providing the US with sea territory 132 thousand square nautical miles larger than it would have been if the line were drawn at an equal distance from the respective coast-lines. Neither the USSR Supreme Soviet, nor the RF State Duma, has ratified the agreement. Dwelling on the details, the author was highly critical of the agreement and called for creation of an independent parliamentary commission to analyze the agreement again and to answer whether it is to the best interests of the RF.

9. DPRK To Accept Taiwan Nuclear Waste

Segodnya's Ivan Shomov ("NORTH KOREA IS READY TO BURY NUCLEAR WASTE MATERIALS FROM TAIWAN," Moscow, 6, 1/14/97) reported that, according to Taipei newspapers, two-month long secret talks between the Taiwan Electric Energy Corporation and a nameless "DPRK enterprise" resulted in an agreement for the DPRK to bury nuclear waste materials from the

Taiwan's six nuclear power plants. The financial aspects are still secret. The author recalled that some time ago a similar Taiwan-RF scheme failed, and ventured an opinion that both the US and the PRC, for different reasons, will oppose the deal.

10. DPRK Leader to Assume Formal Positions

Pravda-Five ("PLANET PULSE PYONGYANG," Moscow, 1, 1/11/97) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il "notified Beijing that this year he will officially take the supreme party and state positions." On 7/8/97, the traditional DPRK three-year period of mourning of the late Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-il's father and predecessor, will end.

12. PRC versus Guatemala

Izvestia's Yuriy Savenkov ("BEIJING PUNISHED GUATEMALA FOR ITS LOYALTY TO TAIWAN," Moscow, 3, 1/14/97) reported that the PRC for the first time in a quarter of a century used its veto power as a UN Security Council Permanent Member to block the dispatch of a 155-member peace-keeping force to Guatemala. Izvestia's author pointed out that in this case "Beijing has put political considerations above the humanitarian ones" and punished Guatemala for being one of the 30 odd countries still maintaining diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

13. RF Tanker Catastrophe Polluted the Sea of Japan

Izvestia's Valentin Knepp ("STILL MORE AND MORE MYSTERIES," Moscow, 1-2, 1/9/97) reported on the lack of progress in explaining why the RF "Nakhodka" tanker perished in the Sea of Japan the previous week, as well as difficulties in finding those who responsible for paying environmental pollution compensation to the Japanese in the adjacent coastal areas affected by the fuel spilled by the tanker.

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Aleksandr Zhelenin ("A VERSION OF "NAKHODKA" CATASTROPHE," Moscow, 2, 1/11/97) reported that according to Russian Radio, the "PrisCo Traffic" company that owned the "Nakhodka" tanker advised the crew members against communicating with mass media, adding that their compensation payment will depend on fulfilling that advice. The crew members were not insured. Comparing the tanker insurance facts and figures, the author speculated a "non-accidental" sinking of the tanker cannot be ruled out.

Rossiyskaia Gazeta ("WE'LL HELP TO CLEAN THE OF JAPAN," Moscow, 1, 1/14/97) reported that the RF Emergency Situations Ministry said it would take part in operations to clean pollution in the Sea of Japan produced by the catastrophe of the "Nakhodka" oil tanker.

14. ROK Strikes

Segodnya ("SOUTH KOREAN ARMY WILL BE A STRIKE-BREAKER," Moscow, 6, 1/14/96) reported that a ROK Defense Ministry representative, commenting on the general strike in the ROK in protest of anti-labor legislation, said yesterday that "the army is ready to interfere and to replace the strikers with 'its own personnel.'" Two and a half thousand troops reportedly underwent training yesterday to replace locomotive drivers and telephone operators.

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