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I. United States

1. Spain-DPRK Relations

Agence France Presse ("SPAIN OPENS DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH NORTH KOREA," Madrid, 12/15/00) reported that the Spanish government decided Friday to formally establish diplomatic relations with the DPRK, saying that the move would contribute to reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. A Spanish government statement said, "The establishment of diplomatic relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is deemed acceptable because it will contribute to the

process of reconciliation and normalization on the Korean peninsula. It will allow us to address with the authorities in North Korea the issues that are of concern to the Spanish government."

2. DPRK Military Threat

The Washington Times published an opinion article by James Hackett ("UNABATED NORTH KOREA MENACE," 12/15/00) which said the true facts about the DPRK have appeared in the ROK's Defense White Paper 2000, released December 4 by the ROK Defense Ministry. Hackett noted that despite the ROK's efforts at reconciliation since the June inter-Korean summit, the DPRK has kept most of its combat units poised near the front line. He continued that, despite the recent contacts with the ROK and other countries in search of foreign aid, the White Paper said that the DPRK has made no cuts in its armed forces and continues to spend an estimated 30 percent of its budget on the military. US intelligence sources, including a report prepared by the US military command in the ROK, confirm the White Paper report that the DPRK's opening to the outside world has not been matched by a reduction in military activity. Thus, Hackett wrote, "Every effort should be made to prevent a war that would involve so many Americans, and the best prevention is a strong defense. The White Paper confirms the importance of keeping U.S. forces in the area and adding missile defenses at an early date. Both improved theater missile defenses for U.S. and allied forces and a U.S. national missile defense are needed to deter North Korea from spending its scarce resources on still more weapons, and from using them to blackmail and intimidate. The White Paper presents just the most recent evidence that North Korea says one thing but does another. It would be unwise to believe the word of the dictatorship of the North that it would stop developing or exporting its missiles. Mr. Clinton should stay home his last month in office and take no action that might complicate the foreign policy of the next president." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 15, 2000.]

3. US View of PRC

The Washington Times ("Bill Gertz, "GEN. SHELTON SEES CHINA AS GROWING THREAT TO US," 12/15/00) and Reuters ("U.S. MUST PREVENT CHINA FROM BECOMING THREAT, SAYS SHELTON," Washington, 12/15/00) reported that the US General Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said during a speech to the National Press Club on December 14 that the PRC may emerge as a Soviet-like superpower in the coming years. Shelton said, "I am firmly convinced that we need to focus all elements of U.S. power and diplomacy on ensuring that China does not become the 21st-century version of the Soviet bear." He said that the combination of a capitalist-style economy and Communist political dictatorship is a potential threat to regional stability. He noted that it will not be easy for the US to prevent the PRC from becoming a new Soviet Union. Shelton said, "China takes a distrustful view of the United States' intentions, as articulated in their recent defense white paper. They are aggressively modernizing their military forces, both conventional as well as nuclear. At the same time, they hope to maintain control of an expanding capitalist-like economy under a communist hierarchy that embraces centralized planning and centralized control. This situation is a contradiction that could threaten China's internal power, and consequently threaten stability throughout the region." However, he made no mention of the PRC's recent long-range missile test. [Ed. note: The Washington Times article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 15, 2000.]

4. PRC View of US Election

Agence France Presse ("CHINA WARNS FUTURE BUSH ADMINISTRATION OVER TAIWAN

POLICY," Beijing, 12/15/00) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said Friday that stable Sino-US relations were vital at this point in history and that the PRC was hopeful that a US Bush government would continue the work of previous administrations to improve ties. In a meeting in Beijing with former US secretary of state Lawrence Eagleburger, Tang said that the new US government should take particular care over Taiwan. Tang said, "The Taiwan issue is always the core issue and it is the important and most sensitive to China-US relations. As the US government has made clear pledges on this issue, China hopes the new administration will strictly keep its pledges, deal with the Taiwan issue appropriately, and clearly support China's peaceful reunification."

5. Asian View of US Election

The International Herald Tribune (Michael Richardson, "ASIAN ANXIETY ON TRANSITION TO BUSH APPEARS TO RECEDE," Singapore, 12/15/00) reported that many officials and analysts on Thursday reassessed US President- elect George W. Bush's impact on US policy toward Asia. Jusuf Wanandi, chairman of the supervisory board of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Jakarta, said, "The realities of power in the United States and Asia will make Mr. Bush, as president, drop some of his harsher rhetoric and moderate policies that could upset stability in the Asia-Pacific region." Melina Nathan, associate research fellow at the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies in Singapore, said that Asians would be reassured by Bush's principal aides on foreign and defense policy, many of whom know Asia well and have experience in previous Republican administrations. She said, "Asia in general feels more comfortable with the advisers Mr. Bush has gathered around him. My sense is that wiser heads will prevail." Asian officials and analysts said that because the US electorate and US Congress is deeply divided, a Bush administration is likely to seek consensus and reach across party lines to build bipartisan support for both domestic and foreign policies. This approach, they said, is expected to translate into a cautious approach on Asia, especially toward the PRC and Taiwan and on the push to build a national missile defense system. In Northeast Asia, concerns over a possible change in US policies under a Republican administration have emerged as a key issue in the reconciliation talks between the ROK and the DPRK. Therefore, a US analyst said, Bush should act quickly to reassure the two sides of the US support for their rapprochement. Ralph Cossa, executive director of the Pacific Forum CSIS, a research institute in Honolulu, said, "It is important for Mr. Bush to send an early signal to both Koreas that his administration is committed to the process of engagement and fully supportive of South Korean President Kim Dae Jung's 'sunshine policy' toward the North." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 15, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter-Korean Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "ARGUMENTS OVER 'MAIN ENEMY' CONCEPT STALL HIGH-LEVEL TALKS," Pyongyang, 12/15/00) reported that the high-level talks between the two Koreas made little headway Thursday, as both sides continued their dispute over the ROK's reference to the DPRK as its "main enemy," officials said. On the third day of the ministerial talks, the DPRK repeated its claims that the "main enemy concept," stipulated in the ROK Defense Ministry's white paper for 2001, would hurt the spirit of the inter-Korean summit, they said. ROK negotiators however reminded their DPRK counterparts that the two Koreas are still in a military standoff despite the latest rapprochement. They added that the ROK would abandon the concept only if both sides build military confidence, the officials said. Asked about the prospects for the talks, Jon said, "I have no

idea." Later in the day, the ROK delegation delivered the National Assembly's resolution calling on the DPRK to repatriate ROK prisoners of war and people abducted by DPRK agents. With the two sides mired in debates in the morning session, the DPRK failed to respond to a number of proposals made by the ROK on Wednesday, the officials said.

2. US Policy towards DPRK

The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "BUSH ADMINISTRATION TO GET TOUGHER IN DEALING WITH NK," Seoul, 12/15/00) reported that ROK experts and government officials said that the basis of US policies towards the DPRK will remain unchanged, but the new Bush administration might slightly step back from the current engagement policy and push the DPRK to strengthen its dependence on the ROK to address its problems. US Ambassador to the ROK Stephen Bosworth said recently that the basic US approach towards the Korean Peninsula would remain unchanged even under a new US administration. However, an ROK Foreign Affairs-Trade Ministry official hinted at the possibility that the DPRK might be forced by new Republican policymakers to choose one from the two possible options: better ties with the ROK with the blessing of the US or isolation and containment. Richard Armitage, former assistant secretary of defense and one of Bush's foreign policy advisors, proposed in his report "A Comprehensive Approach to North Korea" that a "Red Line" be drawn to clarify what is unacceptable behavior and underscore that provocative military action by the DPRK will not be tolerated and will provoke a response. In the short term, the ROK and the US might face trials and errors in working out well-orchestrated policies but, in the long term, it is seen that the US policy might offer a fertile ground for President Kim Dae-jung's "Sunshine Policy."

3. Kim Jong-il Rejects Peace Prize

The Korea Times ("NK LEADER REJECTS U.S. NGO'S PEACE PRIZE," Seoul, 12/15/00) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has rejected an international peace award offered by a US non-governmental organization (NGO). The Search for Common Ground, an NGO pursuing interracial and international reconciliation through prevention of conflicts of interest, chose both ROK President Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il, chairman of DPRK's National Defense Commission, as co-recipients of its international peace prize on December 1. The group reportedly wanted to honor their contribution to easing tensions on the Korean peninsula. Gil Kulick, the group's spokesman, said that the DPRK had originally planned to have its Ambassador to the United Nations, Li Hyong-chol, receive the prize in lieu of Kim Jong-il in the awarding ceremony at the Finnish Embassy in Washington. The DPRK announced later however that its leader had rejected the prize, according to Radio Free Asia monitored here. The spokesman said that ROK Ambassador to the US Yang Sung-chul will receive the prize for Kim Dae-jung.

4. Inter-Korean Development Zone

Chosun Ilbo ("NK INTERESTED IN JOINT DEVELOPMENT ZONE," Seoul, 12/15/00) reported that it was reported on Thursday that on his visit to the PRC at the end of May, DPRK leader Kim Jong-il told PRC prime minister Zhu Rongji that he would like to create an "economic development zone" in cooperation with the ROK. According to PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, Zhu advised Kim to create the zone around the 38th parallel and added that it will contribute to easing tension on the Korean peninsula. Kim supposedly agreed with Zhu, saying "that's a very good idea."

III. Japan

1. DPRK Economic Development Zone

The Asahi Shimbun ("KIM JONG-IL PROPOSED ESTABLISHING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA ON 38 LINE," 12/14/2000) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told Yukio Hatoyama, leader of the Japanese largest opposition party who is visiting Beijing, that at the talks between Kim Jong-il and PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji in Beijing last May, Kim Jong-il proposed that an economic development area be established. According to the report, Kim stated, "For the North and the South to develop economically, it would be good to establish an economic development area." Zhu, in response, said, "It would be also good if such an area were established on the 38th parallel line. Such economic development would be better off if established in such a tense place." Kim responded, "That is very good."

2. DPRK Spying in Japan

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPANESE POLICE CONFISCATED DPRK AGENT GUIDEBOOK FROM SUSPECT AGENT," 12/15/2000) reported that the Japanese Police Public Security Section on December 14 confiscated a DPRK agent guidebook from DPRK trading company president Kang Sung-hui, who had already been arrested for fraud in Japan. The report said that Kang received spy training in the DPRK for six days in July 1979 and that the guidebook contains the notes he took during the training. The guidebook describes the methods of spy activities in Japan and the ROK, including how to contact influential people in the political, religious, academic and military circles, how to induce them into becoming information providers by offering money and women, and how to keep a low-key daily life so as not to attract unnecessary attention. Kang's fraud charges include deceiving ROK tourists and pro-ROK residents in Japan to convert them to pro-DPRK "believers."

3. UK-DPRK Relations

The Nihonkeizai Shimbun ("UK AND DPRK ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS," London, 12/12/2000) reported that the UK government announced on December 12 that the UK had established diplomatic relations with the DPRK. Both countries signed a memorandum of understanding at the British Foreign Ministry on December 12, said the report. The UK aims to facilitate tension-reduction between the DPRK and the ROK and to promote human rights in the DPRK. The report added that both sides would exchange ambassadors in the future, but that for the time being, the UK will station their ambassador in Seoul, while the DPRK will station theirs in Stockholm or Geneva.

4. Japanese-Russian Relations

The Sankei Shimbun ("KONO'S VISIT TO RUSSIA WILL LIKELY BE POSTPONED," 12/14/2000) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono's visit to Russia for negotiations over the bilateral territorial issue, originally slated to take place this year, is likely to be postponed until January, 2001. The report said that the Japanese Foreign Ministry is asking Russia for the realization of Kono's visit after Japan's 2001 revised budget is decided on December 25, but that Russia is having difficulty determining Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov's schedule. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda announced on December 13, "If the Foreign Minister's visit were postponed, the Prime Minister's visit would also be postponed." The Foreign Ministry also said to reporters, "We are still asking the Russian side (for Kono's visit this year.)" The report, however,

pointed out that given the disagreement between the two sides on the issue of interpretation of the Japanese-Soviet Joint Communique at the last talk in late November, the prospect for progress in the future talks is still unclear.

5. Japanese View of New US Administration

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVERNMENT SEES BUSH BRINGING JAPAN, US CLOSER," 12/15/2000) and the Daily Yomiuri ("GOVERNMENT SEES BUSH BRINGING JAPAN, US CLOSER," 12/15/2000) reported that the Japanese government welcomed the report that Texas Governor George W. Bush would become the next US president, as it expects Bush to strengthen Japan-US ties. The report also said that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori plans to visit the US in February. Foreign Minister Yohei Kono said, "Mr. Bush has often referred in his speeches to the importance of the Japan-US alliance. The Japanese government also considers the relationship pivotal in maintaining peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Japan hopes to cooperate closely with the new US administration to contribute to world peace." As for the security issue, a senior Foreign Ministry official stated, "The Japan-US relationship is very smooth and we do not expect the US government to make major changes in its diplomatic policies toward Japan." The government thinks that a report compiled by former US Assistant Defense Secretary Richard Armitage in October is an important source for learning the Bush administration's policy toward Japan. Regarding the economic issue, a Finance Ministry official said, "I think the new US government would be stressing the need for more talks and to take a more flexible approach than the Democratic administration, which high-handedly called on Japan to make structural reforms and boost domestic demand."

6. Japanese-US Security Relations

The Japan Times (Junko Takahasi and Sachiko Hirano, "BUSH EXPECTED TO FOCUS ON JAPAN RATHER THAN CHINA," 12/15/2000) reported that experts on Japanese-US relations broadly see George W. Bush's victory in the US presidential election as a good sign for Japan. The article pointed out that during his campaign, Bush described the PRC as a strategic rival and made the US security alliance with Japan the pillar of his policy for Asia, while Democratic rival Al Gore described the PRC as a partner and mentioned Japan only rarely. Hisahiko Okazaki, a former career diplomat and director of the Okazaki Institute, said that many of the staff who worked with Japan to win the Cold War under the administrations of Republican Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush Sr. are expected to exercise their influence in the new administration. Key members of the Bush campaign team played important roles in his father's administration, which included Vice President-elect Dick Cheney as secretary of defense, Colin Powell as chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Richard Armitage as Asian affairs adviser. Bruce Stokes, senior fellow at the Washington-based Council on Foreign Relations, said that if Bush wants to differentiate himself from Clinton, he would attempt to show that he is closer to Japan than Clinton was. Okazaki said that special attention should be paid to a recent report issued by a bipartisan group of Asia policy experts, including Armitage and Joseph Nye, a former Asia adviser to Clinton, which makes Japan the "keystone" of US policy in Asia and calls for the bilateral security alliance to be strengthened by enabling Japan to engage in collective defense and to participate fully in UN peacekeeping operations. Okazaki warned that friction might arise if Japan fails to respond to calls for stronger security ties. Motofumi Asai, a professor of international relations at Meiji Gakuin University, said that the bipartisan report was carefully released in October--just in time for the election--so the authors' views would be reflected in the new government, regardless of who won. Asai said, "They want to set a direction for Japanese-US relations. Their basic idea is to make Japan revise its Constitution and strengthen the military alliance." According to Asai, the primary US concern in Asia will be an emergency in the Taiwan Strait and lingering uncertainties on the Korean Peninsula, despite recent positive developments.

From the US perspective, it is essential for Japan to amend its Constitution so that it can engage in collective defense activities. Asai said, "They are looking for the right timing to raise the issue before dangerous situations develop in areas surrounding Japan."

7. US Troops in Asia

The Japan Times (Junko Takahasi and Sachiko Hirano, "BUSH EXPECTED TO FOCUS ON JAPAN RATHER THAN CHINA," 12/15/2000) reported that, according to Atsushi Kusano, a professor at Keio University, the new George W. Bush administration is likely to keep 100,000 US troops forward-deployed in East Asia. Kusano said, "Practically speaking, the United States cannot change the 100,000-troop framework because countries like Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia are feeling threatened by China and want the US presence in Asia as a counterbalance." Kusano also said that while their overall presence in Asia will not change, US forces in Okinawa may be consolidated and reduced in line with the 1996 report by the bilateral Special Action Committee on Okinawa. However, the US will not accept a local request to set a 15-year limit on use of a new airfield to be constructed in Nago, northern Okinawa. Kusano said, "When nobody knows how the international situation can change in 15 years, it is nonsense for the US to accept a deadline on such a strategically important facility." The article pointed out that the stalemate over the 15-year limit, which Okinawa Prefecture and Nago have set as the condition for hosting the new US military facility, has effectively stalled the airport project, thus keeping Futenma's return up in the air.

8. Japanese Cabinet

The Japan Times ("POLL SHOWS CABINET RESHUFFLE HAS DONE LITTLE FOR MORI'S POPULARITY," 12/12/2000) reported that the approval rate for Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's Cabinet improved slightly after the reshuffle on December 5, according to the latest Kyodo News poll released on December 11. The approval rate was 19 percent, up a single percentage point from the last survey in late October. The disapproval rate was 65 percent, down 2 points from the previous poll but still high enough to conclude that the reshuffled Cabinet lacks voter support. However, while Mori's popularity increased slightly, only 22 percent of the respondents picked the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) when asked which major party they favor, a setback of 6 points from the previous survey. The largest opposition Democratic Party of Japan gained 3 points to 19 percent, making its support rate very close to the LDP's. The latest poll was based on telephone interviews conducted on December 9 and 10 with 1,000 randomly selected people. Asked how long Mori should stay in power, 57 percent of the respondents answered they wanted him to step down as soon as possible. Some 28 percent answered that Mori should remain in office until the next House of Councilors election, slated for July 2001. On the other hand, a mere 4 percent of the respondents said they wanted Mori to serve as prime minister for as long as he can. As for the new Cabinet, 57 percent of the respondents said that the reshuffle was focused on ruling LDP factions, with 39 percent saying the reshuffle did not make any difference.

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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