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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

The Washington Times ("TALKS WITH N. KOREA END WITH NO ACCORD," New York, 3/16/00) reported that the US and the DPRK broke off talks on March 15 after failing to reach an agreement on an anticipated visit to the US by a top DPRK official. Charles Kartman, US special envoy on DPRK talks, stated, "we adjourned our talks in preparation for the high-level visit." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 16, 2000.]

2. US Forces in ROK

Defense Daily (Frank Wolfe, "SCHWARTZ: KOREAN FORCES LACK TMD PROTECTION," 3/16/00) reported that US Army General Thomas Schwartz, commander-in-chief of the UN command in the ROK, told a congressional hearing on March 15 that military forces in the ROK need theater missile defense (TMD) for protection. However, Schwartz said, the military is "heading in the right direction," in part because of the planned fielding in the ROK later this year of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) system. Schwartz said a tiered family of TMD systems, including ones for the Navy's fleet of Aegis ships, Lockheed Martin's Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD), and the international Medium Extended Air Defense System would provide the needed coverage. The general added that the UN command is also concerned by 700,000 DPRK troops within 100 miles of the demilitarized zone and by the numerical advantage of the DPRK artillery - about 12,000 total systems. Schwartz said that he "fully" supports Army General Eric Shinseki's vision of a lighter, more deployable army. He continued that early arrival of Army forces would mean a shorter conflict and reduced casualties in the event of a Korean conflict. Schwartz also said that enhanced command and control is his greatest equipment priority. He stated, "we are most concerned about our command and control systems. Near term, fiscal year 2001, we need an additional $35 million to cover these critical command and control requirements. My existing Global Command and Control System (GCCS) operating costs alone requires $6 million of that $35 million total. This is critical funding for absolute 'go to war' readiness." Admiral Dennis Blair, commander-in- chief of US Pacific Command, also testified before HASC on March 15, and mentioned intelligence platform shortfalls for the Pacific theater. Blair said that beyond the numbers planned, Pacific Command needs one additional Boeing [BA] RC-135 electronic reconnaissance aircraft, one Lockheed Martin EP-3E electronic reconnaissance aircraft, and one Navy special collection platform to address the shortage. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 16, 2000.]

3. PRC View of Taiwan Elections

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN'S ELECTION WILL DECIDE REUNIFICATION TIMETABLE: SCHOLAR," Beijing, 3/16/00) reported that Xu Bodong, a professor at Beijing's Union University, said on Thursday that the timetable the PRC imposes on Taiwan to resolve the issue of reunification depends on the results of the island's March 16 elections. Xu said, "the timetable is in the hands of the mainland as well as in the hands of Taiwan's new leader and Taiwanese voters. If a Taiwan candidate is selected who supports Taiwan's independence then (the resolution of the problem) will not be a matter of a few weeks, but a matter of a few hours." Xu was among a panel of seven leading academics assembled to back the government's policy on Taiwan. The academics said that the PRC had decided to adopt a harder line on Taiwan only after Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui proposed that the PRC-Taiwan relations should be considered as "state-to-state" ties in July 1999.

4. US-PRC Talks

Agence France Presse ("HOLBROOKE DUE IN CHINA FOLLOWING TAIWAN ELECTIONS," Beijing, 3/16/00) reported that PRC foreign ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said Thursday that US ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke will hold talks with PRC leaders next week. Sun said, "at the invitation of the foreign ministry, the representative of the United States to the UN will visit China in the near future when he will have consultations with the Chinese side on UN affairs." Holbrooke will arrive in Beijing on March 19 and hold two days of talks beginning March 20 with PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and PRC vice minister in charge of international affairs, Wang Guangya. Analysts said that the US will particularly be concerned over the PRC's reaction if Taiwan's pro- independence candidate Chen Shui-bian win the elections. Foreign diplomatic sources in Beijing said that a Chen victory could elicit an unpredictable response from the PRC because it would mark the second time

PRC President Jiang Zemin's policy on Taiwan failed to win over Taiwanese voters.

5. US Views of Cross-Straits Tensions

The Washington Post (Robert G. Kaiser and Steven Mufson, "ANALYSTS DIFFER ON WHETHER CHINA CRISIS LOOMS," 3/16/00) reported that senior US officials are bracing for the possibility that Taiwan's presidential elections will bring a period of high tension with the PRC and compel the US to make difficult choices. Morton Abramowitz, a former US Defense Department official, said that the US has dealt with the PRC's territorial claim to Taiwan by "exporting the problem to the future," but certain factors have pushed the issue forward. He added, however, "this is not like Serbs and Kosovars - none of the parties wants any part of going to war." The article pointed out that rising nationalism in the PRC and Taiwan, the widening gap between the PRC's communist political system and Taiwan's democracy, PRC military modernization, and reciprocal moves in the US Congress to defend the island are pushing the Taiwan question into the present. Former defense secretary William J. Perry said, "we're heading toward a collision course on this now." Paul Wolfowitz, dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said, "democracy in Taiwan has changed the whole situation in ways that are inadequately appreciated." More than three dozen US officials and academic experts agreed that the next three to five years will be a period of heightened tensions and potential crises. Chas. W. Freeman Jr., a former assistant secretary of defense, said that while a clash may not be imminent, "it's very likely the US and China are going to have a war over this issue." Allen Whiting, a professor at the University of Arizona, said that although he sees "a risk of war" if the Taiwan issue is not resolved, serious trouble is at least three years away. Thomas Christensen, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who specializes in PRC foreign policy, said he fears that PRC officials may convince themselves that a dramatic show of force would compel Taiwan to accept the PRC's offer of reunification based on "one country, two systems." Former secretary of state Henry Kissinger said he worries that the PRC and the US will drift into hostility without a real strategic reason for doing so. Kissinger said, "we are talking ourselves into becoming each other's principal enemy." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 16, 2000.]

Office of International Information Programs, US Department of State, released a House International Relations Committee Press Release ("GILMAN BLASTS CHINESE INTIMIDATION OF TAIWAN," Washington, 3/15/00) which said, "US Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (20th-NY), Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, released the following statement today concerning the Taiwanese election set for Saturday, March 18: On Saturday, the people of Taiwan will be free to choose a new president. Regrettably, officials of the People's Republic of China have made statements designed to intimidate the Taiwanese people into voting for a candidate acceptable to China. These threats are unacceptable. The United States insists that the status of Taiwan be decided by peaceful means with the consent of the people of Taiwan. It is my hope that the people of Taiwan will ignore these contemptible threats and choose the candidate that they feel will best represent them. Whoever is selected to lead Taiwan will have a productive working relationship with the American people, the American Congress and the American government. Rather than engaging in threatening behavior, China should be congratulating Taipei for the consolidation of its democracy -- the first in 5,000 years of Chinese history -- and for laying the groundwork for working with the new Taiwanese president for the betterment of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. It is also regrettable that the Chinese have turned to blaming the United States for the problems in their relationship with Taiwan. It seems to me that the refusal to renounce the use of force, an unprecedented military buildup, and threatening rhetoric against Taiwan would be more central to the difficulties in the relationship. The United States has been key to the peace and stability that we have seen across the Taiwan Strait for over 50 years."

6. PRC Satellite Development

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "CHINA'S MILITARY LINKS FORCES TO BOOST POWER," 3/16/00) reported that a classified US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report sent to senior officials recently said that the PRC's newest satellite, launched in January, is a military communications satellite and a major component of the first integrated command, control, communications, computer and intelligence system (C4I). The new system, called Qu Dian, gives the PRC military new capabilities for coordinating and supporting its growing forces. One official said, "this is a major force multiplier." The PRC launched the satellite, reported by official PRC media as a civilian ChinaSat-22 system, on January 26, 2000 from Xichang in southwestern PRC. Defense officials familiar with the report said the DIA identified the satellite as Feng Huo-1, the first of several military communications satellites for the Qu Dian C4I system. The report said an initial test of a subsystem known as the Tactical Information System will be carried out by PRC defense technicians in the next several weeks. The officials also said that the PRC military is describing the new information system as similar to the US Defense Department's Joint Tactical Information Distribution System or JTIDS - a secure communications network used by US and allied aircraft, ships, submarines and ground units to communicate and share intelligence in wartime. The report said, "the Chinese reference to JTIDS suggests the Tactical Information System will yield an integrated battlefield picture, centralizing data from ground, air and naval platforms for wide dissemination to subordinate units. Chinese work is progressing on both the software and hardware to increase the integration and automation of command and control systems." The intelligence report concluded that when fully deployed in the next several years the Qu Dian system "will allow theater commanders to communicate with and share data with all forces under joint command with a high-speed and real-time view of the battlefield which would allow them direct units under joint command more effectively." According to the officials, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) offered a dissenting view of the DIA's assessment, stating in the report that "rigidity" of the PRC military command structure will limit the effectiveness of the new military system. Larry Wortzel, a former US Defense Department PRC specialist now with the Heritage Foundation, said it is "dangerous" for US analysts to systematically play down each improvement of PRC military capabilities. Wortzel said that the new PRC system will "improve command and control and when the system is in use and used in exercises it will help improve decision-making. It took the PLA about four years to learn to use the computer-based war- fighting simulation system it was given by the U.S. Army in 1998, and they'll learn to use this system, too."

7. Spratly Islands

South China Morning Post (James East, "BEIJING WARNS AGAINST JOINT MILITARY GAMES," Bangkok, 3/16/00) reported that in the first meeting of involving the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the PRC, both sides agreed to working together on a "code of conduct" governing relations in the South China sea. However, PRC officials said that they were determined to see an end to joint military operations around the Spratly Islands. A senior adviser to the PRC Foreign Ministry delegation said, "if some countries continue to beef up their military alliances or joint exercise, all sides will continue to be suspicious of one another." Delegates said it was still too early to talk about such specifics, which would be left to a further meeting of foreign ministry officials in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, next month. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 16, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Aid Policy towards DPRK

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "KIM HINTS AT NEW AID FOR N.K.," Seoul, 03/16/00) and The Korea Times ("'NK AID CANNOT BE MADE UNDER RECIPROCITY PRINCIPLE," Seoul, 03/15/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung indicated on Wednesday that the ROK would provide new food aid to the DPRK with no conditions. "We must free our North Korean brethren from the scourge of hunger," Kim said in a meeting with leading members of the Korean Veterans Association at Chong Wa Dae. Kim's statement was seen by analysts as an indication that the ROK may provide food and fertilizer to the DPRK without attaching any preconditions. Kim's aides said at the time that the President's statement could be interpreted as a sign that the ROK government would use taxpayers' money to help the DPRK rebuild its economy and resolve its food shortage problems. The ROK government has so far refrained from using government funds in providing aid to the DPRK, mostly out of fear of a conservative backlash. The opposition Grand National Party has already taken issue with the President's Berlin address, criticizing Kim for attempting to use public funds to help the DPRK in spite of its aggressive posturing. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 16, 2000.]

2. ROK Aid to DPRK

The Korea Times ("CIVIC GROUPS SHIP CLOTHES TO NK," Seoul, 03/15/00) reported that a group of civic organizations on Tuesday shipped 300,000 yards of textiles worth 1 billion won and 50,000 pieces of clothing to the DPRK on Wednesday, the Korean Sharing Movement (KSM) said. A KSM spokesman said that a ship carrying the textiles and the clothes departed Inchon with Woo Tae-ha, secretary general of the Korea Saemaul Movement Center, and Nam Kyong-woo, head of the public relations department of the vernacular weekly Naeil, on board. Woo and Nam have taken charge of the delivery to the North Korean port of Nampo. A DPRK women's association requested the goods last September when a delegation of KSM female members visited Pyongyang. The National Livestock Cooperatives Federation also said that a six-member delegation flew into Pyongyang via Beijing on Tuesday to discuss cooperation in the livestock industry, and get debriefed on the distribution of eggs that the federation and ROK civic groups recently sent to the DPRK.

3. DPRK-ROK Dialogue

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N. KOREA CALLS ON SEOUL TO ACT ON TALKS," Seoul, 03/16/00), Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "NK CAUTIOUS ON BERLIN DECLARATION," Seoul, 03/16/00), The Korea Times (Lee Soo-jeong, "NORTH KOREA ISSUES VAGUE REACTION TO KIM'S `BERLIN DECLARATION," Seoul, 03/16/00) and Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "NORTH KOREA'S FIRST REACTION TO PRESIDENT KIM'S BERLIN PROPOSAL," Seoul, 03/15/00) reported that in its first official response to President Kim Dae-jung's call for the resumption of government-level dialogue last week, the DPRK said on Wednesday that talks could be take place if "South Korea shows positive changes and genuine action." Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the DPRK Workers' Party, said in an editorial, "We clearly desire to hold heart-to-heart negotiations on the nation's fate, and will strive for national reunification with South Korean authorities, if they drop their traitorous confrontation policy and show a positive change in their attitudes." The newspaper dismissed Kim's proposal itself as trite and "nothing new," saying, "How can (the ROK) believe they will be able to cooperate and reconcile with us by making these absurd remarks?" "One act will be more important than 100 speeches," it said, stressing that the ROK government should first meet preconditions if it wants dialogue with the DPRK to take place. The ROK Unification Ministry, however, regarded the Rodong Sinmun editorial as a fairly neutral response. Assistant Unification Minister Kim Hyung-ki said that the government would wait until the DPRK makes an authoritative response, noting that

Wednesday's remarks were made by the DPRK's media instead of Kim Yong- sun, chairman of the Korean Asia-Pacific Peace Committee, who was the official recipient of the ROK's message detailing the presidential proposals. [Ed. note: The Korea Times article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 16, 2000.]

4. DPRK Relations with US and Japan

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS WITH UNITED STATES AND JAPAN IMPROVE," Seoul, 03/15/00) reported that the DPRK's relations with the US and Japan appear to be improving as obstacles are removed one by one. On March 13 the DPRK promised to resolve the issue of kidnapped Japanese nationals. The two nations held Red Cross talks, separate from the main meeting, and announced a joint agreement. The joint agreement includes the following: Japanese spouses will be allowed to visit home in April or May, their third such visit; a thorough investigation will be launched into the disappeared Japanese nationals and if they are found, appropriate measures will be taken; investigations will begin into Koreans who disappeared before 1945. In addition, the US has not ruled out the possibility of removing the DPRK from its list of terrorist-sponsoring nations. Judging from US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's attitude on March 13, it appears that if the DPRK demonstrates a sincere will, there will not be any problem for the US administration to begin an agreement procedure. The DPRK is in urgent need for economic support. The general analysis in diplomatic circles is that the DPRK will push for a lift through a "technical agreement" with the US as it did with Japan.

5. ROK-Japan Military Talks

Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "SEOUL, TOKYO TO BOOST MILITARY EXCHANGES," 3/16/00) reported that in a meeting between Cho Yung-kil, chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) met his Japanese counterpart Yuji Fujinawa on March 15 and agreed to expand bilateral military exchanges and cooperation between the ROK and Japan. Cho and Fujinawa also shared the view that closer military ties between the ROK and Japan are essential to maintaining regional security in Northeast Asia. Fujinawa arrived in Seoul on March 14 for a four-day official visit at the invitation of Cho. A JCS spokesman said that Cho outlined the ROK government's engagement policy toward the DPRK and its efforts to step up its military preparedness, while calling for Tokyo's continued support. The spokesman said that Fujinawa voiced Japan's full support for the ROK's "sunshine policy." The spokesman also said that, "at the meeting, Fujinawa formally requested that Cho visit Japan to meet the members of the Japanese Joint Staff Council, to which Cho reacted positively."

6. DPRK Parliament

The Korea Herald ("N.K. TO CONVENE PARLIAMENT ON BUDGET, BILLS, AGREEMENTS," Seoul, 03/16/00) reported that an ROK Unification Ministry official said on Wednesday that the DPRK will convene a meeting of its Supreme People's Assembly April 4 to deliberate on the national budget. The budget meeting is usually held in the spring to settle the past year's accounts and confirm the budget for the new year. In this meeting, the Assembly will likely discuss bills and ratify various agreements signed with foreign countries.

7. DPRK-Malaysia Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH TO SIGN FIRST VISA FREE AGREEMENT," Seoul, 03/15/00) and The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "NK, MALAYSIA TO SIGN VISA WAIVER PACT," Kuala Lumpur, 03/15/00)

reported that the DPRK and Malaysia will sign a visa waiver agreement on March 23, timed with Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun's trip to Kuala Lumpur, a senior Malaysian government official said on Monday. The DPRK had sought a three month visa-free period, but the source said it has only been granted one month. Paik will leave for China on March 18 and then visit Laos, Vietnam and Malaysia.

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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