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I. United States

1. US Sanctions on DPRK

The Washington Times (Ben Barber, "NORTH KOREA WARMS TO OTHERS, STILL COOL TO U.S.," 2/17/00) reported that Kim Myong-gil, counselor at the DPRK mission to the UN in New York, on February 16, criticized the US refusal to remove the DPRK from its terrorism list until the DPRK

expels Japanese Red Army terrorists who hijacked a plane in 1970 and flew to Pyongyang. Kim said that the fate of the Red Army Faction members was not the business of the US. He stated, "it's between my country and Japan and the individuals in Korea themselves." Kim said, "North Korea wants the terrorist label lifted. According to the agreement reached in Berlin last month, this will be discussed in more detail" at a meeting to be held in New York to prepare for the March visit to the US by a high- ranking DPRK official. Kim indicated that the DPRK has two vital issues that the US needed to address before the top level visit can go forward - sending promised fuel oil and dealing with the terrorism list. [Ed. note: This article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 17, 2000.]

2. DPRK Military Strength

The International Herald Tribune ("NORTH KOREA POWER 'GROWING'," Seoul, 2/17/00) reported that General Thomas Schwartz, the US commander in the ROK, said that the DPRK had significantly increased its military strength. Schwartz warned at a luncheon attended by senior US military officers and foreign correspondents that the DPRK had "tremendous capability" in terms of both conventional and chemical weapons despite the suffering the country has endured economically in recent years, adding that "the threat has not lessened." Schwartz also said that the US-ROK alliance "was born in blood, forged in the crucible of war. If challenged, we will fight and win." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 17, 2000.]

3. DPRK-Australia Talks

Agence France Presse ("AUSTRALIAN DELEGATION HEADS TO NORTH KOREA FOR FIRST TALKS IN 25 YEARS," Sydney, 2/17/00) reported that a delegation of four Australian diplomats will visit the DPRK next week for the first high-level talks since 1975. Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said that Australia wants the DPRK to work harder on its relationships with Japan and the US and to extend its moratorium on long-range missile tests. An anonymous Australian official said, "we will be seeking to make a number of points, to urge further progress in North Korea's external relations, particularly with the United States and Japan. We expect to touch on the importance for North Korea to move ahead with economic changes, economic restructuring reforms which, after all, is at the root of this humanitarian crisis. The way North Korea responds to these issues over time will of course influence the approach that we take with our dealings with North Korea."

4. Australian Aid to DPRK

Agence France Presse ("AUSTRALIA GIVES 6.0 MILLION DOLLARS AID TO NORTH KOREA," Sydney, 2/17/00) reported that Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Thursday that Australia will provide A$6.0 million (US$3.9 million) in aid money to help alleviate the humanitarian crisis in the DPRK. Downer said in a statement, "a serious and complex humanitarian crisis persists in North Korea. The United Nations reports food shortages still exist among the general population, despite some improvement in rice production this year. Malnutrition in children continues as a result of food shortages combined with health problems aggravated by diarrhoeal diseases." Downer also said the UN had drawn up a strategy for a longer-term recovery and rehabilitation program. He continued, "as part of this strategy, Australia will provide 5.0 million dollars to the World Food Program for food aid and agricultural rehabilitation programs." Australia will also contribute A$250,000 to UNICEF for vitamins and minerals for local production of corn soya, A$500,000 to the International Federation of Red Cross for health education and medicine, and A$250,000 to the

World Health Organization for a tuberculosis program.

5. Mt. Kumgang Tour

The New York Times (Calvin Sims, "NORTH AND SOUTH KOREANS MEET ON A MOUNTAIN PATH," Mount Kumgang, 2/15/00) reported that 150,000 people have visited Mount Kumgang since the DPRK opened parts of the mountain to ROK tourists in November 1998. For the first time, the tour has been opened to non-Koreans as of this month. While on the tour, DPRK Navy ships continually patrol the cruise ships, and the DPRK Navy has reserved the right to enter and search the tour ship at any time. Tour guides said that during the initial tours in 1998, there were no fences and they often had contact with the DPRK residents in the area. However, the guides said the DPRK government installed fences after ROK tourists starting giving milk, snacks and clothing to the DPRK Nationals. Even though the tourists have almost no contact with the DPRK residents, they are permitted to speak to DPRK officials, environmental guards, and inspectors who monitor the mountain paths and attractions. The DPRK has set fines ranging from US$15-100 against tourists who urinate or smoke in unauthorized areas, spit, or throw items from tour buses. According to the ROK Unification Ministry, the DPRK has collected US$8,250 in fines for 290 violations in Mount Kumgang since the start of the tours in 1998.

6. DPRK Consulate in Hong Kong

The New York Times (Calvin Sims, "HONG KONG: NORTH KOREA CONSULATE," 2/17/00) and Yahoo! News ("NORTH KOREA OPENS CONSULATE IN HONG KONG," 2/17/00) reported that the DPRK has officially opened a consulate in Hong Kong. The DPRK said that the consulate will promote economic, tourism, and cultural exchanges, but it ruled out using Hong Kong for direct contact with the ROK. The DPRK consulate is located in Wanchai on Hong Kong Island, not very far from the ROK mission, which has its office in the adjoining banking district. [Ed. note: The New York Times article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 17, 2000.]

7. US-PRC Talks

South China Morning Post ("SECURITY TALKS HELP TO RESTORE TIES DAMAGED BY NATO BOMBING," 2/17/00) and Reuters ("CHINA BERATES US ON TAIWAN AS TALKS BEGIN," Beijing, 2/17/00) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and a delegation of top US officials met PRC Foreign Ministry counterparts, including Vice Minister Yang Jiechi, at the beginning of two days of strategic talks on Thursday. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said, "last year, for reasons known to all, China-U.S. ties experienced great ups and downs. We hope this visit can help to improve and develop China-U.S. relations." Zhu also raised the issue of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), saying, "we want to ratify it as soon as possible but we are also taking into consideration some negative developments that have arisen recently. We hope other parties involved will also maintain a positive attitude." PRC and US officials said that the talks would cover global and regional strategic matters, but bilateral issues will be impossible to ignore. Zhu said that a US plan to develop a ballistic missile defense system that the PRC fears could be used to protect Taiwan talks was also included in the agenda. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 17, 2000.]

8. PRC View of US Missile Defense

Reuters ("US HITS AT CHINA IN SPAT OVER ANTI-MISSILE SHIELD," Geneva, 2/17/00) reported that at the Conference on Disarmament on Thursday, US Ambassador Robert Grey rejected the PRC's criticism of US plans to develop a missile defense system. Grey said, "the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction using advanced means of delivery is real, growing and increasingly unpredictable. The United States is considering a limited system to defend against such threats. The spread of these technologies shouldn't have happened but regrettably it did." Grey said that the US was committed to working with Russia "in a spirit of cooperation against a threat we both face." However, Grey accused the PRC of trying to undermine efforts toward lasting arms control while modernizing its own nuclear force. Grey said that the PRC "has been building new missile fields in locations that raise concerns. And they call into question an open orderly process aimed at finding necessary adaptations that can keep a long-standing arms control agreement relevant and effective." Grey said that the PRC position was to block UN-sponsored talks on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty unless there are parallel negotiations on nuclear arms reductions and outer space.

9. PRC Radar Purchase

Agence France Presse ("ISRAELI AIR FORCE COMMANDER WRAPPING UP AWACS PURCHASE IN CHINA," Beijing, 2/17/00) reported that informed sources said that Israel's air force commander, Eitan Ben-Eliahu, is in the PRC to wrap up the sale of an Israeli advance radar system to the PRC military. The source said that an agreement to purchase at least one system "has already been signed and sealed and is now being implemented." The official Xinhua news agency reported that Ben-Eliahu met with the PRC chief of the general staff Fu Quanyou on February 16 as part of a six-day goodwill visit. The source also said that the radar will be fitted onto Russian Beriev A-50 planes. However, the source refused to speculate on when the delivery of the radar and plane would be made.

10. Cross-Straits Relations

Associated Press (Annie Huang, "TAIWAN CANDIDATE OFFERS CHINA POLICY," Taipei, 2/17/00) reported that Taiwanese Vice President and presidential candidate Lien Chan said Thursday that his PRC policy favors setting up a trade zone and reviewing Taiwan's ban on direct shipping and air links with the PRC after both countries join the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, Lien said that his proposals could only be carried out if the PRC ended its hostility toward Taiwan and responded to his government in concrete, positive ways. Lien said, "I deeply hope that Chinese can stop fighting Chinese and let the world see a Taiwan Strait without gunfire." Lien also said that he would consider setting up a direct trade zone with the PRC's eastern Fujian Province and Taiwan's outlying islands of Kinmen and Matsu. He said both sides should have exchanges between their military officials and set up a hotline for their political leaders.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-US Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO MEET TO FINE-TUNE POLICIES AHEAD OF NORTH KOREA-U.S. TALKS," Seoul, 02/17/00) and the Korea Times ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO HOLD CONSULTATION PRIOR TO US-NK TALKS," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that ROK officials said on Wednesday that senior diplomats from the ROK and the US will meet in Hawaii this weekend

for final policy fine-tuning ahead of the rapprochement talks between the US and the DPRK. The ROK-US policy consultation, scheduled for February 22-23, will be headed by ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-ryong and US Special Envoy Charles Kartman, he added.

2. ROK Nonproliferation Talks with Japan and Russia

The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "ROK TO HOLD NONPROLIFERATION MEETINGS WITH RUSSIA, JAPAN," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that an ROK Foreign Affairs-Trade Ministry official said on Tuesday that the ROK will hold disarmament and nonproliferation talks separately with Russia and Japan to discuss issues ranging from missiles and nuclear weapons to landmines. A two-day meeting between the ROK and Russia is set to begin on Thursday in Moscow to mainly address the nonproliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons under the framework of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). "During the negotiations with the Russian side, we will also take issue with North Korea's programs on nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, while discussing ways to induce North Korea to join disarmament and nonproliferation systems," the official said. The ROK- Japan meeting, set for February 21 in Tokyo, will address the Theater Missile Defense (TMD) program, the illegal trade of small arms, and other issues of mutual concern. The ROK delegation, led by the ministry's director general for international organizations, Choi Jong-moo, will also comprise members of the Defense Ministry and ROK missions in Moscow and Tokyo.

3. Alleged Demilitarized Zone Incidents

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "UNC ACCUSES PYONGYANG OF ARTIFICIALLY ESCALATING TENSIONS ON KOREAN PENINSULA," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that the United Nations Command (UNC) on Tuesday accused the DPRK of heightening tensions on the Korean Peninsula with its latest propaganda offensive. The UNC said in a press release that it proposed last Friday a meeting on February 14 with the DPRK at the truce village of Panmunjom to discuss the DPRK's allegations of UNC provocations in the Demilitarized Zone. The release said that DPRK officials at Panmunjom did not respond to the offer. "This marks the second time in the past three weeks that the North Koreans have ignored UNC proposals to discuss unfounded North Korean allegations," said US Army Colonel David Apt, a UNC spokesman. "This is not unusual, the North Koreans frequently avoid meetings to resolve incidents, especially when there is no substance to their allegations," Apt said in the release. "The UNC does not engage in false accusations and believes that such propaganda is counterproductive to a meaningful dialogue between our two nations." "Additionally a recent crossing of the Military Demarcation Line by North Korean guards at Panmunjom has highlighted North Korea's attempts to artificially increase tensions in Korea," he said. Despite the incident, the UNC expressed its willingness in the release to meet with DPRK officials at any time.

4. Light-Water Reactor Project

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "KEDO TO START MAIN WORKS IN MAY AMID LINGERING DISPUTE OVER DELAY," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that ROK officials said that the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) is scheduled to commence construction on two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK in May, provided pending issues are settled by that time. "We are planning to break ground for the main construction in a ceremony around May," said an official at the ROK Unification Ministry's Office of Planning for the Light Water Reactor Project. The official added, however, "North Korea has yet to make any request related to its demands for compensation to KEDO officials. The issue will be discussed at a meeting later this month." As the contract for the

main construction went into effect early this month, high-level experts from the DPRK and KEDO will meet to discuss details on February 22 at the DPRK's Mt. Myohyang, he added. This will be the first time for ROK guards, although they are employees of a private security firm, to exercise policing authority in the rival DPRK, he said. "The number of South Korean security guards will likely increase sharply as the main construction progresses. The work will involve about 800 South Korean workers and more than 1,000 North Koreans," he added.

5. DPRK Consulate in Hong Kong

The Korea Times ("N.KOREA OPENS HONG KONG MISSION BUT RULES OUT VENUE FOR DIRECT TALKS," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday officially opened a consulate in Hong Kong saying it was to promote economic, tourism, and cultural exchanges. A consulate spokesman ruled out using Hong Kong for direct contact between the ROK and the DPRK. The spokesman, who declined to be named, said that the DPRK also expects to hold talks with the Hong Kong government on setting up direct air links. Another consulate spokesman said that the office opened to coincide with the 58th birthday of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and would handle normal consular affairs. The DPRK consulate is located in the waterfront business center of Wanchai on Hong Kong island, not very far from the ROK mission which has its office in the adjoining banking district of Central.

6. DPRK-ROK Red Cross Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim, Ji-ho, "RED CROSS CHIEF TO RAISE DEFECTOR ISSUE WITH N.K.," Seoul, 02/16/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Jee Hae-bom, "RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES MEET IN BEIJING," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that the newly-elected head of the International Red Cross society said on Tuesday that he would take up the issue of the safety of seven DPRK defectors repatriated to the DPRK by the PRC in December. "We will express our concerns about the safety (of the defectors) to North Korean officials," said Didier Cherpitel, secretary general of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). He added, "We will offer anything we can to facilitate (separated family members') contact. We now have a regional office in Beijing, and they are welcome to come and meet anytime." The Beijing meeting of top Red Cross officials is receiving additional attention in the ROK as representatives from the ROK and the DPRK are expected to meet and talk about various humanitarian issues between the two sides.

7. DPRK Defectors in PRC

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "NK REFUGEES IN CHINA SEEK HELP," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that sixteen-year- old DPRK National Chang Kil-su (a pseudonym to protect his identity) is in hiding near the PRC border along with 14 other family members, waiting for help to arrive. Kil-su and his family members, one group at a time, fled the DPRK beginning in 1997. In January last year, Kil-su's immediate family of three fled from Hwadae-gun in North Hamkyong Province to join their relatives. Currently, Kil-su's relatives are living under extremely poor conditions and are scattered throughout 3 different northern PRC provinces. Due to the fact that they are so far apart, even if an extended family member gets arrested by the PRC or DPRK authorities, they hope that the others will be safe. A source at the family rescue movement said that displaced DPRK citizens live in fear that the PRC public security authorities will arrest them and send them back to the DPRK.

8. Food Aid to DPRK

The Korea Times ("GOAT MILKING, PROCESSING SYSTEM TO BE BUILT IN NK," Seoul, 02/16/00) reported that an ROK aid organization will dispatch experts to the DPRK next month to build goat milking and processing systems. Nine experts will be sent by the Korean Sharing Movement, an organization active in providing aid to the DPRK, to a farm near Pyongyang on March 10, said a staff member of the organization. Last August, the agency sent 450 milk goats to the DPRK. The construction of a milking and processing system is expected to maximize the benefits of the previously-sent goats. "We plan to install a goat milking and processing system in an existing building at the Sangwon Farm. The facilities will cost us about 250 million won," he said. The experts are expected to wrap up the installment of the facilities by the end of next month, he added. When completed, the facilities can process the milk produced by 500 goats, he said, adding that his organization will also send 70,000 milk bottles. He said that his agency will transport an additional 500 milk goats to the DPRK this year as part of its efforts to increase inter-Korean cooperation in this field. The processed milk will be distributed to hospitals, day-care facilities, and other welfare centers, he said. Meanwhile, the milking system, worth 80 million won, will be provided by Alfa Laval Agri, a Swedish company.

III. Correction

The summary on US-Japan Consultations ("US VOWS CLOSE LINKS WITH JAPAN IN ASIA POLICY") in the February 17, 2000 Daily Report which stated that US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott met with Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi in Beijing on Wednesday was incorrect. Talbott met with Obuchi in Tokyo on Wednesday, February 17, before leaving for Beijing that night.

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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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Asian Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Gee Gee Wong: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Leanne Paton: anjlcake@webtime.com.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org