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I. United States

1. DPRK Opens Web Page

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA NEWS HITS INTERNET," Tokyo, 01/17/97) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Thursday opened a site on the World Wide Web (WWW) for dissemination of English-language news reports around the world. The web site address is: <http://www.kcna.co.jp>. However, only a few earlier news reports were immediately available on the site, and Lee Young Su, an editor of the Korean News Service in Tokyo, which acts

as the Japanese agency for KCNA, admitted that KCNA wasn't having an easy time with its new venue. "It's been a little difficult for our young men in Pyongyang to master Internet, but never mind. Next month, it will be more up to date," Lee said. By law, ROK citizens cannot read DPRK newspapers or other publications, and are not allowed to listen to DPRK radio broadcasts. The ROK Unification Ministry confirmed Friday that viewing the DPRK's WWW page is illegal, but said it has not yet made any moves to block access to it. A ministry official said, on condition of anonymity, that the ministry has not asked ROK Internet providers to block access to the site because the same information can be found on so many other pages.

[Editor's note: at the time of publication of this Daily Report, the KCNA site offered a list of news items for January 16, a link to an archive of news reports dating to December 2, 1996, a description of the Korean Central News Agency, and a photograph captioned, "The camp of Mt. Paekdu: Birthplace of Secretary Kim Jong Il."]

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2. ROK Strikes

Reuters ("SPECIAL FORCES RING SEOUL CHURCH," Seoul, 01/17/97) reported that ROK special force officers trained in unarmed combat tightened their guard around the Myongdong Cathedral where Korean Confederation of Trade Unions president Kwon Young-kil and six of Kwon's deputies have taken refuge. The confederation has spearheaded national strikes in protest of the new labor law. Meanwhile, the ROK's Roman Catholic cardinal appealed to President Kim Young-sam during a meeting to "resolve the current situation with dialogue," a presidential spokesman said. In what is widely viewed as an ominous warning of a crackdown, authorities have linked the labor strife to the DPRK.

The Associated Press (Ju-yeon Kim, "KOREAN STRIKES LOSE MOMENTUM," Seoul, 01/17/97)

reported that Hyundai Motor Co., the ROK's largest auto maker, announced Friday that it would resume production over the weekend. The announcement was the clearest indication yet that the 23-day nationwide strike is waning. Hyundai, with its 32,000 unionized workers, has been a focal point of the protest movement against the new labor law. Hyundai's unions were the first to go on strike under the umbrella of the outlawed Confederation of Trade Unions. Hyundai's chairman announced the resumed production after meeting with union leaders. The union refused to comment on the meeting.

3. US View of PRC-Russia Arms Deals

US Defense Department Spokesman Ken Bacon ("PENTAGON SPOKESMAN'S REGULAR BRIEFING, JANUARY 16," USIA Transcript, 01/17/97) stated in response to a question as to whether the US objected to Russia's recently reported sale of two destroyers to the PRC, "This is a legitimate arms sale from one sovereign country to another sovereign country. Obviously we would always prefer that threats be held to the lowest possible level, but we don't see this as a threatening move by China or by Russia." Asked if the PRC's acquisition of such advanced weaponry did not represent a threat to Taiwan, Bacon said, "We believe that China is committed to the peaceful resolution of the Taiwanese issue. ... I think we made very clear to China last year that we have a very strong commitment to the peaceful resolution of the Taiwan issue, and that efforts to intimidate Taiwan won't lead to a quick or peaceful resolution. We opposed those efforts last year, and we would oppose any new efforts to intimidate Taiwan, but I don't see this as an effort to intimidate Taiwan. It's part of an ongoing program by China to improve its Navy. This has been going on for some time."

4. ROK Rescues Bull

United Press International ("S.KOREA RESCUES 'PEACE OX' FROM DMZ," Seoul, 01/17/97) reported that ROK Marines on Friday rescued the ox stuck on a tiny island in the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas. The ROK sent eight Marines and a veterinarian to anesthetize the bull and bring it back to the mainland. The ox had an injured leg but was healthier than expected. Officials from the nearby town of Kimpo placed a banner around the bull's neck that read "Peace Bull." However, officials admitted they were disappointed that their earlier plans to cooperate with the DPRK to supply the bull with a mate on the island fell through. Kimpo spokesman Im Chong-kwang said, "We are disappointed but the relationship between South and North Korea is not very friendly." [Ed. note: for more information please also see "ROK To Rescue Bull" in yesterday's Daily Report.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Protests Taiwan's Nuclear Waste Disposal Plans

Having confirmed on Thursday that Taiwan's National Electric Power Corporation and a DPRK trading company concluded a contract to dispose of 60,000 barrels of Taiwan's low-level nuclear waste in the DPRK, the ROK Foreign Ministry strongly requested an immediate suspension of the project, claiming it represented a potential hazard of radioactive pollution in the Korean Peninsula and neighboring areas. The ministry also confirmed that Taiwan and the DPRK will negotiate the transfer of an additional 200,000 barrels of nuclear waste to the DPRK despite being asked several times to cancel the agreement. The ministry strongly warned that it will retaliate if this project is carried out. (Chosun Ilbo, "GOVERNMENT ASKS TAIWAN TO STOP SENDING NUCLEAR WASTE TO NORTH," Seoul, 01/17/97)

2. Developments in Russian-DPRK Relations

The ITAR-Tass news agency reported on Wednesday that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory

Karasin will visit the DPRK on January 21-24 to discuss a new treaty to replace the old USSR-DPRK Mutual Defense Treaty. Karasin told ITAR-Tass that in September 1995 the two countries exchanged drafts of the new treaty, which is to replace the 1961 bilateral treaty that had committed Moscow to assisting the DPRK militarily in the event of a war. Karasin stated that the new treaty would more accurately reflect the current situation and that Russia would continue to develop ties with both Koreas. However, he also stated that Russia "needs to step up ties" with the DPRK, since they had stagnated for some time. Despite protests from the DPRK, Moscow normalized relations with Seoul in 1990 and has since engaged in arms deals with the ROK. Following an agreement with the ROK in 1995, Russia agreed to repay in the form of military hardware US\$450.7 million out of a total of US\$1.47 billion in loans from the ROK. Last year, Russia began delivering T-80 tanks and other armored vehicles to the ROK. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Moscow was a major supplier of "fraternal" aid to the DPRK. (The Korea Times, "RUSSIA, NORTH KOREA TO DISCUSS NEW TREATY THIS MONTH," Seoul, 01/17/97)

3. Developments in PRC-Russian Military Relations

The manufacturers of the Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missile system stated on Wednesday that the PRC had purchased their product, which Moscow has also agreed to supply to Cyprus in a controversial agreement. Igor Melnikov, chief engineer of the Leningrad-Severny state enterprise, told the ITAR-Tass news agency that the PRC had bought the "purely defensive" system and that his factory was also ready to fulfill the contract with Cyprus. According to Melnikov, the all-weather S-300 system, developed in the 1980s, is being constantly modified to keep pace with technical requirements. Valery Pogrebenkov, press spokesman for the Russian arms giant Rosvooruzheniye, stated earlier this month that the S-300 system had been supplied to a Southeast Asian country and that "several other countries in Southeast Asia and the Gulf have shown interest." However, Pogrebenkov declined to name any of the countries concerned. Russian arms experts state that the S-300 system, which can be used against warplanes, cruise missiles, or ballistic missiles, is superior to the US Patriot system that distinguished itself in the 1991 Gulf War. The S-300 system's missiles can hit targets flying as low as 10 meters (33 feet) above the ground. It has a maximum range of 150 kilometers (93 miles) against warplanes and 40 kilometers (25 miles) against ballistic missiles. (The Korea Times, "CHINA BUYS MODERN S-300 MISSILE SYSTEM FROM RUSSIA," Seoul, 01/17/97)

The South China Morning Post reported yesterday that the US is concerned about the PRC's recent purchase of cutting-edge Russian military arms including fighter jets, missiles, and missile-launching destroyers. The report stated that high-ranking US officials are distressed by the recent military cooperation between the PRC and Russia despite official comments to the contrary by the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Winston Lord. The report stated that Lord recently commented that the US does not expect this trend to lead to strategic relations between Russia and the PRC, and that large arms purchases by the PRC are not something to be concerned about. (Hankyoreh Shinmun, "US PRECARIOUS ABOUT RUSSIA-PRC MILITARY COOPERATION," Hong Kong, 01/17/97) [Ed. note: For a more extensive treatment of Lord's comments, please see "US View of PRC-Russia Relations" in the January 14 Daily Report; see also "US View of PRC-Russia Arms Sales," above.]

4. Taiwan Purchases Patriots from US

On Wednesday, Taiwan obtained six US Patriot missile-launching vehicles that are considered to be the key to countering any missile attack by the PRC. Local newspapers stated that the vehicles had arrived in Taiwan's Keelung port in the north and in Kaohsiung port in the south. They are to be sent to a missile base in northern Taiwan where a supply of US Patriot missiles already has been transported. The United Evening News stated that radar and other support facilities arrived there earlier this month. The Independence Evening Post stated that shipments of the remaining missile-

launching vehicles and other materials will be completed by March. A senior military official confirmed the reports but refused to give details. Taiwan ordered 200 Patriot missiles and other materials from the US in 1993. (The Korea Times, "SIX PATRIOT MISSILE LAUNCHING VEHICLES ARRIVE IN TAIWAN," Taipei, 01/17/97) [Ed. note: See also "Taiwan Receives US Arms" in the January 15 Daily Report.]

III. Japan

1. Editorial Assesses Tensions on Korean Peninsula

An Asahi Shimbun editorial (A WAY TO SOFTEN THE TENSIONS IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA, 1/13/97) said that the DPRK's recent statement indicating its readiness to participate in the four-nation talks raises new hope for easing tensions on the Korean Peninsula in the wake of the DPRK submarine incursion incident. While the editorial viewed the statement as a result of balanced compromises among the US, the ROK, and the DPRK, the editorial also pointed out that the statement merely suggests that the situation is now back to what it was before the submarine incident and that there is no call for greater optimism about the prospects of achieving the four-party talks and the light-water reactor construction. The editorial called for Japanese diplomatic decisions that will contribute to the stability of the Korean Peninsula within the constraints of the Japanese Constitution, and proposed that the upcoming Japan-ROK prime ministerial meeting in late January be the first step in enhancing Japan's role of stabilizing the Korean Peninsula.

2. Japan's Policy Shift Toward ASEAN

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN TO SHIFT ITS POLICY TOWARD ASEAN: FROM ECONOMY TO POLITICS," Singapore, Evening Edition 1, 1/14/97) and the Nikkei Shimbun ("JAPAN TO EXPAND JAPAN-ASEAN PRIME MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE: JAPAN TO STRENGTHEN ITS TIES WITH ASEAN," Singapore, Evening Edition 1, 1/14/97) reported that Japan decided to shift its economy-oriented policy toward the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to a politics-oriented policy. According to the reports, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said in his speech in Singapore January 14, concluding his tour of five of the seven ASEAN member countries, that Japan-ASEAN ties should focus more on politics than on economy, and that relations between Japan, the US, and the PRC would have the most impact on peace and security in the region. Hashimoto also said that the world would be more impressed with ASEAN if it contributed more to the support of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The concrete frameworks for Japan-ASEAN ties that Hashimoto proposed include activation of Japan-ASEAN forums, more intimate political forums in the United Nations, and bilateral security forums. He also revealed his determination to establish various cultural cooperative relations and to tackle global problems including terrorism, environmental issues, and welfare issues.

3. Japan-Vietnam Relations

The Sankei Shimbun ("JAPANESE AND VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTERS AGREE ON TOP-RANKING DEFENSE TALKS," Hanoi, 1, 1/12/97, and "JAPANESE AND VIETNAMESE PRIME MINISTERS AGREE ON DETERRING PRC," Hanoi, 3, 1/12/97) reported that visiting Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Vietnamese Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet agreed January 12 that Japan and Vietnam will hold top-level defense meetings, along with enhancing bilateral economic cooperation. Hashimoto argued that peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region is necessary for Japan-ASEAN cooperation, and emphasized the importance of the US presence in the region and the PRC's participation in the international community. Kiet agreed that Japan is playing a major role in security in the region and welcomed Hashimoto's proposal for the establishment of an official defense dialogue.

4. Pro-DPRK Group Criticizes Japanese Diet Member

A Kyodo News article carried in the Daily Yomiuri ("KOREAN GROUPS RAP ETO REMARKS AS 'SHAMELESS'," 1, 1/15/97) reported that a pro-DPRK group in Japan on January 14 criticized Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) politician Takami Eto for his comments defending Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule in Korea. In his speech in Kyushu January 13, Eto questioned the legitimacy of calling the Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty an invasion. The General Association of Korean Residents in Japan criticized Eto by saying, "We cannot restrain our anger at shameless and unabashed remarks distorting and embellishing Japanese colonial rule in Korea." The article added that Eto resigned as Management and Coordination Agency director general on November 13, 1995, after claiming that Japan "did some good things" during its colonial rule over the peninsula.

5. Japan-PRC Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT CHINA IN SEPTEMBER: JAPAN-CHINA RELATIONS TO BE NORMALIZED," Beijing, 1, 1/16/97) reported that governmental sources on January 15 revealed that Japan and the PRC agreed that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and PRC President Jiang Zemin will exchange visits. Hashimoto will visit the PRC in September in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of normalization of Japan-PRC relations, and Jiang will visit Japan in 1998 in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Japan-PRC Peace Treaty. Agreement on the visits was reached during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC) in November, 1996. The visits aim to stabilize Japan-US-PRC relations over the next two years, and to improve Japan-PRC bilateral relations that have been strained of late by a joint declaration on Japan-US security alliance, Hashimoto's private visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, and the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands dispute. The report added that the PRC is also considering a visit of PRC Prime Minister Li Peng or a leader of similar status to Japan prior to Hashimoto's visit to the PRC, and that PRC Defense Minister Chi Jiang Hao may also visit Japan this year for a security dialogue.

6. Russian Apology for Sunken Tanker

The Daily Yomiuri ("WINDS DRIVE OIL SLICKS ONTO NOTO PENINSULA'S WEST COAST," 1, 1/15/97) reported that Russian Ambassador to Tokyo Alexander Panov apologized January 14 for the economic and psychological trauma to local residents caused by the oil spill from the Russian tanker Nakhodka. He also said during his meeting with Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda that the Russian would investigate the cause of the disaster and inform Japan of the result.

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. We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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<http://interactive5.wsj.com/edition/current/summaries/asia.htm>

<http://www.latimes.com/HOME/NEWS/>

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<http://interactive5.wsj.com/edition/current/summaries/asia.htm>

<http://www.latimes.com/HOME/NEWS/>

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