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I. United States

1. Afghanistan Reconstruction

Reuters (Elaine Monaghan, "U.S. envoy says Afghans seeking $22 billion over 10 years," Washington, 01/17/02) reported that Afghanistan's interim government is seeking US$22 billion over 10 years from international donors meeting in Japan next week. Charge d'Affaires Haron Amin said that his government had estimated needs of US$45 billion over 20 years but was asking for $22 billion for the first decade. He also said that Afghanistan was looking forward to a visit to Washington by its interim leader Hamid Karzai "in the near future." He gave no dates of when such a trip might occur. Amin's figure was still considerably higher than the US$15 billion projected in a joint study conducted by the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Program. "They are basing estimates on the whole notion of rhetoric versus delivery, based on past experience," Amin said, referring to the general principle that international donors typically promise more than they come up with in cash.

2. ROK Domestic Politics

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "S.KOREA OPPOSITION HEAD VOWS TOUGHER NORTH POLICY," Seoul, 01/17/02) and Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN OPPOSITION LEADER SAYS SCRAP 'SUNSHINE POLICY,'" reported that ROK opposition leader Lee Hoi-chang stated that, if elected, he would abandon President Kim Dae-Jung's "sunshine policy" toward the DPRK. Lee said he believed that the DPRK has not changed despite Kim's efforts and that he supported the tougher stance taken by US President George W. Bush. Lee explained, "The real change we want is the end of the threat of war on the Korean peninsula and moves toward peaceful co-existence." Lee has not yet declared himself a candidate for the forthcoming December presidential election. Kim's five-year term ends in February 2003 and he is barred by the constitution from seeking re-election.

3. Inter-Korean Railroad

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA RESUMES WORK ON INTER-KOREAN RAILWAY: PRESIDENT," 01/17/02) reported that President Kim Dae-Jung announced that the DPRK has resumed preparations for reconnecting a cross-border railway. Reconnecting the railway was agreed after a June 2000 summit between President Kim and the DPRK's supreme leader Kim Jong-Il. President Kim lamented the delays in re-building the railway, "The Chinese market has opened now. But we still cannot go to China by land because of failing to link the railway to the North." However, ROK Defense ministry spokesperson Jung Sung-Yup stated, "Since late last year, North Korean soldiers have begun showing up and repairing abandoned tents near the railway construction site." The moves were spotted by ROK soldiers on the DMZ border, but there has been no sign of construction work. The proposed routes would cut through the DMZ and relink the Seoul line with Pyongyang railway. The ROK, which began demining the area in September 2000, has completed its portion up to the southern DMZ. President Kim has said that he wants the railway to become the "Iron Silk Road" taking Korean exports across Russia to Europe.

4. ROK-PRC Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA DEFENDS REFUSAL TO ISSUE VISAS TO SOUTH KOREAN LAWMAKERS," 01/17/02) reported that the PRC defended its refusal to issue visas to four ROK legislators who had wanted to visit the country on a fact finding mission about ethnic Koreans living abroad. PRC Foreign ministry spokesperson Sun Yuxi stated, "Because the Chinese side has already informed the South Korean side of its position through diplomatic channels, the Chinese side maintains that at this stage there's no need to arrange the parliament members to come to China to listen to the opinions of the Chinese side again." Sun also commented that the PRC was concerned about past incidents in which ethnic Koreans hoping to find jobs in the ROK were deceived by illegal schemes such as people-smuggling rackets.

5. PRC-US Weapons Talks

The China Post (Chris Cockel, "MAINLAND DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON FOR TALKS ON ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN" Washington DC, 01/17/02) reported that a high-level delegation led by deputy director of the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office Zhou Mingwei arrived in Washington on Wednesday to discuss the issue of US arms sales to Taiwan. The delegation is set to meet with U.S. government officials at the Department of Defense, the White House and the State Department. In addition to discussing the issue of US arms sales to Taiwan, the talks in Washington are set to focus on the war against terrorism. Although no mention was made of Taiwan being on the agenda for discussion, Zhou stated that Taiwan is the core issue in US-PRC relations and cannot be avoided.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-US Military Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, "EXPERTS DIFFER ON NEED TO KEEP U.S. SEOUL BASE," 01/17/02) reported that former US congressman Stephen Solarz commented that moving the US military garrison in Yongsan to somewhere further south on the peninsula would not weaken the US ability to deter a DPRK attack. Solarz stated that it is the US military troops stationed north of Seoul that are crucial to US deterrence. Cho Seong- tae, a former ROK minister of National Defense disagreed and said that although long-term plans for moving the base should be prepared, they should not be implemented until the threat from DPRK is reduced and the two Koreas are ready to sign a peace agreement. Donald Gregg, a former US ambassador to the ROK, said that overall US DPRK strategy is changing from ground troops to high-technology. Gregg predicted that the move of the Yongsan base would become easier as the importance of the US Air Force bases at Osan in Gyeonggi province and Gunsan in North Jeolla province increases.

2. Inter-Korean Railroad

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "NORTH KOREA SHOWING SIGNS OF RESUMING RAILWAY CONSTRUNCTION," Seoul, 01/17/02) reported that the DPRK has been showing some signs of resuming the construction of the railway that would connect the two Koreas. A high ranking official from the ROK ministry of Defense stated, "The North is showing signs of repairing and extending barracks for its engineer troops around the regions designated for the construction of inter-Korean railway." During a luncheon meeting with 240 policemen, fire fighters and other civil servants, ROK President Kim Dae-jung commented, "It seems even North Korea is finally getting the hint, seeing the need to attract foreign tourists themselves for their upcoming Arirang festival slated from April to June this year."

3. ROK Aid To DPRK in 2001

Joongang Ilbo ("SOUTH KOREA SENT NEARLY $135MILLION -WORTH AID TO NORTH ON 2001," Seoul, 01/17/02) reported the ROK Unification Ministry announced Thursday that the ROK provided US$135.39 million worth of aid to DPRK in 2001, up 19% from a year ago. The figure broke down to $70.45 million from the government and $64.94 million from civic organizations. State-level aid included 200,000 metric tons of fertilizer, 1.5 million articles of clothing for children, 100,000 metric tons of corn and special chemicals for malaria prevention. A total of 384 representatives from various civic organization visited the DPRK to verify a fair distribution process. International aid recorded a 42% increase from last year to US$258.48 million. The report concluded, "The aid from international society was a great help in inducing the North to become more involved in outside affairs, attending international seminars and exchanging delegates with foreign countries."

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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