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I. United States

1. DPPK-ROK Relations

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA DEMANDS SOUTH'S 'URGENT DECISION,'" Seoul, 12/18/01) reported that the DPRK appealed to the ROK on Tuesday to make an "urgent decision" on reviving contacts that have been stalled for more than a month. The DPRK Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland issued a statement saying, "The situation demands an urgent decision of the South Korean authorities, who bear direct responsibility for the current state of North-South relations. The future course of North-South relations turns entirely on the South side's stance." The statement was broadcast a week after the ROK's Red Cross called on its DPRK counterpart to resume reunions of separated families, but made no reference to the ROK's request.

2. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "SOUTH KOREA RELEASES NUKES REPORT," Seoul, 12/18/01) reported the ROK's Defense Ministry issued a report on Tuesday concluding that although the DPRK has extracted enough plutonium to build one or two nuclear bombs, it will need "at least several years" to complete its first nuclear weapons. The ministry revealed its estimates of the DPRK's nuclear capabilities in a 225-page report on weapons of mass destruction, which was published Tuesday. In the report, the ROK Defense Ministry said that "available intelligence" led it to believe that the DPRK extracted 22 to 26 pounds of weapons-grade plutonium from its Soviet-designed nuclear reactors before shutting them down under the 1994 Agreed Framework. The report said that the DPRK also conducted at least 70 nuclear-related tests of high explosives between 1983 and 1993. It continued the tests until 1998, but has had difficulties acquiring components necessary to make the devices dependable. "North Korea may have a capability of putting together a crude nuclear explosion device, but its technology is believed to be still in a rudimentary stage. Even if it has manufactured an explosion device, it will be still low in dependability and it will take the North at least several years to turn the system into a weapon," the report concluded.

3. DPRK-Japan Relations

Reuters (George Nishiyama, "KOIZUMI SLAMS NORTH KOREA FOR SUSPENDING JAPANESE SEARCH," Tokyo, 12/18/01) reported that on Tuesday Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi responded to the DPRK's suspension of the investigation into missing Japanese nationals. Koizumi stated, "I think the action lacks sincerity. It is deplorable. Through various channels, we want to ask [the DPRK] to handle this abduction issue more seriously." Japan and the DPRK last held normalization talks in Beijing in October of last year.

4. ROK Presidential Elections

Reuters ("DAUGHTER OF SOUTH KOREAN STRONGMAN PARK EYES PRESIDENCY," Seoul, 12/18/01) reported that Park Geun-hee, the daughter of assassinated former ROK President Park Chung-hee, on Tuesday announced her candidacy for the presidential nomination of the opposition Grand National Party (GNP). Park said that her candidacy would make the country's political system "more productive" by changing the highly personalized way that ROK parties are run. "Put simply, the Korean people are very tired of political conflict between the parties," Park stated. Park, currently vice-president of the GNP, called for a competitive primary election to choose the GNP's presidential candidate and other leadership reforms.

5. PRC View on US ABM Withdrawal

Agence-France Press ("US SAYS DIALOGUE WITH CHINESE ON ABM WITHDRAWAL 'PRODUCTIVE,'" 12/18/01) reported that the US called talks between US and PRC officials over the US decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty "productive," emphasizing that they would continue. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher stated, "Both sides indicated they're ready to continue their dialogue on these issues in order to enhance our mutual understanding." The PRC during the talks reiterated its position on the ABM treaty, which it has regarded as a key component of arms control. PRC Defense Ministry officials stressed the importance of safeguarding international arms control and the disarmament system and the stability of global strategic stability in the current circumstances and hoped that the US will earnestly take into account the opinion of the majority of the world's nations.

6. Russia's View of US ABM Withdrawal

The New York Times (Michael Wines, "PUTIN SEES CONTINUED ALLIANCE DESPITE THE END OF ABM PACT," Moscow, 12/18/01) reported that in an interview published in the Financial Times of London on Monday, President Vladimir Putin cast the Bush administration's withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty as a difference between friends that should not, if handled properly, crush "the spirit of partnership and even alliance" between the two nations. Putin said that Russia would not expand its nuclear forces in response to the US withdrawal. Rather than retaliate diplomatically, he said, the Kremlin hopes to convince the US through negotiations that a successor to the treaty is essential to contain the threat of a global arms race. Russia's defense minister, Sergei B. Ivanov, said that the end of the treaty did not threaten Russia's security, but raised questions about how other nations would now treat their international treaty obligations. [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 18.]

7. Cross-Strait Relations

Reuters (Alice Hung, "TAIWAN SAYS CHINA'S ARMS BUILD-UP THREATENS SECURITY," Chiayi, Taiwan, 12/18/01) and Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN VOWS ARMS EQUALITY WITH CHINA AS F-16S ENTER SERVICE," 12/18/01) reported that Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian vowed to keep step with the PRC's military build-up as he commissioned the island's first wing of 70 US-made F-16 fighter jets. Another 76 fighter jets, based in eastern Hualien, will be brought into service next month. F-16s, along with Mirage 2000-5s and Indigenous Defense Fighters, form the main part of Taiwan's air force. Chen said that the warplanes would help preserve Taiwan's democracy. Chen stated, "In recent years, the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] air force has stepped up military modernization and joint exercises to raise its fighting power against Taiwan and make preparations for regional military conflict in the future. After 2005, its overall air combat capability will increase sharply. This poses a potential threat to security in the Asia-Pacific and severely endangers military stability across the (Taiwan) Strait." Chen also said, "We have no intention to engage in an arms race. We only hope to establish strategic stability in the Taiwan Strait."

8. PRC-Pakistan Relations

Deutsche Presse-Agentur ("JIANG, MUSHARRAF TO BUILD TIES, AFGHAN POLICY IN BEIJING TALKS," Beijing, 12/18/01) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday vowed to coordinate policy on Afghanistan and cement their countries' longstanding alliance during planned talks this week in Beijing. Musharraf stated, "In the wake of the September 11 incidents, we have been in regular contact with the Chinese leadership, over the phone and through emissaries, to consult each other and coordinate our position. It is gratifying to note that the Chinese government has fully supported Pakistan's position in the campaign against terrorism." President Jiang Zemin responded, "China hopes to continue to provide assistance to Pakistan, to work actively to promote China-Pakistan economic and trade cooperation." The PRC offered aid worth nearly 10 million yuan (1.2 million dollars) to Pakistan in September, and Jiang is expected to offer further aid during Musharraf's December 20-24 visit.

The Wall Street Journal (Charles Hutzler, "CHINA'S ECONOMIC, DIPLOMATIC AID TO PAKISTAN HAS PLAYED KEY ROLE IN U.S.'S WAR ON TERROR," Beijing, 12/18/01) printed an analytic article saying that the PRC is playing a crucial role in the war in Afghanistan by bolstering Pakistan with economic aid and diplomatic support. Acting as a go-between for the US and Pakistan is PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who has twice traveled to Islamabad since the attacks, once in late September and again late last month, to assess the Pakistani government's views. After each trip he

has delivered his assessment to US Embassy officials in Beijing. Bonnie Glaser, a consultant to the US government who this month conferred with PRC Foreign Ministry officials, stated, "The most important thing China has done is prop up [Pakistan President Pervez] Musharraf. The potential collapse of the regime is a very major concern for them." [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for December 18.]

9. PRC View of South Asian Tensions

Reuters ("CHINA URGES INDIA AND PAKISTAN TO KEEP THE PEACE," Beijing, 12/18/01) reported that the PRC called on India and Pakistan on Tuesday to exercise restraint and maintain regional stability as tensions run high over last week's suicide attack on the Indian parliament. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue expressed shock and sympathy to India over the incident. Zhang suggested that the attack would not affect a planned visit by Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf to the PRC due to start on Thursday. "Both sides are preparing for the important visit which we hope will be crowned with success," she said.

10. Japanese Role in Afghanistan

Reuters (Masayuki Kitano, "JAPAN KEEN TO HELP CLEAR LANDMINES IN AFGHANISTAN," Tokyo, 12/18/01) reported that Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani said on Tuesday that Japan wanted to help remove landmines from Afghanistan and that he would seek cooperation from Russia. The United Nations estimates that there are between five million and 10 million landmines in the country. Nakatani, who is reportedly hoping to visit Russia next month, said that he would ask Russian officials for information on where the landmines were placed. "The goal is to remove the 10 million landmines buried in Afghanistan and to achieve reconstruction. I want to discuss whether we can cooperate on this point," he said. Nakatani did not say exactly how Japan would contribute and did not touch upon the possibility of sending Japan's military to Afghanistan to clear landmines.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Officials Visit to ROK

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N.K. OFFICIALS OBSERVING NUKE PLANTS," Seoul, 12/18/01) reported that ROK officials said that a group of 20 DPRK government officials arrived in the ROK on Sunday for two weeks to observe the ROK's nuclear power plants. Kim Hui-mun, a minister-level administrator who serves as director of the DPRK's General Bureau for the Light-Water Reactor Project, is leading the visitors. In November, a group of DPRK officials toured nuclear power plants in Sweden and Spain. It is the first time that DPRK officials have visited Seoul since the inter-Korean ministerial talks in mid-September. The DPRK delegation includes officials responsible for the ongoing construction of two light-water reactors being built by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). The delegation will visit nuclear power plants in Uljin, North Kyongsang Province, and Gori, near Pusan. Both have the same type of light-water reactors as the ones to be provided to the DPRK, he said.

2. UN Aid for DPRK Disarmament

Joongang Ilbo (Kim In-koo, "UN TO AID DISARMAMENT IN N.K.," Seoul, 12/17/01) reported that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Monday that the United Nations

Development Program has recently begun educating DPRK officials on disarmament with financial support from the Swedish government. According to the report, the Swedish government donated US$237,000 to the UN program in order to arrange overseas study and inspection tours for officials from the DPRK Foreign Ministry's Disarmament and Peace Institute. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, a group specializing in the field of world disputes and arms control, would finance the project, the report added.

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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