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I. United States

1. US Missile Defense

Washington File ("BUSH ANNOUNCES DEPLOYMENT OF LIMITED MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM," Washington, 12/17/02) reported that President Bush announced that the US will begin deploying a limited system to defend the nation against ballistic missiles by 2004. In a statement issued by the White House, Bush said the deployment represents "another important step" in countering the 21st century threats facing the United States, its friends and allies. "While modest, these capabilities will add to America's security and serve as a starting point for improved and expanded capabilities later, as further progress is made in researching and developing missile defense technologies and in light of changes in the threat," he said. Bush said the United States will begin operating these initial

capabilities in 2004 and 2005, "and they will include ground-based interceptors, sea-based interceptors, additional Patriot (PAC-3) units, and sensors based on land, at sea, and in space."

2. Russia on US Missile Defense

Reuters ("RUSSIA EXPRESSES REGRET OVER US MISSILE DEFENSE," Moscow, 12/18/02) and the Associated Press (Burt Herman, "RUSSIA WARNS OF 'NEW SENSELESS ARMS RACE' AS WASHINGTON MOVES AHEAD WITH MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM," Moscow, 12/18/02) reported that the US' moves to build a missile defense system will destabilize the world and lead to a "new senseless arms race," Russia said Wednesday in a response to the US announcement this week that it will begin deploying a limited system in 2004. Russia has long criticized US efforts to build a missile defense system, made possible after US withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which expired in June, six months after US President George W. Bush announced the US would pull out of the 30-year old agreement. "Moscow with regret follows the activation of the attempt by the United States to create a so-called `global anti-missile defense.' Now, after taking a political decision to deploy in 2004 several strategic interceptors with support from space, the realization of these plans has entered a new destabilizing phase," the Foreign Ministry said in a two-page statement. There was little reaction to Tuesday's US announcement from other countries. Some critics in Britain expressed worries the country's support for the plan could make it a target - without enjoying the protection of the shield. State-controlled media in the PRC did not make an issue of it, and calls to the Foreign Ministry went unanswered Wednesday. Japan also had no reaction: Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said the decision was the US' and he had no comment, said Misako Kaji, a spokeswoman for the prime minister. Moscow said the US focus on developing missile defense could distract it from other important goals, such as the war on terror. "Consigning its principles to oblivion can lead only to the weakening of strategic stability, a new senseless arms race in the world, including the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and diverting resources to counter today's real challenges and threats, above all, international terrorism," the statement said. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer didn't respond directly to Russia's concerns but emphasized the relationship between the US and Russia now is "the best in modern times." Still, he noted there are sometimes disagreements that "have been handled through very patient, quiet diplomacy that has been effective."

3. PRC Human Rights

Reuters (Tamora Vidaillet, "US TO REINFORCE RIGHTS CONCERNS IN NORTHWEST CHINA," Beijing, 12/18/02) reported that US officials headed to the PRC's Muslim region of Xinjiang on Wednesday to underscore that Washington's listing of a regional group as a terrorist organization is not a blank cheque to suppress human rights. The US added the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) to its list of terror organizations this year, a move rights groups feared China would use to justify a long-running crackdown on dissent by ethnic Uighurs in the northwestern region. "It is our understanding that our decision on ETIM is being presented by some Chinese officials as a licence -- that the US has bought into the notion that Uighurs are terrorists," Lorne Craner, US assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour affairs, told Reuters late on Tuesday. "We want to dispel that notion," he said by telephone. After two days of talks with senior PRC officials on human rights and democracy issues in the capital Beijing, Craner said he would meet senior government officials from Xinjiang and Muslim religious leaders on Wednesday and Thursday. Uighurs campaigning abroad for a homeland in Xinjiang called East Turkestan have welcomed Craner's decision to visit the area, but some analysts see the trip as an exercise in damage control.

4. PRC UN Human Rights Investigation

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "US ENVOY: CHINA AGREES TO INVITE UN TORTURE, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INSPECTORS," Beijing, 12/18/02) and the Agence Washington Post (Philip P. Pan, "CHINA AGAIN AGREES TO LET U.N. INVESTIGATE RIGHTS ALLEGATIONS," Beijing, 12/18/02) reported that the PRC has agreed to invite UN investigators into the country to examine allegations that it jails people without due process, restricts freedom of religion and allows torture in its prisons, a senior US official said today. The PRC government has issued similar invitations before, only to back off by insisting on restrictions that UN investigators found unacceptable. But Assistant Secretary of State Lorne Craner, the State Department's top human rights official, said PRC officials promised after two days of talks that they would set no conditions in advance of the UN visits this time. "They made a point of it," he said. "I'm taking their word on this. We went over it and over it." Craner said the unconditional invitations were the most significant result of this week's human rights talks between the US and the PRC.

5. Japan-Russia on DPRK Nuclear Resolution

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA, JAPAN AGREE TO WORK TOWARD PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Tokyo, 12/18/02) reported that the foreign ministers of Japan and Russia expressed concern about the DPRK's nuclear weapons program Wednesday and agreed to work toward a peaceful resolution of the issue, a Japanese foreign ministry official said. Yoriko Kawaguchi and her Russian counterpart, Igor Ivanov, discussed Pyongyang's recently disclosed program to develop nuclear weapons at a meeting in Tokyo, the official said on condition of anonymity. Ivanov was in Tokyo for a three-day visit to plan a Jan. 9 summit meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Japan hopes Russia will use its close relationship with the DPRK to persuade them to abandon their nuclear ambitions, the official said.

6. DPRK Missile Shipment

The Associated Press (Ahmed Al-Haj, "NORTH KOREAN CAPTAIN OF MISSILE-CARRYING SHIP CONDEMNS SPANISH-AMERICAN 'PIRACY,'" Al-Mukalla, 12/17/02) reported that the DPRK captain of a ship that was seized while transporting Scud missiles accused the US on Tuesday of damaging his vessel and "piracy." Kang Chol Ryong, the captain of the Singapore-registered Pan Hope, denied that he had hidden the Yemeni-bound missiles under sacks of cement, and said he had rebuffed the Spanish Navy's order to stop because it was "dishonorable." Captain Ryong spoke to reporters in this eastern Yemeni port an hour before his ship sailed away from Yemen, having unloaded its cargo of 15 Scud missiles and other military equipment. Ryong demanded an apology from Washington on Tuesday, adding "if the United States refuses, they will be condemned more strongly by the world's peace-loving people." When a Spanish warship intercepted Pan Hope, it signaled that it should halt. But the Pan Hope continued sailing until the warship fired across its bows. Ryong said he flouted the initial order to stop because it was "dishonorable as we were sailing legally in the open sea." Spanish sharpshooters then fired at the Pan Hope's cables, breaking them so that a helicopter could hover over the ship and allow Marines to rappel down to its deck. "Five wire ropes, other materials and shackles were destroyed. Other rooms were very seriously damaged," Ryong said. "I never tried to hide the missiles," he added. "They were regularly stored under cover plates. It is not good to place them in the open." The captain said 22 Spanish troops landed on the ship. "They bound and tied 18 of our sailors ... After two days, our 18 Korean sailors were transferred to an American warship, while some soldiers were occupying our ship, searching (our) money and private things like cigarettes and even our ball-point pens," Ryong said. Ryong said a fleet of 49 warships, including an

aircraft carrier, converged on his vessel. "I have 20 years experience of sailing, but I have never seen such a big deployment for such a small ship. This is clearly a very shameful act of piracy."

7. Japan DPRK Abduction Issue

The Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPANESE ABDUCTION VICTIMS MEET TO DISCUSS THEIR FATE, NORTH KOREA," Niigata, 12/18/02) reported that for the first time since their homecoming in October, five Japanese abducted decades ago by DPRK agents met to discuss their future Wednesday on the first day of a three-day reunion. The five have not said whether they wish to stay in Japan or return to the DPRK apparently out of concern for children they left behind there. And it's not clear how much control they have over their own fate. On Wednesday, the five abductees arrived at a hotel in this city 255 kilometers (160 miles) northwest of Tokyo to discuss their plans in a government-organized meeting. Lounging on sofas, the five, all in their 40s, chatted over tea and cake about the hometowns they have been visiting for the first time since they were abducted in 1978. All five wore lapel pins bearing the DPRK flag, which they also donned when they first returned to Japan. Reporters and photographers were briefly allowed in the room before the five were left alone. They later met with special Cabinet representative Kyoko Nakayama to discuss a government financial assistance program that would provide them with living expenses. The group was to meet Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe on Thursday. Abe has said the government won't move ahead with talks on normalizing relations with the DPRK until the safety of the five abductees' children has been guaranteed.

8. DPRK-US War Speculation

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "POSSIBLE HIGH CASUALTIES MUTES WAR TALK VERSUS NORTH KOREA," Washington, 12/18/02) reported that President George W. Bush is less than eager to pick a fight with the DPRK over its nuclear weapons program, and not only because he wants to deal with Iraq first. Bush also may have been influenced in his thinking on North Korea by a conversation he had with ROK President Kim Dae-jung last February. According to sources familiar with their conversation, Bush was taken aback by Kim's account of the horrendous death and destruction that would result from another Korean War. Kim reportedly cited 1994 estimates by the US Joint Chiefs of Staff as the basis for his assessment. The potential American dead in such a conflict would not be limited to the 37,000 US servicemen in the ROK but also would include the tens of thousands of other Americans, most of whom live in the Seoul area, Bush was told. Seoul sits within easy range of DPRK artillery deployed just across the Demilitarized Zone. War undoubtedly also would kill or displace hundreds of thousands from both sides, as did the first Korean War in 1950-53. Based on Kim's assessment, the sources said, Bush decided to include in his public statements on his subsequent visit to Seoul an assurance to the DPRK that the US has no intention of invading. Bush and top aides have been repeating that statement since the DPRK's disclosure that it is developing a uranium-based bomb and its subsequent announcement that it plans to revive a plutonium-producing nuclear reactor that has been idled under a 1994 US-North Korean agreement. "The United States has no plans to attack North Korea," Secretary of State Colin Powell said Monday, repeating almost verbatim what Bush had said on November 15.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Defectors via the Phillippines

Joongang Ilbo ("20 DEFECTORS IN SOUTH AFTER LEAVING CHINA," Seoul, 12/17/02) reported that twenty North Korean defectors arrived at Incheon International Airport Monday. The group arrived in Seoul after traveling from PRC to the Philippines. The DPRK defectors had sought asylum at several ROK diplomatic facilities and a German school in Beijing in separate asylum bids. Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has allowed DPRK asylum-seekers to transit the country on a regular basis since the wave of defectors seeking asylum at diplomatic missions in PRC began. Although it violates a PRC treaty with DPRK, PRC has so far allowed 128 DPRK defectors to leave PRC for ROK via the Philippines.

2. IAEA Inspection to DPRK Nuclear Facilities

Joongang Ilbo ("IAEA CONTINUTES TO URGE NUCLEAR INSPECTIONS," Seoul, 12/17/02) reported that ROK on Sunday decided to form an immediate alliance with the international nuclear watchdog in line with DPRK's announcement to restart its frozen nuclear activities. The decision was reached in Vienna where headquarters for International Atomic Energy Agency is headquartered. The IAEA, after going through negotiation with ROK's side reportedly forwarded a letter to DPRK that calls to abide by Safeguards Agreement of nuclear and to hold experts' meeting again. Report has it IAEA Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei has already discussed following measure with three main allies: ROK, US and Japan. IAEA has already warned it would take the case to UN Security Council if DPRK tries to turn off surveillance cameras and other monitoring equipment placed within DPRK's nuclear plants.

3. Inter Korean Red Cross Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH PROPOSES NEW YEAR'S DAY REUNION," Seoul, 12/17/02) reported that ROK and DPRK Red Cross officials started working-level talks Monday to discuss the details of setting up a permanent center for reunions of separated family members, regularization of family reunions and confirming the whereabouts of missing people from both sides. In a key-note address, Lee Byung-woong, chief of a three-member delegation from ROK, proposed holding another round of visits of 100 separated family members each from ROK and DPRK before or after the Lunar New Year's Day, which falls on Feb. 1 next year. Lee also suggested building a condominium as a reunion center three stories in height and able to accommodate 1,000 people at once in Jopo town, Onjeong-ri, which is near Mount Geumgang. Other suggestions from DPRK included exchange of data on missing soldiers and civilians during the Korean War (1950-53), which would extend the number of eligible people for future family reunion.

4. No Aid with Political Ruse

Chosun Ilbo (Kwon Kyung-bo, "NK SAYS US AID POLITICALLY TAINTED," Seoul, 12/17/02) reported that DPRK's Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday, through the country's Central News Agency, that US and its followers were trying to use humanitarian assistance for political means. He said that although his government welcomed the assistance of international organizations and countries "without other plans on their minds," it would never accept assistance with political conditions. The spokesman said US was hindering international humanitarian assistance from reaching North Korea by "spreading rumors that the government is keeping the foreign food aid for just the army, and that the government engages in drug trafficking." "Japan and other US followers are also pressuring us by connecting humanitarian assistance with nuclear development and normalization issues," he said.

5. Unable to ship Rice to DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Park Don-ky, "UNION REFUSES TO LOAD NK RICE AID," Seoul, 12/17/02) reported that some 5,100 tons of rice aid for DPRK, destined to be loaded onto the 'Eastern Frontier' cargo ship, were unable to leave for their final destination on Monday when members of the Gyeongin Marine Transportation Union refused to be involved in the process, in line with a December 13 statement. Incheon Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Office said the rice will be sent from Gunsan in Jeonbuk Province. Currently rice mills in Seocheon, Chungnam Province are storing another 5,100 tons of government bought rice planned to be sent to DPRK as humanitarian assistance. Choi Man-je, a director of the union said he had received support calls nationwide and as long as there was the possibility that the assistance sent in good faith would be returned as "bombs and missiles," the union will refuse cooperation in assistance. Gunsan Marine Transportation Union plans to load the rice as soon as the 'Eastern Frontier' reaches Gunsan.

III. Can-Kor E-Clipping

1. CanKor #110

"Holiday in North Korea? You must be joking!" That is the opening line on the website of Koryo Tours, a travel agency specializing in trips to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Yet holidays in North Korea are just what Chung Ju-yung had in mind in 1998, when he visited the DPRK for the first time. The late Hyundai Chairman crossed the Panmunjom border from South to North, accompanied by a herd of 1,501 cattle. Born in Thongchon, to the north of Kumgang Mountain, Chung clearly saw the region's potential. He founded Hyundai-Asan, an "inter-Korean cooperative business arm" of his corporation, and negotiated numerous joint ventures, including exclusive right to develop tourism for 30 years in an area spanning 4,000 square kilometres. Prohibitive user fees and difficult access resulted in a steady decline in both visitors and income. Tourists were ferried to Kumgang by cruise ship, and then confined to hotels, casinos and spas within a walled compound. On the verge of bankruptcy, Hyundai-Asan received a transfusion of funds from the ROK government, which subsidized expenses for students, seniors and others. The number of South Korean visitors rose steadily, reaching the 500,000-mark this year. De-mining operations across the demilitarized zone have recently been completed, making way for an overland route that will greatly improve access, and -- it is hoped -- attract tourists in even greater numbers. On November 23rd, the DPRK issued a decree designating the area as a special tourist zone, permitting "free investment" by corporate bodies, individuals and economic organizations. This week's edition of CanKor is an extended FOCUS section documenting efforts to attract tourists, the effects on the South Korean tourist industry, and the experience of vacationing in one of the least likely spots in the world.

For back issues: http://www.cankor.ca

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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