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I. United States

1. Commentary on US-DPRK Relations

Washington Post published an opinion article by James P. Rubin, former assistant secretary of state under President Clinton and currently teaching US foreign policy at the London School of Economics, ("NO TIME TO DELAY ON NORTH KOREA," 5/18/01) which said that US President George W. Bush is right to focus world attention on new threats we all face from the spread of missiles and nuclear weapons, but his administration's approach to DPRK missiles raises some troubling questions. Rubin noted that the problem is that the Bush administration "doesn't seem to accept that international diplomacy is crucial to success in combating this new danger. A serious nonproliferation policy requires far more than developing defenses against ballistic missiles. The other elements must include persuading friends and allies not to provide the raw materials for countries seeking dangerous new weapons; inducing other countries not to pursue weapons of mass destruction; and if all else fails, gaining international support for stiffer measures such as sanctions

or the use of force." Rubin added that the most effective defense against potential DPRK missiles is to persuade it to give them up. Intelligence estimates indicate that the DPRK is the only new country that could have the potential in the next five years or so to deliver a ballistic missile against the US, yet it is not the US but top European diplomats who are leading the effort to deal with this threat. Rubin also wrote that it is not enough to hint that talks with the DPRK will resume at some point. He also said that it was fine that Bush said the DPRK couldn't be trusted but noted that is why any agreement must have adequate verification provisions. So, Rubin concluded, "by delaying diplomatic solutions to the missile problem, the administration is harming our credibility and allowing Europeans to lead what should be an American task in East Asia. If the Bush administration wants the rest of the world to take the threat of missile proliferation seriously, it must show its seriousness by recognizing that international diplomacy is critical to this effort. A good-faith effort to achieve an agreement with North Korea would be a good place to start." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 18, 2001.]

2. US Strategy in Asia

Business Week- Asia Edition (Brian Bremner and Chester Dawson in Tokyo; Stan Crock in Washington; Manjeet Kripalani in Bombay; Moon Ihlwan in Seoul; Dexter Roberts in Taipei and Beijing; Paul Starobin in Moscow; and Pete Engardio in New York, "ASIA: THE NEW U.S. STRATEGY," 5/28/01) reported that US President George W. Bush's plan to redraw the Asian region's security map have caused leaders in the PRC and defense analysts around the Pacific Rim to view the US action as the coordination of a region-wide effort to check the growing PRC military might. The article noted that no one argues that the Bush Administration's diplomatic blitz in Asia and Europe on missile defense is the opening act of a new cold war, likening it to its campaign to contain the Soviet Union after World War II. In essence, the US hopes to redraw the map of Asia where US allies, not the PRC, is at the center. It's a sharp contrast to US Asian policy of the past 15 years where the strategic focus was still on Europe and the collapsing Soviet Union. The US is starting to see the PRC differently because of last year's review of the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait and other US military studies which suggest that the PRC is progressing in its nuclear weapons development and military modernization. Paul Dibb, an influential Australian defense analyst said of the Bush strategy, "It's a classic power game. China is emerging as the natural regional leader, and it knows it. And there is only one country capable of stopping it. That's what this is all about." The big questions are whether the US allies will go along and whether the US is only raising the risk of conflict by trying to create a new Asian order. Japanese planners worry that shipping lanes in the Taiwan Strait are at risk. The Philippines, Singapore, and Indonesia fret that it's only a matter of time before the PRC presses its claims more aggressively over the entire South China Sea. Bush's strategic realignment also dovetails with the new thinking in Japan and India, but the ROK is ambivalent. However, all the countries also have an economic stake in the future of the PRC and such dual interests will keep tugging at nations across Asia. And even in Taiwan who most people think would embrace the new US toughness, it sees the US diplomatic offensive as a mixed blessing. They do not want to raise risks of a devastating conflict with the PRC and there are all those business deals to pursue with the PRC. The US also finds a tough audience in Russia who wants to keep good relations with the PRC because it is Russia's top arms customer. As these currents of doubt surface, the PRC may feel emboldened to counter the US diplomatic offensive. The Bush team hopes to convince the PRC that it has nothing to fear from its moves, including missile defense, but the PRC is not being convinced. The PRC fears the US intends to neutralize its 20-some intercontinental ballistic missiles, which are capable of hitting the US West Coast. In response, the PRC has said its chief option would be to sharply increase production of ICBMs to overwhelm the US shield. Thus, nonproliferation will go out the window. Yan Xuetong, a foreign policy analyst at Beijing's Tsinghua University, said, "If the U.S. is the only military superpower on earth and wants to

proliferate, what [else] can China do?" The Bush team has sketched the outlines of a new Asian policy that is as bold as it is provocative and to men like Armitage and Wolfowitz, Asia has been too long ignored by the US on the security front. To many Asian leaders who credit US protection for the economic boom that buoyed the region in the 1970s and 1980s, the idea of strengthening the US umbrella is appealing. However, when they assess the ramifications to their globalized economies - and to their relations with their newly powerful neighbor - they could well decide that it's best to keep America at arm's length. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 18, 2001.]

3. US Military View of PRC

US Department of State's Office of International Information Programs, ("BLAIR: U.S. HOPES CHINA WILL FOLLOW INTERNATIONAL RULES," 5/17/01) reported that Admiral Dennis C. Blair, the head of the US Pacific Command spoke in a May 16 press roundtable in Bangkok, Thailand, said the key question for the Asia-Pacific region is whether or not the PRC will develop its power and influence "in a cooperative way that follows international rules." Blair reflected on recent actions by the PRC military, including the challenge to an Australian naval group in the Taiwan Strait, the interception of and collision with a Navy EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft in international airspace off Hainan Island, and the PRC's controversial territorial claims in the region. Blair asked, "To what extent does China follow those rules that we all agreed on? Or to what extent, when it has military power that it can bring to bear, is it going to set up its own rules?" Noting that the PRC ratified the United Nations Law of the Sea Treaty in 1996, Blair said it was very important that the PRC come to agreement on a code of conduct on activities in the South China Sea. He also said it was important to allow economic development to take place in the region rather than "making it a region where gun boats clash and airplanes clash and there are fishing wars." Reflecting on relations between the PRC and the US, Blair observed the relationship "has both cooperative and confrontational aspects." He said the US needs to "work toward emphasizing cooperation as well as drawing the lines where we feel we have to." Blair added that the bilateral relationship is more like "a movie, not a single still shot." He said that the PRC is considering taking part in regional security exercises, "but it would be new for them." Blair said the PRC had been invited by both Thailand and the US to send an observer team to this year's Cobra Gold exercise, which had observer teams from nine nations. The PRC had replied that they were looking forward to coming in 2002, but that was before the spy-plane collision.

Reuters ("U.S. WANTS TO INVOLVE CHINA IN BOOSTING ASIA SECURITY," Singapore, 5/18/01) and Agence France Presse ("US TELLS CHINA TO PLAY BY THE RULES," Singapore, 5/18/01) reported that Admiral Dennis Cutler Blair, Commander in Chief of the US Pacific Command, told reporters in Singapore Friday that the US is keen to involve the PRC in its efforts to boost security in Asia. Blair said that Sino-US military contacts, though reduced since the spy plane incident, had not been severed. He said, "We hope, when the crisis is over and the plane is returned, we return to a situation in which we do have contact with PLA (People's Liberation Army)." Regarding missile defense, he said it rose in part because of the build up of missiles by PRC capable of reaching Taiwan. Blair said, "Missiles which potentially range the United States bring us in the United States to think about national missile defense so that our citizens are not threatened by a country which may not be deterable in the traditional sense. China is a mixed picture right now militarily ... I think the Peoples' Liberation Army has a range of missions from safeguarding its own borders, and certainly its been given the job of, if it's told to, of dealing with Taiwan by force." Blair said that while the US supported the One China policy, reunification with Taiwan had to be achieved peacefully.

4. Lee Kuan Yew's View of PRC

The Washington Times (Arnaud de Borchgrave, "LEE SEES CHINA AS UNSTOPPABLE," Singapore, 5/18/01) reported that Singapore's senior statesman Lee Kuan Yew said in an interview Friday that the PRC is going to become a major player in the world and there is nothing the US can do to prevent it. Lee said the biggest threats to global stability will be "the challenges to the status quo from China and India" while the "tinderbox" is Islamist extremism coupled with "a Muslim nuclear weapon that will travel." He added that "there is nothing" Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong have done "that China can't do better in the years to come." Lee continued, "You cannot stop [the Chinese]. Shanghai is now a city of almost 15 million and still streaming in, as well as into Shenzhen. Its new Silicon Valley is the cream of the crop. ... Take your Ivy League and West Coast universities and multiply by five and then imagine that concentrated in two cities. No Chinese leader can afford to work or plan on the basis of [war with the United States]." However, Lee said, the PRC indeed would go to war if Taiwan opted for a unilateral declaration of independence. If the US decided to draw a line across the Taiwan Straits, Lee said, no East Asian nation believes it can be "held for very long." Lee said, "It is clear China wants to avoid conflict and go into the [World Trade Organization]. Given their size, wealth and competence, it is quite logical that they will want a bigger say in how the neighborhood is run. We are gradually moving toward a very different [security] system, in which China becomes the largest player on this side of the Pacific. Not suddenly, but over two or three decades." He also said that the PRC genuinely wants dialogue and negotiations with Taiwan but it was Taiwan's governing party that stood in the way. Taiwanese leader Chen Shui-bian, Lee said, "does not accept that talks with Beijing should be about how to reunite the mainland and Taiwan, even though the US and all other permanent members of the UN Security Council, and all countries in the UN, except 20, recognize one China." However, Lee said, the Taiwanese would opt for independence "if they could do so [with impunity]. ... For all intents and purposes, they have been independent since the Japanese left in 1945." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 18, 2001.]

5. Cross-Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHEN SHUI-BIAN EYES CHINA SUMMIT, BEIJING SAYS NO," Taipei, 5/18/01) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said in a video-taped address, released on Friday to mark his first year in office, that he hoped to attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Shanghai in October and hold talks with PRC president Jiang Zemin. However, the PRC rejected the idea. Chen also said he would form a coalition government at home after year-end parliamentary elections, but he declined to say who he wanted to be part of it. Chen offered to hold talks with Jiang on a range of issues, including lifting a decades-old ban on direct trade and transport links. Chen said Taiwan was "willing to talk about anything, anytime, anywhere with the opposite side of the (Taiwan) Strait under the principle of 'democracy, equality and peace'." However, PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, speaking during a state visit to Sri Lanka, said Taiwan had to follow agreed procedure which in the past had limited the island's APEC representation to a cabinet minister or business leader. Tang said, "On the question of how Taiwan participates in APEC, there is already a Memorandum of Understanding. It is not a question of anyone can attend. Taiwan must observe this Memorandum of Understanding. For Chen Shui-bian, I think he has to accept the one China principle. If he accepts the one China principle that would be a positive step." Political analysts predicted that the PRC would be angered by Chen's US stopovers, but unlikely to take any drastic measures against the island.

6. PRC-India Talks

Baltimore Sun ("INDIA TELLS CHINA WHAT IT LIKES ABOUT U.S. DEFENSE PLAN," New Delhi, 5/18/01) reported that and Indian Foreign Ministry official said India briefed a senior member of the PRC Communist Party on May 17 about its largely positive response to the new vision of nuclear disarmament proposed by the US. India raised eyebrows at home and abroad by supporting the thrust of US President George W. Bush's plan, which includes a missile defense system strongly opposed by the PRC. India said the new proposals could reduce the shadow of nuclear terror but stopped short of openly endorsing the missile defense system, which critics say could trigger a new arms race. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 18, 2001.]

7. Japan's Role in Asia

Reuter ("JAPAN'S ROLE IN EAST ASIA WANING, CLAIMS WHITE PAPER," Tokyo, 5/18/01) reported that Japan's trade ministry said in its annual white paper released on Friday that Japan's role as a leader of industry in East Asia is waning as the PRC's economic growth boosts its competitive power in the region. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) said in the paper, "Up to now, Japan was at the top of a system where economies were categorized by the extent of industrial development. But that is changing with the recent emergence of China…which is not only improving productivity and expanding the volume of exports, but is also raising its international competitiveness in industries ranging from labor-intensive textiles to technology-related ones such as machinery." A METI official said the PRC rise, in fact, should not be perceived as a threat, but as an engine for the region's growth as it spurs healthy competition and leads to positive dynamic changes for industry and trade. He said, "China's emergence will increase competition within East Asia, but I believe the region will benefit from it."

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK on Talks with US

The Korea Herald (Hwang Jang-jin, "RESUMPTION OF U.S.-N.K. TALKS WILL DEPEND ON U.S. STANCE ," Seoul, 05/18/01) reported that Ri Yong-ho, councilor in charge of confidence building measures at the DPRK's Foreign Ministry, said in Hanoi Thursday that the reopening of dialogue between his country and the US will depend entirely on the US' attitude. Ri said, "Washington's hard-line position has hindered the negotiations. We will decide when to restart talks after watching the United States' attitude." Ri currently heads the DPRK delegation to senior officials' meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Regional Forum (ARF), which opened its two-day run in Vietnam. Ri also said that he is still skeptical about whether the US genuinely wants to resume talks.

Joongang Ilbo ("2 KOREAS' OFFICIALS MEET OVER DINNER," Seoul, 05/18/01) reported that representatives of the DPRK and ROK held an unofficial dinner meeting on May 16 on the eve of a gathering of senior officials of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Hanoi, Vietnam. Choi Young-jin, ROK deputy foreign minister for policy planning and international organizations, spoke with Ri Young-ho, a DPRK Foreign Ministry official. Ri told the press, "The attitude of the United States is so hard-line that it obstructs inter-Korean dialogue. The timing of the dialogue will be decided after watching the attitude of the United States."

2. ROK-US Relations

The Korea Herald (Hwang Jang-jin, "U.S., S. KOREA PUSH EXCHANGE VISITS OF DEFENSE

MINISTERS," Seoul, 05/18/01) reported that an ROK government official said Thursday that US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld will visit the ROK as early as July to discuss issues of mutual concern, including the new US defense policy. the official said, "The two sides have agreed to exchange visits of defense ministers." He added that ahead of Rumsfeld's visit, ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-shin will go to the US for talks with Rumsfeld later next month. ROK officials said the successive talks between the ROK and US defense chiefs will focus on new US defense policy, including its missile defense plan, and the status of the 37,000 US troops stationed in the ROK. The new US defense policy immediately raised speculation about a possible reduction of US troops in the ROK. However, ROK officials expect no drastic change in the US policy on forces in the ROK anytime soon. The same source said the US review of a new defense policy will likely be completed by the time Kim and Rumsfeld hold talks in Washington. Analysts said that during talks with Kim, Rumsfeld is also expected to seek support from the ROK for the controversial missile defense system.

3. DPRK on Keumgang Tourism

Chosun Ilbo (Yoon Jong-ho, "NK BLAMES US FOR KEUMGANG MOUNTAIN TOURISM FAILURE," 05/17/01) reported that Radio Pyongyang claimed Thursday that the US should take responsibility if the Mount Keumgang tourism project is suspended. Citing press reports from the ROK, the US and Japan said that US officials, including USFK commander Thomas Schwarz, had said that money earned from the project was being used for military purposes. The radio said that the US, which did not want reconciliation between the DPRK and ROK, was not in favor of the Keumgang project and so should take responsibility for any disruptions.

4. DPRK on Missile Issue

Joongang Ilbo (Ahn Sung-gyu, "IF NO COMPENSATION, NO MISSILE- FREEZE, EITHER, WARNS N.K.," Seoul, 05/17/01) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday claimed that if the US failed to compensate its nation for the loss from the delayed construction of two light water reactor, it would have to resort to reviving the old graphite reactor. The DPRK maintains it has upheld its part of the agreement, but Washington has said there are verification issues. The DPRK sent out similar warnings repeatedly during past few months but did not materialize them into actions so far. One observer in the ROK said, "I believe this is precisely the North's tactic to brace itself for the upcoming resumption of dialogue with the US. The year 2003 which was mentioned in Geneva Agreement process was not a legal date but a political target date."

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
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Monash Asia 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

Robert Brown: 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

Yunxia Cao: yule111@sina.com
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

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

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.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