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I. United States

1. PRC Defense Minister's ROK Visit

The Associated Press (Sang-hun Choe, "BEIJING EYES BOOST TO S. KOREA TIES," Seoul, 1/19/00) and Reuters ("CHINESE DEFENCE MINISTER ARRIVES IN S.KOREA," Seoul, 1/19/00) reported that PRC Defense Minister Chi Haotian said Wednesday during a meeting with ROK President Kim Dae-jung that the PRC will strengthen ties with the ROK to help ease tension on the Korean Peninsula. Kim's spokesman quoted Chi as saying, "China believes that if the two countries improve their partnership through sustained cooperation, it will not only help both countries but contribute to peace in Asia and the world." Kim praised the PRC's role in reducing the threat of war between the DPRK and the ROK. Kim said, "we believe China has played an enormous role behind the scenes in easing tensions on the peninsula, allowing the two Koreas to reduce the threat of war and expand exchanges between them." Kim told Chi, "we expect to increase cooperation and exchanges (with

the PRC) in the fields of economics, culture and military. In particular, we hope our two nations continue cooperating in maintaining peace and stability in Northeast Asia." Lieutenant Colonel Kim Bong-hak, spokesman at the ROK Ministry of National Defense, said, "we hope Chi's visit will boost South Korea-China defense and security relations." The ROK Defense Ministry said that Chi's visits to ROK military installations on January 19 and 20 will be closed to the media "due to China's close relationship with another country"

2. PRC-Russian Talks

Agence France Presse ("RUSSIAN LEADER SEALS STRATEGIC TIES WITH CHINESE DEFENSE MINISTER," Moscow, 1/19/00) reported that Russia and the PRC said they had cemented ties on January 18 in a 40-minute strategic negotiations meeting between acting Russian President Vladimir Putin and PRC Defense Minister Chi Haotian in Moscow. Russian foreign policy advisory Sergei Prikhodko said, "all questions which are beneficial to China-Russia relations were discussed. The strategic partnership between Russia and China is firmly heading into the 21st century." Prikhodko added that the new president of Russia, to be elected on March 26, would make a state visit to the PRC one of his first missions. Prikhodko also said that the PRC delegation reasserted its support of Russia's military campaign in Chechnya. In brief opening comments, Putin told Chi that Russia considers the PRC one of its most important allies. Putin stated, "the chairman of China and president Yeltsin did a lot to restore cooperation between China and Russia. We have reached a very good level of economic, cultural, border and military-technological cooperation." The talks were also attended by Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev, Russian Security Council chairman Sergei Ivanov, and Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin. Prikhodko said that the Russian defense minister has been invited to the PRC, but no date for a visit has been set.

3. PRC View of US Missile Defense

The Los Angeles Times (Jim Mann, "CHINA SNARLS AGAIN AT 'PAPER TIGER'," Beijing, 1/19/00) reported that last week, Sha Zukang, the PRC's top disarmament official, in an interview discussed US plans to build a missile- defense system. Sha stated, "we don't believe it can work. Of course, you can put much money into it, and we know the United States is a very rich country. Once you have got the shield, others will develop a spear strong enough to penetrate it.... Using Mao's words, it's a paper tiger--fierce enough to frighten away cowards only. My request to the American administration is, 'Hands off Asia.'" Chu Shulong of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations observed that if there were a conflict, the PRC "may have more than 500 missiles" to use against Taiwan or US military forces in the Western Pacific. Chu also said, "there's no problem for China to increase [its arsenal] by 100 missiles a year, even with today's budget constraints. These [missiles] are cheap to produce.... I don't suggest the Chinese military is going to compete with the U.S. military. But the People's Liberation Army can concentrate its forces in a small area, like the Taiwan Straits. The United States has to operate globally. You can't send all 13 of your aircraft carriers to this region." However, Huang Renwei of Shanghai's Center for International Studies, said, "the mainland does not want to have a war over Taiwan."

4. US Missile Defense Test

The New York Times (Elizabeth Becker, "MISSILE IS UNABLE TO HIT TARGET IN PENTAGON TEST," 1/19/00), The Los Angeles Times (Paul Richter, "INTERCEPTOR MISSES TARGET IN MISSILE SHIELD TEST DEFENSE," Washington, 1/19/00) and The Washington Post (Roberto Suro, "MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM FAILS TEST," Washington, 1/19/00) reported that the US Defense

Department announced on January 18 that a missile fired from the Marshall Islands in the Pacific failed to hit a mock warhead fired earlier thousands of miles away from a California air base. It was the first time the US Defense Department had tested a fully integrated system of radars and sensors intended to guide the missile as it sped into space in search of the target. The US Defense Department needs to successfully conduct one test before meeting its own minimum standard for advising the president that the technology was feasible for deploying the system in 2005. The military will have one more chance in late April or early May to test the system. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Lehner of the Air Force, spokesman for the US Defense Department's Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, said, "we probably won't have any information telling us why we failed for at least 48 hours. There are a lot of people involved -- we don't even know how far off we were." Tom Z. Collina, director of the arms control and international security program for the Union of Concerned Scientists, said, "this is yet another indication that the president would be ill-advised to pursue deployment of this system this summer. I'm surprised the test failed. There were so many backup systems. The test was so controlled that it is surprising that under those conditions they still failed." The launch also tested critical elements of a defense shield, including space-based sensors, ground-based radar and the system's command centers. [Ed. note: All three articles were included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 19, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. PRC Defense Minister's Visit to ROK

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "CHINESE DEFENSE MINISTER'S SEOUL VISIT TO LEAD TO GROUNDBREAKING EXCHANGES," Seoul, 01/20/00) reported that analysts said that PRC Defense Minister Chi Haotian's visit to the ROK would greatly accelerate the pace of military cooperation and exchanges between the two nations. Kim Tae-ho, director of research cooperation at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) and a PRC expert, said, "there has been slow, gradual progress in the military sector, but Chi's visit is sure to go a long way toward expanding the two nation's military cooperation and exchanges." Kim said that the PRC defense minister's visit would serve as an opportunity to replace their case-by-case approach to military exchanges with an arrangement that allows for systematic and regular exchanges. He said that Chi's visit to the ROK is part of the PRC's multi-front or "good- neighbor" diplomacy, a policy it has pursued since the early 1990s.

2. DPRK-US Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "U.S.-N.K. LIKELY TO MAKE PROGRESS IN HIGH-LEVEL BERLIN TALKS," Seoul, 01/20/00) reported that ROK officials and analysts said on Wednesday that the US and the DPRK are expected to concentrate their efforts on making visible progress in preparatory talks in Berlin this weekend. DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan and US special envoy on Korean affairs Charles Kartman will represent their respective sides in the meeting, which is aimed at discussing furthering bilateral ties. Diplomatic watchers said that the key point of the meeting would be whether the two sides could manage to create a timetable for DPRK First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju's proposed visit to Washington. "The two governments will likely agree on several points at the Berlin talks to help the unprecedented visit materialize in the first half of the year," said Lee Jong-suk, a research fellow at the Sejong Institute. Lee based his prediction on "time constraints," saying, "North Korea, well aware of the possibility that the U.S. Republicans might win the forthcoming presidential election, would want to secure as many benefits as possible by dealing with the incumbent U.S. administration." The Clinton administration also hopes to see its DPRK policy yield results prior to the elections, he added.

3. DPRK Diplomacy

The Korea Times ("N.KOREA WAGES DIPLOMATIC CAMPAIGN WITH A WARY WORLD," Seoul, 01/20/00) reported that the DPRK is engaging in more diplomacy than it has in years. For now, though, many observers doubt that the maneuvering augurs a significant shift in policy toward the outside world. "It is not prepared yet to open up for a real discussion with the outside world beyond its propaganda," Dr. Claus Vollers, Germany's ambassador to the ROK, said in written responses to questions from The Associated Press.

4. Japanese Detainee in DPRK

The Korea Times ("NO WORD YET ON JAPANESE DETAINED IN NORTH KOREA ON SPY CHARGES," Tokyo, 01/19/00) reported that Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said on Wednesday that they were still awaiting a reply from the DPRK to a request for an explanation on what happened to Takashi Sugishima, a Japanese journalist detained on spy charges. The only word so far is that he is staying at a hotel for foreigners and is in good condition. ROK experts said that the DPRK may be merely trying to use Sugishima as leverage in upcoming talks, perhaps hoping to win more aid or even a cash payment in exchange for his release.

5. DPRK Economic Recovery

The Korea Herald ("N.K. ECONOMIC RECOVERY DEPENDS ON EXTERNAL AID," Seoul, 01/20/00) reported that the ROK's Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said that the DPRK will fare badly this year without assistance from the ROK and other countries. "Though North Korea evidenced an economic recovery last year, it is difficult to say that it did so on its own, and a relapse is still likely if international assistance decreases," it said. Quoting data on the DPRK economy for 2000 and policy prospects released on Tuesday, KOTRA said that signs of recovery last year were temporary phenomena brought about by international assistance. Unless the DPRK makes efforts to attract more foreign investment this year, it will find it difficult to secure its own industrial production base.

6. DPRK Nationals in PRC

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "FOREIGN MINISTER STRESSES ALL-OUT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS," Seoul, 01/19/00) reported that Lee Joung-binn, new ROK minister of foreign affairs and trade, recently emphasized in a press conference that he would do his best to guarantee the personal security of the seven DPRK refugees who were repatriated to the DPRK. He said that the ROK has been appealing for their security through all necessary diplomatic channels, including the United Nations High Court for Refugees in Beijing and the Russian government. In regard to the basic principle of treatment of DPRK defectors, he said that the ROK will accept anyone with a hunger problem.

7. DPRK Defector

The Korea Herald ("N.K. FEMALE DEFECTOR ARRIVES VIA THIRD COUNTRY," Seoul, 01/20/00) reported that the ROK National Intelligence Service said on Wednesday that a DPRK woman smuggled herself into the ROK via a third country and applied for political asylum. Intelligence officials are currently questioning the woman, who uses the assumed name Im Sun-hui, about her family background, why she defected from the DPRK, and how she found her way to the ROK. Born

in Hoeryong, North Hamgyong Province, the 34-year-old woman left the DPRK in February 1993, quitting her job at a factory in Sonbong County.

8. DPRK View of Year's Top Stories

The Korea Herald ("N.K. MAKES EURO'S DEBUT TOP HEADLINE OF 1999," Seoul, 01/20/00) reported that the DPRK's official daily, the Rodong Sinmun, has named the debut of the euro currency the top world news story of 1999. In an issue of the official paper of the Workers' Party obtained on Tuesday, the DPRK listed the euro, the NATO air strikes on Yugoslavia, Japan's military buildup, Russia's attack on Chechnya, Macao's return to the PRC and US troop withdrawal from Panama as the top five stories last year.

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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