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I. United States

1. DPRK Participation in ARF

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREAN FM WILL NOT ATTEND ASEAN FORUM," Hanoi, 7/19/01) reported that DPRK Embassy attache Hong Chong-gil said Thursday in Vietnam that DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun will not attend a regional security meeting in Vietnam next week. Hong said Paek was "too busy" to attend and that the DPRK will instead be represented by an ambassador at the talks.

2. Colin Powell's Asia Trip

Agence France Presse ("POWELL TO RELAUNCH US POLICY IN ASIA ON WHISTLE STOP TOUR," Washington, 7/19/01) reported that US Secretary of State Colin Powell will take his first trip to Asia as the top US diplomat next week, with visits to the PRC, Japan, the ROK, Vietnam, and Australia. A senior US administration official said, "It is a very important opening for this administration, probably in a perfect world it would have been nice if we had done this in March, but here we go. This is our chance to get going with these people." Powell leaves the US on July 22 and will make an

overnight stop on July 23 in Japan. From there, he heads to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Regional Forum and post-ministerial conference in Hanoi July 24-26. Aides said that it is "possible" that Powell would hold talks with DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun. [Ed. Note: Reports now say that Paek will not attend the ARF]. After Vietnam, Powell will go to the ROK and then move on to the PRC.

3. US Forward Deployment in Asia

The Associated Press ("U.S. COMMANDER: PLANS TO OVERHAUL MILITARY WON'T MEAN CUTBACKS IN ASIA," 7/19/01) reported that Admiral Dennis Blair, commander in chief of the US Pacific Command, said Thursday that US forces in the region are not likely to suffer cutbacks, despite the US Defense Department's possible plans to overhaul the military. Blair said at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, "I see an increase in the emphasis on Asia as the region of both potential opportunity and potential threat. I look at the fundamental force structure we have here to do our jobs and I think those are going to stay pretty constant." Blair said that among the biggest threats to stability in Asia is the DPRK. He stated, "The North Korean missile program poses a direct threat to both the citizens of South Korea and U.S. forces. North Korea has the capability to fit them with weapons of mass destruction warheads as well as with conventional warheads." Blair also said the US would continue to try to reach a missile agreement with the DPRK.

The Asian Wall Street Journal published an editorial by Eddie Lachica, its former Washington bureau chief, ("STAY ENGAGED IN ASIA," 7/19/01) which said that the object of US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's current defense review is commendable, but defense planners need to be careful that in taking the best that technology can offer they do not undermine the principle of US forward-deployed forces in Asia. Lachica noted that a central assumption of the review is that "by the next decade or so China's People's Liberation Army could become powerful enough to attempt to recover Taiwan by force and thwart US intervention with a new generation of missiles aimed at US bases in Japan and South Korea." He wrote that some advocates of the so-called "revolution in military affairs" want the US to reduce its dependence on forward bases and rely more on stand-off naval platforms, anti-missile missiles and Guam-based bombers to keep the peace. David Gompert, a Rand Corporation executive who led the study, said, "This doesn't mean we abandon forward presence. It means we think about forward presence in a more fluid way, in a much more agile way." Lachica noted that Admiral Dennis Blair, the US Pacific Command's top commander, is an advocate of some transformational changes. He said that Blair will not concede "that US forward-deployed forces are cripplingly vulnerable to missile attack, nor that they should be replaced by stand-off deterrence." Instead, Lachica said, Blair has cautioned Rumsfeld that total acceptance of the idea "that an adversary can deny a US forward presence risks undermining the chain of US alliances in the region." Norman Polmar, an authority on carrier warfare at the US Naval Institute, stated, "Sure, an aircraft carrier has to take its chances in a combat zone, but first it has to be found and the ocean is large place to find a carrier moving in the dark at 30 knots an hour." David A. Perin, of the Center for Naval Analyses, also discounts the missile threat. Lachica concluded that "the future is bound to bring new ways of warfighting to Asia. But in a region where weapons proliferation and maneuvering for prestige, credibility and influence is the order of the day, US engagement is a crucial prerequisite for stability. That means sticking to the old- fashioned games of geostrategy and realpolitik that make US bases and carrier deployments in Asia absolutely critical." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for 7/19/01.]

4. US Troops in Okinawa

The Associated Press (Kozo Mizoguchi, "US. AIR FORCE SERGEANT INDICTED FOR RAPE IN

OKINAWA," Tokyo, 7/19/01) reported that Choko Zukeran, a spokesman for the District prosecutors office in Naha, the Okinawa prefectural capital in Japan, said that US Staff Sergeant Timothy Woodland was charged with rape for the June 29 attack on a 20-year-old woman. The case has prompted calls in Japan to revise the US-Japan agreement governing the US military in Japan. Woodland is stationed at the Kadena Air Base on Okinawa. He will be tried in a Japanese court, and if convicted, he would serve his sentence in a Japanese prison.

II. Republic of Korea

1. US Bases in ROK

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "US TO CLOSE 15 MILITARY INSTALLATIONS," Seoul, 07/19/01) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry said Wednesday that the US will close at least 15 major US military installations and numerous training facilities in the ROK over the next 10 years. Under its land readjustment program, US Forces Korea (USFK) proposed returning by 2011 about 40 million pyong (132 million square meters) of land currently used by its troops stationed in the ROK, the ministry said. In return, the ministry said, USFK requested that the ROK government grant it 750,000 pyong of new land for its consolidated bases and training facilities. Army Brigadier General Kwon Haing-keun, director of the ministry's Yongsan Project Office, said that most of the US military bases to be closed are located in Paju, Dongducheon and Euijeongbu, all in Gyeonggi Province, and Seoul. "As considerable progress has been made between us, we aim to sign a memorandum of understanding on the new land management plan at the next Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) scheduled for early November in Washington," Kwon said. After close consultation with local governments and environmental groups, he said, the ministry would do its best to reach a satisfactory agreement with the US side.

2. G-8 Meeting

The Korea Herald (Hwang Jang-jin, "G-8 LEADERS TO CALL ON PYONGYANG TO ENGAGE IN TALKS WITH SEOUL," Seoul, 07/19/01) reported that leaders of the Group of Eight (G-8) nations will adopt a joint statement to call on the DPRK to engage in talks with the ROK and the US in order to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula, the Italian ambassador to the ROK said Wednesday. "Inter-Korean peace will be one of the important issues to be discussed during the G-8 talks," Carlo Trezz said in a press conference. Trezz said that the joint communique is expected to include "concrete proposals" that call for the DPRK to respond to dialogue initiatives from the ROK and the US. Diplomatic sources said that the G-8 leaders are likely to urge the DPRK to address international concerns about its security threats and human rights record. Trezz declined to comment on whether the statement would tackle sensitive issues such as the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs and conventional weapons.

3. DPRK Nuclear Inspections

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "PYONGYANG REFUSES IAEA INSPECTION," Seoul, 07/18/01) reported that the DPRK stressed on Monday that it would not receive inspection from International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The state-controlled Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), reporting remarks of the chief for Asia-Pacific of the safeguards department of the IAEA who asserted that the DPRK would endure an "adverse effect" for shunning the inspection process, said that such moves coincide with the US completion of its DPRK policy review and once more shows the IAEA's partial

and unfair attitude toward the DPRK. KCNA also added that the IAEA's insistence on "early verification" and "inspection" despite the DPRK's serious energy loss from the delay of light water reactor construction shows for itself that the IAEA is dancing to the US's tune. "There's something unusual going around IAEA and the North," Brent Choi of the Unification Research Institute (URI) in Seoul said. "A crisis may erupt if Pyongyang and Washington fail to reach some kind of accord within 12 months," he warned.

4. New DPRK Vice Director

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "RI JE-GANG NEWCOMER OF THE POWER CIRCLE IN N.K.," Seoul, 07/18/01) reported that Ri Je-gang is the new face to rise to the power seat of DPRK's political circle with his latest promotion as a first vice director of Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK). "North Korean media while reporting on North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's visit to an air force base introduced Ri as one of the first vice directors along with Ri Yong-chol and Jang Song-thaek on Monday," an ROK official said Wednesday. "This shows that Ri has been promoted to the vice director's position which was occupied by the existing four members including Mun Sung- sul, Yon Ki-sun, Jang Song-thaek and Ri Yong-mu," the official pointed out, but added that it is not known exactly which department he is in charge of. Ri, now in his late 60s, served within the Central Committee for over a decade.

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