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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Inspection Agreement

The New York Times carried an opinion article by former US Secretary of State James A. Baker, 3d ("NORTH KOREA WINS AGAIN," Houston, 03/19/99) which said that Tuesday's US-DPRK agreement does not do much to alleviate US concerns about the DPRK's alleged nuclear development. The article argued, "American taxpayers will have to pay for this small concession with hundreds of millions of dollars worth of food and oil." It also warned that the agreement "will make the United States even more reluctant to adopt a more muscular approach toward Korea and thus could actually increase the risk of war on the Korean Peninsula. And the North Koreans may well conclude that their bad behavior will continue to be rewarded." The author maintained, "In 1994, the Clinton

Administration changed the Reagan-Bush policy toward North Korea from one of resolve and strength to one of accommodation, over the unstated objections of the Government of South Korea." He added, "When we discovered evidence, from 1992 to 1994, that North Korea was moving forward on nuclear weapons, we panicked, bowing to North Korea's threats to turn Seoul into a 'sea of fire' and changing our policy 180 degrees. Instead we should have pursued sanctions in the United Nations Security Council, beefed up our forces on the Korean Peninsula more than we did and begun planning a regional antimissile defense system." He also said that the US "should have told [the DPRK] that we fully intended to honor our security agreements with South Korea and Japan, and that, if necessary, we would not rule out the use, again, of nuclear deterrence." He concluded, "it is hard to fathom how anyone could put credence in any agreement by North Korea, particularly since it has recently fired missiles over Japan, continued its belligerent rhetoric toward South Korea and blackmailed us into paying for the opportunity to carry out inspections.... Why should North Korea take seriously any threat coming from this Administration about sterner measures, given the many times in foreign policy and security matters that its rhetoric has not been matched with resolve?" [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19.]

2. DPRK-PRC Relations

Agence France-Press ("CHINA AND NORTH KOREA REPORTEDLY AT ODDS OVER MISSILES AT THEIR BORDER," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that, according to a report by Russian researchers, the PRC is demanding that the DPRK remove at least two missile bases near their border. The report, jointly produced by the Center for Nonproliferation Studies of the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California and the Center for Contemporary International Problems at the Russian Diplomatic Academy in Moscow, stated, "There are at least two DPRK missile bases in the vicinity of the border with China. Beijing is angry about this and insists that North Korea dismantle these bases or move them elsewhere." It said that DPRK officials interpret this demand as "a clear case of betrayal of an ally, who is being threatened by powerful enemies. They point out that 'instead of helping the DPRK to defend itself, the Chinese are following American orders to try to make us even weaker and more defenseless'." [Ed. note: The report referred to was distributed by NAPSNet as DPRK Report #16 on March 12, 1999].

3. Obuchi's Visit to ROK

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "PROTESTS MAR JAPAN PM'S KOREA VISIT," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi arrived in Seoul Friday for three days of talks. Obuchi placed a wreath at the National Cemetery in Seoul and was scheduled to meet later Friday with ROK Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil. Obuchi will meet Saturday with ROK President Kim Dae-jung, who visited Japan in October, in talks that ROJ officials said are likely to focus on how to deal with the DPRK's missile and nuclear capabilities. ROK National Security Adviser Lim Dong-won told journalists that Japan shares the ROK's views on the DPRK. He added, "There is little prospect that either side will show any differences in dealing with North Korea."

The International Herald Tribune (Don Kirk, "SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN FIND A WAY," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that Takeshi Hikihara, a Japanese diplomat in Seoul, said Thursday that the emphasis in the meetings between Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and ROK President Kim Dae-jung would be on coordinating the two countries' policies toward the DPRK. Hikihara stated, "Most important is the positions of the United States, Korea and Japan should be well adjusted." He admitted, however, that the two attached "a slight difference in the weight of importance" to the DPRK's rocket launch last August 31. He added that the Japanese people "have to wait and see if

North Korea shows goodwill toward Japan." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19.]

Reuters ("JAPAN TO OFFER $1 BILLION LOAN TO SOUTH KOREA, JAPANESE PAPER SAYS," Tokyo, 03/19/99) and Dow Jones Newswires ("JAPAN, S. KOREA LEADERS SEEK TO STRENGTHEN ECON TIES - KYODO," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that the Japanese business daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun said Friday that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi is expected to offer the ROK US$1 billion in loans. The report said that the loans, to be offered through the Export-Import Bank of Japan, would be aimed at the promotion of ties between Japanese and ROK companies. Obuchi stated Friday, "I want to strengthen bilateral partnership on the economic front." Japanese officials said that the "Japan-South Korea economic agenda," which will be adopted Saturday, will cover five areas, including the promotion of investment between the two countries and cooperation in the field of intellectual property rights. Obuchi on Friday also invited ROK Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil to visit Japan by the end of the year.

4. Anti-Japanese Protests in ROK

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "PROTESTS MAR JAPAN PM'S KOREA VISIT," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that 30 ROK activists gathered in a Seoul park on Friday to protest "Japan's militarization." In Pusan, 2,000 fishermen planned to rally Saturday to demand that the ROK scrap the new fisheries treaty with Japan. Anti-Japanese activist groups also planned a march on the Japanese Embassy in Seoul on Saturday. Yang Mi-kang, a spokeswoman for ROK women who were forced into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers during World War II, stated, "Without atonement for the past, there can be no future relationship between Japan and South Korea."

5. PRC Nuclear Development

The San Jose Mercury News (Jennifer Lin, "CHINA BUILDING UP NUCLEAR MUSCLE," Beijing, 03/19/99) reported that some military analysts have said that the PRC may be trying to modernize its nuclear arsenal in order to expand its influence in Asia. Gerald Segal, a military analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, stated, "China seeks to deter both a U.S. strike against China and the U.S. ability to defend its wider interests in Asia. Thus if China uses force against Taiwan, it wants to deter the United States from coming to Taiwan's defense by threatening to destroy Los Angeles." An unnamed Asian military analyst stated, "The thinking is that the Chinese are so far behind the other nuclear powers that they need to continue developing a survivable nuclear capability -- that is, if they're attacked they could respond." Andrew Yang, a military expert with the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies in Taipei, said that a series of PRC nuclear tests from 1993 to 1996 demonstrated the PRC's interest in upgrading its nuclear forces. Yang stated, "People were surprised that China exploded small devices that were totally unlike the devices they exploded before. That started to build up a suspicion that China had received the technology and know-how to build small nuclear bombs and not big ones. It was alarming. If they could build a miniaturized nuclear warhead, then logically you would think they would try to develop multiple warheads for a single missile." However, Yan Xuetong, an analyst at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations in Beijing, argued, "It's purely a political issue. I really cannot understand why people do not believe that it is China that is under a U.S. threat, when it is the United States that has so many nuclear weapons and the United States improves its nuclear capability even now every year."

6. US-PRC Military Exchanges

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, "CHINA VISIT," 03/19/99, 9) reported that General Xing Shizhong, president of the People's Liberation Army National Defense University in Beijing, visited the US National Defense University at Fort McNair on Thursday. Xing spoke before a group of military officer for an hour. Xing is also scheduled to take a tour of a nuclear-powered cruise-missile ship, and visit the "Network Centric Warfare" that electronically links all Navy ships to operate jointly with the Army and Air Force. He will also receive a briefing on Task Force XXI, an experimental future war-fighting force and visit the new Air Warfare Center at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19.]

7. Alleged PRC Nuclear Espionage

The Wall Street Journal (Jeanne Cummings and David Rogers, "CLINTON ORDERS SECURITY ANALYSIS AMID ALLEGEDLY STOLEN NUCLEAR SECRETS," Washington, 03/19/99) reported that US President Clinton said in a statement on Thursday that his administration will launch an investigation of counterintelligence security threats at US nuclear laboratories. The 60-day review will be conducted by the president's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board and headed by former Senator Warren Rudman, a New Hampshire Republican.

8. US Missile Defense

The Associated Press (Tom Raum, "HOUSE PASSES MISSILE DEFENSE BILL," Washington, 03/18/99), the New York Times (Eric Schmitt, "HOUSE JOINS SENATE IN VOTING FOR SYSTEM TO DEFEND AGAINST MISSILES," Washington, 03/19/99) reported that the US House of Representatives on Thursday passed a bill committing the US to deploy a missile defense system. The bill was approved by a vote of 317-105. Speaker J. Dennis Hastert, Republican-Illinois, said that the House would probably accept the Senate's language when House and Senate negotiators met to reconcile differences between their two versions of the bill. Representative Barbara Lee, Democrat-California, argued, "It does not do anything to advance the technological capacity to protect our nation and could reverse efforts to reduce Russia's nuclear arsenal. This bill is a blank check for defense contractors." The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "That poses a serious threat to the whole process of nuclear arms control, as well as strategic stability, for which major international agreements have been worked out for decades." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19.]

The Wall Street Journal (Carla Anne Robbins, "ANTIBALLISTIC MISSILE SYSTEM GETS RENEWED SUPPORT FROM CLINTON," Langdon, 03/19/99, 1) reported that Joseph Cirincione of the Carnegie Endowment in Washington predicted that the US will move ahead to build a missile defense system. Cirincione stated, "Politics and the politics of defense procurement will see to that." William Carpenter, manager of the Raytheon Corporation's "exoatmospheric kill vehicle" (EKV), said that the anti-missile weapon can sort out real target from fakes by evaluating their heat, shape, and "wobble" to detect their mass. However, physicist Richard Garwin said that the system could be fooled simply by wrapping the warhead in a large mylar balloon. The EKV could hit the balloon but miss the warhead altogether. He added that other methods of defeating the system include adding heating elements to the decoys or off-the-shelf radar transponders to confuse the EKV's sensors and the ground radar. Garwin added that the US intelligence community "doesn't know" what countermeasures the DPRK has, but that any country "smart enough to develop an ICBM should be smart enough to fool the system." [Ed. note: This article was one of the top stories in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Policy on DPRK

Korea Herald ("PRESIDENT KIM CALLS ON WASHINGTON, TOKYO TO SEEK DIRECT TIES WITH PYONGYANG," Seoul, 03/20/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Thursday again urged the US and Japan to seek direct diplomatic and economic ties with the DPRK. "Now I hope that Washington and Tokyo engage in direct exchange and cooperation with Pyongyang, instead of passing through Seoul," Kim said in a meeting with Chong Wa Dae correspondents. In line with his policy of engaging the DPRK, Kim has previously called for the US and Japan to normalize relations with the DPRK. President Kim applied this fresh pressure on the US and Japan after welcoming the DPRK's decision earlier this week to allow US inspections of the underground facility in Kumchangri. Kim said that the US-DPRK agreement on Kumchangri is significant because it puts further weight on his "sunshine policy" of greater diplomatic and economic engagement with the reclusive DPRK.

2. Japan-DPRK Relations

Korea Herald ("JAPAN READY TO RESUME TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 03/20/99) reported that Japan is ready to restore a normal relationship with the DPRK in various areas if the DPRK responds positively to Japan's primary concerns, including nuclear and missile issues, according to a top aide to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi. "Our government waits for an answer from North Korea," said Sadaaki Numata, press secretary to Obuchi, in an interview with The Korea Herald on Thursday. "We have been making appeals to North Korea for talks about improving our relations." Obuchi will make some remarks regarding the normalization of diplomatic ties with the DPRK after meeting with ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Friday, Numata said. Obuchi has recently said that his government is willing to discuss the normalization issue with the DPRK if the DPRK comes forth to dissolve Japan's concerns about its nuclear and missile ambitions. Another issue weighing heavy on the minds of Japanese officials from a humanitarian viewpoint is the DPRK's suspected abduction of Japanese citizens, he said.

3. DPRK's View of US-DPRK Agreement

JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA ASSERTS U.S. WAS BEARING GIFTS," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that the DPRK Foreign Ministry alleged that the US promised the DPRK a political reward as well as economic aid in return for a US inspection to the suspected nuclear site at Kumchangri. According to the DPRK's Central Broadcasting Network, its foreign ministry spokesman said, "During the NK-U.S. talks we maintained our firm principle that Americans should properly compensate us in order to end their suspicions over the Kumchangri site. It's desirable that the US government accepted our proposals to take both political and economic steps." He also emphasized, "North Korea will open the suspected nuclear site to the US delegation not for an inspection but for a visit. The two governments already reached an agreement for the visiting fee, as well." The DPRK broadcaster, citing the spokesman, finally added that the agreement between the US and the DPRK is still just a piece of paper and carrying out the agreement depends on whether the US government fulfills its promise.

4. DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("INTELLECTUALS SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS IN NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that about 70 ROK intellectuals, including university professors, journalists, lawyers, and

artists, have signed a pledge to safeguard DPRK defectors and guarantee human rights for DPRK citizens. The move follows a similar declaration made by the European intelligentsia earlier in the month. The ROK statement said that it is against one's basic conscience to stand by and watch the unprecedented starvation and famine, and the infringement of human rights in the DPRK. The group pledged to launch various activities that would contribute to the upholding of human rights in DPRK society. The members of the group also plan to host an international conference and bring international leading intellectuals to the ROK in May to establish a worldwide network to help solve various pending issues affecting the DPRK.

5. PRC Citizen Seeking Refugee

Korea Times ("CHINESE SEEKING REFUGEE STATUS HERE," Seoul, 03/19/99) reported that a PRC man, who was allegedly engaged in anti-government activities, has sought asylum after coming to Seoul as a tourist in January, according to the Justice Ministry. The ministry identified the PRC dissident as Xu Bo, 29, adding that he entered the ROK in the middle of January along with a group of tourists. Xu was reported to have recently applied for asylum in the US through the US Embassy in Seoul, the ministry revealed. The embassy reported the case to the ROK office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Seoul Immigration Office is now in charge of Xu Bo's case, the ministry said. Xu Bo reportedly claimed that he fled PRC because he feared persecution by the PRC authorities after he attempted to publish a book criticizing the PRC government. "We are now questioning Xu Bo to find out what made him seek asylum in the US," said an ROK ministry official. He added that the Justice Ministry is consulting with the Foreign Ministry and the Labor Ministry to discuss ways of dealing with the case.

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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