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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Relations

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA UNLEASHES NEW WARNING OF WAR AGAINST US," Seoul, 3/19/01) and The Associated Press ("NKOREA WARNS U.S. ON REACTOR DEAL," Tokyo, 3/18/01) reported that the DPRK on Monday released a new warning of war against the US. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said, "The US bellicose circles are recklessly working to stifle the DPRK (North Korea) by force of arms. This is, however, an anachronistic daydream." It also warned that US moves "to ignite a new war" will never be tolerated. The KCNA said there were "vicious circles" in the US who were trying to hamper reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. It said, "Unlike its preceding administration that professed 'improved relations,' the Bush administration suspended the dialogue with the DPRK and is set to pursue a policy to stifle it by

force of arms." The DPRK's state-run Radio Pyongyang and Korean Central Radio were quoted on March 18 as saying that the US risks a war with the DPRK by seeking to drop the 1994 Agreed Framework. The broadcaster said the US bid would be "tantamount to a declaration of war. If this is the attitude of the United States, we will have to adopt an extreme hard-line stance. If the US imperialists demand war, we will respond a thousand-fold."

2. New KEDO Workers

Agence France Presse ("UZBEK WORKERS HIRED TO SPEED UP BUILDING OF NORTH KOREA REACTORS," Seoul, 3/19/01) reported that the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) 207 Uzbeks had been hired to work at Kumho, near the DPRK east coast port of Shinpo, where KEDO is overseeing the construction of two 1,000- megawatt light-water reactors. The DPRK has complained it cannot be finished until 2007 and threatened to scrap the 1994 accord, accusing the US and the international consortium of foot-dragging. Diplomats said however that a major cause of the delay has been the DPRK's demand that wages for DPRK workers be increased from 110 dollars to 390 dollars a month, several times the average wage.

3. ROK role in US-DPRK Relations

The The Associate Press (Paul Shin, "S.KOREA VOWS BETTER TIES WITH NORTH," Seoul, 3/19/01) reported that ROK President Kim Dae- jung said Monday that the ROK must help improve ties between the US and the DPRK in order for detente on the Korean Peninsula to grow. Kim said in a graduation address at the Korea Naval Academy, "There will be no progress in inter-Korean relations alone without improvement in U.S.-North Korea relations. The two issues cannot be separated from each other. Thus we have to try to improve the inter-Korean relations on the one hand and provide support toward progress in U.S.-North Korea relations on the other." Kim also said Bush supported his engagement policy with the DPRK and recognized the ROK's leading role in inter-Korea relations. He added that cooperation on improving US-DPRK relations will strengthen once the Bush administration formulates its DPRK policy. And, despite the DPRK's renewed criticism of the US, Kim said the country will continue to open up to the world - and the US - to revitalize its devastated economy.

4. US-PRC Talks

New York Times (Michael R. Gordon, "BUSH IS DUE TO MEET CHINESE ON CRUCIAL ISSUES," 3/19/01) reported that as US President George W. Bush prepares for his first meeting with a senior PRC official, his administration faces the issues on whether to design a national missile defense capable of countering the PRC nuclear force and whether to sell destroyers equipped with the Aegis radar system to Taiwan. Although the PRC has indicated that it is open to discussions with the US about missile defense, one US expert said, "The Chinese may be open to the idea of a discussion with us, but I don't think you will get this administration to come out and say that it is the US national interests for China to have a stable deterrent - that is, that it is in the American interest for China to be able to incinerate an American city." The Clinton administration had considered offering the PRC assurances that it had a right to a nuclear deterrent, but it was fearful that this would anger conservative US Republican lawmakers. The administration settled for a vaguer declaration that its missile defense plan was not directed at the PRC. The arrival of the Bush administration raised the stakes for the PRC. Since taking office, the Bush administration has yet to outline what sort of antimissile system it plans to build, but it has signaled that it wants to go beyond the sort of limited missile defense proposed by Clinton. Instead, it has focused its energy on trying to block the sale of

the Aegis-equipped destroyer system to Taiwan. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19, 2001.]

5. US Arms Sales to Taiwan

New York Times (Jane Perlez, "WHITE HOUSE REVEALS PLANS FOR NEW TAIWAN ARMS SALE," Washington, 3/17/01) reported that the senior US State Department PRC expert, Darryl Johnson, and a senior US Defense Department official, Fred Smith, the US Congress that among Taiwan's requests were the Aegis-equipped destroyers, P-3 Orion aircraft used for detecting submarines, and sophisticated command and control communications. Taiwan's request included guided-missile destroyers equipped with the Aegis radar system. The Bush administration has begun the decision-making process on the Taiwan sales. Several major players in the administration decision making include Richard L. Armitage, nominated to be deputy secretary of state, as well as Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz and the nominee for undersecretary of state for arms control, John R. Bolton. According to Taiwanese press accounts, Taiwan wants four Kidd destroyers. Some US military experts point out that Kidds could be sold to Taiwan immediately. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19, 2001.]

6. PRC Companies in Iraq

The Washington Post (Colum Lynch, "CHINESE FIRM PROBED ON LINKS WITH IRAQ," United Nations, 3/17/01) reported that US Defense Department officials have accused PRC based Huawei Technologies of laying optical communications cables between Iraqi antiaircraft batteries, radar stations and command centers. The US Defense Department officials cited the alleged construction work as the primary reason for a joint US-British air raid on February 16. Since the airstrike, the Bush administration has asked the PRC government to investigate whether Huawei Technologies violated UN sanctions by selling Iraq fiber-optic cables for military purposes. China initially denied the U.S. allegation, then promised to look into it, suggesting -- at least publicly -- that officials in Beijing knew nothing about it. According to confidential UN reports, Huawei Technologies has been seeking UN approval for more than a year to sell Iraq about US$34 million in fiber-optics and related equipment. However, it is not clear whether the company went ahead and sold the equipment to Iraq. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 19, 2001.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK - EU Relations

The Korea Herald ("N. KOREAN VICE FOREIGN MINISTER EMBARKS ON EUROPEAN TOUR," Seoul, 03/19/01) reported that DPRK's Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su-hon departed Pyongyang Saturday to travel several European countries like Sweden, Poland and Germany, the DPRK's official Radio Pyongyang reported. The radio station for overseas Koreans said, "Choe was sent off by acting ambassadors of relevant countries stationed in Pyongyang at Pyongyang Airport," but it did not disclose his concrete visit schedules and purposes. But a Swedish vice foreign minister, who tripped to the DPRK early March said in a news media interview that Choe will discuss the roles of Sweden and other European Union (EU) nations in the Korean peninsula peace process while visiting Sweden for three days from March 22.

2. DPRK Parliament to Convene

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N. KOREA TO CONVENE PARLIAMENT NEXT MONTH AMID SEOUL'S HOPE FOR MORE COMMUNICATION," Seoul, 03/19/01) reported that the DPRK Sunday announced it would convene its parliament early next month, raising expectations among Pyongyang watchers here about the DPRK's shift toward greater openness for its neighbors. The fourth congress of the 10th Supreme People's Assembly (SPA), DPRK's top decision-making body comprised of 687 representatives, will be held in Pyongyang April 5, said the official (North) Korean Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS). The KCBS did not elaborate on items scheduled for the agenda, which usually decides state budget, pass bills and elect ranking officials. Seoul officials, however, expected that the SPA would take some measures, including reorganization of systems and cabinet reshuffle aimed at facilitating the isolationist country's reform and open-door policy.

3. Reunion of Separated Families

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "U.S. TO PUT REUNION OF KOREAN AMERICANS WITH NORTH KOREAN KIN HIGH ON AGENDA," Seoul, 03/17/01) reported that US Secretary of State Colin Powell Thursday revealed his intent to talk with the DPRK regarding the possibility of a reunion between Korean-Americans in the US and their separated families in the DPRK. "I would like to take that abroad as one of the items that we will put on the agenda," Powell said in his testimony at the hearing of the House Budget Committee Panel on the States Department 2002 Budget. Rep. Kirk said, "The reunification issue of South Korean families with North Korean families is uppermost in Seoul's mind, but it has never been raised between the United States and the North." Seoul officials estimate that there are about 500,000 Korean-Americans in the US separated from their DPRK families before or during the 1950-53 Korean War.

4. DPRK on US

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "NK STEPS UP ANTI US RHETORIC," Seoul, 03/18/01) reported that DPRK's Central Radio said Sunday that Senator Jessie Helms call for the US to abandon the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework as an open "declaration of confrontation." It added that if this was "the will of American politicians then North Korea would not need to stick with the agreement, and would counter the move in the harshest way possible." In a separate report, the radio said that "it was wrong for US imperialists to try and find a solution to problems on the Korean peninsula through war," adding that "the new US administration is seeking some sort of hard line policy to return the countries to the state of confrontation of the past, in order to carry out criminal, anti-Korean, belligerent policies."

5. Bush to Visit ROK

Chosun Ilbo ("BUSH TO VISIT SEOUL OCTOBER," Seoul, 03/18/01) reported that the White House announced Saturday that US President George W. Bush will be traveling to Northeast Asia later this year. Although details have yet to be announced his tour will include stopovers in Tokyo, Seoul and Beijing. It had been known for some time that the US leader would go to Shanghai this fall to attend a summit meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation or APEC Forum. Dates and other details have yet to be released, but the White House says Tokyo will be Bush's first stop, followed by Seoul and then Shanghai. Meanwhile, observers say it's unusual for the White House to announce the presidential tour schedule 7 months in advance. They say it might be a way for the Bush Administration to appease critics who claim the US leader blew an important opportunity to re-open

dialogue with the DPRK when he voiced his hard-line opinion to President Kim Dae-jung last week.

6. Inter-Korean Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("RESUMPTION OF MINISTER-LEVEL TALKS POSSIBLE SOON," Seoul, 03/18/01) reported that with Pyongyang pulling out of scheduled inter-Korean ministerial talks earlier this week there has been mounting speculation over when the meeting will re-open. Many DPRK experts in Seoul bet the fifth round of cabinet-level talks may resume sometime this month as April is a busy month for the DPRK. Upon making this forecast experts point to signs of an easing of stance by Pyongyang as it's been toning down its rhetoric against Washington over the past few days, coupled with a series of cross-border reconciliatory gestures.

7. Aid to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("MINISTER SAYS NO FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO NK," Seoul, 03/16/01) reported that Kim Han-gil, the ROK Minister of Culture and Tourism, said Friday that he had not discussed financial incentives with the DPRK for opening Gaeseong as a tourist attraction and will not discuss it in the future either. While attending the Culture and Tourism Committee meeting at the National Assembly to report on his visit to the ROK from March 10 to 14, he said that since opening Gaeseong would benefit both the ROK and the DPRK, additional incentives would not be necessary. He added that there was no discussion regarding the opening of inner Mount Kumgang.

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