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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

The Washington Post (Alan Sipress, "ABROAD AT HOME: THE STATE DEPARTMENT," 7/20/01) reported that in contrast to earlier statements by the US President George Bush administration, a senior administration official said last week that raising the issue of DPRK conventional force deployment was not a precondition for resuming dialogue. The official said, "I don't think we've set the bar high. If we had set the bar high, we'd have been saying that there were particular preconditions that we've asked [for] to meet with the North Koreans. We've told them subjects we're interested in." US State Department special envoy Jack L. Pritchard met the DPRK's permanent representative to the United Nations in June and offered proposals for resuming discussions. In a meeting on July 13 with Edward Dong, the head of US State Department's Korea Desk, a DPRK official asked for more information about the proposals. US State Department officials said that the next step could be a meeting between Secretary of State Powell and his DPRK counterpart during Association of Southeast Asian Nations meetings in Hanoi next week. So far, no session has been set. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for

July 20, 2001.]

2. DPRK View of US Missile Defense

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA CRITICIZES US MISSILE-DEFENSE TEST," Seoul, 7/20/01) reported that the DPRK criticized the US on Friday for a missile defense test and threatened to scrap all agreements with the US. A DPRK Foreign Ministry official told the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency that the DPRK "is compelled to take a counteraction for self-defense by the U.S. deliberate provocation made to it in a bid to attain its sinister aim. North Korea will have nothing to lose even if all the points agreed upon between North Korea and the US are scrapped."

3. US-Taiwan Military Talks

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "PENTAGON CONFIRMS DEFENSE TALKS BETWEEN TAIWAN, US," 7/20/01) reported that the US Defense Department confirmed for the first time on July 19 that it holds regular secret talks with Taiwan military officials to discuss "the defense of Taiwan." US Defense Department spokesman Rear Admiral Craig Quigley said that US defense officials have met seven times since 1997 with Taiwan's military officers. Quigley said, "We do frequently meet with representatives of the Taiwan military, in accordance with the terms of the Taiwan Relations Act, again to discuss issues of interaction and means by which to provide for the defense of Taiwan. But by the same token, as a policy issue, we do not typically provide any details of those meetings." He declined to comment when asked if there would be a meeting in California this week. Quigley said that the meetings with the Taiwanese are not held on a set schedule, however, "it's a constant dialogue back and forth between the United States and Taiwan." Asked whether the US Defense Department should discuss "interoperability" issues with Taiwan's military in light of the US President George W. Bush's remarks earlier this year, Quigley said, "Well, we will do our best to carry out the directions of the commander in chief, whatever the circumstances might be. You can have a philosophical debate till sundown as to what might be the appropriate way of going about doing that, but there are very specific and sensitive particular details that are contained in the Taiwan Relations Act. We comply with those, no more, no less." Other US defense officials said the latest round of US-Taiwan defense talks began on July 19 at a military facility in Monterey, California. According to defense officials, Fred Smith, the outgoing deputy assistant defense secretary for East Asia, is heading the US delegation. One official said that the two delegations, each consisting of 18 military and civilian officials, are not permitted to discuss Taiwan's arms-sales requests or in-depth planning for joint military operations. The Monterey talks were started in 1997 as part of an initiative by Kurt Campbell, the deputy assistant defense secretary for East Asia. However, US defense officials said that the subject of the talks and the level of representation were restricted by Clinton administration officials to avoid offending the PRC. The US Defense Department also is prohibited from sending any officers to Taiwan above the rank of colonel or Navy captain, and civilian officials who visit must be low-ranking government representatives. The US Defense Department also announced on July 19 that it will sell Taiwan a joint tactical communications system used by US forces. Officials said the communications system would help Taiwan conduct joint operations with US forces in a conflict. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for July 20, 2001.]

4. PRC Jet Purchases

The Washington Post (John Pomfret, "CHINA SIGNS $2 BILLION DEAL TO BUY RUSSIAN FIGHTER JETS AIRCRAFT TO STRENGTHEN BEIJING'S ABILITY TO ATTACK TAIWAN," Beijing, 7/20/01)

reported that Russian news reports and diplomats said that the PRC has signed a contract with a Russian aircraft manufacturer for another batch of ground-attack jets. Russian news reports and diplomats said that PRC officials signed the contract with the Komsomolsk-on-Amur Aviation Production Association to supply upward of US$2 billion worth of Su-30 MKK ground-attack planes. One report, by the Russian Tass news agency, put the number of jets at 38. Analysts said that the Su-30 will provide the PRC air force with a potent ground-attack element to complement the Su-27 fighter that it first purchased from Russia in 1992. Ken Allen, a former US Air Force officer and an expert on the PRC air force, said that the purchase of the Su-30s was even more significant than that of the Su-27 fighters as the PRC has now obtained a sophisticated ground-attack aircraft after years of relying on its 450 A-5s, a slightly redesigned MiG-19 with no ability to defend itself and a short range. Allen said that combined with the Su-27, the Su-30 could constitute a potent threat to Taiwan. The PRC could use the Su-27 to attempt to gain air superiority and use the Su-30 in its primary role as a ground-attack aircraft. However, Taiwan's air force also has potentially powerful countermeasures: US-built F-16 fighters, French-built Mirage 2000s and a Taiwanese-designed fighter. Allen said that the Su-30 deal also marked another major step toward increasing PRC dependence on Russian military technology. Allen said that the sale is also another indication that the PRC plans to create an indigenous ground-attack aircraft, called the F-10, are far behind schedule. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for July 20, 2001.]

5. ASEAN Regional Forum

Agence France Presse ("ASEAN SECURITY GROUP TO EVOLVE INTO ASIA-PACIFIC MEDIATOR," Manila, 7/20/01) reported that officials and analysts said the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is likely to adopt landmark procedures to help prevent regional disputes at its annual meeting in Hanoi next week. The procedures should give the legitimacy in resolving bilateral and multilateral problems, like the Korean conflict and overlapping claims to the Spratly islands in the South China Sea. ASEAN official M. C. Abad said, "The ARF is expected to consider certain measures that will sanction its evolution from a confidence building forum into an instrument of preventive diplomacy in areas where they overlap." Abad said that the ARF members were expected to agree on giving the ARF chairman an "enhanced role" in implementing preventive diplomacy. He said, "ASEAN considers this a significant milestone on the eighth year of this only multilateral security forum in the Asia-Pacific." Professor Amitav Acharya, the deputy director of the Singapore-based Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies, said that it took the ARF about two years to build consensus on dealing with disputes because some members were worried it might violate the principle of state sovereignty. Acharya said, "There is broad consensus for the first time within the ARF on what preventive diplomacy means and what are the principles of preventive diplomacy -- from there we can do the modalities." He said that preventive diplomacy within ARF would however be confined to inter-state conflicts and not intra-state disputes. Acharya said that the ARF could reduce, if not eliminate, the reliance of Asia Pacific countries on exclusionary bilateral military arrangements.

6. US Troops in Japan

Japan Times ("TANAKA, POWELL AGREE TO SOFA TALKS," Rome, 7/20/01) reported that Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said that the US agreed on July 18 to discuss changing the Japan-US Status-of-Forces Agreement (SOFA) to help ease the transfer to Japanese police of US military personnel suspected of committing crimes in Japan. The agreement was reached in a bilateral meeting between Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka and US Secretary of State Colin Powell on the sidelines of the Group of Eight foreign ministerial meeting. Tanaka told Powell that Japan wants to talk with the US about making modifications to the pact while Powell emphasized that the US wants

to protect the rights of its military personnel and explained that the US needed four days to discuss the humanitarian concerns of the case before granting Japan's request to hand the suspect over before indictment. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for July 20, 2001.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Kim Jung-il's Visit to ROK

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NORTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER PAEK RECONFIRMS KIM JONG-IL'S RECIPROCAL VISIT," Seoul, 07/20/01) reported that DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun has reaffirmed that the DPRK's leader Kim Jong-il will make good on his promise to visit the ROK, Belgium's top envoy in Seoul said Thursday. "There will be a return visit," Ambassador Koenraad Rouvroy quoted Paek as saying. The Belgian ambassador met Paek and other senior DPRK officials in Pyongyang last month. Minister Paek, however, did not say when Kim Jong-il would make the trip. Rouvroy, who also serves as ambassador to Pyongyang, said that the DPRK officials remained skeptical about the early resumption of inter-Korean dialogue. "They said as long as Americans don't give up their preconditions, there will be no contact with the South either," Rouvroy said. Rouvroy said that the DPRK maintained a hostile attitude toward both the ROK and the US.

2. DPRK Participation in ARF

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "N.K. MINISTER PAEK SAID NOT TO ATTEND FORUM," Seoul, 07/20/01) reported that DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun will not attend the upcoming ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Vietnam, a report said. Yonhap News Agency quoted an unnamed diplomatic source in Vietnam as saying that Paek informed the Vietnamese government Wednesday of his decision not to attend the regional security conference. Paek did not reveal the reasons for his decision not to attend, only saying that he could not visit Vietnam due to "several internal problems," according to the report. Instead, the DPRK said it would dispatch a vice minister-level ambassador to the ARF foreign ministers' meeting slated to open in Hanoi July 25.

3. DPRK Criticism of US

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "NORTH KOREA DENOUNCES WOLFOWITZ'S REMARK," Seoul, 07/19/01) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday openly blasted US deputy secretary of National Defense Paul Wolfowitz for his previous argument that called for increase in military budget to fight off a DPRK missile attack in the future. "This explicitly shows the U.S.'s desire to crush our nation," the news said. The DPRK's Korea Central News Television in its commentary argued that Wolfowitz's speech at the budget hearings demonstrated the US determination "to realize their own dark dream to demolish our nation and conquer the world by speeding up their Missile Defense (MD) system." The DPRK's media added that since it is US that retains the world's largest nuclear and missile program, what Wolfowitz is arguing is a pure nonsense.

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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