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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. DPRK Biological Weapons
2. DPRK-US Talks
3. Medical Aid for DPRK
4. PRC-Russian Relations
5. Japan Approves Peacekeeping Bill

II. Republic of Korea 1. Inter-Korean Relations
2. DPRK-Poland Relations

I. United States

1. DPRK Biological Weapons

The Associated Press ("NORTH SAID TO HAVE UP TO 5,000 TONS OF BIOCHEMICAL WEAPONS," Seoul, 11/20/01) reported that at a parliamentary committee on Monday night, ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-shin stated, "North Korea stockpiles between 2,500 and 5,000 tons of biochemical weapons in six different facilities and has the capability to wage germ warfare." He also said that the DPRK is believed to have stores of anthrax, smallpox and eight other types of diseases. However, no clear evidence exists to link the DPRK with terrorist networks.

2. DPRK-US Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA MISSING CHANCE FOR DIALOGUE WITH WASHINGTON: US ENVOY," Seoul, 11/19/01) reported in an interview with the Korea Times, US Ambassador to the ROK Thomas Hubbard stated, "The North Koreans seem to a large degree still stuck in the past. I think they are missing an opportunity by not choosing to move forward at this time. This is a moment that they might seize upon to accept our invitation for dialogue and move forward with the South on some of the issues they have been discussing. Instead, we see this impasse." Hubbard urged the

DPRK to accept the US proposal for talks on reducing conventional forces deployed along the Demilitarized Zone. Hubbard said that dialogue would be "the appropriate course, which would serve both our interests and the interests of peace on the peninsula." Hubbard suggested that the DPRK and the US should begin serious talks on building confidence such as the mutual notification of exercises, the establishment of hotlines and improving communication. Hubbard supported the continued presence of US troops in the ROK. However, the DPRK newspaper Rodong Sinmun insisted that the US should withdraw its forces from the ROK "at an early date." Citing a peace accord signed at last year's inter-Korean summit, Rodong said, "The United States can no longer use the helmet of 'UN forces' for legitimizing its military presence in South Korea."

3. Medical Aid for DPRK

The Associated Press (John Leicester, "WHO SEEKS AID FOR N.KOREA HOSPITALS," Beijing, 11/20/01) and Reuters (John Ruwitch, "N.KOREA HEALTH CARE COLLAPSING, MORTALITY RISING-WHO," 11/20/01) reported that Gro Harlem Brundtland, the head of the World Health Organization (WHO), said Tuesday that the WHO will appeal for US$8 million in donations next week. Speaking in Beijing after a three-day visit to the DPRK, she told officials that DPRK hospitals lack power, modern equipment and drugs. The DPRK devotes just 3 percent of its economy to health - about US$30 for each of its 22 million people per year. The chief WHO representative in the DPRK Eigil Sorensen stated, "The health care system has more or less collapsed." Brundtland added that DPRK's mortality rate has increased 30 to 40 percent in recent years.

4. PRC-Russian Relations

Reuters ("PUTIN BRIEFS JIANG ON BUSH SUMMIT," Moscow, 11/20/01) reported that the Russian government said that Russian President Vladimir Putin called PRC President Jiang Zemin on Tuesday morning to brief him on his summit with US President George W. Bush. The presidential press service said that Jiang welcomed announcements made by the Russian and US leaders that they would seek to reduce their nuclear arsenals by two- thirds over the coming decade. In their conversation, Putin and Jiang also reaffirmed their commitment to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. On Afghanistan, the Kremlin said that Putin and Jiang also wanted the UN to play an active role in finding a political solution to the crisis that would enjoy worldwide support.

5. Japan Approves Peacekeeping Bill

The Associated Press ("JAPAN CABINET OKS PEACEKEEPING BILL," Tokyo, 11/20/01) reported that Japan's Cabinet approved a bill on Tuesday giving its military more freedom to take part in international peacekeeping missions. The bill, which is expected to go before a Diet vote by December 7, would allow Japanese troops to use weapons to protect soldiers from other countries, refugees and staffs of non- governmental organizations. He said they would also allow Japanese troops to monitor cease-fires, disarm local forces, patrol demilitarized zones and collect and dispose of weapons.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter-Korean Relations

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "MINISTER HONG EXPECTS LULL IN KOREAN RAPPROCHEMENT,"

11/20/01) reported that ROK Unification Minister Hong Soon-young told the National Assembly's committee on unification and foreign affairs on Monday that "It appears inevitable that inter-Korean relations will remain in a lull for some time." Hong said, "Currently, the North's hard-liners, including its military, seem to have great influence on inter-Korean affairs." Hong also briefed committee members on the results of the sixth round of inter-Korean ministerial talks.

2. DPRK-Poland Relations The Korea Herald ("N. KOREA, POLAND NORMALIZE TIES," Seoul, 11/19/01) reported that ROK officials said Monday that the DPRK and Poland normalized their diplomatic relationship earlier this month with the appointment of a Polish ambassador to the DPRK. Diplomatic ties were cut off in 1995, when the DPRK expelled a Polish delegation from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC). The official said that vice ministers from the DPRK and Poland held talks in March this year, and the Polish government appointed its new ambassador to the DPRK on November 6.

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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