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I. United States

1. DPRK Threat to US and ROK

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA REMAINS MILITARY THREAT DESPITE THAW: US AND SOUTH WARN," Seoul, 9/21/00) and Associated Press (Christopher Torchia, " COHEN: N. KOREA STILL POSES THREAT," Seoul, 9/21/00) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen and ROK's Defense Minister Cho Sung-Tae said Thursday after annual security talks that the DPRK remains a military threat despite the thaw on the Korean peninsula and both countries must take "substantial" measures to reduce tensions. A joint statement said they welcomed the inter-Korean summit, "however, they note that North Korea's chemical, biological, nuclear and long range missile programs continue to pose a threat to the Republic of Korea, to the United States and regional security." They urged the DPRK to abide by international conventions banning the production, possession and use of these weapons. Cohen and Cho "emphasized the need for North Korea to take substantial and very viable measures to reduce military tensions and support the positive environment created by recent inter-Korean dialogue and diplomatic progress between North Korea and other countries." They also agreed that the ROK-US security alliance is stronger than ever and that combined defense readiness should be steadfastly maintained to deter a wide range of possible

threats and to reinforce engagement with the DPRK. The statement also said, "Secretary Cohen reaffirmed the US commitment to render prompt and effective assistance to the ROK in deterring any repelling any armed attack against the ROK. The US also reaffirmed its commitment to provide a nuclear umbrella for the ROK."

2. DPRK Opens Diplomatic Ties with Europe

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA SEEKS EURO DIPLOMATIC TIES," Seoul, 9/21/00) reported that according to the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency Thursday, the DPRK has proposed to open diplomatic ties with several European countries. DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun recently sent letters carrying the proposal to his counterparts in Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Spain and Britain and the external relations commissioner of the European Commission. The report did not specify exactly when the letters were sent. On Thursday, KCNA said the DPRK was ready to open relations with any country that respects independence and does not interfere in its internal affairs.

3. Japan-DPRK Relations

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN TO WORK WITH US, SKOREA TO EASE KOREAN TENSION," Tokyo, 9/21/00) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori said Thursday that Japan would work closely with the ROK and the US to entrench a new mood of reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. Mori announced that he would discuss with ROK President Kim Dae-Jung, who arrives on September 22 for a three-day visit, the progress from the inter- Korean summit. In an opening speech of the Japanese parliament, Mori said, "Progress has been made on the Korean peninsula since the North-South summit in June. To make the positive moves sustainable, the government will do its utmost and continue to cooperate closely with the United States and South Korea." Regarding his talks with Kim, Mori said, "I am going to discuss new developments in the Korean peninsula and to exchange views on Japan-South Korea relations. In late August, we had a 10th round of normalization talks and the government will continue to make tenacious efforts over these normalization talks." Mori also promised to improve Japan's ties with the PRC, ahead of an October 12-17 visit by PRC Premier Zhu Rongji. Mori said, "Sino-Japanese relations are the most important factor for the stability of the Asia-Pacific region. I will make my best efforts to advance the bilateral partnership toward the 21st century."

4. PRC and Russian Criticism of NMD

Reuters ("RUSSIA, CHINA AGAIN ATTACK U.S. MISSILE SHIELD PLAN," Geneva, 9/21/00) reported that during the final session of the United Nations arms control forum, Russian ambassador Vasily Sidorov and PRC envoy Hu Xiaodi Thursday denounced the proposed US missile shield system and Russia hinted that a new nuclear arms reduction treaty could not go ahead unless it was dropped. Both called for preserving the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty and for launching global negotiations aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. Hu said, "No small country would ever attack or threaten to attack the militarily most powerful country in the world unless it decides to commit suicide. It is only a clumsy excuse." Sidorov added, "We are convinced that the issue of missile proliferation can and must be dealt with without disrupting the ABM Treaty." He also linked maintaining the ABM treaty intact to progress on a future START-III. Sidorov said, "We support the immediate beginning of START-III negotiations...In so doing, we proceed from the fact that conclusion of START-III Treaty is not possible unless the ABM Treaty preserves its integrity."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Red-Cross Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL WANTS REUNION STATUS PROVIDED SECOND RED CROSS TALKS OPEN IN MT. KUMGANG," Seoul, 09/21/00) and The Korea Times (Joint Press Corps, "WHEREABOUTS OF FAMILIES TO BE CONFIRMED ALL AT ONCE," DPRK, 09/20/00) reported that in preparation for the upcoming reunions of separated family members, the ROK Red Cross asked the DPRK Red Cross on September 20 to confirm the whereabouts of the DPRK relatives of all 95,000 ROK citizens who have registered for the reunions. At the talks, the officials discussed procedural details in organizing two more exchange visits for separated relatives, probably in October and November. A three-member ROK delegation also proposed that both sides allow the family members who have already located each other to correspond starting next month. If the DRPK agrees to the idea, some 330 people who were chosen as preliminary candidates in the mid-August family reunions will be able to hear from their relatives.

2. Inter-Korea Railway Project

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "INTER-KOREAN RAILWAY PROJECT RAISES QUESTION OF VIOLATING TRUCE ACCORD," Seoul, 09/21/00) reported that amid the predominantly festive mood surrounding the restoration of the inter-Korean railway and the construction of an adjacent highway, some critics are raising questions about whether these projects violate the truce agreement that ended the Korean War (1950-53). They are also asking whether the ROK earned proper approval from the United Nations Command (UNC) for the historic inter-Korean ventures. These questions are based on the provisions of the Korean Armistice Agreement, which bans all persons from crossing the Military Demarcation Line or entering the Demilitarized Zone without the approval of the UNC. However, dismissing these allegations as groundless, the ROK Defense Ministry said it has taken all legal steps necessary for the inter-Korean projects and has been closely consulting with the UNC for their success. In announcing its overall plan for the cross-border ventures early this month, the ROK Defense Ministry made it clear that it would build solid cooperative relations with the UNC for the success of the inter-Korean projects.

The Korea Times ("INTER-KOREAN HIGHWAY TO BE NARROWER THAN PLANNED," Seoul, 09/20/00) reported that the ROK government has decided to narrow the width of the inter-Korean highway amid difficulties in clearing the Demilitarized Zone of landmines. The highway, which would restore the road section between Munsan in the ROK and Kaesong in the DPRK, was intended for eight lanes originally with only four lanes being paved this time in preparation for the sharp increase in inter-Korean economic exchanges in the future. But the ROK Defense Ministry proposed decreasing the width of the highway to four lanes at the National Security Council standing commission meeting Tuesday, citing problems in removing landmines. With the revision of the road construction plan, the size of areas in which landmine clearing operations are to be conducted will fall from 320,000 square meters to 200,000 square meters.

3. Asia-Europe Meeting

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "ASEM TO ADOPT DECLARATION ON KOREAN PEACE; SENIOR OFFICIALS REACH AGREEMENT ON FRAMEWORK TO GUIDE FUTURE OF GROUP FOR UPCOMING SUMMIT," Seoul, 09/21/00) and The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "ASEM TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTS ON S- N SUMMIT," Seoul, 09/20/00) reported that an ROK senior Foreign

Ministry official said on September 20 that senior officials from 26 Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) member countries agreed to adopt a Seoul Declaration on peace on the Korean Peninsula during the coming ASEM summit beginning October 20 in Seoul. The senior officials also paved the way for the DPRK to participate in various cooperative projects pushed by ASEM by deciding to abolish a regulation allowing only member countries to take part in the business. The ROK has pledged to support DPRK's entry into ASEM and its participation in the cooperative projects. But it has yet to reveal its position.

4. US-DPRK Nuclear Talks

Chosun Ilbo (Ju Yong-jung, "U.S., NK TO RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS," Seoul, 09/20/00) reported that the US special envoy to the DPRK Charles Kartman revealed on September 18 that the US and the DPRK will resume nuclear talks to broadly solve the current issues of both countries in New York early next week. Kartman announced that he and DPRK's Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye Kwan will participate in the meeting as the senior representatives of the two countries to discuss each other's interests such as DPRK's nuclear and missile projects and the issue of terrorism. US government sources said next week's meeting could considerably ease the somewhat stringent relations between the US and DPRK ever since the American Airline's security check on DPRK's nominal head Kim Yong-nam, at Frankfurt Airport on September 5.

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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
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

Leanne Payton: lbpat1@smtp.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