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In today's Report:

I. United States

- [1. Four-Party Talks Briefing](#)
- [2. DPRK Defections](#)
- [3. Profile of DPRK Leader](#)
- [4. ROK Strikes](#)

II. Republic of Korea

- [1. New Statistics on DPRK Foreign Relations](#)
- [2. Developments in DPRK-Russia Relations](#)
- [3. ROK Strikes](#)
- [4. PRC Concerned Over Nuclear Waste Deal](#)

III. Russian Federation

- [1. RF-US Relations on Trade and Arms](#)
- [2. RF Uranium Exports to US](#)
- [3. RF-DPRK Consultation To Take Place](#)
- [4. DPRK Media on 1996 Results and 1997 Tasks](#)
- [5. RF Analyst Lauds DPRK Leader](#)
- [6. RF-PRC Relations](#)

IV. People's Republic of China

- [1. DPRK Criticizes Japanese Militarism](#)
- [2. Japanese Foreign Minister Visits ROK](#)
- [3. Developments in PRC-US Relations](#)
- [4. Japanese Prime Minister's ASEAN Trip](#)
- [5. Japan's Relations with Asia and the US](#)
- [6. PRC Supports UN Peace Plan for Guatemala](#)

I. United States

1. Four-Party Talks Briefing

US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, JAN. 21," USIA Transcript, 01/22/97) said he had no new information concerning the venue for the joint US-ROK briefing of the DPRK on the four-party peace talks proposal scheduled for January 29. "We still are trying to work out with the North Koreans and the Republic of Korea where those talks would be held, and we don't have the final decision on that," Burns said. Burns told reporters, "I have asked that as soon as a decision is made about the site for those talks, that we give that to you."

2. DPRK Defections

The Associated Press ("2 N. KOREA FAMILIES DEFECT," Seoul, 01/22/97) reported that two families defected from the DPRK to the ROK by boat on Wednesday. ROK patrol boats found the eight North Koreans adrift south of the border and towed them to a nearby island, officials said. A police helicopter took them to the port of Incheon, west of Seoul. The defection was the first major escape by sea from the DPRK since the 1987 defection of an eleven-member family to Seoul by boat via Japan. The defection followed that of a seventeen-member family that arrived in the ROK December 9 after a 27-day journey through the PRC into Hong Kong, the largest single flight from the DPRK since the 1950-53 Korean War.

3. Profile of DPRK Leader

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[I. United States](#)

- [1. Four-Party Talks Briefing](#)
- [2. DPRK Defections](#)
- [3. Profile of DPRK Leader](#)
- [4. ROK Strikes](#)

[II. Republic of Korea](#)

- [1. New Statistics on DPRK Foreign Relations](#)
- [2. Developments in DPRK-Russia Relations](#)
- [3. ROK Strikes](#)
- [4. PRC Concerned Over Nuclear Waste Deal](#)

[III. Russian Federation](#)

- [1. RF-US Relations on Trade and Arms](#)
- [2. RF Uranium Exports to US](#)
- [3. RF-DPRK Consultation To Take Place](#)
- [4. DPRK Media on 1996 Results and 1997 Tasks](#)
- [5. RF Analyst Lauds DPRK Leader](#)
- [6. RF-PRC Relations](#)

[IV. People's Republic of China](#)

- [1. DPRK Criticizes Japanese Militarism](#)
- [2. Japanese Foreign Minister Visits ROK](#)
- [3. Developments in PRC-US Relations](#)
- [4. Japanese Prime Minister's ASEAN Trip](#)
- [5. Japan's Relations with Asia and the US](#)
- [6. PRC Supports UN Peace Plan for Guatemala](#)

I. United States

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since the 1950-53 Korean War.

3. Profile of DPRK Leader

The Washington Post (Kevin Sullivan, "N. KOREA'S NEW KIM CULT REMAKING SON INTO FATHER," Seoul, 01/22/97) published a profile of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, focusing on the "fantastic image" of him held by his followers and promoted by the propaganda machine he personally directs. The article described how the image and "the near-religious Kim personality cult" dominate DPRK society, posing unique challenges to US and other diplomats on the eve of historic negotiations aimed at creating a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula. The article noted that it is believed no American has ever met Kim, and that DPRK observers are divided over whether Kim places more emphasis on feeding the population or arming the military. However, it noted, there is wide agreement that Kim's fervent support among his 22 million people is still formidable. "The Kim personality cult in North Korea is without peer -- it eclipses Maoism at its height, because of the hermetically sealed nature of the society and the religious fervor with which people respond," said James T. Laney, US ambassador to the ROK. "To the extent that can be transferred to an heir, it has been." The article also noted that Kim Jong-il's assumption of power following his father's death has been methodical but is now complete, despite the fact he has yet to formally assume all his father's titles. Laney and others say Kim has waited before taking formal power to nurture his image as his father's slowly recedes. Many observers say the younger Kim realizes that his stature still is not nearly as great as his father's. However, Kim Myong-chol, an unofficial DPRK spokesman in Japan, said the world should not underestimate Kim: "North Korea is a very small country, but the Americans should never think that way. Kim Jong-il is a canny fox."

4. ROK Strikes

Reuters ("S.KOREAN OPPOSITION, UNION PUT PRESSURE ON KIM," Seoul, 01/22/97) reported that, in a direct challenge to President Kim Young-sam, opposition parties Wednesday rejected his offer to reopen debate on the new labor relations law. Park Sun-sook of the main opposition National Congress for New Politics said a meeting of officials from her party and the United Liberal Democratic Party decided any debate in parliament would occur only on condition the law was first revoked. "Any debate in parliament must be made on the condition that the law is made null and void," Park said. Meanwhile, Korean Confederation of Trade Unions leader Kwon Young-kil and several deputies left Myongdong Cathedral for the first time since the law was pressed through parliament December 26 in order to lead 4,000 workers in a noisy protest march over the law after a partial response from workers to Wednesday's strike call. The opposition's announcement and the one-hour march came just a day after a Kim's major reversal in agreeing to reopen parliamentary debate on the labor relations law as well as the new national security law passed at the same session. However, Kim still maintains that repealing the legislation outright would violate the constitution.

II. Republic of Korea

1. New Statistics on DPRK Foreign Relations

The DPRK reportedly concluded 39 agreements with 21 nations last year, 53 percent of which dealt with economic issues. In a statistics book released by a ROK government agency yesterday, the DPRK signed eight agreements with Russia, five with the PRC, six with East European countries, four with Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian countries, three with African countries, two with West European countries and one with the US. The remaining eight agreements included the light-water reactor supply agreement with the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). A noteworthy statistic showed Russia and the DPRK stepping up their relations in a wide range of

areas, including investment, trade, medicine, science technology and culture. Russia and the DPRK are currently negotiating the replacement of their 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance with a more basic agreement of friendship. (The Korea Herald, "NORTH CLINCHES 39 AGREEMENTS LAST YEAR," Seoul, 01/22/97)

2. Developments in DPRK-Russia Relations

The DPRK and Russia are currently undertaking talks aimed at forging new friendly relations but excluding any form of military cooperation. The talks are aimed at producing a friendship treaty to replace the 1961 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance, which was scrapped last September. Gregori Karasin, vice-minister of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday to open the talks. An official of the Russian foreign ministry stated that the new treaty will be at the same level as the one concluded between Russia and Vietnam. A DPRK delegation is expected to visit Moscow in April to conclude the treaty. The Russian-Vietnamese Friendship Treaty is an economic and cultural treaty with no mention of military cooperation. (Chosun Ilbo, "NORTH AND RUSSIA DISCUSS NEW TIES EXCLUDING MILITARY," Seoul, 01/22/97)

3. ROK Strikes

ROK President Kim Young-sam met opposition leaders Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-pil as well as the ruling New Korea Party (NKP) chairman Lee Hong-koo at Chong Wa Dae yesterday. They discussed measures for resolving the prolonged standoff between the government and the labor unions. President Kim stated at the meeting that he is ready to listen to discussions on rewriting the Labor Relations Law and the National Security Planning Law if they take place at the National Assembly. He then emphasized, "It is important above all else to reopen the National Assembly. The current dispute could be resolved if the ruling party and the opposition discuss issues together by creating special committees or whatever other measures are necessary." After the meeting, chairman Kim Dae-jung of the National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) stated, "In saying that it is wrong to deny the 'de facto' existence of plural unions in South Korea, President Kim revealed that he shares the same position with the NCNP." President Kim also stated that he would issue instructions to defer the arrest of leaders of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) currently holed up at Myongdong Cathedral in downtown Seoul. However, President Kim rejected the two opposition leaders' demands for the nullification and reconsideration of the Labor Relations Law and the National Security Planning Law, saying "the laws cannot be reconsidered as it would be unconstitutional to do so; they were proclaimed based on constitutional procedures in accordance with the request from the National Assembly speaker." Kim Dae-jung evaluated the meeting positively by stating that "great progress was made in some areas even though some fundamental issues, including the nullification of the railroad bills, have not been resolved." In contrast, Kim Jong-pil presented a negative evaluation and stated that the meeting "broke up in a stalemate." After the meeting, the two opposition leaders agreed to continue to push together for an acknowledgment from the government that the railroad bills were illegal, signaling that the standoff would continue for some time into the future. (Joong-ang Ilbo, "PRESIDENT KIM SAYS REWRITING OF LABOR BILLS POSSIBLE," Seoul, 01/22/97)

4. PRC Concerned Over Nuclear Waste Deal

PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesman Sun Quefang, responding at a regular news briefing to a question by a reporter regarding the nuclear waste agreement between Taiwan and the DPRK, stated that "This is a delicate matter which involves many complex factors... the PRC is interested in relevant reports and will probe for more details." (Hankyoreh Shinmun, "PRC CONCERNED WITH TAIWANESE NUCLEAR WASTE TOO," Beijing, 01/22/97)

III. Russian Federation

1. RF-US Relations on Trade and Arms

Pravda-Five's Anton Surikov commented on the US opposition to RF exports of arms (to Cyprus, Colombia, Iran, the PRC, and the ROK), space technology (to Brazil), and nuclear power plant equipment (to Iran) ("WAR AGAINST RUSSIAN WEAPONS," Moscow, 1, 1/15/97). He argued that the reasons for US opposition to these exports do not lie in "trivial" trade competition but are part of a policy designed to destroy the RF military industrial complex. In particular, Surikov maintained that the US undertook "great efforts" to discourage RF arms exports to the PRC by pointing out the possibility that the PRC might use those weapons against the RF sometime in the future. On this subject, the author dismissed the idea by presenting a counter-argument that the RF was "very careful" in selling to the PRC only those systems that could not be used effectively in the environment between the PRC and the RF. Surikov maintains that "the real reason for Washington's concern" is that these weapons could prove to be "very useful" in the event of a conflict between the PRC and the pro-American regime on Taiwan.

2. RF Uranium Exports to US

According to a report by the Nezavisimaia Gazeta, RF Atomic Energy Minister Viktor Mikhailov stated that, in 1997, the RF would increase its enriched uranium exports to the US relative to the 12 tons exported in 1996 and the 6 tons exported in 1995. Mikhailov also stated that, by 1999, the quantity exported would reach 30 tons ("HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FOR THE USA," Moscow, 4, 1/16/97). The RF currently receives about US\$24 million per ton of highly enriched weapon-grade uranium-235 extracted from ballistic missile warheads. According to the January 1994 RF-US agreement, approximately 500 tons of enriched uranium are to be sold to the US within 20 years.

3. RF-DPRK Consultation To Take Place

According to a report by Sovetskaya Rossia, Grigoriy Karasin, RF Deputy Foreign Minister in charge of Asian affairs, stated that the Deputy Foreign Ministers of the RF and the DPRK would hold consultations on January 21-24 to discuss the new RF-DPRK treaty ("DPRK: APPEAL TO PEOPLE: CONTINUATION OF THE 'DIFFICULT MARCH'," Moscow, 7, 1/16/97).

4. DPRK Media on 1996 Results and 1997 Tasks

Sovetskaya Rossia ("DPRK: APPEAL TO PEOPLE: CONTINUATION OF THE 'DIFFICULT MARCH'," Moscow, 7, 1/16/97) reported that on the occasion of the New Year DPRK newspapers "Nodong Shinmun," "Choson Inmigon" and "Ch'onnen Chonwi" published a joint editorial which called the 1996 a year of hard tests and victories in the "difficult march." Noting that the new year marks the third anniversary of Kim Il-sung's death, the newspapers said that "we must consistently implement his testament and make our country, our Motherland even more strong and rich, even more demonstrate to the whole world the might of the socialism of our brand." The newspapers said the central task is to solve the food issue in order to drastically improve the people's lives. They also stressed that Kim Jong-il's proposals to create a Democratic Confederated Republic of Korea and the national consolidation program should be pursued on the basis of the three principles of independence, peaceful unification and national consolidation, according to the scheme of "two systems and two governments within the single nation and single state framework".

5. RF Analyst Lauds DPRK Leader

Duel ("THE SCIENCE OF KOREAN VICTORIES," Moscow, 3, # 1(23) January 1997) published a half-

page article by V. M. Klimov, Chairman, Executive Committee, RF National Salvation Front, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Kim Jong-il's appointment as the Commander-in-Chief of the Korean People's Army of the DPRK on 12/24/91. The author dwelt on the Korean War, on "American war science know-how" as a result of which the USSR was destroyed and the DPRK lost its strongest ally, and on DPRK nuclear activities and its military build-up. The author argued that the US-DPRK Agreed Framework symbolizes a strategic victory for the DPRK leader and that "during the five years of being the Commander-in-Chief, Kim Jong-il has displayed that which a country's supreme military leader exists for, that is an ability to defend it from enemies without losses and defeats." The author made many unfavorable comparisons, wishing the RF in its dealing with the NATO enlargement and US strategic anti-missile defense plans could follow the example of the DPRK.

6. RF-PRC Relations

Rossiyskaya Gazeta's Vsevolod Ovchinnikov ("THE WORLD WITHOUT THE LEADERS AND THE LEAD," Moscow, 7, 1/15/97) commented on the global context of PRC State Council Premier Li Peng's visit to the RF. The author maintained that the US, while paying lip service to RF democracy and market reforms, actively supports that process only as long as it concerns the dismantling of the former Soviet military potential, while at the same time toughly opposing the RF in the world markets in order to facilitate the decay of its scientific and technological capacity and to turn it into a "banana republic without bananas." In Asia, as soon as the USSR collapsed, the US obviously decided to destabilize the PRC by using both inter-ethnic discords and contradictions between rich and poor provinces. In the author's words, the US "practically started forming an anti-Beijing group consisting of South Korea, Taiwan and other Pacific allies," and with this new geopolitical situation a strategic partnership between RF and PRC is necessary. Considering the recent development of RF-PRC relations, the author called the intention to sign the RF-PRC declaration on international relations during this Spring RF-PRC summit as quite timely.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta ("RUSSIAN AND CHINESE ARE BROTHERS FOREVER," Moscow, 1, 1/15/97) reported that RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov sent a message to all defense councils within the RF Armed Forces, saying that the RF pursues a policy of strategic partnership with PRC in the 21st century and that the negotiations on troops reductions in the RF-PRC border areas are appearing successful, stressing simultaneously that "any concessions undermining our security are out of question." The Minister's message has been explained by the fact that recently the mass media publicized "a number of news and commentaries casting doubts about the correctness of the RF official military and political policy towards the PRC."

IV. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK Criticizes Japanese Militarism

The China Daily reported on January 21 that the DPRK's Rodong Shinmun published a commentary on January 18 asking Takami Eto, a member of the Japanese House of Representatives, to apologize openly for his recent statement. ("JAPANESE `MILITARIST' CRITICIZED BY DPRK," A4). On January 13, Eto reportedly stated that the treaty that effectively put the Korean Peninsula under Japanese rule was a "country-to-country" treaty and should not be considered as an "invasion." The China Daily also added that Eto's comments have triggered widespread condemnation on the Korean peninsula.

The DPRK's Rodong Shinmun commented January 18 on an analysis report issued by the Japanese Defense Bureau Research Institute earlier this month, stating that the declaration of the so-called "Chinese military threat" by the Japanese authorities was merely an excuse to accelerate its militarization, People's Liberation Army Daily ("DPRK CRITICIZES JAPANESE PROPAGANDA OF

'CHINESE MILITARY THREAT'," Pyongyang, A4, 1/19/97) reported. The commentary also stated that, despite Japanese perceptions that the US influence in the Asian-Pacific area has been reduced, the US continues to give tacit consent to "Japanese militarism."

2. Japanese Foreign Minister Visits ROK

The Jie Fang Daily ("JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS ROK," A4, 1/16/97) reported that, on January 15, the Japanese Foreign Minister made a 17-hour visit to the ROK. It stated that the purpose of the visit was to pacify the ROK's discontent. Last week, the ROK expressed a "strong regret" to Japan in response to its decision to use a private fund to compensate Korean women who were used as sex slaves by the Japanese army during WWII.

3. Developments in PRC-US Relations

The People's Daily reported that on January 17 in Beijing, the remains of some US servicemen who died during the Second World War were handed over to US Ambassador to the PRC James Sasser by Mei Ping, the Director of the Department of American and Ocean Affairs of the PRC Foreign Ministry ("REMAINS OF US SERVICEMEN HOME," Beijing, A2, 1/18/97). In a separate account, the China Daily has reported that the remains will be sent to a Hawaiian lab to determine the identity of each crew member ("GI REMAINS HEAD HOME FOR ANALYSIS," A2, 1/16/97).

The Jie Fang Daily reported that PRC-US ties in the field of science and technology took an important step forward after the two sides reached a key agreement in Beijing on January 16 ("ACCORD BINDS SINO-US SCIENTIFIC TIES," Beijing, A4, 1/17/97). It also stated that the US National Academy of Sciences agreed to devote most of its funds in the coming years for international cooperation involving programs that will bring together the most outstanding young scientists of the two countries. According to the report, the event marked the first time since 1988 that the US national Academy of Sciences had sent such a high-level delegation to the PRC and signed a joint statement with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In an interview with the Xinhua News Agency, the President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Zhou Guangzou described the PRC-US scientific meeting as "very successful and very important." He also stated that the talks "covered major issues faced by the two countries and the world as a whole" including "the changing scientific and technological environments, sustainable development, and enhancing the partnership between the two countries through contacts between young scientists -- their future scientific leaders."

According to a report by the China Daily, a senior PRC trade official stated that bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the PRC and the US have progressed but that many difficulties and barriers remain. ("CHINA-US TIES PROGRESS, BUT BARRIERS REMAIN," A5, 1/16/97) While meeting with the US Senate Finance Committee Chairman Williams Roth in Beijing on January 15, Shi Guangsheng, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (Moftec), stated that the "Most Favored Nation" treatment is actually not a preferential one. He added that the MFN is a normal trade arrangement between the PRC and the US and is beneficial to both countries because it serves as a foundation for bilateral trade. On the matter of the trade deficit with the PRC, Shi stated that although a trade deficit exists, it is not as large as the US media have declared because the PRC and the US "use different methodologies to calculate the amount." Shi also stated that, although the PRC could import more goods from the US, the US government has blocked some of its exports, especially high-technology products. On the issue of the PRC's trade with Hong Kong, Shi stated that the PRC would consider it as international trade as it is conducted between a sovereignty and its separated customs territory. As such, Shi stated that the PRC would allow Hong Kong to develop trade relationships with other countries under the basic law.

According to a report by the China Daily, PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesman Shen Guofang stated in

Beijing on January 16 that the US should not link the PRC's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status with the Hong Kong issue as they are unrelated matters ("MFN DECREE UNRELATED TO HK," A1, 1/17/97). A member of a US Congressional delegation visiting the PRC stated recently that the US probably would not grant the PRC permanent MFN status this year and that its decision to grant such a status would depend on the situation in Hong Kong after 1997. Addressing the Congressman's remarks, Shen replied that the vast majority of Hong Kong residents were confident about their future and that US politicians shouldn't worry about the situation. Shen also stated that the US had extended the MFN status to the PRC as a trade arrangement based on reciprocal and mutually-beneficial cooperation. As such, Shen argued that "reciprocal and mutually-beneficial cooperation," rather than "preferential treatment," was the basis for normal economic and trade contacts between the PRC and the US and that, as such, annual discussions on the issue are "a waste of time" that won't help develop bilateral trade.

4. Japanese Prime Minister's ASEAN Trip

A commentary by the Jie Fang Daily stated that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's 8-day visit to the five countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) had one subject: "Asianism" ("HASHIMOTO'S `ASIANISM' PUTS POLITICS IN COMMAND," A4, 1/16/97). It also stated that the core of Hashimoto's "Asianism" is the issue of regional strategic security. The commentary argued that, although the primary purpose of Hashimoto's visit should have been to focus on economic issues, Hashimoto's visit showed that Japan's policy towards ASEAN countries placed political considerations above economic ones. As such, the commentary stated that Japan's policy towards the ASEAN countries had "put the cart before the horse" and that it would have no connection with the "stability" of the area nor give any help to Japan's domestic reforms.

5. Japan's Relations with Asia and the US

The China Daily ("JAPANESE LEADER URGES CLOSER TIES TO ASIA, US," A11, 1/21/97) reported that on January 20, Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto called for deeper cooperation with its Asian neighbors and sought to strengthen ties with the US. In a speech he made to parliament, Hashimoto stated that "for Japan's diplomacy, it is extremely important that the Asia-Pacific region maintains political stability and economic development based on open regional cooperation." Hashimoto also stated that Japan hoped to intensify cooperation with Asia in order to tackle the global problems of population, food, energy and the environment. At the same time, the Prime Minister also noted the importance of ties with the US, particularly its security alliance. He stated that Japan would proceed with a review of defense guidelines, as agreed last year, to enhance its security cooperation with the US.

6. PRC Supports UN Peace Plan for Guatemala

The China Daily reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang stated on Jan. 21 that the PRC hopes that the Guatemala peace process will proceed well under UN supervision ("CHINA APPROVES US PEACE PLAN FOR GUATEMALA," A1, 1/22/97). Shen also told a regular press conference in Beijing that Guatemala had recognized the "gravity and sensibility" of the Taiwan issue and vowed to observe Resolution 2758 of the UN. Made in 1972, this resolution removed Taiwan from the UN and made the PRC the legitimate representative of all China. In this regard, Shen stated that Guatemala had agreed to use the resolution as a guide for its relevant activities within the UN. On January 20, PRC Permanent Representative to the UN Qin Huasun stated that, since the PRC and Guatemala have reached an agreement on the Taiwan issue, the PRC supports the UN-monitored peace process in Guatemala.

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