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IN TODAY'S REPORT:

I. United States

- 1. Kim Dae-jung's US Visit
- 2. DPRK Famine
- 3. ROK Financial Crisis
- 4. ROK Election
- 5. US Nuclear Policy
- 6. South Africa to Recognize PRC

II. Republic of Korea

- 1. ROK-Japan Fishery Agreement
- 2. ROK Air Force Crash

III. Russian Federation

- 1. ROK Presidential Election
- 2. Japanese Reaction to ROK Election
- 3. ROK Elections: Effect on ROK Financial Crisis
- 4. Pardon of Former ROK Presidents
- 5. RF Security Policy
- 6. RF President to Visit Japan and Malaysia
- 7. RF Missile Development
- 8. RF Nuclear Waste Storage
- 9. PRC Military Shakeup
- 10. PRC-South Africa Nuclear Cooperation

I. United States

1. Kim Dae-jung's US Visit

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("WHITE HOUSE SAYS NO DATE YET FOR VISIT BY S. KOREA'S

KIM," Washington, 12/23/97) reported that an unnamed White House spokeswoman said Tuesday that reports that ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung will make an official visit to the US on January 10 are "strictly a rumor." She added that US President Bill Clinton's recent telephone conversation with Kim was "purely a congratulatory call."

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA KIM DAE JUNG PLANS TO VISIT U.S. JAN. 10," Seoul, 12/23/97) reported that Japan's Kyodo news service, citing the ROK Yonhap News Agency, said that ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung plans to visit the US around January 10 to meet President Bill Clinton and ask him for cooperation regarding the ROK economic crisis. Kyodo also reported that the ROK's Chosun Ilbo said Wednesday that Kim has also been considering visiting Japan. Kim will also meet International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Michel Camdessus to ask for cooperation, according to Kyodo.

2. DPRK Famine

The Los Angeles Times carried an analytical article (Rone Tempest, "STARVING A NATION WITH THE POLITICS OF ILLUSION," Xiaogang, PRC, 12/23/97) that compared the current DPRK famine to the PRC famine of 1959-1961. The article said, "The inefficient, state-owned farms and the philosophy of self-determination crafted under the cultish rule of the late Kim Il Sung are eerily similar to the do-it-alone model of development that predominated during China's famine." The article quoted Harvard University economist Amartya Sen as writing, "No substantial famine has ever occurred in a democratic country where the government tolerates opposition, accepts the electoral process and can be publicly criticized." California Institute of Technology demographic historian James Z. Lee stated, "The main comparison you could make between China and North Korea is this extreme isolation. The Sino-Soviet split, coming at the time that it did, created a kind of isolation in China much as North Korea is isolated today."

3. ROK Financial Crisis

Reuters (Yoo Choon-sik, "KIM DAE-JUNG'S REMARKS RATTLE S.KOREA ECONOMY," Seoul, 12/23/97) reported that ROK financial markets fell sharply Tuesday following President-elect Kim Dae-jung's reported remarks on the country's economic crisis. Kim was quoted by the Chosun Ilbo as saying on Monday, "We don't know whether we would go bankrupt tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. I can't sleep since I was briefed." He added, "The government did this to our country. Our response to the crisis must be accurate and no single mistake must be allowed." However, Kim Min-seok, senior vice-spokesman for the Kim Dae-jung's National Congress for New Politics party, stated, "The president-elect did not mean there was a real possibility of a national bankruptcy but wanted to express his willingness to undertake restructuring." Assistant central bank governor Lee Kang-nam stated, "given the current level of usable foreign currency reserves and expected money inflows from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, sovereign defaults will never happen."

The Associated Press ("WORLD BANK SET TO OK S. KOREA LOAN," Washington, 12/23/97) reported that anonymous World Bank officials said that the bank is prepared to offer a new US$3 billion loan to the ROK. The officials said that the bank would take the unusual step of providing the funds immediately instead of spreading them out over a fixed time period in order to help the ROK as rapidly as possible.

4. ROK Election

The Los Angeles Times carried an opinion article (Tom Plate, "A KOREAN LEADER FOR THESE TIMES," 12/23/97) which argued that Kim Dae-jung is the proper person to lead the ROK during its time of financial crisis. The article quoted Kim as saying, "My main priority will be to bring about

national reconciliation. I will seek legislation to prohibit discrimination against any Korean for any reason. I will seek legislation to prohibit political reprisals." He added, "Korea has been too greatly affected by government policies and the official opposition--and by corruption and crime. This is a recipe for failure. Corruption is especially pronounced in government and the upper echelons." Kim also said that the US should indefinitely maintain its troops in the Asia-Pacific region, as "This helps suppress any possibility of military hegemony by China or Japan." He added, "Please tell North Korea that insisting on U.S. withdrawal is not wise. In the struggle between Japan and China, left alone, Korea would be a small shrimp caught between two whales. And if the U.S. were to withdraw, our defense budget would skyrocket." Kim called on the US to organize Korean peninsula peace talks involving not only the two Koreas but also Japan, China, Russia, and Mongolia. However, he warned against expansion of Japan's military role. Kim stated, "U.S. policy is sometimes naive about Japan--be cautious. Be wary of a revival from the ultraconservatives there. Notice that Tokyo has showed no real national repentance for the atrocities during World War II. Many East Asians are worried about your new security treaty [with Japan]. It could inadvertently and unintentionally drive Japan toward remilitarization. I understand fully why the U.S. is going in that direction--U.S. fear of China is driving this. But you must understand that China has fears, too."

5. US Nuclear Policy

The Associated Press (Scott Sonner, "U.S. RELEASES NUCLEAR SECRETS," Washington, 12/23/97) reported that newly declassified US government documents show that the US set off more than two dozen atomic blasts from 1961 to 1973 to study whether nuclear explosives could be used to build harbors, tunnels and canals. Energy Secretary Federico Pena said that the release of the previously secret material was part of the Clinton administration's evolving policy of openness at the Department of Energy. Pena stated, "Starting today ... only materials with a compelling national security interest will be classified." Overall, the US detonated 35 nuclear explosions in 27 tests of peaceful uses for nuclear explosives. Russia has released information that the former Soviet Union detonated 173 nuclear explosives in 156 peaceful nuclear tests, the Department of Energy said. Pena said the department also was releasing 270,000 pages of previously classified documents about plutonium processing for the Manhattan Project as well as an abandoned proposal to build a lake to store contaminated wastewater at a reservation near Richland, Washington. The documents will be publicly available on the Internet.

6. South Africa to Recognize PRC

The Associated Press ("CHINA, SOUTH AFRICA AGREE TO TIES," Pretoria, 12/22/97) and Reuters ("SOUTH AFRICA OPENS CHINA TIES JAN 1, TAIWAN DEAL AGREED," Johannesburg, 12/22/97) reported that South Africa said on Monday that diplomatic ties with the PRC will take effect on January 1, 1998, thus ending South Africa's relations with Taiwan. It also said that South Africa and Taiwan had reached a satisfactory arrangement to protect all their other ties bar diplomatic recognition from January 1. South Africa is the largest of the 30 countries which currently recognize Taiwan.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-Japan Fishery Agreement

The ROK and Japan seem to be moving towards concluding a revision of their 1965 fisheries agreement by the end of 1997. Observers expect a new accord to be completed during a visit by Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi to Seoul this weekend. Koreshige Anami, director-general for Asian affairs at the Japanese Foreign Ministry, met with his ROK counterpart Ryu Kwang-sok in Seoul yesterday afternoon to set up Obuchi's visit. Anami reportedly expressed Japan's hopes to

conclude fisheries talks during Obuchi's trip. (Korea Herald, "ROK, JAPAN TO CONCLUDE NEW FISHERIES ACCORD SOON," 12/23/97)

2. ROK Air Force Crash

Special investigators of the ROK Ministry of National Defense (MOND) concluded that the crash of a KF-16 fighter September 18 was due to engine failure when a corroded Pf4 tube caused the sudden shut-off of fuel to the aircraft. [Ed. note: See "ROK Air Force Crash" in the ROK Section of the October 16 Daily Report.] Investigators said that lubricants and adhesive used in construction of the tube produced chlorine elements that accelerated corrosion of its outer metal sheath. Subsequently, ROK MOND holds the US manufacturer Pratt and Whitney responsible for the incident, not Samsung Aerospace. The ROK MOND is organizing a team to seek legal compensation, while replacing the defective part in the Air Force's fifty KF-16s in order to resume operation. The last accident led to a suspension of KF-16 operations. (Chosun Ilbo, "MOND ATTACHES BLAME FOR KF-16 CRASH TO P&W," 12/23/97)

III. Russian Federation

1. ROK Presidential Election

Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("REFORMIST LEADER MADE A SLIP ON CORRUPTION," Moscow, 4, 12/19/97) reported that the 15th ROK Presidential election was carried out "without excesses." Moreover, with more than 75 percent voter participation, the ROK might be an object of envy on the part of many other countries. The article noted that Kim Young-sam, who was elected President 5 years ago, has lost "practically all his political authority" and earned the nickname "President Corruption" due to numerous corruption cases involving his relatives.

2. Japanese Reaction to ROK Election

Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("UPON REACHING AN OLD AGE THE 'ETERNAL OPPOSITIONIST' WILL HAVE TO LEARN AGAIN," Moscow, 4, 12/20/97) reported that Kim Dae-jung, who has a more-than 40 year record of fighting the "hated military dictatorships," and in this respect is somewhat akin to Nelson Mandela of South Africa, won the ROK presidential election with 40.3 percent of votes against 38.7 percent for his chief rival, thus becoming the 9th ROK President. Segodnya's author noted that Japanese Premier Ryutaro Hashimoto was the first among foreign leaders to congratulate Kim Dae-jung. Yet the new ROK President is still watched suspiciously by Japanese businessmen who consider him a radical politician associated with ROK trade unions and therefore possibly prone to ignore International Monetary Fund (IMF) recommendations. That could hamper ROK economic revival and also have some negative implications for Japanese economy.

3. ROK Elections: Effect on ROK Financial Crisis

Izvestia's Aleksandr Platkovskiy ("KIM REPLACED KIM IN THE BLUE HOUSE," Moscow, 3, 12/20/97) reported that the economic crisis in the ROK greatly helped him Kim Dae-jung to win the presidency. The author remarked that, ironically, Kim, who is well-known for his democratic principles, will now actually have to play the role of a "ruler of hard hand and strong will." To overcome the crisis the outgoing ROK President Kim Young-sam has already "let the IMF surgeons into the country. Now they are cutting the tender flesh of the economy without anesthesia.... Kim Dae-jung did not hide his negative attitude toward the IMF proposed program. But unwillingly, he put his signature on it... However that in no way means that under changed conditions he'll agree 'to dance to the tune' played by international officials. If ROK corporations and trade unions object to the IMF-recommended austerity policies, then Kim Dae-jung will have to either hold on against them

or "to lead a united front of the struggle against 'imperialism and neocolonialism'."

4. Pardon of Former ROK Presidents

Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY," Moscow, 4, 12/23/97) reported that outgoing ROK President Kim Young-sam, after talks with the President elect Kim Dae-jung, granted amnesty to former ROK presidents Roh Tae-woo and Chun Doo-hwan, as well as to 23 of their associates. Segodnya's author argued that by granting the amnesty, Kim Young-sam bears in mind a need to ensure a peaceful future for himself after February nest year, when Kim Dae-jung comes into the Blue House.

Kommersant-daily's Yevgeniy Bazhanov [Director, Institute for Contemporary International Studies, Diplomatic Academy, RF Foreign Ministry] and Andrey Ivanov ("NEW PRESIDENT OF KOREA DOES NOT BEAR GRUDGES," Moscow, 5, 12/023/97) commented on the ROK presidential amnesty to ex-presidents Roh Tae-woo and Chun Doo-hwan. The authors noted that "to imprison or even kill opponents in South Korea was a rule of political struggle. Power-usurping generals did that. Kim Young-sam, who sent Roh Tae-woo and Chun Doo-hwan behind bars, did that, despite the fact that he himself became President with the last South Korean dictator's financial support. Kim Dae-jung, nicknamed the "Korean Sakharov" for his long democratic struggle, who actually released the two ex-presidents from prison, "broke the tradition." By doing so, "he is trying to find ways to achieve national unity and overcome the regionalism in politics." Turning to the international implications of the election, the authors argued that "Kim Dae-jung's election promises changes in relations with Russia, which he visited more than once. In particular, on an invitation from the Diplomatic Academy of the RF Foreign Ministry in 1992, he submitted a doctorate degree thesis based on his book 'South Korea: Dramas and Promises of Democracy.' The new President consider Russia a most important partner to South Korea, because it is the only country interested in a united and strong Korea as a counterbalance to China and Japan. 'Perhaps, I am the only Korean politician who regards Russia with respect', Kim Dae-jung told one of the authors of this article. Alas, the Russia establishment has not treated the world-famous Korean dissenter with a reciprocal attitude, evidently not realizing that he might become the Number One Person of South Korea. And even after it happened Russia turned out to be the last to congratulate Kim Dae-jung."

5. RF Security Policy

Izvestia's Sergey Chugayev ("SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STATE OF RUSSIA IS THE MAIN THREAT TO IT," Moscow, 1, 12/19/97) and Kommersant-daily's Nikolai Gulko ("COURIERS HAVE AT LAST BROUGHT THE NATIONAL SECURITY CONCEPT TO YELTSIN," Moscow, 3, 12/19/97) reported that RF President Boris Yeltsin on December 17 signed a 35 page document titled "Concept of the National Security of the RF" drafted by RF Security Council. The document said in particular that, in case of an armed conflict, the RF will use "all" available means, which implies a possibility of nuclear weapons use. However the document acknowledged that today and in the future an external threat is of a low probability, and that the main dangers exist "in the internal political, internal economic, and spiritual spheres." The Concept is to serve as a basis for drafting the RF "defense doctrine" and "economic security doctrine."

6. RF President to Visit Japan and Malaysia

Nezavisimaia gazeta ("R.F. PRESIDENTIAL VISITS TO THE EAST PLANNED," Moscow, 1, 12/17/97) reported that, according to "a source in the Kremlin," RF President Boris Yeltsin plans to visit Japan and Malaysia next January-February. In Kuala Lumpur he will attend the next summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

7. RF Missile Development

Segodnya ("MISSILE MEN GET ARMED," Moscow, 1, 12/15/97) reported that, according to sources in the RF Defense Ministry, the new Topol-M mobile missile complex will be deployed in the RF Strategic Nuclear Force (RVSN) some time "this December." It will eventually serve as the main missile of the RVSN.

8. RF Nuclear Waste Storage

Segodnya's Viktor Titov ("FRANCE HELPS RUSSIA TO DISARM ITSELF," Moscow, 1, 12/17/97) and Izvestia ("NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY," Moscow, 1, 12/18/97) reported that a nuclear waste storage facility began operation in Novosibirsk, Siberia. The construction was financed by France under an intergovernmental agreement. It is the only facility in the RF designed to store lithium hydride released from the nuclear weapons dismantling process and its capacity is 120 tons.

9. PRC Military Shakeup

Sovetskaya Rossia ("P.L.A. TOP POSITIONS FILLED," Moscow, 3, 12/23/97) reported that, according to sources close to the PRC defense establishment, General Li Sinlian, former Shenyang Military District Commander, was appointed the new Commander of the Beijing Military District, which is considered the most important in the PRC. The appointment is believed to signify PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin's steps to consolidate his positions within the People's Liberation Army of China. Also upon Jiang Zemin's initiative, the People's Armed Police of the PRC has been incorporated into the PLA, thus putting it beyond the control of the PRC Public Security Ministry.

10. PRC-South Africa Nuclear Cooperation

Sovetskaya Rossia ("THESE DAYS .... BEIJING," Moscow, 3, 12/16/97) reported that the Republic of South Africa sold the PRC a "key component" of a nuclear reactor that was used in the 1960s to make an atomic bomb. The sale agreement was signed in February of 1997 despite the lack of bilateral diplomatic relations. Forty PRC specialist worked in secrecy for 2 months to dismantle the reactor at a nuclear complex not far from Johannesburg.

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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