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I. United States

1. Kim Jong-il Visit to PRC

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "NORTH KOREA SENDING MESSAGES OF OPENING, REFORM TO US," 1/23/01) reported that analysts in the ROK said Tuesday that the DPRK's latest diplomatic offensive is part of its circumventing strategy designed to weaken the new US administration's hard-line stance toward the DPRK. Lee Hun-kyong, a research fellow at the semi-official Korea Institute of National Unification in Seoul, said, "The North is sending a message to the United States that it would push for openness and reform by showing its eagerness to improve relations with foreign nations." On January 21, the DPRK Foreign Ministry promised to actively promote the improvement of foreign relations, hailing Kim's visit to the PRC as an "epoch-making" event in relations between the DPRK and the PRC. Lee said, "The Pyongyang regime may judge that its move to pursue reform and openness, be it genuine or not, will help prevent the Bush administration from driving the North into a corner." The DPRK's positive attitude toward improving relations with Western nations helped the EU member countries open ties with the DPRK. However, despite the DPRK's establishment of ties with European nations, it remains to be seen whether bilateral relations will be able to develop substantially. Analysts said this is because the DPRK must address the international concern of its missile program and improve human rights conditions to expand exchanges and cooperation with the EU member states. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 23, 2001.]

2. Analysis of Possible DPRK Reform

Washington Post (Philip P. Pan and Doug Struck, "EXPERTS DOUBT N. KOREA CAN BE 'SECOND CHINA'," Beijing, 1/23/01) reported that PRC and ROK analysts cautioned Tuesday against speculation that Kim intends to imitate the PRC and reform his country's economy while trying to maintain a tight grip on political power. Experts said that any attempt by the DPRK to become a "second China" will be extremely difficult. Piao Jianyi, a leading DPRK analyst at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said, "What North Korea wants to do is become an economic power in a short period of time, but I don't think it can try to become a second China. Kim wants to learn from China's experiences, but the situation in North Korea is different and requires its own solutions." Unlike the PRC, the DPRK is much more heavily industrialized, and only a third to a tenth of its workers are in farming. To restart its economy, analysts say, the DPRK will need to tackle its huge, stagnating state industrial sector. Hyung Kook Kim, a Korea specialist at American University, said, "There are really not any overseas North Koreans waiting to invest as there were overseas Chinese. And there are not as many countries in the world interested in investing in North Korea as in China," said North Korea does have a cheap labor force, he noted, but "there are plenty of cheap labor forces elsewhere in the world and in Asia." If rapprochement between the DPRK and the ROK continues, more ROK investment may follow, but DPRK's ability to attract foreign investment is hampered by a severe energy shortage and an ailing transportation system. Also, opening the DPRK to foreign investors may undermine the legitimacy of Kim's government. Therefore, Kim Byung Kook, a professor at Korea University in Seoul, said, "I cannot persuade myself that Kim Jong Il can have his cake and eat it too -- that is, have a regime and yet reform it from the inside out by following the Chinese model. What he saw in Shanghai was the product of 23 or 24 years of real hard work, full of dangers [for the Chinese leadership.] The odds against him succeeding are exceedingly high." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 23, 2001.]

3. Japan-DPRK Relations

Agence France Presse ("NORMALISATION OF JAPAN-NKOREA DIPLOMATIC TIES INEVITABLE," Tokyo, 1/23/01) reported that Japanese foreign minister Yohei Kono said Tuesday that Japan's normalization of ties with the DPRK was not only inevitable but also morally necessary. Kono said, "Diplomatic normalization with North Korea involves negotiations to normalize relations with an area which Japan once occupied as a colony. It is an issue of morality as well as an inevitable historical one. It is necessary for our country to tackle Japan-North Korea diplomatic normalization while not losing its momentum. It is extremely abnormal that Japan does not have any diplomatic relationship with such a geographically close country. It is in our country's interests as well as that of the international community -- and not only of northeastern Asia -- that North Korea joins in anti-proliferation efforts against weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery." However, Kono made it clear that Japan was not going to do all the work. Kono said, "To get people's trust and understanding, we have to be seen to be making progress in humanitarian issues such as kidnapping." Kono said the solution to issues hindering normalization "will be born from dialogue with, not from the isolation of the DPRK."

Kyodo News Agency ("JAPAN HOPES KIM JONG-IL'S CHINA TRIP A MOVE TOWARD REGIONAL PEACE," Tokyo, 1/23/01) reported Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yutaka Kawashima said on January 22 that Japan hopes DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's recent trip to the PRC and his praise of PRC efforts to reform and open up would influence the DPRK to move towards a similar direction. Kawashima said, "The Japanese government is watching attentively, with the hope that North Korea will continue to build relations with the international community and move in a direction favorable for peace in Northeast Asia." He added that if the DPRK opts to move towards economic reform and

opening up and thus helps create an environment leading to stability on the Korean Peninsula, Japan will take the opportunity to contribute to peace and stability in the region.

4. Cross-Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN LEADER CALLS FOR RESUMPTION OF TAIPEI-BEIJING TALKS," Taipei, 1/23/01) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian called on the PRC during a Lunar New Year speech to resume dialogue with the island to seek peace and reconciliation. Chen said, "We hope both sides of the (Taiwan) Strait will seek peace and use wisdom to reopen negotiations in creating a win-win situation. The old era of confrontation and standoff have gone. The 21st century is a new era of reconciliation, peace and cooperation." However, PRC Premier Zhu Rongji on Tuesday reiterated that the PRC would seek to implement its "one country, two systems" for reunification with Taiwan, while opposing "all separatist plots" aimed at leading the island towards independence.

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](#).

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