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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Relations

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ROK President Kim Young-sam. Japan hopes for a reopening of long-frozen talks on normalizing relations with the DPRK, which experts say will involve food aid as an incentive. The ROK wants its allies to hold off large assistance until the DPRK agrees to peace talks. [Ed. note: Please also see "ROK-Japan Relations" in this section, below.]

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2. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST TAIWAN NUCLEAR WASTE," Seoul, 1/24/97) reported that the ROK said Friday it has started an international campaign to stop Taiwan's plan to transfer its nuclear waste to the DPRK. ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha said the ROK has asked the U.S., China and Japan - as well as the nuclear watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency - to pressure Taiwan to call off its planned shipments. "We are using all our diplomatic resources," Yoo told reporters. "Taiwan will realize that international pressure and condemnation far outweighs what benefits they could get by shipping the nuclear waste to the North." However, Yoo denied reports that the ROK is considering closing its unofficial mission in Taipei and establishing a sea blockade to prevent the shipments. Also Friday, thirty ROK university heads, lawyers and environmentalists issued a statement urging Taiwan to cancel the planned shipments. Meanwhile, according to Foreign Ministry officials, Germany on Friday told the ROK that it has shipped 47,000 tons of recyclable plastic and other industrial waste to the DPRK since 1995, but denied reports in ROK media that the shipments included nuclear waste. [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the ROK section, below.]

3. ROK-Japan Relations

The Associated Press (Peter Landers, "JAPAN, SKOREA TRY ANOTHER SUMMIT," Tokyo, 1/23/97) reported that the run-up to the summit meeting this weekend between Japan's Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and ROK President Kim Young-sam at the Japanese hot-springs resort of Beppu has highlighted the tenuous nature of ROK-Japan relations. Both sides perceive current interests in forging cooperation; however, the problem remains of how to translate that cooperation into a longer-term good feeling, given an atmosphere where Koreans are ready at a moment's notice to erupt in anti-Japanese protests, and Japanese politicians seem all too ready to provide provocation to do so. The trouble stems from Japan's brutal colonial rule over the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945. The latest round was triggered by controversy over payments from a Japanese fund to seven Korean women who were forced to be sex slaves to Japanese soldiers during World War II. Then, this week, Takami Eto, a senior legislator and former Cabinet minister in Hashimoto's ruling party, fanned the flames by declaring in a speech that Japan's annexation of Korea in 1910 was no different than a "merger of two villages." However, a conflict over policies toward the DPRK may soon eclipse these emotive disputes. Following the DPRK's statement of "regret" for the submarine incident, Japan has hoped for a reopening of long-frozen talks on normalizing relations. The ROK, however, wants to make sure that Japan does not pre-empt improved relations between the two Koreas. "Hashimoto and Kim Young-sam have built a relationship of trust to some extent, but that hangs on their cooperation over North Korea," said Masao Okonogi, a Korea specialist at Japan's Keio University. "If Japan rushes ahead, the whole platform collapses."

4. ROK Labor Situation

The Associated Press ("KOREAN LEADERS ENDING SIT-IN," Seoul, 1/24/97) and Reuters ("S.KOREAN STRIKERS ABANDON CATHEDRAL," Seoul, 1/24/97) reported that Kwon Young-gil and six other leaders of the outlawed Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, on Friday abandoned their sanctuary in Seoul's Roman Catholic Myongdong Cathedral. For nearly a month, the seven had taken refuge in a ramshackle tent on the cathedral grounds to escape arrest while they directed nationwide strikes and demonstrations to protest the new labor law. Their decision came three days after ROK President Kim Young-sam's government, under domestic and international pressure, backed down and promised not to arrest them. However, Kwon said their struggle is not over. "We will continue to fight along with the people until we have victory," Kwon said. He said the union leaders will continue a sit-down protest at the confederation's Seoul headquarters, tour work sites around the nation, and hold more rallies. However, the main opposition National Congress for New Politics abandoned its insistence that the new law be repealed and said it was now prepared to debate revising the new law in parliament if the government apologized for its forced passage. The labor law, and a national security law restoring the government's power to arrest those suspected of activities supportive of DPRK interests, were passed in a secretive seven-minute pre-dawn parliamentary session on December 26, of which opposition members were not informed beforehand.

5. US and Russia Missile Sales Competition

The New York Times (Raymond Bonner, "U.S. IS SELLING MISSILES IT ONCE BANNED," Bangkok, 1/23/97) reported that the US and Russia, only a few years after ending their own nuclear arms race, are locked in a fierce competition for arms sales to Southeast Asia, with both countries offering potential purchasers some of the world's most sophisticated missiles as incentives. Countries shopping for advanced fighter aircraft are demanding, and receiving, the chance to buy accurate air-to-air missiles with ranges of up to thirty miles. In one recent case, Thailand threatened to abandon a pending deal worth nearly US$600 million to buy US-made F-18 jets, and to purchase Russian MiG-29 jets instead, if the Clinton administration did not also approve transfer of US advanced medium range air-to-air missiles (AMRAAM). The US eventually approved the sale. The AMRAAM's

transition from a weapon the US zealously protected to one now available to a range of countries illustrates the consequences once arms restrictions are relaxed even a little, US officials and arms control advocates said in interviews. "Once we've said 'yes' to one, it is hard to say 'no' to the next," said one official in Washington. The sale of AMRAAMS to Thailand is also a telling illustration of the workings of the global arms market, in which increasingly it is business, not ideology, that drives sales. Whereas during the Cold War, the Pentagon advocated restrictive policies to prevent sophisticated weapons from falling into enemy hands, now the military services push the arms trade as a way of helping defense contractors suffering from domestic spending cutbacks. The aim, US officials said, is to drum up sufficient business to keep the defense manufacturers profitable and ready to serve the US military should future needs arise.

6. US Considers New Arms Control Initiative The Washington Post (R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. STUDIES FURTHER CUTS IN NUCLEAR WARHEADS," 1/23/97, A04) reported that, according to senior US officials, the Clinton administration is studying the possibility of seeking a new treaty with Russia requiring cuts in strategic nuclear arms that would go well beyond the roughly 50 percent reduction in such weapons set as a 10-year goal by US and Russian leaders in 1993. The newfound US interest in such cuts is exemplified by a secret Defense Department study that is now examining the military consequences of reducing the number of nuclear warheads on both sides to as few as 2,000, roughly the level of the US strategic nuclear arsenal in 1956. Proposing a potential START III treaty is seen by some US officials as a way to persuade Russian legislators to ratify the 1993 START II treaty, which they have so far resisted in part because they claim it will cost too much to implement and in part because, perhaps absurdly, to maintain parity with the US under the treaty's ceiling Russia would have to build new strategic missiles to replace an older model that the treaty eliminates. However, the Pentagon's study also reflects a growing recognition by many current and former military officials that nuclear weapons, although they defined the statures of the superpowers during the Cold War, now have greatly diminished importance. This growing sentiment is epitomized by the position of retired Air Force General Lee Butler, a former head of the Strategic Air Command and director of the US nuclear targeting plan, who recently told the Stimson Center, a private arms control group, that the US should have embraced a ceiling of 2,000 warheads in the early 1990s, and that it should undertake even larger reductions now. "If there's anything that I regret, any argument that I regret having lost before I retired, it was my effort to get that [2,000] number," he said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal

The ROK government reported that it is studying a plan to block the Taiwanese ship carrying nuclear waste materials to the DPRK for disposal. Officials were quoted as stating that, as a last resort, the use of armed force may be unavoidable under the right of self-defense, should diplomatic efforts fail to nullify the nuclear waste delivery contract concluded between Taiwan and the DPRK. (KPS, "SHIP CARRYING TAIWANESE NUCLEAR WASTE TO N.KOREA TO BE BLOCKED," Seoul 01/24/97)

Before it decided to bring in nuclear waste from Taiwan, the DPRK imported large quantities of industrial waste for several years from European businesses in exchange for money. The environmental authorities of the related countries are explaining that these are recyclable wastes (i.e. plastic), but the suggestion has been made that they are actually disguised nuclear waste. Professor Suh Byung-moon of Berlin Free University stated Thursday that in 1995, Hans Marzke, former East German Ambassador to Pyongyang, informed him that the DPRK was becoming an international trash dumpsite and that some of the allegations were confirmed by the Environmental Agency of Germany in Berlin. Since 1995, the Environmental Agency issued export licenses for

200,000 tons of waste to waste treatment businesses under the guarantee that the wastes are recycled in the DPRK. Also in 1995, German businesses exported 40,000 tons of waste from Hamburg to the DPRK's Chungjin Harbor. The DPRK received 800 German Marks per ton to treat this waste. The Environmental Agency has permitted the export of the waste due to the lack of facilities and high cost of waste treatment in Germany and with the guarantee that the waste will be recycled. However, they do not have any assurances that the waste has indeed been recycled. The ROK Ambassador to Germany and the Consul-General say that they have other information indicating similar cases with other European countries such as France. (Chosun Ilbo, "DPRK BECOMING THE WORLD'S DUMPSITE," Seoul, 01/24/97)

Thirty-one ROK social leaders demanded yesterday that the Taiwanese government scrap its plan to sell its nuclear waste to the DPRK. In a press conference at the Press Center of the ROK, the Reverend Song Wol-chu, archbishop of Korean Buddhists' Chogye-jong Order stated, "We cannot help but worry about the adverse environmental and social effects of the secret Taiwan-DPRK agreement on the disposal of Taiwan's nuclear waste agreement." Other prominent figures such as former environmental minister Hwang San-sung, and Kang Won-ryong, chairman of the Christian Academy, similarly argued, "The Taiwanese government's dumping of its nuclear waste in a third country is an inhumane behavior." "The Taiwanese government should immediately cancel its plan to export nuclear waste to the DPRK, which will turn the entire Korean peninsula into a death zone," they said. Earlier, the nation's environmental organizations decided to kick off a boycott campaign against goods imported from Taiwan. Meanwhile, the German Embassy in Seoul yesterday denied local press reports saying that German businessmen recently transferred nuclear waste to the DPRK. The embassy said that it has no information that either the former East Germany or unified Germany have exported nuclear wastes to the DPRK, adding that the German government's policy stipulates that all nuclear waste created in its territory is processed within the country. (The Korea Times, "SOCIAL LEADERS DEMAND TAIWAN SCRAP SALE OF NUCLEAR WASTE TO NK AT ONCE," Seoul, 01/24/97)

2. ROK-US Relations

The US Defense Secretary-designate William Cohen stated at a Senate committee hearing yesterday that US forces will continue to remain in the ROK and Japan to cope with the military threat from the DPRK and to preserve US national interests. He added that additional emphasis will be placed on firmly establishing security in the Asia-Pacific region in order to protect the large US economic interest there. (KPS, "US FORCES TO REMAIN IN KOREA TO COPE WITH THREAT FROM NORTH," Seoul, 01/24/97)

3. ROK-DPRK Relations

The ROK Ministry of National Unification announced today that it has approved requests by seven ROK business firms including Green Cross, Taechang, Lotte, and LG to contact their potential DPRK business partners. These firms are pushing for joint ventures with the DPRK in the production of pharmaceuticals, textiles, foodstuffs, and the development of mineral water. The Ministry's exchange-cooperation bureau director Cho Kun-shik stated that this event signals a gradual change in ROK government policy as South-North economic cooperation was frozen by the DPRK submarine infiltration incident. (KPS, "SOUTH-NORTH ECONOMIC COOPERATION TO RESUME SHORTLY," Seoul, 01/24/97) [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the US section, above.]

III. Japan

1. New Japanese Defense Intelligence Headquarters

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("DEFENSE AGENCY OPENS DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE HEADQUARTERS," Evening Edition 1, 1/20/97) reported that the Japanese Defense Agency opened a Defense Intelligence Headquarters (DIH) January 20, apparently modeled on the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). This headquarters integrates and strengthens the information gathering and analysis functions of the three Japanese self-defense intelligence sectors.

A Sankei Shimbun editorial ("DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE HEADQUARTERS IS SECURITY LINCHPIN," 2, 1/21/97) suggested that the DI headquarters prepare the country for an "information war" in which information becomes important to national security. The editorial pointed out that Japan's strategy had been dependent on the US since the beginning of the Cold War, but that the Defense Intelligence Headquarters is currently expected to play an increasingly major role in the unstable strategic environment. The editorial also expects the DIH to help people understand the importance of information and security.

2. Japan-US Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("US DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SAYS THAT US MARINES IN OKINAWA WILL NOT BE REDUCED," 14, 1/18/97) reported on January 17 that US Deputy Secretary of Defense White said in a letter to Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Sadayuki Hayashi that the US Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) would not consider reduction of US Marines in Okinawa. According to the Asahi article, the QDR calls for maintaining the present number of military personnel in Japan and also for maintaining the basic US policy of forward development in East Asia. The Asahi article also pointed out that the letter indicates that the US wants to reduce the rising Okinawan expectations that the QDR would include the reduction of US Marines in Okinawa. The letter also stressed that the QDR will not influence what was already decided in the Special Action Committee on Okinawa (SACO).

3. Impact of PRC-Russian Defense Relations on Japan

The Sankei Shimbun (Yoshihisa Komori, "FORMER US SECURITY ADVISER WARNS JAPAN ABOUT TIGHTENING CHINA-RUSSIA DEFENSE RELATIONS," Washington, 4, 1/21/97) carried the summary of a paper submitted to the Sankei Shimbun by Robert Manning, former US adviser to the Bush and Clinton Administrations on Asia-Pacific security affairs. According to the summary, Manning calls for Japan to give more attention to the meaning of the recent visit by PRC Prime Minister Li Peng to Russia. He notes the PRC's recent purchase of two Russian destroyers as a result of the visit, and argues that the US and Japan should both be aware that the tightening defense relations between the two countries is meant to defend against the strengthening Japan-US security alliance. He points out that the reasons for the tightening PRC-Russian defense relations include Russia's fear of the eastward-expanding North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and PRC-Russian fear of the US ballistic missile defense system. He also argues that "mutually defensive measures" taken individually among the US, Japan, the PRC, and Russia may cause a chain reaction that leads to conflicts and collisions. He suggests that Japan and the US should pay more attention to the possible linkages among seemingly separate issues such as NATO's expansion, the Japan-US alliance, and the transfer of missile defense systems. He also suggests that both countries should recognize that their policies can influence the actions of the PRC and Russia.

4. Japan-Russia Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPANESE AND RUSSIAN PRIME MINISTERS TO EXCHANGE VISITS," 2, 1/22/97) reported that Russian Ambassador to Tokyo Alexander Panov stated in his speech on January 21 that Japan and Russia are planning bilateral prime ministerial exchange visits this year. In addition, he called for a quick settlement, via bilateral or multilateral agreements, of the recent

sinking of a Russian tanker.

5. Japan-PRC Relations

The Asahi Shimbun (Hideto Fujiwara, "PRC PRIME MINISTER HOPES TO VISIT JAPAN THIS YEAR," Beijing, 1, 1/22/97) reported that on January 21, a visiting trade promotion group led by former chairman of the Japanese Lower House Yoshio Sakurauchi revealed that, in response to the group's demand for PRC Prime Minister Li Peng to visit Japan, Li expressed his hope to be officially invited by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the normalization of relations between Japan and the PRC. Li also suggested that, despite the political tension between the two countries last year, the anniversary would present a good opportunity for more friendly relations between Japan and the PRC in the twenty-first century.

6. Japan-Mongolia Relations

According to a report from Yomiuri Shimbun ("MONGOLIAN PRIME MINISTER TO VISIT JAPAN IN FEBRUARY," 2, 1/23/97), sources from the Japanese Foreign Ministry revealed that Mongolian Prime Minister Mendsaikhany Enkhsaikhan will visit Japan in late February to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Japan-Mongolian diplomatic relations. The visit will be Enkhsaikhan's first since coming to power after defeating the communist Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party in a general election in June 1996. According to the report, during the Japanese-Mongolian prime ministerial talks, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto is expected to pledge greater aid to Mongolia, which has been suffering from inflation, a high unemployment rate and other economic problems despite the end of one-party rule in 1990.

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Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development.

Wade Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: gator@star.elim.co.kr
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org

Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

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Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development.

Wade Huntley: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Shin Dong-bom: gator@star.elim.co.kr
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ihep.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp

Tokyo, Japan

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org