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I. United States

1. DPRK-Japan Relations

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA HAILS PROGRESS IN RESTORING TIES WITH JAPAN," Tokyo, 10/24/97) reported that the DPRK Korean Central News Agency on Thursday quoted an unnamed DPRK Foreign Ministry official as saying that the "improvement of relations between [the] DPRK and Japan is on good terms." The report mentioned Japan's recent decision to donate US$27 million in food aid, and quoted the official as saying, "We are giving attention to the fact that the Japanese side is moving toward the agreement between the two nations. We are also making efforts in the spirit of the agreement."

2. US MIAs from Korean War

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA HANDS OVER MIA REMAINS," Seoul, 10/24/97) reported that DPRK border guards on Friday handed over remains believed to be those of a US soldier to a UN honor guard at Panmunjom. The remains will be sent to the US Army Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii.

3. DPRK Food Aid Monitoring

The Los Angeles Times carried an editorial ("A PINHOLE OF SUNLIGHT," 10/22/97) which argued

that, now that the DPRK has agreed to allow more foreign observers to monitor the distribution of food aid, "How freely these observers are able to move about could provide an important clue to how serious North Korea might be in wanting better relations with the world outside." The editorial added, "That the world's most reclusive state is now, even in a small way, opening itself to scrutiny is a clear sign of how desperate its plight has become. For what outside observers are seeing is not just the results of nature's ravages but the consequences of a mindless and failed system that, like so many of North Korea's pitiful citizens, seems to be slowly, painfully, inexorably dying."

4. US-PRC Military Relations

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "US SEEKS INSIGHT ON CHINA MILITARY," Washington, 10/24/97) reported that the US is seeking a clearer view of the PRC's defense planning and priorities, its military doctrine and training, and its calculations about US military strength. Aides to US Defense Secretary William Cohen say he intends to press the issue when he travels to Beijing next month, the article reported. Michael Swaine, a PRC expert at the federally supported Rand Corporation, was quoted as saying, "The basic bottom line is to build a better base of understanding between the two militaries." The article pointed out that while the PRC has been reducing the size of its 3 million-man land army, it has put new emphasis on projecting naval and air power. Peter Rodman, director of national security programs at the Nixon Center for Peace and Freedom, was quoted as saying that the security problem that the PRC poses for the US "is future rather than present, potential rather than actual." Rodman argued that the PRC must be pressed to be as "open, honest and accessible" as the US military is. Aside from encouraging more openness, the Clinton administration seeks to complete a US-PRC agreement on military maritime and air cooperation, to pressure the PRC to not sell nuclear arms-related or ballistic missile technologies to non-nuclear states, and to build on shared geopolitical interests, such as a peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula, the article stated.

Taiwan's Central News Agency (Bill Wang, "US WANTS TO ENGAGE AS WELL AS DETER PLA," Washington, 10/23/97) reported that Randall Schriver, senior country director for the PRC, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Mongolia in the Office of the US Secretary of Defense, said Thursday that US military engagement with the PRC is aimed at both articulating US policies and intentions and demonstrating US military capabilities in order to deter the PRC People's Liberation Army (PLA) "in the event of the relationship going in the direction no one wants." Schriver stated, "it is important for them (the PLA) to understand our capabilities and know what we can bring to bear on a situation which would involve conflict that, again, no one wants." Schriver said that US objectives for a military relationship with the PRC have been consistent, among which are developing a better understanding of the PLA's modernization efforts, pursuing the relationship to sustain the support of US allies who do not want to contain the PRC, and promoting operator-to-operator dialogue to avoid misunderstanding on the ground. In preparing for the upcoming US-PRC summit, Schriver said, the US Defense Department is working hard on a military maritime safety agreement in line with the objectives of minimizing misunderstanding and miscalculations at sea. He said that the US is also trying to articulate the framework for military contacts between the two sides. Meanwhile, he said, the Defense Department is trying to reach an agreement with the PLA on cooperation in humanitarian and disaster relief, which he emphasized is very important as part of confidence-building measures, as well as being a strong signal to the region that the two sides not only are not adversaries but also can work together on problems and regional challenges.

5. US-PRC Summit Meeting

The Los Angeles Times carried an opinion piece by Xu Jiatun, a former PRC official living in the US ("PERSPECTIVE ON THE U.S./CHINA SUMMIT," 10/24/97) which argued that PRC President Jiang Zemin's "aim is not to make America into an enemy; rather it is to weaken America's ability to

confine China and to establish a long-term relationship with the U.S. that will benefit China's economy." The article argued that, during the upcoming summit with US President Bill Clinton, Jiang may make concessions on a range of issues, but he will request that the US further restrict Taiwan's efforts toward independence and cut back on US weapons sales to Taiwan. The article said, "If Clinton can deliver on these two items, Taiwan independence forces are sure to be suppressed and Jiang will not have to resort to the use of force to resolve the Taiwan question. On this basis, a new Sino-American relationship can be established." The author concluded that "This meeting between Bill Clinton and Jiang Zemin ... can create a new strategic arrangement in which the two countries peacefully co-exist and develop for the next few decades.

6. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The Taiwanese Central News Agency (Chang Lung & Eva Chen, "BEIJING OFFICIALS DENY NOT TO TALK WITH TAIWAN DURING LEE'S TENURE," Beijing, 10/24/97) reported that officials from the PRC Central Office for Taiwan Affairs (COTA) on Thursday denied reports that the PRC will refuse to negotiate with Taiwan for the remainder of Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's tenure. The officials remarked that promoting political negotiations across the Taiwan Strait is and will remain of utmost significance to the PRC, and that this cannot be done without talking to Taiwan. Reports had quoted former US Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs John Holdrige as saying that he had been told by Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army and military representative to COTA, that as long as Lee Teng-hui remains the ROC president, it is unlikely talks between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait can be resumed. [Ed. note: See "PRC-Taiwan Relations" in the US Section of the October 23 Daily Report.]

7. Taiwan-Japan Fishing Dispute

The Taiwan Central News Agency (Sofia Wu, "ROC VOWS TO DEFEND FISHING RIGHTS AROUND TIAOYUTAIS," Taipei, 10/24/97) reported that Chang Chin-chu, director of the East Asian and Pacific Affairs Department of the Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, on Friday expressed concern over Japan's alleged high-handed actions against Taiwan fishing boats operating in waters near the Tiaoyutai islands, which are claimed by Taiwan, the PRC and Japan. Chang said the Taiwan government must receive guarantees on the rights of Taiwan fishermen to operate in traditional fishing grounds near the disputed island group before it will sign a new fishery accord with Japan. "We'll push Japan to conduct a third-round meeting with our country as soon as possible to resolve the longstanding disputes over Tiaoyutai fishing rights," Chang added.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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