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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Test

The Associated Press (Eric Prideaux, "N. KOREA TO FREEZE TESTS FOR TALKS," Tokyo, 09/24/99) and Reuters (Teruaki Ueno, "NORTH KOREA SAYS TO FREEZE MISSILE TESTS," Tokyo, 09/24/99) reported that a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said Friday that the DPRK would freeze test launches of long-range missiles while it was in negotiations with the US. The spokesman said that the DPRK "will not launch a missile while the talks are under way with a view to creating an atmosphere more favorable for the talks." He added, "We think that the step helps create an atmosphere favorable for a negotiated solution to outstanding issues between the two countries." The spokesman also stated, "If the U.S. actually stops pursuing the policy hostile to the DPRK and works hard to improve relations with it, the DPRK will respond with good faith and strive to remove the U.S. suspicions and apprehensions in the interests of the two sides." Later on Friday, a Japanese official said that US presidential envoy William Perry met Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura, and the two agreed that the DPRK made a "positive step" which Japan and the US should welcome. They added however that the two countries should further analyze the DPRK statement before taking any concrete action. The ROK Foreign Ministry said in a statement, "We hope that the measure will become permanent. We hope North Korea's halting missile launches will serve as an important step toward easing tensions and opening a new era of peaceful coexistence on the Korean peninsula."

2. Taiwan Earthquake

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN ACCUSES CHINA OVER QUAKE," Taipei, 09/24/99) reported that Taiwan's China Times newspaper on Friday quoted Sheu Ke-sheng, vice chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council, as accusing the PRC of politicizing the Taiwan earthquake. He criticized the PRC Foreign Ministry for offering thanks to nations that have sent aid to Taiwan. Sheu also noted that the PRC Red Cross Society had told Red Cross branches from other countries that they should refrain from using Taiwan's official name, the Republic of China, when dealing with Taiwan's Red Cross. He said that the PRC Foreign Ministry's "inappropriate words and deeds" were an insult to the Taiwanese quake victims. In a statement on Friday, the Taiwan Red Cross Society said that it does not come under the PRC Red Cross Society and will by no means accept foreign donations through the PRC Red Cross. The China Times said in an editorial, "The Chinese Communist regime is so stupid. Instead of seizing the opportunity to win the goodwill of Taiwanese, it gained antagonism with irritating political language."

3. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "ALBRIGHT URGES NUCLEAR TEST BAN," New York, 09/23/99) reported that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on Thursday appealed to the US Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Albright said that the US can maintain a safe and reliable nuclear weapons defense without tests, and is capable of detecting tests conducted by other countries. She stated, "Americans and people around the world do not want to live in a world in which nuclear testing is business as usual. They do not want to make it easy or acceptable for nuclear weapons to spread further."

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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Asian Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

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

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org

Moscow, Russian Federation

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

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

Leanne Paton: anjlcake@webtime.com.au
Clayton, Australia

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