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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. US-ROK Policy Coordination
2. US Missile Defense

I. United States

1. US-ROK Policy Coordination

Agence France Presse ("BUSH PLEDGES CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 1/25/01) and Reuters ("S.KOREA SAYS KIM-BUSH SUMMIT OVER N.KOREA DUE SOON," Seoul, 1/25/01) reported that ROK spokesman Park Joon-young said that US President George W. Bush on Thursday pledged close consultations with ROK President Kim Dae-jung to help end hostility on the Korean peninsula. Park said that in their first phone conversation since Bush became president, the two leaders also agreed to meet at an early date. The conversation focused on the DPRK, with Bush describing the ROK as "our most important ally." Park added, "While sharing the view that establishing peace on the Korean peninsula is very important, the two leaders stressed the need for close cooperation between the countries." However, without elaborating on his policy toward the DPRK, Bush promised to help the two Koreas promote peace. Bush also said that his policy would be explained further by US Secretary of State Colin Powell when he meets ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn to arrange a summit between the two leaders. Kim Dae-jung predicted that "North Korea may follow the path of economic reform and openness while maintaining its socialist system."

2. US Missile Defense

The International Herald Tribune (Michael Richardson, "ASIA-PACIFIC FEARS ARMS RACE FROM BUSH POLICIES TOWARD CHINA," Singapore, 1/25/01) reported that there are private concerns of US allies and friends in the Asia-Pacific region about the possible effects of a US National Missile Defense (NMD) on the PRC. Melina Nathan, associate research fellow at the Institute of Defense and

Strategic Studies in Singapore, said, "Whenever the U.S. and China have tensions, the rest of the region has to bear the brunt of it." Although US Secretary of State Colin Powell's remarks at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last week sounded positive, some Asian officials said they were concerned that the emphatic importance being given to Taiwan and missile defense by the Bush administration could override other strands of US policy toward Asia. A Southeast Asian official said, "Taiwan is a visceral issue for China. And if the US deploys theater missile defenses to protect its allies and forces in the Western Pacific, China is sure to increase its rather modest nuclear arsenal so that it won't be neutralized. This will prompt India, Pakistan and perhaps other Asian countries to follow. We'll have a new nuclear arms race." Asked how Australia could avoid being dragged into a US-PRC dispute over missile defense, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer stated, "We've said we understand the argument [the US is] making about the need to defend the United States from attacks by rogue states. But there is a long way to go in terms of the evolution of this issue, and we'll be talking with the Bush administration about it. I think, frankly, they'll be looking at material they wouldn't have had access to up until now. There are a lot of complex issues which need to be worked through." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 25, 2001.]

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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