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I. United States

1. Light-Water Reactor Project

The International Herald Tribune (Don Kirk, "U.S. DOUBTS RISE ON NORTH KOREAN DEAL TO BUILD NUCLEAR REACTORS," Seoul 02/26/01) reported that US officials and independent experts are questioning the supply of light- water reactors to the DPRK under the 1994 Agreed Framework. Douglas Paal, president of the Asia-Pacific Policy Center in Washington who is under consideration for US ambassador to the ROK, said that the reactor project "is increasingly problematic. The big question is how long this will this take." Marcus Noland of the Institute for International Economics in Washington stated, "I expect the administration to push harder on trying to convert the nukes into conventional power plants." However, Chang Sun-sup, head of the ROK office of the light-water reactor project, said that his government had rejected a US suggestion for such a change last year. Larry Niksch, a senior researcher at the Congressional Research Service in Washington, said that the entire project "is close to being dead in the water. There are so many bureaucratic and legal obstacles that implementation is at a glacial pace." Niksch added that under the circumstances, the reactors could not go into operation for at least another 10 years. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 26, 2001.]

2. Russia-ROK Summit

The Associated Press (Christopher Torchia, "PUTIN ARRIVES IN SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 02/26/01) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Seoul on Monday night and was scheduled to leave Wednesday. Ralph Cossa, head of the Pacific Forum CSIS in Hawaii, stated, "Mr. Putin is obviously trying to announce that Russia is back, back in Asia as it is in Europe." Andrey Osmakov, a spokesman at the Russian embassy in Seoul, stated, "There is no hidden agenda. We don't need any war on our border. We are interested in a stable situation on the Korean Peninsula." Alexandre Mansourov of the state-run Diplomatic Academy in Moscow wrote in a recent analysis, "(Russia) appears to act as a loose cannon, throwing its weight here and there around the peninsula, depending on circumstances and its own national interests."

3. Reunion of Separated Families

The Associated Press (Kyong-Hwa Seok, "KOREAS HOLD THIRD ROUND OF REUNIONS," Seoul, 02/26/01) reported that the ROK and the DPRK on Monday held the the third round of meetings of separated family members since August. One hundred elderly DPRK flew into the ROK for three days of reunions. A DPRK plane that carried them to Seoul then returned with 100 ROK citizens for similar reunions in Pyongyang. Ri Kang-sol, a science teacher from the DPRK, told his mother and four siblings, "You should all realize who we should thank for this. The Great Leader let us meet." As at the previous reunions, participants cannot visit the homes of relatives or ancestral graves. Private family meetings were scheduled Tuesday in hotel rooms.

4. Japanese Atrocities During World War II

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA DEMANDS REDRESS OVER JAPAN'S WARTIME PAST AMID ASIAN UPROAR," Tokyo, 02/24/01) reported that the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Saturday cited a newspaper commentary criticizing Japan for denying its wartime aggression. KCNA said, "Not content with distorting and beautifying its history of militarist aggression, (Japan) has gone the length of totally denying it." It added, "Japan's redress for its past crimes is the only

way out for it to save itself from moral destruction." On Friday KCNA criticized the Japanese government's reported attempts to approve a junior high-school history textbook that terms the 1910 Japanese annexation of Korea as "legally executed." The scholars who presented textbook had also advocated dropping a reference from Japanese textbooks to "comfort women" forced into sexual slavery under the Japanese Imperial Army. The statement on Friday said, "Japan seeks to justify all these crimes and teach a twisted history to the young. If Japan embarks upon the revival of militarism while justifying its past crimes ... it will meet strong protests from the Korean and other Asian people and will not be able to escape from a disgraceful and miserable end." On Thursday, Taiwanese lawmakers denounced a book by Japanese cartoonist Yoshinori Kobayashi alleging that Taiwanese "comfort women" were volunteers during World War II. On Tuesday, PRC foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao called "ridiculous" a statement by Hosei Norota, a lawmaker from Japan's Liberal Democratic Party and former defense chief, that Japan's wartime aggression helped Asian nations become independent.

5. US Bases in Okinawa

The Japan Times ("OKINAWA CAN NO LONGER BEAR U.S. MILITARY, SAYS GOVERNOR," Naha, 02/26/01) reported that Okinawa Governor Keiichi Inamine told Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono on Sunday that the people of Okinawa Prefecture "can no longer bear" the burden of hosting such a large segment of the US military forces in Japan. Inamine stated, "In a way, we had been reserved about demanding a reduction of the Marines and other U.S. military forces. But we can no longer bear it." He reiterated Okinawa's demands that the US reduce the size and scope of its military presence in the prefecture and asked for the central government's backing. Kono replied, "The issue of military reduction runs parallel with the international situation," and that the perceived easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula does not immediately imply a corresponding reduction of U.S. forces in Japan. He added that if operational improvements to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) fail to remedy the situation, the Japanese government may have to consider revising the agreement. Both Inamine and Chatan Mayor Choichi Hentona, however, said that operational improvements in the SOFA are insufficient. Hentona stated, "The foreign minister just says we should make operational improvements, but we need solid improvements. Making subtle changes means we will repeat the same course that we have trod upon." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 26, 2001.]

6. US Policy toward PRC

The Wall Street Journal (Eduardo Lachica, "BUSH'S CHINA POLICY IS TESTED OVER AID TO IRAQ AIR DEFENSES," Washington, 02/26/01) reported that US President George W. Bush said that the PRC appeared to heed his complaint about the alleged involvement of Chinese workers in the improvement of Iraq's air defenses. Bush stated, "If I can paraphrase [the PRC response], it was, if this is the case we'll remedy the situation." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for February 26, 2001.]

7. PRC-Russia Missile Defense Cooperation

Agence France Presse ("RUSSIA, CHINA AGREE TO BUILD MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEMS," Seoul, 02/24/01) reported that the DPRK's Rodong Sinmun said Thursday that Russia and the PRC have already agreed to build anti- missile defense networks to cope with the US national missile defense system (NMD). It added that Russia has also said that India and other Asian countries might take part in "joint actions like this one." The paper denounced the new US administration for promoting

the NMD as its key defense task despite strong opposition and protests from other countries. The DPRK stated, "Russia has declared that it would not sit by should the United States push ahead with its plans for the NMD."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Light-Water Reactor Project

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "KOREA, U.S. REAFFIRM N.K. REACTOR PROJECT," Seoul, 02/21/01) reported that Chief ROK and US delegates to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) on Wednesday dismissed a possible change in its nuclear reactor provision program for the DPRK and reaffirmed the continuity of the project. Ambassador Chang, who also heads the ROK Office of Planning for Light-Water Reactor Project, said that he and US envoy Charles Kartman reviewed pending issues related to the KEDO project, including the selection of a new supplier of turbine generators for the reactors.

2. DPRK Missile Issue

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SEOUL TO HELP RESOLVE N. KOREA WEAPONS ISSUE WITH U.S.," Seoul, 02/23/01) reported that the ROK government Thursday suggested that it would actively participate in settling the issue of the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction (WMD). "We will seek to resolve the North's WMD issue through close consultations with the United States," Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn said in a lecture at the Korea Defense University in western Seoul. The determination is largely seen as an attempt to prevent a possible conflict between the ROK and the Bush administration over their DPRK policies, analysts said.

3. US Policy toward DPRK

The Korea Herald (Lee Joon-seung, "U.S. ENVOY SAYS P'YANG SHOULD FULFILL ITS PROMISES," Seoul, 02/23/01) reported that a top US envoy in Seoul said Thursday that his government would insist that the DPRK adhere to all agreements. During a closed meeting with lawmakers of the United Liberal Democrats (ULD), Charge d'Affaires Evan Revere said that although there were concerns the DPRK would not permit International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to carry out examinations on certain nuclear sites, the US would insist on full compliance with the 1994 Agreed Framework. As to what experts here called the "ambiguous" clauses in the Agreed Framework that could be used as loopholes to avoid IAEA inspections, Revere stressed that the reactor core of the power plants would only be shipped to the DPRK after all suspicions were put to rest.

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "NEW U.S. APPROACH TO N. KOREA UNLIKELY TO AFFECT PEACE PROCESS," Seoul, 02/22/01) reported that US experts said in Seoul on Wednesday that despite the uncertainties surrounding the relations between the US and the DPRK, the ongoing peace process on the Korean Peninsula will likely continue. "Many obstacles lie ahead and the possibility of retreat and entrenchment can certainly not be excluded," Professor Robert Scalapino of the University of California at Berkeley said at an international seminar. Nevertheless, he said, the inter-Korean situation is decidedly more promising than was the case a few years ago because of the ROK's pursuit of a policy in accord with the interests of major powers and the DPRK's positive interaction and its ideology's minor role in its policies.

4. DPRK Reaction to US Policy

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N.K. THREATENS TO SCRAP MISSILE, NUCLEAR ACCORDS," Seoul, 02/23/01) and Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-gu, "PYONGYANG WARNS US ON HARDLINE POLICY," Seoul, 02/22/01) reported that the DPRK threatened on Wednesday to discard its promise to suspend missile testing and freeze nuclear programs, citing the new US administration's "burglar-like attitude." The DPRK's Foreign Ministry said that the new US diplomatic and security team has maintained excessively tough stances to demand concessions from the DPRK. "This reconfirms the provocative and burglar-like nature of the United States," said the statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency on Wednesday evening. It said that such moves were aimed at reversing the latest thaw in relations between the US and the DPRK. ROK officials said that the DPRK's warning appeared to be aimed at preventing the Bush administration from officially launching a hard-line DPRK policy, rather than expressing its actual willingness to scrap the major peace promises. Stressing that the statement would not disrupt inter-Korean rapprochement, a Chong Wa Dae official also said that the DPRK seems to be trying to inform the US of its position prior to the summit between ROK President Kim Dae-jung and US President George W. Bush, set for March 7.

Chosun Ilbo (Ju Yong-jung, "US CALLS NK REMARKS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE," Washington, 02/23/01) reported that White House National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice warned the DPRK Thursday (EST) that "it's not helpful for the North Koreans to threaten to have missile tests in order to get us to do something to give up missile defense. That's actually counter-productive." All the US government had suggested about the DPRK was that it has to be watched attentively, Rice stated in answering reporters' questions during a briefing on an upcoming US-UK summit. She continued that the US will closely cooperate with the ROK and Japan in conducting its DPRK policies and emphasized the US President George W. Bush administration's view that a national missile defense (NMD) had to be built to defend the US from attacks from states of concern such as the DPRK. Meanwhile, Department of State Spokesman Richard Boucher announced during the daily briefing that the US is currently looking into the details of its DPRK policy and hoped all matters concerning the DPRK's nuclear weapons and missiles would be solved constructively.

5. ROK Reaction to US Policy

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL WORRIED ABOUT HARD-LINE U.S. STANCE ON N.K," Seoul, 02/22/01) reported that ROK officials and analysts said on Wednesday that the new US administration is stressing the need to verify any changes in the DPRK before moving toward a major rapprochement, adding an increased burden on ROK policymakers. Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Lee Joung-binn, in a meeting with ruling party members on Wednesday, said that Condoleezza Rice, national security advisor for US President George W. Bush, had hinted at such a policy direction while meeting with him earlier this month. "Rice has made it clear that the United States plans to push for a North Korea policy aimed at verifying all matters, while cautiously weighing the speed," Lee was quoted as saying by lawmakers. Lee also shed light on his earlier talks with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, who expressed the US determination to adjust relations with the DPRK according to the latter's willingness to curb its development of weapons of mass destruction, including missiles. "Powell indicated that although the United States wants North Korea to escape from its isolationism, it has yet to see how the North will actually change," Lee said. One of the reports said that Powell, during his meeting with Lee, had specified three prerequisites for a diplomatic relationship--conclusion of a missile deal, clear verification concerning the DPRK's implementation of the deal, and its disarmament of conventional weapons.

6. US-ROK Summit

The Korea Times ("KIM TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY MILITARY OFFICERS," Seoul, 02/26/01) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung will be accompanied by high-ranking military officers when he leaves for the US early next month for a summit meeting with US President George W. Bush. A government official said Thursday that General Cho Young-kil, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Brigadier General Cha Young-koo, director-general for policy and planning at the Defense Ministry, would be included in Kim's entourage. The inclusion of military officers has raised the possibility that inter-Korean military confidence building and ROK-US defense cooperation will be among the major items on the agenda during the summit, analysts said.

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Min-bai, "US TO RAISE SECURITY ISSUES AT SUMMIT," Seoul, 02/21/01) reported that ROK and US senior diplomatic sources said that during the upcoming summit talks, the US hopes to consult with the ROK government on steps to build trust on military issues with the DPRK. A source in the US said that the US is more interested in security- related issues than exchanges and cooperation that the ROK government is focusing on in the inter-Korean relationship. He went on to say that US President George W. Bush hopes to hear about the ROK's position from President Kim Dae-jung rather than to propose the US government's policies toward the Korean peninsula. The Bush administration's blueprint on Asia is expected to be drawn up in September. The source said that President Bush is likely to visit Asia including the ROK this October when the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit Talks will held in Shanghai, making it an opportunity to lay out his blueprint on the Korean peninsula as well as Asia.

7. ROK-Russia Summit

Chosun Ilbo ("PRESIDENT PUTIN TO ARRIVE IN SEOUL ON FEBRUARY 27," Seoul, 02/22/01) reported that Cheong Wa dae announced Thursday that Russian President Vladimir Putin would come to Seoul for the first time on February 27. During his two-day state visit, the Russian leader and ROK President Kim Dae-jung are scheduled to hold a one-on-one meeting, expected to fine tune ways to create peace on the Korean Peninsula. Also on the agenda is the proposed project to link the severed inter- Korean railway with Russia's Trans-Siberian Railway, which would be a cornerstone for three-way ROK-Russia-DPRK cooperation. Political analysts said that it is the timing of his visit that bears significance, especially just days before the ROK-US summit. Russian President Vladimir Putin's other itinerary in Seoul includes meetings with Prime Minister Lee Han-dong and key business leaders in Seoul, as well as a speech at the National Assembly. He is also scheduled to make a stopover at the nation's largest semiconductor plant.

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "PUTIN ARRIVES IN SEOUL TODAY," Seoul, 02/26/01) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin was to arrive in Seoul Monday, one day ahead of the original schedule, ROK officials said Sunday. Putin has also added a meeting with opposition leader Lee Hoi-chang to his itinerary. Chong Wa Dae spokesman Park Joon-young said that Putin, who planned to come to Seoul early tomorrow morning, will arrive in Seoul late this evening, which will extend his stay here to three days. "The Russian President wants to have enough time here before holding summit talks with President Kim Dae-jung," Park said in his daily press briefing.

8. Reunion of Separated Families

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "THIRD FAMILY REUNIONS BEGIN TODAY IN SEOUL, PYONGYANG," Seoul, 02/26/01) reported that another 200 separated families from the ROK and the DPRK were to reunite with their loved ones Monday for the first time in five decades, as the ROK and the DPRK were to exchange 100 selected people across the border for the three-day event. In a new program aimed at facilitating the humanitarian exchanges, the ROK also selected 300 people Saturday who

will send mail to their relatives in the DPRK on March 15. For the event, the DPRK will also finalize its own list of 300 families who will be allowed to write letters to their ROK kin. On March 15, Red Cross officials will collect their mail, which can include up to five pages of letters and two photos, and exchange them at Panmunjom, officials said.

9. Taiwan Nuclear Waste Shipment to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("TAIWAN SAYS NO N WASTE BEING SENT TO NK," Seoul, 02/22/01) reported that Taiwan will not be sending nuclear waste to the DPRK anytime in the near future, the spokesman of the country's Representative Office in Seoul announced on Thursday. Yu Myongriang said that he had checked with the Taiwan Power Company and ascertained that no new progress had been made in discussions with regard to this. Yu said that as a member of the global community Taiwan respected the environment and international standards, and would not ship waste to a country that could not meet these.

The Korea Times ("ROK URGES TAIWAN NOT TO SHIP NUCLEAR WASTE TO N. KOREA," Seoul, 02/21/01) reported that the ROK ruling and opposition parties Tuesday joined forces to urge Taiwan to reverse its plan to ship nuclear waste to the DPRK, expressing fear that the shipments could trigger serious environmental contamination on the Korean peninsula. "The government will begin discussions with the Taiwanese government after reviewing the potential of the shipments to contaminate the whole Korean peninsula," said Jung Jang-sun, spokesman for the Millennium Democratic Party. Jung said the abandoned mine in Pyongsan, Hwanghae Province, is just 100 kilometers away from Seoul. "We recommend that Taiwan reconsider shipments of nuclear waste to North Korea, taking into account the International Atomic Energy Agency principle that nuclear waste should be treated in its country of origin," Jung said, adding that he hoped that the issue would not have an adverse impact on ROK- Taiwan relations.

10. ROK Study on DPRK

The Korea Herald (Chang Jae-soon, "NORTH KOREA'S ADMINISTRATION UNDER STUDY," Seoul, 02/22/01) reported that to keep up with the rapid thaw in inter-Korean relations, the ROK government has been conducting research to compare the two Koreas' administration systems, the ROK Government Administration and Home Affairs Ministry said. When the research is completed in June, it will help the two Koreas better understand each other in their exchanges, Minister Choi In-kee said. Choi also said that the ministry would launch an education program for government officials in order to help try and work towards the congeniality that the Koreas had before their division half a century ago.

11. ROK Aid to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("RED CROSS INDICATES SENDING BEEF TO NK," Seoul, 02/21/01) reported that Seo Young-hoon, the president of the ROK National Red Cross, said on Wednesday that he would meet his DPRK counterpart Chang Jae-on soon and propose a plan of providing the DPRK with beef produced in the ROK. He said at a question and answer session of the Assembly's Health and Wealth Committee that he was shocked to learn that countries infected by the bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) were sending their beef to the DPRK. He added that worries about the disease contagion would never be removed even with the strictest control by the governments involved.

Chosun Ilbo (Ju Yong-jung, "US EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER AID TO NK," Washington, 02/23/01) reported that the US government conveyed its concern recently over the possibility of ROK aid to

the DPRK is being transferred to DPRK's military, according to a diplomatic source on Saturday. The source said that the US judged that the DPRK has been strengthening its military since last year and international aid may have contributed to this. This concern was delivered to National Intelligence Service chief Lim Dong-won on his visit to the US. Another source revealed that the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had sent a secret report to the ROK that contained a list of weapons the DPRK had purchased overseas and the source of funds necessary for this. The US Defense Department and the CIA are taking seriously the huge amount of cash provided to the DPRK by Hyundai for its Mt. Kumgang tour, and watching carefully the negotiations on the supply of electricity by the ROK to the DPRK. The sources said that the US government understands the ROK's explanation it is doing its best to ensure aid is used for the correct purpose, and also that there is no detailed evidence of aid being transferred to the military to date. They added that the ROK basically shares US concerns. CIA Director George Tenet testified at an Intelligence Committee hearing that the 10-year decline in defense spending in the DPRK recently stopped and upgrades were carried out and more money spent. He added that any form of outside assistance could be used by the DPRK to develop its military and would shorten the development period for ballistic missile development and production.

12. DPRK Mission to Italy

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "PYONGYANG'S ECONOMIC MISSION VISITS ITALY," Seoul, 02/26/01) reported that a DPRK economic delegation embarked on a six-day visit to Italy Saturday to promote Italian firms' investments in the DPRK and other bilateral exchanges, DPRK media and ROK officials said. The Korean Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS), the DPRK's official radio news outlet, reported that Jon Sung-hun, DPRK minister of metal and machine-building industries, was leading the economic mission. The KCBS report did not elaborate further. ROK officials said that the team is comprised of 10 officials, including Vice Minister of Foreign Trade Kim Pong-ik, and will stay in Italy until March 5. According to officials at the Korea Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA), the delegation will also explore Italian businesses' investments in the DPRK's automobile and textile industries and visit Rome's national trade corporation, ICE. The trip reciprocates the visit to Pyongyang by Enrico Letta, Italian Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade, last November, who held talks with DPRK Prime Minister Hong Song-nam, they added.

13. DPRK Protest to Japan

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-mok, "NK BLASTS JAPANESE HISTORICAL DISTORTIONS," Seoul, 02/23/01) reported that the DPRK Foreign Ministry made an official statement Friday that, "the Japanese history textbook contains contents that justify annexation of Korean Peninsula." The ministry added that, "such content is not only unethical and unjust behavior, but once again reveals the ill expansionism pervasive in Japan." The announcement, which was broadcasted on national TV, warned that, "if Japan fails to repent the wrongful past and continue to revive militarism, Japan will have to face strong protests from neighboring countries that will bring regrettable collapse in the end."

III. Japan

1. Kim Jong-il's Russian Visit

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Toshikazu Seguchi, "KIM JONG-IL TO VISIT MOSCOW IN APRIL BY TRAIN,"

Moscow, 02/23/2001) reported that Russian official Alexandre Tsurko revealed on February 22 that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il would pay an official visit to Moscow in April via the Siberian Railway. Tsurko said, "It would take him (Kim) about 6 days to get to Moscow from Vladivostok by the Siberian Railway." Tsurko also said that Kim's itinerary would include a visit to the planned railway construction site, which would link the DPRK Kyongwon Railway with the Siberian Railway and with the ROK. The report added that Tsurko did not specify how Kim would get to Vladivostok from Pyongyang and that Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il's father, also used the Siberian Railway when he visited Moscow in 1984.

2. ROK-DPRK Summit

The Asahi Shimbun ("KIM DAE JUNG REVEALED THAT HE REFUSED TO VISIT TO KIM IL SUNG'S GRAVE," 02/19/2001) reported that ROK President Kim Dae- jung revealed that he had kept refusing Kim Jong-il's request that he visit Kim Il-sung's grave during their summit meeting in June 2000. Kim Dae-jung said that the DPRK side had said to the ROK before the summit meeting, "If the ROK refuses to visit Kim Il-sung's grave during Kim Dae-jung's visit to Pyongyang, Kim (Dae-jung) should not come to the North." Kim Jong-il even said to Kim Dae-jung in a car on their way from the airport, "Let's go and visit Kim Il-sung's grave right away." Kim Dae-jung responded, "Given our people's emotions, I cannot go with you." Kim Jong-il said, "Then, you don't have to go." The report added that by referring to this episode, the Kim Dae-jung administration is now emphasizing, "The North listens, if we talks."

3. Japanese-Russian Territorial Issue

The Asahi Shimbun ("HASHIMOTO RULED OUT RETURN OF TWO ILANDS," 02/18/2001) reported that former Prime Minister and current State Minister in Charge of Okinawa and Affairs Related to Northern Territory Ryutaro Hashimoto said to reporters after viewing the Northern Territory in Hokkaido on February 17, "There is no such thing as "the return of the two islands first" in Japan. We have never had such a deal that the two islands be returned first and then the other two.... It is, however, possible that the two islands might be returned first only after the return of all the four islands is agreed."

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("PUTIN ACKNOWLEDGES THAT TAKING FOUR ISLANDS WAS A MISTAKE," 02/23/2001) reported that according to sources close to the Japanese prime minister on February 22, Russian President Vladimir Putin said to Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori over the phone on February 13, "It was a mistake for the Soviet Union to take all the four islands (from Japan)." Putin, however, said, "(It is not easy to accept Japan's request because) the (Russian) domestic situation is difficult. Our Foreign Ministry is opposed (to returning the islands to Japan)."

4. Theater Missile Defense

The Japan Times (Kyodo, "THEATER MISSILE DEFENSE STUDY EXTENDED UNTIL 2006," Washington, 02/17/2001) reported that according to the Kyodo News Agency on February 15, Japanese and US officials said that a joint study being conducted by Japan and the US to develop a theater missile defense (TMD) system would be extended for more than three years due to delays in US military tests of a ship-based missile defense system. Japan initially intended to finish the study in 2003 or 2004 and to decide whether to go beyond the research stage and develop a TMD system; however, the decision will now be delayed until 2006 or later. Experts say that the prolonged study period will only increase doubts about the feasibility of missile shields. Japan began technical

research on the system in fiscal 1999 with studies in four fields, including infrared sensors to detect enemy missiles. The US plans to conduct nine tests in total on two types of missiles to check on the abilities of flight, detection and interception in order to gather data for experimental production of missiles in the joint study. A Defense Agency source said that it would take more than three years merely to finish the nine planned tests. The report added that the joint research is a five- to six-year program expected to cost Japan between 20 billion yen and 30 billion yen.

5. US Troops on Okinawa

The Daily Yomiuri ("CALLS TO RIVISE US MILITARY ACCORD RESURFACE," 02/21/2001) reported that calls for a revision of the Japan-US Status of-Forces Agreement have recently been voiced within the Japanese government. The emergence of such opinions seems to stem from a reduction in public appreciation of the US following a recent series of incidents, including the collision of a US submarine and a Japanese fisheries training vessel off Hawaii, and an e-mail message insulting the governor of Okinawa written by the head of the US military in Okinawa Prefecture. The calls first emerged after a series of arson attacks blamed on a US marine occurred in the prefecture in mid-January. The current agreement stipulates that a member of the US military suspected of committing a crime in Japan is, in principle, to be held under US detention until indictment. Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, who, before the recent incidents, took the stance that the Japanese government would "improve the way in which the agreement is applied to individual cases," said that the government would now negotiate a revision of the agreement with its US counterpart. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori met with Chiken Kakazu, a House of Representatives member from Okinawa, and said, "(The current agreement) does not have the consensus of people in the prefecture. We have to take appropriate measures (to improve the situation)." Mori stated, "(The government) will endeavor to negotiate ways in which application of the agreement can be improved, and then think about other possibilities." Even if the Japanese and US governments do start negotiating a revision, "It is inevitable that a stalemate will develop," a senior Foreign Ministry official said. A government source said, "They had no choice but to go a step further (and touch on the issue of revision) because, in addition to the series of incidents involving the US military, the effectiveness of the 'improvement of application of the agreement' was not demonstrated (in the recent arson case)."

6. Japanese Politics

The Daily Yomiuri ("ANTI-MORI MOTION TIMING CAUSES CHAOS," 02/23/2001) reported that the four major opposition parties, though unified in seeking an "unconditional and immediate" resignation of Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and his tripartite coalition Cabinet, could not agree on when to jointly submit a no-confidence motion against the Mori administration. The report said that views are split among opposition leaders over whether an anti-Mori Cabinet motion should be introduced before or after passage of the government-presented fiscal 2001 budget through the House of Representatives. The three-party coalition camp of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), New Komeito and Hoshuto (New Conservative Party) plans to have the next fiscal year's budget approved by the lower house on March 2 to ensure that the budget will get Diet approval in time for the beginning of the new fiscal year. Under constitutional provisions, the budget, if approved by the lower house, can be automatically effected 30 days after lower house approval irrespective of whether it has gained House of Councillors approval. Currently the majority view among the four-party opposition camp-- Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), Jiyuto (Liberal Party), the Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party--is to submit the no-confidence motion before the ruling coalition's submission of the budget to the lower house, said the report. However, a considerable number of opposition legislators are skeptical about the wisdom of a pre-budget

presentation of such a motion against the prime minister and his Cabinet. Opposition camp skeptics consider it more advantageous to take a "wait-and-see" approach instead of hastily presenting the anti- Mori motion, as they feel moves within the ruling camp to allow the prime minister to "voluntarily step down" may increase the confusion within the ruling coalition. The majority of Minshuto members support the submission of a no-confidence motion before the passage of the budget through the lower house. However, some opposition leaders favor delaying the timing of the submission. Political analysts said that the remarks of some LDP leaders were a reflection of their bid to prevent an early submission of a no-confidence motion by the opposition parties. LDP leaders are concerned that an early submission of a no-confidence motion would trigger divisive arguments within the ruling camp over whether to allow Mori to remain in power. The analysts also think that Presentation of a no-confidence motion before the lower house budget approval could cause major confusion within the LDP and New Komeito over the advisability of maintaining the Mori administration, said the report.

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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