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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. DPRK Economy
2. East Timor Leader's ROK Visit
3. US-PRC Military Talks
4. PRC View of US Missile Defense
5. US Policy toward PRC
6. PRC Spying Allegation
7. PRC Internet Law
8. US Policy toward PRC
9. Taiwan Elections
10. US-Philippines Military Exercises

II. Republic of Korea 1. ROK-DPRK Sports Exchanges
2. Human Rights in DPRK
3. ROK Policy toward DPRK

I. United States

1. DPRK Economy

Reuters ("N.KOREA HOLDS EXPANDED CABINET MEETING ON ECONOMY," Tokyo, 01/24/99) reported that Japan's Radiopress quoted the DPRK government newspaper Minju Joson as saying that DPRK government officials and industrial leaders after an expanded cabinet meeting pledged to mend the country's economy. The paper said that the meeting had been held "recently," but did not give a specific date. Local government representatives and leaders of essential industries and businesses attended the meeting along with cabinet officials. The meeting pledged "further efforts towards building our socialist economy," through stimulating the energy, metals and rail transport sectors, and putting emphasis on agricultural production as well as the production of consumer goods.

2. East Timor Leader's ROK Visit

The Associated Press ("EAST TIMOR LEADER IN S KOREA; SEEKS HELP TO REBUILD ECON," Seoul, 01/27/00) reported that East Timorese independence leader Jose Alexandre Xanana Gusmao arrived in the ROK Thursday to discuss ROK help to rebuild East Timor's economy. Gusmao will meet with ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joung-binn and Defense Minister Cho Sung-tae as well as ROK business leaders and human rights activists on Friday. Gusmao also planned to meet President Kim Dae-jung on Saturday. The ROK government plans to donate US$1 million in aid for reconstruction in East Timor.

3. US-PRC Military Talks

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "COHEN, CHINESE GENERAL HOLD SESSION," Washington, 01/26/00) reported that US Defense Secretary William Cohen met Wednesday with PRC Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai. US Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon said that Cohen hoped to visit Beijing this year. Bacon said that the PRC-US military talks had been "very constructive." He added that in addition to a 2000 agenda for military exchanges, the two sides were expected to discuss the situation in the DPRK, US plans for ballistic missile defenses, expansion of NATO, and Asia-Pacific regional issues.

The New York Times (Steven Lee Myers, "CHINESE GENERAL'S VISIT RAISES ONLY LIMITED HOPES," Washington, 01/26/00) reported that US officials said that the visit to the US by PRC Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai will produce only a modest series of military exchanges during the next year. An unnamed senior US military officer stated, "I think the relationship is going to resume in a more carefully focused way on both sides." He added, "I don't think General Xiong would have come over here without some expectation of coming up with a solid program. And that's certainly the expectation on our side." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 27.]

4. PRC View of US Missile Defense

The Washington Post (Steven Mufson, "CHINESE MILITARY LEADER OBJECTS TO U.S. MISSILE SALE TO TAIWAN," 01/27/00, A22) reported that US officials said Wednesday that PRC Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai strongly objected to the possible US sale of theater missile defenses to Taiwan during his talks with US officials this week. The officials said that Xiong warned that such a sale would violate the 1979 US-PRC diplomatic normalization pact. An unnamed senior PRC official in Washington was quoted as saying, "For its own defense needs, if the United States wants to develop a [theater missile defense] system, that's its own business. What we don't want to see is TMD covering Taiwan. That would ... damage U.S.-China ... relations." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 27.]

The Associated Press ("CHINA ATTACKS U.S. POSITION ON ARMS," Geneva, 01/27/00) and Reuters (Stephanie Nebehay, "CHINA SAYS TOP PRIORITY IS HALTING ARMS RACE IN SPACE," Geneva, 01/27/00) reported that the PRC Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament Hu Xiaodi on Thursday criticized the US for acting "at the expense of others" in rejecting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and trying to renegotiate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. Hu stated, "A certain country ... practices expediency and double standards toward arms control and disarmament agreements, even trying to weaken or abolish relevant treaties." Hu added, "People cannot but ask: Do we prefer the common security for all states or the absolute security enjoyed by a single state at the expense of all others?" He stated, "As far as China is concerned, the preventing of an arms race

in outer space, including the prohibition of outer space weapons as well as the prohibition of anti-ballistic missile systems which undermine the strategic stability, is the top priority. The negative developments in this field have stalled the nuclear disarmament process and undermined the basis for non-proliferation."

5. US Policy toward PRC

Reuters (Andrew Browne, "U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CHINA SETS HIS PRIORITIES," Beijing, 01/27/00) and the Associated Press ("US AMBASSADOR SAYS MILITARY CONTACTS WITH CHINA VITAL," Beijing, 01/27/00) reported that US Ambassador to the PRC Joseph Prueher on Thursday defended the need for military exchanges with the PRC. Prueher noted that when he commanded US forces in the Pacific during a standoff over Taiwan in March 1996, "I didn't know anybody in China to talk to, and we had no military relationship. We need to have the ability to have that communication so we don't make any miscalculations and we can advise our civilian bosses better." Prueher said that during his tenure he hoped to act as a bridge between the US President Bill Clinton administration and the incoming administration following US presidential elections this year. He stated, "The relationship between the United States and China is one that is too important to let lapse for a hiatus during an election year."

6. PRC Spying Allegation

The Washington Post (Cindy Sui, "CHINA SAYS U.S. LIBRARIAN ADMITTED STEALING SECRETS," Beijing, 01/26/00, A19) reported that PRC authorities said Tuesday that Song Yongyi, a librarian at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, has confessed to taking documents containing state secrets out of the country illegally. Song was detained August 7. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said that Song's actions "violated the criminal code of the People's Republic of China and jeopardized state security." About 100 US scholars have written to PRC President Jiang Zemin urging him to free Song. Song's wife, Helen Yao, stated, "I don't think he would confess, because he didn't do anything wrong."

7. PRC Internet Law

The Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "CHINA TIGHTENS CONTROLS ON INTERNET," Beijing, 01/27/00), the Washington Post (John Pomfret, "BEIJING CLAMPS DOWN ON INTERNET," Beijing, 01/27/00, A21), the New York Times (Elisabeth Rosenthal, "CHINA ISSUES RULES TO LIMIT E-MAIL AND WEB CONTENT," Beijing, 01/27/00) and The Wall Street Journal (Leslie Chang, "BEIJING, FEARING A LOSS OF CONTROL, WARNS INTERNET FIRMS OF DATA LEAKS," Beijing, 01/27/00) reported that the PRC States Secrecy Bureau released regulations in People's Daily on Wednesday banning discussion of "state secret information" on the Internet. The regulations also require that any website that "provides or releases information on the World Wide Web undergo security checks and approval." The government also ordered companies and individuals to register by next Monday encryption software used to protect transfers of sensitive information. Joe Sweeney, Asia research director for the Gartner Group, an Internet consulting firm, stated, "This is all bad news for China. It's sad because China's Internet is growing fast, but China is trying to rein in that growth." However, Guo Liang of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, argued, "I do not think it will have a big effect. People already know that you couldn't use the Internet to reveal state secrets or do things that are illegal."

8. US Policy toward PRC

The Los Angeles Times carried an analytical article (Tom Plate, "'GOLDILOCKS' POLICY FOR CHINA MAY BE 'JUST RIGHT'," 01/26/00) which said that the US needs a balanced policy toward the PRC. The article quoted Rand security analyst Michael Swaine as saying, "We should treat China like a great power, period, but without appeasement." Swaine stated, "the disincentives for the Chinese to invade [Taiwan] are high. They will only do it if they have no choice." He added, "It's not that [the US] shouldn't get closer to Taiwan simply because Beijing doesn't like it.... In the cost-benefit analysis, we gain more by not doing too much than if we do." Swaine argued, "Please understand what the Taiwanese authorities are doing when they request more high-profile arms than they can possibly use anyway. It's a mistake to make them look like a formal ally, like South Korea or Japan. Besides, they're not." He said that the PRC is at least 15 to 20 years of major economic development and military buildup away from having the capability to challenge the US.

9. Taiwan Elections

The Los Angeles Times carried an analytical article (Jim Mann, "INAUSPICIOUS SIGNS FOR KUOMINTANG," Taipei, 01/26/00) which said that Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang (Nationalist Party) appears headed for a "historic" defeat in the upcoming presidential election. The Kuomintang's (KMT) candidate, Vice President Lien Chan, is running third in most polls behind Chen Shui-bian of the opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and independent candidate James Soong. Chen said that if elected, he would willing to talk with top PRC leaders about their demand that Taiwan's future be settled according to the principle of "one China." Chen stated, "We do not exclude any possibility. For example, what exactly does 'one China' mean? What's its content? And what are the benefits of 'one China' for the Taiwanese people?" He added, "We want to put an end to the historic dispute between the Chinese Communist Party and the KMT." Soong emphasized the need to avoid an arms race across the Taiwan Straits.

10. US-Philippines Military Exercises

The New York Times (Seth Mydans, "PHILIPPINES: JOINT MANEUVERS PROTESTED," 01/27/00) reported that demonstrators in the Philippines demanded a halt to plans for joint military exercises with US troops scheduled for next week. They would be the first joint exercises since 1995. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 27.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Sports Exchanges

Joongang Ilbo (Yom Tae-jung, "HYUNDAI PLANS TO INVITE NORTH KOREAN SPORTS TEAM," Seoul, 01/27/00) reported that Hyundai plans to invite a DPRK team to join a sports contest this April. Kim Yoon-kyu, the representative of Hyundai Asan Corporation, said on Thursday, "We will invite one North Korean team to take part in a sports contest with us in Seoul. We hope this will strengthen the sports exchange between the two countries." He also added that they are planning to invite the DPRK's circus team during the same period. Chung Joo-young, Hyundai's honorary president, will visit Kim Jong-il, leader of the DPRK, to talk over the plans. Hyundai is also preparing to hold an exposition for the European Union on February 11th.

2. Human Rights in DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Park Hae-hyun, "STARVATION IN NK ANOTHER FORM OF HOLOCAUST," Seoul, 01/27/99) reported that about 100 French politicians and intellectuals held a discussion at a conference room at the French National Assembly building on Tuesday and declared that DPRK political prisoners dying of hunger in concentration camps is another form of holocaust. The meeting was organized by Henri Plagnol, a French National Assembly member. A document called "Let's Wake the Silence in North Korea," which the French organizers plan to issue to heads of states that are scheduled to attend a forum during the Holocaust Remembrance Day in Stockholm, Sweden from January 26-28, was distributed to the 100 participants at the assembly building. In the declaration, the French politicians and intellectuals claimed that about 10 concentration camps exist in the DPRK where death is prevalent. It added that the government's appetite for death would not be quenched by the death of a few political prisoners since the DPRK government idly watched 1-3 million DPRK citizens starve to death over the last 3 years.

3. ROK Policy toward DPRK

The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "ROK WELCOMES ALLIES' IMPROVED TIES WITH NK," Seoul, 01/27/00) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs-Trade Minister Lee Joung-binn on Wednesday told ROK-based envoys that the ROK welcomes the improvement of relations with the DPRK by the ROK's friends around the world. "In the same spirit of reconciliation and peace, my government encourages other countries to engage North Korea and welcomes improvements in North Korea's ties with our friends," he said during a speech at a reception he hosted for the foreign diplomatic corps. Lee noted that the ROK would continue to maintain its engagement policy toward the DPRK, because it is the "safest and most effective way to end the Cold War on the Korean peninsula and bring about South-North reconciliation and peaceful coexistence." The minister said that the ROK would keep focusing its efforts on mustering international support for sustained economic recovery and growth. In particular, the minister said that the ROK will actively take part in efforts to get the World Trade Organization's New Round of talks back on course.

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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