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I. United States

1. ROK Diplomatic Visit to DPRK

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREAN ENVOY SEEKS COOPERATION ON NORTH VISIT," Seoul, 03/28/02) and the Associated Press (Paul Shin, "SOUTH KOREAN ENVOY TO URGE NORTH KOREA TO IMPROVE TIES WITH US," Seoul, 03/28/02) reported that Lim Dong-won, diplomatic and national security adviser to ROK President Kim Dae-jung, will fly to North Korea on April 3 for a planned three-day visit, which could be extended if deemed necessary by both sides. Lim's trip, arranged after months of secret negotiations, was announced on Monday in a joint news release by the two governments. Lim told reporters on Thursday that he will be carrying a personal letter from the ROK president to DPRK leader Kim Jong Il. "My mission is to convey to the highest North Korean leader the thinking of President Kim on how to avert a security crisis that may arise on the Korean peninsula," Lim said.

Lim went on to state, "President Kim also has the view that North Korea needs to revive a stalled dialogue with South Korea and revitalize it so that it can bring subsequent improvement to US-North Korea relations."

2. PRC-US Relations

Reuters (John Ruwitch, "CHINA WARNS OF LOOMING SETBACK IN SINO-U.S. TIES," Beijing, 03/28/02) reported that the PRC media blasted the US on Thursday accusing his administration of betrayal after a string of "insensitive moves." The China Daily criticized the Bush Administration in an editorial on Thursday. "Here we are on the verge of another setback in Sino-U.S. ties," the China Daily said in an editorial on Thursday. "Beijing feels betrayed," the state-run newspaper said, adding: "Gone is the euphoria that surrounded US President George W. Bush's visit in February." Topping the list of the PRC's concerns was the U.S. decision this month to allow Taiwan defence minister Tang Yiau- ming into the US for talks with defence officials. The PRC is also upset about a Pentagon report saying that the PRC is one of several targets in the US' nuclear weapons planning, and "undisguised attempts" to bring Taiwan into the World Health Organization, it said. "Friendship is out of the question in the absence of reciprocity," the editorial said.

3. PRC Hu Visit

The Associated Press ("CHINA: VP STILL PLANNING U.S. TRIP," Beijing, 03/28/02) reported that the PRC said Thursday it still plans to send Vice President Hu Jintao to the US, dampening speculation that the visit might be cancelled due to tensions over Taiwan. Despite earlier sidestepping of the issue, on Thursday, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson said, "China and the United States are making preparations for this visit." Details will come "in due time."

4. Russia Nuclear Testing

The Associated Press (Vladimir Isachenkov, "RUSSIA'S EX-NUCLEAR MINISTER SPEAKS FOR RESUMPTION OF NUCLEAR TESTS," Moscow, 03/28/02) reported that former atomic energy minister Yevgeny Adamov disputed the Russian government's strong support of a global nuclear test ban on Thursday and said that the resumption of test explosions is vital for preserving the combat readiness of Russian nuclear weapons. Adamov stated, "If we decide to keep nuclear weapons, nuclear tests are inevitable." Adamov served as nuclear power minister until President Vladimir Putin fired him a year ago. "A nuclear device comes through a certain life cycle, it's being periodically disassembled and certain materials are changed ... so no one can be sure that it functions properly if not tested," Adamov said at a news conference. Russia conducted its last nuclear test explosion in 1990, and the US has banned underground nuclear testing since 1992. His successor, Alexander Rumyantsev, said Wednesday that nuclear test explosions would be necessary to modernize nuclear weapons, but also repeated the official line saying there is no need to resume testing.

5. DPRK Food Shortages

Reuters (Jeremy Page, "N.KOREA CUPBOARD ALMOST BARE, FOOD AID DWINDLES," Pyongyang, 03/28/02) reported that David Morton the World Food Program chief in Pyongyang announced that the DPRK's food stocks are likely to run out in April or May and without further support from donor countries, food aid will be exhausted by July. "Last year's harvest is still going out through the public distribution system at the rate of 300 grams per day -- much less than a person needs," Morton said.

Morton also said that he did not believe Afghanistan was the reason for the DPRK's lack of aid but suggested Japan's contribution was flagging. He gave no further details on the cause of the aid shortfall, which now stands at just a quarter of the WFP appeal. "Unusually, donors have only committed 25 percent of that so far and we will run out of food aid in July this year. That is of great concern to us. It hasn't happened since we've been here," said Morton. "What is missing actually is Japan, which gave half a million tons last year. Japan was the biggest donor last year," he said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK Air Force Project

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, "DEAL SEEN GOING TO BOEING," Seoul, 03/28/02) reported that the ROK government is leaning toward the US- built Boeing F-15K for its next-generation fighter jet project over the French-made Dassault Rafale. The contract to supply 40 new warplanes by 2009 is worth 4.2 trillion won (US$3.23 billion). The National Defense Ministry spokesperson, Hwang Eui-don, said Wednesday that the ministry will move on to a new study between the F-15K and the Rafale, after the first round of evaluation concluded with less than a three-percentage- point difference between their scores. The government had already made clear that the new study would weigh policy issues including the US-ROK alliance, which would favor the F-15K because of its interoperability with US military.

2. Inter Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "SEOUL NAMES DELEGATION FOR PYEONGYANG," Seoul, 03/28/02) reported that the ROK Unification Ministry said Wednesday that seven or eight working-level officials will accompany Lim Dong-won, the presidential envoy, when he visits the DPRK April 3. "Kim Bo-hyun, deputy director for DPRK affairs at National Intelligence Service; Cho Myoung-gyun, director-general of Inter-Korean Exchanges and Cooperation Bureau, and Kim Chun-sig, director of the policy coordination division of the ministry will aid Lim," said Kim Hong-jae, the ministry spokesperson. They will be accompanied by three or four assistant personnel. The ministry will send the list to Pyongyang and ask tje DPRK government to guarantee their safety.

3. Indonesian President Visiting Two Koreas

Joongang Ilbo ("MEGAWATI CARRYING KIM APPEAL TO NORTH," Seoul, 03/28/02) reported that Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri will arrive in the DPRK Thursday for a three-day stay on the invitation of Kim Yong- nam, the country's nominal head. Megawati will meet DPRK Chairman Kim Jong-il and will be carrying a message from ROK President Kim Dae-jung asking the DPRK to enter into dialogue with the ROK, US and Japan, according to a Foreign Ministry official. The Indonesian head of state will visit Seoul Saturday and will brief President Kim on her visit to the DPRK. The government gave permission Tuesday for the charter plane carrying the Indonesian president from Pyongyang to use the usually prohibited direct air route between the DPRK capital and Seoul.

4. Inter Korean Dialogue

The Korea Herald (Seo Hyun-jin, "ENVOY SHOULD TACKLE WEAPON WITH N.KOREA," Seoul, 03/28/02) reported that the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) should be one of the major

topics ROK's presidential envoy Lim Dong-won will discuss during his visit to Pyongyang next week, experts said Wednesday. Yun Duk-min, a senior researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security said the ROK should persuade the DPRK to open dialogue with US and allow special inspections of its nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The ROK also said that presidential envoy Lim will focus his discussions with DPRK officials on five major issues being promoted by ROK since the historic inter-Korean summit in 2000: the revitalization of the Mount Kumgang tour business, the reconnection of an inter-Korean railway, additional reunions of families separated since the Korean War, the establishment of an industrial complex in Gaeseong, and trust-building measures between the militaries of both Koreas.

III. Japan

1. Japan Constitutional Revision

The Asahi Shimbun ("CONSTITUTIONAL DEBATE NO LONGER 'UNTOUCHABLE'," Tokyo, 03/25/02) reported an interview with Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmaker Taro Nakayama, chairman of the Lower House Research Commission on the Constitution. He evaluated the progress of the commission, saying, "The Constitution was considered untouchable two years ago, but it has since become touchable. The public's interest in constitutional debate has grown considerably. With the exception of how to deal with the war-renouncing Article 9, there is little difference in opinion among political parties." Nakayama states, "Article 9 is not necessarily the only one (to deal with), but the question boils down to how to reconcile the present inconsistencies between the current Constitution and the nation's body of laws. The fact is, we have gone ahead with overseas deployment of SDF vessels under the authority of anti-terrorism legislation, even though this is not in keeping with the Constitution. We need to discuss what to do about this inconsistency."

2. DPRK-Japan Mystery Ship Incident

The Japan Times ("'SPY SHIP' DECISION DUE IN APRIL," Tokyo, 03/27/02) reported that the Japanese government is expected to decide in late April whether it will attempt to raise a suspected DPRK spy ship from the East China Sea, with officials leaning toward an investigation of the vessel despite diplomatic considerations. According to Shinzo Abe, deputy chief Cabinet secretary, Japan has every right to investigate why the 100-ton ship entered Japanese waters and exchanged fire with pursuing Japan Coast Guard boats. The coast guard, which used an underwater camera to photograph the ship on February 26, plans to send submersibles and divers to the site in late April. Sources said the government is expected to announce whether it will try to raise it from a depth of about 90 meters after receiving a report from the coast guard. The government has emphasized that the ship sank in the East China Sea and has tried not to provoke the PRC. Some members of the ruling bloc, however, have issued strident calls for a salvage operation. Takeshi Noda, leader of the New Conservative Party, said, "There are fools who say (that Japan would run into) trouble because the nation (to which the ship belongs) would become known when it is salvaged."

3. Oversea A-bomb Survivors

The Japan Times ("HIBAKUSHA CLEARED FOR MEDICAL HELP," Tokyo, 03/27/02) reported that the Japanese government decided Tuesday to allow atomic- bomb survivors living abroad to receive treatment and health-care allowances in Japan beginning June 1, government officials said. The Cabinet-approved revision to a decree under the A-bomb survivors assistance law means survivors

will no longer be required to renew their hibakusha health card every time they visit Japan for treatment, they said. The decision is part of a hibakusha assistance policy introduced by the Health, Labor and Welfare Ministry to cover travel expenses to Japan for medical treatment. The new policies are set to take effect in fiscal 2002, they said. Hibakusha will also be allowed to get special checkups in wider areas of Nagasaki.

4. Japanese Nuclear Weapons Policy

The Asahi Shimbun ("LOW MARKS FOR DISARMAMENT RECORD," Tokyo, 03/28/02) reported that Japan's record on nuclear disarmament is dismal, a group of ten experts concluded Wednesday in a report card to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Their assessment covered 15 areas, including "13 practical steps" such as early ratification of CTBT for nuclear disarmament that was agreed on at the UN review conference of NPT in May 2000. The report card graded the government's effort from May 2000 to February 2002. The overall evaluation was D-minus. "To put more pressure on the government, we will hand the report card to lawmakers as well as diplomats all over the world who will attend the preparatory committee of the NPT review conference being held in New York in April," said Hiromichi Umebayashi, chair of the evaluation committee and the director general of Peace Depot. The evaluation committee includes former Hiroshima Mayor Takashi Hiraoka and Osaka University professor Mitsuru Kurosawa.

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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