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I. United States

1. Japan Domestic Politics

The Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "KOIZUMI FIRES FOREIGN MINISTER OVER SQUABBLE WITH BUREACRATS," Tokyo, 01/29/02) and Reuters (Linda Sieg, "JAPAN PM FIRES FEUDING FOREIGN MINISTER," Tokyo, 01/29/02) reported that Japan Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka was summoned to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's residence Tuesday and abruptly fired over a feud with her top deputy that stalled the passage of legislation to lift the economy. Koizumi also dismissed the foreign ministry's top bureaucrat, Vice Foreign Minister Yoshiji Nogami, and asked a senior lawmaker involved in the latest dispute over Afghan aid to step down from an influential parliamentary post.

Koizumi made the surprise announcement just minutes after the Diet's Lower House passed an extra budget designed to keep the economy afloat. Koizumi stated, "Minister Tanaka's unique character has attracted the attention of a lot of citizens, but as the situation turned from the Foreign Ministry's internal affairs to an issue for the entire government and thus a problem for parliamentary deliberations, I am feeling responsible. I must take responsibility and have reached this conclusion." Koizumi cited the need for political stability amid the nation's economic turmoil. "I wanted to normalize the debate over the budget," Koizumi said. "In this severe economic situation the budget must be passed as soon as possible. We must also think of our interests in diplomatic affairs." Koizumi declined to say who would replace Tanaka.

2. ROK Domestic Politics

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "S. KOREAN LEADER REORGANIZES CABINET," Seoul, 01/29/02) and Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT NAMES NEW CABINET," 01/29/02) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung carried out a major cabinet reshuffle on Tuesday. Key presidential aides were changed and the president named a woman, Park Sun-sook as his top spokesperson for the first time. Unification Minister Hong Soon-Young, who had only been in his post since last September, was replaced by Jeong Se-hyun a DPRK affairs expert who served as vice unification minister in 1998-99. Seven ministers handling justice affairs, education, budget, commerce, science, health and labor were also replaced but Finance Minister Jin Nyum, the government's top economic policy-maker, was kept in his post. Jeon Yun-churl, the government's budget minister, became the new presidential chief of staff.

3. US-Philippines Anti-terror

Agence France-Presse ("US ANTI-TERROR CAMPAIGN IN THE PHILIPPINES TO START THURSDAY," 01/29/02) reported that a joint US-Philippines anti- terrorist operation is to begin Thursday. The operation against the Muslim Abu Sayyaf guerrillas in the southern Philippines is part of US plans to widen its war on terror into Southeast Asia. The US and Philippine commanders of the operation struck a deal on the "number of participating US troops", Brigadier General Emmanuel Teodosio told reporters after an emergency meeting here with a top US military official, Brigadier General Donald Wurster. After settling some "minor hitches", the two sides agreed "that the training's opening will be on Thursday morning," Teodosio added. Teodosio would not say how many US troops would participate in the operation or why the dispute arose.

Agence France-Presse ("84 percent of Filipinos approve of US help against terrorism: poll," Manila, 01/28/02) and The Washington Times (Marc Lerner, "TROOP PRESENCE SPLITS PHILIPPINE OPINION," Cebu, Philippines, 01/29/02) reported that an independent polling firm found that a majority of Filipinos approve of US military help in fighting terrorism in the Philippines. The Social Weather Stations November 3-21 nationwide survey found that 84 percent approved of US military assistance and 16 percent disapproved. The polling firm did not disclose the size of its survey sample and the margin of error. Social Weather said 64 percent agreed that US forces should be given passage through Philippine territory for anti-terrorist operations elsewhere, and 49 percent agreed that Filipino soldiers "should be sent where they can help in the war against terrorism." Max Soliven, a popular columnist and publisher of the Philippine Star newspaper, recently wrote in his column, "What our politicians are beginning to realize, even the ones hostile to the American presence, is that most Filipinos are so sick and tired of the Abu Sayyaf problem that they are happy the Americans are coming to zap the rascals." [Ed. Note: The Washington Post article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for January 29.]

4. PRC Bible Smuggling

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA DEFENDS SENTENCE ON BIBLE IMPORTER, VOWS CRACKDOWN ON 'CULTS,'" 01/29/02) reported that the PRC has defended the two-year sentence handed down to Li Guangqiang for importing Bibles into the country. PRC official Kong Quan said, "China is a country governed by laws, the Chinese court tried the case in accordance with the evidence and in accordance with the law." Kong said that freedom of religious beliefs was protected in the PRC, but that police had ample leeway under the law to clamp down on "evil cults." "The Chinese constitution has clear provisions to safeguard China's freedom of religious belief in accordance with the law," he said. "So far as evil cults are concerned, we will crack down on cults in accordance with the criminal law and the explanations given by the Supreme People's Court," Kong stated.

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "U.S. EMBASSY 'TROUBLED' BY CHINA," Beijing, 01/29/02) and Agence France-Presse ("US REMINDS CHINA ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AFTER BUSINESSMAN JAILED," 01/29/02) reported hours after the announcement of Li Guangqiang's jailing for smuggling thousands of bibles into the PRC, the US called on the PRC to uphold international human rights standards. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the US was troubled that people had been arrested for making religious materials available to Christians in the PRC. "We would expect China to live up to international standards on freedom of religious expression and freedom of conscience that are embodied in the international human rights instruments."

5. PRC's View of Anti-terror War and Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ADVISES IRAQI DEPUTY PM TO COOPERATE WITH UN OVER SANCTIONS," 01/29/02) reported that PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen told visiting Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz that his country should cooperate with the United Nations to end UN sanctions against Iraq. Such cooperation could also help avoid "new and complicated situations" arising from a potential extension of the US-led war against terrorism to Iraq. Qian also expressed, "China does not support the expansion of anti-terror military action, (but) at the same time hopes that Iraq will cooperate with the UN to avoid new and complicated situations which might emerge." PRC Premier Zhu Rongji later told Aziz that the PRC is willing to continue its efforts to lobby for an end to the sanctions. But Zhu said he hoped Iraq would strengthen its cooperation with the UN and also improve its relations with neighboring countries to create conditions for an early lifting of the sanctions. On the US-led global campaign against terrorism, Zhu said "targets should not be wantonly extended."

6. ROK Jet Fighters

Reuters ("KOREA SAYS MAY SCRAP PLAN TO BUY JET FIGHTERS," Seoul, 01/29/02) reported that the ROK Defence Ministry announced that it may scrap plans to purchase jet fighters if it finds prices too high at a bid scheduled for February 4. The ROK is looking for 40 fighters worth approximately 4.2 trillion won (US$3.20 billion) as part of an acquisition program including fighters, helicopters, missiles and surveillance systems. Yoon Won-jae, an ROK ministry spokesperson stated, "If we can't find the right bidder, we will review the fighters purchase program from scratch, including scrapping it." The ministry has already turned down all bids from US aircraft maker Boeing.

7. PRC-Afghanistan Relations

Deutsche Presse-Agentur ("CHINA TO REOPEN KABUL EMBASSY ON FEBRUARY 6," Beijing,

01/29/02) reported that the PRC will officially reopen its embassy in Afghanistan on February 6, a foreign ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday. Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi will preside over the reopening ceremony in Kabul, the spokesperson said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Economic Training

Joongang Ilbo ("480 N.K. OFFICAILS RECEIVED ECONOMIC TRAINING OVERSEAS IN 2001," Seoul, 01/29/02) reported that the DPRK has sent 480 economic officials and scholars abroad to study the capitalist economy last year, an unnamed government official said Sunday. "Out of 503 DPRK officials and scholars who received training overseas last year, 480 studied market economy," said the official on condition of anonymity. The figure is up 2.8 fold from the previous year, he added.

2. ROK-DPRK Family Reunion

The Korea Herald ("RED CROSS PROPOSES FAMILY REUNIONS," Seoul, 01/29/02) reported that the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) proposed to the DPRK on Tuesday the arrangement of reunions for separated families in both countries. KNRC President Suh Young-hoon telephoned his DPRK counterpart, Jang Jae-on, to make the proposal for what would be a fourth round of family reunions around the lunar New Year holiday that falls on February 12. "The matter of separated families is a humanitarian issue that cannot be put off for any reason," Suh said. The two officials planned to exchange reunion visits of 100 people from each side in October last year, but the DPRK suspended the plan due to the ROK's increased security alert following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the US.

3. ROK-Afghanistan Relations

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO RESTORE TIES WITH AFGHANISTAN," Seoul, 01/29/02) reported that the ROK will re-establish diplomatic ties with Afghanistan after a 24-year hiatus, and establish a Kabul branch of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), which provides foreign aid. Minster of Foreign Affairs and Trade Han Seung-soo will sign an agreement with Afghan Foreign Minister Abdullah on January 31 in the US. The KOICA office in Kabul will include a team representing the ROK who will be responsible for coordinating government assistance to Afghanistan. Official ties between ROK and Afghanistan were cut in 1978 after the founding of the communist regime of Taraki in Afghanistan

4. ROK Air Force Project

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "FX PROGRAM TO FACE FULL-SCALE REVIEW," Seoul, 01/29/02) reported that the Ministry of National Defense's Chief Procurement Officer Choi Dong-jin said Tuesday that if the third round of bids on the next generation FX fighter project, scheduled for February 4, fails to meet ministry targets, the entire project will be subject to a review. The ministry and ROK Air Force will then decide whether or not to continue with the project. Choi said that there were several options to be discussed including reducing the number of FX fighters to be purchased, delaying procurement for one to two years, or completely abandoning the project and producing more F-16s for deployment. He continued that if the latter course of action is chosen the ministry will consider buying tankers for airborne-refueling and AWACS aircraft to boost operational

capacity. The four bidders; Boeing, Dassault, Eurofighter and Rosvoorouzhenie; submitted tenders that were between US$600 million to US$1 billion over the ministry's target price in the last round.

III. Japan

1. Japan Nuclear Power

The Japan Times (Eriko Arita, "SITE SOUGHT FOR FUSION PROJECT," Tokyo, 01/24/02) reported that the Japanese government is expected to announce its candidacy to host the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project soon. The Council for Science and Technology Policy, the top government body in compiling the nation's science and technology policies, issued a report in December stating that it recognizes the significance of Japan hosting the ITER project. Some experts have estimated the project will cost 1 trillion yen. According to the Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry, it would cost 700 billion to host the project, compared with 300 billion if Japan does not host but instead participates in a joint project. At present, three municipalities have announced their candidacies as host site: the towns of Naka (Ibaraki Prefecture) and the village of Rokkasho (Aomori Prefecture).

2. US Bases in Okinawa

The Japan Times ("NAGO AIRPORT TALKS," Tokyo, 01/26/02) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka said Friday that she agreed in talks with US Secretary of State Collin Powell that the two countries will continue discussing the requested time limit on the US military's use of an airport to be built in Nago, northern Okinawa. "I mentioned to Secretary Powell that there are respective positions on the time limit and conveyed to him the requests by the Okinawa governor regarding continuing discussions on the relocations and return of Futenma Air Station. Powell said the US will continue talks on the matter," Tanaka said. She added that she informed Okinawa governor Keiichi Inamine about the matter Friday in a meeting of officials from the state and Okinawa Prefecture.

The Japan Times ("OKINAWA AID BILL HAMMERED OUT," Tokyo, 01/26/02) reported that the Japanese and Okinawa Prefectural government agreed Friday on a draft bill that would cover a decade's worth of development measures in Okinawa aimed at luring financial and information technology firms to the area. The government has undertaken major development measures in Okinawa partly as compensation for the heavy US military presence there. The bill also calls for setting up a technology graduate school in Okinawa and lessening a fuel tax on flights between Okinawa and the main islands of Japan. The measure is an "unprecedented major development bill," a Cabinet Office official said of the zones, which will be the first of their kind in Japan.

3. Japan-US Relations

The Japan Times ("JAPAN, U.S. SET TO BEGIN STRATEGY DIALOGUE IN MAY," Tokyo, 01/27/02) reported that Japan and the US are preparing to hold their first meeting at the sub-Cabinet level on a wide range of topics in Washington in May. The sources said Vice Foreign Minister Yoshiji Nogami, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and other officials will attend the meeting, which will address international terrorism, the PRC, the Korean Peninsula, regional and international issues, as well as economic issues. Japan has held similar level talks with Britain, France and Germany, but its highest working-level consultations with the US have been at the deputy foreign minister- level.

4. Japanese Logistical Support for US

The Japan Times ("JAPAN DECIDES TO SEND SECOND FLEET TO INDIAN OCEAN," Tokyo, 01/28/02) reported that the Japanese government has decided to send its second fleet, comprised of three Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) destroyers and one supply ship, to the Indian Ocean next month as part of Japan's continued non-combat support for the US-led war on terrorism, government sources said Sunday. Though the US attacks in Afghanistan have ended, anti-terrorism operations by the US military are expected to continue, and Japan's support will be necessary, the sources said. The first fleet of MSDF ships was dispatched last November to the Indian Ocean, and the second fleet is expected to take over the duty of the first. According to the Defense Agency, the second fleet will include three destroyers-Haruna, from Maizuru Base (Kyoto Prefecture), Setogiri, from Ohminato Base (Aomori Prefecture) and Sawakaze, from Sasebo Base (Nagasaki Prefecture), and a supply ship, Tokiwa, from Yokosuka Base. In addition, four patrol helicopters based in Tateyama (Chiba Prefecture) will be aboard the escort ships, and about 900 MSDF personnel will be sent for the operation. Along with the plan to dispatch the second fleet, the Defense Agency is studying the possibility of extending the period of time the MSDF can provide support for the US operations in the area.

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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