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I. United States

1. EU-DPRK Relations

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "WITH U.S. PULLING BACK, NORTH KOREA OPENS UP TO OTHER NATIONS," Tokyo, 3/28/01) reported that the DPRK has sped up its diplomacy with a wide variety of countries in the recent weeks. Major European companies like Siemens AG of Germany and Asea Brown Boveri of Switzerland have reportedly begun prospecting for business opportunities in the DPRK, focusing especially on the electricity industry. A notable diplomatic shift came earlier this month when Germany negotiated a protocol that calls for its diplomats to enjoy freedom of movement in the DPRK. Oliver Schramm, a German diplomat in the ROK said, "We don't know whether this will be like Ostpolitik (former West Germany's longtime policy of engagement with former East Germany) and take a long time, or not. Somehow, at least on paper, it looks like we have made a big breakthrough." However, some European officials also said that the rush of diplomats into the DPRK raised delicate issues for the US President George W. Bush administration. Antony Stokes, a British diplomat in the ROK, said, "We want very visibly to show that we support the process of closer engagement between the two Koreas, and we have been speaking with our American colleagues and our Japanese colleagues to search for ways to do that. We want to use our

bilateral relationship with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to support this process. The process allows us to raise our concerns in matters that are important to us, which are very similar to issues of importance to the United States and Japan. But we think that by establishing relations, we are in a position to do so more effectively." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 29, 2001.]

2. DPRK View of Missile Defense

The Associated Press ("U.S. WARNED IN ANTI-MISSILE DEFENSE," Tokyo, 3/29/01) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on March 28 accused the US and Japan of boosting joint development of the proposed US anti-missile defense system. The commentary said, "If they continue to provoke military confrontation with North Korea--following this path to war--we will have no option but to respond with firm resolve. Notwithstanding such criticism, the United States and Japan have obstinately pursued their own course."

3. US Military Strategy

The San Diego Union-Tribune carried an analytical article (Holger Jensen, "NEW DEFENSE STRATEGY TO FOCUS ON ASIA," 3/28/01) which said that the US Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review is signaling a major shift in emphasis from Europe to Asia. The first casualty of this strategy may be the long-standing doctrine that the US military must be prepared to fight two major theater wars simultaneously. The second is the belief that Russia still poses a threat to the US. While US President George W. Bush and US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld are said to be in agreement that Russia is too economically strapped to pose much of a threat, the PRC has convinced many US Defense Department strategists that Asia and the Pacific Ocean are more likely theaters of future US military operations than a major war in Europe. This does not mean abandoning Europe or NATO. However, in the long term, the Bush team sees the PRC as a "strategic competitor" whose military buildup poses the greatest potential threat to world peace once it achieves parity with the US over the next 10 to 15 years. Other more immediate areas of Asian concern include the nuclear rivalry of India and Pakistan and the DPRK. US Defense Department sources said that the US Navy will be told to stop building huge aircraft carriers and start designing smaller carriers less vulnerable to missile attack, and that the Air Force will be told to stop building short-range fighters and concentrate more on long- range bombers and unmanned aircraft. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 29, 2001.]

4. PRC Cyberwarfare Capabilities

Agence France Presse ("U.S. MILITARY CONCERNED ABOUT CHINA'S CYBERWARFARE CAPABILITIES, SAYS US GENERAL," Washington, 3/29/01) reported that US Air Force General Ralph Eberhart, head of the US Space Command, said Thursday that the PRC is developing cyberwarfare capabilities that could put at risk the computer networks that the US military increasingly relies on for its operations. Eberhart said that although the PRC's intentions are unclear, the US military is concerned about its focus on developing the means to carry out computer network attack. He said, "We see this in terms of capabilities we know they have, we see this written in their doctrine, we see this espoused by their leadership. We don't know if they in fact intend to use it for a threat. It concerns us when we see a capability out there."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Agreed Framework

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL VIEWS REPLACEMENT OF N.K. NUCLEAR REACTORS AS UNREALISTIC," Seoul, 03/29/01) reported that despite mounting calls among US Republicans for the replacing nuclear power plants to be provided to the DPRK with thermal stations, a top ROK official responsible for the project Wednesday dismissed such a scheme as "unrealistic." Chang Sun-sup, head of the Office of Planning for Light Water Reactor project, said that the proposed scheme would have to undergo a long and difficult process of amending related accords, including the 1994 agreement between the US and the DPRK. "It's not a realistic plan as it doesn't help at all either in shortening the construction period nor reducing the cost," Chang said at a workshop organized by the Asia- Pacific Policy Research Institute. Touching on the delayed construction, which was initially scheduled to end by 2003 but predicted by observers to continue until 2010, Chang said that the process would markedly speed up from the second half of this year.

2. Inter-Korean Sports Exchange

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NORTH KOREA CANCELS JOINT PING-PONG TEAM WITH SOUTH," Seoul, 03/29/01) reported that the DPRK informed the ROK that it would not join the proposed inter-Korean team for the 46th World Table Tennis Championships in Osaka, Japan April 23-May 5, dashing hopes for the first unified sports team in 10 years. The DPRK's table tennis association in a letter cited the failure between the two sides to reach a complete agreement as well as other preparatory problems. The letter did not elaborate on what blocked the complete accord between the two Koreas.

3. Inter-Korean Parliamentary Talks

The Korea Times (Sohn Suk-joo, "INTER-KOREAN PARLIAMENTARY TALKS DUE NEXT WEEK," Seoul, 03/28/01) reported that ROK National Assembly Speaker Lee Man-sup will discuss parliamentary exchanges with a DPRK parliament secretary-general at a meeting in Havana, Cuba, next week, which will be held on the sidelines of the annual conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The IPU meeting is scheduled for April 1-7. "North Korea will send a five-member delegation headed by Supreme People's Assembly secretary-general Kim Yun-hyok to the IPU meeting, during which legislators from the two Koreas will meet," a National Assembly official said. During the inter- Korean parliamentary talks, Speaker Lee will propose that the two Koreas send parliamentary delegations to each other's capital in the near future.

4. US on DPRK Threat

Chosun Ilbo (Joo Yong-joon, "SCHWARTZ EMPHASIZES INCREASED THREAT FROM NK," Seoul, 03/28/01) reported that General Thomas Schwartz, the commander of the Combined Forces Command in the ROK, told a budget allocation meeting of the Senate's Armed Services Committee Wednesday that the DPRK military was getting larger, closer and more lethal day by day. He said that the DPRK was increasing training and improving the quality of its troops. Schwartz said that he would go into details at closed door sessions where he would cite intelligence, and lists of weapons purchases made by the DPRK. His testimony was in line with Central Intelligence Agency Director George Tenet who said in February that the decline of the DPRK military over the past ten years had recently halted.

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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