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I. United States

1. Italy-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse (Jun Kwan-woo, "N. KOREA HAILS ITALIAN VISIT AS START OF NEW

CHAPTER IN TIES," Seoul, 3/29/00) reported that the DPRK hosted a visit by Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini to Pyongyang on March 29. The DPRK and Italy released a joint statement at the end of Dini's two-day visit on March 29, and agreed that a dialogue between the ROK and the DPRK was essential to achieving peace in the Korea Peninsula. The statement released by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said, "(The DPRK and Italy) shared the view that the division of Korea, a source of constant tensions in this area, should be terminated peacefully at an early date." It added that an end to the world's last Cold War frontier should be sought "through beneficial reunification-oriented dialogue and negotiations between the North and South of Korea." The statement also said, "the Italian side assured the DPRK that it would positively examine the latter's request for its sustained aid" and both sides agreed "on expanding and deepening the friendly and cooperative relations in the political, economic and cultural fields on the principle of mutual respect, sovereignty and equality." KCNA said that during his stay, Dini met with his DPRK counterpart, Paek Nam- sun, and nominal head of state Kim Yong-nam, president of the presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly. A statement issued in Italy said that Dini while holding talks with Paek had urged the DPRK to end its isolation.

2. Japan-DPRK Talks

Reuters (Teruaki Ueno, "JAPAN SEES NO QUICK PROGRESS IN N.KOREA TALKS," Tokyo, 3/29/00) reported that Japan said on March 29 that huge hurdles must be cleared before progress can be expected at the normalization talks with the DPRK beginning on April 4. Kojiro Takano, Japan's chief negotiator in the talks, said that the two sides were far apart on key issues including the alleged abduction of Japanese citizens by the DPRK and the DPRK's demands for reparations for damage suffered during Japan's colonial rule of the Korean peninsula. Takano said, "a huge gap exists between Japan and North Korea over bilateral issues.... We can't expect for a quick progress. It's impossible to normalize relations while the abduction issue is shelved." However, he added that Japan would not extend additional aid to the DPRK until the ROK and the DPRK make "substantive" progress in their talks over key bilateral issues. Tokano said, "even if North Korea asks for more aid, it will be very difficult for the Japanese government to respond positively as long as no substantive progress is achieved over various issues, including the abduction case." He also said that Japan would not accept the DPRK's demand that Japan pay reparations for its colonial rule of the Korean peninsula, although it would be ready to accept DPRK demands that Japan apologize for harm done under its colonial rule.

3. US-ROK-Japan Policy Coordination

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA PRESSED BY SOUTH KOREA'S ALLIES TO ACCEPT KIM INITIATIVE," Tokyo, 3/30/00) reported that at a meeting in Japan, senior officials from the US, the ROK and Japan jointly urged the DPRK on Thursday to accept ROK President Kim Dae-jung's recent call for tighter inter-Korean cooperation. A joint statement said that the three countries also agreed to continue efforts to engage the DPRK in dialogue to improve relations. The meeting was led by Yukio Takeuchi, Japan's deputy vice foreign minister for foreign policy, US State Department counselor Wendy Sherman, and ROK deputy minister of foreign affairs and trade Jang Jal-ryong. The statement said, "they hoped that the DPRK would respond positively to the initiative. They also stressed the central importance of South-North dialogue to peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula. They expressed the hope that the DPRK will continue to take positive steps for the improvement of its relations with the three countries." The statement also said that the three countries particularly welcomed the resumption of talks between Japan and the DPRK set for April 4-8 in Pyongyang to establish diplomatic ties. It added that the three countries hoped that the US and the DPRK would improve relations through dialogue, including talks on a visit to Washington by a

high-level DPRK official as well as the DPRK's missile and nuclear development.

The Asian Wall Street Journal published an editorial ("ABETTING NORTH KOREA," 3/30/00) which said that the meeting on Thursday of senior officials from the US, Japan and the ROK in Tokyo to discuss the DPRK did not consider the best available option: Do nothing. The editor wrote, "instead they are determined to go on aiding a despotic regime that starves its own people and threatens its neighbors." The editorial continued, "North Korea's communist regime has been teetering on the brink since the Cold War ended. Were it not for the good intentions of the free world, it probably would have collapsed by now. But over the past six years, the U.S. and its Asian allies have tried to buy peace and security from an innately hostile power. As a result, they have proven to be easy pickings for Pyongyang's extortion, and the region has grown less secure." The editor added that the US should consider whether giving aide to the DPRK Nationals would be a kindness because much of the assistance sent to the DPRK ends up in the hands of the armed forces or the Workers Party elite, thus "enabling the regime to survive longer." It concluded, "neither humanitarian nor security concerns will be resolved until the Democratic People's Republic of Korea vanishes from the face of the earth. The summitteers in Tokyo should concentrate on hastening that happy day." [Ed. note: This editorial was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 30, 2000.]

4. US-PRC Talks

Agence France Presse ("CHINESE PRESIDENT HOLDS TALKS WITH US NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR," Beijing, 3/30/00) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin met with US National Security Advisor Samuel Berger on Thursday at the Zhongnanhai leadership headquarters in central Beijing. The two exchanged pleasantries before journalists were escorted out of the meeting. No other information was immediately available.

5. US Senate Resolution on Taiwan

Office of International Information Programs, US Department of State ("SENATE APPROVES MARCH 28 RESOLUTION ON TAIWAN ELECTIONS," 3/30/00) reported that US Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Democratic Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware urged their US Senate colleagues on March 28 to pass a Senate Concurrent Resolution 99 praising the successful democratic elections held in Taiwan on March 18. Resolution 99 mirrored a House Concurrent Resolution 292 passed by the US House of Representatives on March 28. The Senate approved the resolution unanimously.

6. Cross-Straits Trade Relations

The Los Angeles Times (Jim Mann and Tyler Marshall, "CHINESE REJECT TAIWAN TRADE OVERTURES," Washington, 3/30/00) reported that deputy chief of mission at the PRC Embassy in Washington Liu Xiaoming said on March 29 that the PRC government said that before trade restrictions between the PRC and Taiwan can be eased, Taiwan president-elect Chen Shui-bian must first promise to adhere to the principle that there is only "one China." Chen said during his campaign and in subsequent interviews that he would like to open up what are commonly called the "three links" between Taiwan and the PRC: direct trade, shipping and postal services. However, Liu said, "I do not see that there will be [direct trade] between the two sides without an endorsement by Chen Shui-bian of the 'one China' principle. The 'one China' principle is the basis for cross-strait relations, including the three links." Huang Renwei of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences echoed the

same sentiment at a Washington conference on Taiwan. Huang, suggested that it would be counterproductive for the new government in Taiwan to press for a more precise definition of "one China." Huang said, "there are those who want a clear definition, but this will make it much harder to resolve the problem" of launching a substantive dialogue between Taipei and Beijing.

7. Taiwan Premier

Reuters ("TAIWAN PREMIER APPOINTMENT SEEN AS CLEVER MOVE," Taipei, 3/30/00) reported that Taiwan media and stock investors on Thursday applauded Taiwan President-elect Chen Shui-bian's choice of Defense Minister Tang Fei as premier, saying that it would help Chen build support in the military and ease relations in the legislature. Tang is a veteran Nationalist Party member and military man whose appointment was also seen as reassuring to the PRC. Taipei Times said in an editorial, "although a great surprise, Tang seems to be an inspired choice." Beyond Asset Management President Michael On said, "most see Tang's appointment as quite positive because this can help stabilize sentiment in the military in Taiwan's first power transfer in five decades."

8. Taiwan Assembly

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TO BE MARGINALISED NOT SCRAPPED," Taipei, 3/30/00) reported that Taiwan's two major political parties, the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), agreed on Thursday that the 334-seat body Taiwan National Assembly should be marginalized after its term expires on May 19, but not dissolved. Parliamentarian sources said that the KMT hoped that the assembly would keep marginal powers as a balance to the powerful parliament. DPP secretary-general You Hsi-kun said, "they got the face while we got what we really want. Virtually the National Assembly would be scrapped in terms of its function. It would exist only in form." Hung Yu-chin, the KMT party whip, said in a statement that under the new deal, deputies to the assembly would be appointed by political parties in proportion to their seats in the Legislative Yuan. Most of the assembly's powers would be switched to the parliament including the power to impeach the president or vice-president and to elect the vice-president. Hung said, "NA deputies would be organized in a temporary manner ... only if the parliament presents proposals to impeach the president or the vice president, or when they want to vote in the exercise of their rights of referendum on proposed constitutional amendments submitted by the parliament."

9. PRC-Russian Relations

Agence France Presse ("RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTER SAYS RELATIONS WITH CHINA WON'T CHANGE," Beijing, 3/30/00) reported that the PRC state press said on Thursday that Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev told his PRC counterpart Chi Haotian during meetings in Astana that there would be no major changes in Russia's relations with the PRC following the victory of Vladimir Putin in Russian presidential elections last weekend. Sergeyev was quoted by the official PRC People's Daily as telling Chi, "Russia and China have an important responsibility for maintaining world peace and from today onwards we will continue this kind of cooperation. I stress that Russia in the past, at present and in the future has supported China's policy and position on the Taiwan question, this will not change. Russia and China have similar and close positions on many big international and regional issues and closely cooperate on issues like Kosovo, the anti-ballistic missile treaty, human rights and fighting ethnic splittism, religious extremism and international terrorism." Chi praised Sino-Russian cooperation in maintaining global peace and "opposing hegemonism and power politics. The Chinese side believes that the Chechnya problem is an internal

Russian affair and the Chinese side fully understands and completely supports all actions adopted by the Russian government in efforts to maintain national unity and territorial integrity."

Agence France Presse ("RUSSIA, CHINA, CENTRAL ASIAN STATES TO BOOST MILITARY TIES," Astana, 3/30/00) reported that defense ministers from Russia, the PRC and three Central Asian states promised on Thursday to intensify military cooperation. PRC Defense Minister Chi Haotian said, "we reached a unified position on a wide range of issues. I would especially stress achieving an agreement on a joint fight against reactionary extremism, national separatism and international terrorism. All of us were in agreement that only by joint efforts can we avert this. Our agreements will provide stability and the development of prosperity." Chi also said the three defense ministers discussed continuing work on two Shanghai Five agreements to strengthen confidence-building measures and reduce armed forces along their shared border. He continued, "the defense ministers also paid serious attention to the problems of anti-ballistic missiles, Islamic regional terrorism and extremism and attempts of interference into interior affairs of sovereign states."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Korea Herald (Choi Sung-jin, "PYONGANG TO ACCEPT 'BERLIN DECLARATION' EVENTUALLY," Seoul, 03/30/00) and The Korea Times (Lee Chang-sup, "PRES. KIM ADVISES N. KOREA TO IMPROVE TIES WITH SEOUL," Seoul, 03/29/00) reported that the DPRK is currently on a "fierce" diplomatic offensive. The DPRK has established relations with Italy and is attempting to do the same with Australia, the Philippines, and South Africa. More significantly, it is taking giant strides toward normalizing ties with its two major capitalist foes - the US and Japan. ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lee Joung-binn said that even though the DPRK's ongoing diplomatic initiative is partly a result of the country's dire economic straits, it is also attributable to the ROK's efforts under its "sunshine policy" for the past two years to persuade its major allies to befriend the DPRK. Lee added that this being the case, it can no longer attempt to isolate the ROK diplomatically as it did in the past. Lee predicted that the DPRK's financial struggles would eventually, if not immediately, cause the DPRK to accept ROK President Kim Dae- jung's recent proposal.

2. DPRK Provocations

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "PRESIDENT INSTRUCTS FOREIGN MINISTER TO SEND N.K. MESSAGE ON MILITARY PROVOCATION," Seoul, 03/30/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung ordered the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade on March 29 to send the DPRK a "message" to convince its government not to commit any acts of aggression against the ROK. Kim said, "we must also let the North know that we will not tolerate any provocation." He also said that the DPRK's recent moves to improve relations with foreign countries should assist the ROK and the international community in their efforts to help end its decades-old era of isolation.

3. DPRK-Italy Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Yong-chong, "ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVED IN PYONGYANG," Seoul, 03/29/00) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), reported that Italian foreign minister Lamberto Dini arrived in Pyongyang on March 28. Dini is scheduled to meet DPRK Prime Minister Hong Sung-nam and the DPRK foreign minister, to discuss such issues as aid to the DPRK, military weapons development, human rights, and Italy's future activities regarding the

DPRK.

4. ROK-UK Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "KOREA-UK TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREA POLICY," Seoul, 03/29/00) reported that the ROK and the United Kingdom will resume talks scheduled for April 3-4 regarding DPRK policy. An unnamed person within the ROK Foreign Ministry said that John Battle, the British Minister of State for Foreign Commonwealth Office and person in charge of the Asia region, will visit the ROK next week and have official meetings with Ban Ki- moon, his ROK counterpart at the ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. During the talks, ROK and UK officials will largely discuss policy on the DPRK. The source said that the "UK does not have diplomatic relations with North Korea but has had seven official meetings in the past. The eighth will see discussed the sending of two British English instructors to North Korea."

III. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK Diplomacy

People's Daily (Zhang Xinghua, "NEW CHANGES IN DPRK DIPLOMACY," 3/21/00, P6) carried a commentary saying that the DPRK's diplomacy in the new century tends to be active. This is a positive change, the article said. After the cold war, the article said, containment and antagonism are not in accord with the demand of the age. The tension on the Korean Peninsula in recent years has gradually eased. The US and Japan have adjusted their policies toward the DPRK and economic and cultural exchanges between the DPRK and the ROK have been continuously increasing. Under such circumstances, the article said, the DPRK adjusted its foreign policy in a timely fashion, fastened its steps to push forward positively multilateral diplomacy, and has made encouraging progresses. According to the article, the promotion of multilateral foreign policy shows that the DPRK wants to improve its relations with all countries, including western countries. It said that the tendency of DPRK diplomacy is conducive to creating peaceful and stable environment on Korean Peninsula and increasing the DPRK's economic exchanges with others and its domestic economic construction. However, in the end, the article warned that the cold war mentality has not completely disappeared and the diplomatic normalization between DPRK and the ROK, the US and Japan cannot be reached in one day.

2. DPRK Economy

China Daily ("DPRK'S ECONOMY ON THE UP," Seoul, P6, 03/23/00) reported that ROK economists said on March 22 that the DPRK economy registered positive growth in 1999 for the first time in 10 years. The DPRK's gross domestic product (GDP) grew by up to 3 percent last year, the Korea Economic Daily said in a survey of research institutes in Seoul. It said that the rebound from a 10-year contraction since 1990 was propelled by steady foreign aid and a recovery in agricultural and manufacturing output. "The rebound reflects a shift in economic policy to pragmatism and an inflow of foreign aid," Cho Myong-chul of the (ROK) Korea Institute for International Economic Policy said. "Last year's growth was a technical rebound. But I believe the DPRK economy will grow further this year and next year," he said.

People's Daily (Zhang Xinghua, "DPRK: CHALLENGING DIFFICULTIES AND DEVELOPING ECONOMY," 3/30/00, P6) carried a report saying that the DPRK Labor Party and the DPRK Government have taken a series of policy adjustments and all kinds of measures to promote

economic development. Since last year, the article said, the DPRK economic situation has improved. It said that while facing difficulties, the DPRK people have displayed incredible endurance and strong will, which is an important element to push forward the DPRK's economic development. However, the article also reminded that the DPRK still have difficulties in resolving its economic problems in the short term.

3. Construction of Light-Water Reactors

People's Daily ("DPRK DEMANDS US TO COMPENSATE ELECTRICITY LOSS," 3/30/00, P6) reported that the DPRK's Rodong Shinmun issued an article on March 28 demanding that the US take practicable measures to compensate the DPRK's electricity loss because of the delay of the construction of light-water reactions.

4. ROK-Japanese Relations

China Daily ("JAPAN, TAIWAN BAN SOUTH KOREAN MEATS," Seoul, 03/30/00, P5) reported that Japan and Taiwan have banned ROK beef and pork because of a suspected outbreak of foot and mouth disease on dairy farms in the country's north. "Japan on Monday temporarily suspended the quarantine inspection of beef and pork from South Korea following the outbreak," a spokesman from the ROK agriculture ministry said. He said the blister-causing disease was reported on dairy farms in Paju County. He added that Taiwan had also temporarily banned imports of ROK pork. Kim Sung-hoon, ROK agriculture minister, said that the ministry asked for cooperation from the Defense Ministry and other government agencies in an effort to fight the disease.

5. PRC-US Talks

People's Daily (Zhang Jingyu, "ZHU RONGJI MEETS WITH BERGER," Beijing, 03/30/00, P1) reported that when meeting visiting US National Security Advisor Samuel Berger, PRC Premier Zhu Rongji stressed that any kind of "Taiwan independence" will not be allowed no matter who is in power in Taiwan. He urged the US to be fully aware of the complexity and sensitivity of the Taiwan issue and adhere to the one-China principle, the report said. Zhu expressed the PRC's willingness to improve and develop ties with the US. He said that such a relationship must follow strictly the three Sino-US Joint Communiques and the norms of international relations. In particular, the premier said, the principles of mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs must be honored. Berger, describing the bilateral relations as "at a critical moment," said that the US will adhere to the one-China policy and observe the three Sino-US Joint Communiques. He promised that the US will not support "Taiwan independence," "two Chinas," or "one China, one Taiwan." Nor will the US support Taiwan's entry into any international organization that requires statehood, Berger said. He said the US government will continue working for the establishment of US-PRC constructive partnership. The US government hopes that the PRC can smoothly join the World Trade Organization and will work towards granting the PRC permanent normal trade relations, Berger said according to the report.

6. PRC-US Trade Relations

China Daily (Gong Zhengzheng, "US NUKE FIRMS EYE CHINA," 03/22/00, p5) reported that the US nuclear power plant manufacturers are eyeing China's vast market potential and to supply China with electricity beneficial to its environment. "US companies are prepared to work with Chinese manufacturers and research institutes to establish nuclear power technology base with high

efficiency and reliability in China," said Joe F. Colvin, president with the US Nuclear Energy Institute at the sixth China International Nuclear Industry Exhibition. Details of the companies' plans were not revealed. The institute and three US nuclear power plant manufacturers, including ABB Combustion Engineering, General Electric and Westinghouse, are participating in the exhibition.

China Daily ("CONDITIONS SET FOR IMPORTING US GOODS," 3/25/00, P1) reported that the PRC said it will allow importation of wheat, citrus and meat from the US if certain conditions are met. The conditions were outlined in three bulletins released earlier this week by Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign trade and Economic Trade and Economic Cooperation, and the State Administration for Exit-Entry Inspection and Quarantine (SAEEIQ). The first bulletin said that so long as its own wheat industry is not threatened, China will allow the import of all kinds of wheat from the US. The second bulletin agreed on citrus imports from the states of Texas, Arizona and parts of Florida and California. According to the document, the oranges destined for the PRC must come from orchards, carriers/packing plants and storage sheds designated by both the SAEEIQ and the US Department of Agriculture as passing certain inspection requirements. The third bulletin said that US meat imported by the PRC must come from slaughterhouses approved by the Food Safety Inspection Bureau under the US Department of Agriculture. In commenting on the three bulletins, US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said on March 24 that the new rules are a final step towards implementing the agricultural agreement signed by the PRC and the US in April 1999. The Chinese departments that endorsed the bulletins declined to comment.

7. The Taiwan Issue

China Daily (Xin Zhiming, "'TIMETABLE' FOR TAIWAN ISSUE," 03/24/00, P4) reported that Li Jiaquan, research fellow with the Institute of Taiwan Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that "definitely the current condition across the Taiwan Straits should not last for too long." For this reason, he said, the mainland has reiterated the importance of Taiwan not being off the track of reunification. The report said that the white paper on the Taiwan issue released on February 21 indicates that the PRC will take drastic measures to safeguard reunification if Taiwan refuses the peaceful settlement of the issue. After Taiwan's local election, the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council issued a statement saying that the PRC is "listening to the words and watching the actions" of Taiwan's new leader Chen Shui-bian, implying that any action may be taken by the PRC if the Taiwan authorities do anything dangerous, said the article. Such warnings and implications actually set a timetable for reunification, the report said. The third "if" put forward in the white paper, that is "if the Taiwan authorities refuse the peaceful settlement of cross- Straits reunification through negotiations, then the Chinese Government will be forced to adopt all drastic measures possible, including the use of force, to safeguard China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and fulfill the great cause of reunification," is a timetable without time limit, according to Li. However, the article said, now the watershed of war and peace lies in the attitude of the Taiwan authorities.

China Daily (Hu Qihua, "NATION OPPOSES CHEN'S VISIT TO ANY COUNTRY, 03/29/00, p1) reported that the PRC reiterated Tuesday that the Government opposes any form of official contact between Taiwan and countries that have diplomatic relations with the PRC. "China opposes any country that invites Chen Shui-bian for any kind of visit," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi. Sun's remarks came when asked to comment on the intention of some countries to invite Chen, the newly elected Taiwan leader, to visit before or after he takes up the position. Sun stressed that the one-China policy is of vital importance to the healthy development of relations between the PRC and other countries. Sun also indicated that those countries concerned have made solemn international commitments to the PRC Government that there is but one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of the Chinese territory. Sun said that the PRC Government and people firmly

oppose Lee Teng-hui's splittist activities in any of his visits following his stepping down as the chairman of Kuomintang and leader of Taiwan.

8. PRC-Russian Relations

People Daily ("JIANG EXPRESSED HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO PUTIN," Beijing, 03/28/00, P1) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin communicated with Russian newly-elected president Vlaimir Putin through hot-line on Monday, sending a message of congratulations to Putin for his victory in Russia's presidential election held on Sunday. Jiang said on behalf of the Chinese Government and people that he expresses heartfelt congratulations to Putin and the Russian people on Putin's election as the president of the Russian Federation. On the future of Sino- Russian relations, Jiang said, "It's a historic and correct choice for China and Russia to establish and develop a strategic partnership." "Strong Sino-Russian ties will contribute to pushing forward the process of building a multipolar world and establishing a fair and reasonable new international order," Jiang said. The Chinese president highly praised Putin for his efforts in developing bilateral relations, and said he believes that relations will only improve in the future.

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