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## I. United States

### 1. Inter-Korean Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA CASTS DOUBT ON SOUTH TALKS, CITING DRILLS SLIDESHOWS," Seoul, 10/31/01) reported that the DPRK cast doubt on fresh talks with the ROK on Wednesday, saying minor military exercises near Seoul had made the atmosphere "complicated." ROK media reports said the government would propose on November 2 that ministers from the DPRK and the ROK meet at Mount Kumgang, rescheduling talks originally scheduled to be held from October 28 to 31 in the DPRK capital of Pyongyang. However, DPRK's ruling party newspaper, the Rodong Shinmun, said military exercises in ROK were "clear evidence that the South has no will to resume the North-South dialogue and relax the tensions." The commentary said, "The dialogue cannot proceed amidst the powder-reeking atmosphere of gunshot. And no success can be expected from any dialogue between the North and the South." The commentary did not refer to any specific military exercises, but ROK television reported that the army was conducting small-scale tank drills in the province surrounding Seoul this week.

### 2. DPRK Criticism of ROK Military Exercises

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA CRITICIZES S. KOREA EXERCISE," Seoul, 10/31/01) reported

that the DPRK on Wednesday accused the ROK of staging a military exercise to heighten tension and derail reconciliation on the peninsula. Rodong Sinmun, the official newspaper of the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party, said the exercise "is clear evidence that the South has no will to resume the North-South dialogue and relax tensions."

## II. Republic of Korea

### 1. DPRK-US Talks Unlikely Soon

The Korea Herald (Hwang Jang-jin, "TALKS BETWEEN NORTH KOREA, U.S. UNLIKELY: EXPERTS," Seoul, 10/31/01) reported that a Han Sung-joo, former ROK foreign minister, said Tuesday that the DPRK and the US are unlikely to reopen dialogue for the time being as the US is preoccupied with its war on terrorism. Han said in a keynote speech at a conference on terrorism in Seoul, "The United States is unlikely to see an urgent need to expend time and energy on improving relations with North Korea. The US priorities are security and military affairs. Because these are last on the list of topics North Korea would be willing to discuss with the United States, any dialogue between the two countries would have to wait for quite some time." He added that ties with the US are expected to remain in a lull, and the DPRK is likely to continue to pursue "neither a breakthrough nor break-off" policy towards the ROK in the months to come.

### 2. DPRK-Russia Deal on Oil Supply

Joongang Ilbo ("RUSSIA TO SUPPLY ELECTRICITY TO N.K. - BUT NOT FOR FREE," Seoul, 10/31/01) reported that Russia is to supply the DPRK with its surplus power produced within its nation. The two nations agreed to look carefully into the issue Tuesday and sort out the details of the quantity, price and the paying procedures at the next bilateral working-level talks slated for next month in Vladivostock, Russia. Sources said that Russia might seek barter trade given the DPRK's present circumstances seriously lacking in foreign currency. Prior to the talks Russia also proposed the establishment of an electricity network stretched from its border city of Hasan all the way to the DPRK.

### 3. DPRK Denounce US Report

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "NORTH KOREA CONDEMNS CIRF REPORT," Seoul, 10/30/01) reported that the DPRK criticized the US Congress on International Religious Freedom (CIRF) for including the DPRK in a list of oppressors of religious freedom. The DPRK state-run Korean Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS) quoted a foreign ministry spokesman on Wednesday saying, "The United States has resumed its offensive against us, claiming that our nation violate their laws on religious freedom. This is arrogant and rude behavior, ignoring the basic principles of international laws. The United States should acknowledge and apologize their mass killing of religious followers and destruction of numerous religious facilities back in the Korean War (1950- 53) before criticizing other countries. Even at this very moment the U.S., in reaction to last month's terror attack, is continuing to intensify its atrocities against innocent Muslims in Afghanistan already taking great many of their lives, thus threatening the very existence of the religion of Islam. It is only too plain that the U.S. is not in the position to lecture on the matter of religious freedom." The DPRK also went on to blast US General Thomas A. Schwartz's remarks on October 23 that assured that no vacuum of military power exists in the ROK. Describing the remark as harshly provocative, the DPRK's state-controlled Rodong Sinmun argued that the US must give up the criminal attempt to

extend the war all the way to Korean Peninsula under the pretext of fighting off the global terrorism.

## III. Japan

### 1. Japan's Aid to Uzbekistan

Asahi Shinbun ("US ASKS JAPAN TO AID UZBEK IN WAR ON TERROR," 27/10/01) reported that the US asked Japan to provide economic aid to Uzbekistan. The request was passed on to Japanese Ambassador to the US Shunji Yanai by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage earlier this week. Although Japan pledged to support the US-led campaign against Afghanistan, Uzbekistan also faces economic problems and the threat of Muslim extremists with links to Osama bin Laden operating within its borders. Japan has already pledged economic assistance to Tajikistan, and will now consider how to help Uzbekistan.

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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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),
Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan
Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Gee Gee Wong: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy@dh.mbn.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Rumiko Seya: rumiko- seya@geocities.co.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org

Moscow, Russian Federation

Yunxia Cao: yunxiac@yahoo.com
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org