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Korean Peninsula

1. Inter-Korean Talks

DPRK and ROK military representatives held their second military affair talks and exchanged views and reached some consensus on issues concerning railway repairs and roads construction in the demilitarized zone. The ROK Defense Ministry said the ROK and the DPRK will hold the third round of working-level military talks on the cross-border rail links on December 21.

"DPRK-ROK Military Talks" (Daily Report, December 12, PRC)

"Inter-Korean Military Talks" (Daily Report, December 11, ROK)

The ROK proposed to the DPRK that they establish permanent reunion facilities by next March and suggested arranging the third round of temporary family reunions on January 24. Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu suggested a joint panel be set up to ensure continuous cooperation in sports, tourism and academic fields.

"Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks" (Daily Report, December 14, ROK)

"ROK-DPRK Talks" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

DPRK chief negotiator Jon Kum-jin criticized the ROK Defense Ministry's white paper, which called the DPRK the ROK's "main enemy," arguing that such statements damaged the spirit of the peace accords made during the June summit. Shortly after ROK President Kim Dae-jung was presented the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, the DPRK reiterated these statements. There was little progress on high-level talks, and both sides continued their dispute over the ROK's reference to the DPRK as its "main enemy." The DPRK repeated its claims that this would hurt the spirit of the inter-Korean summit, and the DPRK failed to respond to a number of proposals made by the ROK.

"ROK-DPRK Talks" (Daily Report, December 14, US)

"ROK-DPRK Relations" (Daily Report, December 12, US)

"Inter-Korean Talks" (Daily Report, December 12, ROK)

"Inter-Korean Talks" (Daily Report, December 15, ROK)

The Washington Times published an opinion article by James Hackett, in which he argued that the true facts about the DPRK have appeared in the ROK's Defense White Paper 2000. Hackett noted, among other things, that despite the ROK's efforts at reconciliation since the June inter-Korean summit, the DPRK has kept most of its combat units poised near the front line.

"DPRK Military Threat" (Daily Report, December 15, US)

The ROK Unification Ministry said in a brief statement that the DPRK Red Cross wants to postpone a scheduled meeting with its ROK counterparts until next year because of a busy slate of inter-Korean activities this month. The ROK urged the DPRK to push forward with joint projects, saying that it worries that relations between the countries are losing momentum.

"Inter-Korean Red Cross Talks" (Daily Report, December 11, US)

"Inter-Korean Red Cross Talks" (Daily Report, December 11, ROK)

"Inter-Korean Talks" (Daily Report, December 12, US)

2. Inter-Korean Economic Zone

DPRK leader Kim Jong-il told PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji that he would like to create an "economic development zone" in cooperation with the ROK. According to a report, Kim stated, "For the North and the South to develop economically, it would be good to establish an economic development area."

"Inter-Korean Development Zone" (Daily Report, December 15, ROK)

"DPRK Economic Development Zone" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

3. Nobel Peace Prize

After he received the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize, ROK President Kim Dae-jung appealed to the international community to help the DPRK resolve its food shortage problems and revive its devastated economy. The DPRK has given no official word on the Nobel Peace Prize.

"Nobel Peace Prize" (Daily Report, December 12, ROK)

"DPRK View of Nobel Prize" (Daily Report, December 12, ROK)

The Search for Common Ground, an NGO pursuing interracial and international reconciliation through prevention of conflicts of interest, chose both ROK President Kim Dae-jung and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, chairman of DPRK's National Defense Commission, as co-recipients of its international peace prize on December 1. Kim Jong-il has rejected the international peace award.

"Kim Jong-il Rejects Peace Prize" (Daily Report, December 15, ROK)

4. DPRK-US Military Talks

US officials said that the US Clinton administration believes it is on the verge of a deal to curb the DPRK's missile program and is likely to undertake talks that could lead to a visit to the DPRK by US President Bill Clinton. US officials said that they would like to consult with the next president and his team because the proposed accord is controversial and would depend on the next administration carrying it out.

"DPRK-US Missile Talks" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

The ROK-governmental Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS) said that the US is apparently considering forming an international consortium similar to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development as part of its efforts to raise funds to compensate the DPRK for the suspension of its ballistic missile programs, and the ROK's financial contribution to it seems to be inevitable.

"ROK on DPRK Missile Program" (Daily Report, December 14, ROK)

The US and the DPRK opened talks on recovering more remains of missing US soldiers from the Korean War.

"Remains of US Soldiers from Korean War" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

John Feffer, who works for the American Friends Service Committee in the East Asia Quaker International Affairs Program based in Tokyo, wrote an article on recent US policy decisions toward North Korea and their effect on the Korean Peninsula.

"SPECIAL REPORT: 'PROGRESS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA?'"

5. Nogunri Incident

US Army Secretary Louis Caldera said that the passage of time since the incident in July 1950 made it impossible to determine with certainty what happened in the massacre at Nogunri. The ROK is upset with the US Defense Department's preliminary finding that US soldiers fired in panic, and not under orders, at Korean civilians in the village of Nogunri during the Korean War. The ROK government had sent to Washington its advisory group on the alleged mass killings of Koreans by US troops. A US administration official said that US and ROK negotiators ended Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) talks with no announced result, but they reached a "mutual understanding" that US soldiers killed ROK civilian refugees at Nogunri.

"Nogunri Incident" (Daily Report, December 14, US)

"Nogunri Incident" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

"Nogunri Incident" (Daily Report, December 12, ROK)

"US-ROK SOFA Talks" (Daily Report, December 11, US)

"US-ROK SOFA Talks" (Daily Report, December 11, ROK)

6. DPRK-European Relations

Britain and the DPRK announced an agreement to establish ambassadorial-level relations after their working-level normalization talks. ROK analysts said Britain's decision to establish diplomatic ties demonstrates its hope for a leadership role in Europe in dealing with the Korean Peninsula.

"DPRK-UK Relations" (Daily Report, December 14, ROK)

"DPRK-UK Relations" (Daily Report, December 12, US)

"UK-DPRK Relations" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

A ROK Foreign Affairs-Trade Ministry official said that the DPRK's sudden announcement to normalize ties with Britain has led to speculation that the DPRK might seek to normalize ties with European countries, such as Germany and Sweden, even at the cost of some of its long-held positions. The Spanish government decided to formally establish diplomatic relations with the DPRK, saying that the move would contribute to reconciliation on the Korean peninsula.

"DPRK-Germany Relations" (Daily Report, December 14, ROK)

"Swedish-DPRK Relations" (Daily Report, December 14, ROK)

"Spain-DPRK Relations" (Daily Report, December 15, US)

China

1. PRC Missile Test

US Defense Department spokesman Kenneth Bacon confirmed on December 12 that the PRC conducted the third flight test of the new DF-31 road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile last month during a visit by US General Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Richard Fisher, a PRC military specialist with the Jamestown Foundation, said that the test is part of a propaganda campaign aimed at influencing US policy-makers against deploying a missile defense.

"PRC Missile Test" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

"PRC Missile Test" (Daily Report, December 12, US)

2. PRC Military

The PRC's China Daily reported that the education level of PRC People's Liberation Army (PLA) officers has improved significantly. 71.8 percent of PLA officers have studied in institutions of higher learning, compared to 42.3 percent being college and university graduates in the 1980s.

"PRC Military Development" (Daily Report, December 12, PRC)

3. US View of PRC

US General Henry H. Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that the PRC may emerge as a Soviet-like superpower in the coming years. Shelton said, "I am firmly convinced that we need to focus all elements of US power and diplomacy on ensuring that China does not become the 21st-century version of the Soviet bear."

"US View of PRC" (Daily Report, December 15, US)

4. Cross-Straits Relations

Taiwan unilaterally announced on Wednesday that it would ease a ban on PRC citizens traveling to and trading with two of its islands as part of efforts to ease tensions with the PRC. PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said the PRC has long supported and prepared for establishing direct transport, trade and postal service, but declined to respond specifically to this Taiwanese decision.

"Cross-Straits Links" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

"PRC-Taiwan Trade" (Daily Report, December 14, US)

Former US officials met with PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen and chief negotiator on Taiwan Wang Daohan during their visit to Beijing this week. One anonymous US official in the delegation said, "The bad news is that they don't want to work with [Taiwan President] Chen [Shui-bian] and the good news is that they are willing to wait and go with the status quo."

Former US-PRC policy decision-maker Kenneth Lieberthal reportedly called on Taiwan and the PRC to sign an "arms control agreement" amid new appeals to resume rapprochement talks.

"PRC View of Chen Shui-bian" (Daily Report, December 13, US)

"Cross-Strait Relations" (Daily Report, December 11, US)

5. PRC-Japan Relations

The Hong Kong-based magazine China Review published an article on PRC-Japanese relations by Gao Haikuan, Director of the Chinese Peace and Development Research Center based in Beijing. The article reviews the obstacles to a better PRC-Japan relationship with the goal of then making the relationship more stable.

"PRC-Japanese Relations" (Daily Report, December 12, PRC)

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono and former PRC Ambassador to Japan Xu Dunxin agreed that the two countries should keep building on already good bilateral ties. Kono said that security cooperation among Japan, the PRC, and the ROK has begun moving, as mutual visits by warships between Japan and the PRC and between the PRC and the ROK are planned for next year.

"Japan-PRC Talks" (Daily Report, December 12, US)

The PRC reiterated its good-neighbor policy in response to "Japan and India Should Join Hands to Deal With China," an essay in the Indian magazine "News Behind the News." PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhang Qiyue said that facts have and will continue to prove that the PRC's development has never posed a threat to any other country.

"PRC Diplomacy" (Daily Report, December 12, PRC)

Japan

1. Japanese Military Posture

The Los Angeles Times published an opinion article by Jim Mann which said that Japan's gradual ending of the limits on the use of military power that were adopted after World War II is probably the most important change in East Asia over the next decade. Mann noted that Japan "is becoming what is commonly called a 'normal' nation once again."

"Japanese Military Posture" (Daily Report, December 14, US)

The ROK's Yonhap News Agency carried a commentary that Japan's recent military build-up discloses its intention to change its self-defense military posture, which will inevitably cause great concern among its neighbors.

"ROK View on Japanese Military" (Daily Report, December 12, PRC)

2. Japanese Nuclear Weapons

Kyodo News Service (Japan) reported that a US State Department memo, titled "Chinese Communist Nuclear Explosion," shows that the US considered arming Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) with nuclear weapons in the 1960's.

"Japanese Nuclear Weapons" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

3. DPRK Spying in Japan

The Japanese Police Public Security Section confiscated a DPRK agent guidebook from DPRK trading company president Kang Sung-hui, who had already been arrested for fraud in Japan.

"DPRK Spying in Japan" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

4. Japan-Russian Relations

Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono's visit to Russia for negotiations over the bilateral territorial issue, originally slated to take place this year, is likely to be postponed until January, 2001.

"Japanese-Russian Relations" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

5. Domestic Politics

The approval rate for Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori's Cabinet improved slightly after the recent reshuffle, according to the latest Kyodo News poll. The approval rate was 19 percent, up a single percentage point from the last survey in late October.

"Japanese Cabinet" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

Russia

1. Russia-PRC Cooperation

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov and PRC Vice Premier Li Lanqing met in Moscow on December 4, and both stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral cooperation. They inaugurated the China-Russia Cooperation Committee on Education, Culture, Health and Sports.

"PRC-Russian Cooperation" (Daily Report, December 12, PRC)

2. Weapons Sales to Iran

US and Russian officials began talks on Russian arms sales to Iran. Russia dismissed US threats of possible sanctions if it backs out of 1995 deal between Vice President. The US wants assurances that the sales would not provide Iran with technology that could improve its Sahab-3 missile.

"Russian Weapons Sales to Iran" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

3. Bomber Deployment

A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman reported that Russia had deployed five nuclear-capable Tu-95 "Bear" bombers to bases opposite Alaska for training that may include flights toward US territory to probe US reactions.

"Russian Bomber Deployment" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

US President-Elect's Asia Policy

1. General Asia

Asian officials and analysts reassessed US President-elect George W. Bush's impact on US policy toward Asia. Some predicted realities will force Bush to soften his rhetoric, while others were pleased by the advisors Bush has gathered around himself.

"Asian View of US Election" (Daily Report, December 15, US)

2. PRC

US President-elect George W. Bush has pledged to take a tough new line on the PRC, reinforce US support for Taiwan and breathe new life into what he claims is a seriously neglected relationship with Japan. The PRC is confident that Bush will emulate predecessor Bill Clinton by toning down his campaign rhetoric on the PRC once he becomes the president.

"US President Elect's PRC Policy" (Daily Report, December 14, US)

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian congratulated US president-elect George W. Bush, saying that future bilateral ties could be stronger on the basis of common respect for democracy. Analysts say that Taiwan stands to benefit more from a Bush victory because he takes a harder line towards relations with the PRC.

"Taiwan View of US Election" (Daily Report, December 14, US)

PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said that stable Sino-US relations were vital at this point in history and that the PRC was hopeful that a Bush administration would continue the work of previous US administrations to improve ties. Tang said that the new US government should take particular care over Taiwan.

"PRC View of US Election" (Daily Report, December 15, US)

3. ROK

The DPRK expressed concerns over a possible change in US policies under a Republican administration and an economic slowdown in the ROK emerged as key issues.

"Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks" (Daily Report, December 11, ROK)

ROK experts and government officials said that the basis of US policies towards the DPRK will remain unchanged, but the new Bush administration might slightly step back from the current engagement policy and push the DPRK to strengthen its dependence on the ROK to address its problems.

"US Policy towards DPRK" (Daily Report, December 15, ROK)

4. Japan

Foreign Minister Yohei Kono stated that the Japanese government expects Bush to strengthen Japan-US ties, and said that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori plans to visit the US in February. A Japan Times article reviews a Bush administration's likely Asia policy. Atsushi Kusano, a professor at Japan's Keio University, said that the new George W. Bush administration is likely to keep 100,000 US troops forward-deployed in East Asia.

"Japanese View of New US Administration" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

"Japanese-US Security Relations" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

"US Troops in Asia" (Daily Report, December 15, Japan)

5. Security in the Asia-Pacific

Admiral Dennis Blair, commander in chief of the US Pacific Command, published a commentary that said that armed forces of countries in Asia and the Pacific are under increasing pressure to contribute to a broader set of security concerns, beyond the traditional military arena.

"Security in the Asia-Pacific" (Daily Report, December 11, US)

Arms Control

1. NATO Nuclear Policy

NATO's Defense Planning Committee and Nuclear Planning Group met in ministerial session and found NATO's nuclear forces to be a credible and effective element of the Alliance's strategy of preventing war. They also reaffirmed the importance of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

"NATO Nuclear Policy" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

2. Russian Comments on US Missile Defense

Russian Defense Minister Marshal Igor Sergeev stated that Russia would not countenance changes in the ABM treaty that would permit deployment of a US missile defense system. Aleksandr Shabanov, a member of the Russian nationalist Liberal Democratic Party, stated that Russia would "immediately" withdraw from the START-II Treaty if the US renounces the ABM Treaty.

"Russian Comments on ABM Treaty" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

Russian strategic rocket forces chief General Vladimir Yakovlev said that Russia was not prepared to allow the US national missile defense system to go ahead. He said that NMD deployment would galvanize Russian programs to create new weapons even deadlier than nuclear missiles.

"Russian Statement on NMD" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

3. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty

The Lawyers Alliance for World Security released a white paper on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that responds to the failure of the US Senate to ratify the CTBT by addressing important issues that came to the forefront during the Senate debate.

"Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in US" (NPP Weekly Flash, V.2 #41)

An editorial in The Dawn responds to Pakistanis' doubts about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

"Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

South Asia

1. Nuclear Weapons

Anil Kakodkar, who became Chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission on December 1, stated that nuclear weaponization must continue to develop a credible deterrent and that India has the capability to build a neutron bomb.

"Indian Nuclear Program" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

Haider K. Nizamani, a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies, has published a book on nuclear weapons development in India and Pakistan, and argues that nuclearization is linked to nation building.

"Nuclear Weapons in South Asia" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

2. India-PRC Relations

The PRC has decided to not send a ship to India's International Fleet Review, which the Times of India attributes to a desire to not annoy Pakistan, but will send a speaker to the associated conference. A visit is being scheduled to India by chair of the PRC's National People's Congress Li Peng. The visit will possibly take place in January.

"India-PRC Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

3. Sharif Pardon and Exile

Pakistan President Rafiq Tarar announced that deposed Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had been pardoned and sent into exile. Sharif's original fine and disqualification from public service still stand, and the Pakistani government also confiscated millions of dollars worth of assets. International response to the pardon was favorable, but local opinion focused on the possible harm the pardon could do to the legitimacy of Pakistan Chief Executive Pervez Musharraf's regime.

"Sharif Pardon and Exile" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

"Responses to Sharif Pardon" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

4. Indian Ceasefire

The Indian ceasefire in Kashmir, and the corresponding Pakistani promise to exercise "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control, continued, with the media largely reporting massive reductions in violence along the border.

"Recent Violence" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

Indian Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee stated that if there were such a request by the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference, India would consider allowing them to visit Pakistan despite rejecting the idea of the APHC holding simultaneous, though separate, talks with India and Pakistan. Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Riaz Mohammad Khan reiterated Pakistan's official, two-part position: that Pakistan would exercise maximum restraint along the Line of Control, and that preparations for tripartite talks should begin. An Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesman ruled out tripartite talks and said that Pakistan should stop supporting cross-border terrorism to create an environment conducive to bilateral talks. Commentary on the ceasefire is available from domestic and international perspectives.

"Ceasefire: All-Parties Hurriyat Conference" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

"Ceasefire: Hizbul Mujahideen" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

"Ceasefire: India-Pakistan Dialogue" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

"Ceasefire: Analysis of Peace Initiative" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

"Commentary on the Ceasefire: PRC, France" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

5. Afghanistan

The Times of India reported that representatives from both the Taliban, which controls 95 percent of Afghanistan, and the northern opposition forces are in Turkmenistan for talks being mediated by Turkmenistan and the UN.

"Dialogue" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

A US-Russian draft resolution before the UN Security Council would expand sanctions against the Taliban because of its failure to comply with previous UN resolutions ordering it to end fighting and deliver suspected terrorist Osama bin Laden to US authorities for trial.

"UN Sanctions" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.1 #47)

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