

Regional Overview:

Democracy in Progress . . . or in Peril?

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This was not a great quarter for democracy in Asia. From attempts to remove sitting presidents in the Philippines and Taiwan to a ruling party near-coup in Japan to questions of eligibility of the leading candidate (and ultimate victor) in Thailand to disturbing political instability in Asia's newest and most fragile democracy, Indonesia, the democratic process seemed under attack . . . and many point to the events in Florida to argue that even after over 200 years, kinks remain. Fortunately, with the notable and serious exception of Indonesia, one can argue that this merely represents democracy--"the worst form of government, except all the others," as Churchill once observed--very much in progress, and not in serious peril.

Despite this political turmoil and a series of significant multilateral (and unilateral) gatherings, most Asian capitals seemed more fixated on the "battle of the dimpled chads" in Florida, amid growing anxiety as to what a new U.S. administration portends for Asia. This anxiety ranged from concerns among Chinese that they would not be liked enough to apprehensions among Japanese that they would be liked too much to fears on the Korean Peninsula that North Korea would not be liked at all. Even though the Bush administration has more than a fair share of old Asia hands well-known in the region, such concerns are to be expected whenever an administration changes. Some suggestions to the new administration as to how best to address regional anxieties are offered, nonetheless.

Democracy in Progress

Rumors of democracy's demise in Asia at present are clearly overstated. Yet, there is no question that this past quarter was not democracy's finest hour, in Asia or in the U.S. But, the key point worth remembering is, at least thus far, the process still works. While some Asian leaders took delight in tossing out barbs about the need for overseas observers at U.S. elections, most comments came from officials who remain unprepared to submit themselves to a similar true test of the will of the people.

The Florida experience nonetheless should remind Americans that democracies are not perfected overnight and need constant nurturing and fine-tuning. That fine-tuning is very much in evidence in many of Asia's new and emerging democracies today. Efforts by nations like Thailand to root out corruption, for example, while causing some near-term

pain and disruption, auger well for the future of democracy there. Others would still do well to follow the Thai model, despite its obvious imperfections and growing pains.

Charges of government corruption are also behind the efforts to remove Philippine President Estrada. George Bernard Shaw once observed that “democracy is a device that insures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.” Surely the Philippine people deserve better government than they have received of late. The strength of democracy is that it provides a process for holding governments accountable or for affecting peaceful change. There is a constitutional process, which is being followed--at this writing Estrada’s impeachment trial was continuing in the Philippine Senate. While talk of military involvement in bringing about a change of government remains disturbing and must be carefully monitored, it seems a good bet that once the dust settles, the Philippine presidency will either remain in Estrada’s hands or proceed to his constitutional successor, current Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Any other outcome would represent a serious setback for Philippine democracy and no doubt cause serious strains in Manila’s relations with Washington, among others.

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian’s political travail aptly demonstrates that it is much easier to lead an opposition than to run a government; he is not the first leader to encounter this phenomena. From the viewpoint of this observer, however, Taipei’s political “crisis” is primarily about hard-ball politics and power-sharing; thus far it falls well short of representing a constitutional crisis. It has, however, severely limited Chen’s ability to move his government forward and has affected consumer and investor confidence in Taiwan. It has also helped to guarantee a lack of progress in cross-Strait interaction, since Beijing is taking obvious delight in Chen’s struggles and is unlikely to do anything that would earn him points domestically. However, should Chen’s solution be to form an alliance (or at least a marriage of convenience) with opposition Kuomintang factions still sympathetic to former President Lee Teng-hui, Beijing may wish it had been more responsive to Chen earlier.

In Japan, infighting among Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) factions is hardly anything new, although both the nature of Kato Koichi’s late November challenge to Prime Minister Mori and its dismal failure took many by surprise. The Mori government has survived for now but few expect Mori to still be in charge at summer’s end, if he lasts that long. While prospects for internal reform and speedy economic recovery appear slim as a result of continuing leadership inertia and instability, Japan’s foreign relationships remain largely unaffected. The December appointment of former Prime Minister Hashimoto to a cabinet post in charge of Okinawa developments and Northern Territory issues is encouraging and may bode well for bilateral relations between Tokyo and both Washington and Moscow, although Hashimoto’s earlier dream of a Russo-Japanese Peace Treaty by the dawn of the new millennium failed to materialize.

The country where the democratic process appears most at risk is in Indonesia, given President Abdurrahman Wahid’s mercurial actions and his failure thus far to live up to promises to transfer significant authority over day-to-day operations to his Vice President Megawati Sukarnoputri (who remains largely untested herself). U.S. attempts to pressure

Jakarta to hold an increasingly demoralized army accountable for past sins while stressing the urgent need to disarm West Timor militias and handle other separatists in a kinder, gentler way may seem reasonable in their own right, but will be for naught if the democratic experiment in Indonesia fails. Conversely, if democracy takes hold in ASEAN's preeminent capital--which remains possible but is by no means assured--it could prove an irresistible force throughout the rest of Southeast Asia and beyond.

Multilateral (and Minilateral) Activities

There was also a flurry of multilateral summitry this past quarter, which provided opportunities for numerous one-on-one contacts and some East Asian community building as well.

APEC Meeting. From a U.S. perspective, the most significant multilateral gathering of the quarter was the November 15-16 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting in Brunei. This proved to be President Clinton's swan song visit to Asia--he had wanted to make one more Asian visit, to North Korea, but finally concluded that there was insufficient time available to assemble a missile deal significant enough to warrant a presidential visit. [For this author's views on why the DPRK trip would have been a mistake, see *PacNet* 46-2000.] Clinton did, in conjunction with the APEC trip, also visit Vietnam; a long overdue visit, the first by a U.S. president since the end of the Vietnam War. Clinton's visit provided a useful reminder that "Vietnam is a country, not a war."

Not a great deal of substance came out of the APEC gathering. The leaders did call for a new round of global trade talks but continuing disagreements over the agenda prevented them from agreeing on a target date. Developing states are particularly adverse to the inclusion of several favorite American topics: environmental protection and workers' rights. All continue to play lip service to the concept of global integration but significant differences remain over how to best deal with the wide range of social and economic challenges that globalization poses. Meanwhile, as Pacific Forum economic analyst Jane Skanderup points out, APEC's consensus-building approach has been allowed to provide a convenient excuse for some members to resist or impede liberalization. This has helped stimulate moves by some more progressive APEC members to create bilateral Free Trade Agreements among themselves. Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong summed it up quite nicely: "Those who can run faster should run faster. They should not be restrained by those who don't want to run at all."

While APEC's sense of common purpose has suffered in recent years, the annual Leaders' Meeting still provides a useful opportunity to draw attention to--and to keep pressure on toward the achievement of--the Bogor Declaration's 2010 and 2020 open market goals for developed and developing states respectively. The meeting also presents an important opportunity for bilateral mini-summits, this year including Clinton's final one-on-one meetings with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Russian President Putin, Japanese Prime Minister Mori, and ROK President Kim Dae-jung.

ASEM. Earlier in the quarter, on October 20-21, leaders from throughout Europe and East Asia met in Seoul for the third Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). The leaders agreed to an “Asia-Europe Cooperation Framework 2000,” which will chart ASEM’s course of development over the next decade. The 26 assembled leaders (10 Asian and 15 European heads of state plus the head of the European Commission) also adopted “The Seoul Declaration for Peace on the Korean Peninsula,” which envisions improved ties between North Korea and ASEM member countries (although it was clear that some members, like France, were less inclined than others to speed this process along). This biennial meeting has helped to build a sense of community among the nations of East Asia, in addition to its stated purpose of fostering better Europe-Asia ties. Sitting on the outside looking in were the U.S. (who barely peeked) and Russia (whose curiosity remains peaked), plus Australia and New Zealand--the exclusion of the latter two remains a sore point in relations between ASEAN and its two South Pacific neighbors, who see themselves as members of the East Asian community of nations as well.

ASEAN Plus Three. Australia and New Zealand are even more eager to be included in ASEAN Plus Three (China, Japan, ROK) gatherings, but even less likely to be invited. The fourth informal meeting of ASEAN Plus Three leaders was held in Singapore in late November. The main topic on everyone’s mind was the impact that China’s impending entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) would have on the ASEAN states’ economies. ASEAN members remained nervous despite assurances from Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji that the impact would be minimal. For its part, China proposed the creation of a China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, which was quickly expanded into a discussion of an ASEAN Plus Three or East Asian FTA. Members agreed to study the creation of such a zone and to consider upgrading this annual informal summit into a more institutionalized East Asia Forum. This year’s host, Prime Minister Goh was quick to point out, however, that there was a need to proceed slowly--“I myself would not recommend a hasty evolution,” Goh noted--while also making it clear that “this is not an attempt to shut out Washington from Asia.” It does, however, represent an attempt to develop more institutional links between Southeast and Northeast Asia, in what could eventually form the basis of a greater East Asian sense of community.

Plus Three Meeting. For the second year, ROK President Kim Dae-jung, Japanese Prime Minister Mori Yoshiro, and Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji held a separate breakfast meeting along the sidelines of the ASEAN Plus Three meeting. The three agreed that these informal side meetings should become an annual event. They also agreed to set up a joint economic research program to strengthen trilateral economic cooperation. While the focus of this exercise in minilateralism remains on economics, Japan and the ROK appear eager to place political and security topics on the agenda as well. In addition to improving three-way coordination and helping to bridge the Southeast Asia-Northeast Asia gap, the separate Plus Three gathering is helping to improve Sino-ROK, Sino-Japanese, and ROK-Japan bilateral ties and may also provide a base upon which to build a broader Northeast Asia dialogue, which remains lacking.

TCOG. One other minilateral effort that continues to thrive is the ongoing practice among the ROK, Japan, and United States to closely coordinate their North Korea

policies through the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG). There were two working level TCOG meetings this quarter, in Washington in early October just before DPRK Vice-Marshall Jo Myong-rok's visit, and again later that month in Nara, Japan shortly after U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's trip to Pyongyang. This habit of cooperation was further solidified when Japanese Foreign Minister Kono Yohei traveled to Seoul to meet with Secretary Albright and ROK Foreign Minister Lee Joungeun on October 25, in order to receive a first-hand account of Albright's just-concluded meeting with North Korean paramount leader Kim Jong-il. Given the success of this cooperative effort, one would expect that the Bush administration would attach a high priority to continuing this trilateral dialogue and coordination process.

Bush Administration Challenges

In trying to forecast future U.S. policy in Asia, one can argue that continuity is likely to be order of the day--U.S. national interests do not change when administrations do. In most instances, policy adjustments will be tactical ones or represent shifts in emphasis. No early major surprises are anticipated. Nonetheless, the second most-asked question among Asians during the past quarter seemed to be, "how will the change in U.S. administrations affect Asia?" (the first being "who won?").

In Beijing, there were concerns that the PRC would not be liked enough, given Bush's references to China as a "strategic competitor." In Tokyo, there were apprehensions that Japan would be liked too much; that Washington would expect more from its steadfast ally than Japan was prepared to deliver. On the Korean Peninsula, there were fears that North Korea would not be liked at all; that a more hardline Republican administration would refuse to bargain with Pyongyang or adequately support the ROK's Sunshine Policy. Elsewhere in Asia, there were questions about a continued U.S. commitment to the multilateral process and about how the new team would pursue traditional issues such as the promotion of democracy, human rights, and free trade.

Although the new Bush national security and foreign policy teams contain many Asia hands well-known (and well-respected) in the region, such concerns are normal whenever an Administration changes--remember the anxiety levels eight years ago when a relatively unknown Arkansas governor was about to take the helm in Washington? Nonetheless, some (unsolicited) advice is offered to the new administration as to how best to address regional anxieties.

Japan. The Bush security team has long made it clear that top priority would be given to the maintenance of U.S. bilateral security relationships in general and to the reinvigoration of the U.S.-Japan alliance in particular. This is nothing new! Every major Asia policy or strategy statement issued by the Clinton administration (and by its immediate predecessors, for that matter) highlighted the importance of bilateral alliances and the role of Japan as the "lynchpin" or "foundation" of American security strategy in Asia. But, there were periods when the Japanese, not without some due cause, felt themselves the victim of Japan "bashing" or "passing" over the past eight years. If the October 2000 National Defense University "Armitage/Nye" report on "The United States

and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership” is any guide--and most observers are assuming it is until it is proven otherwise--the Bush administration will be looking to Japan as a more equal partner. It will be important for Washington to send clear signals as to just what this means and for Tokyo to send equally clear signals about how much more equal it wants and is prepared to be.

Korea. It is important for Mr. Bush to send an early signal to both Koreas that his administration is committed to the process of engagement and fully supportive of ROK President Kim Dae-jung’s Sunshine Policy and the U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. Mr. Bush should also be prepared to continue high-level contacts to signal (to Seoul as well as to Pyongyang) America’s continued commitment to the peace process and to more fully ascertain the North’s perspectives while ensuring that the North also understands Mr. Bush’s views. A general timetable and set of milestones should also be set for continued high-level interaction.

Ongoing U.S.-DPRK missile negotiations should continue but should not be allowed to detract from the broader Peninsula peace process. Mr. Bush must reaffirm President Clinton’s firm assertion that there will be no separate U.S.-DPRK deal when it comes to the issue of peace on the Peninsula. [see *PacNet* 50-2000 for more details]

China. Mr. Bush has made it clear that the current Sino-U.S. “constructive strategic partnership” buzzword will not be perpetuated. But, even the most enthusiastic cheerleaders recognize that this lofty goal is unattainable today (or in the next four years), given the two nations differing world views. Regardless of the Bush administration’s chosen catchphrase--and I would argue against the continued use of the term “strategic competitor”--some form of “cooperative engagement and managed competition” is likely to guide relations between Beijing and Washington during the next four years (as it has over the past eight).

Mr. Bush should also reaffirm U.S. support for the “one-China” principle, even if the wording reverts to pre-Clinton pronouncements “acknowledging” (rather than endorsing) the Chinese position. Mr. Bush will be under great pressure domestically not to repeat the famous three no’s uttered by Mr. Clinton in Shanghai--no Taiwan independence; no two Chinas or one China, one Taiwan; and no Taiwan participation in international organizations involving sovereign states. He can finesse this by merely asserting that U.S. policy on this issue remains unchanged.

Any heavy-handed attempt by Beijing to get President Bush to put the three no’s in writing is sure to fail and will likely backfire. Conversely, absent some obvious PRC provocation, Mr. Bush would do best by allowing the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act (TSEA) to lie dormant. Efforts to codify the TSEA would set a counterproductive, confrontational tone and impede even routine efforts to address Taiwan’s defense needs. The Bush administration also needs to remind Beijing of two other no’s: no use of force and no change to Taiwan’s status without the consent of the people of Taiwan. These should play a central role in the future.

One area where the two states are sure to disagree is over the issue of theater and national missile defense (TMD/NMD). Mr. Bush can be expected to proceed with TMD in continued close cooperation with Japan. Coverage for Taiwan should neither be ruled in nor out for the time being, unless Beijing forces the issue with renewed missile “tests” in close proximity to Taiwan, *a la* 1996. Meanwhile, a strategic dialogue with China is needed on NMD so that each side at least understands, and hopefully will be prepared to address, the other’s legitimate concerns.

Multilateralism. President Bush also needs to signal U.S. support for the various Asian multilateral processes, including the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), as well as APEC and others (including those in which the U.S. does not participate). He will, of course, be expected to attend the October 2001 APEC Leaders’ Meeting in Shanghai (which makes an earlier visit to Japan and Korea essential). However, some thought should be given to proposing that, in the future, the APEC Leaders’ Meeting be held every other year, substituting an ARF Leaders’ Meeting on the off years, in order to promote higher-level security as well as economic dialogue. In the interim, Bush’s Secretary of State, Colin Powell, must do a better job than his two Clinton-era predecessors in attending the annual ARF ministerial meeting.

As regards APEC, there are several key challenges facing the Bush administration. Most important is to revitalize the notion of cooperation toward mutual goals, with the attendant give and take that requires. The U.S. shouldn’t waver on pushing for pragmatic results, but it can also set a higher tone of collaboration in service of the regional good. In this vein, China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) will affect markets globally, but will be particularly felt by APEC members. Jane Skanderup of the Pacific Forum CSIS warns that there will be temptations to revert to protectionist measures as countries face inevitable economic and political pressures resulting from China’s increased exports to the region. The United States, in its own policies as well as its approach to APEC members, can help the region’s leaders stay focused on the ultimate benefits of a more open and equitable Chinese market.

A full commitment to the APEC process by the U.S. should also entail active encouragement of the intra-Asian economic dialogues that exclude Washington. So far, the U.S. seems merely to tolerate (if not ignore) such fora. But, the more opportunities East Asian countries have to flesh out differences among themselves on “mini-lateral” economic issues, the more progress APEC is likely to make when the full 21 members are convened.

Democracy and Human Rights. Finally, the new administration should reaffirm America’s commitment to the promotion of democracy and human rights, but needs to pursue this long-standing national objective in the less arrogant manner promised by candidate Bush during the presidential debates. Highest priority should be given to nurturing and supporting emerging democracies in nations such as Indonesia. This will require great patience and understanding, characteristics not typically attributed to American statesmen and politicians.

Regional Chronology October-December 2000

Oct. 2, 2000: U.S., Japan, ROK, and Singapore begin 13-day Pacific Reach combined submarine rescue exercise.

Oct. 3, 2000: U.S. House passes legislation that places economic sanctions on Russia for sales of supersonic cruise missiles to China.

Oct. 4, 2000: Chang Chun-hsing is appointed Taiwan PM, following Tang Fei's resignation.

Oct. 6, 2000: U.S. and DPRK issue joint statement that asserts that terrorism is "an unacceptable threat to global security and peace."

Oct. 7, 2000: Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) meets in Washington.

Oct. 9-12, 2000: DPRK Vice Chairman of Defense Commission Jo Myong-rok meets with President Clinton and Secretary of State Albright in Washington.

Oct. 10, 2000: PRC Premier Zhu tells Japanese reporters in Beijing that China will put its critique of Japanese WWII behavior behind it, as long as Japan does not forget its history.

Oct. 10, 2000: Representatives of ROK labor, religious, arts, and civic groups attend the DPRK Worker's Party 55th anniversary gathering.

Oct. 10, 2000: President Clinton signs H.R. 4444, granting China permanent normal trade relations.

Oct. 11, 2000: Third ASEAN-China Working Group meeting on South China Sea Code of Conduct is held in Hanoi.

Oct. 12-17, 2000: PRC Premier Zhu visits Japan.

Oct. 13, 2000: ROK President Kim Dae-jung wins Nobel Peace Prize.

Oct. 13, 2000: PMs Mori and Zhu meet in Tokyo, agree to open military hotline between China and Japan.

Oct. 14, 2000: ROK and Russia hold joint military exercises off Russia's Far East.

Oct. 16, 2000: China releases Defense White Paper.

Oct. 16-18, 2000: Russia-U.S. consultations on START/ABM in Moscow.

Oct. 17, 2000: Premier Zhu meets with President Kim in South Korea.

Oct. 18, 2000: Japan denies visa request for former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui.

Oct. 20, 2000: Philippine Defense Secretary Mercado visits Beijing.

Oct. 20-21, 2000: Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Seoul.

Oct. 21, 2000: Premier Zhu meets with Indonesian President Wahid. Reports indicate some Indonesian military commanders urged Wahid to procure weapons and equipment from China to replace those denied by U.S.

Oct. 22, 2000: Singapore PM Goh and PM Mori meet in Japan, agree to open free trade agreement talks.

Oct. 22, 2000: PRC Defense Minister Chi begins five-day visit to DPRK.

Oct. 23, 2000: Secretary Albright meets with Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang.

Oct. 23, 2000: U.S. National Security Advisor Samuel R. Berger visits Beijing.

Oct. 23-24, 2000: Russian Deputy FM Losyukov and Japanese FM Kato meet in Tokyo to discuss disputed islands.

Oct. 25, 2000: Foreign ministers of U.S., Japan, and South Korea meet in Seoul for Albright debriefing.

Oct. 25, 2000: U.S. and ROK begin Foal Eagle military exercise.

Oct. 26, 2000: Two U.S. military aircraft accidentally cross into DPRK air space but safely return after emergency radio calls to the pilots.

Oct. 27, 2000: Decision to cancel previously-approved fourth Taiwan nuclear power plant helps trigger recall efforts against President Chen Shui-bian.

Oct. 27, 2000: President Jiang meets with former Japanese PM Hashimoto in Beijing.

Oct. 27-28, 2000: TCOG meets in Nara, Japan.

Oct. 30-31, 2000: Japan and the DPRK hold normalization talks in Beijing.

Oct. 31, 2000: North and South Korea cosponsor their first UN joint resolution on furthering Peninsula peace efforts.

Oct. 31, 2000: Opposition Kuomintang launches recall drive against Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian.

Nov. 1, 2000: Seoul hosts ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-sessional Support Group on Confidence Building Measures.

Nov. 1, 2000: U.S. and DPRK begin arms talks in Kuala Lumpur.

Nov. 1-5, 2000: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Shelton visits China.

Nov. 2, 2000: FM Kono arrives in Moscow to clear path for signing Russo-Japanese Peace Treaty by year's end; no luck.

Nov. 2, 2000: Japan and China agree to naval ship visits next year.

Nov. 2-4, 2000: Russian PM Kasyanov visits China.

Nov. 3, 2000: U.S. and Japan begin 17-day large-scale military maneuvers near Japan.

Nov. 3, 2000: ROK and U.S. military officials meet in Washington to discuss Nogun-ri probe.

Nov. 3-7, 2000: ROK Chief of Naval Operations in Japan to discuss increased military cooperation.

Nov. 6-7, 2000: ROK FM Lee meets with FM Kono in Japan.

Nov. 7, 2000: U.S. presidential elections are held, and the winner is...(TBD).

Nov. 7, 2000: ROK's opposition Grand National Party publishes a white paper on Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), highlighting its inequity.

Nov. 8, 2000: North and South Korea resume economic talks in Pyongyang.

Nov. 11, 2000: President Jiang visits Laos.

Nov. 11, 2000: President Putin makes first visit to Mongolia by a Moscow head of state in 26 years.

Nov. 13, 2000: Philippine President Estrada is impeached; faces Senate trial on corruption charges.

Nov. 13, 2000: G-8 experts meet in Tokyo to discuss nuclear non-proliferation.

Nov. 13, 2000: President Jiang visits Cambodia.

Nov. 14-17, 2000: Australian FM Alexander Downer visits DPRK.

Nov. 15, 2000: President Putin calls for a bilateral U.S.-Russian reduction in nuclear weapons to the 1,500 warhead level by the year 2008.

Nov. 15, 2000: Latest recount in Florida confirms birth of editor's first grandchild, Justus Dali Cossa.

Nov. 15-16, 2000: APEC Leaders' Meeting in Brunei; numerous one-on-one summits are held on the sidelines, including Clinton with Jiang, Mori, Putin, and Kim Dae-jung; Jiang with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, Kim, and Putin; Mori with Kim and Putin; and Putin and Kim.

Nov. 16, 2000: President Clinton arrives for historic visit to Vietnam.

Nov. 21, 2000: ASEAN army commanders hold inaugural meeting in Bangkok to discuss peacekeeping operations and disaster relief.

Nov. 21, 2000: Beijing agrees to tighter missile export controls and U.S. resumes commercial space cooperation.

Nov. 22-24, 2000: ASEAN and ASEAN Plus Three summits in Singapore; Kim, Mori, and Zhu hold second annual separate breakfast meeting. Numerous one-on-one summits also conducted.

Nov. 25, 2000: Premier Zhu attends the Fourth China-ASEAN Summit (Ten Plus One) in Singapore.

Nov. 25-28, 2000: China's Defense Minister, Chi Haotian, visits Malaysia.

Nov. 25-28, 2000: U.S. Representative Tony Hall visits DPRK to assess food situation.

Nov. 27-29, 2000: Kim Dae-jung visits Indonesia.

Nov. 28-30, 2000: Russian Defense Minister Sergeyev arrives in Tokyo for discussions on Russo-Japanese defense cooperation.

Nov. 30, 2000: U.S. Under Secretary of Defense Slocombe holds Defense Consultative Talks in Beijing.

Nov. 30-Dec. 2, 2000: Second round of Korean family reunions begin in Pyongyang and Seoul.

Dec. 4-5, 2000: KEDO experts meet in New York; DPRK participates in talks for the first time.

Dec. 5, 2000: Japan PM Mori announces new cabinet with former PM Hashimoto as special minister for Okinawa/Northern Territories.

Dec. 6, 2000: Taiwan President Chen tells visiting former U.S. officials that the Bush administration should change “three no’s.”

Dec. 7, 2000: American army investigators and South Korean officials fail to reach agreement on whether U.S. soldiers at Nogun-ri acted under orders in shooting civilians.

Dec. 11, 2000: The air forces of Singapore, Thailand, and the United States open annual Cope Tiger air exercise in Singapore.

Dec. 11-13, 2000: U.S. CJCS Henry Shelton visits Russia.

Dec. 12, 2000: Under Secretary of Defense Slocum meets with Russian Deputy FM Georgy Mamedov regarding ABM.

Dec. 12, 2000: North Korea and the UK establish diplomatic relations.

Dec. 12-16, 2000: Inter-Korean ministerial talks begin in Pyongyang.

Dec. 13, 2000: ...Bush, who declares victory after Al Gore concedes.

Dec. 14, 2000: President Putin announces presidential pardon for convicted U.S. “spy” Edmond Pope.

Dec. 15, 2000: PRC FM Tang tells visiting U.S. former officials that the Bush administration should abide by all previous pledges (including “three no’s”) on Taiwan.

Dec. 19, 2000: Washington and Moscow co-sponsor UN resolution calling for sanctions against Afghanistan’s Taliban regime.

Dec. 25-29, 2000: Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong makes his first official visit to China.

Dec. 26, 2000: Chinese Foreign Ministry reaffirms China’s “indisputable sovereignty” over the contested Spratly Islands.

Dec. 28, 2000: U.S. and ROK reach an agreement on SOFA.

Dec. 28, 2000: President Clinton announces he will not visit DPRK.

Dec. 30, 2000: North and South Korean economic officials meet.