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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Missile Talks

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 31," USIA Transcript, 03/31/99) refused to confirm reports that the DPRK has asked for US$1 billion to end its missile exports. He added, "As far as compensation is concerned, our policy remains the same. We're not going to provide compensation to stop them from doing what they shouldn't do." Regarding the DPRK's rocket launch last August, Rubin stated, "As is recognized by the MTCR, the Missile Technology Control Regime, space launch vehicles and their technology are virtually interchangeable with ballistic missiles. Any rocket capable of putting up a satellite is also inherently capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction." He noted, however, that it is not a violation of the MCTR for a country to launch a communication satellite. He stated, "We believe that in the case of North Korea, which is not a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime, that they should not be testing missiles of this range with this payload. That is our view because it's destabilizing."

2. ROK-DPRK Ship Collision

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA SHIP SINKS AFTER COLLISION," Seoul, 03/31/99) reported that ROK maritime officials said Thursday that a DPRK freighter with 36 crewmen on board sank after colliding with an ROK container ship in the Indian Ocean. Hyundai Merchant Marine said that its 61,150-ton container ship, the Duke, collided with the DPRK's Manpok, a 7,000-ton cement carrier, between Sri Lanka and Sumatra, Indonesia around 6 p.m. on Wednesday. It added that Hyundai sailors rescued four of the DPRK sailors and were searching for the other 32 missing crewmen. Hyundai said that the cause of the collision was not immediately known.

3. DPRK-Pakistan Nuclear Cooperation

The Washington Post carried an opinion article (Jim Hoagland, "NORTH KOREAN BANDITRY," 04/01/99, A27) which said that the extent of the DPRK's aid to Pakistan's nuclear development program remain unknown. The article quoted an unnamed European expert as saying, "We can say that North Korean technology was helpful to Pakistan in this area. But what North Korea did exactly and what it got in return remains in the realm of gossip." The article said that DPRK-Pakistan cooperation also it raises questions about possible PRC involvement. It stated, "There is no firm evidence that China encouraged North Korean help to Pakistan's nuclear test following India's surprise resumption of testing last May. But neither is there evidence of Chinese efforts to restrain the leakage of internationally outlawed technology to its strategic client, Pakistan."

4. PRC Premier's US Visit

The Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "CHINA RECONSIDERS PREMIER VISIT," Beijing, 04/01/99) reported that the PRC is reconsidering whether to send Premier Zhu Rongji to the US next week in the wake of the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Jin Canrong, a US expert with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said that discussions on the trip were taking place "at the highest levels." Jin added, "For the Chinese side, the purpose of the trip was to make great progress on WTO (World Trade Organization) and improve the image of the Chinese government. But negotiations on WTO have not been so smooth and the media coverage will be limited because of Kosovo. So what's the point?" He said, however, that his institute and other academics were arguing that relations with the US and the prospects for membership in WTO would be even worse if Zhu canceled. One anonymous Chinese source said that PRC citizens living in the US have written Zhu urging him to cancel the visit. PRC Foreign Ministry Sun Yuxi on Thursday refused to give a date for Zhu's departure. Bill Palmer, a spokesman at the US Embassy in Beijing, stated, "As far as we are concerned, the trip is still on."

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MARCH 31," USIA Transcript, 03/31/99) said that the State Department has no indication that PRC Premier Zhu Rongji's trip to the US is not going forward.

The Los Angeles Times carried an analytical article (Tom Plate, "DIM PROSPECTS FOR CHINA PREMIER'S TRIP," 03/31/99) which said that PRC Premier Zhu Rongji would find a difficult reception if he comes to the US next week. The article said that sources in Beijing have speculated that Zhu will limit his exchanges with the US media. It stated, "Until recently, at least, U.S. administration officials had preferred that Zhu maximize his exposure to the news media rather than appear to shrink from it. Washington rightly believes that China is changing more rapidly than U.S. critics give it credit for. An openly reflective, accessible, even bantering Zhu would give the lie to the image of a grim Stalinist Beijing, locking up its critics." It added, however, that were Zhu's visit to go

badly, it "would undermine the U.S. administration's policy of engagement." It concluded, "Clinton could use the uplift of a warming Zhu visit. Instead, the potential for diplomatic fiasco is everywhere."

5. US Arms Control Agency

The Associated Press ("ARMS AGENCY MERGING INTO STATE DEPARTMENT," Washington, 04/01/99) reported that the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is scheduled to merge into the State Department at midnight on Thursday. John Holum, the agency's director since 1993, has been nominated as the first undersecretary of state for arms control and international security affairs. Holum said that the agency had been productive, taking part in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the chemical and biological weapons conventions, and the SALT and START treaties, among others.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Ship Collision

Chosun Ilbo ("NK SHIP SINKS FOLLOWING COLLISION," Seoul, 04/01/99) reported that the Hyundai Maritime Shipping's 4,400-ton freighter "Hyundai Duke" collided with the DPRK cement carrier "Manpok" at 6:20pm on Wednesday in international waters 500 miles from Sri Lanka. This is the first collision between vessels from the divided peninsula since the Korean War. A spokesman for Hyundai said that the Hyundai Duke suffered minor damage to its port bow while the Manpok sunk. Two DPRK crewmembers were picked up by the Hyundai ship, but the remaining 37 are presumed missing or drowned. The spokesman said that the Duke was on a pre-determined set course at a fixed speed when the Manpok crossed in front of it. The ship is remaining in the area to search for survivors.

2. US-DPRK Missile Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("US CALLS ON NK TO RESPECT MTCR," Seoul, 04/01/99) reported that US State Department spokesman James Rubin said on Wednesday that the DPRK should stop launching missiles with ranges greater than 300km and abide with the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), even though it is not a signatory. The MTCR limits missile ranges to 300km and warloads to 500kg. He added that the DPRK should limit development of satellite delivery systems, as they are interchangeable with ballistic missile technology. This is the first time that the US has called for this following DPRK claims that it had launched a satellite in August last year when it tested a rocket over the Pacific. Rubin added that no compensation would be given to the DPRK on the missile issue.

3. Alleged DPRK Missile Exports

JoongAng Ilbo ("NK EARNING UNDER 100 MILLION DOLLARS BY MISSILE EXPORTS," Seoul, 04/01/99) reported that the DPRK is earning less than US$100 million a year through its exports of missiles, according to an official in the US State Department. The official, who recently attended the 4th US-DPRK missile talks in Pyongyang, added that the money that the DPRK was demanding for halting its missile exports did not make sense. The DPRK asserted that the US should compensate it US$3 billion dollars--US$1 billion a year for three years--when the DPRK stops exporting missiles. The source explained that the volume of the DPRK's missile exports has been declining due to the

shrinking demand of the international missile market, reduced competitiveness of DPRK missiles, and more self- production in the countries that traditionally have imported missiles.

4. ROK-DPRK Separated Families

Korea Herald ("INTER-KOREAN FAMILY REUNION INCREASED," Seoul, 04/02/99) reported that a total of 64 separated families in the ROK and the DPRK briefly reunited with their long-lost relatives in the first half of this year, according to a government report. The figure represents almost a five-fold increase from 13 cases recorded during the same period of last year, said the report released by the ROK Ministry of Unification on Wednesday. The reunions of separated families are arranged informally mainly in the PRC and the DPRK has refused to allow ROK citizens to visit the DPRK for family reunions. To meet their separated kin in the DPRK, ROK families need to obtain government permission. The number of applications for inter-Korean family reunion totaled 292, marking a 350-percent increase, over the cited period. The report also said that 99 ROK families have managed to confirm during the first six-month period whether or not their dispersed family members are still alive, up from the corresponding number of 36 reported a year ago. ROK families' exchanges of letter with their relatives in the DPRK also totaled 191 cases.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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