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I. United States

1. DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo ("AKASHI URGES EARLY NORMALIZATION BETWEEN JAPAN, N. KOREA," Kanazawa, 8/1/00) reported that according to Yasushi Akashi, former UN Undersecretary General and now chairman of the Japan Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Tokyo, Japan and the DPRK should establish diplomatic ties as early as possible. Akashi stated, "Japan and North Korea have long been stuck at the threshold of talks, each voicing demands for the other. But I believe the two should normalize ties at an early date so that Japan can extend North Korea large-scale economic assistance in cooperation with South Korea and the United States, which would lead to peace and stability in Asia." He said that Japan would need to issue an apology over its 1910-1945 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula and promote economic cooperation as part of normalizing relations with the DPRK. However, he added, the DPRK should also clearly respond to Japanese allegations that at least 10 Japanese nationals were abducted to the DPRK in the 1970s and 1980s and reports on the development of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons in the DPRK. Akashi pointed out that the DPRK's active diplomacy in recent months reflects the fact that the administration of Kim Jong-il has stabilized and that Kim consolidated power after seizing control of the military and alleviating the country's economic crisis. He said, "North Korea appears to have overcome food and energy crises after improving agricultural production over the past two years. But the country still suffers from a

shortage of more than 1 million tons of food every year. Therefore, North Korea has no choice but to open up the country to rebuild its faltering economy. Pyongyang's recent moves are based largely on economic reasons." He also said that he hoped the DPRK will contribute to the security of Asia by further cooperating with neighboring countries on disarmament. Akashi said, "North Korea believes that Japan poses a threat to it due to its massive military power. I truly hope the two sides will promote political dialogue along with other exchanges."

2. DPRK Famine

Reuters (David Brough, "FOOD DESPERATELY SHORT IN PARTS OF N.KOREA," Rome, 8/1/00) reported that David Morton, UN humanitarian coordinator in the DPRK, said on Tuesday that the DPRK's food supplies have improved over the past year but in some areas people are desperately short of food. Morton said, "The nutritional situation has improved over the past year. But there is still a serious food shortage in the country, and areas where people are desperately short of food. There is not a famine at the moment, but there is hardship." The Rome-based U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said in a report last week that the DPRK faced grave food shortages again this year and food production could drop unless rainfall increased before the September/October harvest. Morton said that the shortages were caused by drought and worsening economic conditions, which affected the country's ability to buy fertilizers and machinery. He said he was pessimistic about the September/October harvest because of the continuing dry weather. He added, "A lot of damage has already been done (because of the drought). However, if the rains revive, it will certainly help." Morton said that the DPRK would continue to need emergency food aid as well as a greater infusion of agricultural inputs, particularly fertilizer. He said that the inter-Korean summit in June boosted prospects for the DPRK's agricultural and industrial recovery since the ROK was providing aid. He noted that a joint World Food Programme-FAO mission was expected to visit the DPRK around September to evaluate the harvest.

3. US Troops in ROK

The Korea Times (Kim Yong-bom, "'SEOUL, WASHINGTON STILL SPLIT ON SOFA REVISION,'" 8/1/00) reported that Vice-Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon on July 31 gave a report to the opposition Grand National Party about the wide gaps between the ROK and the US on revising the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). His report said there "still exist substantial differences between Seoul and Washington on changing the SOFA codes." Ban was skeptical over positive results from the talks, slated for August 2-3, saying, "It would be better (for the political community) to watch the negotiations with patience." He added that the government, now fully aware of the significance of the talks, will make its best efforts to rewrite the SOFA in accordance with the public wishes. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 1, 2000.]

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "S. KOREA LEADER SPEAKS UP FOR U.S.," Seoul, 8/1/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Tuesday warned against anti-US sentiment among a small group of activists. Kim told a group of activists who were demanding that the US withdraw its 37,000 US troops stationed in the ROK, "We must criticize wrong American policies but that should not lead to anti-Americanism. Cooperative relations with the United States should remain strong. Anti-Americanism does not help our national interests." Despite the improving relations with the DPRK, Kim reconfirmed that the ROK needed the US military presence for its security as well as regional stability. He added, "The United States remains our biggest supporter not only in security and international relations but also in economic relations."

4. PRC-Taiwan Talks

New York Times (Mark Landler, "TAIWAN AGAIN SEEKS TALKS WITH CHINA," Hong Kong, 8/1/00) reported that Taiwan president Chen Shui-bian issued another appeal on July 31 to the PRC government to reopen negotiations. Chen said, "If there is dialogue, there can be exchanges. If there are exchanges, there can be a consensus." However, Chen brushed aside the PRC's demand that Taiwan acknowledge the "one-China" policy. Instead, he asked the PRC to embrace "the spirit of 1992" -- a reference to negotiations in which the two sides agreed to disagree about the meaning of "one China." Experts said that Chen's flexibility on relations with the PRC was constrained last month when his party reaffirmed its support of an independent Taiwan. Andrew Yang, the secretary general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, a research group in Taiwan, said, "Chen Shui-bian's government is in deep trouble. His opponents, particularly in the Legislature, are taking advantage of his weakness on the mainland China issue." Although the PRC did not respond to Chen, the official state news media have sharpened their criticism of his advisers. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 1, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter-Korean Talks

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SOUTH, NORTH AGREE ON RAILWAY LINK; PRO-N.K. RESIDENTS IN JAPAN WILL BE ALLOWED TO VISIT SEOUL," Seoul, 08/01/00) and The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "TWO KOREAS MAKE BLUEPRINT FOR IMPLEMENTING JOINT DECLARATION," Seoul, 08/01/00) reported that the ROK and the DPRK took another major step toward rapprochement on July 31 when they agreed to reconnect a major inter-Korean rail link and reopen border liaison offices. Officials from the two sides announced these and other accords in a six-point joint statement after wrapping up the first round of high-level meetings. The two sides also agreed to hold another round of talks in Pyongyang August 29-31 to continue their discussions on implementing the summit agreement. The agreement will relink the railway between Seoul and Shinuiju - the westernmost town on the border between the DPRK and the PRC. The ROK and the DPRK will soon hold working-level consultations to discuss the reconstruction of the rail line. Officials said that the ROK's decision to permit the entry of ethnic Koreans in Japan sympathetic with the DPRK is expected to accelerate the process of inter-Korean reconciliation. However, the two sides did not say whether they discussed measures to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Analysts said that the DPRK originally had no intention of discussing military cooperation during this first ministerial-level meeting, pointing out that military officials were absent from the DPRK's delegation. However, they said, the two sides laid the groundwork to promote inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation in earnest by agreeing to normalize the operation of liaison offices at the truce village as their standing dialogue channel as well as to regularly hold cabinet-level talks.

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "PRESIDENT KIM WELCOMES AGREEMENTS IN INTER-KOREAN MINISTERIAL TALKS," Seoul, 08/01/00) and The Korea Times ("S-N TALKS FAIL TO TOUCH EASING MILITARY TENSION," Seoul, 07/31/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on July 31 welcomed the agreement reached in the inter-Korean ministerial talks. Kim said while receiving DPRK delegates to the inter-Korean ministerial talks, "The 70 million people in North and South Korea welcome the agreement you have made. This will help open a new era of reconciliation between the two Koreas." Kim met Jon Kum-jin, the chief DPRK delegate, six other DPRK officials and two journalists at Chong Wa Dae. Chong Wa Dae spokesman Park Joon-young said that Kim praised the work of the two delegations in agreeing on follow-up measures to the June 15 inter-Korean summit. Despite these agreements, the ministerial talks fell short of the expectations of the

ROK government, which had hoped to persuade the DPRK to agree on the establishment of a military hot line and exchange of military leaders. The ROK also wanted to lay the groundwork for the formation of joint committees on reducing military tension, economic cooperation, and cultural exchanges. Kim said, however, that it would be difficult for the two Koreas to resolve all their problems at once.

2. US View of DPRK Diplomacy

The Korea Times ("ALBRIGHT OPTIMISTIC ON NK'S ADMISSION TO INTERNATIONAL GROUPS," Seoul, 07/31/00) reported that during an interview with the Nihon Keizai Shimbun in Tokyo, US Secretary of State Madeline Albright expressed approval for DPRK's admission into international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the International Bank for Resource and Development (IBRD). Albright's remarks were a clear departure from her earlier comment that it was "too premature" for DPRK membership in international bodies. However, she did add that "the U.S. is concerned about North Korea's nuclear and missile program and potential threats remain to be seen," clearly signifying that improvements over the issue will be used as a condition to the DPRK's acceptance in the international community.

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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