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I. United States

1. US-PRC Trade Relations

Reuters ("BUSH ASKS CONGRESS TO RENEW CHINA TRADE STATUS," Washington, 6/1/01) reported that US President George W. Bush formally asked the US Congress on Friday to renew normal trade relations with the PRC. Bush said that such a move will help foster "a strong and productive relationship with China." Bush also made clear that he wanted free trade with the PRC despite strained relations. He said in a statement, "Fair trade is essential not only to improving living standards of Americans but also for a strong and productive relationship with China."

2. US View of Relations with PRC

The Washington Post published an opinion article by US Secretary of State Colin L. Powell ("THE PROMISE OF CHINA TRADE," 6/1/01) which said he agreed with US President George W. Bush's decision to extend normal trade relations status the PRC because it is good for the US and "good for the forces of change and reform in China." Powell also said that the decision would be good for the entire region, especially Hong Kong and Taiwan. However, he wrote, " The president's decision is not an endorsement of China's policies, some of which clearly conflict with America's views and values. Rather, we believe that extension of normal trade relations with China again this year is clearly in America's interest. Continuation provides America an opportunity to promote rule of law, transparency and accountability in China--essential elements of our policy designed to promote China's integration into the world trade system and thus promote change in China." Powell added that he does not expect trade relations to define fully the Sino-US relationship, and expects the PRC to live up to its international obligations. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for June 1, 2001.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. US-DPRK Talks

The Korea Herald ("U.S., N.K. TAP POSSIBILITY OF RESUMING DIALOGUE," Seoul, 06/01/01) reported that a senior ROK Foreign Ministry official said Thursday that informal contact between the US and the DPRK to set the agenda for bilateral talks expected to take place this month is now underway. Deputy Foreign Minister Yim Sung-joon made these remarks during a meeting with a group of members of the National Assembly's Unification, Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee, lawmakers said. He also said that the two countries will likely discuss verification of the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs and the implementation of the 1994 Agreed Framework during the talks. "The United States is expected to press the North to agree on measures to verify and supervise its weapons of mass destruction program," he was further quoted as saying. He also said that he believes that the US will set its position on the verification of the DPRK's nuclear program after seeing the outcome of the inspection of the Yongbyon nuclear plant by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

2. DPRK-Australia Relations

The Korea Herald ("AUSTRALIA INVITES N.K. TO NUKE SAFETY PROGRAM," Seoul, 06/01/01) reported that Australia plans to invite DPRK officials to its nuclear safeguard training programs late this year as part of its broader efforts to help ease tension on the Korean Peninsula and to coax the DPRK out of its isolation, an ROK visiting senior official said Thursday. "Australia is hosting a nuclear safeguard training course and will invite North Korean officials to join regional counterparts in developing their expertise in the management and accounting of nuclear materials," Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told a local press association. The move is aimed to assist the DPRK to meet its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the Geneva Agreed Framework, he added. Australia is preparing other various aid programs for the DPRK to help the rapprochement in the peninsula regain momentum. "Dialogue and engagement is the most productive way to achieve progress in securing peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and for our region as a whole," he said.

3. ROK-US Talks

The Korea Herald ("FOREIGN MINISTER HAN MEETS U.S. SENATOR," Seoul, 06/01/01) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Han Seung-soo on Thursday met with visiting US Senator Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) to discuss issues of mutual concern. Han briefed Lugar on the situation on the Korean Peninsula and stressed the importance of inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation, Ministry officials said. Lugar, who came to the ROK Tuesday for a five- day visit, was to pay a courtesy call on President Kim Dae-jung Friday.

4. DPRK Food Security

Chosun Ilbo (Park Young-seok, "NORTH KOREA TO FACE SEVEREST FOOD SHORTAGE EVER," Seoul, 05/31/01) reported that the DPRK is experiencing its worst drought in 82 years and food shortages are likely to peak this year, according to the Reuters news service. The report cited UN officials returning from the DPRK who said that there had been no rain for more than 80 days and that the DPRK is suffering from the worst drought since 1919. This is affecting the harvest of wheat, potato, and barley, which are needed to get through summer until rice and corn can be harvested. The news agency also said that the World Food Program (WFP) is projecting 2001 to be the most difficult year for the DPRK in terms of food security. According to David Morton, DPRK Commissioner for the UN, the DPRK stopped food rations, which means that people need to survive this summer without food from the state. Women, the elderly and children are expected to suffer the most. Reuters added that the DPRK lacked 1.8 million tons of food last year out of 4.8 million tons needed for its 22 million population. Moreover, the Korea Meteorological Administration (KMA) said that the DPRK is unlikely to recover from the drought until the end of June, and it is uncertain at the moment whether the monsoon rains would cover the DPRK this summer.

5. Perry to Visit DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "FORMER U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY PERRY LIKELY TO VISIT PYONGYANG," Seoul, 06/01/01) reported that William Perry, the former special DPRK Policy coordinator during US President Bill Clinton's administration, is likely to visit Pyongyang to call for the DPRK's participation in the unofficial three-party meeting held by the ROK, the US and Japan. The decision came amid Perry's suggestion that more contacts would better the chance to ease tensions and resolve the problematic situations in the Korean Peninsula and other pending issues. Lim Dong-won, ROK Unification Minister, upon his arrival home from Honolulu, Hawaii where the trilateral talks took place, said that a consensus was reached on Perry's suggestion to include the DPRK in the next unofficial tripartite talks. "Perry may enter Pyongyang to persuade the North to take part in the non-government level dialogue," Lim said.

6. DPRK Nuclear Inspection

Joongang Ilbo (Choi Won-ki, "PYONGYANG REBUFFS NUCLEAR INSPECTORS," Vienna, 06/01/01) reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency announced Thursday that its latest inspection trip to the DPRK had ended with no results, other than the scheduling of the next meeting in October. David Kid, a spokesman for the agency, said that the IAEA inspectors had sought in four days of talks from May 22-26 to emphasize the necessity of at least a partial inspection of facilities now shut down, but suspected of having produced nuclear materials in the past. "Olli Heinonen, director of Division of Operations A, Department of Safeguards, will visit Pyongyang again in the summer and consult with the North," Mr. Kid said.

III. Japan

1. DPRK Computer Hackers

The Mainichi Shimbun ("DPRK IS EDUCATING 100 HACKERS ANNUALLY," Seoul, 05/27/2001) reported that, according to ROK military sources quoted by the ROK's Yonhap News Agency on May 27, the DPRK is strengthening its military computer and information technologies and annually educating 100 computer hackers. The ROK military sources found out about the DPRK's information technology policy in US Defense Department documents. The report also said that the US sees the DPRK's technology as already equivalent to that of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

2. Japan-US Summit Talks

The Japan Times ("KOIZUMI TO MEET BUSH JUNE 30 AT CAMP DAVID," 05/30/2001) reported that Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda announced on May 29 that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush will hold their first summit on June 30 at Camp David. It will be Koizumi's first trip abroad since coming to power in late April. The two leaders, who have both stressed the significance of the Japanese-US alliance, are expected to reaffirm the need to strengthen bilateral security ties. During his meeting with Bush at the presidential retreat, Koizumi also is expected to explain the basic outline of his economic and fiscal policies, and convey his determination to carry out structural reforms of Japan's economy, government sources said.

3. Japan-US Defense Talks

The Japan Times (Kyodo, "JAPAN, US TO HOLD REGULAR DEFENSE TALKS: ACCORD EXPECTED AT CAMP DAVID SUMMIT," Washington, 05/31/2001) reported that Japan and the US plan to create a new sub-Cabinet- level consultative framework to coordinate policy on regional and defense issues. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush will likely reach an agreement on the proposed framework when they meet June 30 at Camp David. The consultative framework is meant to deepen coordination between the two countries on matters ranging from Bush's missile defense plans to regional issues involving the DPRK and the PRC, and reinforce the Japan-US alliance, the sources said. Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Ryozo Kato will lead the Japanese side and US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage will lead the US team. They will hold consultations every two or three months. Officials from the US Defense Department and the Japanese Defense Agency will be invited to take part in the consultations, the sources said, adding that the framework will likely cover issues related to US bases in Okinawa. The new framework will consider setting up subgroups to deal with specific issues.

4. Foreign Minister's Statement on NMD

The Asahi Shimbun ("FOREIN MINISTER MAKIKO TANAKA CRITICIZED US NMD," 06/01/2001) reported that during her talk with her Italian counterpart at an Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) luncheon meeting on May 25, Japanese Foreign Minster Makiko Tanaka criticized the US national missile defense (NMD) plan. Tanaka stated, "(The US says there are) missile threats, but I wonder if missile defenses are really necessary. Japan and Europe should tell the US not to go to far. I think that the US is promoting the NMD plan to economically and militarily counter the PRC's threat. However, they should not do so by the use of force." The report said that Tanaka's statement contradicts the Japanese government's official stance on NMD that shows Japan's understanding of the plan.

5. Japanese Emperor's Visit to ROK

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("EMPEROR NOT TO VISIT SOUTH KOREA IN 2001," 05/30/2001) reported that according to Japanese government and Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) sources on May 29, the Emperor's visit to the ROK will not happen during 2002, when the World Cup soccer finals are to be co-hosted by Japan and the ROK. The report said that the sources cited security as a major reason not to undertake the visit next year. The government and the LDP also took into consideration the recent strain in Japan-ROK relations over the history textbook issue. As another concern, the sources cited the DPRK's opposition to the Emperor's visit to the ROK. The visit, if realized, could antagonize the DPRK, which officially does not admit the existence of two Koreas, a Foreign Ministry official said. With moves toward reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula at a standstill, the official said that the danger of terrorism could not be ruled out. Taking these matters into account, the government has judged that it is too early to have the Emperor visit the ROK within 2002. The government and LDP have been deeply wary about planning a visit. A senior Foreign Ministry official said that if the Emperor's dignity were to be damaged by protests in the ROK, it would be a matter of grave concern. An LDP lawmaker, who is a former prime minister, is also doubtful about the advisability of having the visit in 2002, saying, "Is it appropriate (for the Emperor) to visit (the ROK) just as a sideshow to the sports event?" The report added that the government will continue to explore opportunities for an Imperial visit to the ROK after February 2003, when a new ROK administration will be launched.

6. Japan-ROK Talks on DPRK

The Daily Yomiuri (Koichi Mochizuki, "TANAKA, HAN FOCUS ON TEXTBOOKS," 05/27/2001) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Han Seung-soo and Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka agreed on May 26 regarding policy toward the DPRK that the tripartite alliance of Japan, the US and the ROK was crucial. Tanaka also expressed Japan's support for the ROK's engagement policy.

7. Japanese History Textbook

The Daily Yomiuri (Koichi Mochizuki, "TANAKA, HAN FOCUS ON TEXTBOOKS," 05/27/2001) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Han Seung-soo during talks held on May 26 reiterated to Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka the ROK's demand that the contents of some Japanese history textbooks be revised. Han said, "The South Korean government earnestly requests that (the Japanese government) take action in a visible way (concerning the history textbook issue), such as revising some of the expressions at issue. We have high expectations that Prime Minister (Junichiro) Koizumi will exert his leadership (to resolve the issue)." In return, Tanaka asked for the ROK's understanding of Japan's commitment to coping with the issue. Tanaka said, "The Japanese government's stance toward the history (of Japan's colonial rule in the Korean Peninsula) has not at all shifted from that expressed in a statement issued (in 1995) by then Prime Minister (Tomiichi) Murayama." Tanaka also said, "Our government has earnestly accepted (the ROK government's) request for revisions, and the Education, Science and Technology Ministry has been seriously examining (the expressions in question) with utmost care." The report added that Tanaka proposed the joint promotion of exchanges between Japanese and ROK historians, and that Han basically agreed to her proposal.

8. Prime Minister's Visit to Yasukuni Shrine

The Daily Yomiuri (Koichi Mochizuki, "TANAKA, HAN FOCUS ON TEXTBOOKS," 05/27/2001) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Han Seung-soo during talks held on May 26 with Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka requested Japan's commitment in restraining government officials from visiting Yasukuni Shrine, noting that Prime Minister Koizumi had expressed an intention to visit the shrine. Han stated, "We would appreciate it if the Japanese government carefully handles (the issue of Yasukuni Shrine visits) by taking into consideration the potential psychological pain such visits may cause the peoples of neighboring countries."

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
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

Robert Brown: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

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

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Yunxia Cao: yule111@sina.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