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I. United States

1. Alleged DPRK Kidnapping of Japanese

Kyodo News ("2,000 JOIN RALLY OVER ALLEGED ABDUCTIONS BY N. KOREA," Tokyo, 4/30/00) reported that about 2,000 people joined a rally at Hibiya Kokaido Public Hall in Tokyo on April 30 demanding that the government step up efforts to settle the issue of suspected abductions of Japanese nationals by the DPRK. The rally adopted an appeal saying that Japan must never offer official economic assistance to the DPRK until those missing Japanese return home. The appeal also called on the Japanese government to impose economic sanctions against the DPRK unless it shows sincerity toward settling the issue.

2. Northeast Asian Fishing Disputes

The Associated Press (Joseph Coleman, "JAPAN, NEIGHBORS CLASH OVER FISHING," Tokyo,

5/2/00) reported that long-standing territorial disputes among the PRC, Japan, Russia and the ROK has heated up the competition in the rich fishing grounds in the waters off eastern Asia. Japan, the ROK and Russia regularly dispute islands in the prime fishing areas, and poaching is epidemic. Despite frequent flare-ups, however, the fishing disputes in Northeast Asia are not expected to lead to real fighting. Japan and Russia are gradually improving their relations. However, a new hot spot could be brewing in the Yellow Sea, as PRC boats fish ever closer to the Korean Peninsula and risk arrest by the ROK navy. Mark Valencia, research fellow at the University of Hawaii's East-West Center, said that the tendency of some of the boats to fish near the disputed boundary between the DPRK and ROK waters is a potential troublemaker. He added, "given fog and darkness, they may not be distinguishable from North or South Korean boats. This is dangerous."

3. PRC Military Exercises

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN ARMY DENIES CHINA WAR-GAMES," Taoyuan, 5/2/00) reported that Taiwan's military on Tuesday toned down remarks about the PRC's military, one week after warning that PRC forces may be gearing up for war games. Taiwan military spokesman Kung Fanding declined to discuss last week's reports that PRC bombers and warships were holding unusual maneuvers. Critics said that the military was unnecessarily alarming the public. Kung said Tuesday that the PRC was holding routine maneuvers, adding that Taiwan has not noticed any large-scale exercises or unusual concentration of troops. Kung said that the Taiwanese "military has a firm grasp of what the communist military is doing. When it does not compromise our intelligence sources or national security, we will inform citizens of the communist army's situation."

4. Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference

The London Times (Michael Evans, "NUCLEAR POWERS PLEDGE TO WORK TOWARDS DISARMAMENT," 5/2/00) and Reuters ("FIVE POWERS PLEDGE TO ELIMINATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS," Taipei, 5/2/00) reported that the US, Russia, the PRC, Britain and France committed themselves to total nuclear disarmament at the sixth review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in New York on May 1. In a 23-point statement, the countries also called for preserving the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty and obliquely referred to Israel's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The five promised "our unequivocal commitment to the ultimate goals of a complete elimination of nuclear weapons and a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls," but no timetable or specific commitments were given. Hubert de La Fortelle, France's disarmament representative, emphasized a provision in the statement that declares that none of the five have their nuclear weapons targeted at any specific state. Diplomats, while noting that this provision was a positive signal, said that in reality the weapons could be targeted within minutes. Arms control groups and some nations without nuclear weapons said that the statement did not go far enough and that the US and Russia have not been negotiating in good faith to fulfill the treaty's goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. Admiral Ramu Ramdas, the former head of the Indian Navy and an anti-nuclear weapons activist, called the statement a "damage control exercise by the nuclear states-- nothing new at all." He told a news conference that without a framework or schedule the position paper "has no meaning." However, British Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock said the statement was meant to "boost momentum" at the meeting as it was the first time the five countries had made a joint statement. The meeting, which ends on May 19, is to set goals for the 187 signatories to the NPT for the next five years. [Ed. note: The London Times article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 2, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK External Relations

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "BELGIUM, BRITAIN TO SEND DELEGATIONS TO N.K. IN MID-MAY TO IMPROVE RELATIONS," Seoul, 05/02/00) reported that ROK officials said on May 1 that Belgium and Britain will dispatch delegations to the DPRK this month to discuss improving their relations with the DPRK. Both countries have no formal diplomatic ties with the DPRK. The officials said that the Belgian delegation would be led by Van Haute, director general of the Belgian Foreign Ministry's Asian Affairs Bureau. The Belgian team is expected to deliver a message to the DPRK welcoming the June inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang, and will also call on the DPRK to improve its human rights record. The ministry official said that the two sides are also likely to discuss Belgian food aid and other forms of economic assistance for the DPRK. Another diplomatic source said that the British delegation hopes to discuss humanitarian aid and a plan to send two English instructors to the DPRK this year. The two delegations' visits to the DPRK are widely viewed as part of the European countries' ongoing efforts to improve ties with the DPRK through engagement.

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "AUSTRALIA AND THE PHILIPPINES MAY SET UP EMBASSIES IN PYONGYANG," Seoul, 05/01/00) and Chosun Ilbo ("NK TO NORMALIZE TIES WITH AUSTRALIA AND PHILIPPINES," Seoul, 05/01/00) reported that according to a well-informed source, the DPRK is rumored to be re-establishing diplomatic ties with Australia in May and may launch diplomatic relations with the Philippines sometime in June or July. If the rumors prove true, this will place a thaw on over 25 years of non-communication between the two nations.

2. DPRK on US Terrorist List

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "U.S. DECISION TO LEAVE N.K. ON TERRORIST LIST COULD AFFECT HIGH-LEVEL TALKS," Seoul, 05/02/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Joo Yong-joong, "NK REMAINS ON TERRORIST SUPPORT LIST," Seoul, 05/01/00) reported that ROK analysts said on May 1 that the US decision to leave the DPRK on its blacklist of terrorism-sponsoring countries could threaten the prospects for the early improvement of relations between the two nations. In a report to the Congress on May 1, the US State Department said that it would keep seven countries, including the DPRK, Cuba, Iran and Iraq, on its list of nations that support terrorism. Yu Suk-ryul, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), a government think tank, said, "the U.S. action will likely have a negative impact on its overall relations with North Korea." ROK officials said that the US decision was a result of the DPRK's refusal to accept US conditions for its removal from the list. The US had demanded that the DPRK pledge not to engage in terrorist activities, verify that no such operations have taken place for six months, and sign an anti-terrorism treaty. The US decision to keep it on the blacklist came after it imposed penalties on the DPRK and Iran for exporting military technology last month.

3. US-ROK-Japan Policy Coordination

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "U.S. LIKELY TO COORDINATE N.K. POLICY WITH SOUTH KOREA, JAPAN THIS MONTH," Seoul, 05/01/00) and Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "AMBASSADOR SHERMAN TO VISIT PRIOR TO INTER-KOREAN TALKS," Seoul, 04/30/00) reported that according to Yonhap News Agency, the US will hold separate meetings with the ROK and Japan this month to coordinate the three nations' DPRK policies, particularly with respect to the inter-Korean summit scheduled for June. It quoted an unnamed high-level ROK official as saying that US State

Department Counsel Wendy Sherman and DPRK envoy Charles Kartman would go to the ROK in late May, and that the US and the ROK would coordinate their bilateral stances to ensure that the summit was a success. When asked to comment on the report, ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-ryong said that he could neither confirm nor deny it. The report also stated that Sherman was expected to brief the ROK government on the details of US's planned inspection of a suspected DPRK underground nuclear facility in Kumchang-ri during her visit.

4. DPRK-ROK Summit

The Korea Herald ("DETAILS ON INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT ENTOURAGE TO BE UNVEILED TOMORROW," Seoul, 05/02/00) reported that details on which and how many ROK citizens will accompany ROK President Kim Dae-jung to Pyongyang for the June inter-Korean summit are expected to become clear after the two Koreas' third round of preparatory talks, which is slated for tomorrow. Vice-ministerial level representatives for the working level talks are expected to produce a memorandum outlining the agenda for the summit in tomorrow's meeting. The ROK has already requested that the entourage be set at 130 people plus 80 reporters. The DPRK is demanding that these figures be scaled down. Officials expect the two sides to settle on a troupe of 100 members plus 80 reporters as agreed on in previous talks for a summit that was supposed to take place in 1994.

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Min-bai, "NK LEADER'S VISIT TO SEOUL OFFICIALLY PROPOSED," Seoul, 05/01/00) reported that an informed source revealed on Monday that at the pre-summit negotiations being held in Panmunjom the government has officially extended an invitation to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to visit Seoul before the end of the year. The invitation is in line with the government's proposal to make meetings between the leaders of the two countries a regular event. The source said that the visit is expected to be confirmed before President Kim Dae-jung visits Pyongyang in June to meet with Kim Jong-il. The government is studying plans with regard to the president's visit to use surface travel for reasons of safety and security and it is known that the DPRK has raised no objections to this.

5. PRC View of Inter-Korean Summit

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "CHINESE PREMIER RENDERS 'FULL' SUPPORT FOR INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT," Seoul, 05/01/00) reported that ROK officials said on April 30 that PRC Premier Zhu Rongji has thrown his "full" support behind the inter-Korean summit talks. The PRC premier revealed his position during a visit with ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Lee Joung-binn in Beijing on April 28. Zhu said, "it is good that leaders of the two Koreas will have a face-to-face meeting to iron out their differences and coordinate their mutual positions." Zhu also told Lee that he hoped that the summit would be a success because positive developments on the Korean Peninsula would help ease tensions and create a favorable atmosphere in the Northeast Asian region. ROK officials said that Lee asked the PRC to inform the DPRK of the true intentions of the ROK's engagement policy when PRC officials visit the DPRK.

6. Light-Water Reactor Project

Chosun Ilbo (Cha Byung-hak, "NORTH KOREAN KEDO WORKERS ON STRIKE," Seoul, 04/28/00) reported that about half of some 200 local laborers who have been involved in the construction of nuclear power plants in the DPRK for the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) have been refusing to come to work and are demanding higher wages. Those still reporting

to the work site have also been slowing down their work pace since the beginning of this month due to dissatisfaction with their pay. The protest has seen a bottleneck in the progress of the international project. Officials from the ROK government and the Korea Electric Power Corporation (KEPCO) said on April 28 that the workers' protest began on April 1. According to these officials, work for the project has been intensifying and requires more local workers, so the walk-off and slow-down have thrown the project off schedule. The officials also said that their two organizations have already started negotiations with DPRK authorities to find an amicable solution to the situation. They said that they have been considering ways to increase the wages of the workers or to send in more ROK laborers to the site to put the construction back on schedule.

7. Inter-Korean Cultural Exchanges

The Korea Herald ("KIM STRESSES PROMOTION OF SPORTS, TOURISM EXCHANGES WITH N. KOREA," Seoul, 05/02/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung called on the Ministry of Culture and Tourism on May 1 to expand the scope of tourism and sports exchanges with the DPRK. Kim urged the ministry to subsidize the Mount Kumgang tour program so that a larger number of young ROK citizens could visit the scenic DPRK mountain. He noted that DPRK athletes were among the world's best in such sports as soccer, table tennis, track and field and basketball. Kim said, "sports exchanges could become the fastest path toward reconciliation and mutual understanding between the two Koreas." He also called on Park Jie-won, minister of culture and tourism, to actively support the development of the cultural industry and fields like gaming, animation and broadcasting.

The Korea Times (Lee Chang-sup, "SEOUL PUSHES FOR S-N UNIFIED TEAM FOR 2002 WORLD CUP," Seoul, 05/01/00) reported that ROK Culture-Tourism Minister Park Jie-won said on April 30 that the ROK will make a proposal to the DPRK for a unified soccer team for the 2002 World Cup finals hosted by the ROK and Japan. In a report to ROK President Kim Dae-jung, Park also said his ministry is considering allowing DPRK movies to be available in the ROK. Park said that the two Koreas would co-produce TV programs to be aired on the occasion of the historic inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang on June 12-14. He also said that an exchange of TV programs between the two Koreas would be pushed as part of the steps to expand inter-Korean culture and arts exchanges. Park also proposed joint concerts and cyber-art exhibitions. Park added that the ROK will contribute US\$100,000 to UNESCO for preserving cultural property in the DPRK.

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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