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I. United States

1. Hu Jintao US Visit

Reuters ("CHINA'S HU HAILS U.S. VISIT AS BIG SUCCESS," 05/03/02) and Agence France-Presse ("US-CHINA RELATIONS STRONG, VITAL SAYS CHINESE VICE PRESIDENT HU JINTAO, 05/03/02) reported that PRC Vice President Hu Jintao declared that the PRC's rapport with the US is "full of vigor and vitality," as his six-day diplomatic mission to the US neared its end. The US and the PRC are poised to grow closer economically and politically, provided both sides respect agreements and communiqués crafted since the late president Richard Nixon "opened the gate" between the two countries 30 years ago, Hu said late Thursday at a banquet San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown hosted in his honor. Hu said the array of views he exchanged this week with President George Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney left him believing that, while US-PRC relations have "not always been smooth," there is enough understanding to work through problems. "Both sides have taken on to resolve differences and improve relations," Hu expressed. "Tomorrow, I leave for China. I take

with me the confidence that in the years to come, US-China relations will flourish and prosper."

2. Cross-strait Relations

Reuters (Alice Hung, "TAIWAN SAYS EARLY BREAKTHROUGH IN CHINA TIES UNLIKELY BY ALICE HUNG," Taipei, 05/03/02) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said on Thursday that a breakthrough in political ties with the PRC was unlikely in the near term because the PRC would be kept busy by its leadership succession. "At the moment, mainland China faces problems such as leadership succession so it may be difficult to expect a further improvement in cross-strait relations in the short term," Chen told a group of visiting US academics. "But maintaining a status quo, allowing each other to focus on economic development to improve people's lives across the Strait may be a good thing after all," Chen said. President Chen told his guests Taiwan would not abuse US support for the democratic island of 23 million. "Having US backing does not mean we can do whatever we want. We will never misjudge the situation and make a wrong decision that will influence the stability in the Taiwan Strait," said Chen.

Reuters ("CHINA'S HU WARNS ON TAIWAN DURING KEY US VISIT," Washington, 05/02/02) reported that PRC Vice President Hu Jintao, on an inaugural visit to Washington, warned on Wednesday that "trouble" over Taiwan could hurt US-China ties but said that the overall trend in the relationship is positive and the future bright. "The question of Taiwan has always been the most important and most sensitive issue at the heart of China-US relations," said Hu. "Properly handling this question is the key to promoting our constructive and cooperative relations. If any trouble occurs on the Taiwan question, it would be difficult for PRC-US relations to move forward and retrogression may even occur," Hu said. Selling sophisticated arms to Taiwan was "inconsistent" with US commitments to the PRC, he added.

3. Russia-US Arms Deal

Reuters (Elaine Monaghan, "IVANOV SEES GOOD CHANCE OF U.S. ARMS DEAL SOON," Washington, 05/03/02) reported that Secretary of State Colin Powell and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov worked against the clock on Friday to finalize the next decade of post-Cold War nuclear arms cuts, charged by their presidents with sealing a pact in time for a summit in Russia on May 23. "We proceed from the premise that there is a very high probability for that (an agreement) and we will do everything that we can to achieve that," Ivanov told reporters. Ivanov said he hoped that "all major issues" related to the agreement and the Bush-Putin summit could be resolved in further talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell. The Russian minister began his day of meetings at the State Department, where he was due to return for a working lunch and plenary session before addressing reporters later with Powell. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer was more cautious about prospects for a deal being sealed by Bush and President Vladimir Putin this month, saying: "We hope that this can be agreed to, and that it will be signed." Ivanov said the deal on arms cuts was not the only document being worked on. "A treaty on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons is now being prepared and a joint statement is being finalized on the new framework for the strategic relationship between the two countries." He was holding a day of meetings with Powell and Bush, who will meet Putin in Moscow and St. Petersburg this month.

4. UN Food Aid to DPRK

The Associated Press (Edith M. Lederer, "U.N. FOOD AID TO N.KOREA TO BE CUT," United Nations, 05/01/02) reported that the UN says it will stop distributing food to more than 1 million

children and elderly in the DPRK because of a shortfall in international aid, sparking fears of a worsening humanitarian crisis in the country. In November, the United Nations appealed for $258 million so UN agencies and international relief organizations could respond to the most urgent needs in the DPRK, but to date just $23.5 million has been pledged, Kenzo Oshima, the UN's undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, said Tuesday. Eventually, unless donors act, the more than 6 million DPRK citizens currently fed by the UN World Food Program - mainly women, children and the elderly - "may face acute and indeed life-threatening shortages of food, medicines and clean drinking water," Oshima told a news conference. In an initial cutback, the World Food Program is suspending food distribution to more than 350,000 elderly people and 675,000 secondary school children in May, said James Morris, the agency's new executive director. The program will continue to supply food to the groups most at risk - orphans, young children and pregnant and nursing women, he said. But Morris said "a little more than a million people are going to be severely at risk come May because the resources simply aren't there to meet the need."

5. ROK on DPRK Refugees

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA APPEALS TO CHINA ON DETAINED NORTHERNERS," Seoul, 04/30/02) reported that the ROK appealed to the PRC on Tuesday not to repatriate three DPRK defectors arrested while trying to climb over the wall of the ROK's embassy in Beijing, an official said. The three were among five DPRK citizens who tried to slip past heavy security surrounding the ROK's embassy in Beijing in the latest of a string of asylum bids by refugees from the DPRK. The two others also failed to get into the embassy, but fled and escaped arrest. ROK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Hang-kyong relayed an appeal to the PRC ambassador to the ROK, Li Bin, a ministry official said in Seoul. "We conveyed our position that it should be dealt with in accordance with humanitarian considerations," said deputy ministry spokesman Kim Euy-taek. He declined to say whether the ROK had offered to accept the three DPRK defectors, as the ROK has done in recent similar cases involving 28 asylum seekers.

6. Japan Anti-terror Support

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO KEEP MILITARY VESSELS IN INDIAN OCEAN TILL NOVEMBER," 05/02/02) reported that Japan plans to extend its logistical support for the US-led antiterror campaign by keeping its military vessels in the Indian Ocean areas for another six months to November, a report said Thursday. "The government has decided that acts of terrorism could resurge as US-led forces continue the antiterrorism campaign in Afghanistan," the Yomiuri Shimbun daily said, citing official sources. "The government plans to hold talks with the US side to finalise details after the Golden Week holidays and hopes to have the plan officially approved at the meetings of the Security Council of Japan and the cabinet as early as May 17," the report said. Japan has sent 1,200 military personnel, three destroyers and two supply ships to the Arabian Sea. Tokyo has already extended the support operations until May 19. The mission was initially scheduled to end on March 31. A Defense Agency spokesman declined to comment on the report, saying the government and the agency have yet to decide on the issue. "The cabinet will decide whether to extend the mission before May 19, when the current mission ends," the spokesman said, without elaborating.

7. DPRK Japanese Abductions

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREA AGREES TO RESUME SEARCH FOR 'KIDNAPPED' JAPANESE," 05/01/02) reported that the DPRK agreed to resume searches for missing Japanese whom Tokyo

alleges were kidnapped by the DPRK, as part of a Red Cross accord. Under the deal the DPRK agreed to investigate the whereabouts of 11 Japanese nationals identified by Japan who says they were seized by DPRK agents from 1978 to 1983. According to a joint statement issued at the end of two days of discussions between Red Cross officials from the countries, Japan said it would also look into the cases of DPRK citizens who disappeared in Japan before 1945. DPRK authorities would undertake an "in-depth investigation" into the matter in cooperation with Red Cross officials and would "inform the Japanese side of its results quickly," the statement said. The two sides also agreed to a fourth round of home visits by Japanese spouses living in the DPRK this summer, while further Red Cross talks would be held in an unnamed location in June, it added. Japanese officials counseled caution Tuesday despite the agreement. "It's premature to assess the future course of our bilateral relations with North Korea," Kenji Hiramatsu, director of Northeast Asian Affairs at Japan's foreign ministry, told journalists after Tuesday's talks. "To achieve the final goal of normalized relations with North Korea, it is important to solve the issue of the abductions." However, "the situation is now moving forward and there is a kind of favorable trend for more dialogue between Japan and North Korea," he said. Hiramatsu said the Japanese public would not accept the resumption of official talks between the governments without real progress on finding the missing Japanese.

8. DPRK-ROK Family Reunions

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "FAMILY MEMBERS PART IN KOREAS," Seoul, 05/02/02) reported that hundreds of family members from the DPRK and the ROK wept Friday as they parted after their first reunions in half a century. "How can I go back, leaving you behind?" an ROK woman cried from her wheelchair. Her DPRK son, weeping, rubbed his mother's face with his wrinkled hands and replied: "We can meet again if the fatherland is unified." Television footage broadcast live in the ROK did not identify them. Reports said the woman's son, a former resident of Seoul, was conscripted into the DPRK army during the 1950-53 Korean War. Separated family members - 100 from the DPRK and 466 from the ROK - spent a little more than 10 hours together at Diamond Mountain over three days. Because of limited accommodation at the resort, the reunions were staged in two sessions. Friday's farewell marked the end of the latest round of reunions that began last Sunday. It was the fourth round the inter-Korean summit in 2000 and marked the start of revived reconciliation between the two countries after months of heightened tension. It was the first time that the reunions have been held at an isolated location.

9. DPRK Clinton Invitation

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA DENIES INVITATION FOR CLINTON TO VISIT PYONGYANG," Seoul, 05/01/02) reported that the DPRK denied Thursday that former US President Bill Clinton has been invited to Pyongyang to discuss bilateral relations. "We make it clear that we have not invited former U.S. President Clinton," a foreign ministry spokesman said in a report carried by Pyongyang Radio. It was issued after a foreign media outlet claimed the DPRK extended the invitation to Clinton.

10. DPRK Mystery Boat

The Associated Press ("DIVERS PROBING WRECKAGE OF SUSPECTED NORTH KOREAN BOAT DISCOVER CORPSE," Tokyo, 05/03/02) reported that divers inspecting the wreckage of a suspected DPRK spy boat that sank in a gunfight with Japan's Coast Guard found a corpse and a weapon Friday, an official said. The weeklong Coast Guard probe in the East China Sea that started Thursday could lead to a salvage that has been a diplomatic sticking point between the PRC and

Japan. On Thursday, divers discovered a weapon and the body of a man, said Coast Guard spokesman Hiroyuki Isobe. He declined to comment on what type of weapon was found. Fifteen crew are believed to have gone down with the ship, which sank inside China's 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone during last December. Japan wants to raise the ship to prove its case against the DPRK, but needs the cooperation of the PRC.

11. Koizumi Yasukuni Shrine Visit

Reuters ("MOST JAPANESE BACK KOIZUMI'S CONTROVERSIAL SHRINE VISIT," Tokyo, 05/03/02) reported that despite anger from Asian neighbours more than half of Japanese support a visit by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo. Some 53 percent of people generally approve of Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni shrine where 14 convicted war criminals are honoured along with 2.47 million Japanese who have died in wars since the mid-19th century, Kyodo said, citing a recent poll. That figure could signal a leap in the flagging popularity of the prime minister after his public approval ratings more than halved to about 40 percent following the sacking of his popular foreign minister in February. The poll found 39.4 percent of respondents expressed support for Koizumi's April 21 visit to the shrine, and a further 13.6 percent said he should go on August 15, the anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War Two and a date that is particularly emotive for neighbors invaded by Japan

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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