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I. United States

1. ROK-US Policy Coordination

The Associated Press ("SENIOR U.S. OFFICIAL TO VISIT SEOUL TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 5/5/00) reported that the ROK Foreign Ministry said Friday that the US State Department Counselor Wendy Sherman will visit the ROK this weekend to coordinate the two countries' policy toward the DPRK. The talks will include a meeting with ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-ryong and other officials. The DPRK accused the US on Friday of trying to isolate and stifle it by keeping it on the list of terrorism sponsors. An unidentified spokesman of the DPRK Foreign Ministry was quoted by the official Korean Central News Agency as saying, "the U.S. can never hurt the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by keeping it on the list of sponsors of terrorism."

2. Cross-Straits Relations

The Associated Press (Annie Huang, "TAIWAN OFFERS OLIVE BRANCH TO CHINA," Taipei, 5/5/00) reported that Tsai Ying-wen, incoming chairwoman of the Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, said on Friday that Taiwan will stop using the "special state-to-state relations" characterization with the PRC. Tsai said that dropping the wording that offended the PRC will not change the status quo--that Taiwan and the PRC now are governed separately and Taiwan wants to be treated equally in any talks about their relations. The PRC had no immediate reaction to Tsai's comments.

3. PRC Missile Threat to Taiwan

The Sydney Morning Herald (David Lague, "MISSILE WARNING TO CHINA," 5/4/00) reported that Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Command (CINPAC), warned the PRC on May 3 that its missiles threatening Taiwan could force the US to supply the island with a Theater Missile Defense (TMD) network. Blair said, "so whether those systems are made available to Taiwan or not will depend on the threat to Taiwan at the time." Blair said that the military situation across the Taiwan Strait was now quiet, without unusual movements on either side, but the PRC's missile build-up posed a "long-term danger." Military analysts believe that within five years the PRC will have deployed about 650 highly accurate ballistic and cruise missiles carrying conventional explosives, fuel air explosives, warheads that destroy electronic equipment and other munitions in the regions opposite Taiwan. Blair continued, "if China continues to build up weapons to the point that it can pose a threat of tremendous damage to Taiwan, and Taiwan has no defense, then I think that balance is getting out of whack." [Ed. note: This article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 5, 2000.]

4. US National Missile Defense

The Washington Post published an opinion article by Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser to US President Jimmy Carter ("INDEFENSIBLE DECISIONS," 5/5/00) which said that as of now, the US decision to deploy a National Missile Defense (NMD) system is likely to be made either through an agreement with Russia to partially revise the existing ABM Treaty or simply by the US acting alone. Brzezinski wrote, "in either case the decision will be premature and disruptive to America's key strategic relationships. The (US) decision to deploy on the basis of an agreement with Russia could prove troublesome. It would most probably involve an arrangement permitting the United States to use Alaska as the site for a partial missile defense deployment. That would provide protection for America against an eventual North Korean threat, though there are no intelligence estimates regarding the pace of any North Korean efforts to deploy ICBMs armed with nuclear warheads. It would also protect America against the existing Chinese nuclear forces. But the Chinese quite naturally would view an American decision to deploy in the above-mentioned fashion as directed primarily against them. That would intensify American-Chinese tensions (a matter hardly of regret to Moscow) and precipitate Chinese efforts to upgrade their nuclear-armed ICBM capabilities, including the deployment of decoys to override the partial American missile defense. The American initiative and the Chinese reaction would probably cause anxiety in Japan and South Korea." Instead, he continued, "a unilateral decision would maximize such negative consequences. It would also give Moscow the added opportunity to posture as the defender of stable strategic deterrence, which America would then be accused of undermining. The bottom line is that at this stage there is no urgent strategic need for a largely domestically driven decision regarding the deployment of the national missile defense. If the long-standing policy of nuclear deterrence is to be replaced with missile defense, that strategic revolution should be pursued on a comprehensive basis, not just for America itself but also for its allies, and with its allies." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 5, 2000.]

II. Japan

1. Japanese-DPRK Relations

The Daily Yomiuri ("WIVES OF N. KOREANS TO VISIT JAPAN," 04/29/00) reported that the Japanese government decided to allow a group of 16 Japanese wives of DPRK men to visit Japan in June under an agreement between the Japanese and DPRK Red Cross societies. The visit would be the third of its kind from the DPRK. The Japanese government relaxed its original condition that only those who had retained Japanese citizenship could visit. Therefore, the group will include a woman who has renounced her Japanese citizenship. The group will stay at a state-run Olympic facility in Yoyogi, Tokyo, will be reunited with family members, relatives and acquaintances, and will visit family graves, said the report. It added that April and May, the dates of the visit initially proposed, were avoided because of the 10th round of Japan-DPRK normalization talks which is slated for late May.

2. Myanmar-DPRK Relations

The Sankei Shimbun ("MYANMAR DOES NOT DENY DPRK'S ENTRY INTO ARF," Yangong, 05/02/00) reported that Myanmar's Foreign Minister Win Aun told reporters on May 1 that Myanmar would not object to the DPRK's participation in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF). Aun's statement is the first of its kind. The report also said that the DPRK has been striving to establish diplomatic relations with Myanmar and the Philippines before the DPRK officially participates in ARF. Aun said, "establishment of diplomatic relations is one thing, and participation in ARF is another."

3. US View of ROK-DPRK Summit

The Asahi Shimbun ("DISAGREEMENT IS EMERGING BETWEEN US AND ROK OVER ROK- DPRK SUMMIT MEETING," 05/02/00) reported that some disagreement is emerging between the US and the ROK over the inter-Korean talks in June. While the ROK aims to make the meeting an opportunity to activate economic aid to the DPRK and facilitate exchange, the US wants the ROK to put the issue of the DPRK's suspected development and trade of weapons of mass destruction on the agenda of the meeting. The US is also unhappy that the ROK has not consulted with the US on the summit meeting, although the US consulted with both the ROK and Japan in making the Perry Report. A US source says, "The North-South summit meeting is so historic that it can make a great contribution to the peace of the Korean Peninsula and the Asia-Pacific region. Therefore, (the meeting) should have appropriate agendas." The US will also send US State Department advisor Wendy Sherman to the ROK to exchange views with ROK officials by the end of May.

4. Japanese-ROK Defense Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("ROK DEFENE MINISTER TO VISIT JAPAN ON MAY 20," 05/04/00) reported that ROK Defense Minister Chong Sun-dae told Taku Yamazaki, visiting former Chairman of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party Policy Affairs Research Council, that he would visit Japan from May 20 to 24 to meet with Japanese Defense Agency Director General Tsutomu Kawara. The report said that Chong aims to discuss with Japan policy toward the DPRK and Japanese-ROK defense exchanges before the inter- Korean summit.

5. Japanese-Italian Talks on DPRK

The Daily Yomiuri (Akitoshi Muraoka, "MORI, AMATO SEEK TO BRING N. KOREA INTO INTERNATIONAL FOLD," Rome, 05/03/00) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori and his Italian counterpart, Giuliano Amato, agreed in Rome on May 2 that Japan and Italy should cooperate in helping integrate the DPRK into the international community. The two leaders confirmed the importance of helping the East Asian communist country become an active member of the international community. Mori stated, "there are noteworthy changes happening concerning the DPRK, such as the establishment of diplomatic relations with your country early this year, the resumption in early April of diplomatic normalization talks between Tokyo and Pyongyang, and a plan for the first-ever summit talks between the top leaders of North and South Korea.... I would like to assure you that Japan will make every effort to help lead such favorable developments toward a substantive detente, in harmony with the US and the ROK." Amato responded, "By such efforts on our part, we are hoping to encourage Pyongyang to enter the international community."

6. Japanese Constitutional Revisions

The Daily Yomiuri ("DIET PANELS PLAY PIVOTAL ROLE IN DEBATE ON CONSTITUTION," 05/03/00) reported that the research commissions on the Japanese Constitution are playing a pivotal role in promoting debate on a wide range of issues related to the Constitution. The commissions were set up in both houses of the Diet in January to draw up reports probably by the end of their five-year discussion periods. Hearings were held to discuss the circumstances under which the Japanese Constitution was framed after Japan's defeat in World War II, including whether the Constitution was imposed on Japan by the US during the Occupation by the Allied forces. The political parties in Japan still remain split over whether the Constitution should be revised. Two panels are expected to set up subcommittees to address a list of more specific subjects concerning the Constitution. The report also added that the themes would probably include states of national emergency, fundamental human rights and the Emperor system.

7. US View of US Forces in Japan

The Nikkei Shimbun (Shintaro Ikeuchi, "FORMER ASSISTANT DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE SAYS RUDUCTION OF US FORCES IN JAPAN IS POSSIBLE IF TENSIONS ON KOREAPN PENINSULA ARE LOWERED," Washington, 05/05/00) reported that Richard Armitage, former assistant deputy secretary for defense and currently Texas State Governor George Bush's advisor on security affairs, told the Nikkei Shimbun that it is possible to reduce US marines on Okinawa if tensions on the Korean Peninsula are further lowered. Armitage stated, "(If the situation on the Korean Peninsula were improved,) it would be possible to change the force structure of the US forces in Japan." However, Armitage emphasized that regarding the present number of US personnel stationed in the Asia-Pacific, both Japan and the US should closely consult with each other by watching the changing international situation, said the report.

III. Announcements

1. DPRK Forum

The Institute for Strategic Reconciliation, Inc. (ISR) and The Korea Society will host a half-day 7th Washington North Korea Forum on May 15, 2000, at the US Capitol, Rayburn Building - Gold Room 2168, Washington, DC, from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm. The topic will be "Pyongyang Summit of the Two Koreas towards Reconciliation and Unity, and New American Policies towards Korea." For more

information and registration, contact ISR2020@Ureach.com or by fax at 301-570-0911.

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