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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse("SKOREA URGES NORTH TO SOFTEN NUCLEAR STANCE AS HIGH-LEVEL TALKS OPEN," 05/05/04) reported that the ROK urged the DPRK to soften its stance in the stand-off over its nuclear weapons drive as the two Koreas opened a fresh round of high-level talks in Pyongyang, media pool reports said. But at the same time, the DPRK called for an end to joint military exercises involving US and ROK troops, accusing the annual drills of being nuclear war games aimed at the communist state. The talks come ahead of preliminary negotiations in Beijing next week aimed at clearing the way for a new round of six-nation discussions to end the impasse over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. "A step forward toward a peaceful settlement of the nuclear

issue must be made at the Beijing talks," said ROK's chief delegate to the inter-Korean ministerial talks, Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun. "And at the third round of six-nation talks, tangible steps for the solution of the nuclear issue must be agreed upon," Jeong was quoted as saying in his keynote speech at the opening of Wednesday's discussions. His DPRK counterpart Kwon Ho-Ung said in his own speech that the US-ROK joint military exercises must be brought to an end in order to raise inter-Korean ties to a new level. "In order to bring forward inter-Korean relations to make them fit to the spirit of the current times, joint US-ROK military exercises must be terminated," Kwon said. He insisted that the joint military drills were aimed at preparing attacks against the DPRK.

2. DPRK US Train Blast Aid Acceptance

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA ACCEPTS US AID FOR TRAIN BLAST VICTIMS: REPORT," Seoul, 05/05/04) reported that the DPRK will accept a US offer of aid for victims of a deadly train blast last month, a senior official was reported as saying, adding it could improve ties between the estranged countries. Deputy DPRK ambassador to the United Nations, Han Song-Ryol, was quoted as telling the ROK's Yonhap News Agency that the DPRK had recently agreed to accept the proposed aid. He was the first senior DPRK official to confirm the DPRK's decision. The US has pledged 100,000 dollars through the Red Cross for victims of April 22 train blast at Ryongchon, near the border with the PRC, which killed more than 150 people and wounded 1,300. Han said the US offer had been made through contacts in New York in the past week. US officials had also offered to provide emergency kits, including medicines, which the DPRK had accepted, he said. However Han indirectly declined a US suggestion that it could send medical personnel to help treat victims of the blast. The DPRK country has also refused to allow ROK doctors and other specialists into the site. "We already have enough medical staff and what is urgently needed now are medicine and medical equipment," he said. The aid could build trust between North Korea and the US, Han said.

3. DPRK Ballistic Missile Development

United Press International ("REPORT: N. KOREA MAY DEPLOY NEW MISSILE," Los Angeles, 05/05/04) reported that satellite intelligence has uncovered evidence suggesting North Korea may soon deploy a new medium-range ballistic missile that could reach Hawaii. The Los Angeles Times said Wednesday the discovery, reported this week by a ROK newspaper, might indicate that the DPRK has made more progress in developing the rocket than western analysts had believed. The disturbing evidence came in the form of satellite photos of two new bases under construction that do not fit the specifications of the Rodong and Scud missiles that are now in the DPRK's arsenal. There has been no official comment on the report from Washington or Seoul, however arms experts told the Times they believe the new missile has a range of 1,800-2,500 miles, enough to lob a warhead at US bases on Guam or even the Hawaiian Islands.

4. IAEA on Implementation of DPRK Safeguards

The International Atomic Energy Agency ("STATEMENT TO 3RD SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE 2005 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS," 04/26/04) released this statement on the implementation of Safeguards in the DPRK as part of their full report: The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to pose a serious and immediate challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Since December 2002, the Agency has not been in the position to perform any verification activities in the DPRK, and therefore cannot provide any

assurance about the nature of the DPRK's nuclear programme. There is an obvious need for a comprehensive settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue through a combination of diplomacy and verification, and it is our hope that the process of the six-party talks will bring substantive results in this respect. We trust that any future settlement will ensure that the Agency will be given the necessary authority and resources to be able to verify and to provide the expected assurances about the nature of DPRK's nuclear programme.

To read the full report: http://www.iaea.org/NewsCenter/Focus/Npt/npt2004_2604statement.pdf

5. DPRK-Japan Abduction Talks

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN-NKOREA ABDUCTION TALKS END WITH AGREEMENT TO MEET AGAIN," 05/05/04) reported that talks between Japan and the DPRK over the DPRK's abduction of Japanese nationals ended here with the only agreement being to meet again, reports said. "There was too much argument on principles but we had an in-depth exchange of views," Japan's point man on North Korea Mitoji Yabunaka was quoted as saying by Japanese news agencies. Yabunaka, Japan's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau director general, added that agreement had been reached to meet again, Kyodo news agency reported. The two sides were holding discussions at the government level for the first time since February. A first day of talks Tuesday were characterized by Japan as "sincere and straightforward". Yabunaka, along with Deputy Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka, were heading the Japanese delegation. The DPRK was understood to be represented by Jong Thae-Hwa, the DPRK's envoy in charge of talks on normalizing ties with Japan.

6. PRC on EU Arms Ban

Agence France-Presse ("PRC PREMIER CONFIDENT OF END TO EU ARMS BAN," 05/06/04) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao expressed confidence that the European Union would lift a 15-year-old arms embargo on the PRC -- but Belgium stressed that human rights concerns remained a sore point. Speaking after talks with Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt on the second leg of a five-nation EU tour, Wen said the PRC was also optimistic that the bloc would soon grant the booming country full market economy status. "I believe that the EU is looking at this question very positively, as are many of its members. That's why I have full confidence for a resolution to this problem," the PRC premier told reporters. But pressed on the human rights issue, Wen said: "I think that we shouldn't create links between lifting the embargo and conferring market economy status with other problems." Verhofstadt said: "I indicated, like many other members of the European Union, that we should lift the embargo." But the PRC would have to first ratify the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and deepen political dialogue with the EU, "of which human rights forms an important part", the Belgian leader added.

7. US on Cross-Straits Relations

Agence France-Presse ("BUSH AND SINGAPORE PM GOH WARN OF DANGER IF TAIWAN-CHINA TIES MISMANAGED," 05/06/04) reported that US President George W. Bush and Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong warned of "grave consequences" if relations between the PRC and Taiwan are not managed well, an official said. The Taiwan issue was among key topics discussed between Goh, who is on a five-day visit to Washington, and Bush at the White House. "Emphasizing the importance of maintaining stability, they agreed that there would be grave consequences for regional and international security if cross-strait relations were mismanaged," Burhan Gafoor, Goh's press secretary, said in a statement. Burhan did not elaborate.

8. PRC Academic Criticism of PRC Propaganda

Agence France-Presse ("PRC ACADEMIC LEVELS RARE CRITICISM AT CHINA'S PROPAGANDA MACHINERY," 05/05/04) reported that a leading PRC academic has launched a vicious attack on the country's powerful propaganda department, claiming it has butchered freedom of speech and protects corrupt officials. Jiao Guobiao, a journalism professor at Beijing University, called for the abolition of the secretive propaganda machinery, which regulates what the media can and cannot write about, in an essay banned in the PRC but circulated on the Internet. "Their censorship orders are totally groundless, absolutely arbitrary, at odds with the basic standards of civilization, and as counter to scientific commonsense as witches and wizardry," he wrote. Jiao said the PRC's censors were unregulated and operated in a manner similar to the Nazis, charging that it was the "worst infringer, and the spiritual butcher, of the freedom of speech that is guaranteed by the constitution". "The constitution was created by the government, but here is a government department that does not try to protect it and instead does everything possible to trash it," he said. "The Central Propaganda Department has become the bastion to defend the most reactionary forces, allowing them to abuse power and practice corruption at the cost of ruining the images of the party and the government as well as damaging the civil development of the nation." Such outbursts of dissent are still rare in China and Jiao acknowledges that he faces jail. "Criticizing the Central Propaganda Department probably does not merit a death penalty. There will probably be some jail time, but there is nothing to be afraid of," he said. In an interview with AFP, he said the only way China could make progress was to abolish the department altogether. "At minimum, the department of propaganda should work in transparency and be governed by a legal framework," he said. "In the final analysis though, it will have to be abolished."

9. PRC-Hong Kong Relations

New York Times (Keith Bradsher, "DISPLAY OF WARSHIPS SIGNAL HONG KONG OF CHINA'S RESOLVE," Hong Kong, 05/05/04) reported that a flotilla of PRC warships sailed slowly down the length of Victoria Harbor today in a rare show of force that comes as democracy advocates here say they face growing intimidation by Beijing. Two guided-missile destroyers, four guided-missile frigates and two submarines displayed the PRC's military strength for the first time since the territory was handed over by Britain in 1997. It marked a distinct change of tactics by Beijing. The PRC military has been a nearly invisible presence here for the last seven years. Soldiers are required to wear civilian clothing when they leave their bases, and the main base is tucked away on an island at the harbor's western end. But today, residents here watched as a submarine sailed past the downtown Bank of China tower, designed by I.M. Pei. Sailors in dress whites lined the sides of the destroyers and frigates, and some gave friendly waves to workers on a passing tugboat. The People's Liberation Army described the visit as an occasion to honor the navy's 55th anniversary. But there was no such visit on the 50th anniversary in 1999.

II. Japan

1. Bashing Against Released Japanese Hostages

The Japan Times ("HOSTAGE BLAMES STATE FOR BACKLASH," 04/28/04) reported that the harsh criticism that has been aimed at Japanese civilians taken hostage in Iraq stems from the Japanese government's resentment over their relatives' calls for the government to withdraw its troops from the country, one of the hostages said. According to Nobutaka Watanabe, one of the two civilians taken hostage outside the besieged city of Fallujah, officials were angered by the families' position.

"They felt these are people working against the Japanese government," he told reporters at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. "I think it is this resentment that led to the bashing of the hostages." Junpei Yasuda, one of the abductees, justified the attitude of the abductees' families, saying, "Their captors made political demands, so the families had to respond in a political fashion."

The Japan Times ("KASHIMURA BLASTED," 04/28/04) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda on April 27 criticized Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmaker Takeaki Kashimura for describing three Japanese who were taken hostage in Iraq earlier this month as "anti-Japan elements." "The remarks were inappropriate and cannot be justified," the top government spokesman told a news conference.

2. DPRK Ship Port Call in Japan

Kyodo ("NORTH KOREAN FERRY DEPARTS," Niigata, 04/28/04) reported that the DPRK ferry Mangyongbong-92 left the port of Niigata on a homebound voyage on April 27 after an overnight stay. The 9,672-ton ship is carrying about 210 passengers from Niigata to Wonsan. They include students on excursion tours from pro-Pyongyang schools in Japan and North Korean residents of Japan visiting relatives in the North.

3. Japan Constitutional Revision

The Japan Times ("REVISE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW GREATER FLEXIBILITY: COUNCIL," 04/29/04) reported that a private think tank issued a policy proposal urging Japan to develop an independent national strategy and contribute to building a "non-war community order." The Policy Council of the Japan Forum on International Relations called for the war-renouncing postwar Constitution to be amended to ensure Japan plays a larger role in international affairs and has its own security policy as an independent nation. The group presented the policy recommendations, entitled "New World Order of Non-War Community and Future of Japan-US Alliance," to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. While the US is emerging as the sole dominant world power following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the "US empire" has not shown an ambition for territorial expansion, making it different from other historical empires, the report says. But it criticizes the current US administration's unilateral approach toward world affairs, and calls for a "sense of responsibility and mature leadership as a superpower." It says the quest for a "no-war community" is part of a new world order. Japan should move away from passive pacificism toward active pacifism, it says. The group said Japan should become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and the government should rectify its present interpretation of the Constitution, which prevents Japan from exercising a right to collective self-defense. The report says the government should enact a "Basic Law on Security and International Peace Cooperation" instead of a series of patch-up security measures.

4. Japan's Anti-terror Measures

Mainichi Daily News ("TOKYO DRILLS TERROR RESPONSE," 04/26/04) reported that Metropolitan police officers clad in protective gear carried out anti-terrorist training on April 26. Joined by station employees, police officers of the anti-Nuclear, Biological and Chemical (NBC) Weapons task force rushed to Nagatacho subway station on the Tokyo Metro Co.'s Yurakucho Line, in a scenario where sarin gas was assumed to be released. The Metropolitan Police Department has stepped up security measures at JR Tokyo, Shibuya, Shinjuku, Ueno, Ikebukuro and Shinagawa stations after bomb attacks on railway facilities in Spain in March.

5. NPT Preparatory Committee for 2005 Review Conference

Kyodo ("MAYORS ATTEND NONPROLIFERATION MEET IN NEW YORK," New York, 04/29/04) reported that the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki attended a nuclear nonproliferation meeting at the UN headquarters and urged countries to abolish all atomic weapons by 2020. Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba said the global community should set a clear goal to abolish all nuclear arms by 2020, while Nagasaki Mayor Itcho Ito said that even for atomic bomb survivors who were more than 10 km from the Nagasaki atomic bombing hypocenter, many still suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder that also affects their physical health. "It is a heartbreaking reality that can't be obliterated," Ito said.

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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