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I. United States

1. ROK Party Resignation

The Associated Press ("S. KOREAN PRESIDENT QUITS PARTY," Seoul, 05/05/02) and Agence

France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT QUITS PARTY OVER SCANDAL," 05/06/02) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung quit his ruling party Monday and apologized for a recent series of corruption scandals involving his sons and some confidants. Kim's decision does not affect his single five-year term, which ends in February. Under the constitution, he cannot seek re-election. "I can't find words to describe my apologetic feeling," Kim said in a statement read by his chief of staff, Park Jie-won. "I and my wife spend every day in agony." Kim said his decision to leave the Millennium Democratic Party was to free himself from domestic politics and concentrate on state affairs, including the upcoming soccer World Cup, presidential election and other key elections. Kim had resigned as head of the ruling party in November under public fire for a series of corruption scandals involving high-ranking government officials. His sons were not implicated at that time. Two of Kim's three sons - Kim Hong-up and Kim Hong-gul - face summons by prosecutors for allegedly peddling influence in return for bribes.

2. DPRK-ROK Economic Relations

Reuters (Martin Nesirky, "NORTH KOREA PULLS OUT OF SEOUL TALKS AND BLAMES SOUTH," Seoul, 05/06/02) and Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA CALLS OFF ECONOMIC TALKS WITH SOUTH," 05/06/02) reported that the DPRK cancelled economic cooperation talks due to start with the ROK on Tuesday because of "reckless" remarks by the ROK foreign minister, the DPRK's media said. The DPRK's unexpected move dealt a blow to the ROK's efforts to revive the inter-Korean peace process. The DPRK's delegation to the talks said in a statement that ROK Foreign Minister Choi Sung-Hong's comments during a recent US visit "made it impossible" to hold the second round of economic cooperation talks as scheduled. Choi had "made reckless remarks intended to hamstring the implementation of the joint press release" on economic talks, read the statement released by the DPRK's Central Broadcasting Station. It did not say which of Choi's remarks had angered the DPRK. "We expressed regret that the talks cannot be held on a planned date," said the statement, also carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The four-day talks were to begin in Seoul Tuesday with a DPRK dam which the South says is in danger of collapsing expected to dominate agenda. 3. DPRK Asylum-Seekers

Reuters ("CHINA ON HIGH ALERT FOR NORTH KOREAN ASYLUM SEEKERS," Beijing, 05/06/02) reported that the PRC is on alert for DPRK asylum seekers attempting to flee into their embassy compounds. Barbed wire and scores of police reinforcements have been implemented. Roads also have been cordoned off, and police clutching long batons now guard high embassy walls. Rumors more DPRK asylum-seekers may attempt to scale embassy walls during a week-long Labour Day holiday have pushed the PRC authorities to create buffer zones between the embassies and attractive walkways and check the identities of many passers-by. "The Chinese have taken the extra security measures because of rumours that 28 North Koreans are in Beijing looking for a chance to jump over the walls," said one Western diplomat on condition of anonymity. "The Chinese are embarrassed... They have to prevent these people from getting to our embassies," he said

4. DPRK Defections

The Associated Press ("312 NORTH KOREANS HAVE DEFECTED TO SOUTH KOREA THIS YEAR," Seoul, 05/04/02) reported that a total of 312 DPRK citizens have defected to the ROK in the first four months of this year, said the ROK government intelligence agency Saturday. The figure was more than half of the total for all of last year, when 583 DPRK citizens fled to the ROK, and equaled the 312 refugees who fled in 2000. In 1999, 148 DPRK citizens fled to the ROK, up from 71 in 1998. Most DPRK defectors have said they fled hunger and political repression. In April alone, 74 DPRK defectors made it to the ROK, said the National Intelligence Service in a news release.

5. Hu Jintao US Visit

Agence France-Presse ("CHINESE HEIR APPARENT ENDS MAIDEN US VISIT ON HIGH-TECH NOTES, 05/04/02) reported that Vice President Hu Jintao ended his crucial first visit to the US with a taste of cutting-edge US technology on Saturday. Hu rounded off his six-day visit -- which took him to Washington, New York, San Francisco and Hawaii -- with a visit to the San Francisco area's famed Silicon Valley where he met with top industry players. Before flying out of here for Beijing, Hu and his delegation paid a visit to the Intel Corp., the world's largest maker of semiconductors on Friday. "The vice president's visit was primarily relationship building and it was very successful," Intel spokesman Chuck Malloy stated on Friday, adding that Hu met the chip maker's chairman Andrew Grove and chief executive Craig Barrett. The Intel executives stressed their continuing commitment to the PRC, where it has invested 500 million dollars in research, testing and manufacturing facilities in Beijing and Shanghai, Malloy said.

6. PRC-US Military Relations

Reuters ("US AND CHINA TO DISCUSS IMPROVING MILITARY TIES," Washington, 05/04/02) reported that the US and the PRC are planning talks to see if they can improve military cooperation. Pentagon spokesperson said on Friday that the decision came during a meeting on Thursday between Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and PRC Vice President Hu Jintao. A PRC spokesperson said afterward that the two sides agreed to resume military exchanges. But U.S. officials said on Friday that the PRC characterization was misleading because the Rumsfeld-Hu decision was only an agreement to hold talks. "As much as I know, the action item, or the primary action item, that came out of it, was the agreement to have the representatives get together and talk about how we'd proceed on military-to-military," Pentagon spokesperson Torie Clarke told reporters. Rumsfeld last year decreed the US would no longer pursue military contacts with the PRC on a routine basis but instead would decide on a case-by-case basis which ones were in the U.S. interest. Signs of serious improvement could come with the announcement of military consultative talks in Washington, PRC ship visits to the US and a deeper PRC commitment to intelligence-sharing in the war on terrorism.

7. DPRK Mystery Ship

The Associated Press ("REPORT: BODIES FOUND TIED TO WRECKAGE OF SUSPECTED NORTH KOREAN BOAT," Tokyo, 05/05/02) and Reuters ("BODIES REPORTED TIED TO SUSPECTED N.KOREAN SPY SHIP," Tokyo, 05/05/02) reported that Japanese divers have found several bodies lashed to a sunken suspected DPRK spy ship, raising suspicion they attached themselves to the vessel to make recovery difficult, the Yomiuri Shimbun said on Sunday. The coast guard began a diving operation on Wednesday and has so far recovered the remains of a man from the seabed along with a gun, cartridges, a cartridge belt and a magazine near the wreckage of the ship. The Yomiuri newspaper, citing coast guard officials, said the recovered body was tied to the stern with a rope, while four other bodies, yet to be recovered, were found tied to the deck with what appeared to be rope. Divers on Saturday also recovered two weapons and what appears to be a bullet from the seabed.

8. Taiwan Nuclear Waste Dump

Reuters ("TAIWAN APOLOGISES TO ISLAND OVER NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP," Taipei, 05/05/02) reported that Taiwan Economics Minister Lin Yi-fu has offered an apology to aboriginal residents of

a tiny island where the government stored its nuclear waste, local media reported on Sunday. "I can understand how you feel," Lin told the aboriginal tribesmen, residents of tiny Lanyu island, who began to protest outside Taiwan's only nuclear waste storage facility on May 1. Taiwan currently dumps its nuclear waste -- a by-product of its three nuclear power plants -- on Lanyu, 80 km (50 miles) southeast of Taiwan. Lin said on Saturday the government would set up a committee within one month to study plans to remove the waste, but gave no timetable for the actual removal. The government has pledged to close the dump by the end of this year, but no money has been allocated for the task in this year's budget.

9. Taiwan WHO Bid

Reuters ("TAIWAN SAYS TO TRY TO JOIN WHO AS 'HEALTH ENTITY'" reported that Taiwan on Monday launched its sixth straight annual bid to join the World Health Organisation (WHO), but frustrated by the PRC's diplomatic embargo said it would apply as a "health entity" to avoid a sovereignty dispute. "Some countries may not recognise Taiwan politically, but Taiwan's rights to participate in the WHO cannot be denied," Foreign Minister Eugene Chien told a news conference. "Our participation in the WHO is not to challenge Communist China or to promote Taiwan independence," Chien said. "We know the task is full of difficulties, but we will do our best." Taiwan officials said the island hoped to avoid a dispute with the PRC if it calls itself an 'entity.'

II. Republic of Korea

1. NGO's Retreat from DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("RELIEF ORGANIZATION MAY LEAVE NORTH," Seoul, 05/06/02) reported that an international relief agency operating in Pyongyang may have to leave DPRK due to a lack of resources, an ROK government source said Sunday. Handicap International, a non-governmental organization based in Lyon, France, is likely to be forced to quit the DPRK if it fails to secure funding for its work. It would be the first time for a relief group to withdraw from the DPRK due to a lack of funding rather than disputes over access or cooperation from the DPRK. The source added that the pull out of the group could signal a retreat or loss of interest in DPRK by private international aid groups. The group, which specializes in helping land mine victims and other victims of armed conflict, supports an estimated 2,000 disabled DPRK citizens and was planning to offer surgery and regular medical treatment to another 7,500.

2. DPRK-Japan Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH MAY NORMALIZE TIES WITH JAPAN," Seoul, 05/06/02) reported that a top DPRK diplomat said Saturday that if "certain conditions are fulfilled" the DPRK could normalize ties with Japan. "I believe there are chances for official ties with Japan if Red Cross talks turn out smooth and the Japanese government is sincere about addressing its crimes in World War II," said Pak Yong-yon, vice director of the Japan Bureau of DPRK's Foreign Ministry. But Pak added that normalization of ties with Japan is not the DPRK's official stance, but his personal opinion as the official in charge of seeking compensation from Japan for its crimes during its occupation of the Korean Peninsula through the end of World War II.

3. Inter Korean Relations

Joongnag Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "PYEONGYANG CALLS OFF ECONOMIC TALKS," Seoul, 05/06/02) reported that the DPRK on Monday abruptly called off the second meeting of the inter-Korean economic cooperation committee, which was to run from Tuesday to Friday in Seoul. "South Korean Foreign Minister Choi Sung-hong's thoughtless remarks, which go directly against the June 15 Joint Declaration, led to this end," the DPRK said in a statement. Choi was reported to have praised the Bush administration's tough stance on DPRK during a recent visit to Washington. Choi and the ROK have repeatedly denied the report, saying his words were taken out of context by the Washington Post reporter who wrote the article. "We have already demanded an apology and appropriate measures from Seoul concerning Minister Choi's conduct, but since we have seen no movement on the matter we decided the South's government should pay for its inaction," the DPRK responded.

4. DPRK Human Right Situation

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Jin, "HARSH PRISON REGIME IN NORTH DESCRIBED FOR US LAWMAKERS," Washington, 05/06/02) reported that before a US House International Relations subcommittee, DPRK prison camp survivors testified Thursday on the DPRK's observance of humanitarian and human rights. They described to the subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific incidence of inhumane treatment. Lee Young-kook, a DPRK prison camp survivor and former bodyguard of DPRK leader, Kim Jong-il, described his experiences at the Yeohwa political prison. "I was allowed to eat only 130 grams of corn a day, along with a watery soup, but was forced to work for 15 hours daily," Lee said. Kim Sung-min, a former DPRK People's Army captain, said, "Contrary to the outside assumption, even soldiers are starving in the North."

III. Japan

1. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Asahi Shinbun (Tsutomu Watanabe, "MORE TALKS SET ON MISSING ISSUE," Beijing, 05/01/02) reported that the DPRK has signaled its willingness to try to locate 49 Japanese believed missing in the DPRK according to an announcement Tuesday. A joint statement issued here by Japanese and DPRK Red Cross representatives appeared to represent a tentative step forward with the DPRK side pledging to take "necessary measures" in its investigation into missing Japanese nationals. Closing out two days of talks between Red Cross representatives from Japan and the DPRK, agreement was reached on the points.

2. Japan-Australian Relations

The Japan Times ("KOIZUMI, HOWARD TO EXPLORE 'ALL OPTIONS' ON ECONOMIC TIES," Canberra, 05/02/02) reported that Japan's prime minister Junichiro Koizumi and Australian prime minister John Howard agreed to form a "creative partnership" to boost political and security exchanges, strengthen economic ties and intensify cooperation on educational, social, scientific, technological and other matters during Koizumi's visit to Australia. They also agreed in principle Wednesday to launch high-level talks to explore "all options" to deepen economic ties with the ultimate objective of forging a free-trade agreement. During a speech later Wednesday at the Asia Society in Sydney, Koizumi said that the economic partnership the two countries forge should "respond to the new international economic realities, particularly in East Asia."

3. DPRK Mystery Ship Dispute

The Japan Times ("OAST GUARD BEGINS PROBE INTO SUNKEN MYSTERY SHIP," 05/02/02) reported that the Japan Coast Guard began an underwater survey Wednesday of a suspected DPRK spy ship that sank in the East China Sea in December. If the vessel is a DPRK ship, coast guard sources said, its mission was possibly to smuggle stimulant drugs into Japan or conduct spy activities. Finding out (the purpose of) the mission would help prevent a recurrence of similar operations," a senior coast guard official said in Tokyo. "We believe the ship should be salvaged." On Thursday, the divers and submersibles were to begin their first three-hour underwater survey at 7a.m. The team plans to dive twice a day over a period of 5 days, weather permitting.

IV. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK-US Relations

China Daily ("US SET TO RESUME TALKS WITH DPRK," Washington, 05/02/02, P1) reported that the Bush administration on April 30 signaled it will accept an offer from the DPRK to hold security talks between the two countries. It reported that White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said in a statement that the Permanent Mission of DPRK to the UN has informed the US State Department that it is prepared to begin talks with the US. "The United States will work to determine the timing and other details in the coming days," Fleischer said. "We anticipate these talks will begin." The details of how the US-DPRK talks might resume have not been disclosed, it reported, but a senior State Department official of the US said Pyongyang had said it would welcome a visit by US envoy Jack Pritchard.

2. ROK-DPRK Relations

People's Daily (Wang Linchang, "SEPARATED FAMILIES REUNITE AT MOUNT KUMGANG," Seoul, 04/29/02, P3) reported that the fourth reunion of separated families between ROK and DPRK started at Mount Kumgang on the afternoon of April 28. Ninety-nine senior people from ROK met with 186 people from the DPRK separated families, said the report. It reported that the round of reunion would be divided into two parts. The first part would be held on April 28-30, and the second part would be on May 1-3.

3. DPRK-Japan Relations

China Daily ("VOW ON MISSING JAPANESE," Beijing, 05/01/02, P8) reported that DPRK strengthened signs it is seeking better relations with the outside world on April 30, agreeing to intensify a search for missing Japanese nationals Tokyo says were abducted decades ago. A Japanese official hailed the agreement as a step towards upgrading relations with DPRK, although the DPRK has said several times before it would look into the missing Japanese, said the report. A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said that April 30's agreement could mean the DPRK would use its state-controlled media and a poster campaign to help trace the missing Japanese, it reported. "They have agreed to explore the ways and means to deepen, to enhance the level of their investigatory activities," said Kenji Hiramatsu, director of the Northeast Asia division of Asian and Oceanian Affairs bureau of the Japanese Foreign Ministry. "This is a stepping stone for the next stage of relations with North Korea," he said.

4. PRC-US Relations

People's Daily (Ma Xiaoning, Ren Yujun and Wang Rujun, "VICE-PRESIDENT MEETS LEADERS OF US CONGRESS," Washington, 05/02/02, P1) reported that visiting PRC Vice President Hu Jintao met with leaders of the US Congress at the Capitol Hill on April 30 and exchanged in-depth views with them on issues concerning China's WTO entry, anti-terrorism, Taiwan and non-proliferation weapons of mass destruction. During the meetings, Hu said that although the international situation has undergone profound changes, the PRC and the US now share more common interests than before and they thus have every reason to further their cooperation in all areas. On the Taiwan issue, Hu stressed that this is the most important and sensitive issue in Sino-US relations, and that proper handling of the issue is the key to healthy and stable development of the two countries' ties.

5. PRC-Japan Relations

People's Daily ("CHINA TO SUPERVISE JAPANESE INVESTIGATION OF SUNKEN SHIP," Beijing, 04/30/02, P4) reported that Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said on April 29 that the PRC will supervise Japan's investigation of a sunken ship in the East China Sea. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and other domestic laws, the PRC claims sovereignty and jurisdictional rights over the shipwreck area, which is within the PRC exclusive economic zone, Kong said. The PRC and Japan have consulted over the issue, he said, noting that the Japanese side conceded PRC sovereignty and jurisdictional rights over its exclusive economic zone. However, Japan promised to take effective measures in preventing the pollution of the marine environment, and to report the underwater investigation progress and results. Hence, the PRC would not object to the underwater investigation by the Japanese side, he said.

China Daily (Shao Zongwei, "JAPANESE OFFICIALS URGED TO CORRECT BIAS," 05/01/02, P2) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan on April 30 urged Japanese leaders to adopt a "correct" attitude towards the aggression of China in the 1930s and 1940s. "We think the Japanese leaders should have a correct attitude towards the Japanese invasion and should take concrete action to prove their commitment," said Kong at a regular briefing. Kong was responding to the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on April 21. "Japan should make adequate retrospection on its history of invasion as it has promised, so as to win the trust of the people in China and in Asia and the international community," said Kong.

6. Cross-Strait Relations

People's Daily ("MAINLAND WILLING TO PROVIDE WATER TO DROUT-HIT ISLAND PROVINCE," Beijing, 04/26/02, P4) reported that Chen Yunlin, director of Taiwan Affairs Office of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said on April 25 in Beijing that the PRC is willing to provide fresh water to Jinmen (Kinmen), Mazu (Matsu) and Penghu islands. Chen said, the island province has suffered its worst drought in 10 years, especially in Jinmen, Mazu and Penghu areas where water shortage has threatened people's daily life. The central government is extremely concerned with this situation and would like to ship fresh water as soon as possible to Jinmen, Mazu and Penghu from Fujian Province, the official said. Meanwhile, the central government is also considering the possibility to lay water pipelines to link Jinmen, Mazu and Fujian Province, in an attempt to thoroughly solve the problem of water shortage there. "Technically, there is no problem", he added. "The Taiwan compatriots are our siblings, and we suffer as much as they do in their times of hardship," he 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.
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