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I. United States

1. DPRK-Japan Talks

The Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "JAPAN, N. KOREA TALKS END," Pyongyang, 4/7/00) reported that a joint statement released by Japan and the DPRK said that the two sides agreed on "the need to continue talks on normalizing ties." In addition to another round of talks in Tokyo, there is a third session planned in the PRC or elsewhere in the near future. The official DPRK newspaper Rodong Sinmun carried a full page of stories about the talks, with headlines such as: "Japan Must Apologize

and Compensate For The Past," and "Japan's Barbaric Pillaging of Cultural Treasures," referring to art works that Japan's colonial army allegedly had stolen. Despite the acrimony over historical issues, Yang Hyong Sop, the vice president of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, thanked Japan for agreeing last month to extend food aid to the DPRK. DPRK officials also expressed hope that new Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori would continue working toward improving bilateral ties.

The Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "N.KOREA, JAPAN DISAGREE ON TALKS," Pyongyang, 4/7/00) and Agence France Presse ("JAPAN AND NORTH KOREA CLASH BUT SAY THEY ARE THAWING ICY TIES," Pyongyang, 4/7/00) reported that Japan and the DPRK ended their three-day normalization talks on Friday with sharply divergent views of what they agreed upon. DPRK chief negotiator Jong Thae Hwa said Japan agreed to atone for its 35-year colonization of the Korean Peninsula. Jong said, "the two sides agreed that Japan will apologize for historical issues and provide compensation." He added that the main issue is "whether Japan keeps its promise." However, Kojiro Takano, Japan's top negotiator, looked surprised at a subsequent news conference when reporters questioned him about Jong's remarks. He said no such agreement had been reached. An anonymous Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman said Jong's statement was "puzzling." It was unclear what effect the comments would have on the future of the negotiations. The two sides agreed Friday to hold a second round of talks in late May in Tokyo.

2. Alleged Massacres by ROK Troops

Associated Press (Paul Alexander, "CIVILIAN MASSACRES IN VIETNAM WAR TIED TO S. KOREANS," Tay Vinh, 4/7/00) reported that witnesses and local Vietnamese officials around the village of Binh An said that from early January to February 2, 1966, ROK troops operating in three coastal provinces in Vietnam's midsection carried out a scorched-earth policy against villages they considered hostile. Ho Thi Cham, a Vietnamese woman who lived in Binh An, said ROK troops, US allies in the Vietnam War, had killed 380 villagers and left their bodies to rot. Other villagers said hundreds more civilians--up to 1,600--had been killed in raids by ROK troops in the preceding month. ROK military veterans, asked separately about the incidents, recalled taking heavy losses in a battle zone where they struggled to tell friendly villagers apart from Viet Cong foes. Rumors that ROK soldiers killed many Vietnamese civilians have circulated for years in the ROK, but no history books chronicled the attacks and past governments suppressed open discussion and news reports. The alleged killings, said to have occurred two years before US soldiers massacred 504 Vietnamese in the village of My Lai, became public knowledge in the ROK only recently. Neither the US Defense Department nor the ROK Defense Ministry would comment on the allegations or offer independent confirmation of the mass killings. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 7, 2000.]

3. Cross-Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SHOWS FIRST SIGNS OF IMPATIENCE WITH TAIWAN'S CHEN," Beijing, 4/7/00) reported that PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen showed signs in a speech on April 6 that the PRC was becoming more impatient with Taiwan's president-elect Chen Shui-bian. Qian said that Chen should take "substantial steps" to win the PRC's trust. He added, "we would like to get a complete response to the issue, as a complete response is very important, and other things are less important. Taiwan independence has no room in the world and most Taiwan compatriots do not accept the prospect of Taiwan independence and a turbulent cross-straits relationship. We are determined to, and confident and capable of reaching a final resolution on the Taiwan issue, to realize the complete reunification of the motherland." An editorial was also published Friday in the People's Liberation Army Daily which reiterated that the PRC would take any measures necessary to

prevent Taiwan moving away from PRC rule. The editorial said, "no one should underestimate the determination and ability of China's government and people to stop Taiwan independence by any means." It added, "the major reason for the victory of the Democratic Progressive Party candidate was not because he strove to advocate Taiwan independence, but because before and during the elections he dropped his call for Taiwan independence and promised to change the party charter. If any people make the worst mistake under Heaven and stubbornly persist along the road of Taiwan independence they will not have a better result than that of Lee Teng-hui."

4. US Weapons Sales to Taiwan

Wall Street Journal (Ronald G. Shafer, "TAIWAN SIGNALS A GO-AHEAD ON U.S. WEAPONS SALES BEFORE A CHANGE IN LEADERS," 4/7/00) reported that a US Defense Department official said the US quietly approached Taiwan about postponing a decision on arms sales to the island until after the May 20 inauguration of Chen Shui-bian as Taiwan's new president. A delay would have put the weapons decision off until after the debate in US Congress begins over permanent US trade relations with the PRC. The US House of Representatives debate is slated to begin the week of May 22. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 7, 2000.]

5. US Reaction to PRC Military Purchases

The Washington Post (Eric Pianin, "ISRAEL-CHINA RADAR DEAL OPPOSED," 4/7/00) reported that Sonny Callahan, chairman of the US House Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations, said on April 6 that he would block US$250 million in aid to Israel unless it cancels plans to sell an advanced airborne radar system to the PRC. Callahan said that until US Defense Secretary William S. Cohen "certifies to the Congress that the sale of the [Israeli] AWAC system to China is not a threat to our national security, then they don't get their money. . . . It gives him a little leverage to go in there and say, 'You're making a mistake.'" US Representative David R. Obey, the ranking Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, strongly backed Callahan's action. Obey said, "Israel better understand it's difficult to justify any military aid to any country whose companies are making available technology we don't want to see fall into Chinese hands." John Holum, US undersecretary of state for arms control, told Callahan's subcommittee that the Phalcon sale was "something we're very concerned about. I don't think we should let our close relationship with Israel get in the way of those kinds of discussions." [Ed. note: This article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 7, 2000.]

6. Japanese Foreign Policy

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN'S LEADER SEEKS CLOSER TIES WITH ASIA," Tokyo, 4/7/00) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori vowed in his first leader's policy speech to the Japanese Parliament on Friday that he would strive for closer ties with Asian neighbors, especially the PRC. Mori said, "while making Japan-US relations as the axis, our country needs to make further diplomatic efforts to create peace in Asia, particularly in Northeast Asia. I will make efforts to develop relations with China further by acknowledging the China-Japan Joint Communique." In relations with the DPRK, Mori said he "resolved to promote future-oriented bilateral relations built up by the former prime minister and President Kim Dae-Jung." Mori also promised to improve ties with the DPRK, saying, "continuing to work closely with South Korea and the United States, I will engage patiently in talks on normalizing diplomatic ties [with the DPRK], which were resumed after a break for seven and a half years. In doing so, I will do my best in solving pending issues between

Japan and North Korea, including humanitarian and security issues."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Korean War Massacre

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO ASK FOR ACTIVE U.S. COOPERATION IN NOGUN-RI PROBE," Seoul, 04/07/00) and The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "KOREAN TEAM TO VISIT US IN MAY FOR NOGUN-RI PROBE," Seoul, 04/06/00) reported that the ROK government decided on April 6 to demand the full cooperation of the US in the Nogun-ri massacre probe in order to wrap up the investigation by the end of June as scheduled. The decision came after a joint meeting of officials and advisors at the ROK's Central Government Complex, chaired by ROK Government Policy Coordination Minister Choi Jae-wook. The participants verified the proceedings of the investigation and consulted on the schedule for an advisory group's visit to the US, slated for May 1-6.

2. DPRK-Kuwait Relations

The Korea Herald ("N.K. REPORTEDLY SEEKING NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT," Seoul, 04/07/00) reported that an ROK government source said on April 6 that the DPRK is reportedly seeking to normalize ties with Kuwait. The source said, "the North has been approaching Kuwait, with which it has no formal relations, since it established diplomatic ties with Italy in January." DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun will likely discuss forming ambassadorial-level diplomatic ties with his Kuwaiti counterpart at a meeting of foreign ministers of non-aligned nations opening on Friday in Colombia. The source noted that the DPRK's move is seen as an attempt to create a bridgehead in the Middle East, and that it hopes to eventually establish relations with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Israel. The Kuwaiti government is reportedly responding positively to the DPRK's efforts, encouraged by ROK's engagement policy and the DPRK's new ties with Italy.

3. DPRK Welcomes ROK Economic Favors

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Si-rae, "POSITIVE REACTION TO ECONOMIC FAVORS TO NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 04/06/00) reported that the domestic business sector is reacting positively to the government's policy to provide special economic favors to the DPRK. Ten businessmen, including Kohap Group president, Chang Chi-hyeok, will visit the DPRK in early May at the official request of the DPRK government. The economic favors to the DPRK are expected to aid its Social Overhead Capital (SOC) projects.

4. DPRK-US Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Sun-gu, "HIGH LEVEL U.S.-NORTH KOREA TALKS DELAYED," Seoul, 04/06/00) reported that the US has revealed that high-level talks with the DPRK were not held on April 5 as planned. US State Department spokesman James Rubin said that the US attitude toward the DPRK has not changed, and they still want high-ranking DPRK officers to visit the US to help improve the two countries' relationship. However, Rubin maintained that the high-level talks would not be held this month. Diplomatic sources in Washington expressed their confidence that DPRK Vice Foreign minister Kim Gye-kwan and US envoy for Korean Affairs Charles Kartman would meet in Geneva at the end of April or beginning of May. It has recently become clear, however, that if the two officials

do meet in Geneva, it will not be until June at the earliest.

5. Germany on Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Chung Sun-gu, "GERMANY URGES N. KOREA TO START DIRECT TALKS WITH SEOUL," Seoul, 04/06/00) reported that the German government urged the DPRK on April 5 to accept direct talks with the ROK in a bid to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula. Rudger Volmer, junior minister at the German foreign ministry met with Paek Nam-sun, the foreign minister of the DPRK, during his current visit to Germany. Volmer also urged the DPRK to hold a summit meeting with the ROK, US and the PRC to resolve the growing tension in East Asia. He pointed out that a joint meeting with other countries would be an important step toward normalizing diplomatic relations with Japan. Paek said that it was time for Germany to establish an equal diplomatic relationship with the DPRK and ROK governments. However, Germany indicated that it intended to turn down DPRK's suggestion. Germany explained that the current diplomatic exchanges between the capitals of the two nations have been satisfactory, and there would be no need to advance the current relationship.

6. DPRK-Japan Talks

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-mok, "NK PROPOSES FOUR POINT PLAN TO JAPAN," Seoul, 04/06/00) reported that at a press conference following the meeting to promote friendly relations between the DPRK and Japan, DPRK representative Chong Tae-wha said that he proposed measures to end sour sentiments from the past. The proposed four points include an apology by the top Japanese official, compensation for human and material damage during the years of colonial rule, the return and compensation for national treasures, and an improvement in the legal status of ethnic Koreans in Japan. The DPRK's Central News Agency reported that Chong said, "compensation without an apology is a mere economic transaction rather than a true reflection on the past. The DPRK-Japan relationship will depend on Japan's attitude on expressing an apology."

III. Japan

1. Japan-DPRK Talks

The Daily Yomiuri (Yuzuru Endo, "JAPAN, N. KOREA TALKS STALL ON PREVIOUS ISSUES," Pyongyang, 04/06/2000) reported that on the first day of the negotiations on normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the DPRK in Pyongyang on April 5, the DPRK demanded an apology and compensation from Japan for its colonial rule. The negotiations were held between Japanese Ambassadors Kojiro Takano and his DPRK counterpart Jong Thae-hwa. The DPRK also listed the return of cultural assets removed during the occupation and the securing of legal status for DPRK Nationals living in Japan as top priorities to be resolved. Japan reiterated that the government rejects wartime compensation, and maintained that both Japan and the DPRK can make legal requests for damage compensation. Takano also asked Jong to deal sincerely with the issue of abductions of Japanese citizens in the DPRK. Jong responded that "the abductions were unlikely to have happened." Japan also raised its concerns over such issues as the DPRK's missile development, the spy ships incident, development of chemical and biological weapons, drug smuggling, and default on trade debts.

The Sankei Shimbun ("MORI SAYS HE WILL STRIVE TO SOLVE ABDUCTION ISSUE," 04/06/2000) reported Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori emphasized the importance of the Japan-DPRK

normalization talks. Mori said, "(As for the DPRK's alleged abduction of Japanese civilians,) it is important that they return to their parents well as soon as possible. To construct a good environment to realize this, it is important to facilitate talks at the governmental and private levels."

The Nikkei Shimbun ("FOREIGN MINISTER INSISTS THAT SUSPECTED ABDUCTION ISSUE SHOULD BE RESOLVED IN NEGOTIATIONS." 04/07/2000) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono told reporters on April 7 that it is important that Japan- DPRK normalization talks "solve the issue of the DPRK's alleged abduction of Japanese civilians. I understand that the DPRK is opposed to this, but we would not proceed without solving the issue. The DPRK is sticking to their principle (of solving the issue of Japanese colonization of Korea), and we also have put up the issue of our concern on the table. We have not come any farther than that."

2. DPRK Diplomacy

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Yoshikazu Shirakawa, "DPRK TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH THIRD WORLD," Seoul, 04/07/2000) reported that the DPRK Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam, the DPRK's second highest-ranking official, will participate in the conference among non-aligned nations on April 7 in Colombia. Kim will also attend the G-77 meeting, slated for April 10 in Cuba. The G-77 is a group of 132 developing countries that aims to discuss cooperation and exchange among the member countries. ROK sources said that Kim is likely to meet with the heads of the countries individually.

3. Japanese-PRC Relations

The Nikkei Shimbun ("PRC COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANIZATION HEAD SAYS BOTH JAPAN AND PRC ARE VICTIMS OF HISTORY," 04/06/2000) reported that visiting PRC Communist Party Organization head Zeng Qing-hong spoke to the representatives from the three Japanese ruling parties in Tokyo on April 6. Regarding the issue of past history between Japan and the PRC, Zeng said, "history is a fact, which should not be changed... We are not imposing responsibility (for the past) on Japan. Responsibility lies in a very few leaders. Both the PRC and Japan are victims of history."

4. US Nuclear Subcritical Test

The Sankei Shimbun ("US CONDUCTED ANOTHER SUBCRITICAL TEST," 04/07/2000) and the Yomiuri Shimbun ("US CONDUCTED ANOTHER SUBCRITICAL TEST," 04/07/2000) reported that the US State Department's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory conducted the 11th subcritical nuclear test aimed to see how the fragments of plutonium would affect nuclear weapons on April 6. The test was part of "the Oboe Series" and that a small amount of plutonium was used. The US said that subcritical tests do not violate the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty because there is no explosion during such tests.

5. Survey on New Japanese Prime Minister

The Daily Yomiuri ("POLL SHOWS 49% HOPE MORI WILL BE EFFECTIVE LEADER," 04/07/2000) reported that the Yomiuri Shimbun conducted a telephone survey on Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro's new leadership and the current political set- up on April 5 and 6. The survey results showed that 49 percent of respondents said they hope Mori carries out his duties effectively, while 45 percent said they have no expectations of him. The survey polled 1,500 eligible voters across the country after Mori was elected Prime Minister by both chambers of the Diet. 51 percent of

respondents opposed the new tripartite coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), New Komeito and Hoshuto (Conservative Party). More than half of the respondents said they favor the dissolution of the Japanese House of Representatives for general elections either after the summit of the Group of Eight major nations, slated for July--or October in Okinawa, when the tenure of lower house members expires. The LDP's approval rate stood at 39 percent, an increase of 10 percentage points from the previous survey conducted March 18 and 19 before former Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi was hospitalized.

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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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Gee Gee Wong: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org