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I. United States

1. Taiwan War Games

Reuters (Alice Hung and John Ruwitch, "TAIWAN SCRAPS WAR GAMES TO DEFUSE TENSION WITH CHINA," Taipei, Beijing, 08/07/02) reported that Taiwan scrapped planned war games on Wednesday as part of efforts to defuse tensions with the PRC, but the PRC told President Chen Shui-bian he may risk attack if he presses ahead with a referendum on independence. Taiwan's military announced it was cancelling anti-submarine drills off eastern Taiwan set for August 15 to "avoid speculation and misunderstanding" after Chen backed a referendum on formal independence for the island. "The situation in the Taiwan Strait is tense. We cancelled the exercises to avoid misunderstanding," a Defence Ministry spokesman said. He declined to give further details. "Chen Shui-bian knows things have gotten out of control. China is enraged and the United States is shocked. He must do something to defuse the tension," said George Tsai, research fellow at the National Chengchi University's Institute of International Relations. The PRC's military and state-run official media appeared to be unimpressed with Chen's back-peddling, renewing threats to invade the island.

2. DPRK-US Nuclear Relations

The Associated Press ("U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS NORTH KOREA MUST COMPLY WITH NUCLEAR REACTOR DEAL," Kumho, 08/07/02) and Agence France-Presse ("US ENVOY DEMANDS NORTH KOREA COME CLEAN ON NUCLEAR PROJECTS," 08/07/02) reported that US officials urged the DPRK to come clean about its past nuclear activity, as international efforts to build safe nuclear reactors for the DPRK celebrated a significant breakthrough. At a ceremony here the first concrete was poured into the foundations of a nuclear reactor being built under the so-called Agreed Framework signed by Pyongyang and Washington in 1994 to avert a nuclear crisis. The ceremony was led by Jack Pritchard, the US envoy for Korean affairs and US representative on the KEDO board, and his counterparts from Japan, South Korea and the European Union. Pritchard said the consortium would complete "a significant portion" of the project by delivering key components in mid-2005. But he warned the DPRK must open controversial nuclear facilities for inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and comply with the Non-Proliferation Treaty. "It is now time for us to see the same kind of tangible progress by the DPRK (North Korea) in meeting its commitments under the Agreed Framwork, to cooperate with the IAEA and to come into compliance with the NPT," Pritchard said.

3. Cross-Straits Relations

Reuters ("CHINA'S ARMY WARNS OF MILITARY ACTION OVER TAIWAN MOVES," Beijing, 08/07/02) and Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S ARMY WARNS TAIWAN OF USE OF FORCE IF REFERENDUM CALLED," 08/07/02) reported that Taiwan risks attack from the PRC if President Chen Shui-bian presses ahead with a referendum on the island's future, Beijing's military warned through state-run media. In the first direct reference to possible military action since Chen's call for a referendum at the weekend sparked a crisis between the rivals, an unidentified "senior military source" told the China Daily that force always remained a possibility. Chen's comments underscored the growing possibility that "peace will have to be safeguarded and won through the use of force", the source was quoted as saying. "If we want to strive for peace, we have to be fully prepared for military actions," the source said. "We have enough confidence and determination to settle the question." The source reiterated Beijing's long-held stance that it would continue to work for peaceful reunification with the island, while also stressing that the Taiwan issue was purely an internal affair of the PRC. However, he emphasized "the need for the mainland to proceed with military preparations as a backup to encourage a peaceful reunification". "We must not delude ourselves that the separatists will abandon their pro-independence pursuit overnight," the source warned.

4. Japan-DPRK Red Cross Talks

The Associated Press ("JAPAN AND NORTH KOREA TO HOLD RED CROSS TALKS IN PYONGYANG ON AUG. 18-19," Tokyo, 08/07/02) reported that Japanese and DPRK Red Cross officials will meet in Pyongyang on August 18-19 to discuss the missing Japanese nationals whom Tokyo accuses Pyongyang of kidnapping, Japanese Foreign Ministry and Red Cross officials said Wednesday. The Red Cross officials will also discuss possibly arranging for Japanese wives of DPRK men to travel to their homeland, as well as other humanitarian issues, the Red Cross said in a news release. On July 31, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and her North Korean counterpart Paek Nam Sun agreed to restart stalled talks toward normalizing diplomatic relations. Their talks, held in Brunei, was the first meeting between the two nations' top diplomats in two years. The top-level talks had been deadlocked since October 2000 over Japan's kidnapping allegations and DPRK's demands that Japan apologize for its 1910-45 colonization of the Korean Peninsula.

5. US-Japan Whaling Dispute

The Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "U.S., JAPAN MAY CLASH OVER WHALING," Tokyo, 08/07/02) reported that Japan's top whaling official indicated Wednesday that Japan would block US attempts to reinstate a five-year whale hunting season for Alaskan Eskimos. The issue has been a flashpoint between the two countries since Japan led a drive to ban the hunting of bowhead whales by Eskimo subsistence hunters at a May meeting of the International Whaling Commission. "Our target is not the Alaskans, it is the double standard of the United States," chief Japanese whale negotiator Masayuki Komatsu told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "There are still many points that must be cleared up." The comments appeared to step back from an earlier softening on the issue by Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Tsutomu Takebe.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Food Aid to DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Oh Young-hwan, "AID OFFICAIL SAYS NORTH'S FOOD SITUATION IN GRIM," Seoul, 08/07/02) reported that "North Korea is short 1.36 million tons of foods this year alone," said Kenzo Oshima, UN under secretary general for humanitarian affairs. Speaking to reporters here Tuesday, Oshima discussed his just-concluded four-day visit to DPRK. He said the trip, his first visit there, was to survey conditions in the famine-stricken country and keep relations between the UN and DPRK on track. According to Oshima, DPRK agreed during his visit to improve the communications problems that the UN staff in Pyongyang had been experiencing. DPRK agreed in principle, he said, to allow the UN to use satellite communications equipment and to provide a plane if World Food Program staff located outside Pyongyang needed to be evacuated. The UN and DPRK also agreed to conduct a nutrition survey of the DPRK in September and October. According to World Food Program's estimates, the DPRK's 1.36-million-ton food shortage will be hard to fill completely. He stressed that medical, food and health conditions in DPRK are poor.

2. DPRK-UN Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "SUCCESS, SORT OF, IN MEETING," Seoul, 08/07/02) reported that DPRK agreed with the US-led UN Command on Tuesday to make efforts to prevent recurrences of armed border clashes between the two Koreas' navies, an unusual accord reached at a general officers' meeting in Panmunjeom. DPRK did not respond to demands for an apology and punishment of military officials responsible for the June 29 Yellow Sea gunfire exchange. It hinted at an escalation of tension because of the ongoing work to salvage a sunken ROK Navy patrol boat and stuck to its insistence that the UN-imposed sea demarcation line in the Yellow Sea is invalid. Still, the UN officials appeared more than satisfied with the outcome. Major General James Soligan, the deputy chief of staff of the United Nations Command and led the UN delegation, hailed a better mood. "We had a very positive meeting today -- a tone of cooperation and common interest in reducing tensions and preventing miscalculations,"

3. Ceremony of KEDO in DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Ko Soo-suk, "CEREMONY SET AT NUCLEAR SITE IN NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 08/07/02) reported that executives of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, an international consortium building two light-water nuclear power reactors in DPRK, departed Sokcho Port, Gangwon province, for DPRK on Tuesday for a ceremony to mark the start of main construction

on the project. Chang Sun-sup, head of ROK's Light-water Reactor Project Planning Office; the US ambassador to KEDO, Jack Pritchard; Japan's ambassador, Katsunari Suzuki; the European Commission ambassador, Jean-Pierre Leng, and 130 reporters will participate in the ceremony on Wednesday. DPRK and KEDO executives will fine-tune details of the construction during the visit. DPRK's position on the implementation of the 1994 Geneva Framework will be relayed to the US. The US and DPRK agreed that Pyongyang would freeze its nuclear development in return for two light water reactors built by the international consortium. The ceremony will take place during concrete-pouring at the reactor site in the Kumho district in South Hamgyeong province, DPRK. The concrete casting will build a containment structure for the reactors.

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