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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Summit
2. DPRK-Australia Normalization
3. DPRK Participation in ADB
4. DPRK Views of ROK-Japan Military Ties
5. ROK Aid to DPRK
6. PRC Military Exercises
7. PRC Military
8. Bombing of PRC Embassy in Yugoslavia
9. US Policy toward PRC
10. Indian Naval Exercises

II. Republic of Korea 1. DPRK-Australia Normalization
2. US Inspection of DPRK Site
3. Korean War Massacre

I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Summit

The Associated Press (Kyong-Hwa Seok, "KOREAS DISAGREE ON SUMMIT AGENDA," Panmunjom, 5/8/00) and Agence France Presse ("TWO KOREAS FAIL TO FIX AGENDA FOR FIRST SUMMIT," Panmunjom, 5/8/00) reported that ROK negotiators said that envoys from the ROK and the DPRK on Monday disagreed on the agenda and the size of the press corps that will cover the June inter-Korean summit. The ROK had hoped to wrap up a deal setting the stage for the summit, but the two sides instead held a full day of talks punctuated by frequent recesses. The ROK had wanted the agenda to list economic aid, the reunion of separated families, and other topics, but ROK officials later said privately that they were willing to yield to the DPRK's demand for a broadly worded agenda that extolled the goals of peace and reunification. Yang Young-shik, the top ROK delegate

said, "as to the agenda, the only remaining problem is the expression of its language." Another ROK envoy said that press coverage was also an issue. The ROK requested that the two sides hold another meeting on May 9, but the DPRK said no. Yang said, "both sides need time to consult with higher authorities on important issues."

2. DPRK-Australia Normalization

Agence France Presse ("AUSTRALIA RESUMES TIES WITH N.KOREA AFTER CONSULTING ASIAN NEIGHBOURS," Canberra, 5/8/00) reported that Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said on Monday that Australia and the DPRK renewed diplomatic relations after a 25 year freeze Monday, but not before Australia first consulted its Asia-Pacific neighbors. He said that the ROK, the US, Japan and the PRC had been "very positive in their responses to this initiative." However, Downer added that the relationship would be endangered if the DPRK shot another missile over Japan as it did in 1998. Downer said that restoring ties with the DPRK gave it an opportunity to encourage the DPRK to engage in regional dialogue. In an official communique carried by the Korean Central News Agency, the DPRK said that "temporarily suspended" ties had been reopened "to develop the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries on the principle of mutual respect for sovereignty, non- interference in other's internal affairs, equality and reciprocity." Both the ROK and Japan saw benefits for their own dealings with the DPRK. ROK foreign ministry spokesman Lee Kwan-se said in a statement, "we expect the resuming of diplomatic relations between North Korea and Australia to positively contribute to improving inter-Korean ties."

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA'S PUSH TO END DIPLOMATIC ISOLATION GAINS SPEED," Seoul, 5/8/00) and Reuters (Bill Tarrant, "NKOREA IN ANOTHER STEP TO END COLD WAR ISOLATION," Seoul, 5/8/00) reported that ROK analysts said that the DPRK's push to end decades of diplomatic isolation was catapulted by its normalization of ties on Monday with Australia and will continue to gain speed. Hong Hyun-ik of Sejong Institute, a private think-tank in the ROK, said, "the isolationist North is sending a clear message to the outside world that it is changing towards openness. Now, the Pyongyang leadership may be waiting for the world to give an answer to what rewards wait for the change urged by its neighbors. The North's diplomatic approach to Canberra is deemed as part of its 'grand scheme' to cash in on improving ties with others." ROK officials have predicted that the DPRK will also try to forge diplomatic links with the Philippines in June or July, and also join the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Hong said that the DPRK seems to have realized that unless it sends strong signals it is ready to open up, it will receive "only a limited amount of aid" needed to revive its economy. Paik Haksoon, also from the Sejong Institute, said, "Canberra may be an attractive country for the North to launch its burgeoning all-round diplomacy." However, Paik said, the DPRK still thinks it could get more aid from the US and Japan than from Australia. The ROK welcomed the DPRK's diplomatic offensive, saying it will help ease tensions between the two Koreas, and boost prospects for their summit. However, analysts cautioned that the DPRK could play its "cards of Italy, Australia and other foreign countries" to boost its position in its bargaining with the US and Japan. Hong said, "the North could press for Washington and Tokyo to stop delaying aid, preconditioned during the earlier talks, and also to make more concessions, telling them 'Look, we are clearly changing.'"

3. DPRK Participation in ADB

Agence France Presse ("US, JAPAN BLOCK BID TO BRING NORTH KOREA INTO FINANCIAL SYSTEM," Chiang Mai, 5/7/00) reported that the US and Japan on May 7 blocked an ROK proposal at the annual board of governors meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Thailand for the DPRK to be allowed to join international financial institutions and to be granted economic aid. US

Assistant Treasury Secretary for international affairs Edwin Truman said, "our position on membership is unchanged. Both because our own legislation requires us to do so (and) because North Korea is an international terrorist state." Truman said that the US had discussed with the DPRK how it could end its isolation, but "as long as that situation prevails and the North Korean regime is one which is fundamentally incompatible with the principles of institutions such as the ADB, we would oppose membership."

4. DPRK Views of ROK-Japan Military Ties

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA CRITICIZES SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 5/6/00) reported that the DPRK accused Japan and the ROK on May 6 of planning to involve Japanese forces in a war on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said on May 6, "in their attempt to legalize the deployment on the Korean peninsula of the aggressive forces of Japanese militarism, the South Korean puppet government and Japanese reactionaries are acting with increasing impudence and folly." The accusation was apparently in response to talks in the ROK on May 2 between ROK Prime Minister Park Tae-joon and Taku Yamasaki, a former Japanese Construction Minister who until recently was policy chief for Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Officials at the ROK prime minister's office were not available to confirm Park's reported comments. Unconfirmed ROK news reports have said that Japan has an emergency plan to use military transport planes and navy vessels to evacuate 17,000 Japanese from the ROK in the event of war on the Korean Peninsula.

5. ROK Aid to DPRK

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "S. KOREA TO SHIP FERTILIZER TO NORTH," Seoul, 5/6/00) reported that the ROK said on May 6 that it will send US$58 million worth of fertilizer to the DPRK. Lee Kwan-se, spokesman for the ROK Unification Ministry, said that the ROK was not directly asked by the DPRK for aid and decided to provide the 200,000 tons of chemical fertilizer out of humanitarian concern.

6. PRC Military Exercises

Agence France Presse ("CHINA TO HOLD WARGAMES AFTER TAIWAN PRESIDENT'S INAUGURATION: SOURCES," Taipei, 5/7/00) reported that Taiwanese military sources said on May 7 that the PRC's People's Liberation Army (PLA) is to hold a series of military exercises after the inauguration of Chen Shui- bian as Taiwan's president on May 20. One source said, "airborne and amphibious landing drills would be held in the Hainan Island targeting Taiwan. At the same time ballistic missiles would be lobbed into the East China Sea.... Apparently the drill would be aimed at the United States and Japan, warning them not to interfere in the Taiwan issues." Taiwan's ET Today Internet news quoted unnamed intelligence sources as saying that some 80,000 PLA soldiers, along with 20,000 policemen, would be involved in the 20-day drills codenamed "Qung Dao No. 4" beginning from May 25. The Taiwan defense ministry declined to comment on the report.

Reuters ("TAIWAN SAYS NO UNUSUAL TROOP MOVEMENTS BY CHINA," Taipei, 5/8/00) reported that Taiwan's military dismissed on Monday a local media report that the PRC would hold exercises soon after the island's new president takes office next week, saying it had found nothing unusual. The Taiwanese Defense spokesman's office said in a statement, "the Ministry of National Defense has not found relevant information or signs of the report that Communist troops would conduct 'Hainan Island No. 4' exercises in the near future. The ministry is capable of monitoring closely any

major training activities by Communist troops. The people can rest at ease." Asked to comment on the report, a Defense Ministry spokesman said it was common for both Taiwan and the PRC to conduct routine training missions. The spokesman said, "so far there is nothing threatening or targeted at us."

7. PRC Military

The Straits Times (Lee Siew Hua, "SKEPTICISM OVER CHINA'S ARMS CAPABILITY," Washington, 5/7/00) reported that at a conference arranged by the Jane's Information Group, US experts were openly skeptical that the PRC can progress far enough from the weapons and strategic thinking of the 60s and 70s to become a superbly capable military force. The experts identified road-blocks from over-capacity to opposition to change. Professor John Frankenstein of Columbia University said, "we should not confuse acquisition with capability." Senior analyst Dennis Blasko of the International Technology and Trade Associates consultancy said that, regarding the PRC's quest for advanced weapons, "except for counter-stealth, high-power microwave weapons, ASATs and lasers, many other systems could be considered catch-up technology." Richard Bitzinger of the Atlantic Council said that the industry probably has three times the number of workers it needs. He added, "there's no way out of the scorched-earth policy of downsizing." The experts also said that a culture of conformity, rather than innovation, was deadening for science and technology in the PRC. Overall, the experts noted, PRC defense buildup is not the only priority, but competes with national economic goals. However, they said, there are pockets of excellence and the PRC is putting in an effort to create high-tech soldiers under its Two Transformations (Liangge Zhuanbian) strategy to develop an army capable of fighting local wars under modern high-tech conditions, and an army based on quality, not quantity. David Finkelstein of the Centre for Naval Analyses Corporation said that the PLA is making the right moves in tapping civilian universities for science-savvy officers and reforming military education. The main consensus of the conference was that current reforms are on the right path and that the PRC has made gradual progress in many sectors, but this is not an across-the-board leapfrog, and the modernization is evolutionary, not revolutionary. Kenneth Allen of the Stimson Center said that the PLA, whether capable or not, will attack Taiwan if necessary.

8. Bombing of PRC Embassy in Yugoslavia

USA Today ("CHINA DEMANDS NEW U.S. PROBE OF BOMBING," Beijing, 5/8/00) reported that the PRC marked the first anniversary of the NATO bombing of its embassy in Yugoslavia with a low-key memorial on May 7 and a demand for a new US investigation. There were no public protests. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 8, 2000.]

9. US Policy toward PRC

The Taipei Times published an editorial by Ted Galen Carpenter, vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, ("THE US SHOULD ADOPT A FLEXIBLE POLICY TOWARD BEIJING," 5/8/00) which said that an increasingly angry and divisive debate is taking place in the US about policy toward the PRC. The root of the problem is that there is simply no way to know whether the PRC will be a peaceful, status quo power or an aggressively revisionist power, and significant factors push the PRC in both directions. Because of that uncertainty, Carpenter wrote, "the US must not lock itself into a strategy based on expectations of either friendship or an adversarial relationship with China. Instead, Washington should adopt a hedging strategy -- a set of principles that are likely to work reasonably well no matter what type of regime holds power in

Beijing a decade or two from now -- or, equally important, what kind of great power the PRC turns out to be in terms of its international conduct." He continued, "the best course from the standpoint of American interests would be to encourage the emergence of multiple centers of power in Asia. Encouraging the evolution of a multipolar strategic environment is not the same as adopting a provocative, US-led containment policy against China, however. Washington does not have to be the godfather of a vast anti-PRC alliance. Encouraging--or at least accepting--the evolution of a balance of power designed to contain any PRC expansionist ambitions is also different from regarding China as an implacable foe of the US. Washington ought to treat China as simply another great power and cultivate a normal relationship, recognizing that the interests of the two countries will sometimes coincide and sometimes conflict." In order to achieve this multipolarity, however, Carpenter noted that the US would have to relinquish its own hegemony in East Asia. He continued, "it is a manifestation of national arrogance to think that the US can forever dominate a region that contains nearly a third of the world's population and that, despite a brief stumble, is becoming an increasingly sophisticated center of economic and technological output." Therefore, Carpenter concluded, "the US-PRC relationship would be merely one component of a complex mosaic of relationships throughout the region, and there would be a significant opportunity for the US to pursue a policy that avoided the extremes of viewing the PRC as a strategic partner or new enemy."

10. Indian Naval Exercises

The Washington Times (Ben Barber, "INDIAN NAVY EXERCISES SEEN APT TO IRK BEIJING," 5/8/00) reported that Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said on April 14 that Indian naval and coast guard ships are preparing to sail into the South China Sea for joint military exercises with Vietnam. The Hindustan Times reported that Fernandes said that India would "shortly launch joint training and exercises with their counterparts from Vietnam and Japan to stem the increasing menace of pirates in international waters." The paper also reported that the exercise would be held in the South China Sea in October, but an Indian Embassy official in the US said the maneuvers could begin "at any time." Fernandes said, "the Indian navy has a responsibility that goes beyond protecting our borders." According to Stratfor, a private intelligence reporting group based in Texas, India plans to leave four to five warships, a submarine and air-reconnaissance planes in the South China Sea for some time after the exercises end. Stratfor also said that India was also preparing to launch a Kilo-class submarine capable of firing ballistic missiles. The group said that Japan's involvement in the exercises will be limited, due to the limitations in its constitution, but Vietnam will directly engage in military naval exercises. Larry Wortzel, director of the Asian Studies Center at the Heritage Foundation, said that India's decision to sail into the South China Sea "is inflammatory, and it is meant to antagonize China. This is a dangerous way for India to respond to China's incursion into their sphere of influence in Bangladesh, Burma and Pakistan." Wortzel added that the US will have to increasingly take on the burden of protecting international navigation in the region if India and the PRC are antagonistic. Defense analyst Marvin Ott of the National Defense University in Washington said that the Indian naval exercise is "striking in that it validates a growing impression that India is determined to assert itself as an Asian power." Ott said that the naval mission means that India is injecting itself into the great territorial dispute over the South China Sea. He added, "from a Chinese standpoint, that's a pretty gratuitous intervention of India into a place where China wants to dictate terms to the Southeast Asians. India's intervention will not be welcomed by China." [Ed. note: This article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 8, 2000.]

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-Australia Normalization

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "NORTH KOREA, AUSTRALIA RESTORE DIPLOMATIC TIES," 05/08/00) reported that ROK officials said Monday that the DPRK and Australia have agreed to restore diplomatic relations. An unnamed senior official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade stated, "The Australian and North Korean governments are expected to simultaneously announce the agreement today." ROK officials said that the move would positively affect the ROK-DPRK summit meeting and help the DPRK's attempts to improve relations with the US, Japan and other countries. ROK observers also said that the DPRK might have promoted the restoration of ties with Australia in order to pave the way for its admission into the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum and facilitate loans from the Asia Development Bank and other world financial bodies. One unnamed analyst stated, "The North's move proves its strategy is to prevent the Kim Jong-il government from collapsing by opening its closed doors and drawing foreign economic assistance."

2. US Inspection of DPRK Site

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "U.S. TO CONDUCT SECOND INSPECTION OF SUSPECTED N.K. NUCLEAR SITE THIS MONTH," 5/7/00) reported that an official at the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said on May 6 that a group of US nuclear experts will likely fly to the DPRK later this month to investigate a suspected underground nuclear facility. The official said, "negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang on the date for the inspection visit are underway." The official said, "this time, the United States plans to send only four or five experts to the North Korean site, as an in-depth inspection was already made last year." However, he did not elaborate on the US inspection team's itinerary in the DPRK, saying that the US had yet to reveal this to the ministry. Diplomatic observers in Seoul said that the US was expected to focus its second probe on any major changes made in the site over the last year, as their previous inspection was extensive. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 8, 2000.]

3. Korean War Massacre

The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "US TO TRANSFER TAPES OF VETS' TESTIMONIES FOR NOGUN-RI MASSACRE," 5/6/00) reported that in a dispatch from Washington, the ROK's Yonhap News Agency reported that a Korean advisory team and an investigative team had secured a commitment from US officials, including Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera, that all recordings containing testimonies by US veterans would be made available to the ROK for a probe into the alleged No Gun Ri massacre. An anonymous US official said on May 5, "so far, the U.S. side has been reluctant to hand over such evidence out of fear that it might face legal responsibilities. Therefore, the US decision is seen as a remarkable step in grasping the complete picture of the incident." The ROK advisory group is composed of experts and scholars, including retired general Paik Sun-yup, former ambassador to the US Hyun Hong-choo, lawyer Choi Hwan, Sookmyung Women's University Professor Yi Mahn-yol, Hankyoreh Daily's chief editorial writer Lee Won-sop, and Seoul National University Professor Chong Chin-song. The investigative teams from the ROK Defense Ministry and the ROK Office for Government Policy Coordination also accompanied the advisory group on the trip. The news agency said that the ROK visitors also requested US officials to form a standing committee to facilitate the exchange of information and the assessment of findings, and US officials showed no objection to the idea. The US side also referred to the possibility that it would seek ways to restore the honor of the No Gun Ri victims, but did not specify how it would do so. The ROK investigators also hinted at the possibility that the ongoing investigation would be delayed for a considerable time

due to the large stockpile of documents that has to be reviewed. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 8, 2000.]

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