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I. United States

1. DPRK Asylum Seekers ROK Arrival

The Associated Press (Y.J. Ahn, "36 NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS ARRIVE IN SOUTH KOREA VIA CHINA," Incheon, 09/11/02) and Reuters (Paul Eckert, "THREE DOZEN NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS ARRIVE IN SOUTH," Seoul, 09/12/02) reported that three dozen DPRK asylum seekers arrived in the ROK on Thursday. The first group of 11 women, seven men, two infants and a small boy flew into Inchon at dawn from Manila after leaving the PRC on Wednesday. The 21 DPRK defectors had trickled into the ROK consulate in Beijing since late June. Another 15 DPRK asylum seekers who climbed over a wall to take refuge in a German school in Beijing last month arrived in Seoul on a flight from Singapore an hour later. "It's unbelievable," said one man in the group, most of whom smiled broadly as they entered Seoul's main airport in Inchon after an overnight flight from Manila. Asked by reporters why they chose to flee their homeland at great risk, the man said: "We were driven by antipathy to the intolerable contradictions of the system." The 36 were the latest in a string of successful asylum attempts by North Koreans facing repatriation and what rights groups say could be jail, torture or death for trying to enter the protected grounds of foreign missions if they are sent home.

2. UN-DPRK Railway Deal

The Associated Press (Choe Sang-hun, "U.N., NORTH KOREA SIGN A DEAL TO ALLOW A SECOND CROSS-BORDER RAILWAY," Seoul, 09/12/02) reported that the US-led UN Command signed a deal with the DPRK on Thursday to allow troops from the two Koreas to work together to reconnect another set of cross-border rail and road links. The agreement - signed between the UN Command's chief delegate, US Major General James Soligan, and DPRK Col. Gen. Li Chan Bok - is another sign that the recently revived reconciliation process on the divided Korean peninsula is moving forward. The command took similar action when two Koreas agreed last year to build a railway and a parallel road across the western sector of the border. The procedure was necessary because the UN Command, not the ROK, signed the armistice agreement with the DPRK that ended the Korean War in 1953. The command controls the southern half of the buffer zone between the two Koreas. As part of a broad political accord reached in August, the Koreas agreed to simultaneously start work on the two sets of cross-border rail and road links on September 18. Thursday's agreement cleared the way for the scheduled joint launch of the projects. If plans go smoothly, a road link to Korea could be restored as early as November and a railway link by the year's end. The last train across the border ran shortly before the 1950-53 Korean War.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, "KOREAS AGREE ON 2 SITES FOR KIN REUNIONS," Seoul, 09/09/02) reported that wrapping up three days of Red Cross talks Sunday, the two Koreas agreed to open permanent meeting places for families separated for the half-century since the end of the Korean War. The two delegations also agreed to hold two sets of one-time reunion meetings for separated families on Sept. 13-18 in DPRK. The delegations had been meeting at the Mount Geumgang resort since Friday. The two sides also agreed to search for persons who have been missing during the Korean War. The delegations said they also agreed to build two permanent meeting facilities -- one at Mount Geumgang on the east coast and another near the west coast, near a checkpoint on the proposed cross-border Gyeongui railroad line. The meeting center construction at Mount Geumgang will begin first; the South will provide materials and the North will provide labor. The two sides must still agree on a timetable for their work and set policies for the meetings to be held there. Working-level talks of Red Cross delegates will be held next month to work out those arrangements.

2. Bush's Message to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Choi Heub, "KOISUMI TO TAKE MESSAGE FROM BUSH TO KIM," Tokyo, 09/09/02) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will pass on a message from US President George W. Bush to DPRK's National Defense Commission Chairman Kim Jong Il when he meets him on September 17, Japanese media reported Sunday. The message from President Bush that Prime Minister Koizumi will convey is known to be a request for DPRK to make more efforts to re-open talks with the US. Japanese media related that Koizumi will have talks with President Bush after attending the memorial for the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York on September 12 and that at that time, will receive the message to be taken to DPRK. Koizumi will then convey the message to Kim Jong Il during the talks and afterwards receive a reply to be sent to the US. After examining DPRK's response, the US will decide whether or not to dispatch Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly to Pyongyang.

3. Trilateral Coordination toward DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Cho Hee-chon, "TCOG CALLS NK TO COMPLEMENT GENEVA ACCORD," Seoul, 09/09/02) reported that ROK, US and Japan are making headway in coordinating their policies toward DPRK, ahead of an unprecedented summit between leaders of Japan and the the DPRK later this month. In Seoul, Saturday, on the final day of the two-day Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group meeting the three nations continued discussions on the DPRK's recent economic reform plan, inter-Korean relations and renewed dialogue between DPRK and Japan. Other key issues high on the agenda include the September 17 meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and his DPRK counterpart Kim Jong Il, as well as a possible Pyongyang visit by a high-level US envoy. In a joint press release the TCOG members urged DPRK to accept nuclear inspections promptly continue its recent economic reform. The three senior TCOG delegates, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, South Korean Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Tae-shik and Japanese Director-General of Asian and Oceanian Affairs Hitoshi Tanaka, said the implementation of the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework should move forward promptly to begin full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

4. ROK's Fund to Aid DPRK

The Koreaherald ("GOVERNMENT OKS NK AID FUND," Seoul, 09/09/02) reported that ROK government approved Saturday the use of 201.4 billion won (US$156.68 million) from state coffers to ship rice and fertilizer to DPRK. The fund will be used to provide 400,000 tons of rice on credit and a donated 100,000 tons of fertilizer to DPRK and organize reunions of separated families. Of the total fund, 127.2 billion won will be used for the purchase of rice, 4.8 billion won for the lease of cargo ships and 35.6 billion for other uses such as transportation and distribution. In addition, 29.2 billion won will be allotted for the purchase of fertilizer and 3.8 billion won for the cost of its delivery. The remaining 800 million won will be used for the fifth round of reunions of separated families expected to take place Sept. 13 at DPRK's Mount Geumgang, the ministry said.

5. Inter Korean Economic Relations

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL FIRMS SEEK INTER-KOREAN PROJECTS," Seoul, 09/09/02) reported that ROK firms are pursuing $8.7 million worth of projects to develop telecommunications technology in DPRK, the Ministry of Information and Communication said Sunday. A venture firm Ntrak has invested $4 million to build a telecommunication center in Pyongyang with the aim of developing telecommunications technology jointly with a DPRK firm, according to a ministry report presented to Rep. Kim Hyong-o of the opposition Grand National Party. Samsung Electronics recently obtained permission from the PRC government to invest $2.2 million in Beijing for a joint project with a DPPK firm to develop computer software. Hanabiz.com got permission for investment of $2 million in Pyongyang for software development. Korea Telecom, Hyundai Syscomm and Onse Telecom are also pursuing projects worth hundreds of thousands of dollars, respectively, to develop telecommunications technology at DPRK's Mt. Kumgang resort and at a nuclear reactor construction site in the communist country.

III. Japan

1. Japanese View on Gender

The Japan Times ("Fewer support traditional gender roles," 08/11/02) reported that forty-seven

percent of Japanese back the traditional roles of men as breadwinners and women as housewives, down 11 percentage points from five years ago, according to a survey on gender equality. The latest survey, conducted between June and July, shows an equal amount -- 47 percent -- do not support adherence to the traditional roles. According to the survey of opinions on married life, 55.6 percent said husbands have the power in the household, down 6.1 points, while 16.5 percent said wives have the power, up 5.3 points. The survey covered 5,000 adult men and women, of which 71.2 percent responded. More than 80 percent of the respondents said wives are in charge of doing the laundry, cooking and clearing the table after meals. Of the respondents, 15.8 percent said husbands usually manage the household finances, up 6.1 points from a survey 10 years ago, while 66.9 percent said wives are in charge, down 3.6 points, the survey found. The number of people who believe marriage or motherhood should not force women to abandon their careers is increasing, with 37.6 percent supporting the idea, up 4.5 points from the previous survey, while 36.6 percent said women should quit working when they marry or become mothers, and should try to find work again only after their children have grown up.

2. Afghan Refugees

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("Group to seek residency for Afghans," 08/12/02) reported that supporters of Afghan asylum-seekers facing deportation will call on the central government Thursday to allow them to remain in Japan. According to a group of Tokyo lawyers supporting 23 Afghans formerly held at immigration centers, about half the asylum-seekers had attempted suicide during their detention. Two Afghan asylum-seekers killed themselves in May and August. Concerned that more will attempt suicide, the lawyers will attempt to win public support for their campaign to persuade the government to grant special residency permits. The lawyers said all 23 asylum-seekers, most of whom had been detained at the East Japan Immigration Center in Ushiku, Ibaraki Prefecture, had been granted conditional release, but that they were struggling to deal with the uncertainty over their futures. However, they must report to immigration officials once a month, and are not allowed to work or leave the prefecture without permission. Many of the Afghans who filed unsuccessful applications for refugee status fear being incarcerated again or forcibly returned to Afghanistan. As a result, some of them are too scared to report to immigration authorities.

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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