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I. United States

1. DPRK Famine

The Associated Press ("FAMINE-HIT N. KOREA REPORTS DROUGHT," Seoul, 05/13/99) and Agence France- Presse ("DROUGHTS HIT NORTH KOREA: OFFICIAL REPORT," Seoul, 05/13/99) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Thursday that droughts are setting in across the country during the planting season. KCNA stated, "This year, the DPRK has been frequently affected by warm and dry winds from the west. As a result, its precipitation is very small and most regions have been bit by droughts." The report said that the east coast cities of Chongjin, Wonsan, and Hamhung have had no rain at all for the past three or four months. Other provinces also reported less-than-average rainfall, with southwestern Hwanghae province reporting only half its usual rainfall. ROK weather experts said that warm currents from southern China continued to flow into the DPRK this year, causing a long spell of dry weather.

2. ROK Weapons Development

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TO BUILD MORE U.S. F-16S," Seoul, 05/13/99) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry said Wednesday that the ROK will assemble 20 more US F-16 fighter jets to provide jobs for thousands of workers. Under a US$5.2 billion contract with Lockheed Martin, the ROK has been importing or assembling 120 F-16s. The government said Wednesday it will extend the contract until 2002 to assemble 20 additional F-16s under a licensing arrangement at a cost of US$833 million. The article said that ROK air force generals had opposed producing more F-16s, saying that the ROK needs new jet fighters with wider operational ranges. One anonymous air force officer stated, "Some Cabinet ministers were mixing national defense with business interests." However, Defense Ministry spokesman Koo Bonhak stated, "We will continue to pursue the next-generation fighter jet project."

3. Anti-US Protests in PRC

Reuters (Christiaan Virant, "CHINA CALM AS PROTESTS END," Beijing, 05/13/99) and the Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "BEIJING RETURNING TO NORMAL," Beijing, 05/13/99) reported that hundreds of police remained on guard outside the US Embassy in Beijing on Thursday, but there were no signs of further protests. The US Embassy remained closed, however. Embassy spokesman Tom Cooney said that the embassy and the consulates in Shenyang and Chengdu will remain closed until at least Monday and the issuing of visas for work travel or study in the US will be suspended indefinitely. US consulates in Guangzhou and Shanghai, which were not badly damaged during the protests, will reopen Friday.

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "US COMMENTS ON PROTESTS UPSET CHINA," Beijing, 05/13/99) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao criticized US suggestions that the government manipulated recent public protests against the NATO bombing of its Belgrade embassy. Zhu pointed to remarks made by US Defense Secretary William Cohen about the government's role in the demonstrations as "unwarranted." Zhu said that the protests expressed understandable outrage at the bombing of the PRC Embassy. He stated, "This is natural, justifiable and brooks no questioning." He added that the US should immediately respond to the PRC's demands instead of "making unwarranted remarks over these acts of justice of the Chinese people. Otherwise it will meet with stronger opposition from the Chinese people." Zhu also said, "We do not condemn or condone those law- breaking activities. I'm sure you have seen what we have done in recent days."

4. UN Reaction to PRC Embassy Bombing

Reuters (Evelyn Leopold, "UN STATEMENT ON CHINA EMBASSY BOMBING DEADLOCKED," United Nations, 05/12/99) and the Associated Press (Nicole Winfield, "CHINA THREATENS TO BLOCK U.N. HUMANITARIAN RESOLUTION ON KOSOVO OVER EMBASSY BOMBING," United Nations, 05/12/99) reported that UN Security Council members were unable Wednesday to agree on an official reaction to the NATO bombing of the PRC embassy in Belgrade. NATO members objected to a revised Beijing draft for the third consecutive day. Chinese envoys said that they would block an attempt by developing nations on the Security Council to vote on a humanitarian resolution on the Kosovo crisis until the council issued a statement on the embassy bombing. PRC deputy UN representative Shen Guofang said that the resolution would not be completed by the council until its own statement "had been dealt with."

5. US Ambassador to PRC

The Associated Press ("ADMIRAL TAPPED AS CHINA AMBASSADOR," Washington, 05/13/99) reported that the White House said Thursday that retired Admiral Joseph W. Prueher, who left his post as Commander-in-Chief Pacific in March, has been nominated as the next US ambassador to the PRC. Prueher's selection follows a months-long search in which a handful of candidates declined the post. US National Security Council spokesman Michael Hammer stated, "It's a tough assignment, no matter who's in the job." He added, "What you're looking for is a qualified person who has the president's ear and can speak authoritatively in China."

6. US Nuclear Forces

The Associated Press (Tom Raum, "SENATE PANEL TO LOWER TRIDENT LEVELS," Washington, 05/12/99) reported that congressional officials said Wednesday that the US Senate Armed Services Committee was ready to support a plan for reducing the Navy's nuclear-missile submarine fleet from 18 to 14. Anonymous officials said that under the plan, four of the existing Trident submarines would be refitted for non-nuclear purposes. Federal legislation requires the US to maintain an 18-boat Trident force, the level agreed to under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) with Russia. The Navy's long-range plan is to reduce to a force of 14 nuclear-weapons-fitted submarines once the Russian Duma ratifies START II.

7. Indian Adherence to CTBT

Reuters ("BRITAIN URGES INDIA TO MOVE TOWARD N-TEST BAN," New Delhi, 05/12/99) reported that British envoy to India Rob Young said Wednesday that Great Britain hoped the Indian government would work toward signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the end of the year. Young said, "The elections make life difficult, but I hope that progress will be made in creating a consensus on the CTBT."

8. Indian Nuclear Weapons

Reuters (Chaitanya Kalbag, "INDIA FLAYS 'IMPERIALIST' NUCLEAR QUALMS," New Delhi, 05/10/99) reported that Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh on Saturday rejected claims that India may not be able to handle its nuclear arsenal. Singh stated, "I have continued to reject this whole colonial, imperialist attitude -- that which advocated a kind of nuclear apartheid, that national security was the preserve only of some and not others. I am weary of being told by yesterday's imperialists or today's new imperialists that responsible international conduct is the preserve only of some.... I also sense very disagreeable racial overtones in such assumptions, therefore I reject it totally." He added, "As for responsible action I need hardly point out the kind of unrestrained aerial bombardment of Yugoslavia for the past so many weeks (by NATO) and the restraint with which India and Pakistan have handled their difficulties." He stated, "India's strategic autonomy is certainly a factor that the rest of the global community now recognizes." Singh said that his next round of talks with US Undersecretary of State Strobe Talbott, planned for June, had been postponed, "But these have been with the United States the longest lasting and I do believe the most productive rounds of talks that have been held in the last many decades."

Dow Jones Newswires ("INDIA PRIME MINISTER DEFENDS NUCLEAR TESTS, CRITICIZES NATO," New Delhi, 05/11/99) and Reuters (Santosh Menon, "INDIAN PM OPENS CAMPAIGN ON NUCLEAR NOTE," Bombay, 05/12/99) reported that Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Tuesday defended India's nuclear tests of one year ago and its missile program. Vajpayee stated, "If nuclear

weapons are not needed, no one should need nuclear weapons." Vajpayee also pointed to the war in Yugoslavia as a warning for the rest of the world. He stated, "In this situation, we can't neglect our security." He added, "India's missile development program will continue for its own security. To keep peace, this is the only way out. If need be, we will take more steps."

The International Herald Tribune carried an opinion article by Brahma Chellaney, a professor of security studies at the Center for Policy Research in New Delhi, ("FOR INDIA, THE BIG NUCLEAR BREAKTHROUGH HAS FIZZLED," New Delhi, 05/13/99) which said that India's nuclear tests of a year ago have not advanced its defense and foreign policy interests. The article argued, "The central objective of the tests a year ago was to break out of the India-Pakistan strategic straitjacket and build a credible deterrent against India's larger adversary, China. But the Vajpayee government has only helped reinforce the international pairing of the subcontinental rivals by allowing the United States to conduct parallel diplomacy on the issue with New Delhi and Islamabad." It added, "The incongruity of a country proclaiming a nuclear deterrent without the necessary military underpinnings can only make India more vulnerable in a situation where it confronts a well-armed, ambitious nuclear power, China, and a Pakistan whose nuclear-weapons program has always been run by the military." It concluded, "A year after the tests, India is still unable to frame a clear political and defense strategy based on nuclear weapons. The government has lost sight of the very objective that it says impelled it to conduct the tests."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Dialogue

Joongang Ilbo ("NK BLAMES SEOUL FOR STALEMATING INTER-KOREAN DIALOGUE," Seoul, 05/13/99) reported that the DPRK on Thursday criticized the ROK government for taking a lukewarm attitude toward the suggestion that DPRK made in February to resume official talks between the two Koreas. The Committee for Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, the DPRK's negotiating channel to the ROK, claimed that "Seoul has not taken any visible steps to remove obstacles impeding dialogue between the South and North. This reflects the negative attitude of Seoul toward the inter-Korean dialogues and peaceful reunification. "

2. Affect of PRC Embassy Bombing on Korean Peninsula

Dong-A Ilbo (Han Ki-hung, "IMPACT OF NATO'S BOMBING ON ROK'S DPRK POLICY SEEN," Seoul, 05/10/00) reported that ROK officials see the NATO bombing of the PRC Embassy in Yugoslavia as having repercussions on the Korean peninsula. On Monday, an unnamed ROK government official stated, "Considering the dynamic relations in Northeast Asia, North-South relations can be smooth when US-China relations are fundamentally amicable." The official added, "The ROK Government is carefully watching the development of the situation, seeing if any sparks of US-China conflict will spread to the Korean peninsula." The official noted, "Up until now, the four-party talks have been pushed ahead based on a '3+1' formula among the ROK, the United States, China and North Korea with the United States and China supporting the ROK's position. However, if US-China relations continue to get worse, the two countries will face difficulty coordinating their positions concerning Korea peninsula problems." The official argued, "the [ROK] government needs to adjust its speed of promoting its North Korea policy, while watching the development of US-China relations."

3. ROK National Security Law Arrests

The Korea Herald ("THREE KOREAN STUDENTS HELD FOR ANTI-U.S. DEMONSTRATION," Seoul, 05/13/99) reported that three college students were taken into police custody Wednesday for holding an anti-US protest in front of the US Embassy in downtown Seoul. It is believed that the students held the protest to mark the anniversary of the May 18, 1980 Kwangju uprising. The students, members of the student group, Hanchongnyon, held a banner that read, "The main criminal of the May 18 Kwangju massacre, the U.S. Get out!"

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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