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I. United States

1. DPRK Multilateral Talk Demands

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA RENEWS DEMANDS AHEAD OF NUCLEAR CRISIS

TALKS," Seoul, 08/18/03) reported that the DPRK warned it would not dismantle its nuclear arsenal unless the US changed its policy towards Pyongyang, reiterating its hardline stance ahead of next week's six-nation nuclear talks. The DPRK warning came as a maritime skirmish heightened tensions on the peninsula, just hours after the DPRK announced it was withdrawing athletes from the World Student Games starting in the ROK later this week. "If the US does not express its will to make a switchover in its policy towards the DPRK, the DPRK will have no option but to declare that it can not dismantle its nuclear deterrent force at the talks," the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Monday. The DPRK is due to meet the US, Japan, China, Russia and South Korea in Beijing on August 27-29 for talks aimed at resolving a 10-month crisis over its nuclear program. KCNA said Washington could prove it had changed its policy towards the DPRK by agreeing to a non-aggression pact and diplomatic normalization, and pledging not to hinder the DPRK's international trade. A foreign ministry statement released on KCNA last week said Pyongyang would make these demands at the talks, which were set up after weeks of intense PRC-led diplomacy. The US has already rejected a non-aggression pact, although Secretary of State Colin Powell has suggested there may be a way for the US Congress to take note of a less formal arrangement.

2. US on DPRK-US Diplomacy

Agence France-Presse ("BUSH HOPEFUL ON NKOREA DIPLOMACY," Crawford, 08/18/03) reported that US President George W. Bush said last week that it will take "a lot of persuasion" from nations besides the US to get DPRK leader Kim Jong Il to give up nuclear weapons. "I'd like to solve this diplomatically and I believe we can," Bush told the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service in an August 14 interview, a transcript of which the White House released on Monday. But "it's going to take a lot of persuasion by countries besides the US to convince him," said Bush, who has staunchly resisted taking a bilateral approach to disarming Pyongyang. "We believe he has got a warhead. We know he's got rockets. And we know he's a dangerous man. And that's why we take his threats seriously," said Bush. "He loves the idea of, you know, making people nervous and rattling sabres and getting the world all anxious. "And my job is to tell others that, let's speak with one voice and convince this man that developing a nuclear weapon on the Korean Peninsula is not in his interests," said the US leader.

3. DPRK on Japan Role in Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA WARNS JAPAN MAY SPOIL NUKE TALKS," Tokyo, 08/18/03) reported that the DPRK warned Monday that Japan could spoil upcoming six-way nuclear negotiations with its insistence on raising the issue of Japanese citizens abducted to the DPRK years ago. Japan and the DPRK officially cut diplomatic ties in October over the abductees. Last September, the DPRK acknowledged its agents abducted or lured 13 Japanese nationals in the 1970s and said eight of them had died. The remaining five returned to Japan in October, but the North won't let their families leave to join them. Attempts to bring up the abductions "may create unnecessary complications" and "throw the discussion into confusion and divert its focus," said a news analysis in the state-run Rodong Sinmun newspaper on Monday. Earlier this month, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said the issue of the abductions was just as important to Tokyo as the nuclear standoff.

4. DPRK-Japan Trade

Korea Herald ("DPRK-JAPAN TRADE FALLS SHARPLY," Seoul, 07/17/03) reported that trade between the DPRK and Japan is declining sharply, as the bilateral relationship has been hurt by the

DPRK's admissions that it had kidnapped Japanese citizens and that it is developing nuclear weapons, the Korea International Trade Association said on 16 July. According to the association, which cited statistics from Japan's customs bureau, the country exported 4.5 billion yen (US$38.1 million) worth of goods to the DPRK during the first five months of this year, down 31.6 percent from a year earlier. Japan's imports of DPRK goods declined 18.5 percent year-on-year to 9.6 billion yen during the January to May period. In particular, in May Japan's shipments to the DPRK tumbled 52.6 percent year-on-year to 8 billion yen, the lowest in eight years, while its imports from the DPRK shrank 41.2 percent to 1.5 billion yen, the lowest since June 1999, according to the trade organization.

5. ROK-US War Games

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA LAUNCH WAR GAMES DESPITE DPRK FURY," 08/18/03) reported that US and ROK troops began joint war games in the face of objection from the DPRK which condemned the exercise as a rehearsal for a pre-emptive strike on the DPRK. The annual Ulchi Focus Lens exercise, focusing on computerized war simulations with the DPRK, involves 14,500 US forces based in and out of the ROK, US military authorities here said. The ROK's defense ministry gave no exact figures on ROK troops participating in the 12-day exercise, but confirmed it was the biggest joint military maneuvers with the US.

6. Japan-PRC Mutual Warship Visits

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, CHINA PLAN FIRST-EVER MUTUAL WARSHIP VISITS," 08/18/03) reported that the Japanese and PRC governments plan to conduct the first-ever mutual visits by warships this year as they hope to resume stalled military exchanges. An accord on the mutual visits is expected to come at Japanese Defence Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba's meeting with PRC Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said without citing sources. Ishiba is to visit China from September 1, the economic daily said. It would be the first China trip by a Japanese defence minister since May 1998. While stopping short of confirming the report, a defence agency spokesman said: "We hope to facilitate Japan-China exchanges as they have been stalled since last April."

7. Taiwan Presidential Race 2004

Asia Pulse ("CHINA TO BE MAIN FOCUS OF TAIWAN'S 2004 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN," Taipei, 08/18/03) reported that Cross-Taiwan Strait issues are set to become the focal point in the 2004 presidential campaign, as comments recently made by President Chen Shui-bian on Taiwan-mainland ties were criticized by the opposition parties, political observers said. Major opposition Kuomintang (KMT) Chairman Lien Chang and People First Party (PFP) Chairman James Soong have in a low-key fashion responded to Chen's claims made last week that "there is one country on either side of the Taiwan Strait" and that "direct cross-strait transportation ties will be completed in three stages by the end of 2004." Criticizing Chen's direct transportation links promise as a "rubber check," Lien declared that he would immediately launch two-way negotiations on the issue as long as he wins the next presidential election. The KMT chairman said he would work to forge the much-expected direct transportation links across the Strait without any hesitation if elected president because it is an issue that is very much in the interests of the Taiwan people. Soong called Chen's claims "sheer election language," and said if the president was sincere, why not make the move now instead of waiting until the end of next year?

8. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("FACTIONS WITHIN JAPAN'S RULING PARTY GEARING UP TO OUST KOIZUMI," 08/17/03) reported that unhappy members of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party are drawing up plans to unseat Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in a crucial election bid next month, a top party powerbroker said. The comment came as another leading LDP official said Sunday that the premier had only a "50-50" chance of winning the upcoming party leadership race, a vote crucial to Koizumi continuing as prime minister. "Whether we put forward a single candidate or (multiple candidates to) force a run-off... I'd like to focus on a single way how to replace Koizumi," Hiromu Nonaka, 77, former LDP secretary general, told a Fuji Television talk show. "I'd like to discuss this matter with our group of like-minded members," said Nonaka, who is also an influential member of the powerful faction loyal to former prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. The LDP will hold an election to pick its president for a three-year term on September 20, the springboard for the premiership given the LDP's dominant force in parliament. Three LDP lawmakers have already indicated their willingness to challenge Koizumi for the presidency, Nonaka said, adding a party group will meet with them August 28 to discuss strategy.

9. PRC-Australia on DPRK Human Rights

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIAN PM DISCUSSES N KOREA AND HUMAN RIGHTS WITH CHINA'S LEADERS," 08/18/03) reported that Australian Prime Minister John Howard began meetings with the PRC's top leaders to urge them to maintain their pressure on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program. It is Howard's fourth visit to the PRC and his first since new leadership headed by President Hu Jintao took over the running of the world's most populous nation earlier this year. He opened his day-long session of talks at Beijing's Great Hall of the People with Premier Wen Jiabao and will also meet Hu, parliamentary chief Wu Bangguo and former president Jiang Zemin. Despite hosting US deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage last week, Howard said he was carrying no message from the US administration. "I'm not carrying any messages for anybody except messages from the Australian people and messages from my own government," he told reporters on his arrival late Sunday. "We have a full-blown, very mature, very constructive relationship with China." "We have in the past pointed out how influential China is in relation to North Korea and I will continue to do that," he said. Australia has offered to provide experts and help in any verification program concerning the DPRK's weapons programs.

10. DPRK World Student Games Boycotts

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA BOYCOTTS STUDENTS GAMES OVER SAFETY FEARS," 08/18/03) reported that the DPRK abruptly cancelled its participation in the World Student Games due to get underway here this week, saying that the ROK had become too dangerous for its citizens. The semi-official Committee for Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland said in a statement that the DPRK will not take part in the games as the ROK had become a "very dangerous place" for North Koreans. It took issue with recent anti-Pyongyang rallies held by right-wing groups in the South, which the statement said were an affront to North Korea and its leader Kim Jong-Il. The statement, aired by the DPRK's Central Broadcasting Station and monitored in Seoul, accused ROK authorities of "turning a blind eye" to provocations by "extreme right wing groups." "It has become obvious that we can not send our athletes to the university games in the South which has become a dangerous place where people do harm to the safety and dignity of their own brothers," it said.

11. Taiwan-US Submarine Deal

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN TO SELECT TYPE OF EIGHT SUBMARINES GUARANTEED BY US," 08/18/03) reported that Taiwan has inched a critical step forward in its plan to acquire eight conventional submarines from the US after paying 3.0 million US dollars to kickstart the deal. The US had demanded Taiwan pays a 333 million dollar advance to secure the multi-billion-dollar deal, guaranteed by George W. Bush, the Taipei-based China Times said. The hefty downpayment demand drew complaints from Taipei, prompting reports that the plan could be killed or Taiwan could opt for second hand submarines from the international market. Yet the deal was revived when "the US agreed to slash the advance payment to 7.5 million dollars," the China Times said. It said the Taiwan navy has paid 3.0 million and will pay 4.5 million before the year's end. The paper said that in October Washington would make a presentation to Taipei on the possible submarine types available. Taiwan's defense ministry declined to comment on the report. The paper did not provide details about how the eight electric-powered submarines would be built. Bush in April 2001 approved the sale of eight conventional submarines to Taiwan as part of Washington's most comprehensive arms package to the island since 1992.

12. Asia HIV-AIDS Prevention

Agence France-Presse ("BILLIONS MORE CONDOMS NEEDED TO HALT HIV-AIDS EPIDEMIC IN ASIA: WHO," 08/18/03) reported that billions more condoms are needed to prevent the escalation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Asia, the World Health Organization (WHO) said, calling on the region to put safety before pleasure. Asia-Pacific, which has seven million people living with HIV, is set to become the epicentre of the global pandemic in the next decade unless massive prevention efforts are undertaken immediately, the organization said. It warned that at least 30 million people could be infected with HIV in India and the PRC alone by 2010. "Condoms save lives. We need to vigorously step up promotion of this life-saving device to prevent millions of people getting infected," said Dr Giovanni Deodato, the WHO representative to Laos. His comments came ahead of Monday's opening of a regional meeting in Vientiane on the "100 percent condom use programme", a strategy to promote condom use in the sex industry, one of the most high-risk areas for HIV infection. The four-day conference in the Lao capital brings together central and local government health officials from across the region.

II. People's Republic of China

1. PRC-Japan Relations

China Daily (Shao Zongwei, "YASUKUNI SHRINE VISIT AROUSES CONCERN," 08/16-17/03, P1) reported that Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan reiterated on August 15 that it is in Japan's own interests to express remorse for its militarist past. Kong was responding to Friday's visit by some senior Japanese officials to the Yasukuni Shrine on the anniversary Of Japan's defeat in WW¢ò. "A correct attitude towards history will be conducive to the sound and steady development of the Sino-Japanese good-neighborly relations as well as to Japan's harmonious co-existence with its neighbors," said Kong, adding that it ultimately serves the interests of Japan itself. Also on the day, Koizumi expressed his resolve to help secure world peace, while expressing remorse for Japan's wartime aggression at a memorial ceremony marking the 58th anniversary of the end of WW¢ò, according to the report.

China Daily (Shao Zongwei, "JAPAN SAYS IT REGRETS RECENT LEAK," 08/13/03, P1) reported that the Japanese Government has expressed its regret over last week's incident where more than 30 Chinese people were struck down after being exposed to chemical weapons left by its troops during

their invasion of PRC from 1937 to 1945. Japanese officials and experts have visited PRC in the past to cooperate with their Chinese counter-parts to look for discarded chemical weapons. On August 12 during a meeting with Japanese Ambassador Anami Koreshige, Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi said any remaining chemical weapons, left at the end of the Japanese invasion, should be destroyed with a sense of urgency. Wang urged the Japanese Government to take concrete action immediately and properly handle the aftermath, said the report.

China Daily ("LI CALLS FOR DIPLOMACY OVER DPRK," Tokyo, 08/12/03, P1) reported that Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said in Tokyo on August 11 that PRC hopes the nuclear issue of DPRK will be solved peacefully through the envisioned six-party talks. PRC welcomed Japan playing a "constructive role" in efforts to deal with the nuclear issue. Li was meeting Japanese PM Junichiro Koizumi and FM Yoriko Kawaguchi, stressing that PRC and Japan should always adhere to the treaty's principles. PRC's development is a chance for Japan, not a threat, said Koizumi. Japan is to make further efforts to boost bilateral ties for mutual benefit, he said in the report.

2. PRC-ROK Relations

China Daily ("PRESIDENTIAL MEETING," 08/15/03, P2) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun met visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing on August 14 to discuss bilateral ties and the DPRK nuclear issue. During the 50-minite meeting, Li said he came to fulfill the common understanding reached by Chinese President Hu Jintao and Roh of promoting bilateral ties to all-around cooperative and friendly ties.

3. Relations Across Taiwan Straits

China Daily (Xing Zhigang, "CHEN'S NEW PLAN SLATED," 08/15/03, P1) reported that Taiwan leader Chen Shuibian's three-stage plan for cross-straits ties was condemned on August 14 as another "empty promise" and a "gimmick" to get votes. Mainland experts on Taiwan studies urged Chen to demonstrate his sincerity towards the mainland through action rather than just words. Chen reportedly told local media that the first stage is preparation for transport links and that negotiations will be conducted in the second stage. Beijing's government body in charge of cross-straits relations, the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office, refused yesterday to comment on Chen's remarks. Chen has to engage in empty talk to paint a false picture of better cross-Straits relations in the future because of his failure to improve bilateral ties during his time in office, said an expert. On the other hand, Chen's posturing is an attempt to ease mounting pressure on his pro-independence DPP in the upcoming elections, given the close alliance between the two pro-reunification opposition parties, the Kuomintang and the People First Party, the expert said in the report.

4. The Six-way Talks

China Daily (Hu Xiao, "TALKS OFFER ¡(r)STEP FORWARD' FOR PEACE," 08/15/03, P2) reported that PRC confirmed on August 14 it will host six-way talks late his month on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, saying they marked "an important step forward" in efforts to defuse the 10-month standoff. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that the talks would take place from August 27 to 29 in Beijing, bringing together the DPRK, ROK, US, PRC, Russia and Japan. The announcement followed a flurry of diplomatic activities to restart talks on the standoff. Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing visited Seoul on August 13 after his Japan trip, and envoys from the DPRK and the ROK held separate meetings in Moscow. Piao Jianyi, executive director of the Center for Korean Peninsula Issue Studies of the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese Academy of

Social Sciences, said that currently the first step is for the DPRK and the US to build mutual trust so that an agreement would become possible, according to the report.

China Daily ("DPRK CLARIFIES NUCLEAR TALKS STAND," Pyongyang/Moscow, 08/14/03, P1) reported that the DPRK on August 13 clarified its stand on the coming six-party talks aimed at settling the nuclear issue. The DPRK wants to conclude a non-aggression treaty with the US that would "strictly and legally" guarantee that neither of the two sides would attack the other, said a foreign ministry spokesman. He warned: "As long as the US insists on its hostile policy towards the DPRK, the latter will not abandon its nuclear deterrent force." In Seoul, visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing informed his ROK counterpart Yoon Young-kwan on August 13 of the preparations for the six-party talks and the development of the co-ordination between RPC and other involved countries. Li also said the progress of the talks will affect peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, "So China hopes all the parties involved in the talks attend the meeting with sincerity, and hopes the ROK will play an active role," added Li in the report.

5. Russia's Stance on DPRK Issue

China Daily ("MOSCOW HOSTS INITIAL KOREA TALKS," Moscow, 08/11/03, P11) reported that Russia, the DPRK and ROK will hold talks in Moscow tomorrow to prepare for six-way negotiations in Beijing, a top Russian official said on August 10. "We are working on the possibility of conducting a similar meeting with Japan in the near future," said Deputy Minister Alexander Losyukov. "It is likely that those who are taking part in these consultations will lead the delegations at the talks in Beijing," he said.

6. ROK's Stance on DPRK Issue

People's Daily (Zhang Jinfang and Zhang Li, "ROK STRESS RAPID AND PEACE SETTLEMENT," 08/16/03, P3) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun stressed on August 15 that the Korean Peninsula issue will be possibly a signal of new conflicts in North-East Asia. He said the DPRK nuke issue and the DPRK-ROK relations may be the two barriers lying head of North-East Asian peace and stability undertakings. He stressed the DPRK Nuke issue should be settled as soon and peaceful as possible. As long as the issue got resolved, the DPRK and ROK should start negotiations on establishing peace mechanism and military trust, he said according to the report.

7. US's Stance on DPRK Issue

People's Daily (Yan Feng, "BUSH BELIEVES IT BE SOLVED PEACEFULLY," Washington, 08/15/03, P3) reported that the US President George W. Bush said on August 13 that the DPRK nuke issue will be solved in a peaceful way, and it is undergoing well. The US will continue dialogue with DPRK and make it clear that not only US, but also all the neighboring countries wants firmly a nuclear-free peninsula. The reason for US sticks to the multilateral framework in the discussions, lies in the fact that history proved once again that dialogues don't work, said Bush in the report.

8. PRC-SCO Joint Exercise

China Daily ("JOINT EXERCISE DISPLAYS EXPERTISE," Yining, 08/13/03, P1) reported that the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) joint anti-terrorism exercise concluded here on August 12, consisting of two phase, the first in Kazakhstan and the second in PRC. Chinese Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan and other heads of military delegations of SCO members inspected the troops for

the joint anti-terrorism exercise. During the drill, the coalition forces displayed their military competence and wrote a new chapter in the SCO members' military cooperation as well as in the history of friendly exchanges between PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Cao said. The drill also indicated the SCO members' solidarity, friendship and cooperation in the maintenance of regional peace and global anti-terror efforts.

9. PRC-US Relations

China Daily (Hu Xiao, "KONG CONDEMNS US SPY CLAIMS," 08/12/03, P1) reported that officials on August 11 condemned a number of US media claims that the nation had been engaged in espionage there, as attempts to "denigrate" PRC and play up the so-called "China Threat". Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan, in a response to a report carried by the Washington Times alleging that PRC sent spies to the US to steal sensitive intelligence, said it violates news ethics and cannot win readers' trust. Kong said that Gertz is notorious for writing articles that attempt to "denigrate" PRC and play up the "China Threat." PRC's embassy in Washington also rejected another report by the Associated Press as "totally groundless". Chinese Embassy spokesman Sun Weide indicated that by the end of last year, there were only 681 registered Chinese companies in the US. "It is impossible that there are thousands of Chinese espionage companies," Sun told China Daily on August 11 in a telephone interview.

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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