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I. United States

1. USAID Report on Humanitarian Relief Delivery to Ryongchon

The United States Agency for International Development released a statement regarding the delivery of medical supplies to victims of the Ryongchon train disaster: In a follow-up response to the train disaster in North Korea, a USAID officer crossed the PRC border into the DPRK on Monday, May 17 and personally delivered two emergency medical kits (sufficient for 20,000 people for 3 months) and 1,000 bed sheets. The officer officially handed the medical supplies to relief officials in Ryongchong, the site of the April 22 explosion that killed 170 people and injured over 1,000. The officials gave the USAID officer a "certificate of acceptance," and said they would try to report on the distribution of the donation. On April 26, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly declared the incident a disaster and OFDA initially responded by providing $100,000 to the IFRC appeal through the American Red Cross for emergency non-food items.

2. DPRK-US Relations

Radio Free Asia ("US LEGISLATORS SEEK NORTH KOREA VISIT; KIRK CALLS AID KEY TO SOLVING OTHER PROBLEMS," Washington, 05/17/04) reported that a delegation of US legislators is in talks with the DPRK about a possible visit to the tightly closed country, US Rep. Mark Kirk told RFA's Korean service. "I think this aid can open the door for solving political problems," he said. "If we reach an agreement on visiting North Korea, we will discuss measures of expanding food provisions, supporting hospitals and medical resources, and providing help in the agricultural area," Kirk, a Republican from Illinois, said in an interview. How many members of the US Congress would visit the DPRK, where they would go, and when have yet to be decided, Kirk said. "We are in the process of discussing the issue of visiting North Korea to talk about such issues. Private companies in the Chicago area where I work and many Korean-Americans are willing to participate," he said. "I think this aid can open the door for solving political problems. And more contact should be promoted between the two nations, whether at the governmental level or the private level." "Humanitarian help is the only purpose of the visit to North Korea. I have been working on aid since 1996, and I have personally visited North Korea. This is very important in my political activities," he said. "Children in North Korea are waiting for help from the international community. We should not ignore the kids because of political reasons."

3. ROK on US Troop Relocation

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA DOWNPLAYS SECURITY FEARS AS US READIES TROOP REDEPLOYMENT," 05/18/04) reported that the ROK's government has moved to calm security fears as the US confirmed plans to redeploy some 3,600 US troops from the tense border with North Korea to Iraq. US and ROK officials said the reduction in troop numbers would not weaken the ability of US forces based in the ROK for more than 50 years to deter the DPRK. Air defenses will be reinforced and more long-range US bombers will be deployed to the region, Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon said. "I am convinced that there will be no security vacuum and the troop withdrawal will not lead to a weakening alliance between South Korea and the US. The US will take supplementary measures," Ban told journalists here. New military hardware would be deployed here under a US plan announced last year to invest 11 billion dollars in the defense of South Korea in coming years, he said. The first pullout of US troops from the ROK since the early 1990s comes as the allies grapple with the 19-month-old standoff over the DPRK's nuclear weapons drive.

4. Japan-DPRK Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("KOIZUMI TO TELL NORTH KOREA HE WILL TRY TO NORMALIZE TIES," 05/18/04) reported that Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has decided to tell DPRK leader Kim Jong Il during their summit talks slated for Saturday that he will try to normalize diplomatic relations during his term as prime minister if Pyongyang resolves issues related to the abduction of Japanese and its nuclear weapons programs, government sources said Tuesday. The government also plans to resume negotiations mid-June on normalizing ties, which have been suspended, if eight family members of five former abductees are allowed to come to Japan, the sources added. During talks with Kim in Pyongyang, Koizumi will stress that problems concerning the abductees and the development of nuclear arms by North Korea must be settled for bilateral ties to be normalized by the end of Koizumi's term as prime minister, the sources said. The government hopes Koizumi's remarks will prompt the DPRK to not only allow the eight family members to come to Japan, but also to clarify the whereabouts of eight other possible abductees.

5. PRC-Pakistan Connection

Agence France-Presse ("LINKS WITH PAKISTAN CLOUD CHINA'S MEMBERSHIP IN GLOBAL NUCLEAR GROUP," 05/19/04) reported that the US government pressed its case in Congress for the PRC's membership in a multilateral nuclear group but lawmakers cautioned the PRC's moves to equip Pakistan may pose a proliferation threat. The US is seeking to back the PRC's long-standing application for membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the cooperative association of countries aimed at controlling the export of nuclear materials, equipment and technology. The PRC's membership may be approved later this month by the NSC, whose 40 members now include the US, Russia, France, Germany, Russia and Britain, officials said. John Wolf, the assistant secretary in the US State Department's bureau of nonproliferation, told a congressional hearing Tuesday that the PRC should be included in the NSG, where major nuclear export control issues were discussed. "China as a nuclear supplier should face those issues head-on. That is one of the global responsibilities it should take on," Wolf told the international relations panel of the House of Representatives. But some groups believe the PRC could follow in the footsteps of Russia, which had posed difficulties in the NSG in the past, probably driven in part by Moscow's interest in protecting its nuclear supply relationship with India. Wolf dismissed such a possibility, saying that the PRC had stated that it would inform the NSG of particulars about its supply of a second nuclear reactor to Pakistan, for which an agreement was signed just earlier this month.

6. PRC on Human Rights

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA REJECTS STATE DEPT REPORT, TELLS US TO TURN HUMAN RIGHTS GAZE INWARD," 05/18/04) reported that the PRC has told the US it should look into its own human rights problems, slamming a State Department report claiming that PRC defense lawyers were jailed on fictitious charges. "The US should know itself, check into its own problems and think more about how to improve its own human rights status," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a regular briefing. "It should refrain from interfering in other countries' internal affairs under the pretext of human rights," he said. Liu's remarks came after a series of scathing PRC attacks on the US following the revelation of widespread abuse of Iraqi prisoners at the hands of American troops. His statement was in response to a State Department report that said criminal lawyers in China who vigorously defend their clients are jailed on trumped-up charges. Such reprisals seem to have deterred attorneys from specializing in criminal defense, which restricts defendants' access to justice, said the report, entitled "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The US Record 2003-2004." "(The report) makes groundless accusations against the PRC government and defames the human rights situation in China," Liu said. "The improvements made by China in human rights is witnessed by all," he said.

7. PRC-Taiwan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS PEACE NOT POSSIBLE IN TAIWAN UNLESS CHEN CHANGES TACK," 05/18/04) reported that the PRC is piling more pressure on Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian days before his inauguration for another term, warning peace on the island could not last unless he abandoned his calls for independence. Describing cross-Straits ties as in "serious crisis", the official Xinhua news agency said Chen was clearly paving the way for a future referendum on independence for the island. "It is clear that Chen is using his power to alter the current situation that both the mainland and Taiwan belong to one and the same China," Xinhua said in a commentary. "If the Taiwan authorities stubbornly adhere to the 'Taiwan independence' separatist stance and refuse to admit the one-China principle, peace and stability will not last." Xinhua's rhetoric followed a joint statement by the Communist Party's Office for Taiwan Affairs and the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council Monday vowing to "crush" Taiwanese independence moves "at any cost". It did, however, offer economic and diplomatic rewards if the island towed the

PRC line.

8. ROK-Taiwan Relations

Asia Pulse ("S. KOREAN DELEGATION HEADS TO TAIWAN FOR CHEN'S INAUGURATION," Seoul, 05/18/04) reported that a delegation from South Korea's largest business lobby, the Federation of Korean Industries, will visit Taiwan tomorrow for four days, an FKI official said today. Park Yong-oh, chairman of the Doosan Group, will lead the delegation in the capacity of Seoul's chairman of the South Korea-Taiwan economic cooperation committee, the official said. The group will attend Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian's inauguration ceremony and state dinner on Thursday and meet with their Taiwanese counterparts the following day to discuss ways to expand economic exchanges between the countries, according to the official.

9. PRC Space Exploration

Reuters ("CHINA SHELVES PLAN FOR ASTRONAUTS ON MOON PLAN FOR MANNED SPACE STATION TO MOVE FORWARD," Beijing, 05/18/04) reported that the PRC plans to build its own manned space station by around 2020 but has shelved plans to put a man on the moon for financial reasons, state media quoted the chief designer of the nation's space program as saying. Wang Yongzhi, godfather of the mission that completed its first manned flight successfully last year, said the permanent station would take about 15 years to complete, the official Xinhua news agency said, citing a Beijing newspaper. "China will also conduct a lunar orbiting program," Wang told a gathering of high school students on Sunday, the Beijing News reported. But contrary to previously announced plans, the 72-year-old said the lunar probe would not land a man on the moon.

10. US DPRK Cold War Defector

The Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "FROM GI TO PAWN IN 39 YEARS - A US SOLDIER WHO APPARENTLY DEFECTED TO NORTH KOREA IN 1965 NOW COMPLICATES JAPAN'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS TIES WITH PYONGYANG," Tokyo, 05/18/04) reported that in present-day photographs, the jug ears and prominent nose are the same. But the once-young GI named Charles Robert Jenkins is now an old man, with creases running across his brow and a small picture of the late DPRK founder Kim Il Sung pinned to the lapel of his shiny suit. On the morning of Jan. 5, 1965, Jenkins was a 24-year-old buck sergeant stationed in South Korea. It was 2:30 a.m., and he was leading a patrol into the demilitarized zone separating the Koreas. He told his buddies he'd heard a noise and wanted to investigate. He never came back. Three and half weeks later, his voice was heard in a propaganda broadcast saying that he had found himself in "Shangri-La" in the DPRK. Over the ensuing decades, little was heard from or about the high school dropout from North Carolina except for an occasional appearance in DPRK propaganda. Family members for most of that time were unsure if he was still alive. Jenkins - one of a handful of Americans who apparently defected to the DPRK - probably would be lost in the dusty archives of the Cold War were it not for a chain of recent events that make him a pawn in the tangled relationship between the US, DPRK and Japan. Jenkins came out of the shadows in September 2002, when Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi traveled to Pyongyang, the DPRK capital, to meet with leader Kim Jong Il. During that summit, Kim made an astonishing confession - that over the years, the DPRK had systematically kidnapped Japanese citizens to train as spies. There was more: One of the abductees, a woman named Hitomi Soga, was married to Jenkins. This most unlikely couple, the former GI and the kidnap victim, were said to be living in Pyongyang with their two daughters. Given the tension over North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons, the Pentagon has shown little inclination to show forgiveness. In

some quarters, Jenkins is viewed almost as another John Walker Lindh, the American who joined the Taliban in Afghanistan. "Our military feels very strongly about desertion. This is a time of George W. Bush and Donald Rumsfeld, and you are talking about someone who went to the other side at a time of high tension," said a US diplomat who asked not to be quoted by name. Japan has made repeated high-level requests to the US to grant Jenkins a pardon so he can come to Japan. The requests have been denied, with Defense Secretary Rumsfeld personally putting his foot down, diplomatic sources say. The matter has grown more urgent by the day in the wake of Koizumi's announcement Friday that he planned to return to Pyongyang next Saturday and, it is hoped, bring out family members of the five abductees released in 2002. It was unclear, because of the extradition issue, whether Jenkins and his daughters would be included. "Although he has US nationality, he is married to Ms. Soga and we of course consider that they are one united family," Kyoko Nakayama, a Japanese Cabinet official handling the case, said in a March interview. "We hope he'll come to Japan, where the family will be able to discuss freely where they want to live." Back in North Carolina, Jenkins' supporters worry that he'll become a scapegoat for the anti-DPRK lobby. James Hyman, a nephew and the family member most active in the case, says there are dozens of Cold War defectors to Communist countries who now live quiet lives in the US. "I don't know why they want to crucify my uncle when there are others who deserted who are buried in Arlington Cemetery," said Hyman, who was 5 when Jenkins vanished.

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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