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I. United States

1. ROK-Japan-US in DPRK Talks

Reuters ("U.S., JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA OPEN NORTH KOREA TALKS," San Francisco, 06/17/02) reported that the US, Japan and the ROK opened two days of talks on June 17 to discuss strategies for pulling the DPRK out of international isolation. The San Francisco talks, one of a series of regular meetings by the three countries, come as the US considers whether to send special envoy Jack Pritchard to Pyongyang to resume discussions on the DPRK's missile and nuclear energy programs. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, deputy ROK Foreign Minister Lee Tae-shik and the head of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, Hitoshi Tanaka, led the delegations at the talks, which US officials said would discuss "a range of issues" related to North Korea.

2. ROK-US Military Incident

The Associated Press (Lee Soo-Jeong, "U.S. MILITARY IN SOUTH KOREA CONCLUDES FATAL

INCIDENT WAS NOT INTENTIONAL," Seoul, 06/20/02) reported that about 50 people demonstrated Thursday outside a US military base in anger over the deaths of two ROK teenagers who were struck by a US armored vehicle, a news agency reported. Protesters gathered outside the headquarters of the 2nd Infantry Division in Eujongbu, north of Seoul. They demanded an apology from the US military and trial in an ROK court of the two soldiers who were in the vehicle. But the ROK does not have the legal right to prosecute the soldiers because they were on duty, and the US division headquarters said there were no plans to court-martial them. It said that a joint investigation with ROK police concluded the deaths were a "tragic accident." "We believe this event was a tragic accident," the U.S. military said in a statement. "We have found no evidence to believe this was an intentional or malicious act." The armored carrier was rounding a curve in the road with a convoy of Bradley fighting vehicles approaching in the opposite direction when it hit the girls, the military said in a statement. The armored vehicle's commander saw the girls but was unable to warn the driver in time, the military said. "The driver had a limited view and could not see the right side of the roadway," it added. Shim Soo-bo, the father of victim Shim Mee-sun, said in a telephone interview that the driver had enough time to avoid the girls but didn't want to crash into the oncoming military vehicles. "The drivers killed the girls just to save the lives of their own people," he said. Shim said U.S. military officials apologized to him, but he demanded that the military issue an apology to the Korean people. He said he had not requested financial compensation.

3. US Missile Defense

Reuters (Jim Wolf, "U.S. SEEKS PARTNERS IN MISSILE DEFENSE," Washington, 06/20/02) reported that the US announced a big new push on Thursday to enlist other countries in its controversial plan to build a multibillion-dollar, multi-layered shield against ballistic missiles. The drive to deepen existing cooperation and launch new joint programs followed the US exit last week from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. "Now that the ABM Treaty is no longer operative for us, we can now discuss with our allies and friends what might be possible in terms of participation in the program" and its technology development, said Air Force Lt. Gen. Ronald Kadish, head of the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency. Kadish said the United States would offer different types of participation "to accommodate the different needs of our allies" as those needs may change. Overseas involvement, he said, could involve government-to-government deals or industry-t--industry technology development programs, or both. "And the level of participation could change over time based on the relationships that we have and the progress we make," he said. Kadish said geography was a critical consideration in building the shield that President Bush seeks to field as soon as possible to defend against "Axis of Evil" countries such as the DPRK, Iraq and Iran.

4. Tanaka Party Suspension

The Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "POPULAR JAPAN POLITICIAN SUSPENDED," Tokyo, 06/20/02) reported that former Japan foreign minister Makiko Tanaka was suspended by her own party over allegations that she misused state money meant to pay aides. It was just the latest setback for Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which once leaned on Tanaka's image as a rising star to pull in votes. Just a day earlier, another former party heavyweight was arrested on corruption charges. "I hope she takes actions" to restore public trust in politics, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said after Tanaka was suspended from party functions for two years. Tanaka refused comment, saying she had not been formally told of the decision. The penalty, effective immediately, strips Tanaka of the right to vote in party presidential elections, seek election as a candidate for the LDP, or attend any committee meetings over the next two years. Two weekly magazines alleged in April that Tanaka misused state money earmarked to pay salaries of her secretaries, whose responsibilities range from plotting election campaigns to giving policy advice.

Tanaka has denied any wrongdoing. Since being cut from Koizumi's cabinet, Tanaka has kept her seat in Parliament but maintained a cool relationship with the party.

5. Asian Cooperation Dialogue

Reuters (Katie Hunt, "JAPAN, CHINA SET TO MEET ON N.KOREA ASYLUM SEEKERS," Thailand, 06/19/02) reported that the PRC and Japan will discuss the issue of DPRK asylum seekers on Wednesday on the sidelines of a regional forum in an effort to mend strained relations, officials said. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi will meet her PRC counterpart, Tang Jiaxuan, for the first encounter on the issue since PRC police entered a Japanese consulate on May 8 to haul out five DPRK asylum seekers. "This will be the first time both sides will talk about the issue face-to-face," said the ministry source. Asian government ministers are meeting at a seaside resort in southern Thailand this week to discuss economic and cultural ties, but regional tensions are overshadowing their talks. Ministers from 17 Asian countries, including the PRC, Japan and India, attended the talks in Cha-am, 200 km (125 miles) south of Bangkok, to find ways to work together to boost their economies rather than compete against each other. Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who has dubbed his brainchild the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), told the meeting Asia needed to cooperate to shield itself from what he called the "adverse impacts of globalization."

II. Republic of Korea

1. North Korean Defectors Problem

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA ADMITS DEFECTORS FLEE BECAUSE OF POOR ECONOMY,"Seoul, 06/20/02) reported that diplomatic sources say that the DPRK has privately admitted to foreign officials the growing number of defectors escaping the country since the mid-90s is due to the country's collapsed economy. "The North's state officials actually admitted to EU officials who recently visited Pyeongyang that the problem of defectors lies flatly on the economic crisis of the country," a diplomatic source in tje ROK said Wednesday. Other issues the two sides addressed were violations of human rights, inter-Korean affairs and DPRK's development of weapons of mass destruction. The EU delegation asked that repatriated defectors not be punished, but the sources did not comment on how the DPRK responded to the request.

2. ROK-PRC Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL, BEIJING, JOINTLY SEEKING ALTERNATIVES FOR DEOECTORS,"Seoul, 06/20/02) reported that ROK and PRC agreed Wednesday to seek an amicable resolution to the case of 20 DPRK asylum-seekers in the ROK Embassy in Beijing, ROK's Foreign Ministry said. A day earlier PRC's Foreign Ministry revealed at the daily briefing for foreign press that the nation would resolve things in a humanitarian manner strongly suggesting the captured defectors would be released to ROK. Sources in the PRC also admitted that the PRC guards resort to violence at the ROK mission has tarnished the nation's image and has become a kind of burden to the nation.

3. Inter Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "NAVY APPREHENDS NORTH KOREAN FISHING BOASTS,"Seoul, 06/20/020) reported that the Joint Chiefs of Staff announced, Thursday that the ROK Navy had apprehended three DPRK fishing boats that had crossed over the Northern Limit Line into South

Korean waters. A JCS spokesman said the vessels traveled 11 miles south of the NLL before being intercepted by patrol boats. He continued they had left Haeju on Tuesday, but due to fog and a malfunctioning compass strayed across the NLL. The boats and crew will be returned to DPRK in cooperation with the Ministry of Unification.

4. ROK-US-Japan Meeting

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NORTH KOREA URGED TO ALLOW INTERNATIONAL NUCLERA INSPECTION,"Seoul, 06/20/02) reported that with dialogue between DPRK and US expected to resume sometime soon, ROK, US and Japan have again urged DPRK to allow UN watchdogs to inspect its suspected nuclear sites. The three countries "called on North Korea to move forward with steps needed to begin full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," their joint statement said. The statement was issued after a two-day Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) meeting in San Francisco on Tuesday, in which senior officials from the three governments coordinated their strategies on the communist country.

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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