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I. United States

1. DPRK-Japan Talks

The Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "N. KOREA ENVOYS ARRIVE IN JAPAN," Tokyo, 8/21/00) and Agence France Presse ("JAPAN, NORTH KOREA REOPEN TALKS WITH NO BREAKTHROUGH IN SIGHT," Tokyo, 8/20/00) reported that the DPRK sent a team of negotiators to Japan on Monday for talks on establishing diplomatic relations scheduled for August 22-24. A third round of talks is to be held in the PRC or another country. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hidenao Nakagawa urged patience for the talks, saying, "We will strive to correct the existing abnormal relations between Japan and Chosen (DPRK) in a way that contributes to peace and stability in Northeast Asia as a whole. Since it is a full-dressed setting for dialogue, we will have discussions patiently on various pending issues between Japan and Chosen." Nakagawa denied a Nihon Keizai Shimbun report on August 19 that said that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono had proposed Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori hold a summit meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il. He said, "We consider it

important to have communications with Workers Party general secretary Kim Jong-il in an effective way to advance our policy vis-a-vis North Korea. But we will continue to study what will be effective." However, despite the two countries' efforts, Toshio Miyashita, a DPRK specialist at Yamanashi Gakuin University said, "It will be difficult for the two sides to soften their positions." Jong Thae Hwa, the leader of the DPRK delegation, was quoted as telling Kyodo News agency en route to Tokyo on Monday, "Our basic stance - that we must first liquidate the past - remains intact. In order to attain harmony in the talks, the Japanese must change, not us."

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA LAUNCHES STINGING ATTACK ON EVE OF JAPAN TALKS," Tokyo, 8/21/00) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Monday criticized the Japanese newspaper Sankei Shimbun on its view of the DPRK in recent and past reports. In an editorial on August 20, the Sankei Shimbun said, "North Korea has never been honest about suspicions over its kidnapping, missile launch, spy ships in Japanese waters and drug smuggling. We see nothing but bluff in their attitude. There is no sincere attitude in North Korea's efforts to normalize relations with Japan." KCNA said, "The Sankei Shimbun's commentary does not deserve even a passing note as it is nothing but outbursts let loose by those who are much upset by the ever growing might of the DPRK." The agency also said that the paper's critical stance in editorials since the inter-Korean summit in June was also "a foolish and despicable attempt to put a brake on the process for improving the DPRK- Japan relations." Despite Sankei Shimbun's frequent predictions of the collapse of the DPRK, KCNA said, "On the contrary, the international dignity of the DPRK as a member of the international community is rapidly rising and 'striding across the world' as admitted by the group of hack writers of (the) Sankei Shimbun." KCNA added that it was "a reptile and deceptive paper, (which) ignores truth and spreads false stories."

2. US-ROK Military Exercise

The Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "N. KOREA ENVOYS ARRIVE IN JAPAN," Tokyo, 8/21/00) reported that the ROK on Monday scaled back joint 12-day exercises with US troops to reassure the DPRK, which had condemned the maneuvers as a rehearsal for an invasion of the DPRK. The ROK military canceled amphibious landing and river-crossing drills as well as mock air raids on Seoul, and the US military reduced the number of its troops participating in the exercises, which began Monday.

3. Reunion of Separated Families

The Associated Press ("KOREAS PLAN MORE REUNIONS IN SEPTEMBER," Seoul, 8/20/00) reported that ROK Red Cross chief Chang Chung-shik said on August 20 that the DPRK and the ROK are likely to hold a second round of reunions for separated relatives in mid-September. Chang said that he discussed the issue during a visit to the DPRK last week. He said, "I discussed with North Korean Red Cross officials the possibility of arranging another reunion for dispersed family members around Chusok." Chusok, or thanksgiving day, falls on September 12 this year and is a major holiday in the DPRK and the ROK.

4. ROK-DPRK Prisoner Exchange

Reuters ("S.KOREA TO ASK NORTH TO RETURN KOREAN WAR POWS," Seoul, 8/21/00) reported that the ROK media reported on Monday that the ROK will push for the return of hundreds of elderly prisoners of war (POWs) held in the DPRK for up to half a century. The ROK is already set to return 62 former DPRK prisoners under a deal signed in late June by Red Cross officials from two Koreas.

The Korea Times quoted ROK Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu as saying, "The government agreed to send back the 62 unconverted Communist spies to Pyongyang partly because we wanted to quicken the return of the South Korean prisoners of war." The Korea Times said in its early Tuesday edition that the return of ROK POWs in the DPRK will be one of the major topics of inter-Korean ministerial talks scheduled for August 29-31. According to an ROK Defense Ministry report, there are 343 ROK POWs still alive in the DPRK.

II. Republic of Korea

1. UNESCO Chief to Visit DPRK

The Korea Herald ("UNESCO CHIEF VISITS NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 08/21/00) reported that Koichiro Matsuura, director-general of United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), arrived in Pyongyang by airplane Saturday, the DPRK's Central TV reported. Matsuura will reportedly visit ancient tombs of the Koguryo era in Pyongyang and discuss whether to designate them as world cultural assets during his visit, which will last through August 22. He will also meet Kim Yong- nam, chairman of the Standing Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly, and Foreign Affairs Minister Paek Nam-soon. After leaving Pyongyang, he will reportedly stay in the ROK from August 25 for two days after visiting the PRC.

2. US-ROK Military Exercise

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "N.K. THREATENS TO CUT OFF CONTACTS IF EXERCISE HELD," Seoul, 08/21/00), Chosun Ilbo (Choi Byong-mook, "NK DEMANDS SUSPENSION OF ULCHI FOCUS LENS," Seoul, 08/20/00) and The Korea Herald ("ROK-U.S. ANNUAL MILITARY DRILL TO START MONDAY," Seoul, 08/19/00) reported that the DPRK has warned that all inter-Korean contacts, dialogue and exchange visits could cease immediately if the ROK and the US go ahead with a joint military exercise code-named Ulchi Focus Lens. The strong warning came Saturday in a statement by the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, a DPRK panel handling inter-Korean affairs. The ROK and the US were scheduled to begin the 12- day joint Ulchi Focus Lens military drill on Monday. "As the two Koreas have already agreed to solve the national reunification issue in an independent way, it is unthinkable for South Korea to conduct a joint military drill with an outside force that is threatening the security of our country," the statement said. It said that the joint drill is a clear violation of the inter-Korean joint communique signed at the June summit.

3. Reunion of Separated Families

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "S. KOREAN BORDER CITY CITED AS CANDIDATE FOR PERMANENT MEETING POINT FOR SPLIT FAMILIES," Seoul, 08/21/00), The Korea Times ("MAJOR S-N RECONCILIATORY EVENTS PLANNED IN SEPT.," Seoul, 08/20/00) and The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "KOREAS TO LAUNCH NEGOTIATIONS ON EXPANDED FAMILY REUNIONS," Seoul, 08/21/00) reported that the ROK's Red Cross chief said on Sunday that a permanent meeting place for reunions of separated family members could be set up in the border city of Chorwon, Kangwon Province. Stressing that this was strictly his personal view, Chang Choong-sik, president of the ROK National Red Cross, said that it would be appropriate to establish the meeting place in Chorwon instead of Panmunjom or the DPRK's Kumgang Mountain. "The South reportedly prefers Panmunjom, while the North puts forth Mt. Kumgang," Chang said, appearing on a KBS-TV program.

"But a place in Mt. Kumgang will cause some problems due to the lack of transportation and accommodation as well as costs." Chang also said that the two Red Cross chiefs had exchanged the view that it would be good to hold the second reunion event timed with Chusok, a traditional thanksgiving holiday that falls on September 12 this year. Chang would not confirm whether more than 200 people each from the ROK and the DPRK would be allowed to visit each other's home country in the next visits.

Joongang Ilbo (Choi Hoon, "GOVERNMENT TO EVALUATE SEPARATED FAMILIES REUNION," Seoul, 08/20/00) reported that the ROK government will thoroughly analyze the way in which the August 15 separated families reunion was conducted and will devise a plan to expand the size and frequency of the meetings and to reduce costs. Park Joon-young, the Chong Wa Dae spokesperson, commented on August 19 that the meetings were just the beginning and that the government would evaluate every aspect of the meeting in order to regularize and improve the event. Major agenda items for the September Red Cross meeting will include how to locate and learn the status of members of separated families in the DPRK and the exchange of letters between families.

4. Repatriation of DPRK Spies in ROK

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NORTH AND SOUTH HAVE DIFFERING VIEWS ON ISSUES OF WHO SHOULD BE REPATRIATED," Seoul, 08/21/00) reported that the ROK is set to repatriate some 60 DPRK spies September 2, after five decades of custody. The plan, however, is likely to run into various roadblocks, including civic group demands and differences in the way the ROK and the DPRK view the situation, observers said. On Friday, the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) delivered to the DPRK the list of 62 Communists who want to return home to the DPRK after having served prison terms in the ROK. After screening by the DPRK and consultation with the ROK, the two sides will finalize the list of those to be repatriated. The DPRK, however, has been demanding that the list include those previously released from jail after swearing to abandon Communism, but who still hope to return home. The ROK maintains that these former prisoners should not be returned. Another dispute is over whether or not the repatriates should be allowed to bring along their ROK family members to the DPRK, according to Yoon. Government officials, however, would not budge on the two issues, stressing that neither of the demands had been agreed upon between the two Koreas. "The two sides should first take action on what was agreed upon. Additional steps could be discussed next time," said Hong Yang-ho, director-general for the Unification Ministry's Humanitarian Affairs Bureau.

5. DPRK-Japan Talks

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "N.K., JAPAN RESUME TALKS ON RECOGNITION," Seoul, 08/21/00) reported that ROK Foreign Ministry officials said that the DPRK and Japan will resume talks on the normalization of bilateral relations in Tokyo on Tuesday. Chief negotiators are ambassadors-at-large Kojiro Takano from Japan and Jong Tae-hwa from the DPRK. ROK officials and analysts, however, were rather skeptical whether significant progress could be made during the meeting as both sides still remain apart over some key issues, including Japan's compensation for the colonial past and the DPRK's alleged kidnapping of Japanese citizens. DPRK news media reiterated its call for Japan to settle past problems in time for its delegation's departure from Pyongyang on Saturday. DPRK leader Kim Jong-il recently made it clear that the DPRK would not open ties with Japan unless Japan pays compensation for its colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

6. Inter-Korean Railway

The Korea Herald ("ARMY SET TO START INTER-KOREAN RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION," Seoul, 08/21/00) reported that ROK military authorities said that they have completed a field investigation of the ROK section of the severed Kyongui Railway, which links Seoul and Shinuiju in the DPRK. "A topographical survey of the severed section in the demilitarized zone was recently completed and an examination of mine locations is almost done," a high-level ROK army official said on Saturday. The army will commence work as soon as the construction section is decided, he said.

7. Inter-Korean Cultural Exchange

The Korea Herald ("N. KOREAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ARRIVES IN SEOUL," Seoul, 08/19/00) reported that DPRK's State Symphony Orchestra arrived in Seoul on Friday to hold an unprecedented joint classical concert with the KBS Philharmonic. A 132-member DPRK delegation, led by Ho I-bok of the State Symphony Orchestra, arrived at Kimpo International Airport at 11:15 a.m. (KST) from Sunan Airport in Pyongyang via a direct inter-Korean air route over the Yellow Sea. The performance will be the first of its kind.

Joongang Ilbo (Shim Jae-woo, "HWANG YOUNG-JO TO VISIT PYONGYANG SEPTEMBER 1," Seoul, 08/20/00) reported that Hwang Young-jo, the winner of the 1992 Barcelona Olympic marathon, will visit the DPRK on September 1. "As an honorary envoy following the historic reunion, I want to talk with North Korean athletes such as Jung Sung-ok, the winner of the women's marathon at the World Track and Field Championships," said Hwang. If he gets an opportunity, he wants to go and see the marathon course on the Kaema Plateau and the Daedong riverside where the DPRK held its first international tournament, the 13th Mankyungdae International Marathon Tournament.

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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