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I. United States

1. Kim Jong-il's Trip to Russia

Reuters ("N.KOREA SAYS RAINBOWS BLESS KIM JONG-IL RUSSIA TOUR," Seoul, 08/23/01) reported that the DPRK's official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said that a series of "natural wonders" took place during leader Kim Jong-il's trip to Russia. KCNA said that on August 4, a 20-meter high "waterspout" rose, mushroom-like, in the center of a lake in the DPRK and was visible for 10 minutes. It added that two days later, a rainbow appeared over a monument to the Kim family "as if congratulating Kim Jong-il on his outstanding revolutionary activities to glorify president Kim Il-sung's revolutionary cause." The rainbow followed an "unprecedented" appearance on July 31 of a double rainbow three times in 30 minutes over the northwestern city of Shinuiji.

2. ROK National Security Law

The Associated Press ("SKOREANS SEARCH HOMES OF 3 VISITORS," Seoul, 08/22/01) reported that ROK police searched the houses and offices Wednesday of three activists suspected of violating

the National Security Law during a trip to the DPRK. The three whose houses were searched included Kang Jeong-koo, a political science professor at Dongguk University, Choi Kyu-yup, and Chon Sang-bong. Police said that some of the 16 activists being questioned were suspected of holding prior consultations with the DPRK about their trip.

3. US Troops in ROK

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN EMPLOYEES RALLY," Seoul, 08/23/01) reported that about 800 members of the Korean Employees Union of the U.S. Forces Korea held a rally Thursday demanding that their conditions be improved and that the US military stop using cheaper subcontractors to replace full-time local employees. In a statement, the union criticized local civic groups that demand the withdrawal of US troops, saying that such a withdrawal would threaten workers' livelihoods and weaken the ROK defense against the DPRK. The union said that it may hold more rallies in the future.

4. Japanese WWII Shipwreck Case

The Associated Press (Kozo Mizoguchi, "JAPAN LOSES WWII SHIP DISASTER CASE," Tokyo, 08/23/01) reported that Kyoto District Court ruled Thursday that the Japanese government must pay a total of US$375,000 to 15 Koreans who survived an explosion aboard a Japanese ship that killed hundreds of Korean forced laborers shortly after World War II. Presiding judge Satoshi Mizukami said that the Japanese government at the time had neglected its duties to safely transport the Korean passengers aboard the Ukishima Maru. The case was filed in 1992 by about 80 Korean survivors or relatives of fatalities, seeking US$25 million in compensation and an official apology from the Japanese government. The court said that it could only confirm that 15 of the Korean plaintiffs were aboard the ship at the time of the disaster, and also turned down the apology demand, saying it was unclear what caused the disaster. The chief lawyer for the plaintiffs, Masayoshi Nakata, stated, "It's unfortunate that the court ignored our main claims for an official apology and the truth over what caused the explosion and the sinking. It's regrettable that all the people involved in the case didn't win compensation." He said that the plaintiffs would decide later whether to appeal the verdict. Kyodo News agency quoted Chang Young-do, a Korean whose father died in the disaster, as saying, "What I wanted to know was the truth of the disaster, not money." Survivors have long accused the Japanese crew of setting the explosion to avoid riots by the Koreans aboard the vessel, whereas Japan has maintained that the ship hit a mine that had been planted in the harbor by US forces. Masatoshi Uchida, a Japanese lawyer who is familiar with post- World War II compensation issues, stated, "I expect the ruling will lead to the solving of compensation issues of other forced workers who were taken to Japan."

5. US-PRC Missile Talks

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "U.S., CHINA DISCUSS MISSILES," Beijing, 08/23/01) reported that US and PRC experts met Thursday over the PRC's agreement not to help other nations build missile arsenals or develop nuclear weapons technology. The PRC Foreign Ministry confirmed that the talks were underway but would not elaborate, while the US Embassy said that they might stretch into Friday. Vann Van Diepen, acting deputy assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation, was leading the US team of technical advisers from the Defense Department and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

6. US-Taiwan Military Relations

The Far Eastern Economic Review (David Lague, U.S. HOLDS TIGHTER TO TAIWAN'S HAND," Hong Kong and Taipei, 08/30/01) reported that recent US military exercises in the South China Sea are indicative of US moves to improve ties with the Taiwan military. Yuan I, a security analyst at National Chengchi University, said that the Taiwan military has suffered "psychologically" from its lack of contact with other forces, and that the US drive to improve the military relationship is a welcome change for senior local commanders. Yuan added, "However, we still lack a formal military defense pact. At most, we are in the process of regaining our operational dialogue with the U.S. military establishment." Senior regional defense officials reported that a secure communications hotline was established this year between the headquarters of the U.S. 7th Fleet in Honolulu and Taiwan's operational military headquarters. A Western intelligence source said that a joint US-Taiwanese signals-intelligence center in central Taiwan has been significantly upgraded. According to Taiwanese media reports, the US plans to sell Taiwan a US$725 million communications network, the Joint Tactical Information Distribution System, to allow warships, aircraft and other military units to communicate much more effectively. Deputy Taiwan Defense Minister Lieutenant General Fu Wei-ku welcomed the sale, saying that it would allow local forces to "use the same language and tools as the allies." US officials said that for the first time since the US switched diplomatic to the PRC in 1979, the US is hosting groups of Taiwan officers in exchanges with US military and intelligence officials. [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 23.]

7. Taiwan Admission to WTO

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL (Erik Guyot, "TAIWAN HOPES TO JOIN WTO IN AUTUMN, BUT COULD STALL ON CHINESE DEMANDS," Taipei, 08/24/01) reported that Taiwan Vice Minister for Economic Affairs Steve Ruey-long Chen said that Taiwan's application to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) would likely be approved at a November ministerial meeting in Qatar. Cho Hui-wan, a professor at National Chung Hsing University in Taichung, said that membership in the WTO would be Taiwan's most-important entry to an international organization and would provide an economic and psychological boost. Cheng Cheng-mount of the Taiwan Institute of Economic Research said that entry into the trade body also will hasten increased trade links between Taiwan and the PRC and potentially help smooth out relations between the two sides. A Taiwan government advisory panel is expected this weekend to recommend establishing full direct trade with the PRC as part of the process of entering the WTO.

8. Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

Reuters (Patricia Wilson, "BUSH SAYS U.S. TO QUIT ARMS PACT ON 'OUR TIMETABLE'," Crawford, 08/23/01) reported that US President George W. Bush said Thursday that the US would withdraw "on our timetable" from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty. Bush stated, "We will withdraw from the ABM treaty on our timetable at a time convenient to America. I have no specific timetable in mind." He added that the US would continue to "consult closely" with its allies in Europe and with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Bush argued, "I have made it clear that I think the treaty hampers our ability to keep the peace. I do know that Mr. Putin is aware of our desires to move beyond the ABM treaty and we will."

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "TREATY EXIT COULD UNLEASH CRITICISM," Washington, 08/23/01) reported that US withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty would mark the first time that the US has withdrawn from an arms control treaty. Jan Lodal, an arms control expert who was a deputy undersecretary of defense during the Clinton administration, said that it would be a mistake to exercise that option anytime soon, since the US Defense Department could adjust its

anti-missile technology testing program for 2002 to avoid any appearance of conflict with the ABM treaty. He stated, "We don't have any compelling reasons" to withdraw as early as next year. Rose Gottemoeller, an arms control expert who served on the National Security Council staff during the Clinton administration, said Wednesday that she believes one motivation for mentioning the withdrawal option was to "keep the heat on" the Russians to back off their position.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Arrest of US Civilian Employee

The Korea Times ("COURT MOVES TO ARRAIGN USFK OFFICIAL," 08/23/01) reported that the Seoul District Court arraigned US citizen Albert McFarland on charges of ordering subordinates to dump toxins into a sewer drain in February last year at the Eighth US Army Yongsan Garrison. The court sent one executor and another official to the US army base in central Seoul at around 10:25 a.m. on Wednesday. The court informed the U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK) of the visit, but the US side was reportedly reluctant to cooperate. A court official stated, "We finally decided to force the action because we couldn't delay the procedure any more." [Ed. Note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 23.]

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