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I. United States

1. PRC-ROK Talks

Reuters ("LI PENG ARRIVES IN SOUTH KOREA FOR TALKS," Seoul, 5/23/01) reported that Li Peng, chairman of the PRC parliament, arrived in Seoul on Wednesday for talks with ROK officials. Li was scheduled to meet on May 25 with ROK President Kim Dae-jung. Analysts said the two were likely to discuss US-PRC ties as well as Kim's rapprochement with the DPRK. However, the PRC Foreign Affairs Ministry said that the exact agenda is unknown. Chung Jae-ho, a professor of international relations at Seoul National University, said, "China will undoubtedly press Seoul to reaffirm its stance on Taiwan. Seoul has supported a one-China policy, but recent events in the U.S. calls for a reaffirmation." Analysts said that Li would likely do little to bolster ROK efforts to resume dialogue with the DPRK. Lee said, "China's greatest interest on the Korean peninsula is stability. They will maintain an equal distance between Seoul and Pyongyang."

2. Future of Korean Peninsula

The Washington Times released an opinion piece by Nick Eberstadt, the Henry Wendt chair at the American Enterprise Institute, and Richard J. Ellings, president of the National Bureau of Asian Research, ("THE NEXT HOT SPOT," 5/23/01) which said the US President George W. Bush

administration's review of US policy toward the Korean peninsula comes at an opportune moment because the security environment in Northeast Asia is in the midst of profound change and developments in the Korean peninsula may soon present the US with great new dangers or new opportunities. The authors noted that today, "the Korean peninsula looks increasingly positioned to act deliberately or inadvertently as a driver of international events." Eberstadt and Wendt gave examples such as the continuing DPRK pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and the possible termination of peninsula's fragile two-state structure, which could have "repercussions reverberating well beyond the confines of the Korean peninsula." Therefore, the authors wrote, "Coping with radical change in Korea, and devising a new architecture for peace and prosperity in a very different Korea from the one we know today, may be urgent tasks confronting the Pacific powers and the international community in the uncertain years ahead. Coping with dramatic change in Korea will require not only planning in Washington, but cooperation wherever possible with other powers." Eberstadt and Wendt stressed the need for the US to cooperate with Japan, the PRC, and Russia in dealing with the Korean Peninsula. In the end, the authors wrote, positing a continuation of the status quo rather than contemplating what alternative the Korean Peninsula might portend for national interests will be detrimental. The authors concluded, "Given the Korean Peninsula's importance in contemporary world affairs, and some of the plausible problems that the peninsula could face in the not-distant future, the costs of Korean 'surprises' for inadequately prepared governments with interests in the region at stake could prove to be especially high." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 23, 2001.]

3. Japanese Textbook Issue

Reuters (Jae Hur, "KOREA MPS AIM TO BROADEN JAPAN TEXTBOOK PROTEST," Tokyo, 5/23/01) reported that ROK lawmakers mounted a last-ditch attempt to stop the use of a controversial Japanese history textbook on Wednesday. The four legislators are applying to a Japanese court for an injunction against the distribution of the textbook. Hahm Seung-heui of the ruling Millennium Democratic Party said that while a ruling in their favor is seen as unlikely, the four MPs plan to continue their campaign against the textbooks by forming a region-wide body to oppose "historical distortion" by Japan. Meanwhile, some academics in the ROK earlier this week urged the United Nations to block Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the Security Council and asked faculty members in the PRC and DPRK for a solidarity to protest against the textbooks.

4. Taiwan Air Defense

The London Times (Oliver August, "SECRET WORLD THAT GUARDS TAIWAN," Hualien, 5/23/01) reported that the Jiashan airbase is Taiwan's most sensitive defense installation where more than 120 fighter jets are hidden inside a mountain to foil PRC attackers. Underground flight crews arm and fuel the jets before they fly out of the hillside protected by anti-aircraft guns. On their return, the planes touch down on a shortened runway along the tunnel entrance before disappearing into the caves again. Taiwan's military regards Jiashan as its last line of defense against a PRC invasion. The caves are buried under hundreds of feet of granite and the steel doors at the end of the tunnels apparently can withstand nuclear blasts. Arthur Ding, of the Institute of International Relations, "The mountains around Hualien are so steep that any incoming missile would have a trajectory problem. After flying horizontally across the Taiwan Strait the missile would have to clear the top of the mountain and then immediately drop straight down to hit the base." Military planners assume that after a strike by the PRC, Taiwan's fighter jets would still be able to take off unharmed. Ding said, "After the first wave we have the capability to counter-attack." Jiashan was built eight years ago and has room for a third of Taiwan's Air Force, including US-made F16 jets. The Taiwanese government is planning a huge expansion of underground air shelters near the island's east coast.

Sean Boyne of Jane's Intelligence Review stated, "There are a number of others under construction, due for completion by 2003." Like Jiashan, they may include hospitals and command centers as well as space for munitions and parts. The first new base at Chih-hang was completed in January. Boyne said, "In time of war Taiwan would move combat aircraft from vulnerable sectors on the west coast--the side facing China--to these shelters." Taiwan's Defense Minister Wu Shih-wen confirmed the expansion drive, saying, "We need to extend our underground shelters and make them even more resistant to attack." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 23, 2001.]

5. Chen Shui-bian's US Stopover

Agence France Presse ("CHINA LODGES FORMAL PROTEST OVER CHEN VISIT TO US," Beijing, 5/23/01) reported that the PRC on Wednesday summoned Michael W. Marine, acting head of the US embassy in Beijing (pending the arrival of a new ambassador) to protest the US decision to allow Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to stop over in the US en route to Latin America. The Xinhua news agency said that PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong lodged a "solemn representation with the US government for its permission of Chen Shui-bian's stopover to the United States." Zhou said, "the wrongdoing of the US government seriously dishonored the three Sino-US joint communiques and the commitments made by the US side, stirred the arrogance of the splittist force who sought Taiwan's 'independence', and grossly interfered in China's internal affairs. The Chinese side expresses its strong indignation at and firm opposition" to such moves.

6. Asia-Europe Meeting

Agence France Presse ("ASIAN AND EUROPEAN MINISTERS TO MEET IN CHINA WITH US IN BACKGROUND," Beijing, 5/23/01) reported that the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) are meeting this week in Beijing, but the US is not invited. The agenda facing the group is broad and varied, ranging from human trafficking to the digital divide and developments on the Korean peninsula. David Zweig, a political scientist at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said, "This could be an opportunity for commiserating with each other about how difficult it is to cope in a world where there is such a high degree of American unilateralism." ASEM is made up of 10 Asian countries and 15 European Union countries, as well as the European Commission. Senior officials from the ASEM members started two days of talks on Wednesday, while the foreign ministers will gather for a working dinner late Thursday, followed by a full day of meetings on May 25.

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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