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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. Japan-DPRK Talks
2. Trilateral Policy Coordination
3. PRC-Taiwan Unification
4. Ratification of CTBT

II. Republic of Korea 1. Inter-Korean Railway
2. Repatriation of DPRK Spies
3. Investment in DPRK
4. DPRK Development Fund
5. ROK POWs
6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

I. United States

1. Japan-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN, NORTH KOREA SHELVE ROW FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS," Kisaruzu, 8/24/00) and The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREAN NEGOTIATORS IN JAPAN," Tokyo, 8/24/00) reported that talks between delegations led by DPRK special envoy Jong Thae-hwa and Kojiro Takano of Japan continued on Thursday with an agreement to a new round of talks. A Japanese foreign ministry official said after a round of morning sessions, "We had a very serious exchange of views in order to hold constructive discussions for the next round. We have more or less cleared a stage." Officials said that the next talks after the current round in Japan were expected to be held in October, possibly in Beijing. An afternoon session was also planned. However, the Japanese ministry official said that no breakthrough was expected. He said, "The atmosphere is quite friendly but they are sticking to the same stated positions." The official said both sides explained "basic positions" over Japan's "liquidation of its past." He added, "It is not that both sides presented new positions or ideas."

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN'S PM SEEKS HIGH-LEVEL NORTH KOREA MEETING AT UN SUMMIT," Tokyo, 8/24/00) reported that during a visit to India, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori on August 23 proposed the highest- level encounter yet between Japan and the DRPK when he attends next month's UN Millennium Summit. According to Kyodo News agency, Mori said, "I believe it is good for leaders' ideas to be conveyed to the other side directly as much as possible. But at the moment, nothing has been decided. The important issue for this round is to discuss (their positions) on specific issues, and to make sure it leads to a next round. We will deal with the issues patiently, while continuing to hold close contact with South Korea and the United States."

2. Trilateral Policy Coordination

The Associated Press ("U.S., JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA TO COORDINATE ON NORTH KOREA POLICIES," Seoul, 8/24/00) reported that the ROK government said on Thursday that senior US, Japanese and ROK officials will meet in Seoul next week to coordinate their DPRK policies amid a growing thaw on the Korean peninsula. The ROK Foreign Ministry said that during the two-day talks beginning August 31, the three countries will discuss their separate contacts with the DPRK government. US State Department counselor Wendy Sherman, Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi, and ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-ryong are expected at the meeting.

3. PRC-Taiwan Unification

Taiwan's Central News Agency ("CHINA, TAIWAN OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS CHINA REUNIFICATION IN BERLIN," Taipei, 8/24/00) reported that over 500 officials and scholars from Taiwan and the PRC as well as overseas Chinese will come together on August 26 in Berlin to discuss the issues relating to a peaceful unification of China. The 110-member Taiwan delegation consists of major pro-unification organizations in Taiwan, and will be led by Liang Su-jung, a former speaker of the Legislative Yuan and head of the Cross-Taiwan Strait Peaceful Unification Promotion Association. The meeting was initiated by Zhang Manxin, president of the European Chinese Peaceful Unification Promotion Association. The two-day seminar will focus on promoting the development of Taipei-Beijing relations under the "one China" principle; bilateral exchanges and cooperation in the areas of economics, trade, and culture; and on the influence of overseas Chinese in the promotion of unification. Notable PRC delegates are to include Zhang Jincheng and Sun Yafu, vice-presidents of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, Wang Guoquan, vice-chairman of the PRC People's Political Consultative Conference, as well as officials of PRC's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, and the China Council for Promoting Peaceful Reunification.

4. Ratification of CTBT

Agence France Presse ("CTBT COMMISSION HOPES CHINA WILL RATIFY TREATY SOON," Vienna, 8/24/00) reported that the Vienna-based preparatory commission for a global agreement to ban nuclear weapons testing (CTBTO) said on Thursday that it hoped that the PRC would ratify the treaty in the near future. CTBTO president Olga Pellicer said, "There are some hopes with China. They might ratify in a realistic timeframe. If they do so, the whole atmosphere in southeast Asia will be more favorable. In the United States we have an electoral year. It is very hard to predict whether or not it's possible to expect a ratification." She noted that a US decision could take "some years." CTBTO executive secretary Wolfgang Hoffman said that the DPRK had no difficulty with the treaty, but still had to decide when it wanted to sign.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter-Korean Railway

The Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "SEOUL GOES ALL OUT TO REMOVE MINES IN DMZ FOR INTER-KOREAN RAIL LINK," Seoul, 08/24/00) reported that the government is going all out to remove land mines in the demilitarized zone (DMZ) for the reconnection of the severed inter-Korean railway, and may introduce state-of-the-art foreign equipment to detect and clear them, officials said. "Our military's equipment can uncover metallic antipersonnel and antitank mines, but it is more difficult to detect plastic mines," said a government official, who asked not to be named. "Therefore, we are considering introducing advanced foreign equipment for more rapid and efficient operations." Unofficial ministry data indicates that about 1.12 million mines are buried throughout the 4 km-wide DMZ dividing the two Koreas. About 100,000 of them are presumed to have been planted in the southern section of the severed rail link. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 24, 2000.]

2. Repatriation of DPRK Spies

The Korea Herald (Kim Min-hee, "SOME N.K. SPIES CHOOSE FAMILY OVER HOME," Seoul, 08/23/00) reported that while many former DPRK spies will return to the DPRK Sept. 2 to permanently reunite with their relatives, some others will likely remain in the ROK in order to prevent more families from being divided. In another step toward reconciliation, the ROK is set to repatriate 63 DPRK spies who have refused to renounce their belief in Communism after five decades behind bars. About 23 diehard Communists, however, have opted to remain here, giving up a hero's welcome and the comfort of living where their heart belongs for the sake of keeping their families together. They cannot easily part with their families in the ROK, who have endured hardships all their lives as the spouses or children of DPRK spies.

3. Investment in DPRK

The Korea Herald ("PANEL ON INTER-KOREAN ECONOMIC PROJECTS URGED," Seoul, 08/23/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Kim Min-bai, "INTER KOREAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION COUNCIL PROPOSED," Seoul, 08/23/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung ordered officials on Wednesday to form a government-business panel to curtail extreme competition among ROK firms involved in inter-Korean business projects. "It is not desirable for South Korean businesses to engage in excessive competition regarding investment in North Korea," Kim said in a meeting of the National Economic Advisory Council (NEAC) at Chong Wa Dae. Kim said that a joint panel between government and businesses should be set up to help ROK firms seek business opportunities in the DPRK "in an orderly manner." "Excessive and overlapped investment in North Korea by South Korean firms will not benefit either side," the President said.

4. DPRK Development Fund

Chosun Ilbo (Lee Jun, "MINISTER PROPOSES NORTHEAST ASIAN FUND FOR NK DEVELOPMENT," Seoul, 08/23/00) reported that ROK Minister of Finance and Economy Jin Nyum said on Wednesday that the government plans to take steps to set up an international fund aimed at fostering the opening of markets and the expansion of infrastructure in the DPRK. Jin said that the recent thaw in inter-Korea relations would require the creation of a multinational fund including northeast Asian countries such as Japan, the PRC and the ROK. The minister said however, that the

exact management method for the fund would have to be discussed among the contributing nations. Ministry spokesperson Shin Dong-kyu said later that while Jin's speech reflected the will of the ministry, no concrete steps have been made to date.

5. ROK POWs

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Yong-jong, "GOV'T TO OPEN NEW POW DEPARTMENT IN UNIFICATION MINISTRY," Seoul, 08/23/00) reported that the ROK government will establish a bureau to handle issues relating to the repatriation of POWs and kidnapped ROK citizens believed to be still alive in the DPRK. The new bureau will be put under the Ministry of Unification and will begin work as early as September.

6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Nam-jung, "HYUNDAI AND NORTH KOREA FINALIZE KAESONG DEVELOPMENT PLAN," Seoul, 08/23/00) reported that final negotiations between Hyundai and the DPRK over an economic development plan for the city of Kaesong have been completed. The two parties agreed that construction will begin in early November in order to develop Kaesong into a special economic and tourism zone. A source from Hyundai said on August 23 that, "Hyundai Asan Corporation Chairman Chung Mong-hun and Hyundai Engineering and Construction President Kim Yun-kyu met with Chief Secretary Kang Jong-hun of the DPRK Asia-Pacific Peace Committee and signed the final agreement on details of a development plan for Kaesong. Surveying can begin at the beginning of September. The main construction work can begin around November."

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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