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I. United States

1. DPRK Naval Clash

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "NORTH KOREA SAYS MORE SEA CLASHES POSSIBLE, Seoul, 07/24/02) reported that the DPRK foreign ministry said on Wednesday more naval clashes with the ROK were possible unless the ROK and the US ended their adherence to a 50-year-old inter-Korean sea border. The fresh blast of rhetoric from the DPRK, carried on the official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA), came three days before the anniversary of the 1953 armistice that ended the three-year Korean War. The DPRK's foreign ministry stated, "An undesirable armed clash took place in the west sea recently in the wake of that in 1999 and there is the danger of occurrence of more serious incidents in future," it said. "All this is attributable to the US insistence on the 'Northern Limit Line' (NLL) illegally drawn by it," it added.

2. PRC DPRK Asylum Seekers

Reuters (Tamora Vidaillet, "N.KOREAN ASYLUM BIDS STIR FEARS OF CHINA CLAMPDOWN," Beijing, 07/24/02) and Agence France Presse ("CHINA, SOUTH KOREA TIGHT-LIPPED ON FRESH NORTH KOREAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS," 07/24/02) reported that approximately 10 DPRK asylum seekers have entered the ROK0 consulate in Beijing this month but are likely to be allowed to leave

for Seoul with a minimum of fuss, a diplomat said. The asylum seekers, including families, entered in small groups or as individuals shortly after three earlier defectors were allowed to leave the same mission for the ROK on July 15, said the Asian diplomat who is closely following the cases. "The ROK government and PRC side hope that these cases should be dealt with in a low-key way," said the diplomat, who did not want to be named. An ROK embassy spokesman declined to confirm the report, in keeping with a new policy of playing down asylum cases to avoid embarrassing the PRC. The PRC had not agreed formally to allow the latest batch to depart, but had made it clear it would deal with the cases in a humanitarian manner, the spokesman said. "We interpret that the Chinese position in a very positive way."

3. PRC Domestic Politics

Reuters (Jeremy Page, "CHINA LEADERS DEBATE JIANG'S PARTY REVAMP PLAN," Beijing, 07/24/02) carried an analytical article asking can a capitalist be a communist? That is the riddle troubling PRC leaders at the Beidaihe seaside resort as they debate a controversial plan to modernize the Communist Party by officially opening its doors to private entrepreneurs, analysts say. As well as thrashing out details of a leadership change, party elders must decide how, and to what extent, to incorporate the plan in the party constitution at a five-yearly congress in September or October. Party chief and President Jiang Zemin proposed the idea last year as a way to maintain the party's legitimacy to rule over an increasingly pluralistic and capitalist society. He wants the plan, enshrined in his "Three Represents" theory, written into the party charter to claim a place in China's ideological hall of fame alongside Chairman Mao Zedong and former paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, analysts say. That would also preserve his political clout after the congress, when he is due to step down as party chief along with other senior leaders. But the plan is already unpopular with left-wingers who say it betrays the party's support base of workers and farmers. And now opposition is mounting among mainstream party elders who fear Jiang is using a media campaign promoting his theory to cling on to power, possibly as party chief, analysts say. "When the plan was announced, a lot of people welcomed it," said one political scientist and party member at a prestigious university in Beijing, who asked not to be identified. "Although it was a long way from establishing the rule of law or real democracy, it prepared the way for political reform within the party. Now people just think it's ridiculous, because of the propaganda and the rumours that Jiang will stay on."

4. Cross-Straits Relations

Reuters (James Peng and Rita Chou, "TAIWAN FIRMS TOLD TO QUIT CHINA CHIP VENTURES," Taipei, 07/24/02) reported that Taiwan has ordered local firms to pull out unapproved investments in computer chip companies in the PRC, threatening violators with imprisonment of up to five years. The announcement by the cabinet's policymaking Mainland Affairs Council late on Tuesday said some investors have admitted to investing in Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp (SMIC), Grace Semiconductor Manufacturing Co (GSMC) and He Jian Technology and promised to withdraw funds. The council did not name the investors. The three firms all have Taiwan management and financial backing. Officials at the Shanghai-based SMIC said they were not aware of the Taiwan crackdown, but added most of the company's funds came from the United States, not from Taiwan directly.

5. PRC Response to US Cancellation of UN Funds

Reuters (Jonathan Ansfield, "CHINA SLAMS U.S. FOR CANCELLING POPULATION FUND CASH,"

Beijing, 07/24/02) reported that the PRC blasted the Bush administration decision to scrap a US$34 million payment to the UN Population Fund, saying on Tuesday it would harm government efforts to stop forced abortions. The administration announced the decision on Monday, despite a State Department report recommending the cash be paid, saying the U.N. fund helped the PRC coerce women indirectly to have abortions under the PRC's one-child policy. "The United States canceling its donation to the population fund will weaken the population fund's ability to assist developing countries," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Government and non-government planners agreed, admitting that illegally forced sterilizations still occur in small pockets of the country due to loopholes and limited resources in the state family planning system. "It is precisely because of this that we need international cooperation," said Liu Yangfeng, vice-director of the non-governmental China Family Planning Association.

6. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("OUSTED JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER DENIES FUND MISUSE ALLEGATIONS," 07/24/02) reported that Japan's popular former foreign minister, Makiko Tanaka, flatly denied alleged misuse of state salaries intended for her secretaries as she faced a lower-house ethics panel. "I want to make it clear that it is not true at all," Tanaka told a meeting Wednesday of the Deliberative Council on Political Ethics, which was open to the media for the first time. There had been a rash of reports in the local press that Tanaka had misused salaries for the secretaries, who were on lease from the Tanaka family company Echigo Kotsu, a bus service operator in her constituency of Niigata, some 200 kilometres (124 miles) north of Tokyo. She said "salaries from the state were paid to the secretaries." Asked to comment on details of the salaries, however, she repeatedly said: "I do not know as I left trifling things entirely (to the Niigata company)."

Agence France-Presse ("APPROVAL RATE FOR JAPANESE CABINET RISING: POLL," 07/23/02) reported that the approval rate for the cabinet of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi rose by about eight points to 50 percent as voters welcomed the premier's renewed backing for reforms, a poll showed. Meanwhile, the disapproval rate for the cabinet fell to 38 percent, down about eight points from a month ago, said the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper, which carried out the poll. The Yomiuri contacted 3,000 randomly selected voters on Saturday and Sunday and received 1,902 valid answers. On Monday, the Asahi Shimbun said its poll showed support for the cabient was up 10 points to 47 percent, while the disapproval rate fell eight points to 36 percent.

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.
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