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I. **United States**

1. **US-Russia Nuclear Weapons Reduction Treaty**

The New York Times (Michael Wines, "US AND RUSSIA SIGN NUCLEAR WEAPONS REDUCTION TREATY," Moscow, 05/24/02) reported that US President Bush and the Russian leader Vladimir V. Putin, calling the event historic, put their names today to a treaty reducing their countries' nuclear warheads by two thirds. "We are going to cast aside all doubts and suspicions and welcome a new era of relations," Bush said in a televised meeting with Putin just before the signing ceremony in the Kremlin. "Today we may say we are creating qualitatively new relations," Mr. Putin said. Under the Treaty of Moscow, each country will reduce its arsenals to between 1,700 and 2,200 nuclear

warheads by 2012. The two countries currently have about 6,000 warheads each. Bush arrived here Thursday night to be greeted by a brass band, a parade of flag-carrying, arm-swinging soldiers and a rebuke over remarks he made earlier about Russian aid to Iran's nuclear programs. It was the start of a three-day visit that both sides have cast as a final elegy to the cold war.

2. Taiwan on Taiwan-US Relations

Asia Pulse, ("TAIWAN-US RELATIONS BEST FOR LAST 30 YEARS: TAIWAN LEADER," Taipei, 05/24/02) reported President Chen Shui-bian said Thursday that present bilateral relations between Taiwan and the US are better since US President George W. Bush came to power in 2000 than they have been for the last 30 years. Chen made the remarks while giving a speech to welcome a 30-member delegation of the United States-based National Newspaper Association. Describing ties as in their best shape ever, Chen said the two countries are "inseparable democratic allies" and he thanked the US for its long-term support for Taiwan. Based on common aspirations jointly shared by the two countries, such as democracy, freedom and human rights, Chen said the United States is willing to help Taiwan safeguard its democracy, while Taiwan will do its best to help maintain international order in the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world. "Both countries hope for stability and prosperity in the Taiwan Strait and increased trade and economic exchanges are mutually beneficial," the president noted.

3. DPRK Asylum Seekers in ROK

The Associated Press (Yoo Jae-suk, "FIVE NORTH KOREAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS ENJOY FIRST DAY IN SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 05/22/02) and Agence France-Presse, ("North Korean asylum seekers arrive in Seoul," 05/23/02) reported that the five DPRK refugees who caused a serious diplomatic row between the PRC and Japan arrived in the ROK to an emotional welcome from relatives and supporters. The two men, two women and a three-year-old girl, all from the same family, looked nervous when confronted by dozens of photographers at Incheon International Airport. But they smiled and expressed their relief after being offered bouquets of flowers from representatives of aid groups and relatives from the DPRK who defected to the ROK last year. Without identifying those who helped their asylum mission, the group thanked their helpers, mostly members of South Korean and foreign Christian groups. "First of all, I'd like to say thanks to God and to those who helped us come here," said one of the men, Kim Kwang-Chul. "We had bitter feelings because we were dragged out of the Japanese consulate compound by Chinese security authorities, but we've left all the bad feelings behind as we are now in South Korea," he said. They left Beijing on Wednesday and flew to Manila and then straight to Seoul. Thirty-eight DPRK asylum seekers have been allowed to leave the PRC for the ROK since early March, all having sought asylum in foreign diplomatic missions.

4. PRC and Japan on DPRK Asylum Seekers

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN WANTS TO INTERVIEW NORTH KOREANS ASYLUM SEEKERS IN SOUTH KOREA," 05/24/02) reported that Japan has not abandoned plans to interview the five DPRK asylum seekers who were granted safe passage to the ROK. "We have to do what needs to be done," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a press conference on Friday. "We will talk with the South Korean government."

Reuters (Jonathan Ansfield, "CHINA SAYS TOOK ACCOUNT OF KOREAN DEFECTORS' WISHES," 05/23/02) reported that the PRC said on Thursday it took the wishes of the five DPRK asylum seekers into account when allowing them to fly to freedom to the ROK, and rejected suggestions that future

asylum seekers would necessarily receive similar treatment. A Foreign Ministry spokesman gave the PRC's version of the release of the defectors. "These five Koreans entered and stayed in China illegally," spokesman Kong Quan told a news conference. "After verification of their identities -- which included whether they had criminal records in China -- the Chinese side permitted them to go to a third country based on international norms, domestic laws and in a humanitarian spirit as well as based on their own will," he said. Kong gave no signs that the release of the five asylum seekers had any link with negotiations between the PRC and Japan. "China handled these five people entirely within the scope of its national sovereignty," said Kong. "China has no need to consult with other countries." "We hope and require that the Japanese side recognize reality and respect reality."

5. US role in DPRK Asylum Seekers

Agence France-Presse ("STATE DEPARTMENT ADMITS IT MISLAID ASYLUM PLEA BY NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES," 05/25/02) reported that the US State Department admitted that an apparent plea for asylum by the five DPRK refugees arrested after trying to enter a Japanese consulate in the PRC had got lost in the system and was never seen by relevant officials. The appeal was contained in a letter faxed to the department by the Virginia-based Defense Forum Foundation, which has been involved in helping North Korean refugees, to the office of Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky. "The letter conveyed an e-mail message in English purporting to be from the five North Koreans who tried to enter the Japanese consulate in Shenyang," said State Department spokesman Philip Reeker. "The message stated that the family sought asylum in the United States. And unfortunately, the letter was not transmitted to relevant offices in the department that were handling this matter," he said. "It was an error. We certainly regret it."

6. PRC on India-Pakistan Conflict

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA URGES INDIA, PAKISTAN TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS THROUGH DIALOGUE," 05/25/02) reported that the PRC called on India to resolve differences with Pakistan through dialogue and show restraint, state media reported. PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, in a phone call to his Indian counterpart, Jaswant Singh, said he hoped the Southeast Asian neighbors would de-escalate tensions between them as soon as possible. This would be in the basic interests of the two countries and also benefit peace and stability in South Asia, he said.

7. DPRK on US Label of Sponsor of Terrorism

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA ANGRY AT U.S. DECISION TO RE-DESIGNATE IT AS A SPONSOR OF TERRORISM," Seoul, 05/24/02) and Reuters ("NORTH KOREA DISMISSES U.S. TERROR DESIGNATION," Seoul, 05/24/02) reported that the ROK responded for the first time to the US' renewed labeling of the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism. The DPRK stated on said Friday that it does not care about the "trite" US decision. In its annual report to Congress on Tuesday, the US State Department again listed the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism for the past year, along with Iran, Sudan, Libya, Iraq, Cuba and Syria. The DPRK's foreign news outlet, Korean Central News Agency, reported that the DPRK's Foreign Ministry denounced the US decision, calling it "ridiculous." "It is a trite method employed by the U.S. for the pursuance of its 'big stick policy' to label those countries disobedient to it as terrorists," KCNA quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying. "The DPRK (North Korea) does not care whether the US lists it as a 'terrorism sponsor' or not, because nobody recognizes the label," the spokesman was further quoted as saying.

8. PRC Gas Field Discovery

The Associated Press ("CHINA REPORTS FINDING HUGE NEW GAS FIELD," Beijing, 05/23/02) reported that researchers have discovered the PRC's biggest natural gas reserves to date in its northern region of Inner Mongolia, the government said Thursday. The field is believed to hold 602.5 billion cubic meters (21 trillion cubic feet) of gas, said Yan Qisheng, an official of the Ministry of Science and Technology. However, Yan said the discovery shouldn't affect the PRC's decision on a massive deal to be announced soon to supply imported gas. Companies from Indonesia, Australia and Qatar are competing for the 20-year contract. "China's demand for gas is big, and the supply cannot meet demand," said Yan, director of the ministry's department of resource development. The Inner Mongolia field is expected to supply Beijing and other major eastern Chinese cities, Yan said. They are trying to reduce air pollution by using cleaner gas and less coal and imported oil. The new gas field was found in the Erdos region of Inner Mongolia in 1999, but its vast size wasn't known until recently, said Yan. Beijing should start receiving gas from the field within two years, she said. The field is expected to produce about 6.5 billion cubic meters (227 billion cubic feet) of gas a year.

II. Republic of Korea

1. North Korean Asylum Seekers

Chosun Ilbo (Yeo Si-dong, "FIVE NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS ARRIVE IN SEOUL," Beijing, Seoul, 05/23/02) reported that five DPRK defectors, who were dragged out of the Japanese consulate in Shenyang by PRC police on May 8 arrived at the Incheon International Airport from Manila early Thursday morning. They were met by five Chang Gil-soo's family members who came to Seoul last year. According to diplomatic sources, the move by PRC, coupled with comments to Japanese reporters by Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs Quian Quichen, who said that the PRC does not forcibly repatriate DPRK asylum seekers or hold those who have not committed any crime, could mean a major change in the treatment of refugees by PRC.

Joongang Ilbo ("GOVERNMENT TO ACCEUP NK DEFECTORS AT DIPLOMATIC MISSION ABROAD," Seoul, 05/24/02) reported that the government decided to accept all DPRK defectors who manage to reach the ROK mission established abroad and negotiate with the related local authorities for the best solution under humanitarian basis. The government's new resolve is seen so far as a fresh new change to the existing policy. "Things would continue to remain tough, though, with China's reluctance to interfere with inter-Korean issues and especially toward those wanting to head to Seoul," state official said.

2. DPRK-US Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("DARK CLOUDS FOR NORTH-US DIALOGUE, SAYS CHOSUN SHINBO," Seoul, 05/24/02) reported that dark clouds are hanging low for prospective dialogue between the US and DPRK, said the pro-DPRK daily paper on Thursday referring to US re-designating the DPRK as a country sponsoring terrorism in its annual report. "Although it is hardly surprising coming from the Bush administration that branded our country as an axis of evil it nevertheless disclosed once more the US' unwavering resolve to keep up with confrontation and hostility," Chosun Shinbo said. "How can we expect any progress at this point even with the visit of American envoy when it is obvious how the report would affect bilateral talks?"

3. Opposition Party Leader's Policy with DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Sang-il, "LEE SAYS HE WOULD CONTINUE POLICY OF ENGAGEMENT WITH

NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 05/23/02) reported that Lee Hoi-chang, the presidential nominee of the Grand National Party, said Wednesday he would continue to engage with the DPRK if elected, but said he is wary of the differences in the two Koreas' respective visions of reunification. "I will seek to clarify Article Two of the South-North Joint Declaration regarding reunification," Lee said at a meeting with the Kwanhun Club, an association of senior ROK journalists.

4. DPRK-Russia Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("TIE TO US, SOUTH STRESSED FOR NORTH," Moscow, 05/22/02) reported that DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun and his Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov agreed Tuesday that strengthening ties between the ROK and the DPRK and between the US and DPRK are important in building peace on the Korean Peninsula. According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the two ministers also agreed to cooperate to fight international terrorism and asserted that they are prepared to resolve international conflict through diplomatic efforts. The ministry said the two ministers have decided to accelerate the project linking the Trans-Korean and Trans-Siberian railways. They also discussed ways to support the construction of nuclear power plants and expand infrastructure facilities in DPRK.

III. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK-ROK Relations

People's Daily (Wang Linchang, "DPRK EXPERTS VISIT ROK," 05/20/02, O3) reported that a group of 10 DPRK experts arrived in Seoul on May 19 to look over ROK airports and light-water nuclear reactors. During its six-day stay in the ROK, the report said, the DPRK delegation will visit Yangyang Airport, Gimhae International Airport and nuclear power plants in Uljin in North Gyeongsang Province. It reported that the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization was consulting with North Korea on opening a direct inter-Korean air route over the East Sea. The air route, if opened, will be used to transport workers and materials for the construction of nuclear reactors in the DPRK, said the report.

2. PRC-ROK Relations

People's Daily (Qian Tong, "LI PENG MEETS WITH ROK GUESTS," Beijing, 05/21/02, P2) reported that Li Peng, chairman of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, met with a delegation of the Korean Foundation of ROK led by its president Lee In-ho in Beijing on May 20. Li praised the development of the PRC-ROK relationship in political, economic and cultural areas after the two countries forged diplomatic ties a decade ago. ORC Leaders, including President Jiang Zemin, Li himself and Premier Zhu Rongji had visited ROK, and ROK leaders had also paid reciprocal visits to the PRC, Li said, adding that such high-level visits enhanced mutual understanding and promoted friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries. Li told the guests that Xinjiang was one of the key regions for PRC's western development strategy in which entrepreneurs from ROK were welcome to participate for the common prosperity and development of the two countries.

3. PRC-US Relations

People's Daily (Gong Wen, "CHINA SUBMITS SUSPENDING CONCESSION LIST AGAINST US

PRODUCTS TO WTO," Beijing, 05/22/02, P4) reported that sources from the PRC's Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) said that the PRC has submitted to the WTO a list of suspending concession against US products targeted for import duties. The list, a tariff response to US steel tariffs, was submitted to WTO on May 17, according to the MOFTEC. It includes waste paper, bean oil and electric compressors, said the report. It said, if the WTO dispute settlement panel decides that the US safeguard measures conflict with WTO agreements, the PRC will add a 24 percent tariff to those products, with the total tariff volume of 94 million US dollars.

4. PRC-Japan Relations

People's Daily ("CONSULATE INTRUSION INCIDENT 'WELL SOLVED' FM SPOKESMAN," 05/23/02, Beijing, P4) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said on May 22 that the PRC has appropriately dealt with the five involved in an intrusion incident at the Japanese Consulate-General in Shenyang, Northeast China. In a brief statement, Kong said that the settlement was made in accordance with the PRC's domestic laws and international norms and from a humanitarian perspective.

5. Cross-Straits Relations

People's Daily ("MAINLAND READY TO PROVIDE MORE WATER TO TAIWAN," Beijing, 05/22/02, P4) reported that Chen Yunlin, director of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council of the PRC, reiterated on May 21 that although Fujian is also partly hit by drought, the province has been ready to ship untreated or tap water to Taiwan's Jinmen (Quemoy), Mazu and Penghu islands. The PRC welcomes ships from Taiwan to come for water and is ready to send ships for supplying water to Taiwan, Chen said while answering reporters' question about the mainland's water supply to Taiwan. "We're seriously concerned about the continued drought in Taiwan and are willing to do our best to help the Taiwan compatriots to overcome the difficulties," said Chen. If the Taiwan authorities agree, Fujian engineers are available to work with their colleagues in Jinmen, Mazu and Penghu on long-term water supplies, he said.

6. PRC Position on Arms Control

China Daily ("NUCLEAR ARMS," 05/23/02, P2) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan on May 22 said that the PRC hoped a new agreement on nuclear arms control between the US and Russia can follow the spirit of verifiability and non-reversibility, in which they should further reduce their arms and push forward the international process of arms control and disarmament. Tang made the remarks during a telephone talk with his Russian counterpart, Igor Ivanov, noting that the PRC maintains the international community should establish a new security concept based on mutual benefit, mutual trust, equality and cooperation.

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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Department of Political Science, [Korea University](#), Seoul, Republic of Korea

Center for American Studies,
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International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),
[Meiji Gakuin University](#), Tokyo, Japan

[Monash Asia Institute](#),
[Monash University](#), Clayton, Australia

Brandon Yu: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Young-soo: yskim328@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy84@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Saiko Iwata: saiko@akira.ne.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@online.ru
Moscow, Russian Federation

Wu Chunsi: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:
nautilus@nautilus.org