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I. United States

1. ROK Encourages US-DPRK Talks

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA URGES U.S.-N. KOREA TALKS," Seoul, 4/26/01) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Han Seung-soo and Defense Minister Kim Dong-shin met Thursday with Evans Revere, charge d'affaires at the US Embassy in Seoul, and US Forces Korea Commander General Thomas Schwartz to ask the US to reopen dialogue with the DPRK. Kim Euy-taek, a spokesman at the ROK Foreign Ministry, said, "During the meeting, we relayed our hope that the United States will resume dialogue with North Korea as soon as possible after reviewing its policy on the North." Also Thursday, ROK President Kim Dae-jung said he believed that the DPRK will soon resume dialogue not only with the ROK but also with the US. Kim said, "There is no alternative to dialogue, which is beneficial to each other."

2. Reaction to Bush Remarks on Taiwan

The Los Angeles Times (Edwin Chen and Henry Chu, "BUSH REMARKS ON TAIWAN DEFENSE CAUSE A FUROR OVER U.S. POLICY," Washington, 4/26/01), Reuters ("CHINA SAYS U.S. ON "DANGEROUS ROAD" OVER TAIWAN," Beijing, 4/26/01), and the Associated Press (John Leicester, "CHINA ATTACKS BUSH OVER TAIWAN," Beijing, 4/26/01) reported that Sino-US tensions over Taiwan rose again on Wednesday when US President George W. Bush declared that the US would do "whatever it took to help Taiwan defend herself" and said the deployment of US troops is "certainly an option" if the PRC were to invade the island. However, Bush quickly sought to correct any impression that the remarks constitute a departure from long- standing US policy to be deliberately vague on how the US would help Taiwan. Zhang Qiyue, a spokeswoman for the PRC Foreign Ministry, called Bush's comments "dangerous" and said they "undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and will create further damage to Sino-US relations." Zhang added, "This shows that it has drifted further on a dangerous road." PRC Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing called on the US to "immediately revoke its erroneous decision" and said the PRC would hold the US responsible "for all the consequences" of the weapons sales. The PRC also threatened to reconsider its cooperation on nonproliferation issues. In a rapid series of follow-up interviews with various news organizations, Bush insisted that his comments did not signal a departure from the "strategic ambiguity" that for decades has characterized the official US position on Taiwan vis-a-vis the PRC.

Reuters ("CHINA PLAYS DOWN ANGER AT BUSH COMMENTS ON TAIWAN," Beijing, 4/26/01) reported that tough comments by US President George W. Bush on defending Taiwan caused only a ripple across the Taiwan Strait on Thursday. Taiwan refused to get too excited, and the PRC played down its anger. The PRC's first official reaction indicated that the PRC wanted to mark its displeasure without blowing up the issue. In Taiwan, PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Chang Siao-yue said Taiwan saw no shift in US policy away from the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act. Chang said, "We don't judge U.S. policy based on one sentence. The new U.S. administration's policy toward Taiwan is consistent with its commitments in the Taiwan Relations Act. What concerns us the most is peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait. Nobody wants war. Everyone wants peace." Political analysts said Taiwan was anxious not to provoke the PRC by crowing about an apparently hardening US position on defending the island. Ting Shou-chung, a legislator from Taiwan's main opposition Nationalist Party, said he feared the US was using the island as a bargaining chip in its dispute with the PRC over the April 1 collision between a US spy plane and PRC fighter jet. Ting said, "We shouldn't be overjoyed. Taiwan could be a bargaining chip. It doesn't do us any good if Taiwan is pushed to the front line." The daily editions of widely read PRC national newspapers did not mention Bush's statement that the US would do "whatever it took" to defend Taiwan, focusing instead on attacking the US decision to help Taiwan buy a package of sophisticated arms. The online edition of the official People's Daily later highlighted Bush's subsequent remarks softening his tone. The paper said, "U.S. President Bush has clarified his earlier remarks that United States would do 'whatever it took' to help Taiwan defend itself by saying US policy on Taiwan had not changed." English-language China Radio International noted Bush had reaffirmed his commitment to the Taiwan Relations Act, with its ambiguity on the use of US forces. Diplomats said newspapers were playing down the issue to avoid stirring up a nationalistic public already angered by the biggest US arms sales to Taiwan in a decade, the spy plane incident, and a US visa issued to former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui. One US diplomat said, "It's good news they haven't been too inflammatory in the papers. Otherwise, things could quickly escalate." However, PRC academics who advise and comment on government policy said the PRC would make a strong response. Yan Xuetong, executive director of the Institute of International Studies at Tsinghua University in Beijing, said, "First Bush started to sell offensive weapons to Taiwan, now he has promised to protect Taiwan unconditionally. This is a fundamental change," he said. "I think the reaction must be something more than a protest."

3. Secrets on US Spy Plane

Reuters ("US CREW UNABLE TO DESTROY ALL SECRETS ON SPY PLANE, SAY GOVERNMENT SOURCES," Washington, 4/26/01) reported that US government sources said on Wednesday that the crew of the US EP-3 surveillance plane that made an emergency landing in the PRC had not been able to destroy as much of the secret materials on board as originally believed, and some of it could be exploited by the PRC. The government source told Reuters, "It's pretty bad. They weren't able to get a lot of it. It's very serious." US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, shortly after the crew was released, said they went through the check list for such situations and did everything possible in the time they had. But the government source said the crew did not have the ability to destroy everything in an expeditious manner so as "to not subject it to compromise." The source said in some cases, the crew was not able to physically destroy the material, and in others what they tried to destroy was not destroyed to the extent that rendered it useless. An anonymous senior US Navy official said the situation was not necessarily worse than the US Defense Department officials believed at the very beginning. The official said, "We knew that there would be computer disks and drives, even though smashed, that could be compromised by a determined investigator. We knew there were going to be compromises and that there was going to be a significant windfall for the Chinese."

4. PRC-Japan Relations

Reuters ("ANGRY CHINA SCRAPS NUMBER TWO LEADER'S JAPAN TRIP," Beijing, 4/26/01) reported that the PRC said on Thursday that PRC Parliament Chief Li Peng has cancelled his trip to Japan next month in protest against former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's visit to Japan. PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said, "The National People's Congress has notified Japan's Diet that Li Peng will be unable to visit Japan in the near future." Zhang called on Japan's newly formed government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to "take concrete actions to improve relations and ensure the recovery and development of bilateral ties."

5. New Japanese Administration

Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "JAPAN PRIME MINISTER NAMES 5 WOMEN," Tokyo, 4/26/01) reported that newly elected Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi announced Thursday that Makiko Tanaka would become the country's first female foreign minister. On Thursday, she backed Koizumi's statement that the relationship with the US forms the foundation of Japan's foreign policy. Joining her in the Cabinet are Mayumi Moriyama as justice minister and Atsuko Toyama as education minister. Chikage Ogi and Yoriko Kawaguchi stayed on as transport minister and environment agency chief, respectively. The position of finance minister went to Masajuro Shiokawa, a party veteran who has held no top financial posts.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Criticize Japan

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "LAWMAKER CALLS ON U.S. TO CONTINUE ENGAGEMENT WITH N.K.," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that a ruling party lawmaker Wednesday sent a letter to US foreign policymakers and US legislators, urging them to adopt a policy of engaging the DPRK instead of isolating it. Representative Jang Sung-min of the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) said in the letter "President George W. Bush's North Korea policy should be formulated in a way that will re-

engage the North and resume stalled negotiations." The mail, which contains an article elaborating on the reasons for Jang's demands, was addressed to the Bush administration's ranking officials, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, US Congress leaders and experts on the DPRK. Jang said that the pursuit of engagement with the DPRK would be the best way to curb military threats from the DPRK, noting that this also conforms to the US need for national security.

2. DPRK on US

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NORTH KOREA SPEEDS UP ANTI-U.S. RHETORIC," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that with the past five weeks of its anti-US campaigns contributing little to resuming dialogue with the US, the DPRK intensified its rhetoric against the US this week. On April 23 alone, DPRK's state-run news outlets released a total of 16 reports, including several editorials, denouncing the US administration, compared to an average of 10 a day prior to last week. The propaganda reports are focused on criticizing the ongoing annual joint military drill between the ROK and the US, called "Reception, staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSOI)" and call for the withdrawal of the US troops stationed here. They also continued to attack the Bush administration's tough stances toward Pyongyang, which they claim are aimed at "stifling" the DPRK.

3. DPRK Mine Clearing

Chosun Ilbo (Jung Kwon-hyun, "NK FAILS TO START MINE CLEARING," Seoul, 04/25/01) reported that the DPRK has yet to start mine clearance in its section of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), despite the ROK's completion of work in its section. Colonel Lee Myong- hoon, chief of the situation room for the Seoul-Shinuiju Railway Project told National Assembly men who visited the construction site that last year DPRK soldiers and vehicles were observed in the area of the railroad, but nothing has been seen recently. However, Koh Dong-choon, head of the Korea National Railroad's project team said that there were no mines in the civil control area north of the DMZ and that work was 29 percent complete. He added that the DPRK would complete their construction faster than the ROK, saying opening the link in September was still possible as the 1.8km in the DMZ could be completed in three months after removal of the mines, if ministers sign the appropriate document.

4. US Hearing on DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "U.S. TO HOLD PUBLIC HEARINGS ON NORTH KOREA IN MAY," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that the US Senate's Foreign Relations Committee (FRC) Chaired by Senator Jesse Helms is to hold a public hearing on the DPRK next month, on May 23. The hearings on the DPRK, opened for the first time since the launch of the new Bush administration is expected to provide another debating ground for Republicans and Democrats, with Republicans refusing to budge its hard stance and Democrats urging to resume the dialogue and engagement policy with the world's last Stalinist state. Chairman Helms, a Republican himself, is expected to side with the hard-liners. Among the witnesses stands Mr. Nobert Vollertsen the German doctor the former relief worker in the DPRK who were later expelled under charges of slandering the DPRK authority.

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL DENIES U.S. VISIT BY HWANG," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that the ROK government Wednesday denied reports that high-level DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop will attend a US Senate committee hearing on the DPRK next month. Local dailies reported that Hwang will visit the US at the invitation of Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms to testify before a hearing scheduled for May 23. The Foreign Ministry said it confirmed that the US committee had never sent an invitation to Hwang. A ministry official said Hwang might have been

invited from a conservative defense-related foundation in the US.

5. Inter-Korean Trade

Joongang Ilbo ("23.1 percent INCREASE IN INTER-KOREAN PROCESSING TRADE," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that the inter-Korean processing trade for the first quarter of the year summed up to US$24.34 million taking 31.8 percent of the total trade volume, a 23.1 percent increase from last year. An ROK state official said, "Exactly 193 companies participated in North-South trade during the first quarter with 342 trade items. Among them 79 businesses were related to processing trade with 154 items." However, not much luck was there for the total volume of inter-Korean trade, recording US$76.56 million for first quarter, which translates, into a meager 0.8 percent growth from same time last year. In fact, according to the ROK Unification Ministry. excluding the non-transactional affairs like humanitarian aid and construction of light water reactor the actual trade volume adds up to US$43.48 million, a 22 percent reduction from last year,. A ministry official said, "In the respect of nominal trade balance South Korea recorded a US$15.01 million-profit. But taking into account all the aids poured to the North, it is actually the their side that has reaped the real profit of about US$17.75 million. The drop in inter-Korean trade attributes to worries over last year's setbacks in inter-Korea economic cooperation's transactions. With the normalization of seaborne supply route, the trade between two Koreas has shown 75 percent increase since mid-March and is continuing to recover its pace."

6. DPRK's New Laws

Joongang Ilbo ("N.K. TO LEGISLATE NEW LAWS FOR KAESONG COMPLEX," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that prior to the construction of Kaesong complex, the DPRK has called for a team of experts to legislate special laws related to the project. The state official, pointing out the importance of Kaesong Complex, said the DPRK is currently working on drawing out special laws for the project with the help from dozens of local experts from various sectors on Wednesday. The ROK state official said, "The North has a good understanding of what the laws should contain thanks to its prior negotiations with Hyundai for past several months. North Korea is opening more rooms for international concepts on trade but nevertheless the inter-Korean ties would still be affected by the upcoming legislation. We hope the newly passed processing trade law to make positive contributions to inter- Korean trade, especially on the processing trade sector for the good of two Koreas."

7. DPRK-Russia Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("N.K. VICE CHAIRMAN TO HOLD TALKS WITH PUTIN ON THURSDAY," Seoul, 04/26/01) reported that AVN, Russia's military news agency on April 24, said Kim Il-chol, DPRK's vice chairman of the National Defense Commission and Minister of the People's Armed Forces will visit Russia on Thursday to negotiate a strengthening of DPRK-Russia military ties. The visit came amid the certain conflicts rising between the two countries that include DPRK's latest request for weaponry aid and its unilateral postponement of the summit meeting initially scheduled to take place last week on April 17. Kim, during his stay in Russia, is expected to hold consecutive meetings with top brass Russian officials including President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov.

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

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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