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I. United States

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1. Military Armistice Commission

Dow Jones Newswires ("S. KOREA AGREES TO LET U.S. GENERAL HEAD ARMISTICE TALKS," Seoul, 05/27/98) reported that ROK officials said Wednesday that the ROK has agreed to let a US general represent the UN Command (UNC) in the Military Armistice Commission (MAC). An anonymous senior ROK military official stated, "Our decision is significant in that it will bring the North back to dialogue and reopen a high-level military channel to cope with possible emergencies on the peninsula." Jim Coles, spokesman for the UN Command in Seoul, said that the UNC has been talking with the DPRK about the proposed change, but that no agreement has been reached. Last March the DPRK, which withdrew from the MAC in 1991, indicated it would resume meetings with the UN Command if a US general headed its delegation.

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2. US MIAs from Korean War

United Press International ("MIA TEAM ARRIVES IN NORTH KOREA," Washington, 05/26/98) reported that a five-member US Defense Department team arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday to begin reviewing military records for clues to the fate of US servicemen reported missing in action during the Korean War. The team will conduct its search at the Fatherland Liberation Museum in Pyongyang. Last year, a similar mission turned up documents, which are still being analyzed, relating to the fate of several US prisoners of war.

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3. ROK Food Aid for DPRK

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA TO LET HYUNDAI OWNER TAKE CATTLE TO N. KOREA," Seoul, 05/27/98) reported that ROK government officials on Wednesday said that Hyundai Corp. founder Chung Ju- yung is expected to be allowed to visit the DPRK in early June. The officials said that the DPRK has basically agreed to let Chung and his cattle cross the border at Panmunjom, and that Hyundai and DPRK officials will meet in Beijing this weekend to work out details.

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4. DPRK Agricultural Development

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA TO PRESENT PLAN FOR GRAIN SUSTAINABILITY," Geneva, 05/26/98) reported that a UN Development Program (UNDP) spokeswoman said Tuesday that DPRK officials plan to present a US$2 billion action plan this week aimed at making the country self-sufficient in cereals within three years. A 13-member DPRK delegation led by Choe Su-hon, vice minister for foreign affairs, will outline the agricultural recovery program at a two-day round-table session opening in Geneva on Thursday. The spokeswoman said that the delegation will ask for imports of farm machinery, fuel, and fertilizer worth US$300 million to rehabilitate the DPRK's farm sector. Some 40 countries, including the US, the ROK, and the PRC, are due to send representatives to the closed-door talks, which are also being attended by nearly 30 international organizations. Christian Lemaire, UNDP representative in Pyongyang, stated, "The grain deficit stands at about two million metric tons. The deficit is likely to continue unless some rehabilitation is done." He added that the balance of the US$2 billion plan is to be provided through local inputs and domestic labor. The plan

has been worked out over the past five months by the DPRK and experts from the UNDP and Food and Agriculture Organization. Lemaire emphasized that the conference in Geneva "is not a pledging conference. It is a first opportunity to discuss the main underlying issues and get some consensus on whether it is the right way to do things."

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5. ROK Labor Unrest

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "HYUNDAI, OTHER WORKERS GO ON STRIKE," Seoul, 05/27/98) reported that workers belonging to the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions began a two-day nationwide strike over job security. The Union vowed to organize a bigger strike in early June unless massive layoffs are halted. The confederation said that about one-fifth of its members joined in the temporary work stoppage, but government officials said the figure was much smaller. Union leaders demanded a sharp increase in unemployment benefits and a speedier restructuring of the chaebol. Kim Won-bae, the chief government negotiator from the Labor Ministry, called those demands "unacceptable" but added that the government will continue to talk with labor.

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6. Clinton's Visit to PRC

Reuters ("REPORT: CLINTON TO VISIT CHINA JUNE 25-JULY 3," Beijing, 05/27/98) reported that the PRC's official Workers' Daily said Wednesday that US President Bill Clinton is scheduled to visit the PRC from June 25 to July 3. The PRC Foreign Ministry and the US Embassy in Beijing declined to confirm the dates. The newspaper commented, "Serious differences remain between the two sides on some issues due to the different political systems and values in China and the United States. But these kinds of differences should not become obstacles to the two sides developing ties and cooperating."

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7. Taiwanese Views of Clinton's PRC Visit

The Los Angeles Times carried an analytical article (Jim Mann, "U.S.-CHINA SUMMIT HAS TAIWAN JITTERY," Washington, 05/27/98) which said that the PRC has been "pressing extremely hard, behind the scenes," for US President Bill Clinton to sign a statement that the US will not support Taiwanese independence, Taiwanese admission to the UN, or a policy of recognizing two separate Chinas. It added that the PRC would like the administration to pledge that it will not install a theater-missile defense system on Taiwan and will restrict arms sales to the island. The article quoted Koo Chen-fu, chairman of the Straits Exchange Foundation, as saying that if Clinton were to give these written assurances at the summit, "it could hurt Taiwan." Regarding the summit in general, Koo stated, "our only concern is that Taiwan's interests are taken into account." Koo also warned that if Clinton were to make new written promises about Taiwan during the summit, it would "put fire into the Taiwan independence movement." He argued that PRC officials will put their own interpretation on any written statement, even if it does not take the form of a joint communique. He stated, "They will not regard the fact that it's not a communique as less binding."

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8. Taiwan-PRC Legal Relations

Reuters (Alice Hung, "TAIWAN PLEASED BUT CAUTIOUS AFTER CHINA'S LEGAL DECISION,"

Taipei, 05/27/98) reported that the PRC Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that Taiwan civil court rulings and institutional arbitration decisions would have the same validity as law in the PRC upon confirmation by PRC courts. The PRC's official Xinhua news agency quoted Supreme People's Court Vice President Tang Dehua as saying that the decision did not mean that the PRC accepted Taiwan's legal system or surrendered its claim to legal and administrative power over the island. Johnnason Liu, legal chief of the Taiwan cabinet's Mainland Affairs Council, responded to the move, "If they can really implement the decision, it's a move in a positive direction." However, he added, "I am reluctant to call it a goodwill gesture. We have shown our good faith by accepting mainland court rulings since 1992, provided those rulings do not violate public orders and social tradition. The mainland side's decision to reciprocate is a little bit late and it does not forget to belittle our political status. Still, it's better than not doing anything at all."

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9. Indian Nuclear Tests

Reuters (Narayanan Madhavan, "INDIA DEFENDS NUCLEAR TESTS," New Delhi, 05/26/98) reported that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Tuesday again defended his decision to conduct nuclear tests earlier this month and said that preparations for the tests had started as long ago as 1983. Vajpayee stated, "Only the decisions were needed. My government took the decision." He added, "Because of this we have joined the ranks of big powers."

The Associated Press (Krishnan Guruswamy, "INDIA LEADERS QUESTION NUKE TESTS," New Delhi, 05/27/98) reported that several Indian lawmakers on Wednesday in parliament criticized the government's nuclear policy. Communist Party of India leader Indrajit Gupta questioned whether India could claim a scientific achievement while "we can't supply ordinary water and electricity to the residents of the capital." Natwar Singh, a leader of the main opposition Congress party, accused Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of overturning a national consensus for nuclear restraint built over the past 24 years.

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10. Indian Nuclear Weaponization

United Press International ("INDIA MAY ARM WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS," New Delhi, 05/26/98) reported that Indian defense minister George Fernandes said Tuesday that he wants to arm the Indian military with nuclear weapons, as without them, India will not be taken seriously as a nuclear power. He added, "No one is talking of nuclear war. There is only one instance when nuclear weapons were used, and we know the circumstances."

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11. India Calls for No-First Use Pact

Reuters ("INDIA READY TO DISCUSS 'NO FIRST USE' PACT," New Delhi, 05/27/98) reported that an Indian government paper on nuclear policy presented by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to parliament on Wednesday said that the government was ready to discuss a "no first use" agreement on nuclear weapons with Pakistan and other countries, bilaterally or collectively. The paper reiterated that India was a nuclear weapons state and "this is a reality that cannot be denied." However, it added, "India, mindful of its international obligations, shall not use these weapons to commit aggression or to mount threats against any country, these are weapons of self-defense and to ensure that in turn India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion." In a separate statement

Vajpayee told the lower house of parliament, "We have been and will continue to be in the forefront of the calls for opening negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, so that this challenge can be dealt with in the same manner that we have dealt with the scourge of two other weapons of mass destruction -- through the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention."

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12. Possibility of Pakistani Nuclear Test

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "PAKISTAN CLOSE TO NUCLEAR TEST BLAST," 05/27/98) reported that US intelligence agencies believe that Pakistan is on the verge of conducting its first underground nuclear test. An unnamed US intelligence official stated, "They are making final preparations to test. It could happen at any time." Other intelligence sources said that the information obtained through US surveillance confirms that a nuclear device has been placed in the underground shaft at the Pakistani test site and that equipment used to monitor the blast is in place. However, an unnamed White House official said Tuesday, "As they have said all along, [the Pakistanis] are prepared to test and, as far as we know, they have made no political decisions." A senior defense official likewise said that the Pakistanis are "close" to having everything in place for a test, but "what isn't clear is that they have made a decision to do so."

II. Republic of Korea

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1. US MIAs from Korean War

The Monday handover at the truce village of Panmunjom caught even experienced DPRK observers off guard. When the DPRK refused to repatriate the remains on May 15 as originally scheduled, it appeared adamant that a US government representative, not the UN Command (UNC), should take possession of the remains, citing the US-DPRK bilateral agreement last year. Even the UNC appeared unprepared for the DPRK's change of stance, as shown by the fact that it invited media representatives to the transfer virtually at the last minute, while its usual practice is to serve notice days before. The transfer immediately followed a colonel-level meeting between the UNC and the DPRK in the morning. From a humanitarian point of view, the resolution of the issue is a welcome event. Some observers have raised the possibility that the US offered the DPRK some "carrots" to resolve the repatriation issue. The UNC declined comment on the issue, but said, "The format on how to handle future repatriations is not resolved.'' It has been speculated that the UNC might have agreed to have a US government official receive the remains in the future. Following the DPRK's refusal to hand over the remains on May 15, some observers speculated that the refusal was part of the DPRK's tactics to lay a groundwork for continuing direct contacts between the US and the DPRK. A UNC spokesman did not give a clear answer, citing the UNC's internal policy not to talk about the details of its dialogue with the DPRK. However, some UNC officials ventured that the DPRK realized the necessity for smooth relations with the UNC in anticipation of food aid deliveries through Panmunjom. Another possibility might be in connection with a generals-level meeting between the US and the DPRK, which has been bogged down due to procedural matters, according to some DPRK watchers. (Korea Times, "SPECULATION RIFE ON NORTH KOREA'S HANDOVER OF US SOLDIERS' REMAINS," 05/27/98)

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2. DPRK Defector Reported Missing

A DPRK man who fled with his family has been missing since last August when he was caught by authorities in a PRC city, a civic human rights group in Seoul said yesterday. Li Sung-nam, 46, who crossed the DPRK-PRC border last August 5 with his wife and two sons, is feared to have been repatriated to the DPRK, said the Citizens Union for Human Rights in the DPRK. Li was reportedly caught by PRC security officials on August 6. "Repatriation of defectors back to the DPRK means death or detention in a concentration camp," a union spokesman said. PRC authorities make it a rule to send DPRK refugees back to the DPRK when they get picked up for unauthorized travel in the PRC. Amnesty International last October requested the PRC authorities to disclose Lee's whereabouts, but the PRC has refused to reply to the request. (Korea Times, "NORTH KOREAN DEFECTOR REPORTEDLY MISSING IN CHINA SINCE LAST YEAR," 05/27/98)

III. People's Republic of China

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1. Light-Water Reactor Project

China Daily ("REACTOR PROJECT TO BE DISCUSSED," Seoul, 05/22/98, A11) reported that the ROK, the US, and Japan will hold an executive board meeting next month to discuss the issue of cost-sharing for the provision of nuclear reactors and heavy fuel oil to the DPRK. According to an ROK official, when and where the meeting will be held have not yet been decided.

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2. DPRK Participation in ARF

Wen Hui Daily ("DPRK APPLIES FOR ACCESSION TO ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM," Manila, 05/22/98, A3) reported that the DPRK had expressed again its interest in access to the ASEAN Regional Forum. The report said that the DPRK Government presented a note in the first ten days of this month to the Foreign Ministry of Philippines, saying that it hopes to accede to the Forum. The DPRK had made similar requests several times, but none was successful. A Philippine official said that dealing with the DPRK's application was a knotty problem, because that country had no formal diplomatic relations with most of the ASEAN countries. He added that the ASEAN had not yet made a decision.

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3. Clinton's Visit to PRC

Jie Fang Daily ("SYMPOSIUM HELD TO DISCUSS CLINTON'S VISIT TO CHINA," 05/21/98, A3) reported that the Shanghai Institute for International Studies held a symposium titled "President Clinton's Visit to China and Chinese-US Relations" on May 20. The participants agreed that with the common efforts by both sides, the bilateral relations between the PRC and the US are developing in a right direction. The two sides both have some expectations for the forthcoming important visit, the scholars said. However, it is not realistic to expect that all problems can be resolved just through one or two summits. The experts said that the mutual visits between the two presidents should be institutionalized and regularized so as to deepen mutual understanding and strengthen coordination on some problems. President Clinton's visit to the PRC is a good chance for the two people to understand each other. The participants believed that this visit will be helpful to eliminate some misunderstanding and prejudice and to establish a firm foundation for the benign development of bilateral relations.

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4. Alleged US Missile Technology Transfer to PRC

Commenting on the allegation that certain US satellite manufacturers had leaked missile technology to the PRC, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said on May 24 that the PRC had no intention of obtaining US missile technology by providing satellite launching services, nor is it possible for the PRC to do so. Sino-US cooperation on satellite launching is a normal commercial activity and beneficial to both sides, Zhu noted. People's Daily ("FM SPOKESMAN DENIES ALLEGATIONS," Beijing, 05/25/98, A4)

China Daily ("US MISSILE TECHNOLOGY ALLEGATION REBUTTED," 05/25/98, A1) reported that a veteran Chinese expert on carrier rocket technology denied on May 22 that a US satellite company helped the PRC to improve its missile guidance and control system during the investigation of the launching failure of the PRC's Long March rocket in February 1996. As an expert who experienced the whole investigation into the launching failure, Li Jianzhong, president of the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, said in an interview with Xinhua News Agency that the PRC invited six experts from the US, Great Britain, and Germany to form an assessment group in line with international practice. The purpose of the investigation was to obtain information on which the insurance sector could make decisions, he said, adding that the action was irreproachable.

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5. US-PRC Law Enforcement Cooperation

China Daily ("CHINA, US SET UP LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION," Washington, 05/15/98, A1) reported that the PRC and the US signed a memorandum of understanding on May 14 regarding the establishment of a joint liaison group on law enforcement cooperation. This is in line with the Sino-US Joint Statement issued during the Washington summit last year between presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton. The nations agreed to convene an initial meeting of a subgroup to discuss specific forms of cooperation, to begin negotiating an agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters at an early date, and to assign counter-narcotics officers to their respective embassies. According to a press release from the PRC Embassy in Washington, both nations hope to have their personnel in place by June.

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6. US-Japan Defense Guidelines

People's Daily ("CHINA CRITICIZES PACT REMARKS," Beijing, 05/27/98, A1) reported that the PRC expressed grave concerns over a Japanese official's remarks which virtually placed Taiwan in the Japan-US defense framework. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said at a press conference on May 26 that the PRC expressed its strong indignation at the move made by the Japanese side that wantonly interferes in the PRC's internal affairs. The PRC Government has made solemn representations with the Japanese Government for an explicit clarification and explanation, Zhu said.

A commentary in China Daily ("JAPAN THREATENS SECURITY," 05/26/98, A4) said that the PRC hopes that Takano Kigen's statement on May 22 that Taiwan is included in the revised US- Japan defense guidelines does not represent the stance of the Japanese Government. If it does, the article said, it will surely damage Sino-Japanese relations. Furthermore, it will pose new threats to the security environment of Asia. According to the article, the PRC has always kept a watchful eye on

the US- Japan military alliance, because the PRC is concerned that the defense accord is directed at the PRC and might infringe upon the PRC's sovereignty over Taiwan.

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7. PRC-Japanese Relations

PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, in an interview with China Daily, ("CHINA COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL, INDEPENDENT FOREIGN POLICY," 05/22/98, A1) said that the PRC will unswervingly follow a peaceful and independent foreign policy and is committed to strengthening friendly ties with all countries. Tang said that relations between the PRC and Japan have made great progress since the normalization of diplomatic ties thanks to the efforts of both governments and peoples. Now that Sino-Japanese relations have entered an important development period, both sides should seize opportunities, remember the lessons learned from history, and appropriately handle relevant problems on the basis of the China-Japan Joint Communiques and the China-Japan Peace and Friendship Treaty.

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8. Japanese-Russian Relations

Wen Hui Daily published an article on May 21 ("JAPAN PURSUES A BIG POWER STATUS," A3) analyzing Japan's motives to improve its relations with Russia. In order to reduce the pressures from the US, the article said, Japan recently began fastening its steps to better ties with Russia. Japan has three aims for the improvement of the Japanese-Russian relationship. The first is to balance the rise of the PRC. Secondly, Japan hopes to take part in energy development in Siberia. And thirdly, Japan hopes that economic cooperation will help persuade Russia to return the northern territories. Not long ago, Japan proposed holding a four-party summit in the Asia-Pacific region, which would be participated in by the leaders of the US, the PRC, Japan, and Russia. According to the article, this proposal is designed to improve Japan's international status, and to ingratiate itself with Russia.

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9. PRC Nuclear Industry

China Daily ("NUCLEAR PLANT," Nanjing, 05/22/98, A5) reported that land requisition, resettlement, and other preparatory work for the PRC's largest nuclear power plant, near the port city of Lianyungang in Jiangsu Province, has been completed. The project, which officially began on February 27 on 185 hectares of land, has meant moving 10 companies and institutes and about 70 families. Work on a 40-million-yuan (US$4.8 million) emergency exit and the testing and designing of programs have been done recently, and an 11-kilometer-long water supply pipe has been completed.

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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