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I. United States

1. DPRK Asylum-Seekers in PRC

Reuters (Jonathan Ansfield, "CHINA DEMANDS SEOUL HAND OVER NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS," Beijing, 05/28/02) reported that the PRC demanded on Tuesday that the ROK's consulate in Beijing hand over several DPRK asylum-seekers who took refuge there in the past week. The demand from Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan came as an ROK diplomat said that a fourth DPRK defector had got into the consulate on Monday to join three who entered earlier. "We require the South Korean embassy to hand these people over to the Chinese side to be dealt with," Kong said. "We believe that according to international and Chinese laws, foreign embassies have no right to grant asylum to citizens of a third country," he told a news conference. The diplomat said

negotiations with the PRC over their fate could drag on for some time. "It's rather complicated," said the diplomat, adding that the asylum-seekers would be able stay in the consulate for an extended period.

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA HOPES FOR TALKS WITH CHINA OVER NORTH KOREAN ASYLUM SEEKERS," Beijing, 05/26/02) and Agence France-Presse ("THREE NORTH KOREANS TAKE REFUGE IN SKOREAN MISSION IN BEIJING," 05/25/02) reported that three DPRK asylum-seekers have taken refuge in the ROK consulate in Beijing, an embassy spokesman said. A man and a woman in their 30s entered the consulate premises at about 4:00 pm Friday after a 40-year-old man tricked his way in the previous day, the spokesman said. The ROK government called on the PRC to allow the trio to leave for Seoul. "We conveyed our position to the PRC side that the incident should be dealt with in a humanitarian manner like the recent cases involving other foreign diplomatic facilities," an unidentified ROK official was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency. "We'll continue having active negotiations with Chinese authorities," he said. The ROK's foreign ministry made no official comment on the incident.

2. Cross-Straits Direct Links

Reuters (Jeremy Page and Benjamin Kang Lim, "CHINA AND TAIWAN DANCE AROUND TALKS ON DIRECT LINKS," Beijing, Taipei, 05/28/02) reported that the PRC and Taiwan may appear a step closer to ending a decades-old ban on direct air and shipping links following a Chinese invitation last week to two Taiwan tycoons to conduct talks. But the thousands of business executives who have to travel and ship goods via a third port, usually Hong Kong, can expect several more rounds of negotiations before talks on opening direct links can begin, analysts said on Monday.

3. Japan on India-Pakistan Conflict

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN URGES PAKISTAN TO EXERCISE SELF-RESTRAINT," 05/27/02) reported that Japan urged Pakistan to exercise restraint after Islamabad conducted two nuclear-capable missile tests over the weekend, heightening tensions with nuclear rival India. "We have called (on Islamabad) to exercise self-restraint. We will continue to do so in the future," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters.

4. ROK-US Military Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA REJECTS US CALLS FOR COMBAT TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN," 05/28/02) reported that the ROK has rejected US calls for combat troops in Afghanistan, citing anti-American sentiment and security precautions for the football World Cup, military authorities said. The unofficial US requests have been delivered through ROK liaison officers stationed in Florida to support the US Central Command, a defense ministry official said Tuesday. "We told them that dispatching military troops overseas is not appropriate at this point of time," he said. "This is a very sensitive issue," he said, referring to fears that South Korea could be the target of terrorist attacks due to its traditional alliance with the United States.

5. ROK-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA STOPS PUBLISHING DEFENSE WHITE PAPER TO AVOID ANNOYING NORTH," 05/25/02) reported that the ROK government has decided to skip the publication this year of an annual defense ministry report, whose description of the DPRK as its main

enemy has annoyed the DPRK. "We have decided not to publish this year's defense White Paper," a spokesman of the defense ministry stated. "The ministry will not issue the White Paper any more under the current government," he said. Instead of the annual report, the defense ministry will publish a comprehensive report wrapping up policies implemented under Kim Dae-Jung, the spokesman said. The opposition Grand National Party accused the government of following a policy of appeasement toward the DPRK. The party urged the government to publish this year's White Paper retaining intact the phrase labeling the DPRK as the main enemy.

6. Cross-Straits Relations

Reuters (Benjamin Kang, "TAIWAN DISMISSES CHINA MISSILE THEORY IN CRASH," Taipei, 05/27/02) reported that Taiwan investigators sifted through wreckage of a China Airlines jet Monday to try to find out why it fell apart at over 30,000 feet, but the military dismissed speculation it may have been hit by a PRC missile. Taiwan military spokesmen dismissed speculation that a PRC missile may have hit the aircraft. "Communist China has denied it. We think its denial is highly credible," the spokesman said by telephone, responding to a report on cable news network Formosa TV which quoted an unidentified military analyst as saying a Chinese missile may be to blame. "Based on our own judgment, we can also say it's absolutely impossible," the spokesman said, adding that Taiwan's military was not conducting any exercises or missile-testing in the area at the time of the crash.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK on the Net

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH ON THE NET? THIS MAN SAYS YES," Seoul, 05/28/02) reported that an ROK businessman now in Pyongyang says he and a DPRK company have opened a joint-venture Internet room in Pyongyang. The announcement was posted on the Hoonnet Co. Web site in the form of a letter from the firm's CEO, Kim Beom-hun, which he reportedly sent from the Pyongyang. Kim said the new facility would charge $50 for 30 minutes of access and $10 per 10 minutes thereafter. ROK is apparently unhappy about the venture and Kim has been ordered home by the Unification Ministry, a company source said, but is unlikely to return immediately. Kim's letter said the PC room would serve DPRK citizens as well as foreign clients; that is unlikely because of both censorship and the daunting price.

2. Perspectives of ROK-Japan Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("REDRESS DEMANDED BUT JAPAN YAWNS," Seoul, 05/28/02) reported that a joint survey conducted by the student newspapers of Seoul National University and Tokyo University has highlighted differences in historical perspective. The newspapers polled 580 university students; 73 percent of the ROK students polled said that the two countries must resolve issues related to their shared history before bilateral relations can improve. Less than half the Tokyo University students agreed. Seventy percent of ROK students criticized Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to the Yasukuni Shrine for Japan's war dead; only 16 percent of the Japanese respondents agreed. Forty percent of Tokyo University students said ROK was interfering in its internal affairs by criticizing Japan's history textbooks.

3. Inter Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL TO CONSIDER PROPOSING GEUMGANG TALKS," Seoul, 05/28/02) reported that ROK government is reportedly considering breaking the ice with a proposal for talks with DPRK on the Mount Kumgang tour business. The talks were originally slated for June 11, but ROK officials said they have heard nothing from DPRK regarding the talks. Officials remain optimistic that the talks will take place. They cited the recent visit to DPRK by a group of tangerine farmers, which was followed by lawmaker Park Geun-hye's meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il this month. Also DPRK has made no mention of earlier disputes that contributed to the cancellation of ROK-DPRK economic talks early this month. "This could lead to another chance for inter-Korean dialogue to mature depending on the North's attitude," an official added. "Although the second inter-Korean economic meeting should have taken place prior to the Kumgang tourism talks, we could still go ahead with the meeting," the official said.

4. Inter Korean Civic Level Contact

Joongang Ilbo ("SOUTH URGES NORTH TO RESUME CIVIC CONTACT," Seoul, 05/28/02) reported that the 2002 Preparatory Committee for North-South Joint Festivals disclosed Monday that they sent a letter urging DPRK to resume civic level talks. The committee said it proposed holding talks at Mount Kumgang from Friday to Sunday regarding a commemoration of the joint declaration the two Koreas signed June 15, 2000. The ROK Council for Reunification and Cooperation and a coalition of seven religious groups sent a letter to DPRK on Saturday protesting DPRK's claim that ROK government had disrupted earlier proposals for civic talks, which were originally scheduled for mid May. "At this point it looks like the two Koreas are almost ready to give up on a June 15 commemoration day with the cancelation of earlier working level talks two weeks ago," a preparatory committee official said. Earlier this month, the DPRK protested ROK's decision to bar some officials of unification-related civic groups from taking part in the working-level talks on the joint celebration.

5. DPRK Defectors in ROK Embassy

Chosun Ilbo (Yeo Si-dong, "CHINA DEMANDS HANDING OVER OF NK DEFECTORS," Beijing, 05/28/02) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry demanded the ROK embassy hand over defectors being given sanctuary in the ROK embassy in Beijing, Tuesday, saying that under international and domestic law, foreign diplomatic missions could not offer protection to third country nationals. This is the first such demand to be made; it was not made when earlier DPRK asylum-seekers entered the US, Canadian, Spanish and United Nation's missions.

6. ROK F-X Project

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "PRESIDENT SIGNS F-X DEAL," Seoul, 05/28/02) reported that following ROK President Kim Dae-jung signing off on the deal with Boeing to purchase 40 F-15Ks between 2005 and 2009, the Ministry of National Defense officially confirmed the final contract, Tuesday. The contract is worth US$4.228 billion with offset trade valued at US$3.561.

III. Japan

1. Japanese Armed Attack Situation Bill

The Japan Times ("EMERGENCY BILLS BACK ON TRACK," Tokyo, 05/28/02) reported that the

opposition parties on Monday agreed to resume Diet deliberations on the emergency contingency legislation. The move to end the boycott came after the ruling bloc accepted a request to ensure enough time for deliberations. The two sides further agreed to call off public hearings scheduled for this week on the bills. In a move to show its readiness to ensure thorough deliberations, the ruling camp also agreed to debate a counterproposal drawn up by the Liberal Party.

The Asahi Shimbun ("ASAHO MIZUSHIMA: EMERGENCY BILLS NOTHING BUT ANACHRONISM," Tokyo, 05/27/02) held an interview with Asaho Mizushima, a professor of constitutional law at Waseda University, on Japanese emergency bills now under deliberation. Mizushima said, "It is like an inventory clearance of the vestiges of the Cold War. The Cold War regime took into assumption Soviet aggression. But now, as a result of US intervention, it became more likely for Japan to be dragged into a conflict and become a target of attack. It is a shift from 'defense-type' emergency legislation to 'intervention-type' emergency legislation. If US forces attack 'rogue nations' and those that form 'an axis of evil' and Japan provides logistic support, it is a matter of course for Japan to be a target of a counterattack."

2. Japanese Self-Defense Force Unification

The Japan Times ("DEFENSE AGENCY PLANS UNIFICATION OF FORCES," 05/27/02) reported that the Japanese Defense Agency has begun deliberations on unifying the regional organizations of the ground, maritime and air services of the nation's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and reorganizing them into new regional headquarters, according to agency officials. The reorganization is aimed at strengthening unified operations to more effectively employ the three arms of the SDF in preparation for situations involving terrorists or spy ships, which cannot be handled under the deployment situations created during the Cold War. Currently, the Ground Self-Defense Force and the Maritime Self-Defense Force are each split into five regional groups and the Air Self-Defense Force into four. Each group has its own chain of command. Under the new plan, five or six regional headquarters are envisioned with the three SDF services having their troops directly controlled by the command centers at the respective regional headquarters, the officials said. The creation of regional defense bureaus is also envisioned, aimed at strengthening coordination with municipal governments in times of disaster relief and emergencies. A deliberation committee headed by Defense Agency chief Gen Nakatani expects to compile a basic plan on the reorganization by the end of the year and plans to implement it under the next mid-term defense plan starting in fiscal 2006. If the changes go ahead, it will be the first major reshuffle since the SDF was inaugurated in 1954.

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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