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I. United States

1. DPRK Reaction to US-Japan Defense Guidelines

Dow Jones Newswires ("N. KOREA CRITICIZES JAPANESE DEFENSE BILLS - KYODO," Tokyo, 04/29/99) reported that the DPRK on Thursday criticized the Japanese Diet's passage of a set of bills designed to implement the new US-Japan Defense Guidelines. The DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying that the legislation is aimed primarily at the DPRK, and that its passage transforms relations between Japan and the DPRK "into those between warring sides by law." The spokesman added that the legislation "leads to restoration of the right of belligerency renounced by Japan's Constitution ever since its defeat in World War II, clearing the way for overseas aggression by law." He warned, "It may trigger escalating tension and arms race in Asia and, furthermore, an armed conflict." The spokesman said that the legislation proves that DPRK efforts to "increase national defense capabilities are quite right. It earnestly calls for more efforts to increase national defense capability." He stated, "We solemnly declare that we

will not remain a passive onlooker to the ever-increasing military threats from the Japanese reactionaries which have become a reality, but reserve the right to turn to all means and steps necessary to foil Japan's design for reinvasion."

2. Four-Party Peace Talks

Reuters (Bill Tarrant, "N. KOREA TALKS FOLLOW SCRIPT: WAITING FOR GODOT," Seoul, 04/29/99) reported that the US and the ROK made four proposals during the recent round of four-party peace talks; establishing a communication channel between military authorities, exchanges of military personnel, prior notification of military exercises, and opening a land route through Panmunjom to deliver aid. The DPRK, however, insisted that the meeting first discuss a separate peace agreement between the US and the DPRK. Daryl Plunk, senior fellow at the Asian Studies Center of the Heritage Foundation, stated, "This stance serves two purposes. It keeps Pyongyang's focus clearly on the U.S., not on the South, and it remains a primary excuse used by the North to refuse dialogue with the South." He argued that US policy over the last several years has encouraged the DPRK to push for bilateral exchanges "and give mere lip service to dialogue with respect to the South. The very latest example was the Kumchangri deal. It was a payoff, plain and simple." Ralph Cossa of the Pacific Forum Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that while the Geneva meeting provided interaction between the ROK and the DPRK, "the key question remains: Is the North interested in moving forward or in just accumulating frequent flyer miles back and forth to Geneva.... So far it seems to be the latter." Cossa said that no dramatic breakthroughs are likely until after the US presidential election in 2000. He added, "It's even less clear if Washington will focus any attention on Asia next year beyond the status quo and damage limitation."

3. US Sanctions on DPRK

Reuters (Carol Giacomo, "US MOVES TO PERMIT FOOD SALES TO IRAN, LIBYA," Washington, 04/29/99) reported that US officials said Wednesday that the US government will ease its sanctions policy to permit food and medicine sales to Iran, Libya, and Sudan, but will not lift restrictions on exports to the DPRK and Iraq. The officials added that energy products are also not covered by the new policy. US Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat said the decision was the preliminary result of a two-year review of overall US sanctions policy that concluded that allowing food and medicine sales "doesn't enhance a nation's military capability or ability to support terrorism." He added that banning such sales can backfire by eroding support for US policies and harming its agricultural sector. He stated, "With respect to North Korea, Iraq and Cuba, today's policy announcement represents no change. There are already existing regimes" which govern and restrict food and medicine sales to those countries.

4. Alleged PRC Nuclear Espionage

Reuters ("CHINA DENIES STEALING US NUCLEAR DESIGNS," Beijing, 04/29/99) reported that the PRC denied Thursday it was involved in the reported theft of US nuclear warhead design technology. "The problem of China stealing nuclear technology from the United States does not exist," Foreign Ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi told a news conference. He also said, "If there has been a leak of secrets on the part of the United States, that is their own affair." Asked to comment on a proposal by a member of the US Congress that security should be tightened at US nuclear labs, Sun repeated his denial of Chinese spying, adding: "Whether US security measures should be reinforced or not is up to them." US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson confirmed allegations of nuclear theft on Wednesday, saying an "egregious" security breach had occurred. "While I cannot comment on the specifics, I can

confirm that classified nuclear weapons computer codes at Los Alamos were transferred to an unclassified computer system," Richardson said in a statement.

The Wall Street Journal (John J. Fialka, "APPARENT BREACH OF WEAPONS LAB TO PROMPT DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS," Washington, 04/29/99) reported that US Energy Department officials plan to take a series of disciplinary actions against agency employees and employees of its nuclear-weapons laboratory at Los Alamos for failing to stop a breach of security. The actions are expected next week, according to one official, after the completion of an internal inquiry of former agency employee Wen Ho Lee. Penalties for those who should have known about the transfers and the extent of Lee's activities will be determined by US Energy Secretary Bill Richardson, who this month ordered secure computer systems at US weapons labs to be closed down for two weeks. According to DOE officials, weapons- lab scientists -- who are technically employees of the University of California, the contractor that runs the facility -- have been retrained. One new procedure requires that no data can be transferred out of secure computer systems without the approval of two superiors. Sophisticated systems that can track secure information and keep profiles of the use of data by various researchers are also being installed.

5. Japanese Prime Minister's Visit to the US

Washington Post (Kevin Sullivan, "JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER RIDES WAVE OF POPULARITY ACROSS THE PACIFIC," Tokyo, 04/29/99) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi embarks Thursday on his first official visit to the US. Obuchi stops first in Los Angeles and will visit Chicago before traveling to Washington on Sunday on his six-day tour. Japan political analyst John Neuffer stated, "[US President Bill] Clinton can't be too unhappy with what Obuchi has done. I think Clinton's stance is going to be: 'A job well done, keep it up. But we're still concerned about the economy.' " Obuchi, meeting with US reporters on the eve of his departure, said he hoped his trip to the US would highlight the two nations' "shared values and goals." He said he planned to de-emphasize nagging trade friction and concentrate on areas of agreement, particularly security. Obuchi also touted his economic reform program, which most analysts agree has at the very least slowed Japan's economic downturn and at best has helped Japan move toward economic recovery. Political analyst Minoru Morita said Obuchi's main goal in the US will be to win a clear statement from Clinton that he trusts and has confidence in Obuchi's government. Obuchi is the sixth Japanese Prime Minister since Clinton was inaugurated in 1993.

6. Russia Nuclear Forces

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA SECURITY COUNCIL DISCUSSES UPGRADING NUCLEAR ARSENAL," Moscow, 04/29/99) reported that President Boris Yeltsin chaired a Kremlin session Thursday that sought ways to maintain and upgrade Russia's nuclear arsenals despite the country's lack of money. Russia's nuclear forces "have been and remain the key element in the strategy of ensuring national security and military might of the country," Yeltsin said at a meeting of the presidential Security Council. The council's secretary Vladimir Putin told reporters after the meeting Thursday that Russia would act like other nations, "moving ahead in the sensitive sphere" of testing nuclear arsenals while honoring international agreements. Yeltsin said at the start of the meeting Thursday that Russia "must consider in detail the entire technological cycle of the nuclear weapons sector, including research in the field of nuclear arms, the conducting of tests and the production and storage of such weapons." Yeltsin stressed that Russia must keep a sufficient number of nuclear weapons to guarantees its security. "We mustn't allow such dismantling of nuclear weapons that would leave us with nothing," he said. Yeltsin didn't mention the START II arms reduction treaty with the US in his opening remarks.

7. Indian Adherence to CTBT

Reuters ("INDIA: NUCLEAR BAN ASSENT HINGES ON SECURITY CONCERNS," New Delhi, 04/28/99) reported that Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes said Wednesday that India would not sign a global nuclear test ban treaty unless its security concerns were addressed. Fernandes stated, "When it comes to the question of CTBT (Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty) and NPT (Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty), the bottom line will be, unless our security concerns are addressed there is no way we are going to sign any treaty. He added, "Those security concerns have to be addressed not in some kind of secret understanding but in total transparency." Fernandes said India, which had been considered a soft state since independence, had become strong with the conduct of nuclear tests and the successful test firing of the Agni-II intermediate range ballistic missile. He argued, "Agni-II clinched the issue that India as a missile power is on the stage of the world and no one can any more question India's capability to look after its security, look after its frontiers."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Perry's Report

Joongang Ilbo (Jangsoo Seo , "WILLIAM PERRY'S REPORT CALLING FOR N.K. TO IMPLEMENT 1991 BASIC AGREEMENT," Seoul, 04/29/99) reported that an unnamed source from the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said that William Perry, US policy coordinator for the DPRK, will apparently call on the DPRK to implement the basic agreement concluded between the ROK and the DPRK in 1991 when he issues his review on DPRK policy at the end of May. The source said that during recent meetings in Hawaii with ROK policymakers, Perry proposed a new approach for the US and the ROK toward the DPRK that mainly focuses on the easing of tension on the Korean Peninsula. Perry's report apparently contains concrete measures to provide food and energy assistance to the DPRK through the expansion of direct investment, the support of agricultural and industrial technology, and loans under the auspices of international financial organizations including the Asia Development Bank.

2. ROK-DPRK Trade

Chosun Ilbo (In-ku Kim, "TWO WAY TRADE BETWEEN SOUTH AND NORTH FALLS," Seoul, 04/29/99) reported that, despite the government's policy of economic cooperation with the DPRK announced in 1998, the actual two way trade has declined, according to an ROK Ministry of Unification (MOU) report released Thursday. For the 98-99-trade year a total volume of US$254 million was recorded, down 17.4% compared to the previous year. A total of 15 businesses were granted 13 licenses for projects in the DPRK, but with the exception of Hyundai's tourism project and a corn growing test, none of the projects have been implemented. An ROK official said that the failure was due to the ROK economic crisis and a passive attitude on the part of the DPRK.

3. ROK Army Supplies

Chosun Ilbo (Yong-won Yoo, "ARMY TO GET NEW EQUIPMENT," 04/29/99) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Defense announced Thursday that it will issue twenty-seven new types of improved equipment beginning in May. The new issue includes larger boots and a larger, warmer, water-proof combat jacket for special forces troops that can protect troops at minus 25 degrees Celsius, alongside special lighter boots designed also to cope with low temperatures. Lighter, bullet proof jackets and new aramide helmets with twice the stopping power of the current ones will also

be issued.

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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