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I. United States

1. Russia-US Arms Control

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "RUMSFELD, RUSSIA TALK NUCLEAR ARMS," Moscow, 04/29/02) reported that the US and Russian defense chiefs reported modest progress Monday toward a nuclear arms agreement but gave no indication they had settled the major stumbling blocks. "We're making progress, and the meetings will continue later this week in Washington," Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said, referring to meetings scheduled between Secretary of State Colin Powell and Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. After about two hours of talks with Rumsfeld, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters that his government had submitted to the US a "set of new ideas" to push the talks toward agreement. He did not elaborate but said

Rumsfeld had responded to those ideas. "My personal belief is that today we have reached some progress," the defense minister said.

2. DPRK-US Relations

The Associated Press ("DPRK INVITES US OFFICIAL TO VISIT PYONGYANG," George Gedda, Washington, 04/29/02) and Reuters ("US SEES SIGNS DPRK PREPARED TO RESUME DIALOGUE," Washington, 04/29/02) reported that the DPRK has informed the US it would welcome a visit to Pyongyang by a US State Department envoy, apparently opening the way for the first official talks between the two countries in 18 months, an administration official said Monday. "There are indications they might be willing to resume dialogue," said an unnamed US official. US envoy on DPRK affairs, Jack Pritchard, had contact with DPRK officials in New York in March and went there again last week for a meeting of the Korean Energy Development Organization (KEDO). "There were indications then they wanted to continue the contacts in New York and keep the KEDO contacts going," said the second official. Another indication earlier this month was that ROK envoy, Lim Dong-won, reported back that the DPRK was ready to receive Pritchard in Pyongyang. Pritchard might go to the DPRK at some time but no agreement has been reached or dates set, an official said. The DPRK official said DPRK leader Kim Jong-il had invited President William Clinton to visit Pyongyang to play a mediating role and to cool rhetoric from the US.

3. DPRK Clinton Invitarion

Reuters (Teruaki Ueno, "DPRK INVITES CLINTON FOR MEDIATING ROLE," Pyongyang, 04/29/02) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has invited former US President Bill Clinton to visit Pyongyang to play a mediating role and to cool rhetoric from Washington, a DPRK official said on Monday. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated,"The plan of the Dear Leader Kim Jong-il is that Mr. Clinton should end the rhetoric." There was no immediate comment from either the White House or the State Department in the US. The Bush administration has in the past dismissed suggestions of mediation by former presidents, including Clinton. There was also no immediate reaction from the ROK.

4. DPRK-Japan Red Cross Talks

Reuters (John Ruwitch, "DPRK SEES PROGRESS IN TALKS WITH JAPANESE RED CROSS," Beijing, 04/29/02) and The Associated Press ("JAPAN, DPRK OPEN TALKS THROUGH RED CROSS," Beijing, 04/29) reported that Red Cross officials from Japan and DPRK on Monday opened their first talks in two years, looking to resolve a dispute over allegations that DPRK kidnapped Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Ri Ho-rim, deputy secretary general of the DPRK Red Cross Society stated that the DPRK and Japanese Red Cross officials made some progress on the issue of missing Japanese nationals on Monday, but also said that the investigation into was going slower than expected. "There has been some progress," Ri told reporters before the afternoon session of the talks began at a hotel in downtown Beijing. The resumption of the Red Cross talks follows a gap of more than two years and is one of several signs DPRK wants to resume diplomatic contacts with its neighbors. Both sides emerged from the morning session sounding positive. Ri said they discussed the missing Japanese, food aid and the fate of some 1,800 Japanese women who moved to DPRK with ethnic Korean husbands between 1959 and 1982.

5. DPRK-ROK Relations

The Associated Press (Yoo Jae-suk, "NKOREA WANTS SKOREA MINISTER FIRED," Seoul, 04/28/02) reported that the DPRK demanded Sunday that the ROK sack its foreign minister and apologize for what it called his support of the US "hard-line" policy toward the DPRK. The DPRK was responding to an April 23 Washington Post report quoting ROK Foreign Minister Choi Sung-hong as saying, "Sometimes carrying a big stick works in forcing DPRK to come forward." Choi made the remark in Washington earlier this month, the Post reported. The DPRK's official news agency, KCNA, called Choi's reported remark "an unpardonable insult." "Such traitors who make a mockery of and insult the fellow countrymen, kowtowing to their master the US, as Choi Sung-hong (did), should be dislodged and eliminated at once," said a statement by the DPRK's Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland, a powerful party organization. Choi has said his remarks were taken out of context.

6. DPRK Mystery Ship

Reuters ("JAPANESE DIVERS TO SURVEY SUSPECTED DPRK SPY SHIP," Tokyo, 04/29/02) reported that Japanese divers are preparing to start surveys this week of a suspected DPRK spy ship that sank last December after an exchange of fire with Japanese coast guard vessels, officials said on Monday. The investigations, which will begin on May 1, are a key move towards salvaging the vessel. Japanese intelligence sources have said that they suspect the ship was on a spying or drug smuggling mission for the DPRK. A Coast Guard spokeswoman said the investigation by a private diving firm will send divers down some 90 metres (yards) to check the ship's condition on the floor of the East China Sea, among other things. "The government's final decision on whether it is physically possible to raise it, and how that should be done, will be made pending the results of the investigation," she added.

7. Japan UN Security Council

The Associated Press ("BRITAIN BACKS JAPAN'S GOAL REGARDING THE U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL," London, 04/29/02) reported that Foreign Secretary Jack Straw welcomed Japan's foreign minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, to Britain on Monday and supported her country's bid for permanent membership on the UN Security Council. "I was delighted to welcome Mrs. Kawaguchi to the U.K. on this her first overseas visit since her appointment as foreign minister. Japan and the U.K. have excellent bilateral relations," Straw said. "I hope to visit Japan later this year, when we will look at further ways in which the U.K. and Japan can work together," he said. "We have today agreed that the U.K. and Japan will co-host two conferences on Afghanistan (news - web sites)," Straw said. "I also gave Mrs. Kawaguchi the U.K.'s full support to Japan in its bid for permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council."

8. Japan-US Military Relations

The Associated Press (Kelly Olsen, "TOP US MILITARY OFFICIAL MEETS JAPANESE DEFENSE CHIEF," Tokyo, 04/29/02) reported that US Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, General Richard Myers, Monday met Japan's most senior defense official during a tour of three of Japan, the ROK, and the Philippines. Myers held half- hour talks with Defense Agency head Gen Nakatani, said agency spokesman Koichiro Oshima. Later, Japanese media reported the men discussed proposed legal changes being debated in Parliament on emergency military measures to be taken if Japan is attacked, Japan's contribution to the war in Afghanistan and recent accidents involving US military aircraft here.

9. US Ship Hong Kong Port Call

The Associated Press (Dirk Beveridge, "US WARSHIPS SAIL INTO HONG KONG, ENDING CHINA'S LATEST BAN ON PORT CALLS," Hong Kong, 04/29/02) reported that a US aircraft carrier and four other ships in its battle group came to Hong Kong on Monday, bringing in about 6,000 sailors for a port call that ended the PRC's latest ban on such visits. The USS Kitty Hawk was set to spend several days here on a routine stop, along with a cruiser, a destroyer, a frigate and an oiler from its battle group, said Barbara Zigli, a spokeswoman for the US Consulate. The arrival of the Kitty Hawk and the other ships marked the first visit by US naval vessels since Beijing refused to let the guided missile destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur stop here about a month ago. That denial was viewed as retaliation over the US decision to let Taiwan's defense minister, Tang Yiau- ming, attend a private military convention earlier this year in Florida.

10. Arirang Festival

The Associated Press ("DPRK STAGES OPENING CEREMONY FOR 'ARIRANG' FESTIVAL," Pyongyang, 04/29/02) reported that a hundred-thousand dancers and gymnasts performed in a steady drizzle Monday at a stadium in the DPRK capital to mark the start of a festival that celebrates the birthday of the country's founder, Kim Il Sung. The opening ceremonies, held in Pyongyang's May Day Stadium, featured mass games in which thousands of students used placards to create giant backdrops for teams of gymnasts and other performers. At one point, the placards formed the beaming portrait of the late founder, who would have celebrated his 90th birthday on Monday. Although this year's festival also coincides with the 60th birthday of the DPRK's current leader, Kim Jong Il, he did not attend.

II. Republic of Korea

1. North Korean Defectors

Joongang Ilbo (Oh Young-hwan, "PYEONGYANG, BEIJING MUM ON DEFECTORS," Seoul, 04/28/02) reported that three DPRK defectors who sought asylum in ROK after entering two embassies in Beijing have arrived at Seoul's Incheon International Airport. The two defectors, Kim Mun-ok and Kim Ok- sil, both in their early 20s, arrived early Saturday, one day after another DPRK defector, O Se-hyeok, climbed the walls of the German embassy compound. Talks to send the two defectors to a third country and then to Seoul proceeded smoothly, an official at the US Embassy in Beijing said. The PRC Foreign Ministry has not issued any comment on the incidents. The PRC is bound by treaty with DPRK to repatriate North Korean defectors. Chu Gyu-ho, director general for Asian and Pacific affairs at the Foreign Ministry in Seoul, said the expatriation of the defectors reflected a humanitarian approach to such issues by the PRC.

2. Separated Family Reunion

Joongang Ilbo ("A 4TH REUNION UNDER WAY AT NORTH RESORT," Mount Geumgang," 04/29/02) reported that a group of 99 ROK citizens have met with family members living in the DPRK for the first time in half a century. The first meeting of a three-day reunion with 186 of their relatives from DPRK took place Sunday at the Kumgang Mountain Inn. The three-day reunion of separated families was the fourth of its kind after the ROK and the DPRK agreed to begin the program in June 2000. A support team, including a 19-member medical crew to assist the elderly family members, accompanied the group. Thirty journalists were allowed to make the trip and broadcast the reunion

live to ROK. Third-country journalists were not allowed.

3. DPRK, Main Enermy?

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "WHO'S MY ENEMY?" SEOUL ASKS," Seoul, 04/29/02) reported that the ROK government's move to delete a reference to the DPRK as ROK's "main enemy" in the National Defense Ministry's public planning document is stirring controversy. A government official said a high-level discussion of the issue would be held soon; the ministry reportedly opposes the deletion of the phrase. The Korean Veterans Association denounced the change as "unreasonable," saying it ignored the reality of a DPRK military threat. The group said the DPRK still refers to the ROK as an "enemy" and a "target" and refuses to cooperate in lessening cross-border military tension. Administration sympathizers say the designation is hampering the development of ties with DPRK like inter-Korean railroad rebuilding project which requires that military measures be agreed for safety in the Demilitarized Zone

4. DPRK-US Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "PYEONGYANG WANTS CLINTON TO PLAY A MEDIATOR TO WASHINGTON," Seoul, 04/29/02) reported that a DPRK official speaking on conditions of anonymity revealed Monday that the DPRK has proposed that former US President Bill Clinton mediate DPRK relations with the US by inviting him to Pyongyang. "The plan of the Dear Leader Kim Jong-il is that Mr. Clinton should end the rhetoric," the official said without revealing exactly when the DPRK made such offer to the former President or whether it was after or before incumbent President George W. Bush defined the DPRK along with Iran and Iraq and "axis of evil." The official added that the DPRK hopes Clinton could play a role similar to another former US President Jimmy Carter who served as special envoy from US and brokered US talks and arranged what was supposed to first-ever inter-Korean summit meeting in 1994.

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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