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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "TWO KOREAS RESUME HIGH-LEVEL TALKS," Seoul, 8/29/00) reported that ROK officials said that a five-member government delegation from the ROK traveled to the DPRK on Tuesday for three days of high-level talks on easing tensions between the two countries. Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu said in a statement issued in Pyongyang, a copy of which was released in Seoul, "We have taken a great first step forward ... but we still have a long way to go to achieve national reconciliation, co-prosperity, peace and unification." During a dinner hosted by DPRK Prime Minister Hong Sung-nam, Park made a speech calling for more reunions of separated families. ROK officials said that key discussion points in the talks include opening a military hot line, a detailed schedule to reconnect a railway across the heavily armed border, and the first-ever meeting between the defense ministers of the two sides. Officials also were to discuss an investment protection and double taxation treaty and ways to resolve disputes stemming from future economic exchange.

2. ROK Policy toward DPRK

The Los Angeles Times (Valerie Reitman, "S. KOREA ON EGGSHELLS OVER RELATIONSHIP WITH

THE NORTH," Seoul, 8/29/00) carried an analytical article which said that the ROK is going out of its way to tryi not to upset the DPRK. It noted that ROK conservatives were alarmed by the ROK government's decision to scale back its annual war games, reduce field exercises and, dispense with the simulation of an invasion of the DPRK in computerized exercises. Some have also criticized the government's failure to demand the immediate return of hundreds of ROK prisoners of war said to remain in the DPRK, in exchange for the 63 former DPRK spies whom the ROK will return on September 2. Choi Woo-young, whose father's fishing boat with a dozen people was allegedly seized by the DPRK in 1987, said, "The government said this whole problem is like a hot potato and we should take it very slowly. And the public is still wanting me to keep silent because they don't want to jeopardize the reunification either." Opposition Grand National Party spokesman Lee Jae-yel said that the party is troubled by "unification syndrome." Lee said, "(DPRK leader) Kim Jong Il is the star of the show, not [ROK President] Kim Dae Jung." Lee Ki-tak, an international relations professor at Yonsei University who escaped the DPRK with his family as a teenager in 1950, accuses the ROK government of ignoring the reality of the DPRK's nuclear weaponry, missile development and heavy deployment near the demilitarized zone. Lee said, "Nobody knows what is right or wrong anymore." He accused the media of being "very much muffled" and "duped." Scott Snyder, Korea representative of the Asia Foundation, said that the level of self-censorship in the ROK media is far greater than in the US. Snyder said, "Old habits die hard. It was little more than a decade ago that the government was telling [newspapers] which pictures to run.... Everybody knows who is in charge, and people are aware how instruments of state power are available for use in certain contexts." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for August 29, 2000.]

3. DPRK Leader's Russia Visit

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREAN LEADER TO VISIT MOSCOW EARLY NEXT YEAR: INTERFAX," Moscow, 8/29/00) reported that the Russian Interfax news agency, citing a source in the Russian foreign ministry, reported on Tuesday that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il will pay an official visit to Russia early next year. Contacted by Agence France Presse, the Kremlin and the foreign ministry said that they had no information on the visit.

4. PRC-Japan Maritime Row

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN AND CHINA MOVE TO COOL TEMPERATURE IN SPYSHIP ROW," 8/29/00) reported that Japanese officials and that the PRC's official media indicated on Tuesday that Japan and the PRC have moved to calm a row over suspected PRC "spy ship" activities near Japanese waters. According to Japanese spokesman Yasuhisa Kawamura, Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono held a three-hour meeting followed by a reception with PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan on August 28 where the two sides agreed to hold expert level talks on September 27 and 28 in Beijing on the sea border dispute. Tang also agreed that the PRC would notify Japan of any PRC research or naval operations in the vicinity of Japan's exclusive maritime economic zone, while Japan would reciprocate in kind. Kawamura quoted Tang as saying in the talks, "The situation where Japan worries no longer exists." The PRC's official Xinhua news agency said that both Tang and Kono agreed that mutual trust was lacking in the relationship between the two countries, while Tang insisted that the crux of the ongoing dispute was the lack of a common understanding on the demarcation of the sea boundary in the East China Sea.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

The Korea Herald (Shin Hye-son, "SEOUL CALLS FOR SOUTH-NORTH INSTITUTE IN CHINA," Seoul, 08/29/00) reported that the ROK government is pushing for the establishment of an ROK-DPRK joint research institute in the PRC, which will deal with various issues related to economic cooperation between the two Koreas. ROK Minister of Commerce, Industry and Energy Shin Kook-hwan said in a meeting with reporters on August 28 that the institute would review the mid- and long-term policy direction of ROK-DPRK economic cooperation and try to materialize the cooperative relationship. Shin said, "I understand that on a private level, a joint research institute has been set up and is in operation at Beijing University of China. Inter-Korean economic cooperation could be further promoted if the South and North make joint research activities on a government level."

2. Inter-Korean Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, "SEOUL TO PROPOSE DEFENSE MINISTER SUMMIT," Seoul, 08/29/00) reported that during the second minister-level talks between ROK and DPRK diplomats to be held August 29-31 in Pyongyang, the ROK government will officially propose that the two sides conduct a summit of defense ministers. An ROK government representative explained, "We will suggest three points to the North during the talks; establishing regular talks between defense ministers, a military cooperation committee, and a military hotline between Seoul and Pyongyang. If the North accepts our proposal, the South's Defense Minister Cho Sung-tae and his North counterpart, Cho Myung-nok, will meet this September." In order to ensure practical success during the upcoming talks, the government will organize separate commissions for military, economic and cultural cooperation in order to further the progress of the June 15 Joint Declaration.

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.
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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
The Center for Global Communications, Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China
Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Gee Gee Wong: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Robert Brown: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com

Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Yunxia Cao: yule111@sina.com
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

Leanne Payton: lbpat1@smtp.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org