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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Prisoner Exchange

Reuters ("S.KOREA EXPECTED TO DEMAND N.KOREA RETURN POWS," Seoul, 8/28/00) reported that at ministerial-level talks starting on August 29 in Pyongyang the ROK is expected to press the DPRK to return Korean War prisoners and citizens allegedly abducted by the DPRK. ROK media reports said on Monday that the two Koreas may discuss steps to reduce tension on their militarized border at the talks. ROK Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Hyun-doo said that five ROK officials, headed by Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu, will meet their DPRK counterparts. Kim said, "They are likely to discuss the reconnection of the inter-Korean railroad and the transfer of South Korean POWs in the meeting." The ROK Joongang Ilbo newspaper, quoting a high-ranking ROK government official, reported on Monday that the ROK will propose a meeting between ROK Defense Minister Cho Sung-tae and his DPRK counterpart Cho Myung-rok, as well as the establishment of a military hotline and a joint panel on military affairs. It said that a meeting between the defense ministers could take place in September, if the DPRK accepts the proposal.

2. DPRK-Japan Normalization Talks

Reuters ("MONEY KEY IMPROVING JAPAN-N.KOREA RELATIONS," Tokyo, 8/28/00) reported that during the Japanese-DPRK rapprochement talks last week, analysts said that there were signs of progress on the issue of money. During the talks, Japanese negotiators repeated their refusal to accept demands for "compensation," saying that Japan was never technically in a state of war with the DPRK, but they hinted that Japan was willing to "settle the past" with funds. Japanese officials said that they explained to the DPRK delegation how Japan provided US\$500 million as financial aid when Japan normalized ties with the ROK in 1965. One Japanese official said, "We brought up the South Korea case as an example of how difficult talks can be solved." The DPRK delegation did not respond to the idea, Nozomi Akizuki, a professor of regional studies at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, said that the proposal would satisfy both Japan and the DPRK and allow the two sides to save face. Akizuki said, "Japan can say it is economic aid, while North Korea can say it is compensation."

Analysts said that from Japan's perspective, the discussions on the idea of economic aid will keep the DPRK from leaving the negotiation table and allow Japan to state its own demands. Analysts said that the only way to persuade the DPRK to make a concession on the issue of alleged abductions would be a promise of cash. Noriyuki Suzuki, chief analyst at Radiopress news agency, which specializes in monitoring DPRK broadcasts, said, "Unless actual amounts are made clear, North Korea will not be able to make a decision on the abduction issue." Suzuki also said the easing of tensions on the Korean peninsula could speed up normalization talks between Japan and the DPRK, but added, "This can only happen while (ROK President) Kim Dae-jung is in power." Suzuki noted that it would also give the DPRK an incentive to speed up talks with Japan. Masao Okonogi, a professor of international relations at Tokyo's Keio University, said, "Now it's a three-way relationship," adding that the ROK and the DPRK shared a common interest in having Japan extend financial assistance to the DPRK. Analysts said that the DPRK is highly unlikely to admit to the alleged abductions and regardless of what concessions they may make on the issue, they would be unlikely to quell the hard feelings held by some Japanese towards the DPRK. Akizuki said, "We need a politician who is willing to sacrifice himself," adding that Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori was probably not the man as he lacked strong leadership.

The Associated Press ("JAPAN CALLS FOR EXPANDING CONTACTS WITH NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 8/28/00) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono said on August 27 that Japan is willing to expand contacts with the DPRK. Kono said, "We felt a willingness on the part of the North Koreans to move the negotiations forward." He said "an energetic approach" on both sides was needed to improve relations. Kono said that Japan was interested in establishing contacts "at various levels" to complement the normalization talks. He also suggested that the two countries could strengthen their present relationship even before coming to terms with their past differences. He said that it is "possible" that Japan could recognize the DPRK as a state before the completion of the talks to formally establish diplomatic relations.

3. Japan-PRC Talks

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN, CHINA FOREIGN MINISTRY TALKS BEGIN," Beijing, 8/28/00) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono began an official four-day visit in Beijing on Monday by immediately holding talks with his PRC counterpart Tang Jiaxuan. Tang told Kono before the talks, "We have achieved a friendly, open relationship in which we can frankly discuss all matters of concern to us, I hope this time will be the same. In addition to discussing Premier Zhu Rongji's visit to Japan, I hope we can have frank and open talks on international, regional and bilateral issues." Kono replied that Japan was ready to "ensure a successful visit to Japan by Zhu," which is scheduled for October. Kono left Japan earlier on Monday promising to discuss alleged PRC spy ships prowling around Japanese waters. Japan said it would postpone a 17.2-billion-yen (US\$161 million) loan package to the PRC due to opposition from ruling lawmakers angered by the suspect PRC maritime activities. Delivery of the loan will depend on whether Kono gets a satisfactory explanation from PRC President Jiang Zemin, Premier Zhu Rongji and other PRC leaders about the ships, members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party argued. During his trip Kono will also meet with PRC Vice Premier Qian Qichen and Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan. Kono said that he would not make any decision on the low-interest loan package until after he returns from the talks. In a television interview on August 27, a day before he left for the talks, Kono also said that he may call on PRC leaders to continue dialogue with Taiwan. Kono said, "It is bad if the two sides cannot settle the China-Taiwan issue through dialogue. I have to tell them that forceful action would not have a positive impact on neighbor countries."

Reuters ("JAPAN AND CHINA GRAPPLE WITH DISTRUST," Beijing, 8/28/00) reported that Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Yasuhisa Kawamura said that Japan and the PRC agreed on Monday to step up their security dialogue to dispel distrust between the two countries after a series of PRC naval incursions in waters off Japan. Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono, in three hours of talks in Beijing with his PRC counterpart Tang Jiaxuan, raised concerns about the PRC's naval activity and oceanic research excursions in waters off Japan. Kawamura said, "Mr. Kono pointed out that the feeling of distrust of the Japanese people toward Chinese people is rising." Japan said that it logged at least 17 cases of PRC warships and research ships inside its 200 nautical mile exclusive economic zone this year. Kawamura quoted Tang as telling Kono that "the situation that worries Japan does not exist" while agreeing that the two sides should step up exchanges to build trust. The PRC's official Xinhua news agency quoted Tang as saying "the core of the matter is that China and Japan have not yet reached a common understanding on the demarcation of boundary lines in the East China Sea." Kawamura said that the two sides would hold talks in September in Beijing to try to settle longstanding disagreements on demarcation of the borders of their exclusive economic zones. They also agreed to set up a system for advance notification of each other's oceanic survey expeditions. The two ministers also finalized October 12-17 as the dates for a visit to Japan by PRC Premier Zhu Rongji. Tang told Kono that Zhu's visit would stress economics and therefore Japan and the PRC must "promote and take full advantage of Japan's economic assistance."

4. Cross-Straits Relations

The Associated Press (Marcos Calo Medina, "TAIWAN PRESIDENT FIRM ON CHINA PLAN," Taipei, 8/28/00) reported that the tone and words used by Taiwan president Chen Shui-bian at his monthly news conference on Monday were markedly different from those used during his first meeting with reporters as president three months ago. Chen stressed that any plan on unification with the PRC must have the approval of the Taiwanese public. Although he repeated his invitation to PRC leaders to join him at a summit, Chen added, "No single government, no single party, no single leader can make any decision on the future and direction of Taiwan. Anything is possible, but whatever change and direction the future of Taiwan will take will have to be decided by the 23 million Taiwanese. Whether Republicans or Democrats -- particularly President Clinton -- all have said that any solution regarding cross-straits relations should go through the Taiwanese people. And polls have shown that majority of the Taiwanese do not want to be just a part of China. That is a fact."

5. PRC Participation at UN Summit

Agence France Presse ("LI PENG HEADS TO UNITED STATES AS HUMAN RIGHTS PROTESTERS WAIT," Beijing, 8/28/00) reported that the PRC parliamentary head Li Peng left on Monday to attend a UN conference in New York. PRC's official Xinhua news agency said that Li will deliver a speech at the opening ceremony of a UN Millennium Conference for Presiding Officers of National Parliaments and will introduce the PRC's stance on international cooperation.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-Japan Normalization Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("NK ASKS JAPAN FOR AID PRIOR TO NORMALIZATION," Seoul, 08/27/00) reported that according to the Japanese Asahi Shimbun, the DPRK delegation visiting Japan for negotiations on the normalization of diplomatic relations unofficially asked for aid prior to signing an agreement. The newspaper said that Japan's policy of not providing aid without normalization still stands, but there was a possibility of an indirect method of supplying assistance. The Nihon Keizai reported that during the tenth meeting between the two delegations, the DPRK unofficially asked about resuming trade insurance with regards to goods exported there and support for its joining the Asian Development Bank. Japan said that this could be done if the DPRK paid its outstanding debts; insurance was suspended in 1975. The DPRK is demanding more than US\$10 billion in compensation for damage caused during the Japanese occupation.

2. Inter-Korean Talks

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "INTER-KOREAN TALKS TO ZERO IN ON MILITARY ISSUES," Seoul, 08/28/00), The Korea Times ("FOREIGN MINISTERS FROM TWO KOREAS TO MEET AGAIN AROUND SEPT. 18," Seoul, 08/27/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "SECOND MINISTERIAL TALKS TO START TUESDAY IN NK," Seoul, 08/27/00) reported that ROK officials said on August 27 that the ROK and the DPRK will open their second round of governmental talks in Pyongyang on Monday, focusing on easing military tensions. The two sides are also expected to discuss measures to protect ROK investors in the DPRK, while boosting inter-Korean social and cultural exchanges.

3. Reunion of Separated Families

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SEOUL PROPOSES TALKS ON CONTINUED FAMILY REUNIONS," Seoul, 08/28/00) and The Korea Times (Lee Soo-jeong "SOUTH KOREA PROPOSES RED CROSS TALKS TO ENSURE MORE FAMILY REUNIONS," Seoul, 08/28/00) reported that the ROK on August 26 proposed to hold inter-Korean Red Cross talks Panmunjom on September 5 to discuss additional reunions of families separated by five decades of national division. ROK National Red Cross President Chang Choong-sik made the proposal in a telegram sent to his DPRK counterpart, Jang Jae-on. The proposed talks, if accepted by the DPRK, will come on the heels of the ROK's repatriation of 63 DPRK spies scheduled for September 2, and also would focus on setting up a permanent "reunion point," where the split families in the two Koreas can meet regularly.

4. ROK POWs in DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Young-won, "TEN MORE POWS CONFIRMED IN NK," Seoul, 08/27/00) reported

that an ROK government source said on August 27 that the government had confirmed the existence and identities of ten prisoners of war (POWs) in the DPRK from the written testimony of four veterans who returned to the ROK at the end of July. He added that the four had provided a list of seventy names, but most duplicated existing ones. With this information the list of surviving POWs in the DPRK now reaches 360.

5. DPRK Participation in IMF

Chosun Ilbo (Kang Hyo-sang, "IMF TO INVITE NORTH KOREA TO ANNUAL MEETING," Seoul, 08/27/00) reported that according to an IMF source on August 27, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) plans to invite the DPRK as a Special Guest to its upcoming annual general meeting, which will take place in late September in the Czech Republic. The source said that the IMF executive body had reviewed the possibility of inviting the DPRK at its annual conference, asking for ROK's input on the issue. According to the source, the ROK government welcomed the idea. However, the source said that he did not know what the DPRK's official response to the invitation is and that it is premature to speculate on whether or not the invitation will be accepted. Observers point out that the prospect of the DPRK's entry into the IMF depends largely on its removal from the US list of terror-sponsoring nations.

6. International Support for Korean Reconciliation

The Korea Times ("KIM STRESSES INT'L SUPPORT FOR S-N PEACE," Seoul, 08/27/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on August 26 stressed that sustained international support is necessary to ensure the promotion of inter-Korean peace and reconciliation. In a meeting at Chong Wa Dae with 13 participants who attended a seminar about his Sunshine Policy, Kim took note of the fact that inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation have been progressing with the DPRK's understanding and coming to terms with his Sunshine Policy alongside international support for ROK-DPRK dialogue.

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