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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Stance
2. US-ROK-Japan Multilateral Talks
3. US DPRK Nuclear Investigation
4. Japan-DPRK Diplomatic Establishment
5. DPRK-UK Dialogue
6. Japan-US May Summit
7. SARS Global Outbreak
8. ROK Domestic Political Amnesty
9. Japan New Age Cult
10. PRC SARS Panic
11. Japan Domestic Economy
12. PRC Zhao Ziyang
13. Japan DPRK Spy Ship
14. DPRK on Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks

II. Republic of Korea 1. Only ROK Army in Charge of JSA
2. Diplomatic Resolution on DPRK Nuke
3. ROK Stance on DPRK Unclear
4. Inter Korean Ministerial Talks

III. Japan 1. US-DPRK Relations
2. Japan-France Relations
3. US-Japan-ROK-PRC Relations over DPRK Issues
4. Japan-British Relations
5. Japan's Diplomacy in the Middle East
6. Japan-Germany Relations
7. Japan-US Relations

IV. CanKor E-Clipping Service 1. Issue 123

I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Stance

CNN News ("NORTH KOREA ADMITS NUKES, WARNS US," Seoul, 05/01/03) reported that the DPRK has blamed a hostile US policy towards Pyongyang for its development and deployment of a "necessary deterrent" -- a clear implication that it has a nuclear arsenal. In a report from the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the DPRK also warned the US not to internationalize the "nuclear issue" or seek United Nations sanctions against the communist nation, which would give "the green light to a war." It is the latest exchange in a six-month nuclear standoff between the DPRK and the US. "The US, which possesses the biggest number of nuclear weapons in the world and poses a constant threat to other sovereign countries with them, should scrap its nuclear program before such a small country as the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] does," said the KCNA report.

2. US-ROK-Japan Multilateral Talks

BBC News ("NORTH KOREA TO TOP US ALLIES TALKS," 05/01/03) reported that leaders from the ROK and Japan are to discuss the diplomatic stand-off over the DPRK's nuclear program with the USlater this month, as the US continues to mull Pyongyang's proposals. The ROK's Blue House announced that President Roh Moo-hyun would visit Washington from May 11-17, 2003. Japan's Kyodo news agency said President Junichiro Koizumi was expected to meet President Bush at Camp David sometime between May 20-22, 2003. There has been speculation that the US would be unlikely to make any decision on its DPRK policy until consultation takes place with the ROK and Japan. The US has not specified exactly what the DPRK demanded in landmark talks last week, but reports suggest Pyongyang wanted normalized relations with the US and substantial economic assistance in return for an end to its nuclear program.

3. US DPRK Nuclear Investigation

The New York Times (David E. Sanger and Howard W. French, "NORTH KOREA PROMPTS US TO INVESTIGATE NUCLEAR BOAST," Washington, 05/01/03) reported that White House officials have ordered the nation's intelligence agencies to conduct a review of whether North Korea could produce bomb-grade plutonium - as it says it has done - without detection by the US, according to senior administration officials. The order to the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies that have long monitored the DPRK's nuclear program was prompted by the blunt and direct nature of the DPRK's declaration last week, during negotiations in Beijing, that it was already a nuclear power. It said it had completed reprocessing of 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods that could provide enough plutonium for four to six additional weapons. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell described the DPRK assertion in testimony today to a Senate subcommittee, saying, "The DPRKs, in very typical bellicose fashion, accused us of everything imaginable and then said, `We reprocessed all the fuel rods that were in storage.' " So far the US has not been able to verify the DPRK's claim to have produced weapons-grade plutonium. "We can't establish that as a matter of fact with our intelligence community, but they said they did it," Powell said.

4. Japan-DPRK Diplomatic Establishment

Reuters ("REPORT: NORTH KOREA WANTS TIES WITH JAPAN TO SCRAP NUKES," Tokyo, 05/01/03) reported that the DPRK raised the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan as a

condition for scrapping its nuclear program in a proposal made in talks with the US last week, a major Japanese newspaper said on Thursday. The Yomiuri Shimbun, quoting a government source, said the DPRK side also demanded guarantees on the DPRK's security and the normalization of US-DPRK ties as pre-conditions for scrapping its nuclear program. In addition it expressed hopes that economic aid would be offered, the Yomiuri said, without specifying by which country. It added that the DPRK side did not make it clear whether it would accept or reject Japan and the ROK's participation in future multilateral discussions, saying only that direct talks with the US were important. The report comes after the DPRK said on Friday it had offered a "new bold proposal" at the talks with the US in Beijing.

5. DPRK-UK Dialogue

Agence France-Presse ("BRITAIN, NORTH KOREA RENEW DIALOGUE IN LONDON AS EMBASSY OPENS," London, 05/01/03) reported that Britain held its first ministerial-level talks with the DPRK since Pyongyang sparked a crisis last October by throwing out international weapons inspectors. British Foreign Office Minister Bill Rammell said there had been "progress of sorts" in his discussions with opposite number Choe Su Hon, who said Pyongyang was ready to dismantle its nuclear facilities and readmit inspectors in return for a guarantee that it would not be attacked. But Choe refused to confirm whether the DPRK -- which Wednesday opened its first embassy ever in London -- actually has nuclear weapons, as it claimed last week. "The fact that they have engaged (with Washington) in the talks last week in Beijing and in discussions today is positive and there have been some positive statements," said Rammell after the meeting. "But I do believe, and I told Choe, that the DPRK needs to go much further. There are still far too many questions left unanswered and far too much ambiguity in their position." Rammell said there if the DPRK chose to continue down the path of isolation rather than engage with the international community then they could face containment and economic sanctions. "We are not proposing that at the moment, we don't want to have to propose that, but the choice is very much in the hands of the DPRKs," he said.

6. Japan-US May Summit

The Japan Times ("JAPAN-US SUMMIT SET FOR LATE MAY," Washington, 05/01/03) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush plan to meet at the Camp David, Md., presidential retreat sometime between May 20 and May 22 and discuss the DPRK and postwar Iraq's reconstruction, Japanese sources said Wednesday. The two countries are now making the final arrangements for the one-day summit, the two leaders' first together since September, when they met in New York, the sources said. The DPRK nuclear standoff and Iraq's reconstruction are expected to be high on the agenda at the upcoming meeting, which comes before the June 1-3 Group of Eight summit in France. At talks with Bush, Koizumi is expected to reiterate Japan's position that the DPRK nuclear crisis should be resolved peacefully through diplomacy, including the continuation of the three-way talks, the sources said. He is also expected to seek assurances from Bush that Washington will continue to seek a resolution through dialogue, they said. Koizumi plans to tell Bush that Tokyo will further press Pyongyang to accept the early inclusion of Japan and the ROK in talks aimed at resolving the nuclear issue, the sources said. Koizumi is also expected to offer specific support measures for rebuilding Iraq, while stressing the importance of international cooperation and the role to be played by the United Nations, the sources said. Given that the Japanese economy remains sluggish, Bush may urge Koizumi to accelerate the disposal of bad loans at banks and bring an early end to deflation. With the Iraq war all but over and the 2004 presidential election just around the corner, the Bush administration is placing priority to boosting US economic growth. The US is thus hoping Japan and Europe will serve as engines for global economic growth.

7. SARS Global Outbreak

The Washington Post (Rob Stein, "SARS COULD RECUR ANYWHERE AT ANY TIME OFFICIALS WARN OF VIRUS'S ONGOING THREAT," 05/01/03) reported that despite recent victories in the battle against SARS, health authorities are warning that the new disease remains a looming global menace that could flare up again in hotspots that appear under control, spread to new, more vulnerable parts of the world or return in a second, more devastating wave of outbreaks. Because the epidemic is still raging in the PRC, the danger is rising that infected people will spark outbreaks elsewhere, especially in less developed parts of nearby Asia and Africa. At the same time, epidemics tend to be unpredictable. They often occur in successive, sometimes more deadly waves, and frequently follow a seasonal pattern, especially in the case of respiratory infections. "I wish we could say we had turned the corner," said David L. Heymann, executive director of the World Health Organization's communicable diseases program. "The issue is China. If China can't stop the current outbreak like other countries have, China will continue to seed the rest of the world periodically with this disease." Most immediately, officials are alarmed by reports that the number of cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome has more than doubled in the past week in neighboring Taiwan, which could become the next major crisis point. Yesterday, Taiwan reported its first SARS death. The most intense concern is focused on the less-developed parts of Asia and Africa, which have far less effective health systems to identify and isolate cases, and vast populations especially vulnerable to new infections because of AIDS.

8. ROK Domestic Political Amnesty

BBC News (Caroline Gluck, "SOUTH KOREAN STUDENTS ON THE RUN," Seoul, 05/01/03) reported that the ROK has granted a special amnesty to nearly 1,500 people convicted of political and labour-related offences. The move - which took effect on Wednesday - is the first amnesty granted since President Roh Moo-hyun took office two months ago. It is being seen as a gesture to encourage national unity, and further the country' s democratization process. Among those released from jail are many members of an outlawed student organization known as Hanchongryun - the Federation of Korean University Student Councils - the country's largest student organization. The group was branded as being against the state in 1998, under the anti-communist National Security Law, and more than 700 students were jailed. Song Yong-han is one of more than 100 other students who are still on the run from the police. "When you are on the outlawed list, it is constant tension all year round, 24 hours a day, fearing you can be arrested at any moment," he said. "It's unfair, because I don't consider I've done anything that's illegal." 'Subversive group' Hanchongryun is regarded as radical and anti-American. Its calls for reunification - free from any outside power's influence - echo North Korea's policies. Hanchongryun's involvement in increasingly violent protests led to the government ban five years ago. It was declared a subversive group under the anti-communist National Security Law - and accused of helping the DPRK. But times have changed, and relations between the two Koreas have improved. Key figures in the new government say they are considering legalizing the outlawed student group.

9. Japan New Age Cult

The Associated Press ("JAPAN INVESTIGATES SUSPECTED NEW AGE CULT," Tokyo, 05/01/03) reported that Japanese police on Thursday began searching the vehicles of a New Age group that has blocked a mountain road for days, draped white sheets from the trees and accused leftists of trying to harm its members with electromagnetic waves. The group, which calls itself Panawave, took over the road in western Gifu state last week, saying it was fleeing persecution. The 30 people in the caravan have refused to move until the end of this week, saying they are caring for a gravely

ill woman who is believed to be their guru. They said they cannot move on because of her poor health. The group draped the trees in white cloth, claiming it neutralizes the effects of harmful electromagnetic waves. About 300 police surrounded the group and began searching their vehicles, but no arrests were made Thursday. A Panawave spokesman said the caravan was protecting Yuko Chino, 69, a self-proclaimed prophet who preaches a blend of Christianity, Buddhism and New Age doctrines. According to the group's literature, Chino believes that a 10th planet is moving closer to the earth and will cause "cataclysmic" changes this summer.

10. PRC SARS Panic

The New York Times (Erik Eckholm, "AS TOLL MOUNTS, CHINESE OFFICIALS TRY TO CALM A PANICKY PUBLIC," Beijing, 05/01/03) reported that in a live, televised news conference, the new acting mayor of Beijing called the SARS epidemic severe and uncontrolled today as he sought to convince a panicky public that the battle against the disease had been effectively joined at last. "We are now facing up to this grave difficulty," said the acting mayor, Wang Qishan, a former banking chief and a protégé of the no-nonsense former prime minister, Zhu Rongji. Wang was summoned to Beijing 10 days ago to replace the former mayor, Meng Xuenong, who was fired for his part in covering up the city's surging epidemic. Showing the new face of candor that China's leaders adopted after months of denial led to medical and diplomatic disasters, Wang did not mince words today - a day when reported cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome in the capital climbed by another 101, to 1,440. He admitted that the city had been sadly unprepared for the new disease, had misled the public about its spread and now faced a shortage of qualified hospitals and medical staff. "SARS is an epidemic that hit us head-on," Wang told domestic and foreign reporters and a national television audience. Beijing's stores and restaurants are nearly empty as many people fear leaving their homes. Tiananmen Square, normally overflowing with visitors on a sunny spring day, is deserted. While many Beijing residents said they were encouraged by Wang's statements, strong undercurrents of anger and mistrust remain. "I'm upset because the government tried to cover this up for so long and now things are totally out of control," said Lin Qiuli, a tour operator. "Wang Qishan has a big job in front of him, and it's too early to say whether he can do it."

11. Japan Domestic Economy

The New York Times (Ken Belson, "JAPAN TO ADD MORE CASH TO ITS ECONOMY," Tokyo, 05/01/03) reported that jolted by tumbling stock prices and the economic fallout from the SARS virus, the Bank of Japan's monetary policy board said today that it would flood the markets with yet more cash and expand the range of collateral that it accepts for loans. The moves are the latest in a series of incremental steps taken by the central bank's new governor, Toshihiko Fukui, who took office in mid-March. The measures are unlikely to provide any significant stimulus to the economy or relief to the nation's struggling banks, but Fukui is under pressure from the government to find ways to help halt the long slide in Japanese asset prices. Unlike his predecessor, Masaru Hayami, who resisted direct pressure from the government, Fukui has agreed to cooperate with lawmakers as much as he can. To that end, the central bank said today that it would begin accepting bank loans that had been turned over to the government-backed Industrial Revitalization Corporation as collateral for new lending. The decision is meant to prod the country's banks to sell their troubled loans to this new organization. More immediately, policy makers are fearful that further declines in the stock market will weaken Japan's banks, which count some of their immense shareholdings as capital. Typically, the central bank tries to avoid creating the appearance that it is reacting to short-term market moves. But in an unusually blunt statement, the bank's policy board said today, "Careful attention is warranted so that the stock price developments will not negatively affect financial markets and economic activity."

12. PRC Zhao Ziyang

The Japan Times ("MYSTERY SHROUDS FATE OF EX-CHINA PARTY HEAD ZHAO ZIYANG," Beijing, 05/01/03) reported that there has been no official confirmation of the reported death of former Chinese Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang, who tried to avert the Tiananmen massacre in 1989. Zhao, 83, was reported to have died of a heart ailment in a Beijing hospital Monday, PRC sources told Kyodo News on Wednesday. The PRC press, including the state-run Xinhua, has made no mention of Zhao as of Thursday afternoon. A Hong Kong human rights activist said he made calls to Zhao's house on Tuesday and Wednesday, only to be told that he is alive. A PRC source speculated that the government will keep the death secret "for at least a week" so as not to create social tension when the public is already uneasy over the SARS epidemic. Zhao's main legacy is his tragic and ultimately useless emotional appeal to pro-democracy students in Tiananmen Square in mid-May 1989 to quit their protests, just weeks before the student protests were crushed in June. Martial law was imposed in Beijing and Zhao fell from grace.

13. Japan DPRK Spy Ship

The Japan Times ("RAISED PYONGYANG SPY SHIP TO BE DISPLAYED," Kagoshima, 05/01/03) reported that a DPRK spy ship that sank in the East China Sea in December 2001 after a shootout with Japanese patrol vessels will be exhibited in Kagoshima on May 17 and 18 and in Tokyo in June, the Japan Coast Guard said Thursday. The exhibit will include items found on the vessel after it was raised and taken to Japan, including some weapons, a small boat and a water scooter for landing, coast guard officials said. The exhibition in Kagoshima will be held at the private dockyard where the ship is currently located, and the number of visitors will be limited to 3,000. Tickets can be obtained on a first-come, first-served basis by sending a postcard application to the Japan Coast Guard Association's southern Kyushu regional headquarters, the officials said. The exhibits will be shown at the Museum of Maritime Science in Shinagawa Ward, Tokyo, in early June. The spy ship sank after exchanging fire with coast guard patrol ships on Dec. 22, 2001, off Amami-Oshima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture. According to the coast guard, the crew scuttled the ship and went down with it. Around 10 people are believed to have been on board the ship, but the bodies of only four were recovered and other human remains were found in the vessel. Three coast guard personnel were wounded in the shootout. Prosecutors said Monday they would not charge the 10 spy ship crew members with attempted murder because they are dead.

14. DPRK on Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("INTER-KOREAN MINISTERIAL TALKS CLOSE," Pyongyang, 05/01/03) reported that the tenth inter-Korean ministerial talks were held here from April 27 to 29. At the talks, both sides had an exhaustive discussion on the matters raised and reached an agreement on major points with a common stand and will to sincerely implement the historic June 15 North-South Joint Declaration. A joint press release was published at the talks. According to it, the north and the south reconfirmed the basic spirit of the June 15 North-South Joint Declaration and agreed to invariably abide by the declaration and continue implementing it to the letter. They also had an exhaustive discussion on their stands on the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and agreed to continue to cooperate with each other in the efforts to settle the issue peacefully through dialogue. They agreed to make sure that the June 15 Grand Festival for National Reunification to take place on the occasion of the third anniversary of the joint declaration is successfully held in an atmosphere of reconciliation and cooperation, and support each other so that the festival may be put on a regular basis.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Only ROK Army in Charge of JSA

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "SOUTH MAY TAKE FULL CHARGE OF JSA," Seoul, 05/01/03) reported that ROK and US governments are discussing a plan that would make ROK military fully responsible for the Joint Security Area in Panmunjeom as soon as early next year. The area is now under the control of the United Nations Command, which consists of US and ROK soldiers. A high-ranking ROK government official said that US government had proposed that the change be implemented in the first half of next year, and that ROK was considering it in a positive way, as a symbol of its self-defense capabilities. The official pointed out that the change was independent of the plan to relocate the US 2nd Infantry Division south of the Han River, a plan ROK opposes. That issue will be taken up at the summit talks in Washington in mid-May.

2. Diplomatic Resolution on DPRK Nuke

Chosun Ilbo (Joo Yong-joong, "POWELL STRESSES MULTILATERAL, UN EFFORTS," Washington, 05/01/03) reported that Colin Powell, US secretary of state, told US Senate Foreign Relations Committee that US would continue the multilateral talks to resolve DPRK nuclear issue and discuss the issue with UN Security Council. "We are studying the proposal because our allies are interested," Powell said on DPRK's proposal for a step-by-step package. "However, it is not a proposal that is going to take us in the direction we need to go." Citing last December's incident in which a missile-laden DPRK freighter was intercepted while headed for Yemen, Powell implied that such measures may be repeated. "In the future we will make different decisions based on what is inside the ship, where it's going and the timing," he said. Meanwhile, the White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said at the White House's regular briefing that a diplomatic resolution to DPRK nuclear issue would take time. "However, one thing that will not happen is North Korea getting compensated whatsoever for its nuclear development," he said. "Our purpose is for North Korea to dispose of its nuclear weapons by a verifiable and irreversible method, and President Bush has repeatedly made it clear that the US would not make concessions for DPRK's malicious claims."

3. ROK Stance on DPRK Unclear

Chosun Ilbo (Shin Jeong-rok, "ROH DOWNPLAYS NORTH'S NUKE CLAIM," Seoul, 05/01/03) reported that ROK president Roh Moo-hyun, commenting on DPRK's admission in the Beijing talks that it has nuclear weapons, said that the comment should be treated like the negotiation card that it is. Roh told the staff of the Cheong Wa Dae newsletter Cheong Wa Dae Briefing on Wednesday that ROK should not conclude that the situation is exacerbated and take a firm stance. What DPRK says when it is engaged in negotiations could have the nature of negotiation cards or games, he said, adding that ROK should still be prepared. "We should not take everything North Korea says as the truth and act like something big has happened," he said. The president added that ROK and US should take a coordinated, strategic stance to solve the nuclear issue, and illustrated the situation as DPRK and US as boxers in the ring and PRC as the referee.

4. Inter Korean Ministerial Talks

The Korea Herald ("MINISTER SAYS SEOUL TO JOIN NUKE TALKS," 05/01/03) reported that ROK unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said Wednesday he is optimistic about ROK's participation in future multilateral talks to solve DPRK nuclear dispute. During inter-Korean cabinet-level talks in

Pyongyang, North Korean delegates inspired a degree of confidence by not "strongly opposing" ROK's proposal that ROK should be involved in future nuclear talks, Jeong said in a press conference. "We will naturally sit on the table to some degree until the talks progress. The North Koreans didn't strongly oppose our demand that South Korea take part in the multilateral talks," he said. Last week's talks in Beijing were held in a three-way format involving DPRK, US and PRC. The two Koreas issued a joint statement at the close of the talks, pledging to continue to make efforts to solve the nuclear issue peacefully. They also agreed to promote various inter-Korean exchange programs despite the nuclear tension. In addition, DPRK promised to support ROK's bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics, ROK officials said. ROK President Roh said "We should continue to provide assistance to North Korea including humanitarian aid," On Tuesday, Roh and US President George W. Bush agreed in a telephone conversation to try to resolve the standoff through dialogue. They also shared the view that the talks between US and DPRK in Beijing were "useful," Song said.

III. Japan

1. US-DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("N.KOREA PUBLICLY INDICATES POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS," Beijing, 04/30/03) reported that DPRK indicated Wednesday that it has nuclear weapons and accused the US of "torpedoing" the process of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. "The DPRK called for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula to ensure peace and protect the sovereignty and the dignity of the nation, not to disarm itself under the US pressure," the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted a Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying in a statement. However, "the reality requires the DPRK to deter the escalating US moves to strike the DPRK with a physical force, compels it to opt for possessing a necessary deterrent force and put it into practice," KCNA quoted the spokesman as saying. He was also quoted as saying DPRK adopted the joint declaration on denuclearization of the peninsula with ROK in January 1992 and "has long consistently called for" making the peninsula free of nuclear weapons. Accusing the US of pursuing a strategic aim, the spokesman was quoted as saying, "If the US finally brings up the nuclear issue for discussion at the UN and abuses its name again, the DPRK will be left with no option but to consider taking practical measures to cope with an emergency." In PRC-brokered talks with the US in Beijing last week, DPRK reportedly said it had nuclear weapons. The North also reportedly told the US that it is ready to abandon its nuclear programs and stop missile exports in return for a series of demands, including a written guarantee that the US will not attack the country as well as economic assistance. In Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell said Tuesday a DPRK proposal to address its nuclear and missile programs is not in the right direction but that the US will study it as its allies are interested in it. The nuclear impasse erupted last October, when Washington said Pyongyang had admitted to running a program to enrich uranium for use in weapons. DPRK expelled international nuclear inspectors, and declared its withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation.

The Asahi Shinbun (Kiyoshi Hasaba, "N.KOREA'S RECKLESS CONFRONTATION PLOY," 04/26/03) reported that Pyongyang's claim that it possesses nuclear weapons indicates DPRK leader Kim Jong Il intends to use confrontation and deterrence to prevent a US-led regime change in the isolated nation. After the US last October accused DPRK of developing nuclear weapons, Pyongyang avoided making a clear statement and only asked that Washington agree to a treaty of non-aggression. However, DPRK's attitude hardened after the US attacked Iraq, a war legitimized on the grounds of a pre-emptive strike and regime change. "War cannot be prevented even with a non-aggression treaty," said a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman in a statement April 6, as US troops encircled Baghdad. "We can only protect the nation and the people with a powerful deterrent that can repel any attack using the most advanced weapons." The latest admission by Pyongyang can only have a

negative effect on relations between the two Koreas.

2. Japan-France Relations

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI, CHIRAC FAIL TO GO INTO DETAILS OVER IRAQ," Paris, 04/30/03) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and French President Jacques Chirac generally agreed that the world should patch up its differences over the post-war reconstruction of Iraq but failed to go into any details during their talks in Paris on Tuesday. "We shared the view that the international community should cooperate in Iraq reconstruction," Koizumi told reporters at a hotel in the French capital after the evening summit with Chirac at his presidential office. The two leaders also discussed the DPRK crisis. Koizumi enlisted Chirac's full support for Tokyo's policy of settling Pyongyang's nuclear issue peacefully with multilateral cooperation, the prime minister and Japanese government officials said. In their discussions about plans for postwar Iraq, Chirac was quoted as saying that the US-led coalition should be responsible for maintaining public safety but that the United Nations should play a key role in reconstructing the country. But the two leaders failed to go into any details about what steps they should take to advance international cooperation for rebuilding Iraq, apparently due to the sharp divide that still remains in the international community over the U.S.-led war against Iraq. Chirac strongly opposed U.S. President George W. Bush over the war and has kept his distance from the US-led civil administration in Iraq under the US Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). In contrast, Koizumi strongly supported Bush in the war, and several Japanese officials have already joined the ORHA, a unit under the US Defense Department. Japanese officials said earlier that Koizumi more or less could act as a mediator between France and the United States if Chirac is willing to mend ties with Bush. The Japanese and French leaders did agree, however, that the split over the Iraq war is "temporary." Koizumi will fly to Berlin on Wednesday and meet with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who also strongly opposed the war. On the topic of DPRK, Koizumi explained to Chirac Japan's policy to seek a comprehensive solution to issues related to DPRK, from its nuclear program to the past abductions of Japanese people. Chirac was quoted as saying he supported Japan in its efforts to settle the nuclear and kidnapping issues. On bilateral relations, Koizumi said he is learning from France on how to lure more foreign tourists. France, the world's top tourist destination, draws nearly 76 million foreign visitors a year. Koizumi wants to double the number of foreign visitors to Japan to 10 million in 2010. Before meeting with Chirac, Koizumi discussed with UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura how to restore and preserve Iraq's cultural assets that have been damaged in the war, the officials said. Matsuura, Japanese chief of the Paris-based UNESCO, briefed Koizumi about the latest development of efforts to recollect damaged or stolen cultural assets. The visit to France is the third leg of Koizumi's eight-day European trip. Koizumi met with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London on Saturday and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar in Madrid on Monday. From Germany, Koizumi will fly to Greece and meet with Prime Minister Costas Simitis and European Union officials, including European Commission President Romano Prodi, in Athens on Friday. Koizumi will return to Japan on Saturday.

3. US-Japan-ROK-PRC Relations over DPRK Issues

The Asahi Shinbun ("US SET TO COOPERATE ON KOREA,"04/28/03) reported that Senior US envoy James Kelly and Japanese government officials agreed over the weekend to continue close consultations to find a peaceful resolution to the DPRK issue, officials said. The move comes after Pyongyang's admission that it possesses nuclear weapons. Japanese officials were in accord with the US assistant secretary of state's plan to hold working level talks between Tokyo, Washington and Seoul in May to discuss the next move in response to the three-day talks between the US, DPRK and PRC in Beijing last week. Kelly met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda and Foreign Ministry

Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director Mitoji Yabunaka at the US ambassador's official residence in Tokyo on Saturday. At the meeting, Kelly told the Japanese side that Washington would carefully analyze all the statements made by DPRK officials and consider how to proceed. Japanese officials quoted Kelly as telling them that in the Beijing meeting, the two sides presented their basic stances and that Kelly pressed for complete and verifiable dismantlement of DPRK's nuclear program. He also stressed the inclusion of Japan and ROK in talks at the earliest opportunity. Kelly raised human rights issues, and in the process, sought a resolution to the abduction issue, they said. The DPRK side made a clear response to neither the abduction issue nor the proposal to include Japan and ROK in future nuclear talks, but apparently did not reject the latter idea. Kelly also explained Pyongyang's self-proclaimed "bold and generous new proposal" at the meeting to resolve the nuke issue, but Japanese officials did not elaborate on the plan. However, other sources hinted that the DPRK proposal was a package of measures that touched upon maintaining the current Pyongyang regime and dismantling the nuclear program, while allowing energy needs to be met, that were "not unrealistic or impossible to realize." "Both sides agreed to seek a peaceful resolution to DPRK's nuclear arms development issue and that Japan, the US and ROK would work closely to demand that DPRK act in a responsible manner," Fukuda told reporters after the meeting.

4. Japan-British Relations

The Asahi Shinbun ("KOIZUMI, BLAIR DISCUSS UN ROLE IN POSTWAR IRAQ," London, 04/28/03) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and British counterpart Tony Blair reaffirmed in a meeting Saturday that the international community should work together in rebuilding postwar Iraq, with the involvement of the United Nations. The two leaders also agreed that they, as leaders of nations that have traditionally backed the United States, will urge US President George W. Bush to support a substantial role for the UN. According to Japanese briefing officials, Koizumi told Blair that "it was the correct decision on the part of the British government" to send troops to participate in the war in Iraq, even though there were casualties. Blair, on the other hand, gave high marks to Koizumi for declaring Tokyo's support for Bush right after US troops opened fire. Blair said he and Bush agreed that Koizumi had made the right decision. On the issue of reconstruction of postwar Iraq, Blair was quoted as telling Koizumi that there was a need to convince Washington of the practical merits of including the U.N. in the reconstruction efforts. Blair noted that it would be difficult for other nations to participate without UN involvement, the officials said. Koizumi said, "a government for the Iraqi people should be established by the Iraqi people as soon as possible," given that there is anti-US sentiment in the Arab world. "The US presence must be diminished. And for that, the UN and international organizations should be given roles in the reconstruction effort," Koizumi was quoted as saying. Koizumi told Blair that he plans to visit the United States in May and hopes to discuss the issue with Bush. Koizumi earlier told reporters traveling with him aboard a government plane to London that Tokyo is working to schedule his meeting with Bush before the Group of Eight summit scheduled for June 1-3 in Evian, France. Regarding the domestic debate on whether new legislation is needed to allow Japan to fully participate in Iraqi reconstruction, Koizumi said, "At this juncture, I cannot say whether we need a new law." But he also said, "If the UN adopts some resolution on reconstruction efforts and Japan's current laws will not allow Tokyo to participate in the efforts, then we have to have the Diet debate the issue."

5. Japan's Diplomacy in the Middle East

The Asahi Shinbun ("DIPLOMACY BECKONS DURING GOLDEN WEEK,"04/29/03) reported that Iraq and the pressing Palestinian problem are issues that are much in the minds of the Japanese leadership during the Golden Week holiday period. On Monday, the secretaries-general of the three

ruling coalition parties left on weeklong visits to the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar. The three are Taku Yamasaki of the Liberal Democratic Party; Tetsuzo Fuyushiba of New Komeito and Toshihiro Nikai of Hoshu Shinto (New Conservative Party). Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was in Europe on the weekend, and Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi was in the Middle East. Koizumi, on a weeklong European tour, arrived in Spain on Sunday evening after holding talks the day before with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in London. In Spain, he was to meet Monday with Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar after paying a courtesy call on King Juan Carlos I in Madrid. Koizumi is also scheduled to visit France, Germany and Greece, officials said. Meanwhile, Kawaguchi on Sunday visited Jordan, the first leg of a seven-day tour. Officials said Iraq's reconstruction was a key issue for both Koizumi and Kawaguchi. Jordanian Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb told Kawaguchi that the United Nations offers a good framework for Iraq's reconstruction. Kawaguchi replied that international cooperation was vital in this endeavor. "Japan wants to offer support (for the Iraqi reconstruction) in cooperation with Arab countries, Iraq's neighboring countries, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations," Kawaguchi said. As for the Middle East peace process, Kawaguchi and Ragheb agreed that the Palestinian autonomous government's prime minister-designate, Mahmoud Abbas, and the Israeli government should work together to end the endemic violence in the area. After the talks, Kawaguchi journeyed Sunday to Israel. She also plans to visit the Palestinian autonomous region and Syria. It is the first time since June last year that a Japanese foreign minister has visited Israel and the Palestinian autonomous region. Her scheduled meeting with Abbas represents his first opportunity to hold talks with a visiting foreign VIP. She also plans to meet with Yasser Arafat on Tuesday, officials said. Officials said Kawaguchi would announce a comprehensive aid package for the Palestinians, which includes humanitarian assistance.

6. Japan-Germany Relations

The Asahi Shinbun (Tetsuya Okazaki,"UN IRAQ ROLE, N.KOREA TOP KOIZUMI BERLIN VISIT,"05/01/03) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder were in general agreement Wednesday on the importance of having the United Nations involved in an international effort to rebuild postwar Iraq and the need for diplomatic resolution of the DPRK crisis. Schroeder told Koizumi United Nations leadership in the reconstruction process was necessary to give legitimacy to the new government of Iraq and said Germany would support such an initiative. Koizumi told Schroeder he believes the policy dispute between the United States and Germany on Iraq is temporary, assuring him, "it is more important to bring about international harmony in the reconstruction process." Koizumi said the DPRK issue is quite unlike the Iraq issue, and said a peaceful solution is essential. Schroeder agreed. The two leaders met for about 90 minutes.

7. Japan-US Relations

Kyodo ("JAPAN-US SUMMIT TO BE SET BETWEEN MAY 20-22," Washington, 04/30/03) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush are expected to meet at the Camp David presidential retreat outside Washington sometime between May 20 and 22, Japanese sources said Wednesday. The two countries are now making the final arrangements for the one-day summit, the first of its kind since September, when Koizumi and Bush met in New York, the sources said. The nuclear standoff with DPRK and the reconstruction of postwar Iraq are expected to be high on the agenda at the upcoming meeting, which will be held before the Group of Eight summit in France on June 1-3. The US held talks with DPRK in PRC-brokered talks in Beijing last week to discuss Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs. At talks with Bush, Koizumi is expected to reiterate Japan's position that the DPRK nuclear crisis should be resolved peacefully through diplomacy, including the continuation of the three-way talks, the sources said. He is also expected to

seek assurance from Bush that Washington will maintain the policy of seeking a resolution through dialogue, they said. Koizumi plans to tell Bush that Japan will further press DPRK to accept the early inclusion of Japan and ROK Korean in talks aimed at resolving the nuclear issue, the sources said. Koizumi is also expected to offer Japan's specific support measures for rebuilding Iraq, while stressing the importance of international cooperation and the role to be played by the United Nations, the sources said. Given that the Japanese economy remains sluggish, Bush may urge Koizumi to accelerate the disposal of bad loans at banks and bring an early end to deflation. With the Iraq war all but over, the Bush administration is placing top priority to boosting US economic growth with the 2004 presidential election around the corner. In this sense, the US is hoping Japan and Europe will serve as engines for global economic growth. The sources said Japan initially hoped to have the meeting at Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas. But Bush's tight schedule had made meeting there difficult and the US instead offered to hold the summit at Camp David, they said

IV. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. Issue 123

Three days of talks in Beijing conclude with the USA and DPRK agreeing to meet again, the result of significant encouragement by China. US officials say North Korea claimed to have nuclear weapons, whereas the DPRK complains their new proposals to resolve the dispute were ignored. Following an international conference on human rights held in Prague, the issue gains support and prominence in Europe and the USA. The US Congress passes a resolution based on this year's State Department Report on Human Rights in the DPRK, to which the North Korean press is quick to respond. The issue is also debated in the British House of Lords. The European Union formally denounces the DPRK human rights record at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, which leads to the first ever United Nations resolution on the matter. This week's FOCUS, "DPRK under pressure over human rights," gives an overview of the relevant documents.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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