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I. United States

1. DPRK on US-Led War on Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA MAY SEEK NUCLEAR WEAPONS BECAUSE OF IRAQ WAR: RUSSIA," Moscow, 04/04/03) and CNN News ("NORTH KOREA FEARS IT WILL BE NEXT," Pyongyang, 04/04/03) reported that concern is mounting in the DPRK that it will become the next target of a US attack after the war in Iraq is over. In an official statement released by the Korean Central News Agency on Thursday, the DPRK said it had pulled out of a nuclear non-proliferation treaty as a self-defensive strategy because "the supreme interests of the state were seriously

threatened." The signed statement said the US was "doggedly opposing its constructive proposal for the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty" between the DPRK and the US A United Nations envoy recently returned from the Korean peninsula said Thursday that the DPRK believed the security and integrity of the nation was genuinely threatened by the United States and it was prepared to go to war to defend itself. "I think a war is unnecessary. It is unthinkable in its consequences, and yet it's entirely possible," Maurice Strong, a special adviser to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, told Associated Press. The DPRK views the U.S.-led attack on Iraq as proof that it too will be the target of a pre-emptive strike. President George W. Bush has labeled North Korea as a member of an "axis of evil," along with Iraq and Iran. The US says it wants a peaceful solution to the issue but is rejecting DPRK calls for one-on-one talks to address the issue, insisting instead the matter must be dealt with multilaterally. Strong said he expected a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on the nuclear crisis in the DPRK next week to include a "very, very vigorous and possibly divisive" debate. The Security Council will meet Wednesday, a day before the DPRK's withdrawal from the nonproliferation treaty becomes final.

2. DPRK Leader Re-appearence

BBC News ("NORTH KOREAN LEADER REAPPEARS," 04/04/03) reported that the DPRK's Kim Jong-il has made his first reported appearance for 50 days, ending weeks of speculation as to what had happened to the mysterious leader. The DPRK's official news agency, KCNA, said that Kim inspected a military medical school in Pyongyang on Thursday. Pictures showed him walking with military staff, smiling broadly. His movements have not been reported since 12 February, when he attended a reception at the Russian embassy in the DPRK capital. It has been his longest disappearance since February 2001, when he was not seen for 35 days, and prompted a flurry of analysis. Some Korea-watchers suspected he was holed up with top military officials, possibly at a resort in the north of the country, following the war in Iraq. KCNA reported that Kim visited the armed forces' Kim Hyong-jik military medical university in Pyongyang "for a long time" on Thursday. "He dropped in at a lecture room where he inspected a lecture in field surgery," the agency said. "He instructed that all students should work hard during their university days to prepare themselves as able army surgeons." The agency said he was accompanied by chief of the Korean army, Kim Yong-chun, Defence Minister Kim Il-chol, and two other generals. Kim Yong-chun was reported missing, along with Kim Jong-il, at the country's annual parliament session last week. 3. DPRK on US Economic Sanctions

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA BLASTS US FOR IMPOSING TRADE SANCTIONS OVER MISSILE EXPORTS," 04/04/03) reported that the DPRK has blasted the United States for imposing sanctions on its missile marketing agency for exporting missile technology to Pakistan, claiming the deal was legitimate. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that the DPRK, which has never joined the Missile Technology Control Regime, is bound by no legal restrictions concerning the export of missiles or the transfer of missile technology. "It is our sovereign right to produce, deploy or export missiles to other countries," KCNA said in a report carried by the ROK's Yonhap news agency. It said the DPRK's missile development program was defensive in its nature and "poses no threats to any country that is not threatening us." The statement came after the US for the first time explicitly accused Pakistan and the DPRK of missile-related trade Wednesday. The DPRK responded by accusing the United States of "state terrorism" for bombing cities and killing civilians in its war against Iraq. "The United States is like a thief who takes up a stick to beat its victim. It is the main culprit of the state terrorism which is turning cities and villages into ashes and massacring civilians in Iraq, and now it is talking about sanctions against us," it said.

4. PRC on DPRK Dialogue

The Washington Post (John Pomfret, "CHINA URGES NORTH KOREA DIALOGUE," Beijing, 04/04/03) reported that the PRC has begun playing a more active role in pushing the US and the DPRK to settle their differences over the DPRK nuclear development program, according to the PRC government and Western diplomatic sources. In a series of moves aimed at influencing both sides, the PRC government has warned the DPRK to stop provoking the United States, backing up the warning by closing an oil pipeline to the DPRK for three days in late February, the sources said. At the same time, the PRC has blocked US attempts to use the U.N. Security Council to censure the DPRK for withdrawing from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and has announced that the PRC opposes sanctions against the DPRK leader Kim Jong Il. "We have realized that we cannot let this situation alone," said a PRC government official involved in foreign policy. "So we've decided to attempt to influence it, specifically by getting the two sides together." To that end, he said, the PRC has transmitted more than 50 messages between the DPRK and the US. It also has held numerous meetings with diplomats from both sides. Government sources said a PRC offer to host talks between the two sides still stands.

5. US-ROK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("BUSH, ROH DISCUSS IRAQ, NORTH KOREA," Washington, 04/04/03) reported that US President George W. Bush thanked President Roh Moo-Hyun for sending medical and engineering units to help with humanitarian efforts in Iraq, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said. The two leaders, locked in a dispute with the DPRK over its resumption of nuclear programs, also "reiterated their intention to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue peacefully and to continue close consultations," he said Friday. Roh won a major political victory Wednesday when the opposition-controlled National Assembly overwhelmingly approved his pledge to dispatch some 700 non-combatant troops in support of the US-led war in Iraq. Members voted 179 to 68 in favor of the motion several hours after Roh delivered an appeal for support in his first speech to the National Assembly since his inauguration in February. Fearing a public backlash, legislators had twice put off a vote on the unpopular motion that has brought thousands of anti-war protesters onto the streets of the ROK.

6. US Japan Minesweeper Calls

The Japan Times ("US WANTS JAPANESE MINESWEEPERS IN GULF," Washington, 04/04/03) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage expressed hope Thursday that Japan would send military personnel, including minesweepers, to help with reconstruction efforts in postwar Iraq. Armitage, speaking to reporters after a congressional hearing, said Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's strong support for the war has earned immense gratitude from President George W. Bush. "The unbelievable, strong public support of Prime Minister Koizumi and his government to the United States is something that President Bush and this administration will never forget," he said. Armitage said the Bush administration hopes Japan will help out by dispatching medical personnel and minesweepers to the Persian Gulf. Japan sent minesweepers to the Persian Gulf following the 1991 Gulf War.

7. PRC SARS Virus

BBC News ("CHINESE IN THE DARK OVER VIRUS," 04/04/03) reported that as scientists try to discover the source of the pneumonia-type virus blighting the southern PRC - and whether it jumped to humans from animals - the BBC's Adam Brookes finds local people alarmingly uninformed. Zheng makes her living by raising animals for market in Guangdong. Her tiny farm is illegal; she has no

title to her land and wants nothing to do with the authorities. It is a dirty, unhealthy existence. She lives cheek by jowl with her chickens and pigs and knows nothing of the emerging virus. "I've never heard of people getting sick from pigs or chickens. If our pigs get sick we just give them an injection," she said. Scientists have said privately that they believe it is likely the mystery virus, known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS, first infected a human being in southern PRC. In Guangdong province, more than 1,000 people have contracted the atypical pneumonia brought on by SARS. But in the PRC the public are being kept ignorant. Wang Ping is frightened. She knows a new virus is out there, and that it can kill - but nothing more. So she boils vinegar. She believes this will cleanse the air and protect her from infection. The ruling Communist Party, fearing panic, tried to stem the flow of information. "Later, news of the virus was broadcast on television, but it didn't explain anything - it just told everyone to stay calm," Wang Ping said. In fact, PRC doctors knew as early as last November that people were sickening from an unknown disease, but they did not alert the world.

The Associated Press (Audra Ang, "CHINA APOLOGIZES FOR HANDLING OF SARS," Foshan, China, 04/04/03) reported that the PRC apologized Friday for not doing a better job of informing people about severe acute respiratory syndrome as an international medical team went to the city where it believed the mystery illness may have first broken out. The admission, extraordinary for a government that rarely acknowledges fault, came after escalating criticism abroad - and one day after the health minister explicitly said the PRC had followed its own rules in dealing with the problem. "Today, we apologize to everyone," said Li Liming, director of the PRC Center for Disease Control. "Our medical departments and our mass media suffered poor coordination. We weren't able to muster our forces in helping to provide everyone with scientific publicity and allowing the masses to get hold of this sort of knowledge."

8. ROK SARS Alert

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA SEEKS 200 PEOPLE IN SARS SCARE," 04/04/03) reported that the ROK has issued a countrywide alert to trace some 200 people who may have been exposed to a deadly respiratory virus on a recent flight from the PRC. They were on the same Korean Air (KAL) flight from Beijing to Seoul's Incheon International Airport as a Taiwanese traveller who was later confirmed as suffering from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). "We have sent official directives to provincial health authorities to check up on all the 188 domestic passengers who arrived here on the same flight as the man to discover if they have any symptoms," Woo Myeong-Cheol, an official of the National Institute for Health, said. The man was in transit at Incheon airport for two hours after arriving here on KAL Flight KE 852 on March 28 from Beijing and then leaving on Thai Airways Flight TG 635 to Taipei. The ROK has so far remained untouched by the SARS epidemic but NIH chief Kim Moon-Sik said it was just a matter of time before the first case appeared.

9. Japan-PRC Relations

The Japan Times (Kanako Takahara, "KOIZUMI SET TO WOO CHINA WITH LETTER," 04/04/03) reported that Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Friday that Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi will deliver a letter to PRC Premier Wen Jiabao stressing the importance of friendly bilateral ties. Kawaguchi is scheduled to depart on a visit to the PRC on Sunday. "(In the letter,) I will mention the importance of (maintaining) a friendly relationship between Japan and China," Koizumi told reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence. "Since this year marks the 25th anniversary of the conclusion of the Japan-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship, I will express hope that the two countries will continue cooperating with each other." During her three-day visit,

Kawaguchi hopes to meet with the new PRC leadership, including her counterpart, Li Zhaoxing, and Wen. She will urge Beijing to pressure the DPRK over its nuclear ambitions. The foreign minister will also aim to lay the groundwork for a summit meeting between Koizumi and PRC President Hu Jintao. A summit of this kind has yet to be realized due to PRC anger over Koizumi's repeated visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine. Indeed, with the PRC having adopted a tougher stance on the Yasukuni issue under the Hu leadership, a leaders' summit has yet to be put on the diplomatic calendar. Yasukuni Shrine honors Japan's war dead, as well as Class-A war criminals. According to some media reports, China does not plan to hold a summit for the time being in protest at the shrine visits. Koizumi himself insists that this is the case. "We will wait for the (right) timing" for the visit, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said Friday.

10. ROK Domestic Economy

The Associated Press ("FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN SOUTH KOREA FALLS," Seoul, 04/04/03) reported that foreign investment into the ROK fell 48 percent in the first quarter, the government said Friday. The announcement comes as other economic indicators show South Korea's economy is faltering amid the standoff over North Korea (news - web sites)'s suspected nuclear weapons program. South Korea's stock market is among the worst performers in Asia this year. The Kospi index has dropped 18.3 percent since January. The value of the currency, the won, has also plunged. The government said there was $1.1 billion in foreign direct investment in the January-March period. Investment from the US tumbled 72 percent during the January-March quarter to $356 million, while investment from the European Union fell 24 percent to $355 million. In contrast, investment from Japan rose 6.1 percent to $156 million. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy said the fall in foreign investment was due to uncertainties over Iraq and a lack of confidence in a global economic rebound weighed on investor sentiment across the world.

11. DPRK on US Human Rights

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("US NOT QUALIFIED TO TALK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS," Pyongyang, 04/04/03) reported that a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of the DPRK in a statement issued on April 3 accused the US of pulling up the DPRK over its human rights issue. He said the US with the poorest human rights record is not qualified to talk about human rights. Recalling that the US in an "annual report on human rights" released on March 31 slandered the DPRK behaving as if it were a "human rights judge," he continued: Human rights precisely mean national sovereign rights. The accusation made by the US against the DPRK over its human rights issue is nothing but a ridiculous attempt to tarnish the international image of the DPRK by adding the "human rights issue" to the "nuclear issue" and increase its pressure upon the DPRK in a bid to infringe upon its sovereign rights.

12. DPRK on US-ROK Joint Military Exercise

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("US-SKOREA JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES FLAILED WORLDWIDE," Pyongyang, 04/04/03) reported that at least 200 media, political parties and organizations and many figures of different social standings in the world strongly condemned the U.S-ROK joint military exercises staged in the ROK, holding that they were chiefly aimed to ignite the second Korean war. The Australian newspaper Canberra Times and AFP said that those operations were planned nine months ago and the US and South Korea decided to stage the exercises in order to show that they remain alert on the Korean Peninsula despite the US Iraqi war. Radio Voice of Russia commented the deployment of more US Forces on the Korean Peninsula is an

indication that such military operation as the one against Iraq can be staged on the peninsula. The US newspapers Worker and Worker's World, the Malaysian newspaper New Straits Times, the Mexican newspaper Reforma, the Czech newspaper Halo Noviny and many other newspapers observed that the involvement of large-size bombers and stealth fighters of the US air force in the exercises suggests that they can easily go over to an actual war operation anytime as it is an open warning to the DPRK.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Deploying ROK Army to Iraq War

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "VOLUNTEERS POUR FORTH TO JOIN IRAQ DEVELOPMENT," Seoul, 04/04/03) reported that an advance group of military officers will head for Kuwait on Monday to begin coordinating with US Central Command on the timing, positioning and missions of South Korean troops who will be deployed for the Iraqi war, the Ministry of National Defense said Thursday. The three-officer team will be headed by a colonel, who will likely remain through the consultations and join the troops when they are deployed there. The deployment of a 666-member contingent was authorized by the National Assembly on Wednesday. A Defense Ministry official said the force, made up of 566 engineers and 100 medics, is likely to be stationed in Kuwait initially, but they could be moved into Iraqi territory to help with reconstruction and medical assistance assignments. As ROK government began preparations for the deployment, and despite President Roh Moo-hyun's plea Wednesday to put the divisive issue behind, advocacy groups ratcheted up their protest against the plan to send the troops to Iraq. Attorneys with Lawyers for a Democratic Society filed a petition with the Constitutional Court. The People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy filed an administrative petition to suspend the deployment. Officials with the groups said the constitution prohibits deployment of Korean forces in a military invasion.

2. DPRK Missile Test Issue

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hee, "SO IT WASN'T A MISSILE TEST AFTER ALL," Seoul, 04/04/03) reported that intelligence authorities of ROK and US have concluded that the recent intelligence report about a North Korean test of its surface-to-ship missile was not reliable. Defense officials of ROK, Japan and US had made conflicting remarks Tuesday about whether such a test had occurred. The intelligence communities' clarification was a rare move, because the two countries have often refused to confirm DPRK-related issues in order to protect their information collecting methods from exposure. DPRK designated a restricted travel zone in its waters off the coast of Hwajin-ri in the Yellow Sea, the source said, but no actual launch was observed. DPRK's military normally deploys missile-tracking radar, a target and control vessels in the area, but no such equipment was placed, the source added. Defense Minister Cho Young-kil said a missile launch was unlikely because the area was not suitable for missile tests. Another senior official said inhabited islands and a naval base were located in the suspect area. DPRK test-fired two missiles this year toward the East Sea (Sea of Japan). The U.S. and South Korean intelligence authorities did not rule out the possibility of a test-launch of an unidentified weapon.

3. DPRK Nuclear Agenda to UN

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH'S NUCLEAR STEP TO GET UN ATTENTION," New York, 04/04/03) reported that UN Security Council will meet Wednesday to take up the North Korean nuclear problem,

ambassadors to the United Nations said Thursday as they emerged from a closed-door meeting on the council's schedule for April. PRC's ambassador to the United Nations, Wang Yingfan, said it was not certain whether the consultations will result in a formal step by the council, such as political or economic sanctions. US Ambassador to the UN John Negroponte also said there was no commitment to any outcome in next week's discussions. Thursday will mark the day that DPRK's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty becomes formally effective, three months after DPRK's declaration. DPRK has insisted, however, that its declaration was effective immediately.

4. ROK Economy Depending on DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Shim Shang-bok, "MOODY'S STILL WARY OF NORTH'S ACTIONS," New York, 04/04/03) reported that Moody's Investors Service has warned that it may lower ROK's sovereign debt rating, if DPRK brings about new tensions by reactivating its facility for reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods or by launching a long-range missile. "The cut in South Korea's credit outlook in February resulted mainly from the North Korea nuclear issue," Thomas Byrne, vice president of Moody's, said in a lecture before the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry in USA, Inc., at Fort Lee, New Jersey, on Wednesday. The rating agency lowered the nation's rating outlook by two notches from "positive" to "negative," in February. "If North Korea takes further action, we could lower South Korea's credit rating," Mr. Byrne said. Mr. Byrne pointed out that DPRK had gradually increased its provocations regarding the nuclear issue. "We are paying attention to the possibility that a reactivation of the nuclear facilities can induce a U.S. attack on North Korea," he said.

5. ROK-US Talks on Military Alliance

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "TALKS SET ON QUESTION OF US TROOPS," Seoul, 04/04/03) reported that talks between ROK and US on reducing or relocating US troops here and the future of the alliance will be held next Tuesday and Wednesday at the Ministry of National Defense. Leading US delegation will be Richard Lawless, US deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia and the Pacific, who will arrive in ROK on Sunday. Heading ROK's side will be the director of the ministry's policy planning bureau, Cha Young-gu. Specific topics expected to be aired include the relocation of the 2nd U.S. Army and the removal of troops from the Yongsan base. ROK's policy is that downsizing US forces now is not an option, and that relocating the 2nd Army should come after the North Korean nuclear problem is resolved. However, US has said it wants the questions settled by September, and wants to initiate the reduction and relocation of US troops here as soon as possible.

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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