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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Test Preparation

CNN News ("NORTH KOREA 'PREPARING MISSILE TEST,'" Tokyo, 03/06/03) reported that in a

move likely to add to rising tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the DPRK may be readying to test fire a medium-range ballistic missile, Japan's Kyodo news agency reports. Quoting an unnamed senior US official, Kyodo reported that the US was monitoring DPRK missile activity closely. "At this point, what we're concerned about is the Rodong," the official, in Washington was quoted as saying. The Rodong missile, with a range of about 1,300 km (800 miles) is capable of striking Japan. Defense analysts believe around 100 of the missiles have been deployed in DPRK. "There is various activity," the official said. "There is nothing concrete to show that they are doing that, but we do have worries both logically and in terms of some movements we are seeing that might make sense." There have been a number of military related maneuvers in the past fortnight that have added to tensions on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK says it has the right to possess missiles and that the US and Japan were using an alleged threat posed by its missiles as pretense to launch an attack. "The development and deployment of missiles is a sovereign right and is aimed at strengthening self-defense capabilities," the KCNA, a mouthpiece for the North Korean regime, said Monday. KCNA said Washington and Tokyo "are trying to make an excuse for staging a pre-emptive attack."

2. ROK on the DPRK Nuclear Threat

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "SEOUL LIVES IN SHADOW OF NORTH KOREA'S GUNS," Seoul, 03/06/03) carried a story that read that on weekends, many residents of Seoul drive north to dine in fancy cafes overlooking peaceful rice paddies - and military checkpoints and barbed wire fences. The location of Seoul, just 37 miles south of the world's most heavily armed border, doesn't make military sense. This city of 10 million people lies within the range of the DPRK's formidable batteries of artillery and missiles. DPRK jets can reach the city within several minutes of takeoff. But Seoul's residents live surprisingly normal lives, mocking the international furor over the DPRK's nuclear program. "No. I don't wake up with nightmares," said Park Jin-ha, a 40-year-old businessman. "We are like villagers who grew tired of hearing 'wolf' cried too often." In October, the US said the DPRK admitted having a secret nuclear weapons program. The ROK President Roh Moo-hyun stresses stability on the Korean Peninsula, saying he would not support any plan by the US to attack the DPRK because of its weapons of mass destruction. He says such an attack would trigger a war that would devastate the ROK as well.

3. ROK on US Troop Presence

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "SOUTH KOREA URGES US NOT TO REDUCE TROOP STRENGTH," Seoul, 03/06/03) and the New York Times (Don Kirk, "Key South Korea Aide Defends the Presence of US Troops," Seoul, 03/06/03) reported that the ROK's second highest leader today defended the presence of US forces in the country as the first line of defense against the DPRK invasion. He spoke out as two dozen US heavy bombers flew into Guam and analysts here focused on what the DPRK is likely to do next in the widening crisis. Prime Minister Goh Kun, a veteran government official with a long background as a top official with conservative Korean governments, appeared to contradict the dovish words of other officials as he assured the US ambassador to Korea, Thomas Hubbard, of the need for US troops here. "The trip wire should remain," a spokesman for the prime minister quoted him as telling Hubbard. US and ROK officials have been using the "trip wire" analogy for years in referring to US troops between here and the DPRK border 30 miles north of this vulnerable, sprawling capital. But the timing of Goh's remark offered a powerful antidote to the impact of seemingly dovish comments by ROK officials in recent days. US military officials have been upset by the failure of ROK to offer firm support for US surveillance flights near the DPRK or to condemn the interception of a US spy plane by four DPRK fighters last Sunday.

4. ROK-Japan DPRK Talks

USA Today (Paul Wiseman and Barbara Slavin, "JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA HOLD LOW-KEY TALKS WITH NORTH," 03/06/03) reported that Japanese and ROK envoys have been meeting quietly with DPRK diplomats in the PRC in an effort to persuade the DPRK to give up its nuclear weapons program and end a dangerous diplomatic standoff with the US. The discussions reflect frustration and concern by the DPRK's neighbors that the US and the DPRK can't agree on a forum for talking to each other. The DPRK has said the crisis can't be resolved without one-on-one talks between it and the US. The Bush administration wants discussions that also include other affected nations. Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hatsuhsa Takashima said Wednesday that Japan was holding low-key talks with the DPRK in Beijing, where both countries have embassies. He said Japan is dangling the prospect of normal diplomatic relations and economic aid in exchange for the DPRK abandoning its nuclear ambitions and a resolution to a dispute involving DPRK's past abduction of Japanese citizens. "They are responding to our calls," he said. In Seoul, a top aide to ROK President Roh Moo Hyun said Wednesday that he met with a DPRK official in Beijing three days before Roh's inauguration February 25. But national security adviser Ra Jong Yil denied speculation that he was trying to organize a summit between Roh and DPRK leader Kim Jong Il. A senior State Department official in Washington declined to comment on the talks.

5. Russia on US DPRK Attack

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA WARNS US AGAINST ATTACKING NORTH KOREA," Moscow, 03/06/03) reported that Russia's Foreign Ministry strongly urged the US on Thursday against using force to solve a dispute over the DPRK's nuclear program and reaffirmed its call for a direct dialogue between the US and the DPRK. "Russia has noted with concern the statements that have been issued recently by official American representatives that the US doesn't exclude military means of solving the so-called North Korean nuclear problem," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement released to the media. Russia believes that "there is no alternative to the peaceful settlement of problems on the Korean Peninsula through negotiations," the Russian Foreign Ministry said Thursday. "We are urging both Washington and Pyongyang to show wisdom and restraint, steer clear of actions and statements that exacerbate the situation and take real steps to defuse tensions." Maurice Strong, a special adviser on North Korea to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, met with deputy foreign ministers Alexander Losyukov and Yuri Fedotov during a visit to Moscow on Wednesday and Thursday, the ministry said in a separate statement. "The need for the international community to take a balanced line, aimed at de-escalating the tension using peaceful, political-diplomatic means was noted" at the meetings, the ministry said. Russia's proposed "package agreement," which calls for the DPRK to observe international nuclear agreements in exchange for security guarantees and economic aid, "could become a realistic alternative to the escalation of the situation around North Korea, first of all through the establishment of direct dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang," the ministry said.

6. PRC on Iraq Resolution

BBC News ("CHINA RALLIES BEHIND WAR OPPONENTS," 03/06/03) reported that the PRC has said there is no need for a new resolution on Iraq, dealing a fresh blow to US diplomatic efforts to push a new motion against Iraq through the United Nations. PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said he backed France, Russia and Germany, who warned on Wednesday that they would block any resolution paving the way for war with Iraq. However, Tang did not say whether the PRC would use its power of veto when the resolution was put to a vote, probably next week. Speaking before leaving for the UN on Thursday, Tang said: "We think it is not necessary to introduce any new resolution".

He said the PRC's position was "consistent" with the anti-war statement issued by France, Russia and Germany the previous day. Russia has repeatedly said it might use its veto, while French Defence Minister Michele Alliot said on Thursday that the use of the veto "wasn't an issue" because the majority of council members supported France's position.

7. PRC Domestic Economy

Reuters (Scott Hillis, "CHINA TO REVAMP GOVERNMENT, EYE ON ECONOMY," Beijing, 03/06/03) and BBC News ("CHINESE BUDGET SEES RECORD DEFICIT," 03/06/03) reported that the PRC has announced its 2003 budget, which will include a record deficit for the third year in a row. In his annual address to the PRC's National People's Congress (NPC), Finance Minister Xiang Huaicheng said government spending would exceed revenues by an estimated \$38 billion. The NPC meeting, which opened on Wednesday in Beijing's Great Hall of the People, is expected to approve sweeping leadership changes, with Vice-President Hu Jintao expected to take over the country's presidency in place of Jiang Zemin. Xiang said further spending was needed, despite an increasing deficit, to finance the country's ongoing rural development, agricultural restructuring and social security projects. But he assured the congress delegates that "both the deficit and the total amount of debts for 2003 will remain bearable". Since the 1990s, the government has been pursuing a policy of spending to promote growth. In the past five years, spending on social welfare has increased nine-fold and spending on agriculture and education has doubled, Xiang reported. The PRC's budget problems are not helped by the government's stubborn failure to significantly increase its revenues from taxation. Xiang Huaicheng vowed to change this situation, and said that cracking down on tax evasion would be a major focus for the coming year.

8. PRC on Oil Production

The Associated Press ("CHINA SAYS IT IS READY TO MAINTAIN OIL SUPPLIES IN CASE OF IRAQ WAR," Beijing, 03/06/03) reported that the PRC's long-term strategy of diversifying its sources of imported oil and gas should ensure steady supplies in the event of war involving Iraq, its foreign minister said Thursday. Tang Jiaxuan said the PRC, which is pursuing rapid economic growth, regards its energy imports as a strategically vulnerable resource. "We have realized this problem a long time ago, and worked out the strategy of diversifying imports of oil and gas imports," Tang said at a news conference. While there "might be an impact" on oil and gas supplies during a war in Iraq, he said, "I don't think the impact will be so great that China will have to adjust its foreign policy." Tang made his comments as he was about to fly to New York for a U.N. Security Council meeting on Iraq. He also said the PRC saw no need for an additional U.N. resolution on Iraq and believes weapons inspections should continue. Tang would not say if the PRC would use its veto power in the Security Council to block a resolution to authorize war.

9. PRC on US and Cross-Straits Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA URGES US TO HANDLE TAIWAN ISSUE 'APPROPRIATELY,'" Beijing, 03/06/03)

The US should deal with the issue of Taiwan "appropriately" to ensure smooth relations with the PRC, PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said Thursday. Tang said the PRC expected the US to adhere to its commitments over Taiwan, especially the US's policy of maintaining formal ties only with the ROC. "The key to healthy and steady development of PRC-US relations is for the US to appropriately handle the Taiwan question," Tang said at a news conference held at the National

People's Congress. He did not say what he meant by "appropriate." Alluding to much-improved relations with the US, Tang said the sides were in close consultation on issues such as Iraq and North Korea. "We have to view this relationship from the long-term and strategic perspective," Tang said. "We have to deepen mutual understanding and trust." Tang also said the US and the PRC needed to "recognize and respect differences," presumably including different approaches to the Taiwan issue. "The key is to narrow these differences, and broaden the convergence point of our common interests," Tang said.

10. PRC on US-DPRK Diplomacy

Reuters ("CHINA OPPOSES PRESSURE, SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 03/06/03) reported that the PRC wants the US and the DPRK hold direct talks and believes pressure or sanctions on the DPRK will only cause "complications," Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said on Thursday. "We have all along called for dialogue and opposed pressure or sanctions against the DPRK. Rather than solving the problem, this can only lead to the complication of the situation," Tang told a news conference. The US has urged the PRC, which supplies the bulk of the DPRK's food and oil imports, to use its influence to bring the DPRK in line. But the PRC fears pressure or sanctions could spark more brinksmanship from its unpredictable neighbor, or even provoke a collapse that would send millions of hungry refugees pouring into the PRC, analysts said.

11. PRC Internet Development

The Associated Press ("China's Web surveillance slows access even as government promotes Internet use," Beijing, 03/06/03) reported that the PRC's tens of millions of Internet users are suffering sharp slowdowns in access, which industry experts blame in part on heightened efforts by the government to police online content. Some say problems have worsened this week, suggesting the PRC is tightening surveillance during the annual meeting of the PRC's parliament. The slowdown highlights the clash between the PRC's efforts to reap the Internet's benefits and communist zeal to control what its people read and hear. Authorities have invested both in spreading Web access nationwide and installing technology to scan Web sites and e-mail for content deemed subversive or obscene. Problems emerged in October after "packet-sniffer" software was installed that briefly holds each chunk of data to be screened. The PRC has built an online barrier around the PRC, requiring traffic in and out to pass through just eight gateways - a step that heightens official control. Banned topics include human rights and the outlawed Falun Gong spiritual group. Each item emerging from the PRC bears the same Internet return address, showing that all are held up at the same location rather than coming directly from their senders, said Michael Iannini, general manager of Nicholas International Consulting Services Inc. in Beijing. Iannini compares it to all of China's Web surfers - a population that the government says hit 59 million in January - breathing through the same tiny air hole. "Through this hole the government has set up many filters," he said. The snarl is worsened by the breakup of the PRC's former monopoly phone company amid double-digit growth in its online population, which already is the world's second-biggest. China Telecom was split into two smaller carriers in a move meant to spur competition and lead to better, cheaper service. But in the short run, it has left the PRC's north in the hands of a spinoff company with sharply lower Internet capacity. Ordinary users say they have their biggest problems in reaching foreign Web sites and on weekdays, when people go to work and log on at the same time. They say access sometimes is so slow that they can't reach Google, Hotmail and other popular foreign sites - many based in the US. Industry experts say carriers are said to be installing more Internet capacity between China and the US, but it isn't clear how much will be added or when.

12. ROK Internet Media

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "ONLINE NEWSPAPER SHAKES UP KOREAN POLITICS," Seoul, 03/06/03) carried a story that reported that for years, people will be debating what made this country go from conservative to liberal, from gerontocracy to youth culture and from staunchly pro-American to a deeply ambivalent ally - all seemingly overnight. For most here, the change is symbolized by the election in December of Roh Moo Hyun, a reformist lawyer with a disarmingly unfussy style who at 56 is youthful by ROK political standards. But for many observers, the most important agent of change has been the Internet. By some measures, the ROK is the most wired country in the world, with broadband connections in nearly 70 percent of households. In the last year, as the elections were approaching, more and more people were getting their information and political analysis from spunky news services on the Internet instead of from the country's overwhelmingly conservative newspapers. Most influential by far has been a feisty three-year-old startup with the unusual name of OhmyNews. Around election time the free online news service was registering 20 million page views per day. Although things have cooled down a bit, even these days the service averages about 14 million visits daily, in a country of only about 40 million people. The online newspaper, which began with only four employees, started as a glimmer in the eye of Oh Yeon Ho, now 38, a lifelong journalistic rabble rouser who wrote for underground progressive magazines during the long years of dictatorship here. Although the staff has grown to 41, from the beginning the electronic newspaper's unusual concept has been to rely mostly on contributions from ordinary readers all over the country, who send dispatches about everything from local happenings and personal musings to national politics. Only 20 percent of the paper each day is written by staff journalists. So far, a computer check shows, there have been more than 10,000 other bylines. The newspaper deals with questions of objectivity and accuracy by grading articles according to their content. Those that are presented as straight news are fact-checked by editors. Writers are paid small amounts, which vary according to how the stories are ranked, using forestry terminology, from "kindling" to "rare species." "My goal was to say farewell to 20th-century Korean journalism, with the concept that every citizen is a reporter," said Oh, a wiry, intense man whose mobile phone never stops ringing - and who insists his name has no connection with the newspaper's. "The professional news culture has eroded our journalism," he said, "and I have always wanted to revitalize it. Since I had no money, I decided to use the Internet, which has made this guerrilla strategy possible." Although OhmyNews pays its staff less than reporters earn at the top South Korean newspapers, morale appears to very high. "Wherever I go, people ask me, 'What about the pay?' " said Son Byung Kwan, 31, a reporter who helped break the story about the American soldiers' accident. "I took a 30 percent pay cut to work here, but things couldn't be better. My company is so famous that I have become well known, and best of all, my stories have real impact."

13. Japan Domestic Economy

The Dow Jones (Hiroshi Inoue, "BANK OF JAPAN MAINTAINS SOMBER ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMY," Tokyo, 03/06/03) reported that the Bank of Japan on Thursday left its core economic assessment for March unchanged from February, repeating that economic activity is flat and there remains substantial uncertainty over the outlook for the economy - a view it has held for five months in a row. The central bank's concern about the economy's future centers on greater uncertainty about the global economy amid growing tensions in the Middle East and general geopolitical worries. "The downside risk to the outlook for overseas economies continues to require attention, given that there are some uncertain factors, including geopolitical developments and their economic implications," the BOJ said. The somber assessment follows a decision by the BOJ's nine-member board Wednesday to leave unchanged its ultra-easy monetary policy. However, the board voted unanimously to increase the BOJ's account balance target by two trillion yen (\$16.96 billion) to a

range of 17 trillion yen to 22 trillion yen, in anticipation of a move by Japan's postal corporation to deposit reserves at the central bank. The BOJ said the increase was a technical adjustment rather than an intentional effort to loosen credit. In discussing its concerns about the global economy - the main engine for an export-led recovery in Japan - the BOJ said an improvement in the US economy is slowing and European economies are weak. As for financial markets, the BOJ said the financial system remains stable going into the end of the fiscal year on March 31 and it blamed recent dollar weakness on geopolitical tension.

14. KCNA Call for Non-Aggression Treaty

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("US URGED TO ACCEPT DPRK'S PROPOSAL FOR CONCLUDING NON-AGGRESSION TREATY," Pyongyang, 03/06/03) reported that the Rodong Sinmun today in a signed commentary accuses the US of describing the DPRK's proposal for concluding a non-aggression treaty as "brinkmanship tactics" to get a sort of "reward" from it. It goes on: The DPRK's proposal for concluding a non-aggression treaty with the US is aimed to provide a legal binding force to keep the US from posing a nuclear threat to the DPRK and it has nothing in common with "brinkmanship tactics." The DPRK is bored with hypocritical US promises devoid of any legal binding force. In the 1990s the then US President sent a message of assurances to the DPRK. But later, the US threw it away like a pair of old shoes. Moreover, the Bush administration says that it has no intention to invade the DPRK but its words do not match with its deeds. It turned down the DPRK's proposal for holding dialogues, while paying lip-service to the "peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue," and it said that it is not in a position to legally assure the DPRK of non-aggression despite its assertion that it would not invade the DPRK by force of arms. No matter how many security assurances that lack any legal binding force the Bush administration may give to the DPRK, it is not interested in them at all. That's why the DPRK calls for concluding a non-aggression treaty with a legal binding force to be approved by US Congress. What we need is a legal guarantee to be provided by a treaty as valid as international law. The US should not flee from its heavy responsibility for spawning the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula but promptly opt for direct talks with the DPRK to conclude a non-aggression treaty with the DPRK, the most aboveboard and reasonable proposal to provide the best solution to the pending issues between the two countries.

II. Japan

1. Japan's View on US Policy to DPRK Kyodo

("BUSH MENTIONS MILITARY OPTION TO SETTLE N.KOREA ISSUE," Washington, 03/04/03) reported that the White House on Tuesday sought to play down US President George W. Bush's warning that the US would have to deal with the DPRK nuclear issue militarily if diplomacy fails. Bush mentioned the possibility of using military force against DPRK in an interview on Monday with the Baltimore Sun and 13 other US newspapers. Citing US efforts to persuade DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions, Bush said, "If they don't work diplomatically, they'll have to work militarily." White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Bush's remarks were a "restatement" of US policy. "The president continues to believe that this matter can be handled through diplomacy," Fleischer said. In the interview, Bush said "the military option is our last choice" and reiterated he believes the DPRK nuclear issue can be resolved through diplomacy. This is the first time Bush has specifically mentioned a "military" solution to the DPRK nuclear issue. Previously, he said, "All options are on the table." Japan reacted calmly to Bush's remarks, with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi telling reporters Wednesday in Tokyo, "America has not abandoned any options. (Bush's comments)

exemplified this stance." Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, the top government spokesman, told reporters Bush only mentioned "a very basic principle" in dealing with the North. "When we read it thoroughly, President Bush said the use of arms is possible, but also stressed that there are a slew of things to do before that," Fukuda said, referring to the need for diplomatic efforts. Fukuda also said the Japanese government has no plans to impose economic sanctions on DPRK in the near future.

2. US-DPRK Relations Kyodo

("US SENDING 24 BOMBERS TO GUAM TO DETER N KOREA, Washington, 03/04/03) reported that the US is dispatching 24 B-1 and B-52 bombers to the western Pacific island of Guam to deter any aggression by DPRK in case of a war in Iraq, US sources said Tuesday. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who put bombers on alert in early February for possible deployment to the Pacific, has recently ordered them to be sent to Guam, they said. The sources said the deployment of the bombers does not mean the US military is preparing for an attack on DPRK. The step is intended to strengthen its defense capability in the region at a time when the possibility of a war with Iraq is growing, they said. The sources said the deployment of US bombers has nothing to do with DPRK's recent interception of a US reconnaissance plane in international airspace Sunday.

3. Castro's Visit to Japan

The Asahi Shinbun ("KASTRO KEEN TO AVERT WAR, OFFERS HELP," 03/03/03) reported that Cuban President Fidel Castro offered in his visit to Japan, Sunday, to help mediate in the twin crises of looming war with Iraq and DPRK's nuclear development program. Castro, who last visited Japan in 1995, said that if asked he would do whatever he could to help lessen tensions. He made the remark during talks with Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi also attended the 75-minute meeting in which Koizumi noted that Cuba maintains friendly relations with DPRK. In reply, Castro said, "The Cuban leadership has not made any direct contacts with (DPRK's current) leader (Kim Jong Il) since former leader Kim Il Sung died." However, he added, "It is important to solve the issues (of DPRK's nuclear development) in joint political efforts with PRC, RF and ROK. Cuba will also do what it can (for the solution)." As for Iraq, Castro, 76, referred to reports that Iraq had begun destroying its Al-Samoud missile system. "Although it is a small step, the possibility is growing that Iraq will obey UN resolutions and avert a war (with the US and Britain)." Koizumi said Japan was committed financially to helping with the postwar reconstruction of Iraq after Saddam Hussein's regime is toppled. Castro said he thought Iraq could only avoid war by destroying its arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. "I want to do what I can (to avert a war) even if the effort is very small like a grain of sand," he said. Castro also met Lower House Speaker Tamisuke Watanuki and former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto

4. Japan's Position to Iraq

The Asahi Shinbun (Satoshi Ukai, "ENVOY TAKES DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE TO IRAQ," Anman, 03/04/03) reported that Toshimitsu Motegi, special envoy of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, was to meet Monday in Baghdad with Iraq's deputy prime minister in a last-ditch effort to avert war. Motegi, a senior vice foreign minister, was dispatched by Koizumi to try to persuade the regime of Saddam Hussein to comply with UN resolutions and disarm peacefully, thereby avoiding a US-led military strike. Motegi's scheduled talks with Tariq Aziz come just one week after US Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Tokyo to present the US case to unseat Saddam. Initially, Foreign Ministry officials objected to the diplomatic initiative, fearing Baghdad would use it for propaganda purposes.

On Sunday, before his visit to Baghdad, Motegi met here with Jordan's prime minister, Ali Abu Al-Ragheb, and Foreign Affairs Minister Marwan Muasher. Motegi delivered a letter from Koizumi to Ragheb that explained Japan's effort to seek a peaceful resolution. Ragheb told Motegi he thought Iraq had no choice but to fully cooperate with the UN on weapons inspections, "but we hope the UN has time to spare for this issue." Motegi earlier spoke by telephone with chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix. "Japan can show Iraq how it can become an economic power without weapons as it has oil and water," Blix told Motegi. His mission did not raise hopes that Iraq will feel compelled to disarm, a sentiment that even Motegi voiced. "We have no diplomatic muscle to make Iraq change its mind," said a senior Foreign Ministry official in Tokyo. Earlier, Motegi expressed confidence his visit would be successful if he could determine how cooperative Iraq is willing to be. "To be frank, there's a 90 percent chance that this will not happen," Motegi said. For Tokyo, the bottom line is relatively simple. It wants to dilute anti-war sentiment in the event the US decides it has no option but to wage war. Recent media polls show that about 80 percent of the population opposes a military strike against Iraq.

5. Japan's View to Iraq Situation

Kyodo ("GOV'T ORDERS JAPANESE NATIONALS IN KUWAIT, KHAFJI TO LEAVE," Tokyo, 03/06/03) reported that the Japan's Foreign Ministry on Thursday advised Japanese nationals in Kuwait and the Khafji area of Saudi Arabia to leave immediately, given a possible US military strike on Iraq. "The U.S. forces...are said to be ready for military strike" and it may become difficult for Japanese nationals to leave the areas because airports are expected to be closed and services of commercial flights will be suspended in case of the use of force, the ministry said in upgrading the travel advisory for the areas. In a travel advisory issued Feb. 10, the ministry recommended Japanese nationals postpone visits to Kuwait and the Khafji area of Saudi Arabia as well as Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. Senior Iraqi officials have said Baghdad may launch retaliatory attacks on Kuwait should the U.S. military launch a strike because Kuwait hosts U.S. land troops expected to be involved in such action, according to the ministry. "Iraq might use biological and chemical weapons to attack Kuwait," the ministry said. The ministry said the Khafji area may also be subject to Iraqi retaliation because of its geographical proximity to Iraq.

6. Japan-US Relations over Iraq and DPRK Issues

The Asahi Shinbun ("JAPAN TO WAIT ON IRAQ ATTACK DECISION," 03/06/03) reported that Tokyo also backs Washington's call for multilateral talks with DPRK, Kawaguchi says. Japan will wait to "the very last moment" and weigh all possible information before deciding how it will respond if the US and Britain attack Iraq. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said in an exclusive interview with the Asahi Shimbun. Kawaguchi added that before Japan makes its final decision it would call on Iraq to cooperate with UN weapons inspectors as well as state Japan's position at international forums. She made her comments on Tuesday. The foreign minister also said Japan supports the US' position on a multilateral forum to discuss DPRK's nuclear weapons development program. Pyongyang insists on bilateral talks with Washington and has engaged in escalating diplomatic brinkmanship by resuming operations at its experimental graphite nuclear reactor at Yongbyon and other acts. Kawaguchi said multilateral discussions should begin as soon as possible. At a minimum, Washington wants Japan and South Korea to join in the talks. However, Kawaguchi indicated that a multilateral setting could allow for direct bilateral talks between Pyongyang and Washington on the sidelines. "Even in a multilateral forum there will be detailed communications among members of that forum," Kawaguchi said. "Such a forum would open up possibilities for many different forms of discussion." She also said economic sanctions by Japan are not an immediate option should DPRK resume operations of a reprocessing facility for spent nuclear fuel rods or end its freeze on

experimental ballistic missile launches. "The Japanese government is not working on the presumption that DPRK would take such steps," Kawaguchi said. "That is an issue that the international community as a whole has to consider. There is no discussion right now internationally about imposing economic sanctions." Kawaguchi also said that Japan's decision on how to respond to a US-led attack on Iraq would depend on three factors. "The most important issue is the fact that the international community must respond to the threat of weapons of mass destruction," Kawaguchi said. "Secondly, Japan has to determine if Iraq is serious about cooperating (with UN weapons inspectors). Thirdly, we also have to consider what effect the statements of the world's second largest economic power has on the international community." She pointed out several factors that indicate continued weapons inspections may not be effective. "There have been only minimal interviews with Iraqi scientists and Iraq should not even be producing missiles in the first place," Kawaguchi said. She also brushed aside criticism from opposition party members that she has been less than open in the Diet in response to their questions. "When I say 'please tell me what specifically you don't understand,' I never get a response," Kawaguchi said. "I have no comment on that criticism because I do not agree with their assessment."

7. Japan-US Relations over DPRK Abductions' Issue

The Asahi Shinbun ("ABDUCTEE FAMILIES VISIT US POLITICIANS," Washington, 03/06/03) reported that US congressional leaders on Tuesday offered support to visiting family members of abductees making the rounds here to seek help with the DPRK abduction issue. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told the family members he will talk to US President George W. Bush about the abductions, according to supporters of the families. Shigeru and Sakie Yokota, whose daughter Megumi was abducted by DPRK agents in 1977, and other members of abductees' families are visiting Washington from Monday through Friday to lobby for US assistance. The group also met with Republican Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, who told them he was infuriated at the inhumane abductions, the sources said. Earlier in the day, the family members were interviewed by NBC-TV, The Washington Post and other media organizations. An NBC producer said the interview, when aired, would make the audience wonder what they would do if their loved ones were abducted. The producer also said Americans are generally not familiar with the abduction issue but are very concerned with Pyongyang's nuclear development program.

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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