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I. United States

1. DPRK-ROK Ministerial Talks Cancellation

The New York Times (Don Kirk, "NORTH KOREA CANCELS TALKS WITH THE SOUTH," Seoul, 04/07/03) and BBC News ("KOREAN TALKS CALLED OFF," 04/07/03) reported that ministerial talks between the DPRK and the ROK have been cancelled after the DPRK failed to confirm they would take place. The meetings, which were due to open on Monday, were to have focused on inter-Korean exchanges and the North's suspected nuclear program. The DPRK gave no explanation for its apparent withdrawal. But the DPRK has criticized the ROK's decision to send non-combatant troops to take part in the war in Iraq, and recent war games with the US, which the North has interpreted as a threat. The talks would have coincided with a UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday to discuss the DPRK and its controversial nuclear plans. In a statement released by the official KCNA news agency on Sunday, a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman called the Security Council meeting a provocative act which impeded dialogue and would only aggravate the situation on the Korean peninsula.

2. DPRK on UN Resolutions

CNN News ("NORTH KOREA WAR NOISES OVER UN ROLE," Seoul, 04/07/03) reported that the DPRK has dismissed any future United Nation resolutions to disarm, calling U.N. Security Council plans to discuss Pyongyang's suspected nuclear weapons program a "prelude to war." The issue of the DPRK's alleged nuclear program is on the agenda of a 15-nation Security Council meeting set for Wednesday, but the DPRK on Sunday said it would ignore any forthcoming U.N. resolutions on the issue. The U.N. could discuss imposing sanctions on the DPRK but the DPRK has warned that any such measures against it would effectively be a declaration of war. The U.N. discussions are "a grave provocation act intended to scuttle all [North Korea's] effort for dialogue and aggravate the situation on the Korean Peninsula," a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted saying by the state run Korean Central News Agency. The Security Council's "handling of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula itself is precisely a prelude to war," the spokesman said.

3. DPRK on US Attack

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "NORTH KOREA SAYS ITS ARMS WILL DETER US ATTACK," Tokyo, 04/07/03) reported that in its strongest reaction yet to the war in Iraq, the DPRK said today that only by arming itself with a "tremendous military deterrent" could the country guarantee its security. The statement, coming after more than two weeks of relative quiet since the start of the Iraq war, flatly declared that the DPRK had abandoned faith even in the kinds of security guarantees that it has repeatedly demanded of the US in recent months. "The Iraqi war shows that to allow disarming through inspection does not help avert a war but rather sparks it," the statement said. "This suggests that even the signing of a nonaggression treaty with the US would not help avert a war." The statement, issued by the Foreign Ministry, comes on the heels of another DPRK declaration this weekend, saying that the country would not be affected by any United Nations resolutions about its weapons development programs. The United Nations Security Council meets Wednesday to discuss the DPRK's recent unilateral withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and some regional analysts said the flurry of statements from the DPRK could mean that it had decided to press ahead with development of atomic weapons as a guarantee against an attack from the US. One longtime US analyst of the DPRK who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the statements reflected a fundamental shift in policy by the government after months of urging the US to accept bilateral talks. "This is an earthquake that registers 15 on the Richter scale," the analyst said. "There is not a single policy that we have known in North Korea over the past 10 or 15 that is left standing."

4. SARS Global Fatalities

BBC News ("SARS DEATHS 'REACH THREE FIGURES,'" 04/07/03)

The death toll from the pneumonia-type SARS virus is reported to have reached three figures worldwide. Officials in Hong Kong announced on Monday that a 23rd person in the territory - a 78-year-old woman - had died from severe acute respiratory syndrome. Although not yet officially confirmed, it is thought that this brings the global total of fatalities to 100. Elsewhere, Australia has become the latest country to announce tough new defences against the deadly bug, giving health authorities the power to forcibly detain anyone showing its symptoms. The new regulations also allow for the closure of schools, public places and of Australia's borders. Australia's decision follows similarly tough announcements from Malaysia, Singapore and the US, as countries battle to prevent the spread of the illness, which is now thought to have infected more than 2,700.

5. PRC Response to SARS Scare

CNN News (Willy Wo-Lap Lam, "BEIJING PLAYS DOWN SARS SCARE," Hong Kong, 04/07/03) reported that the PRC has pulled out all the stops to assure foreign businessmen and tourists that it is safe to visit China despite the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Communist party sources in Beijing said the new leadership under President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao had urged central and regional officials to issue words of reassurance to the international community. Despite its upbeat stance, however, the PRC's Ministry of Health announced Monday that the death toll from the virus had risen to 53, with 1,268 people infected. It was also revealed that people had died of the mysterious illness in more of its provinces than previously reported, according to Reuters. Party sources said the pneumonia crisis, along with the war in Iraq, could threaten a 7 percent growth rate the government pledged earlier this year. A number of international conferences scheduled to be held in Beijing, Shanghai and other major cities have been canceled or postponed, and tourism bookings have also been reduced. The government is trying to persuade other nations, including the US, to stop issuing advisories asking nationals to avoid visiting the PRC because of the SARS epidemic, the sources said.

6. Japan Radicals US Base attack

The Associated Press ("JAPAN GROUP SAYS THEY ATTACKED US BASE," Tokyo, 04/07/03) reported that a group of Japanese leftist radicals protesting the US-led war against Iraq has claimed responsibility for firing projectiles at a US military base near Tokyo last week, police said Monday. No one was injured in the incident at Atsugi Naval Air Facility, just south of Tokyo, said Kanagawa state police spokesman, Tsuneo Kosuge. The group, which calls itself the "Revolutionary Workers Association," sent a letter to Japanese media in which it said it acted in protest against the war in Iraq, he said. The group, and its various factions, have been responsible for sporadic attacks in the past. Local residents alerted police late Thursday to two explosions. Investigators later found two metal cylinders, two tripods and a small metal projectile nearby, which are believed to have been used by the group, Kosuge said. Last month, a related faction, The "Revolutionary Army," claimed responsibility for similar attacks at another US military base and Japan's Defense Agency building in Tokyo. No injuries or damage were reported in those incidents either. About 50,000 US troops are stationed in Japan under a mutual security pact. Public opposition to the US-led war in Iraq has been growing in recent weeks, with polls showing most Japanese oppose the military action

7. DPRK Radio Broadcasts

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "STRAINING FOR THE REAL MESSAGE IN NORTH KOREAN BROADCASTS," Seoul, 04/07/03) reported that the DPRK says "peninsula on verge of nuclear war. . . . North Korea calls Bush 'war monger.' . . . North Korea threatens to make Seoul a 'Sea of Fire.'" It's all in a day's work for Kim Tae Won. He listens in his headphones patiently, all day, to the DPRK's propaganda broadcasts, sorting through the bluster for clues of real danger in the crisis over nuclear weapons. Kim works at one of a scattering of listening posts around the region -- in his case, at the ROK Ministry of Unification -- that constantly monitor the DPRK's radio and television stations to watch for provocative moves during the Iraq war. The rhetoric has become more heated since last fall because of tensions over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Many analysts anticipated that the DPRK worried that it is next on the Bush administration's list for preemptive wars, would crank things up once the war in Iraq began. But so far, the airwaves have been relatively calm. The DPRK government has reported on the Iraq war with only a light peppering of editorial flavoring, even using some borrowed US television footage. It has not announced that it plans to restart a plutonium reprocessing plant or test a ballistic missile, the steps that Washington and other governments most fear. For the radio monitors, dramatic announcements are only part of their job. Much of what they do, day in and day out, is try to figure out from routine transmissions just what the reclusive government is trying to tell the world. They weigh the rhetoric, ponder the subtleties, and watch for new names or missing ones to determine changes in the regime's lineup. "It's psychological warfare," said Kang Seok Seung, who helps analyze the information Kim plucks from the broadcasts. "We have to filter out the facts."

8. Japan Human Shields in Iraq

The Japan Times ("'HUMAN SHIELD' COORDINATOR TELLS OF WAR HORRORS IN IRAQ," Damascus, 04/07/03) reported that Jamila Takahashi, who was in Baghdad to coordinate the activities of Japanese "human shields" protesting the US-led war on Iraq, said Sunday she wants to tell the world about the horrors of war. Takahashi, 62, left Iraq for Syria on Sunday evening. "I fully realized the misery of war, as I saw children whose hands have been blown off and residents dying right before my eyes," she said. "I decided to leave the country to tell others about the situation in Iraq and the activities of the shields, and to call for peace." Takahashi and the human shields made daily visits to Baghdad hospitals starting in late March, where they saw the wounded being treated, she said, adding that Iraqi authorities arranged transportation for their visits. "I never felt my life was in danger," she said. "The facilities at which the shields are present were not attacked, and so I think we have been effective in protecting the people's lifelines." Asked to respond to criticism that acting as human shields risks the lives of participants, Takahashi said, "Is there any other means to stop the war? We are calling only on those people who can take responsibility for risking their lives to take part." Rei Shiba, a 27-year-old journalist who was also a human shield, departed Iraq for Syria along with Takahashi. Koshiro Tanaka, a 62-year-old martial artist, has also left the country. There are about 50 to 60 human shields still in Iraq, including some Japanese, positioned at more than a dozen utility plants, according to Takahashi. The Japanese human shields are fine, she said. 9. KCNA on UN Security Council

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("STATEMENT OF FM SPOKESMAN BLASTS UNSC'S DISCUSSION OF KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE," Pyongyang, 04/07/03) reported that a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued the following statement today: The US forced the UN Security Council to call a meeting on April 9 to discuss the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT. As pointed out in the Janiaru 10 statement of the DPRK government, its withdrawal from the NPT has already taken effect. The US and some countries insist on a "legal argument" that the DPRK's withdrawal takes effect after April 10 but a scrutiny into the minutes of the UNSC meeting held in June 1993 would tell that such assertions are meaningless. The DPRK has

so far made every possible effort to ensure stability and peace in the Korean Peninsula and the region. The projected discussion of the DPRK's issue at the UNSC meeting in spite of this is undisguised pressure on the DPRK and a grave provocative act intended to scuttle all its efforts for dialogue and aggravate the situation on the Korean Peninsula. The UNSC's handling of the nuclear issue on the peninsula itself is precisely a prelude to war. The UNSC's discussion of the Iraqi issue was misused by the US as an excuse for war. The US intends to force the DPRK to disarm itself. The Iraqi war shows that to allow disarming through inspection does not help avert a war but rather sparks it. Neither international public opinion nor the UN Charter could prevent the US from mounting an attack on Iraq. This suggests that even the signing of a non-aggression treaty with the US would not help avert a war. Only the physical deterrent force, tremendous military deterrent force powerful enough to decisively beat back an attack supported by any ultra-modern weapons, can avert a war and protect the security of the country and the nation. This is a lesson drawn from the Iraqi war.

II. People's Republic of China

1. The DPRK Nuke Issue

China Daily ("PYONGYANG ACCUSES US OF ABUSING UN MEETING," Seoul, 04/07/03, P12) reported that the DPRK accused the US on April 6 of using UN Security Council (UNSC) discussions of its nuclear program as a "prelude to war" and warned that it would fully mobilize and reinforce its forces. "The UNSC's handling of the nuclear issue on the peninsula itself is precisely a prelude to war," a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement released by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency. The DPRK will not recognize any resolution to be adopted at a UN Security Council meeting on April 2, he said. He condemned Security Council talks on the DPRK's nuclear program as "a grave provocative act intended to scuttle all its efforts for dialogue and aggravate the situation on the Korean Peninsula." ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-Kwan said on April 6 that the Security Council may seek a presidential statement urging the DPRK to be more positive in ending the standoff. US, which wants the nuclear standoff resolved through a multilateral framework, has rejected Pyongyang's demand for one-on-one talks. The war in Iraq has raised tension on the Korean Peninsula, with the DPRK accusing US of planning a pre-emptive strike after hostilities in the Middle East. The crisis has also put inter-Korean rapprochement in doubt. The first round of cabinet-level talks under new ROK President Roh Moo-hyun is to begin on April 7 in Pyongyang, but the DPRK has yet to send an invitation to ROK delegates, said the report.

China Daily ("DIPLOMACY SPEEDS UP BEFORE UN DEBATE," Seoul, 04/04/03) reported that diplomatic efforts to resolve the DPRK's nuclear issue gathered momentum on April 3 after a divided UN Security Council agreed to meet next week to address the standoff. It reported that in an effort to pressure the DPRK to abandon its atomic weapons ambitions, the US has been pushing the world body for months to take up the case. DPRK has said UN sanctions would be tantamount to a declaration of war, deeper into isolation, diminishing hopes of a negotiated settlement to the issue. John Negroponte, however, the American ambassador to the UN, said on April 3 no decisions on the UN handling of the DPRK should be expected at the April 9 meeting. The ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun's national security adviser Ra Jong-Yil was in Beijing the same day for talks with Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, following meetings in Moscow. Later this month, the ROK's Foreign Minister, Yoon Young-Kwan, is expected in Beijing and could travel to Moscow thereafter, according to media reports in Seoul. Yoon, on his first foreign trip since he took office in February, unveiled a "roadmap" to peace on the Korean Peninsula in Washington last week, details of which have yet to emerge. For the past two weeks, Pyongyang has issued a daily condemnation of the US military action and may have tested a short-range missile on April 2, although ROK Defense Ministry officials say they are

unable to confirm the reports. Even if true, the third test of short-range missiles since late February would not be considered a significant security threat, a ministry official said in the report.

2. Shanghai Co-operation Organization

China Daily ("EXPERT FORUM," Beijing, 04/03/03, P2) reported that emergency response experts from member countries of the Shanghai Co-operation Organization (SCO) met in Beijing on April 2-3. During the meeting, the experts from Kazakhstan, PRC, Kyrghyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tadzhikistan and Uzbekistan agreed on a draft pact on intergovernmental assistance during emergencies. The draft, which sets out the principles and procedures for emergency responses to disasters, is expected to be signed at the second meeting of SCO leaders which is scheduled for autumn this year, said the report.

3. US-Russian Ties

People's Daily (Lv Yansong, "RUSSIA WILLING TO WORK WITH US: PUTIN," Moscow, 04/05/03, P3) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin said on April 4 that his country will make every endeavor to avoid Russia's involvement into the Iraq crisis. Putin stressed that divergence between Russia and US will render no negative influence on non-proliferation of mass destructive weapons and anti-terrorism efforts. Russia and US will continue cooperating in a series of global crisis, he noted. Putin also said as major nuclear states in the world, the two countries are shouldering "special responsibility" in stablizing the world. Russia "is working and will work with the United States" to resolve global crisis, said Putin in the report.

China Daily ("US BLOCKS RIVALS IN POST-WAR IRAQ," Washington/Paris, 04/05-06, P8) reported that the US House of Representatives on April 4 passed a supplementary budget amendment excluding Russia and other 3 nations that opposed the US-led war in Iraq. The measure would even bar access by the four countries to information on reconstruction bids in Iraq. Russia on April 5 reacted to the US's decision, saying post-war Iraq was up to the UN and not to the US. "The forms and standards of Iraqi reconstruction should not be decided by the US Congress, but by the UN," Russian deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov told a briefing in Beijing. The foreign ministers of Russia and other two countries were to meet in Paris on April 5 to discuss the UN's involvement in Iraq's post-war settlement.

People's Daily (Song Shiyi, "RUSSIA PROTESTS AGAINST US BOMBING NEAR RUSSIAN EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD," Moscow, 04/03/03, P3) reported that Russian Foreign Ministry handed a strong protest on April 2 to US Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow. The ministry said that several bombs fell on a civilian district of Baghdad where the Russian embassy is located, and the lives of Russian diplomats were placed in immediate danger. They said that such incidents were "unacceptable." Moscow further called on the US "to take urgent measures to make sure that such dangerous and unacceptable incidents do not happen again," according to the report.

4. ROK-US Relations

People's Daily (Gao Haorong, "S. KOREA, US TO WORK CLOSELY ON DPRK NUCLEAR ISSUE," Seoul, 04/06/03, P3) reported that leaders of ROK and the US agreed on April 4 to work closely to address the nuclear issue of the DPRK. According to ROK Presidential Office's spokeswoman Song Kyoung-hee, President Roh Moo-hyun and his US counterpart George W. Bush on April 4 held a telephone conversation to discuss issues of mutual concern. In the 20-minute telephone talk, Bush promised to resolve the nuclear issue through diplomacy channel, and Roh Moo-hyun explained

Seoul's position that the DPRK nuclear issue should be solved peacefully through dialogue, said the spokeswoman. Bush also thanked Roh for the dispatch of ROK's non-combat troops to support the coalition war in Iraq, and hoped Roh would visit US at an early date, said the report.

China Daily ("ROK PARLIAMENT BACKS DISPATCH," Seoul, 04/03/03, P12) reported that the ROK's National Assembly on April 2 approved the dispatch of non-combat troops to the US-led war in Iraq after President Roh Moo-hyun said it would improve ties with US and help bring a peaceful end to the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. Members voted 179 to 68 in favor of the motion after Roh delivered an appeal for support in his first speech to the opposition-led National Assembly since his inauguration in February. Roh said it was more important to strengthen ROK-US relations than to "stand on principle and incur friction in bilateral ties." US, which has refused to engage in direct talks with the DPRK, has said it is seeking a peaceful solution to the issue triggered nearly six months ago but has not ruled out the military option. Roh opposes military action or even the imposition of sanctions against DPRK that maintains that it will be the next target of US's attack once the Iraqi war is over. The president came out in support of the war on Iraq on March 20, the day hostilities began rising, saying at the time war was "inevitable to eradicate weapons of mass destruction." Roh's support for the war has sparked friction with DPRK and triggered the biggest domestic challenge to his administration since he took office in February. Opinion polls show some 80 per cent of ROK people oppose the war, while DPRK has condemned Roh's planned troop dispatch as a "criminal act."

5. PRC's Disarmament Scheme

China Daily ("NATION PUTS FORWARD DISARMAMENT SCHEME," UN, 04/02/03, P1) reported that PRC put forth a 10-point proposal to the 2003 Session of the UN Disarmament Commission on April 1 to promote sound development for disarmament and arms control. In an address to the session, according to the report, the head of the Chinese delegation, Hu Xiaodi, said some recent developments "have been particularly worrisome," warning that the multilateral disarmament and arms control process is now facing a severe test. Hu stressed the need to create a favorable international security environment through a new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and co-operation to establish common security for all countries. The report listed the 10-point proposal Hu proposed, noting that these and other measures should lead to the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty on the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons, said the report.

6. PRC-US Relations

People's Daily ("CHINA FIRMLY OPPOSES US ACCUSATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION," Beijing, 04/02/03, P4) reported that PRC expresses strong dissatisfaction and firm objection to unreasonable accusations by the US on PRC's human rights situation, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao on April 2. When asked to comment on the report on China of the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002 just released by the US State Department, Liu said the report disregards facts and reprehends PRC for no reason. The Chinese government has always devoted itself to the promotion and protection of human rights and basic freedoms, and has scored great achievements in this regard, which is a generally-acknowledged fact, said Liu. The Chinese government and people of all ethnic groups are building up brighter futures with full confidence, he noted. Liu said in answering this question he would like to advise the US side to think more about its own problems, to stop intervening in other countries' domestic affairs under the pretext of human rights, as well as to give up its double standards on human rights so as not to continue breaking its faith in front of the whole world.

7. Japan-PRC Relations

China Daily (Hu Xiao, "JAPAN PROMISES TO LEARN FROM HISTORY, WORK WITH CHINA," 04/07/03, P1) reported that Japan is willing to develop "closer and interdependent" relations with PRC on the basis of respect for history, as the visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said on April 6 when meeting her Chinese counterpart Li Zhaoxing in Beijing. She stressed that Japan will honor key documents such as joint statements between the two governments and the remarks of former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama when dealing with historical issues. During the meeting, Li said the two countries reached a significant common consensus on the importance of learning from history and facing the future, adding that he hopes Japan can implement these statements to ensure the healthy development of bilateral relations. Li also said PRC wants to maintain high-level contacts, strengthen exchanges at all levels and promote friendship between the two peoples. According to official sources, regional and international issues such as the Iraq War and the nuclear situation in the DPRK are also likely to come up at today's meeting.

8. Russia-PRC Relations

People's Daily ("CHINESE FM MEETS RUSSIAN DEPUTY FM," Beijing, 04/05/03, P4) reported that Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met on April 4 with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy V.Fedotov, who is in PRC for a working visit. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, the Iraq and other international and regional issues of common concern, said the report.

III. Republic of Korea

1. Cancellation of Inter Korean Ministerial Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "NORTH IS SILENT ON TALKS," Seoul, 04/07/03) reported that the 10th round of inter-Korean ministerial talks were to have opened Monday in Pyeongyang, but dead silence from DPRK about the details of the talks has prompted ROK to scrap the dispatch of its team. This is DPRK's third snub of scheduled inter-Korean meetings in the past few weeks. DPRK delegation was a no-show for economic cooperation talks last month; it also canceled planned working-level talks on marine transport and general transportation issues. Recent trends suggest to many DPRK watchers that humanitarian projects like the family reunion center at Mount Geumgang will also face problems. ROK had planned to use the ministerial talks to press DPRK for progress in solving the nuclear armaments issue peacefully. Had there been a positive response, officials here said, ROK would have pledged food and other humanitarian assistance to DPRK. DPRK's refusal to talk with ROK came just before the United Nations Security Council meets on Wednesday and where DPRK's abrupt withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty may be discussed.

2. Three DPRK Defectors to ROK on Boat

Joongang Ilbo ("TRIO ASKS FOR ASYLUM AT AN EAST COAST PORT," Seoul, 04/07/03) reported that three DPRK defectors arrived at Gangneung, Gangwon province Sunday dawn aboard a 5-meter (yard)-long, 2-meter-wide wooden boat. Kim Jong-gil, 46, a farmer; his son, Kim Kwang-hyok, 20, and his brother, Kim Jong-hun, 40, were in the boat. All are from DPRK's South Hamgyeong province. Lee Tae-yong, the captain of the fishing boat Daewangho, reported to police that he had spotted a drifting wooden vessel 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) offshore near Gangneung at 4:15 a.m. The police said the Kim family asked for asylum immediately. They arrived in Gangneung at 9:20 a.m. and were moved to an undisclosed location for questioning. The eldest Kim left his father, a wife and a son

behind; his brother left his wife, a son and a daughter, the police added.

3. ROK-US Cooperative Diplomacy on DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("BUSH, ROH REAFFIRM DESIRE FOR DIPLOMACY," Seoul, 04/07/03) reported that US President George W. Bush called President Roh Moo-hyun over the weekend to thank him for the decision to dispatch ROK troops to Iraq, the Blue House said. Roh had appealed personally to the National Assembly to approve the dispatch. The two leaders talked for 20 minutes. Bush again assured Roh of his desire for a peaceful solution to ROK nuclear issue, according to the Blue House spokeswoman, Song Kyoung-hee. Bush also reportedly told Roh that he is looking forward to their planned meeting in Washington in May. Roh told ROK reporters Saturday of the conversation on Friday night. He said, "Bush gave his word that the United States will consult and cooperate with our government and our people" on the DPRK nuclear issue.

4. DPRK Nuclear Issue to UN

Chosun Ilbo (Kwon Kyung-bok, "YOON HOPES UN ACTION WON'T BE NEENED," Seoul, 04/07/03) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan said Sunday that if diplomatic efforts by ROK, US and DPRK to solve the DPRK nuclear crisis bear fruit, UN Security Council would be slower to impose punitive measures. He also said that ROK government had not officially considered assisting DPRK by building a gas pipeline from Russia. Yoon, speaking on a KBS-TV program, said that the government thought diplomatic channels were preferable for dealing with DPRK than going through the United Nations. He said that DPRK had a lot to gain through multilateral talks, and that this message had been conveyed to DPRK to persuade them to accept such a framework. The Security Council will discuss the DPRK nuclear problem Wednesday, and is expected to issue a statement urging DPRK to stop the reactivation of its main nuclear facility. The International Atomic Energy Agency turned the issue over to the Security Council on Feb. 12.

5. USFK Downsizing and Relocation in Seoul

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Yong-won, "TALKS SET ON QUESTION OF US TROOPS," Seoul, 04/07/03) 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 the American 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 US 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 DPRK 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.

IV. Japan

1. Japan's Role in Iraq War

The Asahi Shimbun ("SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET DEBATE TO FOCUS ON AID TO IRAQ," 04/01/03) reported that Japan may have to issue more bonds or raise taxes if the Iraq war drags on, analysts say. Now that the government has passed its fiscal 2003 budget, debate is likely to shift to how

much of the upcoming supplementary budget should help pay for the reconstruction of Iraq. That work may become more costly than expected, as the easy victory first predicted by US war planners begins to appear less likely. This time, however, the US is not seeking donations for the war. And unlike Afghanistan, where Japanese aid money even went to pay the salaries of public servants, Iraq appears to still have a social and administrative infrastructure in place, not to mention oil income. Senior Finance Ministry officials are therefore optimistic. "Even if damage caused by the war is somewhat greater than forecast, the amount of assistance to be provided by Japan will at most be about the same level as that provided to Afghanistan," said one. That optimism, however, may be premature. With its budget deficit already at record levels, the US government may ask Japan to cough up substantially for Iraq's postwar reconstruction. If that assistance is comparable in size to Japan's contribution in the 1991 Gulf War, when Japan contributed about 1.8 trillion yen, a senior Finance Ministry official said, the government will either have to issue new bonds or increase taxes. Even those options are limited. Bonds already pay for 44.6 percent of the 81.8 trillion yen set aside in the fiscal 2003 budget, up from only 10 percent at the time of the last Gulf War. As for tax hikes, companies and households both find themselves in a tighter situation this time around. Many observers expect the government during the extraordinary Diet session this autumn to compile a supplementary budget that will address the twin goals of funding reconstruction in Iraq and boosting the economy at home.

The Asahi Shimbun ("TOKYO, LONDON JOIN FORCES OVER IRAQ," 04/04/03) and The Japan Times ("KAWAGUCHI TO DISCUSS IRAQ IN BRITAIN," 04/04/03) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi will visit Britain this week to discuss reconstruction aid for postwar Iraq and may also visit Germany and France, Foreign Ministry officials said Thursday. She is expected to side with Britain to urge the US to respect the UN framework on the reconstruction question, the officials said. The officials said Kawaguchi is apparently hoping to win the cooperation of France and Germany, which both staunchly opposed invading Iraq and called for a peaceful resolution through continued UN arms inspections. Initially, Japan plans to work with Britain to determine how other nations view the issue and then relay the information to the US. Vice Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi said recently, "(Japan and Britain) are aware of the same issue" over the need to bring the US in line with the international community. A senior official of the ministry said, "It is probably more effective for us to talk to the British government first, than with France or Russia to persuade the US."

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO OFFER CASH WHEN IRAQ OCCUPIED," 04/04/03) reported that the Japanese government plans to give cash to international organizations to provide humanitarian aid to postwar Iraq during the period the country is under the occupational control of US-led forces, sources said last Wednesday. Japan is concerned an aid vacuum could develop between the fall of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of an interim Iraqi government. The amount of cash will not be announced until later this month, but it is sure to be a big number and very welcome in the US and Britain. The US has already asked Japan for the cash, sources said. It is likely the US and British troops, plus international organizations will distribute the aid until an interim government run by Iraqis is operating. Government officials are leaning toward financial aid because there are legal constraints on sending Japanese personnel or the direct provision of humanitarian goods. Also, Japan can't just hand over the money to the US and Britain -- a move that could be construed as Japan shouldering a portion of the cost of the war.

2. Japanese Logistic Support for US

The Asahi Shimbun ("TOKYO IN DILEMMA OVER AEGIS," 03/29/03) reported that Japanese officials are now in a quandary over whether to call back a state-of-the-art Aegis destroyer dispatched to the Indian Ocean to support the US-led battle against terrorism, to deal with a potential threat from the

Korean Peninsula. The Maritime Self-Defense Force's Kirishima was dispatched to the Arabian Sea north of the Indian Ocean last December under provisions of the special measures law to combat terrorism. Plans originally called for a replacement Aegis destroyer to head out to the Arabian Sea early next month and for the Kirishima to return to Japan in late May. However, the DPRK has ratcheted up its brinkmanship, throwing a monkey wrench into those plans. The problem facing Defense Agency officials is how to utilize the four Aegis destroyers in its possession. Plans had called for sending the Kongo, now patrolling the Sea of Japan, to the Indian Ocean as the Kirishima's replacement. The MSDF planned to use the Myoko to take over the mission of the Kongo. However, if the Kongo is sent to the Middle East, there would be a period of about two months when only two Aegis destroyers would be near Japan, considering the traveling distance. In addition, one of those two Aegis destroyers, the Chokai, is undergoing a regular overhaul. That means the only Aegis destroyer able to operate near Japan would be the Myoko. Defense Agency officials want at least two Aegis destroyers on hand in Japan to deal with any possible situation concerning the DPRK and to accommodate the possibility of breakdowns on the Myoko or fatigue of its crew.

The Japan Times ("DEFENSE AGENCY TO ROTATE AEGIS SHIPS," 04/04/03) reported that another destroyer equipped with the Aegis air-defense system will probably be dispatched to the Indian Ocean to replace the one currently operating there, Defense Agency officials said Thursday. The 7,250-ton Kongo is likely to be sent to replace the Kirishima. The Kongo could depart from Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, as early as Tuesday, accompanying the 8,150-ton fleet support ship Hamana, the officials said. The Defense Agency had considered sending a conventional destroyer, to keep as many operational Aegis ships as possible near Japan in light of the possibility of the DPRK launching a ballistic missile. However, the agency apparently decided to send the Aegis-equipped ship to focus on providing support to the antiterrorism operation due to the escalation of war in Iraq.

3. Japan's Plutonium Storage

The Japan Times ("TOKAI PLUTONIUM REMOVAL FIGURES REVISED," 04/02/03) reported that the discrepancy between the projected amount of plutonium extracted at a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Tokai, Ibaraki Prefecture, and the actual amount was 59 kg, not 206 kg as initially reported, the government said last Tuesday. The science ministry said the discrepancy was the result of a computational error and ruled out fears of material being proliferated. "There is no fear that plutonium was removed and taken outside; there is also no fear that plutonium was lost," the ministry said in presenting its latest findings to the Atomic Energy Commission. According to the ministry, 106 kg of the 206 kg of "missing" plutonium was later found to have been mixed with high-level radioactive liquid waste and was either stored inside the Tokai facility or stored after it was solidified into glass. The ministry said 29 kg of the missing plutonium was made up of short-life isotopes and degraded during storage. The report says another 12 kg of the plutonium was probably stuck in fuel tubes that were disposed of separately from nuclear waste liquid, leaving the amount of plutonium still unaccounted for at 59 kg.

4. Japan Domestic Politics

The Japan Times ("DIET TURBULENCE LIKELY IN SECOND HALF," 04/04/03) reported that as the Diet moves into the second half of its 150-day regular session, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's administration appears headed for more difficult times, politically and economically. The outcome of unified local elections this month, including gubernatorial polls in Tokyo and 10 other prefectures, will affect national politics. Koizumi, his popularity waning, is fighting an uphill battle in pushing his reform agenda. As president of the Liberal Democratic Party, the prime minister also faces a party leadership election in September. The most crucial issue is how to protect Japan against a foreign

military attack. The question most likely will dominate the Diet debates, particularly with the perceived nuclear and missile threats from the DPRK. The package on the table consists of three bills, including one that deals specifically with such attacks. A separate bill would revise the law governing the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). The package is an updated version that includes clearer definitions of "military attack situations." It also includes measures designed to cope with other threats to national security, such as intrusions by armed spy ships into territorial waters and large-scale acts of terrorism. Another major issue is the protection of government-held personal data. The revised bill is welcome in that it would ease restrictions on the media. The worry is that it might tighten government control over civic organizations. Regarding the Iraq issue, debate on postwar reconstruction, not just immediate humanitarian assistance, is imperative. The government is reportedly seeking new legislation allowing the SDF to provide medical support, transport goods and supply fuel.

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