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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA SCORES DIPLOMATIC COUP BY LEADING NORTH BACK TO THE TABLE," 04/08/02) reported that ROK President Kim Dae- Jung has scored a diplomatic coup by coaxing the DPRK to open talks with the US and to revive peace efforts on the Korean peninsula, analysts said. Following talks in Pyongyang, ROK presidential envoy Lim Dong-Won said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il was once again ready to engage the outside world. "Chairman Kim Jong-Il has accepted the request from ROK President Kim Dae-Jung that the DPRK should reopen dialogue with the US to avoid tension on the Korean peninsula," Lim said. The envoy quoted Kim Jong-Il as saying that Jack Prichard, the US special envoy for negotiations with North Korea, would soon visit

Pyongyang. The date for his visit has yet to be fixed, he said. Kim Jong-Il also wants to resume talks with Japan to normalize ties between the two countries, Lim said.

The Associated Press ("US WELCOMES N. KOREAN OVERTURE," Washington, 04/08/02) reported that the US State Department welcomed on Monday a report from the ROK that the DPRK may be moving toward dialogue with the US. "This is positive news," State Department spokesman Philip Reeker said Monday. "As we've said consistently, the best way to resolve issues of concern is through dialogue."

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA WELCOMES NORTH KOREAN READINESS TO RESUME RECONCILIATION TALKS WITH SOUTH," Moscow, 04/08/02) reported that Russia's Foreign Ministry on Monday welcomed the DPRK's willingness to revive reconciliation efforts with the ROK after months of tension, but insisted any talks should be unfettered by outside interference. "Moscow welcomes the positive results of the talks," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

2. Japan Nuclear Weapons Development

The Associated Press ("REPORTS: OPPOSITION LEADER SAYS JAPAN COULD EASILY GO NUCLEAR," Tokyo, 04/07/02) the leader of a small opposition party said Japan could easily develop nuclear weapons if its people feel threatened by the PRC newspapers reported Sunday. "Making nuclear weapons is simple," Liberal Party leader Ichiro Ozawa said in the reports. "Japan could have several thousand nuclear warheads overnight if it wants." Ozawa made the remarks during a speech Saturday in the southwestern city of Fukuoka, according to reports published in the Asahi, Sankei and Nihon Keizai, all nationally circulated dailies. "Japan probably has enough plutonium at nuclear plants for about three to four thousand warheads," the reports quoted Ozawa as saying. "If it comes to that, Japan won't lose militarily." Ozawa said he was speaking against the backdrop of the PRC's increased military spending, which he described as part of its effort to become a superpower. Ozawa added, however, that he felt Japan and the PRC should live together in peace. Anti-nuclear sentiment is high in Japan, the only country to have suffered nuclear attacks.

3. PRC-Japan Relations

The Associate Press ("CHINA'S NO. 2 LEADER SAYS TIES WITH JAPAN WARMING, BUT BEIJING CONDEMNS JAPANESE POLITICIAN'S REMARKS," Tokyo, 04/08/02) reported that PRC No. 2 leader Li Peng said that relations with Japn have gotten a boost from his weeklong visit - but in Beijing the same day, the PRC bristled over a Japanese politician's remarks about making nuclear weapons if threatened by the PRC. PRC Foreign Ministry (news - web sites) spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said in Beijing that comments by Ichiro Ozawa, leader of Japan's small Liberal Party, were "provocative" and represented "an outdated Cold War mentality," the government's Xinhua News Agency reported. Japanese newspapers had quoted Ozawa as criticizing PRC's increased military spending and saying Japan could respond quickly by building nuclear weapons if threatened. "If it comes to that, Japan won't lose militarily," Ozawa was quoted saying.

4. US-Russia Nuclear Relations

The Associated Press (Sarah Karush, "PUTIN ALARMED BY U.S. NUKE PROPOSALS," Moscow, 04/07/02) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed alarm at suggested changes in US nuclear policy, saying in an interview released Sunday that they could lower standards for use of nuclear weapons to "a dangerous level." At the same time he was optimistic that President Bush's

visit to Russia at the end of May would bring a "historical" agreement on nuclear weapons cuts. Putin's remarks came about a month after the Pentagon's leaked "nuclear posture review." "Here is why (this issue) cannot but worry us. We are hearing some statements about the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons by the United States against non-nuclear states, among others. That's first. Second, we are hearing declarations and suggestions to develop low- capacity nuclear warheads and possibly use them in regional conflicts. This lowers the threshold for the possible use of nuclear weapons to a very low plank, to a dangerous level."

5. PRC View of US-Support of WHO-Taiwan Reuters ("CHINA OPPOSES US DECISION TO BACK TAIWAN IN WHO," Beijing, 04/08/02) reported that the PRC made strong representations to the US on Monday opposing its support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organisation (WHO) as an observer and demanded it reverse its stance. A bill passed by the US Congress and signed by US President George W. Bush supporting Taiwan's bid to join the WHO as an observer violated US commitments to the "one China" policy, the official Xinhua news agency said. "The purpose of Taiwan's participation in the WHO is to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan'," Xinhua quoted Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue as saying. The protest comes at a time of cooling relations between Beijing and Washington after a series of US moves that have offended the PRC just weeks ahead of a scheduled trip to the United States by Chinese Vice President Hu Jintao later this month. The PRC called on the United States to "correct its mistakes immediately and stop the connivance and support of Taiwan's attempts to separate China," to avoid harming Sino-US relations, Zhang said.

6. PRC "War on Terror" Tour

Agence France-Presse ("CONCERN OVER US PLANS FOR WAR ON TERROR DOMINATE JIANG TOUR," 04/07/02) reported that PRC President Jiang Zemin begins a five-nation tour Monday in Germany, with the aim of tackling a perceived US go-it-alone attitude in the war on terror, analysts said. The trip will also take the PRC head of state to Libya, Nigeria, Tunisia and Iran, ending on April 21. Jiang's agenda in Germany, Iran and Libya will be strongly influenced by the PRC's concerns that the US might unilaterally expand the war against terrorism, analysts said. Foreign ministry officials in Beijing confirmed Jiang will discuss the global anti-terrorism campaign on several of his stops. "The international community has yet to reach an agreement on the definition of terrorism. Therefore, through consultation with the international community, we hope to reach a common consensus," said Wu Chunhua, the ministry's director of West Asia and North African affairs.

7. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN PRIME MINISTER WALKING ON TIGHTROPE DESPITE ELECTION RELIEF," 04/08/02) reported that Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi voiced relief after a weekend election victory but experts warned he was still walking on a tightrope as a close ally resigned from parliament over a series of scandals. "I take it as showing good sense of the people of Kyoto," Koizumi said about the vote Sunday in favor of a candidate backed by his ruling coalition to the post of governor for the major western prefecture. Former Kyoto vice governor Keiji Yamada, who was also supported by the three opposition parties, edged out lawyer Akira Morikawa, endorsed by the Japanese Communist Party that had ruled Kyoto for three decades until 1978. However, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper said: "A sense of crisis persists." Koizumi is "walking on a tightrope until the triple polls," where his camp is directly pitted against the Democratic Party and other oppositions, it added

8. ROK-Japan Extradition Pact

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA INK CRIMINAL PACT BEFORE WORLD CUP," 04/08/02) reported that Japan and the ROK signed an extradition pact to take effect before the World Cup finals, the justice ministry said. The treaty inked by Japanese Justice Minister Mayumi Moriyama and his ROK counterpart Song Jeong-Ho in Seoul is to be submitted to their parliaments for ratification this month, the ministry said. Both ministers "agreed to let the pact begin to take effect before the World Cup finals starts," a ministry statement said. The pact "would make it possible to take tough action on crime by speedily handing over criminals" during the games, it said.

9. ROK F-16 Crash Investigation

Reuters ("S.KOREA GROUNDS SOME 65 F-16 JETS IN CRASH PROBE," Seoul, 04/08/02) reported that the ROK has grounded about 65 locally made F-16 fighter jets during a probe of a February crash, a defense ministry spokesman said on Monday. The KR-16, assembled by Samsung Techwin with parts provided by US manufacturers Lockheed Martin and Pratt & Whitney, were taken out of service a month ago following the crash of one of the jets on February 27, the spokesman said. "The investigation is about halfway done and it will take about another month," he said, adding that grounding such planes was standard practice after a crash. About two- thirds of the ROK's 117 F-16s are locally assembled, with the remainder purchased directly from Lockheed Martin. The imported fighters were not grounded. The pilot of the F-16, which crashed in a paddy field in western Korea, ejected safely after the jet caught fire on takeoff. The fiery plunge of the jet was captured by a cameraman for a national television network.

10. Philippines-US Military Training

Agence France-Presse ("MORE THAN 2,600 US TROOPS DUE IN PHILIPPINES THIS MONTH: MILITARY," 04/08/02) reported that about 2,665 US troops are to arrive in the Philippines for annual joint exercises with Filipino counterparts later this month, the military said Monday. The upcoming maneuvers are separate from ongoing joint US-Philippine military exercises in the south targeting the Muslim Abu Sayyaf group. The two- week exercises are to begin on April 22 on the main Philippine island of Luzon and will include "humanitarian and civil assistance," such as medical missions and construction and repair of schools, the Filipino military said in a statement. It is also aimed at improving combat readiness in combined operations and "interoperability" between Filipino and US soldiers through training exchanges of skills and techniques in conventional and unconventional warfare.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "2 RAIL LINKS AGREED IN INTER-KOREA TALKS," Seoul, 04/08/02) reported that the ROK and the DPRK have agreed to relink the cross-border railways and roads on the western and eastern parts of the peninsula, ROK special envoy Lim Dong-won announced Saturday upon his return from DPRK. After his four-day visit to the secretive Stalinist state. Lim said that the DPRK had agreed to reopen the suspended Gyeongui railway and road project and to begin new construction for the northern part of the Donghae railway and road, connecting ROK's Gangneung and DPRK's Wonsan on the east coast. According to a statement jointly released Saturday, the two sides also agreed to resume the suspended series of family reunions on April 28 at

the DPRK's Mount Geumgang.

2. ROK-US Military Developments.

Joongang Ilbo ("NEXT USFK LEADER TO BECOME A 'FIRST'," Washington, 04/08/02) reported that whether US President George W. Bush chooses from the army or the navy to succeed General Thomas Schwartz in late May, the new individual will be a "first" as commander of the US Forces Korea. According to military sources in Washington, General Larry R. Ellis of US Army Force Command is the candidate recommended by the US Army to fill General Schwartz's shoes. Should he be chosen, he would become the first African-American to become commander of the US Forces in ROK. The US Navy has recommended Lieutenant General Raymond P. Ayres Jr., commander of the US Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic, the sources said. The mostly ground-based US Forces in ROK have never had a commander from the navy before.

3. DPRK-Russia Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("PYONGYANG-KHARBAROVSK DIRECT AIR ROUTE RESUMES," Seoul, 04/08/02) reported that a regular air route linking Pyongyang and Kharbarovsk in the Russian Far East reopened recently, boosting hopes for more exchanges between the region and DPRK. Itar Tass, the Russian press agency, reported that Koryo Air flight 134 arrived at Kharbarvosk last Friday and would make the flight once a week. Reopening the route was reportedly brought up during DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's visit to Moscow last summer, and was addressed again when an envoy from the Russian region, Konstantin Pulikovski, visited Pyongyang last February.

4. ROK-Vietnam Relations

The Korea Herald ("PRIME MINISTER VISITS VIETNAM," Seoul, 04/08/02) reported that Prime Minister Lee Han-dong arrived in Hanoi Sunday on a five-day visit aimed at boosting economic ties. He plans to meet Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai. They will discuss ways to promote bilateral cooperation in technology and natural resources, ROK officials said. Lee will ask Hanoi leaders to help more Korean ROK enter Vietnamese markets for information technology and industrial infrastructure. He will deliver a letter from President Kim Dae-jung to the Vietnamese president. Following the Vietnam trip, Lee is scheduled to meet with PRC Premier Zhu Rongji on Hainan Island, PRC, where the Boao Forum will be held through Saturday.

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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