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I. **United States**

1. **US ROK Troops Force Level Decision**

Agence France-Presse ("NO FINAL DECISIONS ON FORCE LEVELS IN SOUTH KOREA, US SAYS," 06/09/04) reported that the US indicated that no final decision has been made on precise troop levels in the ROK ahead of an expected reduction of forces there by about one third, and pledged to maintain its deterrent strength. US officials confirmed plans Monday to withdraw some 12,500 troops of its 37,000-strong military contingent from the ROK as part of a global review designed to produce a more agile fighting force. The US, facing immediate pressure for fresh troops for duty in Iraq, said the pullout would take place within 18 months. The ROK wants the deadline pushed back. "I think that what's important to point out is that in South Korea as in a number of other countries around the world, we've been consulting friends and allies about our global force posture," said Adam Ereli, a State Department spokesman. "We've made no final decisions as a result of these

consultations." "We are committed to maintaining, as far as the Korean peninsula is concerned, our deterrent capability and our strong alliance," Ereli stressed. "The US views South Korea as a strong and steadfast ally. We are committed to South Korea's security and to our alliance and partnership" with Seoul, Ereli said. "Whether there are X number of troops on the Korean peninsula or Y number of troops does not reflect on this alliance," the spokesman added.

Stars and Stripes (Joseph Giordano, "FACING US TROOP LOSS, SOUTH KOREA PLEDGES TO SEEK BASE RELOCATION DEAL," Yongsan, 06/10/04) reported that chastised by visiting US officials and now facing the larger issue of losing a third of the US troops based on the peninsula, the ROK said Wednesday it would push for a final agreement on base relocation talks. On Tuesday afternoon, the two allies concluded the ninth round of Future of the Alliance discussions essentially where they had begun - with an umbrella agreement on moving Yongsan Garrison out of Seoul by 2007 and eventually consolidating and shifting 2nd Infantry Division troops from their bases near the Demilitarized Zone. But two days of negotiations failed to produce a concrete deal. At an afternoon news conference Tuesday, the head of the US negotiating team expressed "frustration" at the lack of progress in the FOTA talks, one of the most overt statements by a US official on negotiations that have stalled over issues of land and money. According to ROK and US participants, the talks have been hung up on how much more land the US would need in the Pyongtaek area, where an expanded Camp Humphreys would be the new military hub in South Korea. The \$4 billion price tag of the Yongsan Garrison move - to be paid entirely by the ROK under current agreements - also has been a stumbling block. But on Wednesday - with the ROK's government addressing this week's formal proposal by the US to remove 12,500 of its 38,000 troops by 2005 - officials said the FOTA talks should be concluded as soon as possible. "We set the next FOTA as our deadline" for an agreement, Kim Sook, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, said Wednesday. The two sides would hold a special meeting in either late June or early July to decide the issue, he added.

2. DPRK Six-Way Talks Delayed

Reuters ("SIX-PARTY NORTH KOREA TALKS MAY BE DELAYED," Tokyo, 06/08/04) reported that the PRC, likely to dismantle its nuclear arms programs, has told other participants that a new round would be pointless unless the US and DPRK narrowed their differences, diplomatic sources said on Wednesday. The PRC had proposed the week of June 21 for a third round of talks bringing together the US, the two Koreas, Japan, Russia and the PRC. Media have pegged June 23 as the starting date. "Stressing that the US and North Korea remain far apart, China is suggesting the possibility of postponing a third round of six-party talks," one of the sources told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Analysts have been skeptical about the chances of making progress, given that neither of the main protagonists -- the US and the DPRK -- are expected to compromise ahead of the US presidential election in November.

3. DPRK-ROK Military Relations

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA ISSUES 'RECKLESS' WARNING," Seoul, 06/10/04) reported that the DPRK has warned the ROK's navy to stop "reckless military provocations" in the Yellow Sea or face merciless blows. Last Friday, the South said two DPRK patrol boats briefly crossed a disputed border in the Yellow Sea - which the two Koreas call the West Sea - just hours after the DPRK and ROK agreed to introduce measures to prevent naval clashes. But the navy command of the Korean People's Army, the North's 1.1-million-strong armed forces, said it was the South that was raising tension because it had intruded into the DPRK's waters by sending in speed boats and warships and staging "madcap firing exercises" nearby. "The North will be left with no option but to do what it should do and not allow those who try to intrude into its territorial waters even an inch but deal

merciless blows at them," the DPRK's navy said on Wednesday, noting the two sides had held general-level talks on the subject just last week. "The ROK army's military provocations in the sensitive waters in the West Sea is as foolish an act as jumping into the fire with faggots on its back," it said in a statement published by the official KCNA news agency.

4. PRC on US-DPRK Relations

New York Times (Joseph Kahn and Susan Chira, "PRC OFFICIAL CHALLENGES US STANCE ON NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 06/09/04) reported that a senior PRC official said Tuesday that he had doubts about the Bush administration's claim that the DPRK had been trying to build nuclear bombs using uranium, and he urged the Bush administration to stop using the allegations to hold up nuclear talks. The official, Zhou Wenzhong, the PRC's deputy foreign minister, said in an interview that the US had yet to persuade the PRC that the DPRK had both uranium and plutonium programs to develop fuel for nuclear bombs. "We know nothing about the uranium program," Zhou said. "We don't know whether it exists. So far the US has not presented convincing evidence of this program." Zhou said that if the DPRK did turn out to have a uranium program, then the PRC agreed that it must be included in the scope of the nuclear talks, which the PRC is pressing to resume by late this month. But he said the Bush administration should stop making charges about the program unless it could offer more conclusive evidence that it existed. "This is a problem," he said.

5. US Nuclear Weapons Funding

Reuters ("HOUSE PANEL VOTES TO BLOCK NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS," Washington, 06/09/04) reported that a US House of Representatives subcommittee defied the Bush administration on Wednesday and slashed funds to study a new generation of deep-earth penetrating nuclear weapons and so-called low-yield nuclear weapons. The House Appropriations Energy and Water subcommittee denied the \$36 million the administration sought to study the nuclear weapons it says may be needed to confront emerging threats since the end of the Cold War. It took the measure while considering a \$28 billion bill to fund energy, water and nuclear weapons programs. The subcommittee also cut the funds last year, but the full Congress in later House and Senate votes restored them. The administration has said it has no plans to develop the weapons. But it does not want to close the door to the "bunker-busting" nuclear weapons it said may be needed to bore into underground facilities and the smaller weapons with less than half the yield of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. Critics contend that just considering such weapons will spur a renewed arms race and takes nuclear warfare out of the realm of the unthinkable. In a vote last month on a bill authorizing defense programs, the House narrowly defeated an amendment pushed by Democrats to block the study. The Senate is expected to debate the issue next week in an amendment pushed by Democrats on its defense authorization bill, and later when it takes up its version of the bill to fund energy, water and nuclear weapons programs.

6. DPRK-ROK Military Talks

Yonhap News ("NORTH, SOUTH KOREA TO HOLD WORKING-LEVEL MILITARY TALKS," 06/10/04) reported that military officers of the ROK and DPRK will meet this week to formulate how to implement rules on their landmark agreement to take steps to ease tension on their heavily armed border, the Defence Ministry said Wednesday (9 June). Last week, general-grade officers of the rival militaries agreed to stop propaganda broadcasts along the land border and implement a package of measures, including the establishment of a telephone hotline, to avoid accidental armed clashes on the disputed western sea border. Colonel-level officers of the rival states will meet at the DPRK's

border town of Kaesong on Thursday to discuss concrete procedures to put into practice the tension-reduction measures, the ministry said in a Moon Sung-mook, while the DPRK's three-member team is to be headed by Col Yu Yong-chol. The two men participated in last week's high-profile talks at a ROK resort on Mt Seorak.

7. Japan and US on DPRK Nuclear Diplomacy

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, US LEADERS AGREE TO WORK ON NORTH KOREA BEFORE G8 SUMMIT," Savannah, 06/08/04) reported that in a prelude to a summit of world powers, the Japanese and US leaders agreed to work together to defuse threats to global security, ranging from Iraq to the DPRK, officials said. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had a working lunch with US President George W. Bush almost immediately after flying in for the Group of Eight (G8) summit, highlighting the close relationship between the two countries. "Japan-US coordination was emphasized throughout the key discussions on Iraq, North Korea and security issues," the Japanese official said. The leaders agreed that the best way to see whether the DPRK is serious about giving up its nuclear programs -- as expressed by the leader Kim Jong-Il to Koizumi in their second meeting, last month -- is the next round of six-party talks aimed at defusing the crisis, a US official told a separate briefing. "The six-party talk are the right process ... to make it very clear that North Korea will not face a good future if it refuses to give up its nuclear weapons," the US official said.

8. Japan-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE PM WINS BUSH'S PRAISE ON ECONOMIC PICKUP AS G8 SUMMIT BEGINS," 06/09/04) reported that weeks before another election, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has won praise from US President George W. Bush for ending a decade-old economic stagnation. Demonstrating their close partnership, the two men had lunch just before the Group of Eight (G8) summit that also brought together the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Russia to Sea Island, a resort in the southern US state of Georgia. Bush, apparently happy with Koizumi following his lead in key diplomatic decision-making, showered him with praise before the cameras, calling him a leader whom he could trust. "The first thing, of course, I will do is congratulate him on the fact that the Japanese economy is improving under his leadership," Bush said as he stood side by side with Koizumi. Koizumi, dubbing Bush "a man of determination", said he wished to "maintain our Japan-US cooperation in order to come up with peace and stability in the world." Koizumi, who returned to power with a majority government in November's general election, now faces upper-house elections in July, which can make or break his current second-term premiership.

9. Hong Kong-PRC Relations

Agence France-Presse ("INFLUENTIAL FORMER HK DEPUTY LEADER HITS OUT AT HER PRC CRITICS," 06/09/04) reported that Hong Kong's influential former deputy leader has hit out at accusations by PRC officials that her political views are undermining stability in the former British colony. Anson Chan, who whilst Chief Secretary was consistently the most popular politician in the city, angered Beijing officials by comparing their handling of a political crisis in here to the PRC's Cultural Revolution. But she responded by urging her critics to take more care before they start leveling accusations at her. "I would hope that anybody who ... criticizes (what) I wrote ... would take the bother to take a very careful look at what I wrote," Chan said. Chan was attacked in a piece on the PRC's official Xinhua news agency, in which a spokesman for the Hong Kong Liaison Office described her comments as irresponsible and "not in accordance with facts." Chan's comments came

in an article in Time magazine in which she urged the PRC to trust Hong Kong's citizens to make political decisions for themselves.

10. PRC-Taiwan Military Relations Agence France-Presse ("CHINA MAY ATTACK, SAYS TAIWAN VICE DEFENSE MINISTER, SEEKING BUDGET BOOST," 06/09/04) reported that Taiwan's Vice Defense Minister Tsai Ming-hsien says the PRC forces might attack the island in the coming years and called for the passage of a special budget seeking to boost the island's military might. "The PRC communists are likely to conduct small-scale or partial attacks in 2006 or 2008," Tsai said in parliament. Asked why he thought the PRC military would attack during that period, Tsai said because by "that time they may have acquired air and naval superiority (over Taiwan)" following the PRC's persistent arms build-up. He urged approval of the 610 billion Taiwan dollars (18.2 billion US) special outlay for Taiwan's purchase of eight submarines, a modified version of the Patriot anti-missile systems PAC-III and a fleet of anti-submarine aircraft over a 15-year period commencing in 2005. Taiwan government spokesman Chen Chi-mai said Tuesday that the PRC's military spending had risen at a double-digit rate each year, amounting to between 50 billion US dollars and 70 billion US dollars last year.

II. Japan

1. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch

The Japan Times ("EXPERT PONDER SDF ROLE IN IRAQ," 06/02/04) reported that the Self-Defense Forces can legally join any planned multinational force in Iraq -- as long as its purpose and mission does not involve the use of force, a Japanese government legislative expert said. Osamu Akiyama, director general of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, told a Diet committee the SDF could undertake operations that do not involve use of force.

The Japan Times ("U.N. INVOLVEMENT IN IRAQ PUSHED," 06/04/04) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and his Malaysian counterpart, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, agreed on June 3 that the international community needs to promote the involvement of the UN in rebuilding Iraq, a Japanese official said. The two leaders agreed that the US plays a key role in the fields of economy, politics and military in the reconstruction process, the official said. But Koizumi and Abdullah, who also serves as chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, noted that the authority of the UN is essential, in addition to US military power, the official said.

2. Japan DPRK Ship Ban

The Japan Times (Tetsushi Kajimoto, "BILL BARRING NORTH KOREAN SHIPS GETS NOD," 06/02/04) reported that a bill aimed at barring North Korean ships from entering Japan passed the House of Representatives transportation committee on June 1 with the support of the ruling coalition and the largest opposition party. "Our nation's consensus is that pressure is necessary in dealing with North Korea, and I believe the government will invoke (sanctions) when necessary," LDP Secretary General Shinzo Abe told a news conference. "I expect North Korea to deal with (Japan) in a way that (sanctions) will not be imposed," he said. "But there's a possibility (the sanctions will be used) if the North fails to act in a faithful manner." Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda refused to say at a regular news conference on the day whether he believes the DPRK has violated the Pyongyang Declaration. "Right now, (Japan and North Korea) are in the stage of making mutual efforts about that point, so I cannot say things so candidly," he said.

The Japan Times (Kanakano Takahara, "SHIP BAN COULD HURT TALKS WITH NORTH," 06/04/04) reported that Masatoshi Abe, senior vice foreign minister, cautioned the government on June 3 against invoking proposed legislation to ban North Korean ships from entering Japan. "If we resort to pressure, negotiations may not go well," Abe told a regular news conference. "Having a trusting relationship in negotiations is important for talks to make progress." Abe refused to comment on whether the DPRK is violating the Pyongyang Declaration, which requires both Japan and the DPRK to comply with international agreements related to Pyongyang's nuclear development. "The status quo is not satisfactory for us," he said. "But it is also not the time to give marks. (The judgment) is up to what will happen in the future."

3. Japan-DPRK Abduction Cases

Kyodo ("CHINA OFFERED TO HOST REUNION BEFORE KOIZUMI-KIM SUMMIT," Beijing, 06/03/04) reported that the PRC told North Korean leader Kim Jong Il during his visit in mid-April that it would host a reunion in Beijing between former Japanese abductee Hitomi Soga and her husband and their two daughters. The PRC government apparently hopes that improved relations between Japan and the DPRK would provide a breakthrough in the six-way talks on DPRK's nuclear ambitions.

The Japan Times (Kanakano Takahara, "JAPAN STRUGGLES TO FINALIZE SOGA FAMILY REUNION SITE," 06/03/04) reported that nearly two weeks have passed since former US Army Sgt. Charles Robert Jenkins, who lives in the DPRK, rejected a personal request from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to come to Japan and meet his wife, repatriated abductee Hitomi Soga. So far, Indonesia, which has diplomatic ties with the DPRK and no extradition treaty with the US, appears to be the best site. Indonesian Vice President Hamzah Haz has reportedly said that his government would be ready to assist in arranging a reunion if they received a request from Japan. The catch is that the Southeast Asian nation does not fulfill Soga's earlier request that the reunion take place in a country where English is commonly spoken. Soga has also said she "never wants to be parted" from her family once they are reunited -- something that government officials say has compelled them to search for a place where the family might possibly live together indefinitely. Some government officials have recently begun to suggest Hong Kong as a prospective site. The former British colony was returned to mainland the PRC in 1997. "The Jenkins' can fly to Macau on a direct flight and take a ship to Hong Kong," one official said, adding that he believes it is the best location so far.

The Japan Times (Eric Johnston, "DOES JAPAN WANT TO 'REPROGRAM' ABDUCTEES' KIDS?," Osaka, 06/04/04) reported that now that the children of four of the five repatriated abductees have finally been reunited with their parents, local governments are rushing to help them adjust to Japanese life as quickly as possible. Fukui Prefecture has set up a committee tasked with offering support to the three children of Yasushi and Fukie Chimura ranging from Japanese language and culture instruction to psychological counseling. Yet the viability -- and even desirability -- of efforts to integrate the children into Japanese society has been questioned. As far as the children are concerned, Japan is their parents' country, while the DPRK is their mother country, according to Chung Kwi Hwan, director of the International Affairs Division of the Osaka chapter of the pro-Seoul Korean Residents Union in Japan (Mindan). "There is a chance that, in a few years, the children will decide to return to their mother culture," Chung said. Jung Woo Suh, president of the Osaka-based Human Rights Association for Koreans in Japan, said: "Japan wants to force the children to forget what they learned in North Korea and reprogram them. But this will deny the children's cultural identity, which is Korean, and they could end up angry and hating Japan." Jung said that certain things they learned in the DPRK were fallacious: Kim Il Sung being a god, for example. "But other things, like 20th century history, were true," he claimed. "Some Japanese media say such education, especially about history, was anti-Japanese. But it's factually accurate and should not be forgotten."

Chung and Jung also feel that the local governments are making a mistake by not including Korean residents on the committees formed to help the children. Jung worries that the lack of Koreans on the local government committees is a sign that they are not interested in the children's viewpoints.

The Japan Times ("PYONGYANG OFF AGENDA," 06/04/04) reported that Japan will not ask its Group of Eight partners during an upcoming summit to include in the chairman's summary a specific call on the DPRK to resolve the abduction issue, according to government sources. "We have created an environment where the two countries can move negotiations forward without (Japan) using international pressure" on the DPRK, a government source said. In last year's summit in Evian, France, the G-8 members cited the DPRK's past abductions of Japanese nationals in the chairman's statement -- at Japan's behest.

4. Japan Nuclear Energy Policy

The Japan Times ("ROKKASHO RESUMES ACCEPTANCE OF SPENT NUKE FUEL," 06/04/04) reported that a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture, started accepting spent nuclear fuel shipments again on June 3 for the first time in about 19 months. Spent-fuel deliveries to the Rokkasho plant were halted in November 2002 as a result of welding defects that caused a leak of radioactive water at the plant. It was allowed to resume operations after clearing safety checks. Some 46 tons of spent nuclear fuel from Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima No. 2 plant was delivered to Mutsuogawara port in the village aboard the 4,913-ton cargo ship Rokuei Maru early in the morning. Following the arrival of the fuel, Aomori prefectural and Rokkasho municipal officials boarded the ship to inspect the containers and confirm that they were safe. The move is pivotal in light of the government's plan to complete a nuclear fuel cycle, in which plutonium and uranium are extracted from spent fuel and reused after being processed into mixed plutonium-uranium oxide (MOX) fuel. Ahead of the Rokkasho facility's scheduled full-fledged operations in July 2006, trial operations using depleted uranium are scheduled to take place this month, while another test using spent nuclear fuel is being planned for next June. Japan Nuclear Fuel plans to store about 1,600 tons of spent nuclear fuel in the facility before full-fledged operations take place. During fiscal 2004, it will accept about 529 tons from nuclear plants around Japan. Local residents and antinuclear protesters staged demonstrations near the plant, as well as in front of the prefectural government office in the capital city, Aomori. Residents and environmentalists worry about radioactive leaks and possible training accidents involving aircraft from the nearby Misawa US Air Base. "We don't want dangerous radioactive waste to be brought here for storage. The government should end its nuclear fuel reprocessing plans," said activist Osamu Imamura.

5. US Bases in Japan

Kyodo ("U.S. MARINES FACE NIGHTTIME CURFEW," Naha, 06/04/04) reported that the US military will impose a nighttime curfew on almost all Marine Corps troops with the rank of sergeant or lower to prevent crime, US military newspaper Stars and Stripes reported on June 3. Marines and sailors of those ranks at bases in Japan -- not only those in Okinawa Prefecture, but also Camp Fuji, Shizuoka Prefecture, and Iwakuni base, Yamaguchi Prefecture -- will be restricted from leaving the bases between midnight and 5 a.m., beginning June 11, according to the paper. It is the first time a curfew has been imposed on US service personnel since one was enforced in Okinawa during the Group of Eight summit held there in July 2000, according to the Foreign Ministry's office in Okinawa. Marine Lt. Gen. Robert Blackman, commander of US Marine Corps bases in Japan, said the curfew is in response to crimes involving US service members in Japan, which have been on the rise since 1998, the paper said.

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

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