NAPSNet Daily Report 10 March, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 10 March, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 10, 2003, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-10-march-2003/

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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Fire Test

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "NORTH KOREA TESTS MISSILE, SOUTH TALLIES CRISIS COST," Seoul,

03/10/03), The Japan Times (Junko Takahashi, "PYONGYANG FIRES ANOTHER MISSILE," 03/10/03), BBC News ("NORTH KOREA TEST-FIRES MISSILE INTO SEA," 03/10/03) and Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA SAYS NORTH FIRES CRUISE MISSILE," Seoul, 03/10/03) reported that the DPRK test-fired a cruise missile into the Sea of Japan at around noon on Monday (10 p.m. EST Sunday), the ROK's Defense Ministry said, in what appeared to be the latest provocative step in a crisis over the DPRK's suspected nuclear ambitions. "The missile was fired around noon today on the Sea of Japan, and we judged it was the same type as was test-fired on February 24," a defense ministry spokesman said by telephone. "We are still looking to find out exactly what type of missile it was," he said. On February 24, it shot an anti-ship missile into the same waters. The DPRK's second missile test in two weeks was anticipated by Seoul and by Washington since the DPRK declared a maritime exclusion zone in the Sea of Japan from March 8-11.

The New York Times (Don Kirk, "NORTH KOREA FIRES ANTISHIP MISSILE IN TEST LAUNCH," Seoul, 03/10/03), the Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA TEST-FIRES MISSILE, RAMPS UP PRESSURE IN NUCLEAR CRISIS," 03/10/03) and the Washington Post (Doug Struck, "NORTH KOREA TEST-FIRES MISSILE INTO SEA OF JAPAN," Seoul, 03/10/03) reported that the DPRK today fired its second short-range missile in two weeks into the sea, maintaining tensions in the dispute over its nuclear weapons program. The ROK and Japan were relieved that the test-firing, apparently of the same type of surface-to-ship missile fired February 24, was not more serious. Countries in the region fear the DPRK is planning to launch a ballistic missile or begin reprocessing uranium for nuclear weapons in its effort to force the US into talks. "This is a continuation of their demonstration against the US," said Ahn Yin Hay of Korea University. "Because of the Iraqi situation, they feel they are running out of time and methods" to get Washington to negotiate. The ROK's Defense Ministry said the missile was fired about noon today from the DPRK into the Sea of Japan. Officials said the missile traveled 66 miles from the coast, farther than the previous launch, which analysts here say they believe was a failed test. "We don't think this will have any significant impact on our national safety," Japan's defense chief, Shigeru Ishiba, told a parliament committee in Tokyo. "But we are monitoring it closely." Today's test was expected and the DPRK warned ships to stay out of the test range. North Korea has taken a number of steps since October in response to US demands that it dismantle its program to produce nuclear weapons-grade fuel. The DPRK has insisted on negotiations, which the Bush administration has refused.

2. US Domestic Politics

BBC News (Geraldine Carroll, "BUSH'S STRUGGLE OVER NORTH KOREAN THREAT," 03/10/03) reported that poised to unleash war on Iraq, the Bush administration is under siege at home and abroad over its failure to ease the growing DPRK nuclear crisis. Critics say the DPRK is far more dangerous than Saddam Hussein, and are worried by President George W Bush's refusal to order direct talks with its leader Kim Jong-il. Bush is also being accused of standing by as the DPRK prepares to crank up a reprocessing plant at Yongbyon which could churn out up to six nuclear bombs by midsummer, according to CIA estimates. William Perry, a former defence secretary who supported the Clinton administration's policy of engagement with the DPRK, has a dire warning for Bush. "The proposed policy of isolation and containment will not work. It can hardly isolate North Korea more than they are already isolated," he said. In a congressional hearing on Thursday, Secretary of State Colin Powell launched a damage control effort. "The position of the US is we don't want to see nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula," he said. Despite refusing direct talks with the DPRK, Powell said the Bush administration was actively seeking ways to address the issue. "We have a number of diplomatic initiatives under way, some of them very, very quietly under way," he said. But US efforts to convene a regional forum on the crisis, including the PRC and Russia, have so far appeared to make no progress.

3. DPRK on US Plane Interception

The Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA SAYS INTERCEPTION OF US PLANE SELF-DEFENCE: XINHUA," 03/10/03) reported that the DPRK sought to justify its interception of the US spyplane by four fighter jets in international airspace as a defensive act. "We can not stand by and watch the aggressive attempts by the US army," said a commentary in the government mouthpiece Rodong Sinmun newspaper, the PRC's Xinhua news agency reported Monday from Pyongyang. "If the US aggressors had not reinforced the military build-up against us and committed such aggressive acts as that of the reconnaissance aircraft, the interception would not have happened." The DPRK's of its actions came on the day it raised the stakes in the nuclear standoff with the US still further by lobbing an anti-ship missile into the Sea of Japan, according to Japan's Defence Agency. The firing followed the testing of a similar anti-ship missile on February 24, as the DPRK presses for direct dialogue with the US to resolve the five-month-old stalemate, ignoring calls for restraint by Beijing. The Rodong Sinmun charged that the US was paying lip service to negotiations and diplomacy on the one hand while "strengthening the aggressive forces around the Korean peninsula and staging military exercises against the DPRK," Xinhua reported.

4. Japan on UN Iraq Resolution

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "JAPAN SAYS IT WILL BACK THE US RESOLUTION ON IRAQ," Tokyo, 03/10/03) reported that Japan's statement on Saturday that it would support a new United Nations resolution on Iraq sought by the US came after weeks of fence-sitting, marked by almost no public debate on the issue. "Japan supports the proposed resolution as something that will mark the final step of the global community's effort to pressure Iraq to disarm on its own," Yoriko Kawaguchi, Japan's foreign minister, said in the statement. Kawaguchi's announcement came two days after a strongly worded criticism of the government's failure to discuss publicly its position on the Iraq crisis issued by her predecessor, Makiko Tanaka, who said that Japan should do more to avoid war. The decision also coincided with the first large antiwar protests, involving an officially estimated 14,000 demonstrators, who marched through the central city. "Japan should not hesitate to deliver a clear message to the US: exercise patience to avoid war," Tanaka, wrote in an op-ed column in The Japan Times. "But Japan's government also must stop prevaricating with the Japanese people. It should welcome and encourage debate about Japan's defense posture without fearing that the US-Japan friendship is so fragile that it will be destroyed."

5. Russia UN Iraq Resolution Opposition

The New York Times (Michael Wines, "RUSSIA SAYS IT WILL VOTE AGAINST US-BACKED RESOLUTION ON IRAQ," Moscow, 03/10/03) reported that Russia said flatly today that it would vote against a revised United Nations resolution giving Iraq until March 17 to show convincing evidence of disarmament or face military action, signaling that a weekend of American lobbying for the proposal had come to naught. In a speech here, Foreign Minister Igor S. Ivanov said Russia "did not hear serious arguments for the use of force" in Friday's climactic session of the Security Council, during which the US said that the existing resolution demanding that Iraq disarm had proven too weak. "Russia believes that no additional resolutions of the U.N. Security Council are necessary now," Ivanov said. "Therefore Russia openly states that if the draft resolution currently introduced for consideration and which contains impractical ultimatums is put to a vote, Russia will vote against this resolution." While Ivanov did not use the word veto, Russia's status as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council means that its no vote, if the measure was facing passage by other members, would automatically kill the resolution. A Russian foreign ministry spokesman later confirmed that Ivanov was promising to veto the measure if it comes to a vote.

6. US Approval of Moscow Treaty

The Washington File (Dr. Merle D. Kellerhals, Jr., "US SENATE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES MOSCOW TREATY," Washington, 03/10/03) reported that the US Senate March 6 unanimously approved the Moscow Treaty, which will reduce US and Russian long-range nuclear warheads by two-thirds by the year 2012. The treaty, which is formally known as the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, requires the two countries to reduce their deployed nuclear arsenals to between 1,700 and 2,200, down from 6,000 warheads for the US and 5,500 for Russia. The Russian parliament has yet to ratify the treaty, which was signed by Presidents Bush and Vladimir Putin last May in Moscow. "This historic agreement will reduce the nuclear arsenals of the US and Russia to their lowest levels in decades," President Bush said March 7 in a brief statement. "The treaty will benefit both our peoples and contribute to a more secure world. "The Moscow Treaty helps lay to rest the legacies of Cold War competition and suspicion, and marks a fundamentally new era in relations between the US and Russia. The strategic offensive reductions codified and made binding under international law in this Treaty are essential steps toward achieving greater political, economic, and security cooperation between our two countries." Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar, an Indiana Republican, hailed the 95-0 vote as "truly remarkable," adding that it represents an important step toward a safer world. The new treaty is a three-page document that was quickly worked out by US and Russian negotiators ahead of the May 2002 Bush-Putin summit. Ratification is expected in the Russian state Duma and Federation Council within weeks. No further action is needed in the US Congress, because the Constitution vests the Senate sole authority over foreign treaties. The Moscow Treaty also calls for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) to remain in force, expiring in 2009 unless both parties agree to an extension. It also creates a bilateral implementation commission to meet no less than twice each year to discuss "transparency" and other issues that might arise.

The full text of the treaty may be viewed on the Web at
http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/arms/02052441.htm

http://usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl?p=/products/washfile/latest&f=03030701.plt&t=/products/washfile/newsitem.shtml

7. Japan Spy Satellite

The Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "SECURITY BOOSTED, BUT OFFICIAL SAYS SPY SATELLITE NO THREAT TO NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 03/10/03) reported that the head of Japan's space agency said Monday the launch of Japan's first spy satellites later this month poses no threat to North Korea, but acknowledged it was politically "sensitive" and that security was being increased. "To me as an engineer, it is a very ordinary launch," Shuichiro Yamanouchi, head of the National Space Development agency, NASDA, told a news conference. "But the government is very sensitive." Japan is to launch two information-gathering satellites on March 28 from the Tanegashima Space Center on a remote island on its southern fringes. Few details about the spy satellites have been released, and even the launch date was kept secret until just recently. Yamanouchi acknowledged development of the satellites was stimulated by the launch of a North Korean ballistic missile that crossed over Japan's main island and crashed into the Pacific in 1998. He refused to discuss details of the mission, but stressed that it was not just to glean information on the DPRK. "This satellite is really and merely an Earth observation satellite, it is not limited to military missions," he said, adding that it will provide the same level of observation already available from commercial satellites. "I personally don't think it is all that dangerous to North Korea."

8. PRC National People's Congress on Economic Restructuring

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA MOVES AWAY FROM COMMUNIST BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM," Beijing, 03/10/03), BBC News ("CHINA APPROVES MINISTRY CHANGES," 03/10/03) and AsiaPulse ("CHINA'S GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING PLAN ADOPTED," Beijing, 03/10/03) reported that the PRC's parliament has approved sweeping changes to the way the government is run, to help it cope with economic and social changes underway in the world's most populous nation. The plan, which was outlined last week, aims to streamline the PRC's ministerial system and monitor its financial policies as the country opens more of its markets to the wider world. The changes were approved by the country's National People's Congress (NPC), which is meeting in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. The State Development Planning Commission, which used to be entrusted with carrying out the traditional five-year economic plans, is to be renamed the State Development and Reform Commission, reflecting the PRC's wish to be seen as a market-driven rather than a planned economy. The Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (Moftec) and the State Economic and Trade Commission will merge to form the Ministry of Commerce, in order to conform with World Trade Organisation requirements. A Banking Regulatory Commission will be set up to regulate the PRC's banking industry, and a new State Food and Drug Administration will oversee safety supervision and the administration of food, drugs, cosmetics and health supplements. The vast majority of delegates at the National People's Congress endorsed the proposal, with just 88 out of over 3,000 delegates opposing it. But some said the downsizing was not enough. "We hope the reforms will go even deeper. There are still many ministries that need to be adjusted," said Dai Lili from central Hubei province.

9. PRC Li Peng Retirement

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "LI PENG, CHINA'S POLITICAL SURVIVOR, HEADS INTO UNCERTAIN RETIREMENT," Beijing, 03/10/03) reported that in 16 years at the highest levels of power, Li Peng outlasted the upheaval of 1989, a scandal in which a corrupt protege was executed and critics who said he was just too dumb to run the country. This week, the 74-year-old Li steps down as chairman of the PRC's legislature, surrendering his last formal post in a sweeping handover of power to a younger generation of leaders. Li grinned broadly Monday as he delivered his last address to the National People's Congress, lauding the PRC's achievements and declaring "full confidence" in the future. Yet his own outlook is far from certain. Unlike President Jiang Zemin and outgoing Premier Zhu Rongji, Li - the former premier who declared martial law during pro-democracy protests in 1989 - leaves behind few allies to defend his family's business interests or his own legacy. "In fact, most people believe he is worried about being able to protect his family against corruption charges," said Joseph Cheng, a PRC politics specialist at the City University of Hong Kong.

10. DPRK Japan Humanitarian Funds

The Associated Press ("LIST: NORTH KOREAN FUNDS FROM JAPAN SOURCES," 03/10/03) reported that the DPRK exported $225.62 million worth of goods, or about 27 percent of its total to Japan in 2001. North Koreans living in Japan send the DPRK about $85 million a year, experts estimate. In the 1990s, before Japan's recession, the figure went as high as $700 million a year. _DRUGS: Latest customs figures say 2,473 pounds of methamphetamines from the DPRK were seized in the three years through 2001 - second only to the 3,916 pounds from the PRC. Authorities suspect - without proof - that the DPRK government has been printing fake yen. Last year police raided a DPRK ship after one of its crew members allegedly used a counterfeit 10,000 yen bill ($80) to buy a bicycle. Japanese police confiscated $140,000 worth of in fake bills in 2002, though were

unable to identify their origin.

11. Japan Domestic Economy

Reuters (Jonathan Standing, "JAPAN SCRAMBLES TO LIFT MARKET CONFIDENCE," Tokyo, 03/10/03) reported that Japan's government scrambled to shore up confidence on Monday as Japanese shares fell to their lowest in 20 years, raising the specter of a financial crisis as the fiscal year-end approaches. Fears of an imminent war in Iraq and tension over the DPRK helped drive the benchmark Nikkei 225 share average to 8,042.26, its lowest since March 1983 and around a fifth of its value at its peak in 1989. In what markets took to be a sign the government finally seems to be at last gaining a sense of urgency, officials rushed to reassure investors over the health of the world's second-largest economy. "The fall in stock prices would have no long-term effect on the economy, and the nation's financial system is stable," Economics and Financial Services Minister Heizo Takenaka told a news conference after a meeting of the prime minister's economic advisory panel. But the tumble in shares is bad news for Japan's troubled banks because it eats into the value of their huge stockholdings, further eroding capital just as they struggle with mountains of bad loans. With the fiscal year end approaching, fears have grown of a "March crisis" where not only banks but other listed firms are forced into massive write-downs of the value of their holdings. "I think there's very little that the government can do, and there's a kind of resignation among fund managers here that a fall to around 7,800 is pretty much inevitable," said Koichi Ogawa, chief portfolio manager at Daiwa SB Investments.

II. Japan

1. Japan on War against Iraq

Kyodo ("JAPAN SHOULD BACK U.S. REGARDLESS OF U.N.: ASO," 03/03/03) reported that Taro Aso, policy chief of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), indicated Sunday that Japan should support the US -- even in the absence a new UN Security Council resolution -- should it lead an attack on Iraq. "In terms of priorities, we have to weigh heavily on the Japan-US security treaty concerning the security of Japan . . . as the United Nations will not protect us," Aso said in a TV debate with other party leaders. "It would be better if such a situation could be avoided," Aso added.

Kyodo ("KAMEI OPPOSES WAR," 03/03/03) reported that Shizuka Kamei, a senior Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) official, said Sunday he opposes the use of military force on Iraq at this time. "If an attack from Iraq is imminent, then it is a matter of course. But at this point in time, (attacking Iraq) should not be conducted," said the former LDP Policy Research Council chairman said on a Fuji TV talk show. "If the United States uses military force at the wrong time, terrorism can be expected to spread in the world," Kamei said.

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI ASKS IRAQI OFFICIAL TO COMPLY ON WEAPONS," Baghdad, 03/05/03) reported that a special Japanese envoy, meeting with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz, urged Iraq to destroy all weapons of mass destruction or show evidence that it no longer has any banned arms -- or else face a possible US-led military attack. "The time has become critical. The Iraqi government should make a major political judgment," Senior Vice Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi was quoted as telling Aziz. Aziz told Motegi that Iraq realizes the disarmament issue has reached a critical stage and reiterated that it has been cooperating fully with UN instructors. Aziz also told Motegi that France and other countries want the Security Council to give UN inspectors more time and argued that the US-backed resolution now before the Security Council is intended to

pave the way for the US to attack Iraq and control its oil fields. Commenting on Japan's support for the US, Aziz said Japan has the right to do what it wants but the government should think carefully about whether its position serves Japanese interests.

The Japan Times (Makiko Tanaka, "SILENT DIPLOMACY SERVES JAPAN POORLY," 03/05/03) reported a former Japanese foreign minister Makiko Tanaka's opinion on the Japanese attitude towards a possible US-led war against Iraq. She said, "A recent opinion poll in Japan shows that 68 percent of Japanese believe that the United States and Britain should not attack Iraq. Yet, in debates in the Diet, neither Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi nor Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi utter anything more than tepid responses such as: 'Japan cannot respond to a hypothetical situation.' [...] But Japan can no longer afford to be silent or vague about growing global insecurity, as the crisis next door on the Korean Peninsula demonstrates. Why is Japan so seemingly detached in international affairs? Japan has relied entirely on the US for its security needs for over 50 years, and the Japanese government essentially believes that it has no option but to agree with the US or to keep silent." Tanaka continues, "Criticizing Japan's silence need not undermine the Japanese-US strategic alliance. Only last year the two countries commemorated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the US-Japan Security Treaty. During that half century, however, the map of world conflict has been rewritten and the means of warfare transformed, while Japan remains locked in viewpoints forged in the trauma of wartime defeat and US Occupation. There is another factor at work, too. Japan's 'Peace Constitution' supposedly bans possession of military forces. As a party to Japan's debate on national security, I know from experience that attempting to clarify the vague constitutional status of our Self-Defense Forces would lead China and South Korea -- victims of past Japanese invasions -- to try to use dissenting voices within Japan to smother all discussion, killing mature debate. But Japan urgently needs such a debate if it is to respond to a world exposed to the threat of terrorism and gripped by fear." Commenting on the war against Iraq, she said, "Japan's dependence on Middle Eastern oil also demands that we understand what a war against Iraq might mean. If Iraq's oil fields are destroyed or the war is prolonged, surging oil prices will hit Japan and the world economy hard. The best way to avoid this risk is for Iraq to raise its level of cooperation toward the inspections unconditionally and show all the proof needed to dispel the allegations leveled against it. Japan ought to speak up and say this."

The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "THINK TANK SAYS SUPPORTING U.S. WAR ON IRAQ INEVITABLE," 03/06/03) reported that the Japanese government should consider applying the 2001 antiterrorism law to the impending US-led war on Iraq if the US can prove its actions are part of the fight against terrorism, according to a Defense Agency think tank. In this year's "East Asian Strategic Review," the National Institute for Defense Studies says that the government will have to offer some form of support, given Japan's close ties with the US. "Although it is out of the question for Japan to provide direct military support, it is likely to be called on to make some sort of contribution in the area of logistics and reconstruction, as an ally to the US, and there is probably no choice but to do so," the report says. Although such an understanding is shared by government officials, they are cautious about using the antiterrorism law to cover such cooperation out of fear it would undermine the basic aim of the law. The government is instead leaning toward drafting new legislation to offer assistance in the war on Iraq. The institute also said the government will need to take "full-fledged and long-term" counter-terrorism measures, which go beyond the framework of the current legislation, as the US antiterrorism campaign expands geographically and becomes protracted. As one example of a long-term counter-terrorism strategy, the institute called for the government to build firm relations within Eurasia -- especially Central Asia -- which Japan has failed to do despite a 1997 speech by then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto declaring the region the focal point of global diplomacy.

The Japan Times (Junko Takahashi, "KOIZUMI TURNS ON MAJORITY OPPOSING WAR," 03/06/03)

reported that the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, after relying heavily on public support for his political power base, is now turning against the majority of Japanese, who oppose a war against Iraq. At a House of Councilors Budget Committee meeting Wednesday, Koizumi lamented recent opinion polls that show nearly 80 percent of the public opposes the looming war, saying that following public opinion is not always right in formulating policies. "There are times when we might make a mistake if we follow public opinion," Koizumi said when asked by an opposition lawmaker what he feels about popular opposition to the war. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, in defending Koizumi, turned the criticism toward the media later in the day. "What's bad is the way (the media) asks questions," he said. "If you ask whether a war is good or bad, everybody says a war is bad. I wonder if you can call that public opinion."

Kyodo ("PLEA FOR DIPLOMACY," Washington, 03/06/03) reported that New Komeito leader Takenori Kanzaki urged the US on last Tuesday to make every effort until the last moment to resolve the Iraqi crisis within the framework of the UN. Kanzaki made the request during a meeting with Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, said an official of New Komeito, which is part of the Liberal Democratic Party-led ruling coalition. Kanzaki told Armitage that the Japanese government supports a new UN Security Council resolution introduced by the US, Britain and Spain and that his party is in the same position. Armitage said the US will make utmost efforts to get the resolution through the Security Council, but indicated the US will disarm Iraq by force even without UN support.

Kyodo (" 'SHIELDS' URGED TO GO," Amman, 03/06/03) reported that senior Vice Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi on last Tuesday urged nine Japanese nationals who have vowed to serve as human shields in Iraq to leave the country as soon as possible. Motegi, who stopped over in Amman following a visit to Iraq as a special envoy of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, made the call at a news conference held in the Jordanian capital. "The situation is getting critical," Motegi said. "They should leave Iraq as soon as they can."

The Japan Times (Kanako Takahara, "JAPAN BACKS REVISED U.N. RESOLUTION AGAINST IRAQ," 03/09/03) reported that Japan expressed support Saturday for a revised draft resolution submitted jointly by the US, Britain and Spain to the UN Security Council that sets March 17 as the deadline for Iraq to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction. "The (revised) draft resolution will serve as a final effort by the international community to together pressure Iraq so that it will voluntarily disarm," said Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi in a statement. "(The March 17 deadline) means the U.S. will wait no longer than that date," said a government source, suggesting that war is imminent. "Japan's attitude toward the Iraq issue will naturally affect the situation over North Korea," Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said earlier this month. "We must make the Japan-US alliance a firm one so that it will act as a deterrent toward the North." New Komeito leader Takenori Kanzaki said Saturday the revised resolution shows that the international community is determined to deal with the issue of Iraq together. Meanwhile, Naoto Kan, leader of the Democratic Party of Japan, criticized the government for supporting the revised draft resolution, saying Japan should support further inspections in Iraq. "I cannot say Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is trustworthy but calling for an attack is too impetuous," he said.

2. Anti-war Movement in Japan

The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "ANTIWAR CAMPAIGNERS BEGIN WEEKLONG PROTEST," 03/04/03) reported that in another attempt to stop a possible US-led war on Iraq, a loosely united coalition of 47 Japanese groups is waging a one-week campaign that organizers hope will culminate in one of the biggest protests in recent years. The campaign kicked off on Mar. 2 in Hiroshima, where about 6,000 people, including Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, stood in formation to spell out "NO

WAR NO DU," a reference to depleted uranium, which was used by US forces in shells and bullets during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. "The reaction on the streets is different this time," said Ken Takada, a leading organizer. "We have received many calls from first-timers and individuals (who do not belong to a certain group)." Recent opinion polls show that more than 80 percent of Japanese are against a war in Iraq.

The Japan Times ("GIVE PEACE A CHANCE: NGOS," 03/06/03) reported that representatives of two non-governmental organizations on Wednesday submitted petitions bearing more than 15,000 signatures to the Foreign Ministry, urging the Japanese government to oppose the use of military force against Iraq. The two Tokyo-based NGO networks -- No-War Net Japan and the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) -- said a more peaceful approach should be taken, in line with Japan's war-renouncing Constitution. Maki Sato, of the Japan International Volunteer Center, said children should not die for the sake of eliminating Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction. She made the comment to reporters before submitting the petitions. Sato, who visited Iraq in February, also said some children there cannot attend school because their families face financial difficulties, while others suffer malnutrition.

The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "DEMONSTRATION AGAINST WAR IN TOKYO ATTRACTS THOUSANDS," 03/09/03) reported that about 40,000 people gathered in Tokyo's Hibiya Park on Saturday to protest a possible war against Iraq, organizers said, claiming it was the largest demonstration in Japan since the 1980s. Ken Takada, one of the organizers, took to the stage to describe the war as a threat to democracy. "Yet even more unforgivable is (Prime Minister Junichiro) Koizumi offering unconditional support to the United States," he added. Chihiro Ozaki, 18, who said she had never taken part in a protest rally before, said she came to this one in hopes of finding an answer to her question of what to do. "I don't support (Iraq President Saddam) Hussein, but I don't think war is the solution," she said. "I feel I need to carefully examine the situation."

3. Japan on its Nuclearization

Kyodo ("JAPAN WON'T GO NUCLEAR: ENVOY," Washington, 03/02/03) reported that the Japanese ambassador to the US has dismissed speculation that Japan may arm itself with nuclear weapons in response to the DPRK's suspected nuclear arms program. "There is no possibility of nuclear armament by Japan," Ryozo Kato said last Friday at a news conference. Kato said he has been asked about the possibility of nuclear armament at his recent speeches, but there is no serious debate on the issue among US government officials.

III. People's Republic of China

1. US-DPRK Relations

People's Daily (Ren Yujun, "US-DPRK RELATIONS FACE CHALLENGE," 03/05/03, P3) reported that two DPRK MiG29 fighters and two other aircraft intercepted the US air force RC-135 spy plane over the Sea of Japan on March 2, as US Pentagon spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis proved to press on March 3. The US reconnaissance plane returned to its base in Okinawa, Japan, without incident. US officials said it was the first incident of a US plane being intercepted by DPRK aircraft in more than 30 years. He also said the incident was under prudent preparation, since the DPRK's fighters are short-termed. A White House spokesman said it is obviously a higher-level confrontation made by DPRK to US. The US plans a formal protest of DPRK's "reckless actions" and is now consulting with Japan and ROK on the issue, he said. The report also referred to another two facts that block the

bilateral relations, one of which is DPRK commenting that US was plotting a sudden attack on DPRK's nuclear instruments, and the other is the upcoming US-ROK military drills. In conclusion, the report said that the spy plane incident will possibly lead US to persuade international community to press on DPRK. The current DPRK-US relations thus faces harsh challenges, said the report.

China Daily ("BOMBERS ARRIVE IN PACIFIC TO DETER DPRK," Seoul, 03/07/03, P12) reported that US bombers landed on the Pacific island of Guam to deter the DPRK in the event of a US-led war with Iraq, however, there were signs of unofficial contacts between the US and the DPRK over a suspected nuclear weapons program. The Japanese news agency Kyodo quoted a senior US official on March 6 as saying the DPRK was moving ahead with preparations to launch a mid-range Rodong ballistic missile, different from the short-range missile test-fired last week just hours before the ROK's President Roh Moo-hyun's inauguration. A few hours after US bombers arrived in Guam, Roh met security advisers the same day to discuss the crisis and plans for the president and his foreign minister to visit Washington. US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who ordered the deployment of 24 long-range bombers, told a briefing it was a prudent move. Meanwhile, Russia's foreign ministry expressed its concern over statements from officials in US that the US might attack the DPRK after a potential war in Iraq, said the report.

China Daily ("DPRK CALLS FOR TREATY WITH WASHINGTON," Seoul, 03/06/03, P12) reported that DPRK on March 5 made a fresh call for a non-aggression pact with US as ROK rejected fears that the US might launch a military strike on the DPRK nuclear facilities. Pro-peace statements from both Korean states came amid mounting fears that the issue of the DPRK nuclear program might spin out of control following the interception of a US spy plane by DPRK jet fighters. The Pentagon said on March 4 it was deploying 24 long-range bombers in the Pacific to deter the DPRK, further raising the temperature. "What we need is a legal guarantee to be provided by a treaty as valid as international law," said DPRK newspaper Rodong Sinmun, the daily of the ruling Workers Party of Korea. In Seoul, ROK Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said fears of a US attack, heightened by a face-off between a US spy plane and DPRK fighter jets on March 2, were "groundless." In an ROK radio interview, Jeong played down the confrontation over the Sea of Japan, saying it was part of the DPRK's campaign to press the US for one-on-one talks. "That kind of a scenario is nothing more than groundless speculation," Jeong said, when asked whether the US would use the military option to end the five-month crisis over the DPRK nuclear issue. Jeong was speaking after the US announced it was sending a dozen B-52s bombers and a dozen B-1 bombers to the western Pacific. About 2,000 US airmen were expected to be deployed with the bombers.

2. Nations' Response towards the US-DPRK Air Confrontation

China Daily ("US, DPRK URGED TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT," 03/05/03, P1) reported that Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan on March 4 stressed the importance of cool-headedness after jet fighters of the DPRK intercepted a US reconnaissance plane over the Sea of Japan on Sunday morning. "We hope that under the current situation all sides will keep calm and exercise restraint in order to truly safeguard peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia," Kong said at a regular briefing. Kong also said PRC is seriously concerned about the situation. The incident occurred at a time when the row between the two sides over the DPRK's nuclear program has rapidly escalated since late last year, the report said. The wider nuclear crisis added significance and symbolism to the annual military exercises carried out by the US and the ROK forces, which began on March 4, it noted. ROK gave no official response to the latest US-DPRK air confrontation. Japan, home to US spy planes in Northeast Asia, tried to calm tensions but warned Pyongyang not to provoke the US, said the report.

3. PRC's Diplomatic Policy

China Daily (Sun Shangwu, "TANG: DIALOGUE VITAL TO DPRK NUCLEAR ISSUE," 03/07/03, P3) reported that Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan talked about the DPRK nuclear issue on March 6 at the press conference - held on the sideline of the ongoing first session of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC). He said that PRC hopes the US and the DPRK could hold dialogue to solve the nuclear crisis. Any pressure or sanctions put on the DPRK will only "complicate the situation in the peninsula" and is not conducive to the solution of the DPRK nuclear issue, said Tang. He said PRC's basic stance on the DPRK nuclear issue is that the Korean Peninsula should be denuclearized so as to maintain peace and stability on the peninsula. "No matter from the historical point of view or the view of reality, the most effective means to resolve the issue is to realize direct dialogue," said Tang. He attributed the deadlock between the DPRK and US to the lack of trust. At the one-hour press conference, Tang also talked about PRC's attitude towards the Taiwan question and Sino-US relations, its ties with Japan. Tang said that the new government of PRC will continue to enhance its good co-operation with its neighboring countries and is willing to make joint efforts with Japan to advance bilateral relations. He said that the two countries should "learn from history and face the future" and create necessary conditions for future high-level exchanges, according to the report.

4. ROK-DPRK Relations

China Daily ("TOURISM PROJECT HIT A SNAG," Seoul, 03/04/03, P11) reported that a project at the center of the ROK's efforts to improve relations with the DPRK has hit a snag, operators said on March 3, following a week of rising tension over the DPRK's allayed nuclear arms projects. Overland road tours to DPRK's Mount Kumgang resort were put on hold for March, after some 1,300 people from the ROK made history last month by taking buses across the Demilitarized Zone, a no-man's land that has separated the rival Koreas for 50 years. There was no evidence that the halt in trips to the scenic mountain was connected to the four-month-old nuclear crisis. Officials from tour operator Hyundai Asan Corp said they referred to use the word "delay" rather than "stop," said the report.

5. US's Security Policy

China Daily (Washington, 03/08-09/03, P8) reported that the US may soon begin preliminary tests of a new generation of nuclear weapons, following the adoption of a security posture that broadens the range of possible future targets, a top government official said.

6. US-ROK War Games

China Daily ("US, ROK TROOPS STAGE WAR GAMES," Paju, 03/10/03, P12) reported that troops of the US and the ROK staged a river-crossing drill on March 9 near the world's last Cold War frontier amid signs the DPRK was preparing to conduct another missile test. It reported that the drills comes amid heightened vigilance against DPRK, which closed waters off its east coast from Saturday to Tuesday in possible preparations for a second anti-ship cruise missile test. "We have been closely monitoring (DPRK)," an official from Seoul's military joint chief of staff said. ROK Defense Minister Cho Young-Kil said on March 7 that the February 24 test of DPRK's anti-ship missile, with a range estimated at 160 kilometers, was a failure as it exploded after developing engine problems. According to the report, analysts saw the missile test as an attempt by DPRK to step up pressure for US concessions in a stand-off over its nuclear weapons drive. A new test could set the stage for volatile aerial confrontation between the Cold War foes as US intelligence is watching closely for signs of reactivation of a plutonium processing plant at DPRK's Yongbyon nuclear complex, said the

report.

7. US-Russia Relations

People's Daily (Yan Feng and Tan Weibing, "US PRESIDENT URGES RUSSIAN LAWMAKERS TO RATIFY MOSCOW TREATY," Washington, 03/10/03, P3) reported that commending the US Senate's ratification of the Moscow Treaty on strategic nuclear arms reduction, US President George W. Bush on March 7 urged Russian lawmakers to ratify the treaty quickly. "This historic agreement will reduce the nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia to their lowest levels in decades. The treaty will benefit both our peoples and contribute to a more secure world," Bush said. "The Moscow Treaty helps lay to rest the legacies of Cold War competition and suspicion, and marks a fundamentally new era in relations between the United States and Russia," he noted in the report.

People's Daily (Yan Feng and Tan Weibing, "US SENATE RATIFIES US-RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT TREATY," Washington, 03/08/03, P3) reported that the US Senate ratified on March 6 a treaty to cut US and Russian long-range nuclear warheads by two-thirds. US officials said the treaty will benefit regional security, and will win support from Russia on Iraq issue. The treaty, signed by US President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow last year, would reduce Russia's and America's deployed nuclear arsenals to between 1,700 and 2,200 warheads, from about 6,000 each, said the report.

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Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development in partnership with:

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