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I. United States

1. DPRK-US Diplomacy

Korean Central News Agency ("N KOREA URGES 'VERIFIABLE, COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL' OF US FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA," Pyongyang, 03/09/04) reported that the DPRK's party paper in a commentary has called for a "verifiable and complete withdrawal of the US forces stationed in the ROK and a 'complete, verifiable and irreversible security assurance' guaranteed by the conclusion of a peace agreement and normalization of relations." It added however that when the US drops its demand for "nuclear renouncement first" and changes its policy towards the DPRK, a "dramatic progress" will be made in settling the nuclear issue. A commentary in the Nodong Sinmun read: The US demand for "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of the nuclear program is a manifestation of extreme unilateralism, brigandishness and compulsiveness based on US-style superpower chauvinism, which incorporates an extremely dangerous wicked scheme." Agence France-Presse ("N. KOREA THREATENS TO BOOST NUCLEAR DETERRENT OVER 'RECKLESS' US

DEMANDS," 03/11/04) reported that "Reckless" US demands in recent nuclear talks are compelling North Korea to increase its nuclear deterrent, Pyongyang's official KNCA news agency quoted a foreign ministry spokesman as saying. "The US reckless stance only pushes the DPRK (North Korea) to further increase its nuclear deterrent force," the spokesman said. The report added the recently concluded six-party negotiations in Beijing were "not intended to find a negotiated solution to the issue but to achieve its ulterior aim, wasting time." US demands will merely prompt the DPRK to take "more necessary steps with increased pace," the DPRK spokesman said.

2. DPRK US Presidential Elections

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "US, N. KOREA DECIDE TO WAIT," Washington, 03/10/04) reported that this may be one of those rare occasions when the US and the DPRK agree on something: Neither side seems interested in settling their long-running dispute over the communist country's nuclear weapons programs before the US presidential election. Administration officials and private analysts say DPRK officials once believed President Bush was a cinch for re-election but now surmise that Democrat John Kerry has a fighting chance to win. As former State Department DPRK expert Jack Pritchard sees it, the DPRK would rather take its chances with Kerry than open a serious negotiation before November with Bush. A senior administration official privately says he shares that view. Pritchard also says any pre-election agreement with the DPRK inevitably would involve US concessions. This, he says, could alienate key segments of Bush's core supporters and invite comparisons with the failed 1994 denuclearization agreement the Clinton administration negotiated with the DPRK.

3. KEDO-DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("US-LED INTL CONSORTIUM KEDO VISITS NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 03/09/04) reported that the delegates from a US-led international consortium that stopped building nuclear reactors in the DPRK amid concerns about the DPRK's atomic weapons program arrived in Pyongyang Tuesday, a news agency said. The brief report on the KCNA gave no details of the "high-level" delegation's trip, including its purpose or itinerary.

4. ROK-US Joint Military Exercises

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREA, US TO STAGE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES FROM MARCH 22," Seoul, 03/09/04) reported that the ROK and the US will stage their annual joint military exercises later this month, the South Korea-US Combined Forces Command. The two regular exercises - Foal Eagle and RSOI (Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration) - are to be held for one week from 22 March, said CFC spokesman Kim Yong-kyu. The joint training, aimed at strengthening teamwork of the allied forces under emergency situations, has been denounced by the DPRK as "a war exercise." "(Washington) has severely threatened us by causing such a provocative military disturbance as the extensive joint military exercises in South Korea," the DPRK's official newspaper Nodong Sinmun said Tuesday. It claimed the exercises are part of a series of attempts by the US to isolate the DPRK from the international community. The CFC said Foal Eagle and RSOI focus on defence abilities rather than aggressive tactics, as the allied forces are aimed at protecting South Korea from outside threat. "(The joint exercises) are annually arranged practices, focusing on defence," Kim said. The two exercises, conducted at rear bases of the CFC, will involve 5,000 US forces stationed in the Pacific region as well as ROK soldiers, the spokesman said, with the number of participants and training similar to those in previous years.

5. Joint DPRK-Japan Abduction Panel

Agence France Presse ("PYONGYANG PROPOSED JOINT PANEL ON JAPANESE MISSING IN NKOREA: REPORT," 03/09/04) reported that the DPRK proposed establishing a joint committee with Japan to investigate the cases of Japanese people believed abducted to the DPRK, the Kyodo News agency said Tuesday. The DPRK made the unofficial proposal in January, prior to talks in Pyongyang in mid-February and asked Japan to pay for the cost of setting up and running the committee, Kyodo said, citing Japanese government sources. Japan later called for a joint committee to be set up, but the DPRK is believed to have given no clear response, Kyodo said. Japan is demanding that the DPRK produce fuller accounts of 10 people recognized as having been abducted, but the DPRK says eight of the 10 are dead and it has no record of entry for the other two. The victims' families have rejected the DPRK's claims, saying it has not provided sufficient evidence. The DPRK suggested on several occasions through unofficial contacts that the proposed committee investigate the 10 cases as well as other missing people whom Japan has not deemed to have been abducted, Kyodo said.

6. Human Rights Watch on DPRK Refugees in PRC

Agence France-Presse ("HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH TAKES CHINA TO TASK OVER N KOREAN REFUGEES," New York, 03/09/04) reported that Human Rights Watch on Monday accused the PRC of shirking its responsibilities by seeking to classify DPRK refugees as illegal immigrants and return them to almost certain persecution. "Given the appalling human rights situation in North Korea, China needs to provide protection to North Koreans on its territory, not send them back," said Brad Adams, executive director of the New York-based watchdog's Asia Division. "The Chinese government must not try to evade its international legal responsibility by categorizing DPRK asylum seekers and refugees as illegal immigrants," Adams said. Human rights groups estimate there are around 300,000 North Koreans in the PRC who have sought to escape the DPRK. But questioned about the issue on Saturday, PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing insisted there were no such refugees in the PRC. "The people that you are talking about are not refugees, they are illegal immigrants. It is very important to be clear about this," Li told a media briefing on the sidelines of the National People's Congress.

7. Taiwan-PRC Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHEN'S RALLYING CRY TO TAIWANESE SCARES CHINESE LEADERS," 03/10/04) reported that the growing confidence of a new generation of Taiwanese nationalists is driving the re-election campaign of President Chen Shui-bian and raising fears in the PRC that it is losing the battle for the island, analysts say. Chen Shui-bian, of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), is campaigning with an aggressive "Taiwan First" anti-China policy. "If you think you are Taiwanese, you have to recognize this land," Chen told supporters chanting "Believe in Taiwan" at a campaign rally in the southern city of Kaohsiung. His party abandoned calling for outright independence after they lost the island's first direct democratic presidential election in 1996, but the PRC claims he is now trying to achieve his goal by stealth. "If Chen is re-elected, the significance would be profound," Professor Dachi Liao, of the Institute of Political Science of National Sun Yat-sen University, told AFP. "It would send a clear message to Beijing and the international community that people believe Taiwan, whatever its national title, is an independent state rather than part of China." The PRC authorities believe ever-closer economic ties driven by the demands of Taiwan's business community are the main brake to surging support for a separate Taiwan. "The economic factor may take an upper hand in the long term," Liao said.

8. PRC Domestic Politics

The Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "CHINA TO FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION, TERROR," Beijing, 03/10/04) reported that the PRC vowed Wednesday to intensify campaigns against crimes both against and within the government, claiming progress in fighting corruption and in rooting out terrorism, Falun Gong activities and other "evil crimes." The country's top judge and top prosecutor, in reports before the National People's Congress, acknowledged the problems that face their changing society but insisted the government had matters well in hand. PRC leaders fear growing anger over official corruption might trigger unrest and threaten their grip on power. "China's legal system has persisting problems of inefficiency and there are a handful of cases of corruption," Supreme Court Chief Justice Xiao Yang said. "We will take further effective measures to increase our supervision, strengthen our forces and spare no efforts to solve the problems." Jia Chunwang, the country's chief prosecutor told legislators that China had "advanced our fight against organized and evil crimes." "We have resolutely attacked ethnic separatists, religious extremists, violent terrorists and Falun Gong and other types of criminal organized movements," Jia said. The Falun Gong spiritual movement has been banned by the government as an "evil cult."

9. Three Tenors in DPRK?

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA MAY HAVE THREE TENORS PERFORM," Seoul, 03/09/04) reported that the DPRK may invite The Three Tenors to perform at its annual spring festival next month, a pro-DPRK newspaper in Japan reported Tuesday. Song Sok Hwan, the DPRK's chief organizer for the international festival, revealed the plan to have the opera singers perform during an interview with the People's Korea, a newspaper published by Koreans in Japan who support the Pyongyang government. "We aspire to develop our festival into a world-class event. For example we are considering a program bold enough to invite the so-called Three Tenors: Luciano Pavarotti, Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo," Song was quoted as saying. The DPRK's April Spring Friendship Art Festival, timed to celebrate the April 15 birthday of national founder and late President Kim Il Sung, is the largest international event hosted by the DPRK every year. For this year's festivities, the DPRK plans to invite 700 musicians and other artists from 40 countries, Song was quoted as saying.

II. Japan

1. Japan Lawsuit on Iraq Troop Dispatch

The Japan Times ("MASS LAWSUIT FILED AGAINST TROOP DEPLOYMENT IN IRAQ," 02/25/04) reported that opponents of the dispatch of Ground Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops to Iraq have filed a lawsuit against the Japanese government, saying the deployment violates the pacifist Constitution. In the lawsuit filed in Nagoya, 1,262 plaintiffs demanded an end to the mission and 10,000 yen each in compensation for mental suffering caused by the dispatch, which they said violates their constitutional rights to live in peace, plaintiff Yoshinori Ikezumi said. Former posts minister Noboru Minowa filed a similar suit in January, but the move in Nagoya is the first group action. Organizers of the lawsuit recruited supporters online beginning in late January. Separately, a group of 14 people in Okinawa filed a criminal complaint asking local prosecutors to press charges against Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi for sending troops to combat areas in violation of the Constitution and without public consent.

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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