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I. United States

1. DPRK Multilateral Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA TELLS US TO MOVE AHEAD AT ATOM TALKS," Seoul, 05/10/04) reported that the DPRK told the US on Monday to stop wasting time in the search for an end to a crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons ambitions and to take a "trustworthy step" to move talks forward. Delegates from the ROK, the DPRK, the PRC Japan, Russia and the US are to meet in

Beijing on Wednesday for working-level talks on the nuclear standoff. The DPRK wants compensation to give up its nuclear plans, while the US wants Pyongyang to agree to complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement. DPRK leader Kim Jong-il told PRC President Hu Jintao last month that Pyongyang was willing to freeze some of its nuclear programs but would not completely scrap them, a Japanese newspaper said. That stance is in line with the DPRK's existing position and the PRC is concerned it could cause a confrontation at the six-party, working-level talks to start on Wednesday in Beijing on the DPRK's nuclear programs, the Yomiuri Shimbun said. "Success of the six-party talks and progress in the settlement of the nuclear issue will entirely depend on the US attitude," said Rodong Sinmun, the DPRK's main daily newspaper. "If the US truly stands for a negotiated and diplomatic solution to the issue, it should boldly make a switchover in its stance and take a trustworthy practical action. This is the only shortcut to the settlement of the nuclear issue," it said in an editorial carried by the DPRK's official KCNA news agency. "Nobody can predict what will happen in the future unless the US changes its present stand and attitude. The US had better bear this in mind and stop wasting time."

2. DPRK-US Nuclear Crisis Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US DOES NOT RULE OUT TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA ON NUCLEAR CRISIS," 05/11/04) reported that the US does not rule out bilateral talks with the DPRK during an international meeting this week on the nuclear crisis gripping the Korean peninsula, the State Department said. The working group meeting of the PRC, Japan, the DPRK, Russia, the ROK and the US starts Wednesday in Beijing. The DPRK and US have both said they will not budge from their tough positions that had led to a 19-month impasse on how the DPRK would meet its security needs in exchange for giving up its unproven and untested nuclear weapons program. The US will be represented at the Beijing meeting by an interagency delegation headed by Joseph DeTrani, the special envoy for the DPRK. "I wouldn't be surprised if he had meetings, within the context of the six-party talks, with individual delegations, including the North Korea delegation," said Richard Boucher, the State Department spokesman. "But I don't know of anything set or scheduled at this point," he said when asked whether the US and the DPRK would hold bilateral talks within the ambit of the six-party forum. Boucher said DeTrani would consult with ROK, Japanese, PRC and Russian counterparts on Tuesday before the first session of the working group. "Our objective remains the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs," he said.

3. DPRK-ROK Last Minute Talks Agreement

Agence France-Presse ("TWO KOREAS BREAK NEW GROUND WITH TALKS AGREEMENT," 05/09/04) reported that with hopes for peace with the DPRK apparently in tatters once again, the ROK's delegating team trudged away from the negotiating table ready to return home empty-handed. The high-level talks last week in Pyongyang, the 13th in the series, had become deadlocked early on when the DPRK's chief delegate Kwon Ho-Ung renewed the long-standing demand for an end to US-ROK joint military drills. At the same time, the ROK urged the DPRK to soften its stance in the stand-off over its nuclear weapons drive and called for a meeting between military generals on tensions over disputed inter-Korean maritime borders. But as the despondent negotiators were about to leave the conference room and head back to Seoul with no agreement, the DPRK delegates stopped them in their tracks. They told chief delegate and Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun that DPRK military authorities had just agreed to give their final consent to holding inter-Korean generals' talks -- on which an initial agreement was reached at the last high-level negotiations in February. Analysts and officials here said the landmark agreement for general-level military talks, snatched from the jaws of another debilitating stalemate, had broken new ground in the tense relationship between the ROK and DPRK. Jeong said Saturday that the hard-won agreement means

that there will be "no backpedaling" in future ties. "The agreement will serve as a framework for striking a balance between inter-Korean economic cooperation and military relations," said Jeong.

4. Taiwan Presidential Ballot Recount

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN BALLOT RECOUNT STARTS AMID TIGHT SECURITY," 05/10/04) reported that Taiwan has begun a recount of ballots cast in disputed March presidential elections, which President Chen Shui-bian won by a razor-thin victory. All 16.5 million ballots printed for the March 20 polls will be re-examined under High Court supervision amid tight security. Some 480 teams each comprising seven or eight judges, lawyers and representatives from Chen's Democratic Progressive Party and the Kuomintang (KMT)-led opposition were joining the recount. The recount centers, tightly guarded by police and election officials, were closed to the public. Both camps urged supporters to stay calm before the court makes a final ruling on the disputed election result, which they said was unlikely before Chen's inauguration scheduled for May 20. According to Taiwan's election law, Chen is considered the winner unless the recount proves his KMT opponent Lien Chan won the vote. Chen won re-election by fewer than 30,000 votes, or 0.22 percent of the ballot, following an election-eve shooting which the opposition claims swung the vote in his favor. "What we are doing today is not for any individual or any party but for democracy and a just and fair system," KMT chairman Lien told opposition lawyers at a Taipei recount center. Chen bowed to opposition demands for a recount days after the polls in a bid to stamp out mass protests over his narrow win and lingering claims that an election-eve shooting, which left him and Vice President Annette Lu slightly injured, was staged. The recount will focus on the 330,000 invalid ballots among the 13.5 million votes cast. Less than half as many ballots were declared invalid in the island's previous presidential poll four years ago. "How long the whole recount process will take depends on the number of disputed votes which will need decisions by the High Court," said court spokesman Wen Yao-yuan.

5. Japan-DPRK Relations

Washington times ("JAPAN'S PM WANTS TO VISIT NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 05/10/04) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi plans to visit the DORJ to help relatives of five former abductees return to Japan. The Mainichi News reported Friday Koizumi has asked his foreign ministry to arrange the visit, so he can bring the relatives back to Japan with him. "I want you to convey to the DPRK side my intention to bring back the relatives to Japan," Koizumi was quoted as telling Deputy Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka.

6. PRC on US Iraqi Prisoner Abuse

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SHOCKED BY US ABUSE OF IRAQI PRISONERS," 05/10/04) reported that the PRC has expressed shock at the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers and told Washington it must abide by international conventions. "We are shocked by the fact that Iraqi prisoners have been ill-treated and condemn this kind of acts which go against international conventions," the foreign ministry stated. "Complete investigations should be carried out into this affair and the suspects should be punished according to law." The PRC said it was imperative that the Bush administration abide by international laws and respect human rights. "The US government should scrupulously abide by the international conventions such as the Geneva Convention and guarantee the basic human rights of the Iraqi prisoners," said the foreign ministry.

7. PRC DPRK Refugee Crackdown

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA HUNTS DOWN STARVING DPRK REFUGEES TO SEND HOME: UN EXPERT," 05/11/04) reported that the PRC government systematically hunts down starving DPRK refugees and sends them home to face detention in prison camps and possible execution, a UN expert said. This man-hunt, which reportedly involves 200-dollar rewards for information on the refugees' hiding places, is exacerbating an ongoing food tragedy in the DPRK where millions of people are suffering, said Jean Ziegler, the United Nation's special rapporteur on the right to food, as he called on the PRC to stop such activity immediately. "The systematic and widespread persecution of the DPRK refugees from hunger on PRC soil constitutes a grave and repeated violation of the human right to food," Ziegler said in a statement. The men, women and children who are sent back to the DPRK receive heavy penalties, he warned, citing information from non-governmental organizations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. "The most common punishment is to sentence the whole family to long years in camps. The imposition of death sentences has also been alleged," Ziegler said.

8. ROK Military Illegal Exports

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREANS CHARGED WITH ILLEGAL EXPORT OF BLACK HAWK ENGINES," 05/11/04) reported that two South Koreans were charged with illegally exporting two one-million-dollar Black Hawk helicopter engines to the PRC, under the pretence of shipping them to the Malaysian military. According to a grand jury indictment unsealed in federal court in Connecticut, Park Kwon-Hwan and Chun Sung-Ryul also ordered four more of the Sikorsky Aircraft engines, stating falsely that they were bound for the ROK military. Park, who was arrested at Dulles Airport in Washington on April 1, pleaded not guilty Monday to all charges. Chun has yet to be taken into custody. The two Black Hawk engines were shipped -- supposedly to Malaysia -- in April 2002, but were actually diverted to the PRC, the indictment said. Soon after, Park and Chun allegedly sought permission to export four more engines, this time stating their intended destination as the ROK. A single S70 helicopter engines costs more than one million dollars.

9. PRC-UK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("WEN, BLAIR AGREE TO ANNUAL SINO-BRITISH SUMMITS," 05/11/04) reported that Britain and the PRC agreed to hold annual prime ministerial summits, as part of moves to intensify their relationship in a broad range of areas, from trade and investment to illegal immigration. "We have agreed that we should step up our bilateral relationship," Prime Minister Tony Blair told reporters after talks at Downing Street with PRC Premier Wen Jiabao. "In particular, there should be annual prime ministerial summits and the work of the China-UK task force should be taken forward," he said. The China-UK task force was set up last year to forge closer contacts between Beijing and London. The aim, Blair told a press conference alongside Wen, was "to make sure that the reality of today, of a strong British-PRC relationship, is made manifest". Wen said the British leader -- who has only been to Beijing twice since becoming prime minister in 1997 -- would be going to the PRC in 2005 "as a way of launching his summit mechanism". He added: "As long as we continue to respect each other and treat each others as equals, then all will be okay." Wen arrived in London on Sunday on the penultimate leg of an 11-day European tour, his first since taking office more than a year ago. He proceeds Tuesday to Dublin after the signing of Sino-British business deals worth more than one billion dollars (845 million euros).

10. Japan Opposition Leader Resignation

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE OPPOSITION LEADER RESIGNS OVER PENSION SCANDAL,"

05/10/04) reported that Naoto Kan, the leader of Japan's largest opposition party, announced his resignation for his part in a pension non-payment scandal that has already led a top government minister to quit. "My responsibility is extremely grave. In order to take responsibility, I tell you that I will resign," Kan, 57, told a televised meeting of Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) lawmakers. "I deepened (political) distrust and caused trouble to the people and our party members. From the bottom of my heart, I apologize to the people and our party members for my failure in registering for the national pension system." There was no immediate indication who would take over from Kan, but Japanese media reports pointed to party number two Ichiro Ozawa, 61, and party secretary general Katsuya Okada, 50, as the frontrunners. The scandal over top politicians' non-payment of public pension premiums broke late last month when seven cabinet ministers admitted they have failed to make compulsory payments for periods ranging from several months to two decades. On Friday Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's closest adviser, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, resigned to take responsibility for his eight-year, nine-month lapse in pension payments and to forestall further ministerial resignations. The surprise move increased the pressure to resign on Kan who, despite earlier criticism of the ministers' non-payment, admitted he had failed to pay into the pension system for 10 months in 1996 when he served as health and welfare minister.

11. DPRK on Japan Nuclear Armament

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA SAYS JAPAN ON VERGE OF HAVING NUCLEAR WEAPONS," 05/09/04) reported that the DPRK claimed Japan was about to possess nuclear weapons. The report on the DPRK's state news agency KCNA charged that Japan had secretly pursued a nuclear capability while the world's focus was on other countries' arms proliferation. "Japan's nuclear weaponization has been pushed ahead at the phase of practical implementation, going beyond the stage of discussion," the report said. "As a result, there are ample conditions for the descendants of Samurais buoyed by fever for reinvasion to have access to nuclear weapons any moment." Preliminary negotiations take place next week in Beijing aimed at clearing the way for a new round of six-nation discussions on the issue of the DPRK's alleged nuclear weapons program.

12. ROK Military Corruption

United Press International ("JAPAN'S PM WANTS TO VISIT NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 05/09/04) reported that the first active four-star general to be detained since the ROK's army was founded in 1945 has been arrested, the Korea Times reported Sunday. Gen. Shin Il-soon, deputy chief of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command, was arrested and jailed on embezzlement and bribery charges, the newspaper said. Shin is charged with stealing about \$136,000 in unit funds while serving as CFC deputy chief and chief of a ROK division and corps. A military high court issued an arrest warrant for Shin after reviewing a request from military prosecutors for about three hours. Shin was summoned and was questioned by the military prosecution for three consecutive days. Shin reportedly admitted pocketing his units' funds, but insisted he used the money to hold parties and other military-related events, all of which he claimed were traditional military practices.

13. ROK Fishing Boat Explosion

Agence France-Presse ("74 IN HOSPITAL AFTER BLAST ABOARD ROK FISHING BOAT IN URUGUAY," 05/11/04) reported that more than 70 people were hospitalized under treatment for ammonia poisoning following an explosion aboard a ROK fishing vessel docked in Montevideo's port, officials said. Uruguayan Health Director Diego Estol said 74 people were being treated following the blast on the Sung Kyung 201 after they inhaled toxic gas emitted from it. "The most serious

problem associated with ammonia poisoning is with the respiratory tract, if burns and breathing difficulties occur," said Estol. A Navy spokesman, Fernando Franzini, said some of the injured "could have serious injuries in the respiratory tract." Of those treated in the 2:00 am (0500 GMT) blast, 25 people were breathing with the help of ventilators. Crew aboard several other vessels docked in the port, which is close to the center of the Uruguayan capital, were among those treated at several hospitals for symptoms ranging from headaches, nausea and nosebleeds to breathing difficulties. The explosion in the Port of Montevideo was unprecedented, according to authorities. Experts are investigating the cause of the blast, Azuri said.

II. Japan

1. Japan Constitutional Revision

Kyodo ("CONSTITUTION NOW A DRAG ON NATIONAL SECURITY: ABE," Washington, 05/01/04) reported that Japan must revise its war-renouncing Constitution to bolster the Japan-US security alliance, Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Shinzo Abe said in Washington on April 29. "It has become clear that Japan cannot maintain its national security under the current Constitution," Abe said in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington-based conservative think tank. According to Japanese government's interpretation of the pacifist Constitution, Japan has the right to collective defense under international law -- but cannot exercise this right. "Such domestic logic cannot be internationally accepted," Abe said. "It is certain that the Japanese government's interpretation has reached a point where it cannot work anymore." Abe said there had been "a public tendency to make it a taboo to touch on the constitutional revision issue partly because of the trauma of defeat" in World War II. But many of those who hope to keep the Constitution intact lost their seats in November's House of Representatives election, he said.

The Asahi Shimbun ("CONSTITUTION QUESTIONS: ASAHI POLL: 53% SAY REVISIONS NEEDED," 05/01/04) reported that the percentage of respondents who said the pacifist Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution should be revised jumped to 31 percent, up from 17 percent in 2001, according to the recent survey by The Asahi Shimbun. Forty-four percent of respondents said the present government interpretation of not being able to exercise the right of collective self-defense should be maintained. But 28 percent said the Constitution should be revised to allow for the exercise of the right. When asked what the future role of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) overseas should be, 45 percent of the respondents said: "only up to UN-sponsored peacekeeping operations, such as in Cambodia." But 25 percent said: "allow reconstruction assistance even in nations where combat is continuing, like Iraq." And 13 percent said: "allow use of force if needed for Japanese interests." Only 12 percent of the respondents said the SDF should not be allowed to operate overseas at all. Out of a sample of 3,000 voters, valid responses were received from 1,945 individuals, interviewed April 11 and 12.

The Japan Times ("DPJ REVEALS CONSTITUTION PROPOSALS," 05/02/04) reported that the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has decided to include the phrases "exercising the right of self-defense" and "maintaining the Self-Defense Forces" in an interim report on constitutional reform scheduled to be compiled this month, party sources said. Under these proposals, Japan would not abandon its right to exercise individual self-defense in the event of an attack, while the existence of the SDF would not violate the pacifist Constitution. As for Article 9 of the Constitution, the opposition party is on the verge of reaching a consensus on maintaining its renunciation of war.

The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "PUBLIC GRADUALLY MORE ACCEPTING OF CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: BUT NO CONSENSUS ON ARTICLE 9," 05/03/04) reported that revising the war-renouncing Constitution, which has not seen a single change since it was

introduced in 1947, is increasingly becoming a possibility, although a public consensus is still elusive on the most sensitive issue of what to do with Article 9. Many Japanese appear trapped between aspirations for the nation to contribute to the global society and doubts about the wisdom of taking part in activities that could involve the use of force. Meanwhile, in deciding to send the SDF, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi cited, among other reasons, the need to bolster Japan's alliance with the US. "I don't want to make Japan a country that blindly follows the United States like its subordinate state. Article 9 may serve as a brake," said Setsu Kobayashi, a law professor at Keio University. Kobayashi has long been a lone advocate, among constitutional lawyers, for revising Article 9 to make it clear that Japan can defend itself with the SDF. But he said he no longer advocates a revision, at least for now. "I am frightened by the government, which makes light of the law," Kobayashi said, referring to how the government justified the SDF dispatch despite the fighting going on in Iraq by saying the SDF personnel would operate only in "non-combat zones." "They say they are the ones to decide what a non-combatant zone is," he said. But there is no such thing as a non-combat zone in Iraq, at least according to international law, because a guerrilla war is taking place there, he argued.

2. US on Japan's Constitutional Revision

The Japan Times (Eric Johnston, "U.S. LOOKS TO EXPAND JAPAN'S MILITARY ROLE," Osaka, 05/02/03) reported that, with Japan itself having engaged in public debate over possible revisions to the Constitution in recent years, pressure from the US on the issue has been more overt. "(Richard) Armitage is the Bush administration official who probably appears the most in the Japanese media. He constantly pressures Japan to do more militarily and is an ardent supporter of constitutional revision," says Chalmers Johnson, head of the Japan Policy Research Institute in California, who recently authored "The Sorrows of Empire," a book that strongly criticizes US foreign policy during the Cold War. Under the current Bush administration, other American officials have also come out more directly in favor of Japan revising its Constitution. Speaking to the International Friendship Exchange Council in Tokyo in June 2003, US Ambassador Howard Baker indicated support for the debate. "I do not know how Japan will decide its constitutional debate but I am pleased to see the debate has begun. Your leaders and judicial authorities have shown every bit as much ingenuity as have Americans in interpreting your Constitution and your laws, when necessary, in accordance with changed circumstances," the ambassador said. Johnson notes that Armitage and other Bush administration officials have found allies among younger-generation conservative Japanese politicians who favor constitutional reform, as well as media bodies such as the Yomiuri Shimbun and the Sankei Shimbun. During his recent visit to Tokyo, Vice President Dick Cheney, notorious for avoiding the media, was the special guest at a Yomiuri-sponsored symposium on Japan-US relations. Elsewhere in Japan, US Embassy and Consulate officials admit they go out of their way to court reporters at the Fuji-Sankei group, which also favors Article 9 revisions. "It is the policy of the US government to target Japanese media that generally support the goals of whatever US administration is in power. Among the mainstream media today, that means the Yomiuri and Fuji-Sankei," said one US State Department official.

3. Japan-DPRK Abduction Cases

The Asahi Shimbun (Taro Karasaki, "ABDUCTEE KIN FEAR INTEREST IS FADING," 05/01/04) reported that families of Japanese abducted to the DPRK staged a rally in downtown Tokyo on April 30. Organizers said about 4,000 people attended the rally at an outdoor theater in the park. The families and their supporters say the international fuss over the DPRK's nuclear program and recent developments in Iraq have drawn attention from their case. Many say the government is not taking a tough enough stand with the DPRK on the abduction issue, nor trying to win concessions. "The

Japanese government has said that it will deal with North Korea with 'dialogue and pressure.' However, it is time we reverse that stance to 'pressure and dialogue,'" said Shigeru Yokota, head of the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea and father of abductee Megumi Yokota. Environment Minister Yuriko Koike also attended the rally with 24 other lawmakers sympathetic to the abductees and their families. She stated that public attention was being distracted by other events. Later on the day, the families delivered a petition with more than 1 million signatures to the Prime Minister's Official Residence calling for swift resolution of the abduction issue and seeking immediate sanctions if the DPRK fails to act.

4. US on DPRK Abduction

Kyodo ("ABDUCTEES CITED IN U.S. TERROR REPORT FOR THE FIRST TIME," Washington, 05/01/04) reported that the US for the first time mentioned the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK in an annual report on global terrorism released on April 29. The abductions reference in the report effectively means the US will not remove the DPRK from its "state supporters of terrorism" list unless the country resolves the issue. In response to requests from relatives of the abductees, Japan has asked the US to include the issue in its global terrorism report. The State Department report says the DPRK "has allowed the return to Tokyo of five surviving abductees and is negotiating with Tokyo over the repatriation of their family members remaining in North Korea." As in last year's report, the latest report also refers to the issue of the DPRK providing a safe haven to Japanese Red Army radicals who hijacked a Japan Airlines jetliner to the city in 1970.

5. Japan Iraq Troop Dispatch

Mainichi Daily News ("OPPOSITION LEADER GIVES UN CONDITIONAL OK FOR SDF DISPATCH," New York, 05/01/04) reported that Japan's largest opposition party can approve the deployment of troops to Iraq if they are part of a multinational force underscored by the UN, the party's head, Naoto Kan, has told UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Kan, head of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), stated the conditions for the deployment of Japan's Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to Iraq when he met Annan at the UN headquarters on April 30. Explaining that Japan's Constitution bans use of force, Kan added that the SDF's role in Iraq after the end of June, when the Iraqi people's takeover of authority is scheduled to transpire, must be limited to non-military, humanitarian missions. Kan then said that for the SDF to continue its reconstruction efforts in Iraq, it was desirable that UN peacekeeping operations were established there. But Annan flatly denied the possibility of forming such operations. Kan also said that if the US and Britain were to lead the multinational force alone, it would be difficult for the DPJ to approve the deployment of the SDF even if the force operated under the UN banner.

The Asahi Shimbun ("POLITICIANS HEAD TO U.S. TO HIGHLIGHT POSITIONS ON IRAQ," 05/03/04) reported that Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General Shinzo Abe and his New Komeito counterpart, Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, met top members of the Bush administration. After meeting National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, Abe told reporters in front of the White House "Japan and the United States are now in a golden age in terms of their bilateral relationship." Perhaps as a sign of appreciation for the Japanese efforts, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Secretary of State Colin Powell hastily arranged meetings with Abe and Fuyushiba after their arrival. While the Japanese politicians told their US counterparts about the need for a new UN Security Council resolution as a means of heightening UN involvement in Iraq, they did not question US handling of the provisional authority in Iraq, which has become more problematic with the confusion in Fallujah. On the DPRK abduction issue, Rice told the Japanese politicians the issue was a common concern for the US. The US also indicated the abduction issue was one reason it

continues to keep the DPRK on the list of terrorism-sponsoring nations.

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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