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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. ROK Presidential Impeachment
2. ROK Impeachment Impact on Six-party Talks
3. DPRK-US Nuclear Diplomacy
4. DPRK on ROK Security Policy
5. US on DPRK-Iran Uranium Enrichment Project?
6. PRC Role in Iraq Reconstruction
7. Taiwan Presidential Election
8. PRC on US Role in Cross-Straits Relations
9. PRC-US WTO Trade Relations

II. Japan 1. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch
2. Japanese Participation in the Peacekeeping Operation
3. Realignment of the US Forces in Japan
4. The 50th Anniversary of the "Bravo" Test
5. Japan Fascists' Attack on Foreign Residents
6. Japanese MOX Fuel

I. United States

1. ROK Presidential Impeachment

Agence France-Presse ("TURMOIL IN SOUTH KOREA AS PRESIDENT STRIPPED OF POWERS," 03/12/04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun was suspended from office in an unprecedented impeachment vote that triggered panic in financial markets and deepened political turmoil ahead of next month's general elections. The nation's military and police were put on alert as Roh loyalists warned of "civil war" and hundreds of angry protestors faced-off with riot squads outside the National Assembly complex in the city's financial district. Roh, 57, was suspended from office 13 months into a five-year term and veteran administrator Prime Minister Goh Kun took over

as interim president. It was the first time in the ROK's history that a leader has been impeached. The Constitutional Court, whose nine justices began deliberating on the case, must rule within 180 days by a majority of at least six on whether to uphold the impeachment vote. Roh said he expected to be restored to office by the court.

Yonhap ("KOREAN AGENCY DETAILS PRIME MINISTER'S ASSUMPTION OF PRESIDENTIAL DUTIES," Seoul, 03/11/04) reported that the ROK National Assembly approval of the motion to impeach President Roh Moo-hyun means that as of Friday he is suspended as the nation's chief executive, but will still retain the status of president for up to 180 days, during which the Constitutional Court is to make a final ruling on the validity of the impeachment. He has also been suspended as the head of state, supreme commander of the army, president of Cabinet meetings and coordinator of state affairs. Prime Minister Goh Kun takes over Roh's job under the Constitution, serving concurrently as the prime minister and president. Goh will take over the job of commanding the Army and can declare war, sign treaties, proclaim martial law, grant amnesty and receive foreign envoys. Roh, however, will be allowed to reside in the presidential residence under the protection of presidential secret service agents until the Constitutional Court issues a final ruling. Some of the agents will be allocated to Prime Minister Goh to enhance security for the acting president.

2. ROK Impeachment Impact on Six-party Talks

Yonhap ("ROK OFFICIALS, ANALYSTS SAYS IMPEACHMENT MAY HINDER SIX-PARTY TALKS," Seoul, 03/12/04) reported that the passage of an impeachment motion against ROK President Roh Moo-hyun on Friday that immediately froze his powers will likely have a negative effect on inter-Korean relations. Some government officials say the suspension of Roh's presidential power may lead to the government having a limited role in resolving the international row over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, an issue that requires the government to be involved in decisions on providing multinational energy aid for the DPRK. "The government should decide how much it will shoulder in the process of providing carrots to induce North Korea towards dismantlement. That (the impeachment) will make it difficult to make progress in the multilateral nuclear talks," a unification ministry official said on condition of anonymity. Analysts said the impeachment will also limit the government's progress in inter-Korean relations. The impeachment will certainly affect ongoing inter-Korean cooperation projects such as the reconnection of cross-border railways and roads, the construction of an industrial complex in North Korea's city of Kaesong and a tourism programme to the North's Mount Kumgang, they said. The DPRK has as yet not reacted to the impeachment vote.

3. DPRK-US Nuclear Diplomacy Reuters ("US SAYS NUKE DEAL ON OFFER, DEPENDS ON NORTH KOREA," Washington, 03/12/04) reported that despite the DPRK's threat to boost its nuclear "deterrent" after six-party talks made little headway, a senior US diplomat said on Friday the US still wants to strike a deal over aid and diplomatic ties. But Mitchell Reiss, a high-ranking State Department official, also warned the US could use unspecified measures to eliminate a DPRK threat if the DPRK failed to act on the offer. In a speech emphasizing that the potential for a deal depended on the DPRK, Mitchell's statements were a response to the DPRK's criticism of the US stance at last month's second round of six-way talks that it must give up its nuclear programs. "If North Korea is prepared to act, the US is prepared to respond to DPRK actions, not mere promises," the State Department's director of policy planning told the conservative think-tank the Heritage Foundation. "If it acts as a normal state, we will treat it as such." "But if North Korea will not act, it will find the US, its allies and other partners equally prepared to respond with measures that ensure North Korea cannot threaten our countries or international stability," Reiss added. A State Department official, who asked not to be named, said the message for the DPRK was that the US priority was a

diplomatic solution and that "North Korea's nukes (don't) bring it security."

4. DPRK on ROK Security Policy

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK CLARIFIES STAND ON SOUTH'S SECURITY POLICY STRATEGY," Pyongyang, 03/12/04) reported that a spokesman for the National Reconciliation Council clarified the principled stand of the DPRK side in a statement issued Friday (12 March) as regards the ROK authorities' recent release of the "four-point basic security policy strategy". The statement termed the basic strategy as a Cold War-oriented strategy for confrontation with the DPRK as it diametrically runs counter to the June 15 joint declaration to which the DPRK and ROK committed themselves to remain true. It continued: The DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) is compelled to clarify its principled stand as the other side of dialogue declared the strategy of confrontation with the North as its policy. The "leading role in deterring the North" the ROK authorities cited as a basic point of security policy glaringly reveals their intention to play a major role in stifling the DPRK. Therefore, it conflicts with their loudmouthed "common prosperity of the South and the North" and has nothing to do with "self-reliant national defense." The DPRK will closely watch the future attitude of the ROK authorities and take necessary counter measures. Whether the inter-Korean relations will improve or not entirely depends on the stand and attitude of the ROK authorities.

5. US on DPRK-Iran Uranium Enrichment Project?

Reuters ("US SAID PROBING REPORTED IRAN-NORTH KOREA PROJECT," Washington, 03/11/04) reported that the US is unaware of a new Iran-North Korea nuclear project reported by a Japanese newspaper but is looking into it, US officials said on Thursday. The Sankei Shimbun, citing an unidentified military source, reported this week that the DPRK and Iran were working on a project to build an underground factory in the communist state to produce machinery for enriching uranium. Uranium is a key ingredient in nuclear weapons and the US has accused both Iran and the DPRK of pursuing nuclear weapons programs. "I have not seen anything to substantiate that," one senior US official said of the Sankei Shimbun report. "We saw the report and we're looking into it," he stated. Another senior US official said the newspaper report was the first time he had heard allegations of a DPRK-Iran collaboration but he was skeptical. "I would think there would have been some indication in the past if indeed there was such a relationship. If there is any truth to this it's a little surprising that it would come out like this," he said. The newspaper said the two countries agreed to jointly build a plant to make a centrifugal separator in Kusong, 40 km northwest of Anju, a site known for nuclear development by Pyongyang. It said that under the accord, reached during the visit by a senior Iranian military officer to Pyongyang in late January, both nations would use the machinery, with Iran planning to import it as "industrial goods" through a third country, the Sankei said.

6. PRC Role in Iraq Reconstruction

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TEMPERED CRITICISM ON IRAQ AND NOW REAPING BENEFITS," 03/11/04) reported that as US and British tanks rumbled into Iraq, fellow UN Security Council member PRC tempered criticism of the US and Britain and is now muscling in on lucrative contracts in the rebuilding process. It sat on the fence for months in the lead up to the invasion before finally taking a firmer anti-war stance alongside France, Russia and Germany. But it was never as vocal in its opposition as Paris, Moscow or Berlin, and as one of five permanent members of the UN Security Council it had the right to use its veto powers, but never did. Beijing had long enjoyed friendly relations with Iraq, but was also keen to maintain ties with the US, which have improved

significantly in recent years following a rocky period. Its lower key approach appears to have paid off. While the PRC has steadfastly refused to deploy troops to Iraq, unlike Japan and the ROK, it has offered the country humanitarian assistance, pledging 25 million dollars towards Iraq's rebuilding at a donor conference in Madrid last October. And last month it indicated it was prepared to write-off a big part of the estimated 5.8 billion dollars owed to it by the former Saddam regime. In return, it wants lucrative reconstruction contracts, particularly in the oil, power and infrastructure fields where PRC companies did business before the US-led attack. It is starting to reap those rewards, avoiding inclusion on a list of countries the US barred from bidding for rebuilding work because they opposed the war, like France, Germany and Russia. So far, two PRC companies have secured deals, both in the telecommunications sector.

7. Taiwan Presidential Election

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN VOTE SIGNALS CREEPING DEMOCRACY INTO MAINLAND CIRCLES," 03/11/04) reported that with Taiwan's third presidential election further cementing democracy on the disputed territory, Beijing is starting to reveal fears that people power may be just as dangerous for the mainland as any threat of independence from the island. In the weeks leading up to the March 20 poll, mainland officials have laid out a steady stream of invective against ruling President Chen Shui-bian and expressed an equal distaste for both Taiwan democracy and Taiwan independence. They have also blasted Hong Kong pro-democracy campaigners in a further sign of nervousness that democratic debate on the fringes of the PRC could soon lead to greater calls for mainland political reform, analysts said. "In seeking his personal re-election, Chen has put the tangible interests of the Taiwan people at stake," Jiang Enzhu, spokesman for China's National People's Congress (NPC), said last week. "This is indeed very immoral," he said. "We understand and respect the Taiwan compatriots' desire for developing democracy, but we firmly oppose Taiwan authorities' pursuit of Taiwan independence and any splittist activities under the cloak of democracy."

8. PRC on US Role in Cross-Straits Relations

Reuters ("CHINA URGES US CONGRESS TO STAY OUT OF TAIWAN ROW," Washington, 03/12/04) reported that political wrangling between the PRC and Taiwan spilled over to the US this week when the PRC urged members of the US Congress not to sign a statement supporting a controversial Taiwan referendum. In an e-mail to lawmakers, the PRC Embassy expressed "grave concern" over the statement circulated by two congressmen and said Taiwan's referendum, to be held along with a presidential election on March 20, "has nothing to do with democracy and everything to do with abusing democracy." The statement being circulated in the US Congress, which urges members to "support democracy! support Taiwan!," is sponsored by Reps. Peter Deutsch, a Florida Democrat, and Dana Rohrbacher, a California Republican. "The US must support the right of the Taiwanese populace to speak its mind through a peaceful voting process," it said. To Taiwan, the lawmakers said: "Your 23 million citizens have earned the right to decide for yourselves the issues affecting your well-being and security (and) to hold exclusive responsibility for determining the future of Taiwan and to exercise democratic processes." "This includes referenda free from intimidation or threat of force from any country including communist China." The statement was an expression of opinion, not US policy or law, but it fuels an already volatile debate on Taiwan. Only a handful of lawmakers have signed so far, but the statement only went out on Thursday, congressional aides said.

9. PRC-US WTO Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA LASHES OUT AT US TRADE POLICIES AFTER ZOELLICK ATTACKS," Beijing, 03/12/04) reported that the PRC accused the US of having excessively protectionist trade policies and said Washington was failing to conform to the spirit and agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The criticisms are contained in the PRC's first ever report, commissioned by the Ministry of Commerce, assessing US trade policy. Its publication in the PRC Daily Friday comes only a day after the US threatened to use take action at the WTO against the PRC for allegedly not complying with global trade rules and adopting discriminatory tax policies. "Amid a sluggish economy and the growing trade deficit, protectionist tendencies have clearly got stronger in US trade policies, while its enthusiasm to solve disputes multilaterally has clearly waned," said the report. It cited safeguard measures for the steel industry, as well as a new agricultural subsidy act, as having "abused and breached WTO rules. "The US has stepped up trade protection in domestic legislation by taking advantage of opaque WTO rules in some aspects. The problem has concerned many WTO members but remains unresolved," the report said.

II. Japan

1. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch

The Japan Times ("IRAQI RESIDENTS OF JAPAN TO VISIT SAMAWAH TO SUPPORT SDF," 02/29/04) reported that Sarmad Ali, a college student from Iraq who lives in Japan, is planning to visit the southern Iraqi city of Samawah in early March to help locals communicate with Japanese troops stationed there with a phrase book he published in Japan last year. "I want to let Iraqis have some new information about Japan, as Japanese people are going to Iraq for peaceful purposes," said Ali, expressing his gratitude for Japan sending Self-Defense Forces troops to his homeland to provide humanitarian assistance. The book is an Iraqi version of a booklet series designed to enable Japanese tourists to communicate with locals by at least pointing a finger at some often-used words written in Japanese and local languages. The SDF has purchased 400 copies of the book, which was published in August, with some appearing on news photos from Samawah, according to the publisher, Joho Center Publishing Co.

Kyodo ("GSDF, SAMAWAH LANDLORDS AGREE TO RENTAL TERMS," Samawah, Iraq, 03/03/04) reported that the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) contingent in Samawah has reached an agreement in principle with local landlords over the annual rental payment for the GSDF camp, landlords said. The two sides are putting the final touches to the accord, under which the annual rent will be set at some $200 per 2,500 sq. meters, or 0.25 hectare. As the GSDF camp will occupy about 350 hectares, the total annual rent will come to around 30 million yen. The latest deal is expected to boost GSDF humanitarian activities in the area, since it would avoid prolonged negotiations that could cause tension between the troops and local people. The landlords had originally demanded that Japan pay $2,500 per 2,500 sq. meters but later reduced the price to $500. The GSDF only offered $100, however, and negotiations stalled, with the landlords planning a protest at the site. At Saturday's meeting, the landlords said they would not mind the rate being lowered to $300, which they claim the GSDF had once offered, while the GSDF said they planned to pay more than $100. Both sides agreed to compromise at around $200.

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN, FRANCE AGREE ON IRAQ AID," 03/03/04) reported that the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and visiting French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin agreed that the two countries should cooperate on reconstructing Iraq. They emphasized the importance of consorted international efforts as well as the involvement of the UN in the Iraq effort, Japanese officials said. The French minister also told Koizumi that France "understands" Japan's position on the DPRK issues, including the abductions of Japanese in the late 1970s and early 1980s. To that,

Koizumi called for France's cooperation in efforts to resolve the abduction issue, which remains a thorn in Japan-DPRK relations. Later Tuesday, Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and de Villepin agreed that Japan and France will cooperate in providing aid to Iraq in cultural, medical, sports and other fields. Aid projects include rebuilding Iraq's national museum, supporting Iraqi athletes hoping to compete in international meets and training Iraqi doctors in Egypt.

2. Japanese Participation in the Peacekeeping Operation

The Asahi Shimbun ("A NEW SDF: MORE MEMBERS FAVOR OVERSEAS U.N. MISSIONS," 03/01/04) reported that Japan has tried to get more involved in international peacekeeping operations. Japan has dispatched SDF members to the 30-year UN mission in the Golan Heights since 1996. The operation now has about 1,200 multinational members, including those from such countries as Austria and Canada. Of them, 45 are from the SDF. In 2001, the GSDF surveyed its members on whether they wanted to participate in peacekeeping operations. Forty-eight percent said yes, while 39 percent said they would if ordered to do so. Only 7 percent answered no. The percentage of those who hoped to work in peacekeeping is up from 46 percent, according to a 1999 survey. Appreciation and accomplishment are high on the list of reasons why some SDF members look forward to UN missions. This year, the government plans to revise the National Defense Program Outline for the first time in nine years. In the revision, "international cooperation (including peacekeeping operations)" will be listed as one of the two main SDF duties, along with the "defense of Japan." The GSDF plans to restructure in response. One of the main reforms will be to establish units that can be deployed immediately, according to GSDF officials. The troops, which are directly controlled by the Defense Agency director-general, will have a special peacekeeping unit. The unit's headquarters will be the training center and point of dispatch for peacekeeping operations, officials said. Japan may now be "graduating from the newcomer's status" of nations involved in overseas peacekeeping, noted a 2003 defense white paper. But such a graduation will likely force Japan to shoulder a heavier burden in peacekeeping. Last year, Canada announced plans to reduce its rear-echelon members serving in the UN Golan Heights peacekeeping operation from 200 to 50. A UN peacekeeping commander asked Japan to take up the slack. If Japan accepts, it could be the first time for the nation's forces to play a command role in a multinational rear-echelon mission.

3. Realignment of the US Forces in Japan

Kyodo (Tomohiro Deguchi, "OKINAWANS SAID TO BE HOPING U.S. PARES MILITARY PRESENCE," Naha, 03/02/04) reported that Okinawa residents appear increasingly hopeful that the US military presence here will be scaled back amid a global US force realignment. The US Marine Corps headquarters is located at Camp Foster (Camp Zukeran) in Kitanakagusuku. Some 16,000 troops of the Third Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) are based there under the command of Lt. Gen. Robert Blackman. The MEF, the corps' sole operational force permanently stationed outside the US, is in charge of keeping a close eye on the tense situations on the Korean Peninsula and in the Taiwan Strait. The infantry and other corps, sent from the US to the camp on six-month rotations, now include troops who have taken part in the Iraq war. But according to marine sources, most of them spend only two to three months in Okinawa because an increasing number of training exercises are now being held overseas and on Japan's mainland, indicating the actual number of troops is about 10,000. This month, the marine corps sent three of its four infantry battalions, numbering 3,000 troops, to Iraq. Blackman denied that this indicated a permanent troop cut, saying the dispatch was a temporary measure. Although he did say: "Deterrence is more than numbers. What is valuable here beyond sheer numbers is capabilities."

The Asahi Shimbun ("U.S. EYES JAPAN FOR ARMY HEADQUARTERS," 03/03/04) reported that with

its eye cocked on a potentially volatile Korean Peninsula, the US has asked Japan to consider becoming home to Army headquarters in charge of Asia and the Pacific, sources said. Currently, the headquarters, the US Army's I Corps, is located in Fort Lewis in the western state of Washington. If carried out, I Corps could administrate US Army forces now serving in the ROK from Japan. So far, the Japanese government has not warmed to the idea, saying the transfer would go beyond the limits of the Japan-US Security Treaty, which is aimed only at protecting Japanese territory and maintaining security in the Far East. Speaking at a news conference, Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba said the idea was just one of several plans discussed by the US, and that no official presentation had been made. The possible transfer of I Corps to Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture is part of an overall Asian realignment being carried out by the US Department of Defense. US defense authorities are also considering transferring the US military's headquarters in Japan -- now located at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo -- elsewhere in Japan. Japanese and US government sources said the US military authorities broached the idea of the transfers at bilateral working-level negotiations in Hawaii in late November.

4. The 50th Anniversary of the "Bravo" Test

Kyodo ("MOCK TRIAL HELD ON H-BOMB TEST AT BIKINI," Shizuoka, 03/01/04) reported a mock trial in the city of Shizuoka held to look into who was responsible for the radiation disaster at Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific ahead of its 50th anniversary on March 1. The incident severely damaged the fisheries industry in the city of Yaizu, Shizuoka Prefecture, the home port of the Fukuryu Maru No. 5, and caused the 23 crew members and their families to become victims of discrimination, Toshihiro Iizuka, 73, said. "The Fukuryu Maru was considered an 'angel of death' by Yaizu residents. Fishermen's families in the city had to pawn their clothes to live," said Iizuka, who had just started teaching social science in the city at the time of the disaster. After negotiations with the Japanese side, the US paid each surviving crew member an average of 2 million yen as "sympathy money" in a political settlement. Because of the political settlement, the Japanese government has not recognized the crew members as nuclear-bomb survivors, or "hibakusha," unlike people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and has continued to exclude them from relief measures. The tribunal concluded that the government should request that the US issue an apology to the former crew members and that legislation be enacted providing the survivors with medical treatment through governmental support.

Kyodo ("SURVIVORS MARK ANNIVERSARY OF BIKINI H-BOMB TEST," Yaizu, Shizuoka Pref., 03/02/04) reported that survivors and peace activists on March 1 marked 50 years since 23 crew members of the Japanese trawler Fukuryu Maru No. 5 and residents of Rongelap Island were irradiated by the blast from a US hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific. Braving chilly weather in the morning, about 2,000 people marched 2 km from Yaizu Station in Shizuoka Prefecture to the grave of Aikichi Kuboyama, chief radio operator of the Fukuryu Maru, and laid his favorite red roses and offered incense. Kuboyama died six months after the March 1, 1954, blast at age 40. His dying wish was, "Please make sure that I am the last victim of a nuclear bomb." In a message delivered on his behalf at a ceremony at Kuboyama's grave, Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba called for more efforts to tell the younger generation and the world of the need to abolish nuclear weapons. Nagasaki Mayor Itcho Ito said in a separate message that the global nonproliferation framework is being threatened by countries that continue to hold onto their nuclear arms and others that are suspected of having recently obtained such arms. John Anjain, 81, former community leader of Rongelap Island, also participated in the march to Kuboyama's grave. He said at one of the earlier events that births of malformed or disabled children were observed after the hydrogen bomb test. "Recent US Congress members are so young they don't know much about the problems Rongelap islanders have faced," said the islander, who lost his son to leukemia at age 19.

5. Japan Fascists' Attack on Foreign Residents

Mainichi Daily News ("FOREIGNERS, FASCISTS CLASH IN KOSHIGAYA," Koshigaya, Saitama, 02/29/04) reported that two members of a fascist political organization and several of the hundreds of mostly Middle Eastern foreigners they rumbled with outside a motor show held in Koshigaya have been injured, police said. Two members of the ultra right-wing organization involved in the scuffle incurred minor head injuries after the foreigners hurled rocks at their propaganda truck, smashing its windscreen. The fascists responded to the attack by unleashing a barrage of shots from air guns into the foreigners' ranks, hitting and injuring several before the roughly 200 non-Japanese quickly fled the scene.

6. Japanese MOX Fuel

Kyodo ("MOX FUEL MAY BE USED AT SAGA PLANT IN FISCAL 2008," Fukuoka, 03/02/04) reported that Kyushu Electric Power Co. (KEPCO) plans to begin using the controversial nuclear fuel known as MOX at its atomic plant in Genkai, Saga Prefecture, as early as fiscal 2008, sources said. Environmental groups oppose use of the plutonium-uranium mixed oxide fuel due to its potential dangers. The power industry's plans to introduce MOX fuel have met with fierce public resistance, especially after it was revealed that safety data on the fuel had been falsified. Shipments from Europe at the time were subsequently rejected. Saga Gov. Yasushi Furukawa voiced surprise at the utility firm's announcement, saying, "I understand that there is no such plan at the moment." Yet proponents of the MOX project say they believe Kyushu Electric's plan will go ahead smoothly because the firm maintains favorable ties with local governments in the area. Kyushu Electric had said it wanted to start using MOX by 2010. The utility wants to introduce the fuel quickly. It combines plutonium and uranium oxide recycled from spent nuclear fuel, and Kyushu Electric's spent fuel stockpiles have been increasing at a rapid rate. The utility said it would take at least four years before starting to use the fuel, in view of procedures to apply for government approval and sign contracts with MOX providers. It is considered desirable by power plant operators because it reduces uranium consumption and is a way to use the plutonium produced by burning other sorts of nuclear fuel.

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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