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I. United States

1. ROK-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("ROH BOASTS OF "CHEMISTRY" WITH US PRESIDENT," 05/16/03) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun suggested he had found a kindred spirit in US President George W. Bush, a day after their White House summit sketched over differences in how to thwart the DPRK's nuclear quest. Roh told Korean reporters as he flew from the US capital to the final stop

of his US tour in San Francisco that he was delighted with the talks, which took place at a crucial time in the DPRK nuclear crisis. "He (Bush) is self-confident and frank. He likes plain talking. Like me, in a way. We had chemistry," said Roh as he wrapped up his first-ever visit to the US. Bush described Roh as "an easy man to talk to" after their 30-minute meeting, which was followed by dinner at the White House. Both men stressed their countries were united on the fundamentals of the DPRK question, despite clear differences of approach. But in their joint press appearance in the White House Rose Garden late Wednesday, Roh and Bush did not take questions, fanning suggestions that their carefully choreographed meeting intentionally papered over large gaps on how to deal with Pyongyang. "It's the best possible outcome of the summit -- the two leaders have established a fundamental relationship based on trust," Roh's national security advisor Ra Jong-Yil, stated. However, Roh signaled earlier in a television interview that differences of approach remained over the DPRK crisis, despite the bonhomie in evidence at the White House. Roh was asked whether he supported the idea of offering incentives for an end to the DPRK's nuclear programs -- an option the US says would be tantamount to "blackmail." "When Korea, China, Japan and the US offers what North Korea wants, maybe North Korea's attitude may chance in the future," Roh said on PBS Newshour. "That is if the North Korea receives security guarantees and if it receives an opportunity to reform and open up its economy, then there is a high likelihood that it will be willing to renounce its nuclear program." US national security advisor Condoleezza Rice said on Wednesday before Bush and Roh met that the administration was opposed to such an approach. "Our policy toward North Korea can really be summed up as follows: no one should be willing to give into the kind of blackmail that the North Koreans have been practicing on the world for a number of years now, especially not the US."

2. ROK San Francisco Arrival

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT ARRIVES IN SAN FRANCISCO," 05/16/03) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun arrived in San Francisco, a day after sealing a new friendship with US President George W. Bush with a tough message for the DPRK on nuclear weapons. Roh was due to meet US business leaders in a sector of California famed for its high-tech industries and the source of a huge chunk of Seoul's trade relationship with the US, its largest export market. The ROK leader was cheered by his first-ever meeting with Bush, at the White House on Wednesday, which wrapped up with a working dinner in the residential portion of the executive mansion. Roh began his visit to the US on Monday with a tour of the New York Stock Exchange. On Friday, he will return to Seoul after meeting former US secretary of state George Shultz and visiting Intel Corp.

3. Response to PRC SARS Execution Policy

Agence France-Presse ("RIGHTS GROUPS, EXPERTS FROWN ON CHINA'S THREAT TO EXECUTE SARS VIOLATORS," 05/16/03) reported that international human rights groups and health experts criticized new laws which allow the PRC to execute or imprison for life anyone who violates SARS quarantine and spreads the disease. "This is completely out of line with international practice and is sending the wrong message to the population," said Nicolas Becquelin, research director for Human Rights in China (HRIC). "The effects are likely to be the opposite: scaring the public even more." Becquelin said quarantine procedures have not been laid out, with local governments doing whatever they wish. "That so many people are escaping quarantine also highlights the little trust that the population has for the authorities: they know that their life is not worth much," Becquelin said. "It's also a consequence of not being forthcoming with information on SARS from the beginning." The PRC covered up the extent of the epidemic that originated in its south in November until coming clean on April 20. Frank Lu, director of the Hong Kong-based Information Center of

Human Rights and Democracy in China, said the law showed the PRC would rather scare the populace than convince them to follow its policies. "It will be useless in fighting SARS," Lu said. Health experts agreed the law was unnecessary. "I think you can have a lot of impact without having to impose harsh punishment," said a Beijing-based international health official, who declined to be identified. "It's not an effective deterrent measure." On the contrary, experts fear it could bring negative consequences. People who had stayed away from hospitals or quarantine areas could be less willing to turn themselves in for fear of facing the penalty, they said. "We're concerned it will discourage people from coming forward about the disease," said the World Health Organization's spokesman in Beijing, Bob Dietz.

4. Japan Wartime Preparedness Bill

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S LOWER HOUSE PASSES WARTIME PREPAREDNESS BILLS," 05/15/03) reported that Japan's main ruling and opposition parties united in the lower house of parliament to vote through three war contingency bills that give the nation its first legal framework for responding to military attack since World War II. Although Japan's constitution renounces war in settling international disputes, it has long been generally accepted that Japan retains the right to self-defence. But the bills spell out for the first time the circumstances under which the government can mobilize Japan's armed forces and the powers the military would have in an emergency to requisition land and other property including private vehicles, fuel and food. They also outline the responsibilities of central government and its power to order local governments in wartime, and expand the size and scope of the Security Council headed by the prime minister in national emergencies. The ruling coalition, led by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), along with opposition Democratic and Liberal parties, passed the bills with an overwhelming majority, a parliamentary spokeswoman said. The Communist Party and Social Democratic Party, representing 38 legislators in the 477-strong assembly, opposed the bills. Successive LDP governments have pressed for such legislation, but in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, the government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was the first to submit draft legislation to parliament. The unusual meeting of minds came after Koizumi, who also heads the ruling LDP, accepted on Tuesday Democratic Party leader Naoto Kan's demands for measures to protect citizens' rights and limit the powers of the administration. LDP secretary general Taku Yamasaki, a close aide of Koizumi, hailed the bills' passage. "It is really epoch-making in our nation's politics, especially so, if you look at postwar politics that we made a cross-party agreement on security policy," Yamasaki stated.

5. DPRK Hacker Training?

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA MAY BE TRAINING HACKERS," Seoul, 05/16/03) reported that the DPRK is suspected of building nuclear weapons, has developed another weapon: cyber terrorism, a senior ROK military officer said Friday. Maj. Gen. Song Young-geun, head of the ROK military's Defense Security Command, said the DPRK is churning out more than 100 computer hackers a year, and urged the ROK to boost its ability to fight "cyber threats from the outside." Computers are a rarity among the DPRK's hunger-stricken 22 million population. Visitors say the Internet is available only at a few hotels in the capital, Pyongyang. Yet, "North Korea is reinforcing its cyber terror capabilities," Song said at a seminar on information protection in Seoul. Song did not produce evidence to back his claim. The ROK is one of the world's most wired countries, with nearly 70 percent of all households having high-speed broadband access to the Internet. Concern over cyber terror spiked after the ROK's Internet service came to a near standstill early this year because of a virus-like computer infection

6. US DPRK Food Aid

Agence France-Presse ("US GIVES 40,000 TONS OF FOOD TO NORTH KOREA," Washington, 05/16/03) reported that the US said it had sent 40,000 metric tons of food promised in February to the DPRK. The donation was first announced after Secretary of State Colin Powell visited the PRC, Japan and ROK in February, a trip that took in the inauguration of new ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun who met President George W. Bush at the White House on Wednesday. "The US has provided 40,000 metric tons of humanitarian food assistance through the World Food Program to North Korea this year," said Brenda Greenberg, a State Department spokeswoman. "The US continues to call on North Korea to adhere to the same standards of human access that apply to all recipients of international food assistance." Aid donors to the DPRK in the past expressed concern that their donations have not reached their intended recipients, and may have been diverted the communist state's armed forces. The department said it was ready to offer DPRK an additional 60,000 tons of food aid. the US has insisted that its status as a major food donor to DPRK, suffering under successive droughts and the vagaries of the state controlled economic system are separate from its clash with Pyongyang over its nuclear programs. The announcement came as Roh wrapped up a visit to the US in San Francisco, a day after meeting President George W. Bush at the White House.

7. US-ROK Trade Talks

Seoul, "US, SOUTH KOREA TRADE TALKS ON MEMORY CHIPS COLLAPSE," Seoul, 05/16/03) reported that trade talks between the ROK and the US on stiff tariffs imposed by Washington on computer chip imports have collapsed, officials said here. Last month the US slapped punitive tariffs on imports of memory chips produced by the ROK's Hynix Semiconductor Inc. in a preliminary ruling. Talks were convened in Paris Tuesday as the ROK sought to win a suspension of the sanctions against the world's third largest memory chipmaker. "The two sides failed to reach an agreement due to differences in their positions and US businesses' negative attitude towards the merits of the talks," the ministry of commerce, industry and energy said in a statement. Hynix has been targeted by US and European rivals who charge that government bailouts of the ailing firm constitute illegal subsidies. The US ruling in April called for countervailing duties of 57.37 percent on chips shipped to the US by Hynix. The ROK has denied US claims that it subsidized Hynix through bailout packages and has threatened to file a grievance at the World Trade Organization. The accusation focuses on a series of rescue packages -- including emergency loans, debt rollovers and tax benefits -- to help Hynix stay afloat. Following the US suit, the European Union decided to slap a 33 percent tariff on Hynix memory chip imports over the alleged illegal state subsidies. Hynix accounts for 30 percent of the ROK's total DRAM exports. It shipped 553 million dollars of DRAMs to the US and 271 million dollars to the European Union last year.

8. Japan SARS Virus Entry

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN INVESTIGATING POSSIBLE ENTRY OF SARS VIRUS," 05/16/03) reported that the Japanese government said it has started investigating whether the virus that causes SARS has entered the country, after a Taiwanese man who visited Japan was believed to have been infected with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The Japanese government will conduct health checks on staff and guests at four hotels where the man stayed, an official with the Japanese health ministry said Friday. The man, who is a physician who had cared for at least one SARS patient in Taiwan, came to Japan on May 8, toured western Japan, and returned to Taiwan on May 13, the official said. "Details about the situation are still unclear," the official said. "We are still collecting information." The action by the Japanese government follows an announcement by Taiwan's Health Department that the physician has been quarantined for showing SARS-like symptoms and is

receiving treatment at a hospital in Taipei, according to reports. SARS has claimed 36 lives out of 274 cases in Taiwan since the first infection was detected in mid March. Japan is yet to record a confirmed case of SARS.

9. ROK Trucking Strike

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN TRUCKERS AGREE TO END WEEK-LONG STRIKE," 05/15/03) reported that ROK truckers have agreed to return to work after winning concessions from the government to end a week-long strike that has idled the world's third largest container port. The agreement was reached after overnight talks between strike leaders, transport companies and government officials. Under the agreement, the government accepted almost all demands from unions including tax cuts and other measures to protect the interests of truckers. Hundreds of truckers from the Korea Cargo Transport Workers Union (KCTWU) unanimously endorsed the agreement in a vote outside a college building in Busan, which is the country's largest port and handles 75 percent of South Korea's export cargo shipping. "This is our victory," announced an elated strike leader as the truckers held a rally of celebration. KCTWU head Kim Jong-In urged all truckers to immediately return to work. Container traffic at Busan had been crippled by strike action for the past six days, prompting the government to send in troops and non-union truckers to replace strikers. Some 15,000 police had been deployed here and in other areas, including highway resting places for truckers and toll gates, to shield the export-driven economy from further harm. The walkout had disrupted export cargo transport at major southern ports -- Busan and Gwangyang -- as well as an inland container terminal in Uiwang, 30 kilometers (18 miles) south of Seoul. The week-long walkout cost 540 million dollars in export losses, according to the Korea International Trade Association. The breakthrough came after the government promised to revise laws so that truckers would benefit from state insurances and a cut in income and oil taxes. Truckers would also benefit from a cut in highway tolls, higher transport service fees and state subsidies for any future fuel price hikes, according the 11-point agreement, copies of which were handed to the media. The government also promised to change industry practices whereby job contracts are farmed out to truckers through middlemen in return for high commissions.

10. G7 Meeting

Reuters (Gilbert Le Gras, "G7 FINANCE MINISTERS TO MEET AS JAPAN, EU CLOSE TO RECESSION," Deauville, 05/16/03) reported that with Europe and Japan on the brink of recession, finance ministers from the world's seven leading powers head to the French casino town of Deauville on Friday with the focus on how to revive global growth. Currencies are another area of concern, with the strength of the euro and the yen against the dollar causing worries in some quarters about the detrimental impact on weak growth in Europe and Japan. Figures on Friday showed that Japan, the world's second-largest economy, slowed to a standstill in the first quarter of 2003 while data on Thursday showed the euro zone also stagnated in the first three months of this year. "The latest economic data (from the EU and Japan) really underlines the need for growth," a senior Canadian finance official told Reuters ahead of the meeting of ministers from the Group of Seven industrialized countries. US Treasury Secretary John Snow, who told Reuters in an interview released on Tuesday that Japan and Europe shouldn't blame a weaker dollar for their economic woes, was due to meet Japanese Finance Minister Masajuro Shiokawa at 1400 GMT. While a stronger euro and yen makes exports from the euro zone and Japan more expensive, a weaker dollar tends to improve the competitiveness of US exporters. Before leaving for Deauville, Snow said on Thursday the US was "doing its part" to promote growth, adding that he would ask his G7 counterparts to focus on boosting their economies. "Growth must remain our priority," Snow said in a statement. "Our G7 partners must immediately take their own steps, appropriate to their own

circumstances, to spur growth, create jobs and contribute to global prosperity," he said, adding that structural reforms were especially important in some economies.

11. Japan Zero Growth Domestic Economy

The Associated Press (Yuri Kageyama, "JAPAN'S ECONOMY RECORDS ZERO GROWTH IN 1Q," Tokyo, 05/16/03) reported that Japan recorded zero economic growth in the first three months of 2003, underscoring fading hopes for an export-led recovery and growing fears of a global downturn. The numbers for the gross domestic product - the value of a nation's goods and services - for the January-March period released Friday by the Cabinet Office were in line with expectations. Economists surveyed by Dow Jones Newswires forecast on average that the economy would show no growth during the quarter. The report reflects the deep problems of Japan's economy, where stock prices have plunged, people are losing hope and prices are consistently spiraling downward in a deflationary trend, said Hiromichi Shirakawa, chief economist at UBS Warburg in Tokyo. "It's now beyond a doubt that the problem of deflation is getting worse," he said. "The numbers are totally negative." Export growth that had led last year's fragile recovery, including a 4.5 percent rise in the final quarter of 2002, slid 0.5 percent in the first quarter of this year. Imports climbed 1.4 percent. Public demand dipped 0.3 percent, reflecting the continuing shrinking in government spending for public works projects. "Individual spending has remained more or less flat, but exports have fallen," said Katsuki Oda of the Cabinet Office. For the fiscal year ended March 31, the economy grew 1.6 percent, a recovery from a 1.2 percent contraction in fiscal 2001 and above the government forecast of 0.9 percent growth. But growth is dwindling. The economy grew 1.3 percent in the April-June quarter of 2002, 0.8 percent in the July-September period and 0.5 percent in the October-December period. Japan's economy has been in a slowdown for more than a decade, repeatedly racking up back-to-back quarters of contraction in between periods of modest growth. The economy shrank for three straight quarters in 2001, the nation's worst recession in at least two decades. The jobless rate has remained above 5 percent for nearly two years, hitting a record high 5.5 percent in January for the third time in half a year - the worst reading in the five decades since the government began keeping such records.

12. PRC and Russia on UN Iraq Draft

Reuters ("RUSSIA, CHINA WANT CHANGES TO UN IRAQ DRAFT," Moscow, 05/16/03) reported that a top Russian foreign ministry official said on Friday that Russia and China sought serious changes to a US-backed draft resolution to the United Nations on lifting sanctions on Iraq. Yuri Fedotov, a deputy foreign minister, said in an interview with Interfax news agency after meeting a high-ranking Chinese official that both countries welcomed the fact that work had got under way in New York to modify the draft. But he added: "We believe that parts of this draft resolution require serious alteration. In its present form, the draft resolution creates serious problems for our countries." Russia has proposed a suspension, rather than lifting, of decade-old sanctions against Iraq, saying the final end to the embargo should wait until U.N. inspectors have certified Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction. The new draft, circulated at the United Nations on Thursday, beefs up the role of a U.N. envoy in Iraq, called a coordinator, but leaves most of the envoy's duties vague, a persistent criticism by Russia, China, France and others. Interfax quoted Fedotov as saying Russia and China were particularly concerned at when power in Iraq would be handed over to a legally elected government and also how the shift from the "oil for food program" would be carried out. Another Russian deputy foreign minister, Georgy Mamedov, said on Thursday the fate of the draft depended on resolving the issue of Iraqi debts and contracts agreed with the former government.

13. PRC WHO Taiwan Entry Protest

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PROTESTS US BILL SUPPORTING TAIWAN'S ENTRY TO WHO," Beijing, 05/16/03) reported that the PRC has voiced strong opposition to the passage of a bill by the US Congress supporting Taiwan's participation as an observer in the World Health Assembly summit in Geneva next week, state media said. "Taiwan, as a province of China, is ineligible to participate in the World Health Organisation, an organisation open only to sovereign countries, nor is it eligible to attend the WHO as an observer," foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue was quoted as saying by the China Daily. The US House of Representatives cleared the bill for the White House on Wednesday without objection. Japan and the European Union are also supporting Taiwan's bid for observer status at the WHO ahead of the body's 56th World Health Assembly beginning May 19. The PRC's response came despite a last-minute plea by Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian for Beijing not to oppose the move with the island province fighting to control an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). "If the People's Republic of China is truly concerned about Taiwan and the spread of the epidemic here, it should effectively show that concern by stopping opposition to Taiwan's participation in the WHO as an observer," Chen said. Zhang accused Taiwan of playing "political tricks" and taking advantage of the SARS crisis and that Washington should recognize "the political motive" behind their actions.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-US Summit Talk

The Koreaherlad (Hwang Jang-jin, "ROH, BUSH UNLIKELY TO PULL BACK TROOPS," Washington, 05/15/03) reported that ROK and US are likely to agree to defer a controversial US plan to pull its troops back from the heavily fortified inter-Korean border when their leaders meet today, ROK officials said. ROK President Roh Moo-hyun and US President George W. Bush will hold a crucial summit at the White House to reaffirm their joint approach in dealing with DPRK's nuclear program and to form a "comprehensive alliance" between their countries. Earlier this week, Roh said he will request that Bush not move the key combat troops until DPRK's nuclear dispute is settled and the security situation on the Korean Peninsula improves. He also said he is willing to fully cooperate with US plan to relocate its military base in Yongsan, central Seoul. The two leaders are also expected to express their commitment to strengthening their 50-year-old alliance and economic cooperation in what will be dubbed a "comprehensive alliance" during the summit, the officials said. On the eve of the summit, Roh expressed confidence that he and Bush will share a common position to end the nuclear standoff between DPRK and US diplomatically. The first face-to-face encounter between the Roh and Bush comes amid strains in ROK-US ties as they still differ on how to halt the North Korean nuclear drive. But Roh said close coordination between ROK and US "will serve as a stepping stone to the peaceful resolution of the problem." He was also confident that the summit will lay groundwork for the two nations moving "beyond the traditional alliance and create a comprehensive relationship." However, the Bush administration is reportedly seeking stricter sanctions against DPRK and is moving to curb DPRK's trade of missiles and illicit drugs, the major sources of hard currency for the impoverished country. ROK officials ruled out the possibility that Bush may request ROK join in international sanctions on DPRK during the summit.

2. Cash Delivered to DPRK for Summit Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Jeon Jin-bae, Kang Joo-an, "CASH DEPOSITS TO NORTH SPLIT," Seoul, 05/15/03) reported that $200 million wired by Hyundai Merchant Marine just before the June 2000 inter-Korea

summit went to three accounts held by DPRK, including one owned by Workers' Party, at the Macao branch of the Bank of China, ROK government officials and members of the financial community told the JoongAng Ilbo Wednesday. This contradicts the statements made by senior aides to former President Kim Dae-jung, who said that ROK government merely facilitated a transfer by Hyundai to win development projects. The Hyundai transfer was allegedly funded by Korean Development Bank, a state institution, and former Hyundai and bank officials have alleged that the loan to Hyundai had merely been a cover for ROK government's payment to DPRK. One of the accounts was held by Taesong Bank, one of the DPRK's three major banks along with the Central Bank and the Foreign Trade Bank. Taesong Bank is DPRK's main foreign exchange bank. Officials speaking to the JoongAng Ilbo said tense National Intelligence Service agents pressed the Korea Exchange Bank, which handled the transfer, to ensure that the deposit was completed on June 9. The transfer was processed on June 9 but the balances at the Macao bank did not reflect the deposit until June 12. On June 10, DPRK put off the meeting between President Kim Dae-jung and its leader, Kim Jong-il, which was scheduled for June 12. DPRK later rescueduled for June 13.

3. Rumsfeld on DPRK as "Evil Dictatorship"

Chosun Ilbo (Joo Yong-jung, "RUMSFELD CONDEMNS 'EVIL DICTATORSHIP'," Washington, 05/15/03) reported that US defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, said this week that DPRK's famine and suffering were due to its "evil dictatorship." "The solution is for DPRK to acknowledge that a market economy, not totalitarianism or despotism, is the system that creates the most for the people," he said. Rumsfeld was at the Hudson Research Institute in Washington, receiving the James Doolittle prize for exhibiting courage in the defense of the nation's freedoms. The German doctor and activist for North Korean rights and refugees Norbert Vollertsen was in attendance, and asked Rumsfeld, "North Korean civilians are suffering under a dictatorship worse than Iraq. Are there any possibilities that the U.S. will support them?" The defense secretary pointed out that US provides DPRK with more food support than any other country does, and that many countries are subsidizing DPRK, including China, which sends $500 million a year, and Japan. "The problem is not because North Korea is not getting enough money from the outside world," he said. "The North Korean military recently lowered its minimum height restrictions because the younger generation's growth is stunted due to the lack of food," Rumsfeld said. "The situation for North Korean people is truly tragic."

4. DPRK Defectors Repatriated to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Min-cheol, "CHINA SAID TO HAVE REPATRIATED 19 DEFECTORS," Seoul, 05/15/03) reported that an ROK group that assists DPRK defectors said Wednesday that 19 defectors caught last January as they were leaving PRC by boat at Yantai Harbor were returned to DPRK on Jan. 25. The Durihana Mission produced a tape recording of a telephone call with one of the refugees, identified only as Kim, who was released by DPRK authorities two weeks ago and had re-escaped. "On Jan. 18 we were caught at Yantai and sent to the border," Kim said. "On Jan. 25, 19 of us got on three buses and passed through Dandong to North Korea. Four people, including myself, were held captive for months before we were released on May 3." Durihana helped about 80 defectors from DPRK escape in January, using two boats. The group had been unsure whether those caught had been repatriated.

5. Defecting DPRK Soldiers

Chosun Ilbo (Yoon Hee-young, "NORTH'S SOLDIERS DEFECTING," Seoul, 05/15/03) reported that

many DPRK soldiers, including officers, have fled to PRC and are seeking exile in Western countries and ROK, the wire service Reuters reported Wednesday, quoting various sources in PRC. "During the past few months, defectors from the North Korean military escaped through China and went to Southeast Asia by plane, train or on foot with false identification," said Reuters, with information from three different sources. One of the defectors is a 45-year-old army officer, Baik Jong-su, who is hiding in Cambodia. In a written interview he said many other soldiers had escaped before him.

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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