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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. US Missile Defense Tests
2. Russia's View of US Nuclear Posture Review
3. PRC View of US Nuclear Posture Review
4. PRC Response to Taiwan-US Defense Meeting
5. Taiwan-US Relations
6. PRC Domestic Politics
7. DPRK-US Relations
8. DPRK Asylum Seekers
9. ROK Aegis Warship Defense Systems
10. Japan Domestic Politics
11. Japan Fishing Boat Incident

II. Republic of Korea 1. DPRK Asylum Seekers Coalition
2. ROK Air Force Project
3. DPRK Militarization
4. DPRK Armed Vessel

III. Japan 1. Japan-US Military Cooperation
2. Japanese Participation in PKO
3. Japanese New Security Legislation
4. Japanese Logistical Support for US

I. United States

1. US Missile Defense Tests

The Associated Press (Matt Kelley, "NEW MISSILE DEFENSE TEST SUCCEEDS," Washington, 03/18/02), The Washington Times, (Joyce Howard Price, "U.S. TEST MISSILE HITS WARHEAD; NO DECISION ON SADDAM," Washington, 03/17/02), and Reuters (Tabassum Zakaria, "U.S. MISSILE

SHIELD TEST SUCCESSFUL," Washington, 03/16/02) reported that the US Pentagon announced that the latest test in a US missile defense program was successful on Friday when a projectile weapon destroyed a mock warhead in space over the Pacific Ocean after accurately choosing the target over three decoys. "Tonight's test is a major step in our aggressive developmental test program," the Pentagon said in a statement. However, Chris Madison of the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation stated, "We have a long way to go before the final exam. I'm concerned that people have the impression, based on these tests, that we're almost to missile defense. Until we have operational testing, we'll have no idea whether we can get there." At least 19 more tests are needed before the ground-based missile defense system can be fully functional, Lt. Col. Rick Lehner, a spokesman for the Defense Department's Missile Defense Agency.Friday's test cost of more than US$100 million.

2. Russia's View of US Nuclear Posture Review

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "POWELL TRIES TO REASSURE RUSSIA," 03/18/02) reported that US Secretary of State Colin Powell says Russia should feel reassured - not threatened - by a Pentagon report that raises the possibility of using nuclear weapons against countries that endanger the US. At the same time, Powell that the US would stand by a 24-year pledge not to use its arsenal of nuclear weapons against states that do not have them. "If anything, they should feel less threatened than they might have felt before having read this study because the study in a number of places says Russia is no longer an enemy," Powell said. And Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters after a visit to Washington that U.S. explanations "satisfy us."

3. PRC View of US Nuclear Posture Review

Reuters (Michael Battye, "CHINA ACCUSES U.S. OF 'NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL,'" Beijing, 03/17/02) reported that the PRC, using its strongest language against the US in months. In a television report, PRC Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing stated, "China wants to make it very clear that China will never yield to foreign threats, including nuclear blackmail. The days when China could be bullied are gone forever." Li continued that threats would "simply increase the determination of the Chinese people to safeguard their sovereignty."

4. PRC Response to Taiwan-US Defense Meeting

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA SUMMONS DIPLOMAT OVER TAIWAN," Beijing, 03/18/02) reported that PRC Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing summoned US Ambassador Clark T. Randt on Saturday to demand the US reverse course on ties with Taiwan. Li stated, "The Chinese government and people express their strong indignation and resolute opposition to acts that interfere in China's internal affairs and undermine China-US relations."

5. Taiwan-US Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN SAYS TIES WITH U.S. HAVE NEVER BEEN BETTER," Taipei, 03/18/02) reported that Taiwanese Foreign Minister Eugene Chien said Monday that Taiwan's ties with the US have never been better in more than three decades, but added he hoped this would not undermine US-PRC relations. Chien expressed, "While handling triangular relations between the United States, China and Taiwan, we hope it'll be a win-win- win situation. We don't want Taiwan's developing (relations with the United States) to affect US-China ties."

6. PRC Domestic Politics

Reuters (Jeremy Page, "TIANANMEN PHOTO HOLDS KEY TO NEXT CHINA PREMIER," Beijing, 03/18/02) carried an analytical article on Wen Jiabao. The article observes that despite a picture showing Wen standing with then Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang as he made an emotional appeal to students to leave the square two weeks before the June 4 Tiananmen massacre that ultimately led to Zhao's purging from the Party days later, Wen has survived to become Vice Premier and is now, at 59, favorite to take over from Premier Zhu Rongji when he retires from his party post late this year. One Western diplomat noted Wen's high-level patronage accompanied by a subtle, low-profile style that contrasts him sharply with the plain-talking "Boss Zhu." Wu Guoguang, another of Zhao's aides in the 1980s, said, "Nobody dislikes him. He is a master of PR with a low-profile. He has no enemies."

7. DPRK-US Relations

Reuters ("US ENVOY MEETS NORTH KOREAN OFFICIAL IN NEW YORK," Washington, 03/15/02) reported that US special envoy to the DPRK Charles Pritchard met DPRK official is Pak Gil-yon in New York this week for the first time since President George W. Bush's State of the Union address. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told a daily briefing: "We found the meeting useful. Both sides agreed to continue their discussions at this level from time to time and we remain willing to explore the DPRK's receptivity to accepting our proposal for a dialogue." "We have said we are ready to sit down for a serious dialogue at any time, any place," he added. The DPRK has not responded to the offer of talks at a higher level.

8. DPRK Asylum Seekers

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "ASYLUM SEEKERS ARRIVE IN SEOUL," Seoul, 03/18/02) and Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS ARRIVE IN SEOUL," 03/18/02) reported that 25 DPRK asylum seekers arrived in Seoul on Monday, four days after they forced their way into the Spanish Embassy in the PRC demanding that they be allowed to travel to the ROK. The group, 14 adults and 11 children, landed at Incheon International Airport outside Seoul aboard a Korean Air plane that took them from Manila, the Philippines. "We're glad to be finally in South Korea, which is better off than the northern side," Choi Byung Sup said, speaking on behalf of the whole group. "We want to live freely here, abiding by South Korean law and do whatever we want to do." It was the largest DPRK defection ever to the ROK.

9. ROK Aegis Warship Defense Systems

Reuters ("US PLANS $1.2 BLN AEGIS MILITARY SALE TO SKOREA," Washington, 03/19/02) and Agence France-Presse ("CONGRESS NOTIFIED OF PROPOSED 1.2 BILLION DOLLAR AEGIS SALE TO SOUTH KOREA," 03/19/02) reported that the US plans to sell the ROK three sophisticated Aegis warship defense systems built by Lockheed Martin Corp. for an estimated US$1.2 billion, the Pentagon said on Monday. The US Defense Department said the ROK had asked to buy the systems, which can simultaneously track and shoot down numbers of aircraft, for use on destroyers in the ROK Navy. The Aegis would help a major Asian ally of Washington protect itself from a growing missile threat being developed by the DPRK. In a notification to Congress of the proposed sale, the Pentagon said it "will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the US by significantly improving the defense capabilities and security of a key defense treaty ally."

10. Japan Domestic Politics

The Associated Press (Joji Sakurai, "EX-JAPAN OFFICIAL DECRIES KOIZUMI," Tokyo, 03/18/02) reported that Makiko Tanaka, Japan's former foreign minister, broke months of silence Monday about her dismissal, labeled Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi a "spent political force." Tanaka said Koizumi has caved into the same Old Guard factions in the ruling party that he promised to eradicate. Tanaka expressed, "What we need to do now, no matter how painful it is, is to create a new system and enter a new era, but it's like the earth is shaking, and they (the Koizumi administration) are all trying to ignore it. Koizumi has just crumbled under the pressure of old style politicians. Once lots of people stand up and notice there is an "earthquake," then this Cabinet will be finished." Koizumi's spokesperson, Misako Kaji, had no comment about Tanaka's remarks. Despite a new opinion survey published Monday that said Tanaka had overtaken Koizumi as the politician Japanese most want to be their prime minister, she said she had no sights on the top job. "I don't have the ability," she said. Yet when asked whether she would take a leadership role in a post-Koizumi Japan, she left her options open, replying simply, "I don't know."

11. Japan Fishing Boat Incident

Agence France-Presse ("NAVY CLOSE TO ANNOUNCING SETTLEMENT FOR SUNK JAPANESE FISHING VESSEL," 03/19/02) reported that the US Navy is close to announcing a final settlement agreement with local Japanese authorities with regard to the Japanese fishing boat sunk by a US nuclear submarine, a Navy spokesperson said. Nine Japanese died when the USS Greeneville performed an abrupt surfacing maneuver and slammed into the Ehime Maru near Hawaii in February 2001. Twenty-six other passengers from the boat were rescued. "We are very close to a final agreement with the local government, but have not yet reached a final settlement regarding compensations... it is expected this week," Lieutenant Commander Pauline Storm said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Asylum Seekers Coalition

Joognang Ilbo (Lee Yang-soo, Lee Moo-young, "ADVOCATES JOIN FORCES TO HELP MORE FLEEING FROM THE NORTH," Manila, 03/18/02) reported that the rush on the Spanish embassy in Beijing by 25 DPRK defectors has triggered efforts to form an international coalition to help more DPRK citizens seeking asylum. The defection by the group was a result of linked efforts by international groups working for the cause of DPRK citizens seeking permanent asylum in the ROK. The head of a coalition based in Seoul, Kim Sang-ryeul, said Sunday that ROK representatives were in Tokyo at a conference that began Saturday. The purpose of the meeting is to devise more effective ways of assisting DPRK defectors. Ten human rights groups from around the world, including the US, are at the meeting.

2. ROK Air Force Project

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, "FIGHTER JET DECISION IS CALLED NEAR," Seoul, 03/18/02) reported that the selection of the ROK Air Force's next-generation fighter jet will be finalized March 28, the National Defense Ministry reported Sunday. The ministry said it plans to announce the results of the first evaluation of jets competing for the contract on March 25 after compiling results of four separate trials.

3. DPRK Militarization

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL DEFENSE FORCES,"Seoul, 03/18/02) reported that the DPRK has been straightening its civil defense force for some time. The intensification of civil armed forces is in line with direct orders from incumbent DPRK leader Kim Jong-il who stressed the establishment of "sole leadership." Chairman Kim exhorted that civilian security training is directly linked with the nation's security and that they should keep up the training no matter how busy they are with farming and other livelihood matters.

4. DPRK Armed Vessel

The Korea Herald ("ARMS FOUND ON N.K. SHIP OFF GUINEA-BISSAU," Bissau, 03/18/02) reported that the Guinea-Bissau navy discovered a stash of arms aboard the DPRK ship, the Golden Like, which then managed to escape, a source close to the navy said Friday. The vessel entered Bissau port on Wednesday, officially to seek a fishing license, but a routine search by the navy's security services uncovered Kalashnikovs, sub-machine guns and ammunition in various parts of the ship, the source said. An inquiry was opened into possible accomplices who may have helped the captain flee with his cargo. Last week unidentified fishing boats were surprised working in Guinea-Bissau waters. The suspects opened fire on a naval launch killing a soldier.

III. Japan

1. Japan-US Military Cooperation

Kyodo ("MSDF, U.S. NAVY HOLD JOINT DRILL," Yokosuka, 03/15/02) reported that the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) and the US Navy held an annual joint military exercise Thursday inside the US naval base at Yokosuka, military officials said. About 200 MSDF and 730 US Navy service members took part in the exercise, which was based on a scenario of a chemical weapons attack from fishing boats in the port of Yokosuka with more than 30 people injured, they said.

2. Japanese Participation in PKO

Kyodo ("GSDF CONTINGENT SETS SAIL FOR U.N. DUTY IN EAST TIMOR," Sapporo, 03/16/02) reported that the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF) troops left Hokkaido's Muroran port Friday for East Timor aboard an amphibious force ship, the first contingent of the main unit that will engage in UN peacekeeping operations there. The Maritime Self- Defense Force's 8,900-ton Osumi departed from the port with 47 members of the force's Northern Army and 72 vehicles, including trucks. The vessel, accompanied by the 2,950-ton destroyer Mineyuki, is scheduled to arrive in Suai, East Timor, on March 26, GSDF officials said. The troops will establish a base facility and unload cargo before the arrival of the remaining members of the main unit, who are scheduled to leave in two teams on March 22 and April 10.

3. Japanese New Security Legislation

The Asahi Shimbun ("STATE TO PUNISH CIVILIANS WHO DISOBEY EMERGENCY ORDERS," Tokyo, 03/15/02) reported that civilians who disobey government orders during an attack by foreign forces could be fined or imprisoned, according to provisions in a planned set of laws governing

emergency situations in Japan. Under provisions set out in the proposed legislation, civilians who disobey such orders could be fined up to 300,000 yen or imprisoned for a maximum of six months. The Japanese Defense Agency and various central government ministries and agencies compiled a summary plan of the proposed laws. It includes more than 100 ways in which the public could be called on to lend support to SDF troops. The summary lists doctors, medical staff, civil engineers and civilians employed in the air and sea transportation industries as people who could be asked to assist the SDF. The summary also suggests SDF troops be allowed to unload provisions from vessels without seeking local permission in preparation for an enemy landing.

4. Japanese Logistical Support for US

Kyodo ("MSDF SHIPS BACK FROM INDIAN OCEAN," Sasebo, 03/17/02) reported that three Maritime Self-Defense Forces (MSDF) vessels have returned to their home port of Sasebo after being dispatched to the Indian Ocean as part of Japan's provision of noncombat support to U.S.-led military operations in Afghanistan, MSDF officials said Saturday. The 5,200-ton Kurama, the 4,550-ton Kirisame and 8,100-ton Hamana returned from the northern Indian Ocean on Friday night, some four months after leaving Sasebo on an intelligence-gathering mission from November 9 last year.

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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