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I. United States

1. PRC on US-Led War on Iraq

The Associated Press (Audra Ang, "CHINA: ATTACK ON IRAQ IS VIOLATING 'NORMS OF INTERNATIONAL BEHAVIOR,'" Beijing, 03/20/03) and the Agence France-Presse ("CHINA

DEMANDS US STOP USING FORCE AGAINST IRAQ," Beijing, 03/20/03) reported that the PRC has urged the US to stop using force against Iraq, saying it violated the United Nations charter and international laws. "We urge relevant countries to stop their military action and return to the right path," said foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan in China's first reaction to the US strikes against Baghdad. "As long as there is hope we will continue to work hard for peace. "We strongly appeal to the relevant countries to stop the use of force." The PRC has consistently said it is against war and the issue should be solved within the United Nations framework. Kong said the US decision to use force without UN approval was a breach of international law and that most countries favored continued weapons inspections and a peaceful solution to the crisis. The strikes "violates the UN charter and the basic norms of international laws," he said at a regular briefing. "I believe that within the Security Council that most members are opposed to the conclusion of inspections in such a short time and are in favour of a political settlement of discussions. "Most countries want a political solution to the Iraq question," he added. He said the PRC government was concerned about the impact the war would have on world peace.

2. PRC and Oil Dependency

The Associated Press (William Foreman, "CHINA'S BIG THIRST FOR OIL MAKES WAR WITH IRAQ A SERIOUS CONCERN," Beijing, 03/20/03) reported that the PRC's growing need for oil makes the country's economy vulnerable if the war with Iraq drags on, causing fuel prices to shoot up and stay high, analysts said Thursday. One potential problem for the PRC - the world's third-largest consumer of oil - is the country's lack of strategic reserves that would help cushion it against wild swings in prices. Adding to the PRC's concerns, the nation just installed a younger group of leaders who are under intense pressure to keep boosting the economy. The new rulers' survival could depend on their success in defusing unrest among the swelling masses of poor farmers and workers laid off from bloated, debt-ridden state factories. "Stability is crucial to China's economic development. The problem of energy supplies will certainly bring fluctuation," said Wang Zhengzhong, deputy director of the Economic Institute at the PRC Academy of Social Sciences. The PRC's need for oil has been expanding steadily in recent years. New classes of affluent Chinese have been trading in their bicycles for cars, and foreign companies have been rushing in to set up factories in booming coastal cities. Last year, the PRC imported 69.4 million metric tons (76.3 million tons) of crude oil - a 15 percent increase from 2001, according to customs statistics. About 40 percent of the oil came from the Middle East. As long as the war doesn't turn into a quagmire for US-led forces, Wang said that OPEC will be able to meet demand and prices won't rise as high as they did in the 1972 oil crisis.

3. ROK Military Readiness

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "SOUTH KOREA PUTS FORCES ON HEIGHTENED ALERT," Seoul, 03/20/03) and the Washington Post (Soo-Jeong Lee, "SOUTH KOREA INCREASES MILITARY READINESS," Seoul, 03/20/03) reported that the ROK's military went on its highest alert in seven years Thursday as concerns arose that the DPRK could use the distraction of war in Iraq to raise tensions on the Korean Peninsula, the ROK's Yonhap news agency said. Yonhap, quoting unnamed sources, said the ROK elevated its military's Watch Condition to a level 2 for the first time since 1996. The move affects mostly military intelligence and other units assigned to watch the tense border and does not involve any major southern troop movements. The Defense Ministry would not confirm the report. But ROK President Roh Moo-hyun was expected to address the nation later Thursday in a live, televised speech on the US-led war on Iraq. Roh also planned to convene a National Security Council meeting Thursday to discuss the war's economic and security implications, his office said. ROK elevated its Watch Condition to a level 2 in 1996 when North Korean troops marched into the truce village of Panmunjom to raise tensions.

4. DPRK Reprocessing Status

The Washington Post (Walter Pincus and Glenn Kessler, "N. KOREA STYMIED ON PLUTONIUM WORK REPROCESSING LAB CALLED ANTIQUATED," 03/20/03) reported that the DPRK appears to be having trouble restarting a nuclear reprocessing facility that would separate plutonium for weapons from spent fuel rods, according to administration officials with access to recent intelligence. The Bush administration had been bracing for the DPRK to time the start-up of the facility to coincide with the war with Iraq. But despite feverish activity that can be observed around the site, officials believe the DPRK has been stymied in their rush to begin creating the raw material needed for nuclear weapons. "They are working 24/7," a senior administration official said. "But it is not going as fast as they wanted to." The situation has raised concerns among officials that the DPRK would take other provocative steps during the conflict with Iraq. Robert Alvarez, a nuclear expert who as deputy assistant secretary of energy for materials asset management and national security analysis in the Clinton administration visited Yongbyon to work out details of the 1994 agreement, said the DPRK is working with 1950s nuclear technology. He said the 5-megawatt reactor is a 1956 British design that in part still uses vacuum tubes rather than modern components. Even when operating it broke down frequently, he said. He also said the reprocessing plant was "in the early stages of initial start-up when its activities were frozen in 1994." Trial runs would be needed before it could restart, and "it will likely require a significant amount of 'hands-on' operation that normally is done with more advanced remote controls in other countries." Such operations in human hands generally result in spills, leaks and failures during the complex steps of extracting and purifying plutonium, Alvarez said. While other experts have talked about the DPRK being able to extract enough plutonium to make five or six bombs within months, Alvarez said these estimates were based on how modern, US reprocessing plants operate. He said the much older, simpler DPRK plants, using older technology, could take "a span of several months to a year."

5. Japan on US-Led Iraq War

The Associated Press (Gary Schaefer, "JAPAN BLAMES IRAQ FOR MISSING 'LAST CHANCE' TO AVOID WAR, MULLS SUPPORT FOR US," Tokyo, 03/19/03) and the New York Times (Howard W. French, "JAPAN PREMIER SUPPORTS US ON IRAQ STANCE," Tokyo, 03/19/03) reported that in the face of strong and growing opposition, the Japanese prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, expressed strong support today for the US' ultimatum to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq to leave his country within 48 hours or face war. "Now that it is determined that the extremely dangerous regime of Hussein has no intention to disarm, I believe it appropriate to support America's use of force," Koizumi said at a news conference today. Koizumi's foreign minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi, reinforced the Japanese government's message in a meeting with Iraq's interim chargé d'affaires, Qasim Shakir. "If Iraq paves the way for the abolition of its weapons of mass destruction with the exile of President Hussein, the Iraqi people will be able to avoid damage stemming from military action," Kawaguchi was quoted as telling the envoy. Hatsuhisa Takashima, a foreign ministry spokesman, said: "Prime Minister Koizumi made it clear that because of the constitutional constraints, Japan will not participate in any military action against Iraq. However, the government of Japan will make a thorough study on how to help the rehabilitation and reconstruction of postwar Iraq and contribute to international peace and stability while making utmost efforts to secure the safety of Japanese nationals and to prevent any economic disruption."

6. Japan Role in Iraq Reconstruction

The Japan Times (Reiji Yoshida, "IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION BILLS COULD BE IN DIET BY MAY," 03/19/03) reported that the government will submit a package of bills to help in the postwar

reconstruction of Iraq to the Diet probably by early May, Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Taku Yamasaki said Wednesday. Japan's role in the aftermath of the much-anticipated war is expected to include providing Self-Defense Forces as part of multinational peacekeeping units in the event the United Nations dispatches such forces to Iraq, Yamasaki told reporters. "It is generally believed that the war will end within one month," the LDP's No. 2 man said, explaining the probable timetable for the legislation. His comment came a day after US President George W. Bush set a 48-hour deadline for Iraq leader Saddam Hussein to surrender or face war. Yamasaki said that SDF missions in postwar Iraq will be nonmilitary operations involving transportation, medical care, dismantling of weapons of mass destruction and minesweeping in the Persian Gulf. Although Yamasaki was quick to add that nothing concrete has yet been discussed by the ruling parties or the government on the details of the bills, emphasizing that he "has only mentioned possible roles for Japan generally," this is the first time a high-ranking member of the ruling coalition or the government has revealed details and the possible timing of reconstruction assistance bills, which are expected to be necessary for Japan to play an active role in rebuilding Iraq. Yamasaki reiterated the government's position that Japan will not participate in missions against Iraq that involve the use of military force, emphasizing that the nation's role will be limited to postwar reconstruction.

The Japan Times (Kanako Takahara, "IRAQ ENVOY URGES JAPAN TO STEER US TO PEACE," 03/19/03) reported that the charge d'affaires at the Iraqi Embassy in Tokyo on Wednesday nudged Japan to lean on the US to avert a war in his country. "It's better for Japan to work in the direction of defusing the problem" than talk about helping to reconstruct Iraq after a military conflict ends, Qasim Shakir told the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. "Japan could talk to the US about having a peaceful solution to this problem." Shakir noted it is understandable that Japan is supporting the US ultimatum on Iraq because of its own security concerns. "(Junichiro) Koizumi has his own reasons to back the US," Shakir said, referring to the prime minister's statement on Tuesday in support of US plans to forcibly disarm Iraq. "The Japanese position may be affected by the crisis in North Korea." Shakir indicated that Baghdad would not consider Japan an enemy even if US-led forces attack Iraq because Japan is not expected to participate militarily. As for Japanese nationals who have traveled to Iraq to serve as human shields, Shakir welcomed them for "supporting Iraq and fighting against war."

7. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Japan Times (Junko Takahashi, "TOKYO MAY KILL PYONGYANG DEAL," 03/19/03) and CNN News ("JAPAN MAY SCRAP NORTH KOREA PACT," Tokyo, 03/19/03) and BBC News ("JAPAN QUESTIONS NORTH KOREA DEAL," 03/19/03) reported that Japan has warned the DPRK that it may scrap a landmark agreement between the two sides if the DPRK carries out a ballistic missile test aimed at Japan. The agreement, known as the Pyongyang Declaration, commits the DPRK to an extension of its 1999 moratorium on long-range missile tests in exchange for Japanese aid. It was signed at an historic summit between the DPRK and Japanese leaders last year. But since then, Japanese relations with the DPRK have been battered by Pyongyang's brinkmanship over its nuclear program. Japanese government spokesman Yasuo Fukuda noted that the DPRK "still have not crossed the line," stressing that Japan would not tear up the Pyongyang Declaration lightly. "Once we abrogate it, then we lose a forum for dialogue. Is that good? We have to consider that carefully," he said.

The Associated Press (Audrey McAvoy, "NORTH KOREA ATTACKS JAPAN SPY SATELLITE LAUNCH, WARNS IT COULD VOID DECLARATION NOT TO TEST BALLISTIC MISSILES," Tokyo, 03/19/03) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday attacked Japanese plans to launch spy satellites into space later this month, saying it would be a "hostile act" posing a "grave threat" to the DPRK. The DPRK also warned the step could be construed as releasing it from a vow not to test ballistic

missiles. "Japan's sending a spy satellite into space and establishing a missile defense is a hostile act against the DPRK and poses a grave threat to it," the state-run KCNA news agency quoted a North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman as saying. Japan plans to launch two information-gathering satellites - its first ever - into space on March 28, 2003. Citing security reasons, Tokyo has kept many of the details about the satellites and the launch under wraps. Japan currently has little satellite intelligence-gathering capabilities of its own and relies heavily on the US.

8. DPRK on Missile Development Right

The Associated Press (Sang-Huh Choe, "NORTH KOREA CLAIMS RIGHT TO DEVELOP MISSILES," Seoul, 03/19/03) reported that the DPRK said Wednesday it has the right to develop missiles, increasing fears it might resume test-launching long-range weapons while the US is focused on Iraq. "The DPRK's missile program is of purely peaceful nature and does not pose a threat to anyone," the DPRK Rodong Sinmun said. The commentary, carried by the DPRK's official news agency KCNA, said the communist nation has a "sovereign right to go ahead with its missile program." Japanese media reported last week that the DPRK appeared to be making final preparations to test-launch a ballistic missile, though government officials in the region have denied there is strong evidence that a test is imminent. With the US focused on Iraq, experts say North Korea might use the opportunity to test long-range missiles or reprocess spent nuclear fuel to make atomic bombs. On Tuesday, US Secretary of State Colin Powell warned against missile tests and said fuel reprocessing would make it harder to find a peaceful solution to the dispute. On Tuesday, the DPRK's foreign ministry attacked Japan's plan to launch spy satellites later this month, saying the move would pose a "grave threat" to the isolated communist state. The DPRK warned that it too has the right to launch satellites. Officials are more concerned about a possible North Korean test of a Taepodong-2 missile. Analysts believe that missile is capable of reaching the US, though there are widespread doubts about its range and accuracy. The DPRK says the spy satellites violate the spirit of a joint declaration signed by Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang last year.

9. US Panel on US-DPRK Talks

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "PANEL URGES US-NORTH KOREA TALKS," Tokyo, 03/19/03) reported that a group of prominent US experts on Korea has challenged the Bush administration's rejection of direct negotiations with the DPRK, saying the US should begin talks to test the communist government's willingness to give up its nuclear program. The group includes four former ambassadors, three former top-ranking military officers, missile experts, academics and specialists who have offered a strategy to break the deadlock between Washington and the DPRK government in Pyongyang. The administration has said it will not negotiate until the DPRK agrees to dismantle its programs to develop nuclear weapons, and then will talk only in a multinational group. The DPRK insists on direct negotiations with the US. "There was division on the task force about whether it was too late to try to negotiate with North Korea," said the chairman of the group, Selig S. Harrison, director of the Asia Program at the Center for International Policy, a Washington research organization. But to discover what is possible, he said, "there was complete agreement that the first steps have to be in direct, bilateral negotiations between the DPRK and the US." The group, which Harrison called an "attempt to bring together the people in the country who know most about Korea," added its voice to calls from a small but growing number of ranking Republicans and Democrats in Congress. They have urged the administration to soften its refusal to engage in direct negotiations.

10. PRC on US-DPRK Diplomacy

The Associated Press ("REPORT: CHINA'S HU, TALKING TO BUSH, URGES DIALOGUE WITH NORTH KOREA ON NUCLEAR ISSUE," Beijing, 03/19/03) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao, talking with US President George W. Bush by phone, urged dialogue with the DPRK "as soon as possible" over their nuclear standoff, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Wednesday. The dispute erupted in October, when the US said that the DPRK had admitted having a secret nuclear-weapons program in violation of a 1994 agreement. "The key to the issue now is to launch dialogues in certain forms as soon as possible, especially between the US and the DPRK," Xinhua said. Hu said actions that will "escalate the situation should not be taken," the report said. An envoy for U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is in Pyongyang this week as part of United Nations efforts to mediate the standoff. Envoy Maurice Strong, visiting Beijing en route to the DPRK, said the threat of war in the Gulf underscores the need for maintaining peaceful dialogue between the US and the DPRK. "As one conflict is about to begin in the Middle East, my job is to try and ensure that the Korean situation does not have the same result," Strong said.

11. ROK-US Military Exercises

The Associated Press ("UN COMMAND TELLS NORTH KOREA THAT EXERCISES ARE DEFENSIVE, BUT PYONGYANG SAYS THEY'RE WAR PREPARATIONS," Seoul, 03/19/03) reported that the US-led United Nations Command told DPRK officers Wednesday that military exercises in the ROK are defensive and not related to "current world events," an apparent reference to US preparations for war against. But the DPRK said that the US was preparing to launch a nuclear attack. The U.N. Command made its statement in discussions between colonels holding a weekly meeting at Panmunjom truce village in the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas. North Korea refused a request to discuss the matter at a higher military level on Thursday, the Command said. "The KPA (Korean People's Army) has turned down an excellent opportunity to discuss important events affecting the Korean peninsula," Col. Martin Glasser of the Command's Military Armistice Commission said in a statement. Glasser said the annual joint military exercises in the South are not related to "current world events." "We also explained that the exercise is defensive in nature and is not an aggressive or a threatening move against North Korea," he said. "And that these are regularly scheduled exercises much like the exercises they routinely conduct in North Korea." North Korea, however, said the US was preparing to attack, a claim it has made in previous years. "The ever more reckless saber rattling of the US imperialists is, in a nutshell, a premeditated move to mount a pre-emptive nuclear attack," the official newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said Wednesday.

12. ROK on US-Led War on Iraq

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "SOUTH KOREA SAYS IT SUPPORTS US-LED WAR IN IRAQ," Seoul, 03/19/03) reported that the ROK backed a potential US-led war in Iraq on Wednesday and said it may dispatch non-combat troops to help. The ROK also said it will step up security at US military bases and other interests in the event of war. Police patrols will be boosted at nearly 700 foreign facilities across the ROK, including embassies and diplomats' residences, that could be targeted for attack by terrorists or violent protesters, the National Police Agency said. The ROK's support for its top ally the US puts it in a small coalition of nations willing to aid the US in the bid to oust Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. "The South Korean government supports the US and international community's efforts to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction," said Ra Jong-il, senior security adviser to President Roh Moo-hyun. On Wednesday, Ra said the ROK government is seeking various ways to support a war in Iraq, possibly through refugee aid and the dispatch non-combat troops. But no specifics have been decided, he added. On Tuesday, the Cabinet agreed to ask the National Assembly to approve a plan to send an engineering battalion of 500-600 soldiers, but no combat troops.

13. US ROK Base Relocation

Reuters (Will Dunham, "US PLANS TO RELOCATE KEY SOUTH KOREA BASE," Washington, 03/19/03) reported that the US expects to offer a plan within months to relocate a military base from Seoul as part of a realignment of US forces in the ROK that could include the possible removal of US troops from the country, the Pentagon said on Wednesday. At issue is Yongsan Garrison, the headquarters for the US military force that has been in the ROK since the Korean War 50 years ago. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, told Reuters that the US wanted to have at least a preliminary blueprint for a revised military relationship with the ROK by October. This would include "rebalancing some of our roles and responsibilities, relocating Yongsan and having some preliminary ideas for repositioning some US forces south of the Han river" at the south end of downtown Seoul. The US had said in 1991 that it wanted to move the facility, Davis said. He said US officials were working with the South Korean government to identify within months areas where Yongsan could be relocated. Davis said any moves in the ROK "would be a phased process that would take place over several years."

14. US-Japan Economic Cooperation

BBC News ("US AND JAPAN TO PROTECT MARKETS," 03/19/03) reported that just days ahead of a war, the US and Japan are prepared to co-operate to support the financial markets if there is a crisis. A deal was struck last week in the US between a former Japanese finance minister and the head of the US central bank, the Federal Reserve's Alan Greenspan. "There was an agreement between Japan and the US to take action co-operatively in foreign exchange, stocks and other markets if the markets face a crisis," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said. The move came as Japan's key Nikkei 225 index dropped to another 20-year low, falling about 1.5% to hit 7,824.82, before rebounding. Finance and economics minister Heizo Takenaka said the Bank of Japan and stock exchanges would be watching the markets closely during the current Iraq crisis.

15. PRC Social Agenda

The New York Times (Joseph Kahn, "FAVORING CHANGE, CHINA'S NEW LEADERS MOVE CAUTIOUSLY," Beijing, 03/19/03) and the Washington Post (John Pomfret, "CHINA'S LEADER OUTLINES A SOCIAL AGENDA," Beijing, 03/19/03) reported that new PRC premier, Wen Jiabao, offered his vision today of a kinder, gentler government, focusing on the country's growing problems of unemployment and economic distress. The 60-year-old former geologist referred to himself as a common man, quoted poetry and spoke movingly about his past during an almost two-hour, televised news conference. His comments set a very different tone from that of his predecessor, former premier Zhu Rongji, who was known for his temper and ruled by fear. "Most people think I am mild-mannered, but at the same time I am self-confident, hold my own ground and dare to take responsibility," Wen said. He listed a series of problems facing the country, citing stagnant income for farmers and bad management in the state-owned sector. Unemployment is increasing, he said, a rising gap exists between the PRC's cities, and the countryside, and state-owned banks hold billions of dollars in bad loans. The PRC's problems are daunting, he said, but "one prospers in worries and hardships and perishes in ease and comfort." The news conference was the first time most citizens had a glimpse of the new premier. The event came at the end of the annual session of the National People's Congress.

16. PRC Waste Management

BBC News ("CHINA'S WASTE BREAKTHROUGH," 03/19/03) reported that a scheme to manage human waste in a way more beneficial to the environment is to be launched in Beijing in time for the Olympic games. So far, trials of ecological sanitation - Ecosan - have not received high prominence, although a three-year project has seen some aspects installed in 19 different urban areas in Mali. But by 2006, the entire suburb of Yangsong, a newly built area of the Chinese capital, will use Ecosan as its waste treatment system. Ecosan techniques include the separation of urine from faces, the use of "biogas" as fuel, and the re-use of "greywater," the waste water from showers, baths and clothes washing. "There are 12 billion kidneys working 24 hours a day," Arno Rosemarin, of the Ecosan programme in Sweden, said. "We have not tapped this resource." In particular, urine is rich in the element phosphorous, an essential component of fertilizer. The pioneering of Ecosan in Beijing - following successful trials in 50 villages in China's Yongning County - is no coincidence. The PRC's problems in human waste disposal are massive, and the country is seen by the UN as crucial to helping it meet the Millennium Development Goal of halving the proportion of the world's population without access to basic sanitation.

17. Super Pneumonia Identification

BBC News ("HK DOCTORS 'IDENTIFY KILLER DISEASE,'" 03/19/03) reported that scientists in Hong Kong have claimed a key breakthrough against a virulent form of pneumonia which is claiming more victims around the world. The researchers have identified the mystery respiratory illness at the heart of a global health scare as a virus from the paramyxoviridae family, which are responsible for conditions such as mumps and measles. More work is needed to establish whether the virus is a new strain and whether it is curable, according to the doctors from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Prince of Wales Hospital. But a university spokeswoman told BBC News Online that the discovery indicated that the treatment being given to patients suffering from the atypical pneumonia in Hong Kong - the hardest-hit area - was the right kind.

14. Japan Earthquake Toll Estimates

The Associated Press ("JAPAN: 10,000 DEATHS IF BIG QUAKE HITS," Tokyo, 03/19/03) reported that about 10,000 people would die and 250,000 homes would be destroyed if a massive earthquake were to strike central Japan, the government said Tuesday. The estimates - announced in a government survey designed to promote disaster management and prevention - assumed a magnitude-8 temblor struck a densely populated region known as Tokai, said Cabinet Office spokesman Takashi Murata. The area is home to Nagoya, Japan's fourth-largest city, and forms a major part of the country's industrial belt. While nothing in the government's meteorological data indicates a big quake is imminent, seismologists say a powerful temblor may strike the region anytime, Murata said. A big earthquake generally hits the Tokai region every 100 to 200 years. Some of the damage would result from tsunami, or huge ocean waves caused by seismic activity, slamming into the coastline and destroying low-lying buildings. The survey estimated the quake would generate tsunami as high as 33 feet. Japan is one of the world's most earthquake-prone countries. In January 1995, a magnitude 7.2 earthquake hit the western city of Kobe, killing more than 6,000 people and leveling off hundreds of thousands of buildings.

II. Japan

1. Japan-US Relations over Iraqi Crisis

Kyodo (Takeshi Sato and Kakumi Kobayashi, "JAPAN BACKS BUSH, BUT SUPPORT FOR KOIZUMI LUKEWARM," Tokyo, 03/18/03)reported that Japan's government of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi expressed strong support Tuesday for U.S. President George W. Bush's ultimatum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to leave his country within 48 hours or face war, but the premier appears not to be receiving full-fledged support for his decision from fellow lawmakers or the public. "Now that it is determined that the extremely dangerous regime of (Saddam) Hussein has no intention to (completely) disarm, I believe it appropriate to support America's use of force," Koizumi told a press conference. Koizumi's government called for the Iraqi leader to flee the country as chances for a peaceful resolution to the crisis have become slim. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi on Tuesday called for the exile of Saddam to avoid war in Iraq in a meeting with Qasim Shakir, charge d'affaires ad interim at the Iraqi Embassy in Japan, Foreign Ministry officials said. "If Iraq paves the way for the abolition of its (suspected) weapons of mass destruction with the exile of President (Saddam) Hussein, the Iraqi people will be able to avoid damage stemming from military action," Kawaguchi was quoted as telling the envoy at the ministry. Koizumi said that no additional UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution will be necessary before the expected attack because past resolutions, including 678, 687 and 1441, have already legitimized the use of force to disarm Iraq. However, he said Japan will not join the U.S.-British military alliance, which also includes forces from Australia, in the event of action due to the nation's war-renouncing Constitution.

2. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("JAPAN TELLS US OF PLAN TO STRENGTHEN N.KOREA MONITORING," Washington, 03/18/03) reported that Japan has told the US it will strengthen monitoring of DPRK as part of its measures to cooperate with the US in the event of a war in Iraq, Japanese and US sources said Tuesday. Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. Ryozo Kato conveyed an outline of support measures planned by Japan to US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz at a meeting Monday at the Pentagon, the sources said. The meeting was held hours before US President George W. Bush delivered an ultimatum to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, saying he and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours or face a U.S.-led invasion, they said. The sources did not reveal the specific contents of measures to strengthen monitoring of DPRK, but they are expected to include stepping up reconnaissance flights and the communications interception by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). Japan and the US are apparently concerned that DPRK may take provocative actions, such as the test-launching of ballistic missiles, while the US military focuses on Iraq. At the Pentagon, Kato expressed full support for the U.S. taking military action against Iraq, and Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz appreciated it, the sources said. In addition to strengthening monitoring of DPRK, Kato told the top US defense officials that the SDF will help guard US military bases in Japan and continue refueling US-led coalition vessels engaged in operations in the Arabian Sea to hunt down al-Qaida members fleeing Afghanistan. The cooperation measures listed by Kato also included supporting refugees from Iraq entering neighboring countries and providing assistance for post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq. Kato told Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz that the Japanese government will announce the list of its cooperation measures immediately following the launch of a US-led invasion of Iraq.

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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