



NAPSNet Daily Report 21 April, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 21 April, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 21, 2003,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-21-april-2003/>

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I. United States

1. DPRK-US-PRC Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press (Jennifer Loven, "BUSH: 'GOOD CHANCE' OF NORTH KOREA AGREEMENT," Crawford, Texas, 04/21/03) and the Associated Press ("US, NORTH KOREA, CHINA SET FOR NUKE

TALKS," Washington, 04/21/03) reported that the US, the DPRK and the PRC will hold three days of talks starting Wednesday in Beijing on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, the State Department said Monday. Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the US delegation will be led by Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly. Boucher said the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs "are a matter of concern to the entire international community." He said the US believes the inclusion of Japan and the ROK in the discussions at a later stage is essential, given the stakes they have in a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. The meeting will be the first face-to-face discussion between US and DPRK officials since Kelly led a delegation to Pyongyang last October.

CNN News ("NUCLEAR ISSUES TO TOP KOREA TALKS," Seoul, 04/21/03) and BBC News ("US SIGNALS TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA," 04/21/03) reported that the US has dispatched its East Asia envoy James Kelly to Beijing in the strongest sign yet that much-awaited direct talks with the DPRK on its nuclear ambitions will go ahead this week. The talks had looked in doubt after Pyongyang announced it was already reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods but it toned down the announcement on Monday. "We are heading out there and... expect the group will be meeting the DPRK in Beijing this week," a US official said as Kelly and his delegation were leaving Washington. In another diplomatic move, the DPRK offered to hold ministerial-level talks with the ROK on April 27, 2003 - a proposal immediately accepted by the ROK. The DPRK's statement on Friday that it was already reprocessing spent fuel rods - the step necessary for producing weapons-grade plutonium - was amended to read that the DPRK was "successfully going forward to reprocess" the 8,000 rods. This new statement appears to fit with Western intelligence assessments that the reprocessing plant at Yongbyon is not yet operational. On Sunday, US President George W Bush said he believed that the DPRK could be steered away from the production of nuclear weapons through joint efforts by the US, Japan, the ROK and the PRC.

2. US Domestic Politics on DPRK

The New York Times (David E. Sanger, "ADMINISTRATION DIVIDED OVER NORTH KOREA," Washington, 04/21/03) reported that just days before President Bush approved the opening of negotiations with the DPRK over its nuclear program, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld circulated to key members of the administration a Pentagon memorandum proposing a radically different approach: the US, the memo argued, should team up with the PRC to press for the ouster of North Korea's leadership. Rumsfeld's team, administration officials said, was urging diplomatic pressure for changing the government, not a military solution. But the classified memo, drafted by officials who are deeply opposed to opening talks that could eventually end up benefiting the DPRK economically, shows how the handling of the crisis has become the newest subject of internal struggle over how to pursue Bush's determination to stop the spread of nuclear arms and other unconventional weapons. Officials on all sides of the arguments say that, with the fall of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, the internal battles that once surrounded the policy on Iraq are re-emerging over the DPRK. White House officials say a change of government in the DPRK is not official administration policy and some suggest that the secret memorandum was circulated for discussion among high-level officials, including Vice President Dick Cheney, and may not represent Rumsfeld's view. Rumsfeld's spokeswoman, Victoria Clarke, said today that the defense secretary completely supported the president's diplomatic strategy for disarming the DPRK. But the memo's main argument, that the US' goal should be the collapse of Kim Jong Il's government, seems at odds with the State Department approach of convincing Kim, in the words of one senior administration official, "that we're not trying to take him out." The memorandum was described by several officials who have seen it, including critics of the Pentagon approach who say it is ludicrous to think that the PRC which is acting as intermediary between the DPRK and the US would join in any American-led effort to bring about the fall of the DPRK government. "The last thing the Chinese want," said a

senior administration official dealing with the delicate diplomacy, "is a collapse of North Korea that will create a flood of refugees into China and put Western allies on the Chinese border."

3. DPRK Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "KOREAS AGREE TO HIGH-LEVEL TALKS," Seoul, 04/21/03) and Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA CORRECTS NUCLEAR STATEMENT," Seoul, 04/21/03) reported that the DPRK issued a revised version of an official statement which had originally indicated the Stalinist state was reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods. A new version of Friday's statement was posted on the website of Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (<http://kcna.co.jp>). A foreign ministry spokesman was quoted on Friday in an English-language report on the official agency website as saying the DPRK was "successfully reprocessing" 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods. The revised dispatch posted Monday on the website, but still dated Friday, replaced this with "successfully going forward to reprocess" the rods, stopping short of saying actual reprocessing had begun. The rest of the statement was unchanged. KCNA gave no explanation for the replacement of the original dispatch. The new English-language version of the foreign ministry spokesman's statement appeared closer to the original Korean-language version carried Friday by KCNA.

4. DPRK-ROK Talks

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "KOREAS AGREE TO HIGH-LEVEL TALKS," Seoul, 04/21/03) reported that the DPRK and the ROK agreed Monday to hold Cabinet-level talks next week, as confusion continued over whether the DPRK has begun reprocessing its spent nuclear fuel for possible atomic weapons. Meanwhile, the DPRK issued a new batch of slogans urging its hunger-stricken people to remain loyal and guard against "US imperialists" and build military power. "If the enemies invade our inviolable sky, land and seas even an inch, destroy the aggressors with a merciless annihilating strike," one of the slogans said, according to the DPRK's official news agency KCNA. Major buildings in DPRK cities and villages are decorated with similar slogans. On Monday, ROK Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun sent a telephone message to Pyongyang accepting the DPRK offer to hold Cabinet-level negotiations in Pyongyang April 27-29, his office said Monday. The agreement came days before the US, the DPRK, and the PRC were expected to meet in separate talks in Beijing to discuss the DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons programs. The Beijing talks could take place as early as this week.

5. DPRK-PRC-ROK Diplomacy

Asia Times (Shiping Tang, "WHAT CHINA SHOULD DO ABOUT NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 04/21/03) carried an analytical piece that argued while the rest of the world's attention has been focused on Iraq for the past couple months, countries in East Asia have had something else to worry about: the ongoing standoff between the DPRK and the United States. This week, the DPRK agreed to talks with the United States and the PRC. The DPRK's new willingness to participate in multilateral discussions seems to indicate that the PRC has quietly done something in the past couple weeks. But the PRC must be careful how it helps. First and foremost, one can still doubt that the administration of US President George W Bush is really interested in resolving conflicts through dialogue, because recently it has shown more interest in resolving them with action in the form of smart weapons. Therefore, the problem of the US-DPRK standoff may not be a lack of solution; rather, the problem may be that Washington does not want a solution other than a complete capitulation or implosion of DPRK. Unless Washington can change its hard-nosed realist mindset, the world should not expect a

breakthrough between Washington and Pyongyang. But the PRC can still do a few things for the long term, even if the talks cannot produce much. First, the PRC must make it clear that while it does not object to - indeed has now facilitated - multilateral discussion, it is imperative that the United States and the DPRK work hard toward a mutual understanding. Second, the PRC must work closely with the ROK, Russia, and Japan to map out a framework for what kind of role the four countries can play if the US and the DPRK do reach an accord. Third, and perhaps most important, if the US is to show no sincerity in resolving the crisis with negotiation even under the multilateral forum, the PRC should just tell the DPRK to forget about Washington for a while and think of a "third way"; other than brinkmanship and setting things right with the US, the DPRK can actually work with the ROK closely and force the US to play its hand according to the wishes of Koreans, instead of the other way around. The crucial link in this "third way", if course, is that the ROK must understand that the Koreans themselves should dictate the pace of the reconciliation process, not any other external powers. The policy of reconciliation must stay the course even if the US wants nothing of it. Only then can the Koreans control their own destinies, because as long as the Korean reconciliation-reunification process makes steady progress, regional powers and the US will have to play along. It is imperative that the ROK and the DPRK quickly grasp this fact. 6. DPRK Nuclear Scientists Defections

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "KOREAN SCIENTISTS DEFECT IN CHINA REPORT SAYS TOP NUCLEAR OFFICIALS FROM NORTH HELPED BY US, OTHERS," Tokyo, 04/21/03) reported that the US and at least 10 other countries helped arrange the defections of up to 20 top DPRK officials, including key nuclear scientists, in an operation that began in October, according to an Australian newspaper. The Weekend Australian reported that a man it identified as the "father" of the DPRK nuclear program, Kyong Won Ha, was among the defectors and is providing intelligence information to Western officials. Kyong and the other officials had escaped to the PRC and went on to other countries with the help of consulates and embassies, the newspaper reported. The US helped set up -- and pay for -- an embassy in Beijing for the tiny Pacific Island of Nauru specifically to help move the defectors, though none went to the embassy, the Australian said. Nauru, an eight-square-mile island in Melanesia northeast of Australia, was persuaded to cooperate in part because of a promise that the US would help it avoid financial sanctions being considered for the island nation as a "non-cooperative country." It has been singled out for sanctions by Washington as a "primary money-laundering concern" under the US Patriot Act. According to the Weekend Australian, the plan took the defectors in the PRC through a network of other countries. Kyong, the nuclear scientist, is "believed to be in a safe house in the West," according to the Weekend Australian. The newspaper said Kyong had provided "unprecedented insight" into the DPRK's nuclear program, but no specifics were reported. The newspaper said one organizer of the defection network was a Washington lawyer named Philip Gagner. He had contacted the president of Nauru in October and asked the country to agree to open embassies in Washington and Beijing, free of charge. The newspaper said it had uncovered the network "through confidential documents and interviews with key players in Washington, the Pacific and North Asia." It said Australia was not involved and that the operation "has now been wound up." The report could not be independently verified by The Washington Post.

7. SARS and PRC Domestic Politics

The Washington Post (John Pomfret, "SARS COVERUP SPURS A SHAKE-UP IN BEIJING," Beijing, 04/21/03) reported that in the most significant political shake-up in more than a decade, the mayor of Beijing and the minister of health were removed from their Communist Party posts today for failing to deal with the spread of SARS in the PRC. Health officials also conceded they had mismanaged the outbreak, an unprecedented admission by the Communist Party. The government increased the number of confirmed SARS cases in the capital from 37 to 346, a tacit

acknowledgement that it had previously lied about the toll. The government also canceled the annual one-week vacation that begins May 1. The Ministry of Education, meanwhile, effectively confined hundreds of thousands of students in the capital to their campuses to limit the infection rate. The moves constituted a political earthquake for the Communist Party, which has rarely acknowledged making mistakes during its 54-year rule. From the start, PRC sources said, the new government of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, who formally took power in March, approved the coverup. But a combination of intense international pressure and the influence of the information revolution on the PRC made the government look so out of touch that bold action was demanded, the sources said.

8. PRC SARS Death Toll BBC News ("SARS DEATH TOLL GROWS IN CHINA," 04/21/03) reported that the PRC says the SARS virus has killed 13 and affected 194 more people since Friday, as the deadly disease continues to spread. The latest figures - reported by the PRC's official news agency - bring the death toll from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome to 92 in the country, with the total number of cases reaching 2,001. In Hong Kong, the authorities said six more people had died there, bringing the death toll from SARS to 94 - the highest in the world. As people avoid travel and public places for fear of infection, the disease is also taking its toll on economies in the region. In Beijing, shops, restaurants and hotels are empty and locals in Hong Kong say their city is a ghost town, according to the BBC's Holly Williams. Known death toll: Hong Kong: 94 China: 92 Canada: 14 Singapore: 14 Vietnam: 5 Thailand: 2 Malaysia: 1.

9. ROK-US Diplomatic Relations

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "KOREAN DIPLOMACY ENTERS A NEW ERA," Seoul, 04/21/03) reported that the last time a ROK president traveled to Washington, President Bush had just been inaugurated and this country's leader, Kim Dae Jung, was an elder statesman with a Nobel Peace Prize who thought he could secure US support for his policy of engaging the DPRK. What Kim got instead was a lecture about how untrustworthy the DPRK leader, Kim Jong Il, was, and a deeply bruised ego. As a result, the two men never established much of a connection, and relations between the nations, longtime allies, have only grown worse. Next month, a new ROK president, Roh Moo Hyun, will travel to Washington. He will be preceded, though, by a new ambassador, Han Sung Joo. Experts on the ROK both here and in the US say the choice of Han reflects a determination to avoid a diplomatic train wreck. In Han, the experts say, Roh has chosen someone who can take the initiative on complicated and sensitive diplomacy rather than merely to try to burnish his leader's image. This former foreign minister and university president has ideas of his own, and in his confident, though soft-spoken way, he does not hesitate to voice them. "Bush and Roh will get along great, so long as they don't discuss anything of substance," said one former State Department official with long experience in Korean issues.

10. DPRK-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SAYS NO NORMALISATION WITH NORTH KOREA WHILE KIDNAPS UNRESOLVED," Geneva, 04/21/03) reported that the DPRK must explain what happened to Japanese nationals kidnapped by DPRK agents if relations are to be normalized, a Japanese foreign ministry official told AFP. "If North Korea wishes to progress in normalisation negotiations, there needs to be clear cooperation and a clear resolution of this question," said foreign ministry official Akitaka Saiki. The DPRK's absolute leader Kim Jong-Il admitted for the first time last year that DPRK agents kidnapped 13 Japanese in the 1970s and 1980s, in order to train spies in Japanese language and culture. Saiki is in Geneva accompanying relatives of the kidnapped who will testify to

the United Nations human rights commission on Tuesday. While the DPRK maintains that only five abductees have survived, Japan remains convinced that more of the kidnapped are alive. "The information provided by the DPRK authorities was insufficient and inaccurate," said Saiki. After talking to the victims' families, the Japanese authorities came up with 155 questions for Pyongyang concerning the abductees' fate. These questions were passed to the DPRK authorities, Saiki said, and despite several informal meetings between the two nations, "there is not a single answer to these questions". "Unless this question is resolved, there will be not a single yen, not a single grain of rice extended" to North Korea, Shoichi Nakagawa said.

11. PRC-US Espionage

BBC News ("FBI ACCUSED OVER CHINA 'SPY,'" 04/21/03) reported that the family of a Californian woman accused of having worked as a double agent for the PRC government says she is being prosecuted to cover up for mistakes made by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The statement, published in the Washington Post newspaper, said Katrina Leung had been a loyal informant for the FBI, but had been exploited by two of the bureau's agents who had had long term sexual relations with her. Leung is being held on charges of illegally obtaining secret documents for the PRC while working for the FBI. She denies this, saying the FBI knew about all the documents she passed on.

12. DPRK-Australia Naval Interception

CNN News ("NAVY STORMS NORTH KOREA 'HEROIN SHIP,'" Sydney, Australia, 04/21/03) reported that a court refused bail Monday to 30 DPRK sailors arrested when the Australian navy stormed a ship allegedly involved in trafficking almost \$50 million worth of heroin. The cargo ship, Pong Su, was intercepted Sunday by a navy warship after it refused police orders to stop off Australia's south coast. Troops boarded the ship using a helicopter and boarding vessels. Police suspect the ship transported 50 kilograms (110 pounds) of heroin seized in the southeastern town of Lorne last week. Three men, from Malaysia and Singapore, were arrested last Wednesday and charged with importing heroin taken from the ship. The body of another man was found on a beach after he apparently drowned while bringing drugs ashore. A court in Sydney on Monday denied bail to the ship's DPRK captain and 29 crew, but police said they have not yet been charged. They were in police custody and due to appear in court on Tuesday. Australian authorities impounded the 4,000-ton Pong Su, which is registered in the tiny Pacific island nation of Tuvalu. After the navy stormed the ship on Sunday, Australian Prime Minister John Howard said the operation showed the government was determined to stop illegal drugs entering the country. "This sends a clear signal to international drug traffickers that Australian authorities are determined to stop illegal import of drugs and will do whatever is necessary to ensure that the people responsible face the full force of Australian law," Howard said in a statement. The three men arrested last week were Kiam Fah Teng, 45, and Yau Kim Lam, 44, both Malaysians, and Qwang Lee, 34, of Singapore.

13. DPRK Missile Test Site Explosion

Agence France-Presse ("EXPLOSION HIT NORTH KOREA MISSILE TEST SITE," Seoul, 04/21/03) reported that a US spy satellite monitored a strong explosion that rocked the DPRK's test site for ballistic missiles in November last year, ROK reports said. Washington has passed information concerning the explosion to ROK military authorities, according to Yonhap news agency. The blast occurred during a missile engine test and crippled operations and facilities at the DPRK's missile launch site at Musudan-ri, Hwadae county, northeast of Pyongyang, Seoul's Chosun Ilbo newspaper said. The launch site in North Hamgyong province has been closely monitored by US spy satellites

since Pyongyang sent shockwaves around the world by test-firing a Taepodong long-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan and into the Pacific in 1998. The explosion caused extensive damage and has been delaying the development and test launch of North Korea's Taepodong missiles, Chosun said, adding fragments and debris flew several hundred meters (yards) across the launch site. ROK military officials declined to confirm the reports.

II. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK Nuclear Issue Talks

China Daily ("KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE TALKS IN THE PIPELINE", Seoul, 04/18/03, P1) reported that senior envoys from the DPRK, the US and PRC will hold talks in Beijing next week, bringing negotiators together for the first time since the nuclear issue came to the fore in October. The ROK, Japan and others including Russia will not participate in the talks, which would take place between April 23 and 25. The format represents a compromise between DPRK's demand for one-on-one discussions with US, and the US call for a multilateral regional solution. The US side will be represented by Assistant Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific Affairs James Kelly, who will meet senior officials from Japan and the ROK in Washington on April 18 to co-ordinate policy for the Beijing talks. Russia welcomed the coming talks. In another report, the DPRK asked for rice and fertilizer aid from the ROK on April 17, while the ROK side previously said it would consider a plan to provide the DPRK with 200,000 tons of fertilizer this year if the DPRK makes such a request, said the report.

2. PRC's Attitude towards Trilateral Talks

China Daily ("'POLITICAL WILL' AND 'SINCERITY' VITAL", 04/18/03, P1) reported that Chinese Foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao on April 17 called for "political will" and "sincerity" to encourage talks that may ease tensions between the DPRK and the US over the DPRK nuclear issue. "The realization of dialogue requires political will and sincerity from all parties concerned," Liu told a regular briefing. "It also needs the encouragement and support of the international community." PRC has been a strong advocate for the peaceful resolution of the dispute between the DPRK and the US since tension escalated last autumn. "The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula must be resolved peacefully through dialogue," reiterated Liu. "From this principle, China has been making active and constructive efforts for this goal," said Liu in the report.

China Daily (Shao Zongwei, "DPRK NEW STANCE ON NUCLEAR ISSUE HAILED", 04/16/03, P2) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao on April 15 hailed the new position of the DPRK to participate in multilateral dialogues to solve the nuclear stand-off on the Korean Peninsula. Liu declined to specify which countries should be included in the multilateral dialogues, saying that it is up to the parties concerned to decide. "We are open to any plan that is in the interest of a peaceful solution", he said, adding that up to now no specific plan has been discussed.

3. Nations' Response to Trilateral Talks

People's Daily ("JAPAN WELCOMES DPRK'S SOFTENING STANCE ON NUCLEAR ISSUE", Tokyo, 04/15/03, P3) reported that Japan welcomed on April 14 the latest remarks of the DPRK over the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. A DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said on April 12 that the DPRK would not stick to any particular dialogue form for resolving the nuclear issue if the US dropped its anti-DPRK policy. "It's a good sign... It's going in a favorable direction," Kyodo quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda as saying, adding that the Japanese government was keeping

close watch on DPRK's moves ahead. Fukuda also stressed that as the indispensable part in resolving the DPRK issue, Japan will actively take part in the multilateral negotiations.

People's Daily (Lv Yansong, "RUSSIA CRITICIZES US'S UNWILLINGNESS TO HOLD DIRECT DIALOGUE WITH DPRK", Moscow, 04/15/03, P3) reported that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov criticized the US on April 14 for its unwillingness to hold direct talks with the DPRK on the nuclear crisis. "The United States would prefer to stand aside, taking part in negotiations led by a group of countries. The approach is unpromising, and we will not do it," Interfax quoted Losyukov as saying. Losyukov said Russia will not join in the multilateral talks that the US has pushing forward, because such talks led to no future. Moscow had expressed its willingness to help for numerous times, "yet we have not received a pragmatic answer from America," said the minister in the report.

People's Daily (Gao Haorong, "ROK TO CONTINUE URGING DPRK TO ACCEPT MULTILATERAL TALKS", Seoul, 04/15/03, P3) reported that ROK government released a statement on April 14, saying that ROK is very concerned with the lately changes of DPRK's stance and will make efforts to push DPRK to accept the proposed multilateral talks.

China Daily ("KOREA NUKE TALKS IN 'TWO WEEKS'", Seoul, 04/16/03, P12) reported that the head of the international consortium building two nuclear reactors in the DPRK said on April 15 he expected multilateral talks on DPRK's alleged atomic weapons ambitions to start in two weeks at the most. Charles Kartman, executive director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), said the DPRK's move to shift from its insistence on strictly bilateral talks with the US was not a huge leap but a positive first step on a potentially long road to a deal. Meanwhile, Russia is ready and willing to take part in multilateral talks to resolve the issue over DPRK's alleged nuclear program, a top diplomat said on April 15, and he expressed optimism that both the US and the DPRK were committed to negotiations after a long stand-off. Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov, Russia's point man on the Korean Peninsula, said Moscow wanted to actively participate in the talks "since any conflict on the Korean Peninsula does no suit us at all". In Seoul, ROK President Roh Moo-hyun said the DPRK nuclear issue is his top task that must be resolved. The ROK should try to softer conductive atmosphere of the dialogue among the US, the DPRK and other countries concerned, said Roh in the report.

4. PRC-Japan Relations

China Daily ("SINO-JAPANESE TIES SHOULD BE VALUED", 04/17/03, P2) reported that Hu Jintao, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), on April 16 met with a delegation from the Democratic Party of Japan headed by its leader Kan Naoto. Hu said Sino-Japanese relations, cultivated by previous generations on both sides, constitute a hard-won achievement that should be valued by both nations. He stressed that both sides should, with a responsible attitude, learn from history, look ahead to the future and adhere to the principles enshrined in the bilateral documents. Kan said the Democratic Party attaches great importance to its relations with the CPC, pointing to the frequent bilateral contacts, especially high-level exchanges. These contacts have played an important role in furthering good relations between the two parties and promoting friendly cooperation between the two countries.

5. PRC Symposium on "Wang-Koo talks"

China Daily (Guo Nei, "IMPACT OF LANDMARK 'WANG-KOO TALKS' DISCUSSED", 04/19-20/03, P1) reported that a symposium was held by the Taiwan Research Institute on April 18, marking the

10th anniversary of the "Wang-Koo talks", the historic meeting between the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) and Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) in 1993. Institute Vice-Director Xu shiquan urged the Taiwan authority to accept the one-China principle, calling for a resumption of across-Straits dialogue and negotiations. The "Wang-Koo talks", in which the two organizations reached the common understanding that both sides can solve the concrete questions through dialogue and negotiations, is of great importance, as it is the most practical way to break the political stalemate across the straits, said Xu. Other scholars also expressed their common views as the fact that "Wang-Koo talks" achieved great success and created a valuable new environment for progress in the cross-Straits relationship, especially in the fields of trade and culture.

6. DPRK-ROK Relations

People's Daily (Xu Baokang, "DPRK PROPOSES INTER-KOREAN MINISTERIAL TALKS", Seoul, 04/20/03, P3) reported that the DPRK on April 19 proposed holding inter-Korean ministerial talks on April 27-29 in Pyongyang, the ROK Ministry of Unification said. Kim Ryong Song, who had led the DPRK delegation in previous two inter-Korean talks, sent the proposal via telephone message to Minister of the ROK Ministry of Unification Jeong Se-hyun, said a Ministry of Unification spokesman who was quoted by the Yonhap News. ROK will give reply to the proposal as soon as possible, the spokesman said. The 10th inter-Korean ministerial talks failed to be held on its slated date of April 7-10, because Pyongyang did not give its response to the ROK's proposal of discussing the agenda and details of the talks. On April 18, ROK urged the DPRK to enter inter-Korean dialogue as soon as possible to discuss peace on the Korean Peninsula and other issues, said the report.

7. DPRK's Nuclear Power

China Daily ("SPOKESMAN: DPRK 'SUCCESSFULLY REPROCESSING' NUCLEAR FUEL RODS", Seoul, 04/19-20/03, P8) reported that the DPRK said on April 18 it was "successfully reprocessing" thousands of spent fuel rods at its nuclear power plant, which could enable it to produce weapons-grade plutonium. The DPRK's foreign ministry spokesman said the US was informed of the development early last month. "As we have already declared, we are successfully reprocessing more than 8,000 spent fuel rods at the final phase as we sent interim information to the US and other countries concerned early in March after resuming our nuclear activities from December last year," the spokesman said. Meanwhile, senior US, Japanese and ROK officials were set to discuss the agenda on April 18 for next weeks landmark talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue in Beijing, according to officials in Seoul and in Washington.

III. Japan

1. Japan's Role in Iraq Reconstruction

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO SEND CIVILIANS TO IRAQ OCCUPATION BODY ORHA," Tokyo, 04/18/03) reported that Japan said Friday it will dispatch four to five civilian officials to Iraq to join the US occupation administration there, possibly later this month. "We carried out our plan to provide proactively humanitarian assistance for post-conflict (Iraq)," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters at his office. The government has been considering dispatching staff to the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) from the foreign, trade and health ministries and possibly from the private sector, Japanese officials said. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda,

the top government spokesman, told reporters separately that Japan hopes its involvement in ORHA-related works would make more effective any assistance measures Japan takes for postwar Iraq. But Fukuda said the government has yet to come up with concrete measures, such as dispatch of police officers and experts on water supply. The envisioned Japanese staff does not include Self-Defense Forces (SDF) officers, the officials said. The Japanese Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party have voiced opposition to sending Japanese staff to ORHA, saying it would violate Japan's Constitution, which renounces war.

Kyodo ("YAMASAKI CALLS FOR SWIFT DISPATCH OF CIVILIAN OFFICIALS TO ORHA," Tokyo, 04/20/03) reported that Taku Yamasaki, secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, said Sunday it is vital for Japan to swiftly dispatch civilian officials to join the US body administering postwar Iraq. "Participating halfway through cannot be taken as full-fledged support. (It is vital for Japan) to participate from the very start of the entire process," Yamasaki told a roundtable discussion aired on NHK on Sunday morning.

Kyodo ("JAPAN UNVEILS IRAQ AID PACKAGE, TO STUDY SENDING SDF," Tokyo, 04/21/03) reported that the Japanese government unveiled an aid package for postwar Iraq on Monday, featuring a plan to study the possibility of dispatching Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel. Announced by Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda and endorsed by the ruling coalition parties, the package calls for cooperation between different aid organizations and the US civil administration overseeing Iraq's reconstruction in the effort to provide humanitarian assistance. It was the first time the government has unveiled a package outlining its basic policies for helping Iraq since Iraq came under US control earlier this month. According to the measures contained in the package, Japan will help preserve Iraq's cultural assets in cooperation with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and reopen its embassy in Iraq as soon as possible. The package also calls for Japan to transport materials and goods for humanitarian aid to war-affected people in Iraq and the vicinity using SDF aircraft. In an indication of its willingness to consider the dispatch of SDF and civilian personnel, the government is prepared to draw up new legislation, if necessary, the package says. The government has yet to make any decisions on new legislation, Yasuo Fukuda told reporters. Vice Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi told reporters separately that the Foreign Ministry will study the feasibility of dispatching SDF personnel to Iraq or neighboring countries through consultations with such bodies as the premier's office and the Defense Agency while closely monitoring the situation in the region. "We are not at a stage to comment," the top ministry bureaucrat said.

2. Japan Military Emergency Legislation

Kyodo ("DIET DEBATES STEPS TO PROTECT RESIDENTS IF JAPAN ATTACKED," Tokyo, 04/18/03) reported that the Japanese Diet began discussions Friday on a bill to protect residents of Japan during a foreign attack, as the government presented an outline of steps to be taken under it. The outline describes restrictions on people's rights -- such as prefectural governments using private property against the owner's will -- and defines the national government's role in halting nuclear power plant operations and removing contamination if Japan is attacked with weapons of mass destruction.

Kyodo ("GOV'T TO TIGHTEN CONTROLS ON BIO WEAPONS MATERIALS," Tokyo, 04/20/03) reported that the Japanese government is planning to tighten controls on hundreds of materials that could be used in biological and chemical weapons and list them up as part of measures to protect Japan from a possible foreign attack, officials said Saturday. It has begun compiling a list of the substances to be designated under an ordinance in hopes that identification prior to a contingency could help strengthen storage and management measures and decontamination. The restrictions are

also aimed at preventing such materials from being passed to invading terrorist or other forces. The list will include nerve gases such as sarin and VX gas, as well as germs including botulinum and the smallpox virus. "The creation of the list is a necessary procedure for the bill to protect residents and is the first step to secure its effectiveness," said a government official, referring to a bill to protect Japanese during a possible foreign attack. The government presented an outline of the bill to a special Diet committee on Friday. But the outline does not mention any concrete and comprehensive response measures, such as the definition of the substances concerned, where they should be stored and what kinds of decontamination would be possible. By designating the substances under a government ordinance, revisions and additions can be made even after the passage of the bill to respond flexibly to contingencies such as unknown germs, according to the officials.

3. Japan Landmine Stocks

Kyodo ("JAPAN DEVELOPED LAND MINES TO REPLACE DESTROYED STOCKS," Tokyo, 04/18/03) reported that Japan began equipping the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in fiscal 2002 with antipersonnel land mines developed as a substitute for mines destroyed under an international treaty, Defense Agency officials said Friday. The so-called antipersonnel impediment system was domestically developed with sensors and remote controls so troops can explode them selectively to hit enemies and avoid civilians, the officials said.

4. Japan-US Joint Military Drill

Kyodo ("ASDF BEGINS MIDAIR REFUELING DRILLS WITH U.S. AIR TANKER," Miyazaki, 04/21/03) reported that the Japanese Defense Agency on Monday began a series of refueling drills involving four Japanese F-15 fighters of the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) and a US KC-135 tanker over western Kyushu and Shikoku. This first ever midair refueling exercise by the ASDF, which is expected to continue through May 2, is to help establish operating procedures for the aerial tanker ASDF plans to introduce around 2006.

IV. CanKor E-Clipping

1. Issue #122

The USA is "satisfied" with the outcome of a 90-minute closed-door meeting of the UN Security Council Wednesday (April 9, 2003), although it failed to condemn the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT because of Chinese and Russian opposition. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov warns that the development of nuclear weapons by the DPRK could result in a re-evaluation of Russia's opposition to international sanctions. Weapons build-up on the peninsula continues as ROK President Roh attends the launch of a new stealth warship with advanced spying capabilities. On the day their withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty takes effect (April 10, 2003), the DPRK asserts that the US-led conflict in Iraq proves the need for a strong military deterrent. IAEA inspections are "like taking off our pants," inviting a US invasion. "North Korea Blinkered," says an editorial in the New York Times, and most other North American media follow suit, claiming that the USA has won the first round in its six-month standoff with the DPRK by insisting on multilateral, rather than bilateral talks. The agreement brokered by the PRC for the USA and the DPRK to meet in Beijing next week -- with the participation of the PRC as host -- is clearly a face-saving operation where both sides can legitimately claim victory. Whether the USA can widen this circle into four-way or six-way talks remains to be seen.

For more information and back issues: <http://www.CanKor.ca>

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.

Produced by [the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development](#) in partnership with:

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View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-21-april-2003/>

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