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I. United States

1. Japan Yasukuni Shrine

Reuters (Elaine Lies, "CHINA TELLS JAPAN TO DELAY VISIT OVER WAR SHRINE," Tokyo, 04/23/02) reported that the PRC on Tuesday postponed a visit by Japan's defense minister to vent its ire after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the controversial Yasukuni Shrine. A Japanese Defense Ministry spokesman said the PRC had conveyed a wish to postpone the visit of Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, scheduled to start Saturday. The PRC also delayed a visit to Japan by PRC naval vessels set for May, the first such visit ever. "There is no mistake, they will both be postponed," the spokesman said. A PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed the delay was linked to Koizumi's surprise Sunday visit to Yasukuni Shrine. "The Japanese leader's visit to Yasukuni has

hurt the feelings of the Chinese people and harmed Sino-Japanese relations," he said. "China believes it is not appropriate to hold these two activities at this time."

Reuters ("DOZENS OF JAPANESE POLITICIANS VISIT WAR SHRINE," Tokyo, 04/23/02) reported that dozens of Japanese politicians on Tuesday visited Yasukuni Shrine, as more protests erupted in the ROK over a similar visit by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi at the weekend. Political aides said 91 members of parliament followed Koizumi's example on Tuesday, including Taku Yamasaki, secretary-general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Another 94 sent representatives in their place. "Many of the people in this group go three times a year -- in the spring, August, and the autumn," one aide said. In Seoul on Tuesday, a group of former ROK commandos hacked a squealing pig to death in the back of a van to protest against Koizumi's visit to the shrine. Dozens of riot police surrounded the vehicle short of the Japanese embassy so the ex-agents -- who say they were trained to infiltrate the DPRK -- drew knives and repeatedly cut and stabbed the pig, which had "Koizumi" daubed on it.

2. Hu Jintao Tour

Reuters (Simon Cameron-Moore, "CHINA'S HEIR APPARENT VISITS MALAYSIA ON WAY TO US," Kuala Lumpur, 04/24/02) reported that the PRC's enigmatic heir apparent, Vice President Hu Jintao, arrived in Malaysia on Tuesday on a trip that will also take him to the US. The April 23-May 3 tour, including Hu's first official visit to Washington, underlines his position as the man who will be succeeding Jiang Zemin as Communist Party chief later this year and as president in 2003. Hu said in a statement that his visit to Malaysia would help deepen the "friendly and co-operative ties" between the two countries for the stability and development of the region. Hu can expect to hear Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad express concern about US unilateralism and its unstinting support for Israel. "Like most small countries, Malaysia is uncomfortable with the unipolar world," said Abdul Razak Baginda, director of the Malaysian Strategic Research Centre. "It would like a strategic regional counterbalance to the United States, which wants to impose its own model of political and economic value systems," he said.

3. Philippines-US Wargames

Agence France-Presse ("US TROOPS JOIN WARGAMES WITH PHILIPPINES TROOPS," 04/22/02) reported that about 2,700 US troops and their Philippine counterparts launched joint exercises. The two-week exercises in the northern island of Luzon were launched by Philippine Vice-President Teofisto Guingona and US ambassador Francis Ricciardone at the military headquarters in Manila. The war games were to hone skills in jungle warfare, tactical night flying and amphibious landing as well as search and rescue. They form the second phase of this year's "Balikatan" (Shoulder-t--Shoulder) joint exercises between the Philippines and its former colonial master. The first phase, with about 1,000 US troops, was launched in the southern Philippines in January and aimed at destroying the Muslim Abu Sayyaf kidnap-for-ransom group, allies of the al-Qaeda terror network.

4. Russia-US Arms Nuclear Relations

The Associated Press (Vladimir Isachenkov, "US, RUSSIA WORK ON ARMS CUTS," Moscow, 04/23/02) reported that US and Russian negotiators worked Tuesday to prepare an agreement on nuclear arms cuts before next month's summit, but two Russian arms control experts spoke out against the deal, saying it would require bowing to American demands. US Undersecretary of State John Bolton and a group of US negotiators met Monday and Tuesday with Russian counterparts led

by Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov. "The relationship between the United States and Russia has fundamentally changed. And I think that the summit will reflect that change in relationship regardless of what documents we have to sign," Bolton stated. "Nonetheless, we are working as hard as we can to show as much of that progress in the agreement form as we can," he said. President Bush has promised to cut the U.S. arsenal to 1,700 to 2,200 strategic nuclear warheads, while Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Russia could go even lower, to 1,500 warheads from the current 6,000 that each country is currently allowed under the 1991 START I treaty.

5. China Air Crash

The Associated Press ("CHINA DEFENDS PILOT OF CRASHED JET," Beijing, 04/23/02) reported that the pilot of a the Air China jetliner that crashed in the ROK with 166 people on board was well-trained and had over 6,000 hours of experience flying Boeing 767s, Chinese state media said Sunday. The 31-year-old pilot, Wu Xinlu, was among 38 people to survive the crash Monday near Busan, South Korea's second largest city. The defense of him in the PRC media follows suggestions from ROK officials that human error was to blame. "Among pilots his age, little Wu is among those to have flown most times to Busan airport," Xinhua quoted Qian as saying. However, ROK records only showed Wu flying to South Korea twice this year and indicated that Monday's flight was his first to South Korea as a full-fledged captain. ROK authorities have banned Wu from leaving the country pending investigation and have threatened to prosecute him if he is found responsible.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Inter Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "SEOUL OFFERS HELP IN RAIL LINK PROJECT," Seoul, 04/23/02) reported that the ROK government will provide equipment and material for the DPRK to complete its part of a project to relink the Gyeongui Railroad line before October, Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said Monday. The offer is a bid to expedite the stalled inter- Korean railroad project. At a briefing for President Kim Dae-jung Monday, the minister outlined other elements of his ministry's reconciliation program for this year. He said that the ROK's military authorities are reviewing a plan to help the DPRK remove mines near the border with some high-tech equipment. The ROK also plans to restore 27 kilometers of the Donghae Railroad line to connect Gangwon province in eastern ROK to Onjeong-ri in the DPRK.

2. DPRK-KEDO Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH, KEDO PLAN NEW NEGOTIATION," Seoul, 04/23/020 reported that talks between the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization and DPRK officials will resume on April 30 in Hyangsan, North Pyeongan province, government officials said Monday. "The discussions will cover the construction issues such as the establishment of a communications network between the Korea Electric Power Corporation in Seoul and the construction site in Sinpo in the North to the training of nuclear experts," a government official said. The DPRK and KEDO will open negotiations in early May on an agreement concerning nuclear liability.

3. Two Koreas Attending the Meeting

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH AND SOUTH TO ATTEND NONALIGNMENT COMMITTEE MEETING," Seoul, 04/23/02) reported that representatives from the ROK and the DPRK will participate in the ministerial-level meeting of the nonalignment steering committee set for Durban, South Africa from April 28-29 signaling another hope for possible diplomatic contact between the ROK and the DPRK. "South Korea decided to send its UN Ambassador Sun Joun-yung to the Durban meeting while North Korea is likely to send Vice Foreign Minister Choi Su-hon," a ROK government source noted Tuesday. "Although there's no official plans for inter-Korean contact in a meeting which would discuss on more wide-ranging world issues such as environment and other international concerns there's still some chance of exchanging few opinions on certain pending matters within Korean Peninsula," the official said.

4. Air China Clash Accident

Chosun Ilbo ("AIR CHINA PLEDGES COMPENSATION FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES," Seoul, 04/23/02) reported that the search and investigation continued for an eighth day, Tuesday, at Gimhae, southeastern ROK following the fatal crash of Air China flight CAA-129 last Monday. A week after the crash of the flight bound for Busan, the airline's president has pledged to provide adequate compensation to the bereaved families. Speaking at a meeting with Minister of Construction and Transportation Lim In-taik on Monday, Air China President Wang Kaiyuan said full compensation will be made according to international practice. Wang also gave his apologies to the victims' relatives and the ROK government, while asking for increased cooperation in DNA testing to identify the bodies as quickly as possible.

5. ROK-Japan Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOIZUMI VOWS TO PROMOTE BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH SEOUL," Seoul, 04/23/02) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Monday he will exert his energy to promote relations between the ROK and Japan, in light of the upcoming 2002 FIFA World Cup soccer finals. At a ceremony marking the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the ROK-Japan Friendship Association, Prime Minister Koizumi delivered a speech, citing the importance of strengthened bilateral ties not only for peace in Asia but also for the world. However, the Japanese premier made no mention of his unexpected visit Sunday to Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine.

6. IMF Delegation to ROK

Chosun Ilbo ("IMF DELEGATION TO VISIT SEOUL," Seoul, 04/23/02) reported that a three-person delegation from the International Monetary Fund will arrive in Seoul, Wednesday, to meet with local government officials to discuss the nation's current economic conditions. According to the Ministry of Finance and Economy Ministry Monday the delegation led by David Coe, the director of the IMF's Korea Division plans to stay in the country until next Tuesday and visit key economy-and-finance related government agencies including the Finance and Economy Ministry, the Fair Trade Commission, the Financial Supervisory Commission and the Bank of Korea. The IMF delegation's weeklong visit is part of its annual review of the nation's economy.

III. Japan

1. Yasukuni Disputes The Asahi Shinbun ("OPPOSITION SLAMS SHRINE VISIT," 04/22/02) and the Japan Times ("SURPRISE TRIP APPEARS DESIGNED TO SIDESTEP BRUNT OF CRITICISM,

04/22/02) reported that Japan's prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi made a surprise visit to Yasukuni Shrine to preempt diplomatic problems ahead of this summer's World Cup. The timing of the visit was designed to minimize foreign criticism, although the PRC and the ROK wasted no time in censuring the visit. Both the ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry and the PRC Foreign Ministry released statements Sunday critical of Koizumi's visit. Yukio Hatoyama, the head of Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), said Koizumi's decision to visit the shrine early in the year, rather than on August 15, would satisfy no one. "It will be seen as a halfway measure by those who believe that a visit in a public capacity is desirable, as well as by those who believe he should not visit," Hatoyama said.

2. Japan-ROK Relations The Asahi Shinbun ("NAKATANI BRIEFS SEOUL ON ATTACK BILLS," Seoul, 04/22/02) and the Daily Yomiuri (Tetsuo Hidaka, "TOKYO, SEOUL HOLD TALKS OVER JAPAN'S DEFENSE PREPAREDNESS," Seoul, 04/21/02) reported that Japan's Defense Agency Director-General Gen Nakatani visited Seoul over the weekend to explain legislation recently submitted to the Diet to prepare Japan for a military emergency. Nakatani met on Saturday with ROK Prime Minister Lee Han Dong and National Defense Minister Kim Dong Shin. Although a formal reaction from the ROK was put off until meetings scheduled in May between high-ranking bureaucrats from the two nations, Kim showed his understanding toward Nakatani's explanations on a set of Japanese bills on national emergencies. In addition, Nakatani and Kim exchanged opinions about situations surrounding the DPRK, including the suspected DPRK spy ships and Japanese citizens allegedly abducted by the DPRK. They reconfirmed a basic policy to strengthen ties among Japan, the ROK, and the US to deal with issues related to the DPRK.

3. Japan-US Relations

The Asahi Shinbun ("US EYES JAPAN AID IN IRAQ ATTACK," 04/20/02) reported that the US has informally asked Japan to help out with Aegis destroyers in the event of an attack on Iraq, a request that could be difficult for Japan to meet, government sources said Friday. The request came at a Japan-US working-level meeting on foreign and defense affairs. US representatives said they were counting on Japan to send Aegis warships and P3C anti-submarine patrol aircraft to the Arabian Sea to stand in for US forces that would be moved closer to the action in the Persian Gulf if an attack were imminent. However, Japanese government sources said this would be both politically and legally difficult under the constraints of recently adopted legislation allowing Japanese cooperation in the US-led fight against terrorism. Some officials said the special measures law would probably not be applicable to an attack on Iraq unless the assault targeted an al-Qaida terrorist network. Aides to Koizumi said they are not taking the US requests at the working-level talks seriously because the US side did not push very hard.

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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