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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Armed

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "N. KOREA WARNS US IT HAS NUCLEAR ARMS," Washington, 04/24/03) and Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA OWNS UP TO BOMB AS CRISIS TALKS END EARLY," 04/24/03) reported that the DPRK's lead official at nuclear weapons talks in the PRC told a US envoy that his country has nuclear weapons and may test, export or use them depending on US actions, a senior US official said Thursday. The comment was made by DPRK delegate Ri Gun to Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly during a social gathering Wednesday following formal discussions on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, said the senior US official, speaking only on condition of anonymity. Kelly did not respond to Ri's comment, said the official. According to the official, Ri said during the plenary session earlier that the DPRK has reprocessed all 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods in its possession. If true, that would put the DPRK much closer to

building six to eight additional weapons beyond the one or two it is believed to have at present. The US official said CIA assessments indicate that reprocessing has not yet started. The discrepancy, the official said, suggests the either Ri is lying or the US has suffered a major intelligence failure. Last Friday, the DPRK said that after initial preparations, it was "at the point" of reprocessing, a statement apparently designed to increase its leverage heading into this week's talks. The comments by Ri, as reported by the administration official, suggest that the DPRK is not taking seriously the US goal of a "verifiable and irreversible" elimination of the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. The State Department refused on Thursday to characterize the talks. Secretary of State Colin Powell said any attempts by the DPRK government to intimidate the US would fail. President Bush said the talks give the US "an opportunity to say to the DPRKs, 'We are not going to be threatened.'" Bush, in an interview with NBC anchor Tom Brokaw, said, "See, they're back to the old blackmail game." He said the world needs to focus on the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the materials used to make them. A US official said there were no indications that a nuclear test by the DPRK was imminent but acknowledged that preparations for an underground test could be concealed. Another official said the DPRK has never used the word "test" in the discussions. One positive note during the talks for the US was a statement by the PRC on Wednesday, during a closed-door plenary session, in support of a denuclearized Korean peninsula. The PRC also reminded the DPRKs that they had promised the ROK in 1992 that they would not develop nuclear weapons. After three-way talks on Wednesday, Thursday's discussions were limited to a one-on-one US-PRC meeting and a one-on-one PRC-DPRK encounter. Friday's agenda remained up in the air. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said more two-way talks involving the same participants might be held along with a final three-way discussion. He said direct US-DPRK talks were unlikely. Powell delivered a stern warning to Pyongyang after it cranked up its rhetoric during the talks, saying "war may break out any moment" due to tensions with the US. DPRK officials should not leave the talks "with the slightest impression that the US and its partners and the nations in the region will be intimidated by bellicose statements or by threats or actions they think might get them more attention or might force us to make a concession that we would not otherwise make," he said. "They would be very ill-advised to move in that direction." Kelly is expected to leave Beijing Friday and will call in Tokyo and Seoul on his way back to the US to brief senior officials.

2. PRC WHO SARS Quarantine

Agence France-Presse ("HUGE QUARANTINE IN BEIJING AFTER WHO ADVISORY HITS CHINA, CANADA," 04/24/03) reported that amid scenes of panic in Beijing, China began implementing drastic quarantine measures to contain SARS after the World Health Organisation warned against travel to Beijing, Shanxi province and the Canadian city of Toronto. After covering up the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome for months, the PRC's media issued a rallying call to the nation against what it called "a savage attack against mankind." The U-turn came as the global death toll from SARS inched higher to 253 with new fatalities in Singapore and Canada, and the World Bank warned of the growing damage being inflicted on Asia's economy. The WHO Wednesday added the three new SARS blackspots to an earlier advisory on Hong Kong and the province of Guangdong, sparking an angry reaction from Toronto and mounting anxiety in Beijing. Shoppers besieged supermarkets in Beijing, which has reported 35 SARS deaths and nearly 1,500 confirmed or suspected cases, and the airport and train stations were packed with people fleeing the city. The Beijing government meanwhile said anybody suspected of having SARS and any area where the virus had been found would be isolated. Anybody who violated the order would be "severely punished." The first victims of the measure were the city's prisons where employees have been banned from leaving and family visits have been stopped. The PRC's national library was also shut for two weeks. The semi-rural northern province of Shanxi has reported 157 cases and seven deaths from the virus, and there are fears the area's more basic medical facilities will be overwhelmed. In Toronto,

government officials reacted with fury to the WHO's travel advisory and demanded the UN body immediately send a team to investigate the city, where most of the 16 deaths and 330 SARS cases in Canada have been recorded. "I'm shocked that the medical evidence before us does not support this advisory," said Toronto's Mayor Mel Lastman, calling the WHO move a "gross misrepresentation."

3. Japan PRC War Time Rape Victims

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN COURT REJECTS CHINESE WOMEN'S DAMAGE CLAIM FOR WARTIME RAPES," 04/24/03) reported that the Tokyo District Court rejected a damages suit against the Japan's government by Chinese women and families of dead women despite acknowledging they were raped by Japanese soldiers during World War II. The plaintiffs from Shanxi Province were seeking damages of 20 million yen (166,667 dollars) each and a written apology from the Japanese government. Presiding Judge Takaomi Takizawa Thursday acknowledged the women were raped repeatedly and tortured by Japanese soldiers from 1941 to 1943, but dismissed the case on the grounds there was no compensation legislation at the time. "The government cannot be held responsible, because at the time of the incident there was no law regulating the government's responsibility to compensate damage claims," Takizawa said. But the court expressed its hope that the government would help the victims through new laws or administrative actions. "Considering the damage will remain deep within the soul of the plaintiffs, (the court thinks) it is very much possible that the legislative and executive branches will resolve the issue," Takizawa said. "It is hoped that war compensation issues will be dealt with in a forward-looking manner, in the direction that some sort of consolation will be brought to those who received damages," he said. The legal team for the plaintiffs, who were considering appealing the case, also said they hoped lawmakers and the executive branch would take act sympathetically. "We can accept the court's recognition of the facts and its additional remarks. We hope the legislative and executive branches will take positive action to revolve the issue," a representative of the team was quoted by Jiji Press as saying. The court did not characterize the plaintiffs in the latest case as sex slaves. More than 50 damages suits, have been filed against Japan over its wartime sexual enslavement of women, mainly from the ROK and the PRC. Many of those suits have been rejected by Japanese courts on the grounds that the 20-year period for demanding compensation has expired, or that internationally recognized treaties only provide for reparations to be made to states, not individuals. Historians say at least 200,000 young women, mostly Korean but also from Taiwan, the PRC, the Philippines and Indonesia, were forced to serve as sex slaves in Japanese army brothels during World War II.

4. Japan Aum Cult Death Sentence Demand

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE PROSECUTORS SET TO DEMAND DEATH SENTENCE FOR AUM CULT GURU," 04/24/03) reported that after more than 250 hearings over seven years, Japanese prosecutors are set to demand the death penalty on the Aum Supreme Truth doomsday cult guru as they sum up their case. "There can be nothing but the death penalty" that the prosecution will demand, said Hiroshi Itakura, a law professor at Nihon University ahead of the milestone in the marathon trial. Since the prosecution is due Thursday to read out a summary of its case in respect of 13 charges reportedly running to 300 pages, the formal demand on punishment is expected to come late in the day. Shoko Asahara, 48, whose real name is Chizuo Matsumoto, has been on trial at the Tokyo District Court since April 1996 for murder and various other charges including attempted murder, illegally disposing of three bodies and illegal production of arms. Nine of his disciples have already been sentenced to hang in connection with the 1995 deadly Sarin gas attacks on Tokyo subways, the strangling of the entire family of an anti-cult lawyer and other crimes, but none of the sentences has been carried out. The verdict for Asahara, also expected to be found guilty and followed by a sentence of capital punishment, would come in late this year or early next year,

Itakura said, adding an appeal could drag out the process for another two years. "It will be three to four years from now until the verdict is finalised at the Supreme Court," he said. "It is problematic that it takes this long, but it was unavoidable for this enormous case ... especially when the accused kept his silence," he said. The near-blind Aum founder has made virtually no statement at his trial since January 1998 when he denied masterminding the Tokyo subway attack, apart from murmuring incoherently, and has often appeared to doze during proceedings.

5. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("KOIZUMI MARKS THIRD YEAR IN OFFICE WITH LITTLE TO SHOW ON PROMISED REFORMS," 04/24/03) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will mark the start of his third year in office on Saturday with little fanfare and with his pet slogan of "structural reform" widely dismissed as a joke. His lack of initiative has been blamed by politicians and businesses for the huge sell-off in share prices that saw the key Nikkei 225 benchmark index plunge some 45 percent in his two years at the helm to 20-year lows of around 7,800 points. The economic malaise threatens to overshadow his bid for re-election in September as president of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), a post which traditionally carries with it the premiership due to the party's long dominance in parliament. "Some people want me to quit soon as they say two years are too long. But it takes some time to deliver on reform," Koizumi said in a campaign speech ahead of parliamentary by-elections on Sunday. "The reforms have been steadily progressing." But over the last two years the jobless rate has soared, hitting a record 5.5 percent in January, while bad loans at banks crippled the financial system. The value of shares on the Tokyo bourse's major board has lost some 150 trillion yen (1.25 trillion dollars) in two years, with Japan's top seven banks burdened with paper losses of 2.6 trillion yen in shareholdings for the year to March. Yotaro Kobayashi said last week when he retired as head of the Association of Corporate Executives: "We are short on information about how the prime minister see things and what he is going to do." Nobuo Yamaguchi, head of Japan's Chamber of Commerce and Industry, rated Koizumi's achievement at about 50 out of a possible 100. Koizumi can still muster an approval rating of 40 percent, albeit a far cry from the popular support of more than 80 percent he enjoyed when he swept to power as a political maverick with the blunt message: "There will be no growth without reform" and "I will go ahead even if I have to break up the LDP." His relatively stable rating was attributed by the leading business daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun on Wednesday to lingering hopes for his reform drive and to the absence of "other ideal candidates for the premiership."

II. Republic of Korea

1. Trilateral Talks with US, DPRK and PRC

Chosun Ilbo (Kwon Kyung-bok, "NUKE TALKS BEGINS IN BEIJING," Beijing, 04/24/03) reported that US and DPRK on Wednesday started talking about solving DPRK nuclear problem. At the trilateral talks with PRC held at Beijing's state guest house, Diaoyutai, the head of US delegation, Deputy Secretary of State James Kelly, said that DPRK should put a verifiable and irreversible end to its nuclear program. The head of DPRK's delegation, Ri Gun, deputy director of the Foreign Ministry, said that the moral of the war in Iraq was that anxieties about security must be dissolved to protect the independence of a country, so a non-aggression pact was in order. The first set of talks, which lasted six hours, hit rough patches early on as ROK insisted that ROK and Japan be included in future talks while DPRK said the matter could be reviewed in the future, diplomatic sources said. Further talks are to be held on Thursday and Friday to attempt to coordinate the different opinions, sources said.

2. ROK against UN Vote on DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Shin Yong-ho, "SEOUL WORKED TO BLOCK UN VOTE ON NORTH RIGHTS," Seoul, 04/24/03) reported that Ra Jong-yil, the senior Blue House adviser for national security, said Wednesday that he worked last year to keep the United Nations Commission on Human Rights from putting the DPRK human rights issues on its agenda. Ra was ROK's ambassador to the United Kingdom in the Kim Dae-jung administration at the time. He told the National Assembly's Intelligence Committee, "At that time, our priority was to create an environment for improving rights there in the future, not demanding immediate changes. We believed that if DPRK human rights issues were dealt with publicly, it would lead to a worsening of human rights and a security crisis," he said. The administration has been criticized for ducking a vote on a resolution critical of DPRK's human rights regime that the UN body adopted recently.

3. US Dovish Perspective on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Joo Yong-joon, "POWELL DOWNPLAYS REGIME CHANGE TALKS," Washington, 04/24/03) reported that Secretary of State Colin Powell, speaking on a TV talk show, said that US would not be intimidated by DPRK's nuclear weapons and would take any necessary actions to stop the threat. Asked if Washington should guarantee the North's security, Powell said that nothing would be proposed at the Beijing talks, which started Wednesday. "The United States has such economic, political, diplomatic and military power that we are not going to be intimidated by a small number of nuclear weapons held by a particular regime," Powell said. On the report that the US Department of Defense circulated a memorandum suggesting a regime change for DPRK, Powell said that it was definitely not President Bush's agenda, and that the president has clearly confirmed that he would find peaceful and diplomatic measures to solve the problem.

III. Japan

1. Defense Agency's Misuse of Personal Data

Mainichi Daily News ("DEFENSE AGENCY USED PRIVATE INFO TO SCREEN SOLDIERS," 04/22/03) and The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "DEFENSE AGENCY COLLATED SECRET DATA ON RECRUITS FOR ITS RANKS FROM 1966," 04/23/03) reported that in a practice criticized for infringing on privacy rights, the Japanese Defense Agency has for three decades gathered personal information from local governments on 18-year-olds to help recruit soldiers. A list the agency compiled last May shows that an average of 60 percent of municipalities under the jurisdictions of 11 prefectural governments in the Kanto and surrounding areas have collected such personal information from their resident registrations, and passed it over to the agency, the officials said. However, some local governments refused to comply, claiming such a practice would constitute a violation of the Law of the Basic Resident Registers. The revelations come less than a year after it came to light that the agency had compiled a list of personal information on citizens who asked for access to agency documents under the Freedom of Information Law. Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba insisted no law was broken when it obtained the names, genders, dates of births and addresses of individuals because the Law of the Basic Resident Registers guarantees anyone can access such information. However, he did acknowledge it was inappropriate that the agency gathered other highly private information such as the health condition of individuals and the names of their parents. The Ministry of Public Management called the practice "inappropriate" because the law has no clause governing local governments' distribution of such personal information to outsiders. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda issued a guarded comment. "We are currently

trying to find out exactly what happened. We'll take appropriate action based on the result of the probe."

2. Koizumi European Tour

Kyodo (Kakumi Kobayashi, "KOIZUMI'S DIPLOMATIC CLOUT TO BE TESTED ON EUROPE TOUR," Tokyo, 04/22/03) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will leave Japan on Saturday for a European tour in which his diplomatic clout will be tested by trying to help rapprochement between regional countries that supported and opposed the US-led war on Iraq. During his trip to Britain, Spain, France, Germany and Greece, Koizumi is expected to urge them to pursue international cooperation again as nearly 80% of Japanese say assistance for postwar Iraq should be led by the UN and not the US. A main job for Koizumi will be to persuade French President Jacques Chirac next Tuesday in Paris and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder the day after in Berlin to try to cooperate again with the US. Koizumi will begin his eight-day trip with a visit to London on Saturday. He will meet with Prime Minister Tony Blair, Bush's closest ally in the war, the officials said. Koizumi will then fly to Spain to meet Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, who also backed Bush in the war, next Monday in Madrid. After paying visits to the four European states, Koizumi also plans to meet with Greek Prime Minister Costas Simitis on May 2 in Athens, the fifth and last leg, and to meet leaders of the European Union (EU) there.

3. Tokyo Governor Ishihara on Japan-DPRK Relations

The Japan Times (David McNeill, "SHINTARO ISHIHARA ON NORTH KOREA," 04/15/03) reported the recently-reelected Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara's attitudes on Japan-DPRK relations. "We are under threat ourselves from another terrorist state, North Korea, which has kidnapped 150 of our citizens. 150 people! I don't think any of them are alive. Pyongyang is also sending boatloads of drugs to Japan to harm our youngsters, and it has missiles ready to hit 15 Japanese cities. What other country would tolerate this?" said Ishihara. He added, "This should be called what it is -- terror, and the Japanese government should recognize this and stand up to the North Koreans. We should say that we don't want to leap into a war but if it comes to it we won't avoid it either, together with a policy of sanctions and seizure of the assets of North Korean organizations in Japan. Al-Qaeda assets in the U.S. are confiscated. Why shouldn't we?" Asked if this problem would be better handled through the UN, Ishihara replied, "The UN doesn't have that sort of power. It's a vague talking shop made up of winners from the last war. It's full of factions. When real decisions have to be made, money crosses palms and people disappear to the toilet. I have no trust in it." Regarding the suggestion that the problems on the Korean peninsula be left to the Koreans themselves to sort out, he said, "You mean the Sunshine Policy? Do you really think the policies of Kim Dae Jung were working? (All throughout), the North was becoming more dangerous. This is the country that says it is ready to deliver a 'sea of fire' over Japan."

The Japan Times ("ISHIHARA BEMOANS STATE'S BLINDNESS TO 'TERRORIST' ACTS," 04/21/03) reported that Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara criticized the central government on Sunday for not calling a series of North Korean actions "terrorism." Ishihara was referring to the DPRK's missile exports, its abductions of Japanese nationals in the 1970s and 1980s, and its alleged smuggling of stimulant drugs into Japan. Ishihara made the comments in a speech at a ceremony marking the establishment anniversary of the Ground Self-Defense Force's Nerima military station in Tokyo. The outspoken governor also criticized the Japanese people for relying on foreign forces to defend Japan. "The United States is not a trustworthy country," he said. "A country that fails to decide its own fate will eventually collapse."

4. Bank of Japan on SARS Influence

Kyodo (Ko Hirano, "SARS MAKING FIRMS RELUCTANT TO EXPAND BUSINESS: BOJ," 04/21/03) reported that Japanese companies are increasingly concerned over the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) across Asia, making them reluctant to expand business activity despite a slight recovery in production and exports, Bank of Japan (BOJ) branch managers said Monday. Eiji Muto, general manager of the BOJ's Osaka branch, said some industries, such as tourism, have suffered serious damage from the deadly pneumonia, citing comments by business leaders in the Kansai area centering on Osaka that the impact of SARS "far outweighs" that of the US-led war on Iraq. Muto also said that further spread of SARS would cripple an export-led recovery scenario of the Kansai economy as exports to other Asian economies by Kansai-based firms account for 55% of their total exports, compared with 43% for other regions in Japan. BOJ Governor Toshihiko Fukui said in an opening address to the one-day meeting that the BOJ will work with the government to fight deflation and ensure stability in the financial system. "We believe (the BOJ) has the important task of leading the BOJ's extending of funds (to money markets) to stimulate economic activity and conquer deflation," Fukui told the managers of 32 domestic branches as well as BOJ's representatives in New York and London.

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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