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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Relations
2. Japan-US Relations
3. Asia Anti-War Protests
4. PRC-Pakistan Relations
5. US on Japan role in US-Led War on Iraq
6. Asia US-Led War on Iraq Media Coverage

II. People's Republic of China 1. DPRK's Nuclear Issue
2. ROK-US Relations
3. PRC-Russia Relations
4. PRC-Tajikistan Relations
5. Japan-US Relations
6. PRC-US Relations
7. DPRK-US Relations
8. PRC-Russian Response to Iraq War

III. Japan 1. Japan on US-led Iraq War
2. Japan's Role in Iraq War
3. Anti-War Protests in Japan
4. Opinion Poll in Japan
5. Kan on Missile Defense

I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA SEEKS TO EASE NORTH KOREA FEARS OF US STRIKE," reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun tried to ease DPRK fears of a pre-emptive attack as the US-led war on Iraq raised tensions on the Korean peninsula. The DPRK condemned the US-led

military action Monday as a "war against humanity" while the ROK has pledged support for the war effort. Fearing it could be the US' next target, the DPRK is now reportedly preparing for war and threatening to sever ties with the ROK. Over the weekend, the DPRK rounded on the ROK for stoking confrontation with the North, a charge analysts link to anger at the ROK's backing of the US. The DPRK suspended planned economic talks with the ROK scheduled for Wednesday, effectively freezing work on a joint project to build an industrial zone in the DPRK. Analysts say ministerial level talks set for next month may be called off. President Roh, an advocate of engagement with the DPRK, on Monday tried to calm tension by dismissing speculation that the DPRK could be the next US target after Iraq. "The president is concerned about incorrect and groundless reports that the United States could attack North Korea after the war in Iraq is over," Roh's spokeswoman Song Kyung-hee told a news conference.

2. Japan-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US IS 'ABSOLUTELY INVALUABLE ALLY': JAPAN PREMIER," 03/23/03) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Sunday underscored his support for the war on Iraq, describing the US as "an absolutely invaluable ally." Addressing a graduation ceremony at the National Defence Academy in Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo, he said: "When the United States, an absolutely invaluable ally of our country, is sacrificing itself, it is natural for our country to back the move as much as possible. "We never overlook the fact that Iraq breached a number of UN resolutions for the past 12 years," Koizumi told some 400 graduates. "We would be faced with a dangerous situation when a dangerous dictator possesses dangerous mass-destruction weapons," he said. "It is not another person's affair." Despite a vast majority of Japanese opposing the war in Iraq and his own approval rating, Koizumi is stepping up his support for the US action. But he has stressed that Japan's support only extended to moral backing and a contribution to the post-war reconstruction of Iraq.

3. Asia Anti-War Protests

Agence France-Presse ("ANTI-WAR PROTESTORS TARGET COCA COLA AS DEMONSTRATIONS GRIP ASIA," 03/24/03) reported that Maoist rebels in India destroyed Coca Cola bottles and blasted a Pepsi warehouse as mainly small-scale protests against the US-led war on Iraq were held across Asia. As many governments tightened security outside British and US embassies, protests were held Monday in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia and Australia while Afghanistan and the Philippines moved to put down rallies. Indonesians filled the streets of several cities on Monday to protest at the US-led invasion of Iraq, with some denouncing President George Bush as a "terrorist" and a "vampire." In Jakarta police arrested 10 members of the hardline Islamic Youth Movement for intimidating a group of tourists who were eating at a US-franchised Sizzler restaurant. Shouts of "Destroy the United States," were heard from the protesters, mostly veiled women. They carried posters reading "Capture Bush Dead or Alive" and "No Blood for Oil." In the city of Semarang, hundreds of activists forced the closure of the local office of a US bank and two outlets of US food chains, Elshinta reported. Protesters targeted US-franchised restaurants and called for a boycott of US products. In Australia, hundreds of anti-war protesters tried to storm parliament on Monday, demanding the withdrawal of Australian troops fighting in Iraq. Police managed to hold back the 400 activists who were calling on Australian Prime Minister John Howard to come outside and address them. In Pakistan, 200 blind students denounced the war and demanded protection for Iraqi children. The protests came a day after some 200,000 people swarmed streets in the eastern city of Lahore on Sunday.

4. PRC-Pakistan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PAKISTAN PM ARRIVES IN BEIJING," 03/24/03) reported that Pakistani Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali arrived in Beijing for a three-day official visit to discuss the US-led war on Iraq and bilateral issues with the PRC's new leaders. Jamali is the first foreign leader to visit the PRC since its new administration under President Hu Jintao and Prime Minister Wen Jiabao took over last week. The visit comes as war rages in Iraq and follows Jamali's cancellation of a scheduled trip to the US this week in the face of bitter public opposition to the conflict. Islamabad and Beijing, which have both voiced strong opposition to the war and called for an end to hostilities, often coordinate their foreign policies. Both countries had called for UN weapons inspectors to be given more time to determine Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

5. US on Japan role in US-Led War on Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("US ASKS JAPAN TO SEND TROOPS TO KEEP ORDER IN POSTWAR IRAQ," 03/24/03) reported that the US has asked Japan to send troops to help to maintain order in Iraq after the US-led military campaign there. Japan is studying whether it would be possible to send Self Defence Forces (SDF) personnel to support troops from other countries engaged in peacekeeping, Kyodo news reported late Sunday, citing government sources. Foreign ministry press secretary Hatsuhisa Takashima did not confirm the report but said "there is ongoing consultation" between Japan and the United States on what Japan could do after the military action. "We are studying all the possible options we would take," Takashima told reporters, declining to elaborate. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has offered political support for the US-led military campaign, despite public opposition. Koizumi has also said Japan would participate in the postwar reconstruction of Iraq. By law, Japanese troops can only be sent to an area of conflict after fighting has stopped. Ruling Liberal Democratic Party secretary general Taku Yamasaki said last week a bill paving the way for the dispatch of troops would be submitted to the parliament after the war was over. Takashima said the US had asked Japan to close the Iraqi embassy here but Tokyo was still "studying" how to respond to the request. "To allow other countries to open embassies or consulate-general offices is a matter to be decided by the host country... The Japanese government has its own judgment," he said.

6. Asia US-Led War on Iraq Media Coverage

Agence France-Presse ("ASIA GETS CONTRASTING IMAGES OF IRAQ WAR," 03/24/03) reported that frontline reporters using the latest technology are bringing the Iraq war instantly to millions of people across Asia, but the images highlighted vary widely from country to country. In Muslim-majority Malaysia, most newspapers carried huge front page pictures of Iraqi children killed and wounded in an air strike on the town of Basra, with captions reading "Sickening" and "Victims of barbarism". The Malay Mail front page ran the banner headline; "Bloody Bush war. It's a one-sided massacre of the innocent", while the New Straits Times said: "Invaders pinned down, defiant Iraq says Saddam still firmly in control." The pictures and the reports are from international news agencies such as AFP, Reuters and AP, which are providing coverage of every angle of the war from their correspondents in the battle zone and around the world. The same agencies are used widely throughout Asia, where few newspapers have their own correspondents on the scene, but the angles emphasized by editors can be very different. In the Philippines and the ROK, where the governments support the war, newspapers have focused on US troop movements, such as allied tanks racing across the desert. In New Zealand, which opposes the war, the New Zealand Herald led strongly with images of wounded children. In the Muslim states of Pakistan and Bangladesh, newspapers headlined stiff resistance being faced by allied forces from the Iraqi military, with Pakistan's Urdu

language press highlighting US casualties and prisoners of war. Television editors also have a wide choice of material showing contrasting images of the war, with the Arabic channel Al-Jazeera providing coverage alongside Britain's BBC and the US-based CNN. Qatar's Al-Jazeera, which found fame with its coverage of US operations in Afghanistan in late 2001 and is available directly to satellite subscribers in countries such as Malaysia, has broadcast footage showing dead and captured US troops in Iraq. Despite objections from the US and warnings that the humiliation of prisoners of war contravenes the Geneva Convention, Australian media editors decided at hastily called meetings Monday to keep broadcasting the images. Managers at several media organizations said they could not justify censoring the pictures after having used footage of Iraqi soldiers held by US-led forces.

II. People's Republic of China

1. DPRK's Nuclear Issue

People's Daily (Gong Yidong, Pyongyang, 03/23/03, P4) reported that Maurice Strong, a special envoy of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, said on March 22 that his visit to DPRK is "beneficial." Strong told the reporter with PRC's Xinhua News Agency that during the five-day visit, he notified DPRK's officials of the development of resolving the Korean nuclear crisis since his first visit to DPRK in January. The issue should be resolved by DPRK and US, however, efforts from the international society should be helpful to this issue, said Strong. Strong also said that countries from the world responded positively to Annan's calling for humanitarian aid to DPRK though, there are still great "challenges" for much more aids, said the report.

China Daily ("SPECIAL ENVOY ARRIVES IN PYONGYANG," Pyongyang, 03/19/03, P12) reported that Maurice Strong, a special envoy of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, said on March 18 that he would talk to officials of the DPRK about the current situation on the Korean Peninsula, since he arrived here for a four-day visit to the DPRK. "The DPRK is an important member of the United Nations and I will report to the DPRK officials about the result of activities since my last visit," Strong said. Strong said there had been both progress and difficulties in the past two months with regard to the Korean Peninsula's situation. "There was progress in meeting the immediate humanitarian needs (of the DPRK) and more international understanding of the need for a peaceful resolution of the issues of the country," he said. "There is more commitment to a peaceful resolution, yet there is still real danger and risk along the way," Strong said. "All parties continue to say they want to have a peaceful resolution, but they are not sitting around the table to achieve that yet, which is the major difficulty." Meanwhile, ROK President Roh Moo-hyun said the same day that with war drawing even closer in the Middle East, the country's military should be ready to respond quickly to changes in the world security environment. In a speech at a Korean Air Force Academy graduation ceremony, Roh Moo-hyun said the challenges his new "participatory government" faces include a "forthcoming war on Iraq, an unstable global economic situation as well as the nuclear issue of the DPRK." Roh said his most urgent task is to establish a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula.

2. ROK-US Relations

China Daily ("ALLIANCE IS ¡(r)TOP PRIORITY'," Seoul, 03/20/03, P11) reported that ROK said on March 19 its highest priority was maintaining its military alliance with the US as Washington indicated it could withdraw US troops from the Korean Peninsula at a day's notice. "What takes the highest priority is for the United States to maintain its security commitment on the Korean

Peninsula," said ROK's new Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan, who travels to Washington next week for talks with US counterpart Colin Powell. A senior US defense official told ROK's correspondents in Washington on March 18 that the US would withdraw its troops from ROK at any time if the Seoul government requested a pullout, said the report.

3. PRC-Russia Relations

People's Daily ("CHINESE, RUSSIAN PRESIDENTS TALK OVER PHONE," Beijing, 03/19/03, P1) reported that PRC and Russia share the same stance on the Iraq crisis and would continue to enhance consultations and cooperation to safeguard world peace, the presidents of the two countries said in a telephone conversation on March 18. Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Hu Jintao on his election as PRC's president in the First Session of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC). Russia would work with PRC to advance their bilateral good-neighborly cooperative friendship and the strategic cooperative partnership, Putin said. Hu said the new Chinese government would continue to give priority to relations with Russia and to consolidate bilateral strategic cooperation for common prosperity and development. PRC would make its due contribution to regional stability and world peace, Hu said. The two leaders also discussed bilateral relations and the Iraq crisis, said the report.

4. PRC-Tajikistan Relations

China Daily ("JIANG MEETS TAJIKISTAN PRESIDENT," 03/20/03, P1) reported that chairman of China's Central Military Commission Jiang Zemin met Tajik President Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov during the latter's stopover on March 19. Jiang said he regarded Rakhmonov as an "old friend" to him and the Chinese people. He also believed the mutually beneficial co-operation between PRC and Tajikistan had produced positive results. The two countries had signed a series of documents that served as the basis of bilateral ties, creating opportunities for advancing good relations, Jiang said. Jiang also said the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was making positive contributions to maintaining peace, stability and development in the region and the world, said the report.

5. Japan-US Relations

People's Daily (Sun Dongmin, Tokyo, 03/19/03, P7) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said on March 18 that he supports US President George W. Bush's ultimatum giving Iraqi President Saddam Hussein 48 hours to go into exile or face a US-led war. Koizumi stressed the importance of Japan-US alliance to Japan, said the report.

6. PRC-US Relations

People's Daily ("CHINESE, US PRESIDENTS TALK OVER PHONE," Beijing, 03/19/03, P1) reported that Chinese President Hu Jintao said PRC is willing to work with the US for a healthy and stable development of Sino-US relations and the benefit of the two peoples. Hu made the remark during a phone conversation with US President George W. Bush on March 18. Congratulating Hu on his election as PRC's president, Bush said the US is willing to cooperate closely with PRC to continuously advance bilateral ties. Bush reiterated the US government's adherence to the one-China policy as well as the three US-Sino joint communiques, saying the US will not support the "independence of Taiwan." Hu emphasized PRC's new leaders will stick to the reform and opening-up as well as the independent foreign policy of peace and continue to develop cooperative friendship

with other countries including the US. With the care and efforts of Chinese leader Jiang Zemin and President Bush, the two countries have set the goal of developing constructive relations of cooperation, Hu said. Hu said the two nations have achieved positive progress in exchanges and cooperation in all fields, which conforms to the fundamental interests of the two peoples and is also conducive to the global peace and development. Hu appreciated Bush for reiterating the stance on adhering to the one-China policy. This is the political foundation of stable development of Sino-US relations, Hu stressed. The two leaders also exchanged views on the Iraq issue and the nuclear issue of the DPRK. On the Iraq issue, PRC always advocates a political solution in the framework of the UN, Hu said, adding PRC hopes for peace instead of war. On the DPRK nuclear issue, Hu said the key to solving the issue is to launch dialogues as soon as possible, especially between the US and the DPRK. PRC has always stood for keeping the Korean Peninsula nuclear-free, maintaining its peace and stability, and solving problems through dialogues, Hu said. In the meantime, actions that will escalate the situation should not be taken, he said in the report.

7. DPRK-US Relations

People's Daily (Zhao Jiaming, "DPRK: US AIMS AT A SECOND KOREAN WAR," Pyongyang, 03/23/03, P4) reported that DPRK's Rodong Sinmun on March 22 carried a long commentary article stressing that US's strategic goal lies in launching an aggressive war on DPRK with the excuse of DPRK's nuclear issue. The second nuclear crisis raised by US is leading to the brink of war, which rendered the Korean Peninsula onto a crossroad of war and peace, the article said. DPRK and US had better conclude a non-aggressive treaty with equity and trust as its basis, through which to resolve the nuclear crisis. The article stressed that such treaty has but one aim of preventing the possible second Korean War, and not for others. It is DPRK's firm stance to deal kindness with kindness, and counter toughness with toughness. The article also warned that if US cannot accept DPRK's suggestion and continue to press DPRK, there will inevitably be military conflicts and even a nuclear war, said the article according to the report.

8. PRC-Russian Response to Iraq War

People's Daily ("CHINA CALLS AGAIN FOR EARLY STOP OF WAR," Beijing, 03/24/03, P4) reported that Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing had a phone conversation with his Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov on March 23, calling again for an early stop for the ongoing military actions against Iraq launched by the US and Britain. The war has deeply concerned most countries and PRC appeals again to stop the military actions as soon as possible, Li said. Ivanov briefed Li on Russia's latest stance. The two foreign ministers also exchanged views on Sino-Russian relations, said the report.

III. Japan

1. Japan on US-led Iraq War

The Japan Times (Reiji Yoshida, "OPPOSITION PARTIES SAY WAR VIOLATES INTERNATIONAL LAW," 03/21/03) reported that in stark contrast to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's unequivocal support for the US, the four opposition parties lashed out Thursday against the US-led attack on Iraq. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Liberal Party, Japanese Communist Party (JCP) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) said the pre-emptive strike, which came without UN authorization, is in violation of international law. Many of the opposition lawmakers jeered as Koizumi addressed both chambers of the Diet to explain his decision to support the war. "This use of military force is totally

unacceptable, as it will paralyze the UN Security Council and undermine its authority," the DPJ said. The DPJ said it is opposed to Japan shouldering any of the financial costs of the war and anticipated postwar occupation of Iraq. SDP leader Takako Doi said the attack, aimed at ousting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein from power, is a violation of the principle of self-determination of the people and national sovereignty of Iraq. "It is innocent Iraqi people who will be exposed to missile attacks by the United States and Britain," Doi said in a statement. The Liberal Party also criticized the government and the ruling bloc, while stressing that the Japan-US alliance and multinational security cooperation (centered on the UN) can coexist.

2. Japan's Role in Iraq War

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN, U.S. IN SYNC ON IRAQ REBUILDING," 03/22/03) reported that Japan and the US agreed Friday to cooperate in rebuilding postwar Iraq with help from the international community. Agreement was reached during a telephone conversation between Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush, officials said. Bush was also quoted as praising measures proposed by Japan to deal with contingencies arising from the attacks, including countering terrorism, monitoring the economy and rebuilding the country after war. Koizumi told Bush that Japan would do its utmost to assist the reconstruction process and stressed the importance of involving the international community. In reply, Bush said he hoped the two countries would cooperate on the issue, adding that the UN must also play an important role.

The Japan Times ("JAPAN IN TALKS TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN AID," 03/23/03) reported that Japan has begun discussions with governments in the Middle East to coordinate airlifts of humanitarian aid by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to countries neighboring Iraq that expect an influx of refugees, government sources said Saturday. According to the sources, the airlifts will be carried out under a law that enables the SDF to cooperate in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO). The airlifts would not use the Air Self-Defense Forces' C130 transport planes, the sources said. Instead, government planes, which are bigger and can fly longer distances, are likely to be used. Syria is a likely candidate for the aid airlifts because Japan believes it is better to send the aircraft to a country that is neutral, rather than one that is cooperating with the US in the ongoing attack on Iraq. Humanitarian rescue operations under the PKO law can be carried out at the request of international organizations, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and the government has already dispatched officials to Geneva, where the UNHCR is headquartered, to discuss the issue.

The Japan Times ("JAPAN TO PROVIDE $104.2 MILLION TO JORDAN, PALESTINE," 03/24/03) reported that Japan will provide a total of $104.2 million, or about 12.7 billion yen, to two of Iraq's neighbors who may be affected by the US-led war, the government announced Sunday. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi told a news conference that the decision had already been conveyed to the recipients -- Jordan and the Palestinian authority. According to Kawaguchi, $100 million will be provided to Jordan in the form of grants, while $4.2 million in the form of food aid will be offered to the Palestinian authority via the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees.

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN EYES BILLIONS FOR POSTWAR IRAQ," 03/24/03) and The Japan Times ("NO SDF DISPATCH WITHOUT NEW UNSC RESOLUTION: LAWMAKERS," 03/24/03) reported that the Japanese government is ready to provide tens of billions of yen for the reconstruction of postwar Iraq and for refugee aid, government officials said over the weekend. The government said Japan's contribution to the US-led war on Iraq will come in three forms--helping war refugees, assisting nations neighboring Iraq, and taking part in the reconstruction of postwar Iraq. But while the war is ongoing, the government will focus on the first two items--helping refugees and the neighboring nations, sources said. As for the postwar reconstruction, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said

Saturday a new law to deal with it is unneeded, as long as the assistance is non-military in nature, such as providing food and medical aid. However, Koizumi said he would consider a new law if Japan is asked to send Self-Defense Forces (SDF) troops for postwar operations to maintain public order. "In that case I should seek approval of the Diet." But on Sunday, Liberal Democratic Party Secretary-General Taku Yamasaki said on a TV program that a new law to endorse the dispatch of the SDF is "impossible" in the absence of a UN resolution. Tetsuzo Fuyushiba, secretary general of New Komeito, one of the LDP's ruling coalition partners, concurred with Yamasaki on the same program. Katsuya Okada, secretary general of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), said on another TV program that Japan should cooperate in rebuilding Iraq if the UN adopts such a resolution. But he also expressed a reservation. "I wonder if it is all right to let the UN deal with the aftermath of the US-led war without reviewing the fact that the United States took military action ignoring the UN Security Council," he said.

3. Anti-War Protests in Japan

The Asahi Shimbun ("ASSEMBLIES TAKE A STRONG ANTI-WAR STAND," 03/20/03) reported that at least 516 local assemblies in Japan adopted resolutions or statements opposing hostilities in Iraq during their regular sessions in February and March. Many more assemblies are expected to vote on similar anti-war messages before their sessions wind up. Of the nation's 47 prefectures, more than half--26--have adopted anti-war resolutions or opinions. In February, the Yamanashi prefectural assembly adopted a written opinion calling for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Officials said it was prompted by citizens' petitions. Its Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members were cautious at first since Koizumi's position on the war is so clear. But they embraced the anti-war cause after other assemblies, with LDP support, went ahead. While Koizumi enthusiastically supports the stand taken by US President George W. Bush, prefectural governors do not agree on the correct course of action. "The situation is developing along the worst-case scenario we feared," said Kanagawa's Hiroshi Okazaki. "Many innocent citizens died during the Persian Gulf War. Efforts must be made to avoid such casualties again." Others were kinder to Koizumi. Niigata Governor Ikuo Hirayama said that while Japan should not blindly follow US policies, "when Japan's national interest as a whole is considered, support for the United States is one possible choice, since North Korea is a thorn in its side."

The Japan Times ("ANTIWAR RALLIES GO ON UNFAZED," 03/21/03) reported that rallies against the US-led war on Iraq continued Thursday in front of US diplomatic offices in Japan, with hunger strikes continuing as US bombs started falling on Baghdad. About 80 people gathered at the US Embassy in Tokyo by 10 a.m., chanting, "No war!" Police, on high alert, began expelling them from the area -- some by force -- after 11:30 a.m. "I want President Bush to seriously listen to the voice of the people," said Kaori Sawada, a 26-year-old member of the group Peace Boat, who began a hunger strike in front of the embassy Tuesday evening. "There are a number of people acting the same way around the world." At the US Consulate General in Osaka, some 100 people gathered and raised their fists, chanting, "Bush, stop the war!" and "We won't tolerate Japan taking part in war!" In Hiroshima, victims of the 1945 US atomic bombing of the city and university students who have been on a hunger strike since Wednesday staged a sit-in at Peace Memorial Park, displaying banners stating they do not want Iraq to follow in the footsteps of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Asahi Shimbun (CHIE MATSUMOTO, "THOUSANDS PROTEST IRAQ WAR," 03/22/03) reported that more than 50,000 people joined a peace rally in Tokyo on Friday to call for an end to the US-led war in Iraq, officials of organizing committee World Peace Now said. Organizer Yuka Hoshino appealed to the US and the UK to stop the war immediately, and called on Japan to reassure citizens it will not support the war militarily or financially.

4. Opinion Poll in Japan

The Asahi Shimbun ("POLL: KOIZUMI SUPPORT RATE DIPS," 03/22/03) reported that support for the US-led military campaign in Iraq rises from 17% in the previous survey taken in Feb. 23-24 to 31%, a latest Asahi survey shows. In the survey, 59 percent of those polled said they oppose the US-led military attack on Iraq, a sharp drop from the nearly 80 percent who said they were against the war weeks before the start of the campaign. When those who said they were against the war were asked for a reason for their opposition, more than 80 percent said, "I oppose any kind of war," or "I find no justification for starting the war." About 10 percent cited the absence of a new UN resolution. When supporters of the war were asked for a reason, about half replied "because Saddam Hussein's regime is dangerous." About 20 percent said "because the Japan-US alliance is important." Support for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's Cabinet dipped to 42 percent from 44 percent in the previous survey. At the same time, those who said they disapprove grew to 45 percent, from 40 percent in the earlier survey. When asked if they agree with Koizumi's decision to support the US-led war, 50 percent of respondents said they disagreed, while 39 percent said they backed the prime minister. The newspaper phoned about 1,728 voters around the country at random for the survey. The Asahi Shimbun received valid responses from 978.

5. Kan on Missile Defense

The Japan Times ("KAN LAUDS MISSILE DEFENSE PLAN," 03/25/03) reported that Naoto Kan, president of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), suggested Monday that Japan should consider introducing a missile defense program to counter North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. "Previously, I had doubts about the technical feasibility of a missile defense system" Kan said at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan in Tokyo. "But given the current situation, I now reckon that it is worth studying the possibility of Japan being involved in developing the system." The DPJ, the largest opposition party, does not have a unified stance on the theater missile defense system Japan is researching with the US. Kan noted that while the US appears to view Iraq as the primary security threat, the DPRK, with its nuclear weapons program and longer-range missiles, is more threatening to Japan's security. Kan added that deploying an US Patriot anti-missile system would also be "an issue to consider in the future" because it is part of a missile defense system.

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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Ilmin Internationl Relations Institute
BK21 The Education and Research Corps for East Asian Studies
Department of Political Science, Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China

International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),

Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan

Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Brandon Yu: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Young-soo: yskim328@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy84@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Saiko Iwata: saiko@akira.ne.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@online.ru
Moscow, Russian Federation

Wu Chunsi: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org