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I. United States

1. Japan Anti-War Boycott

The Associated Press (Yuri Kageyama, "JAPAN'S ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT BOYCOTTS US GOODS, QUESTIONS ALLY AMERICA," Tokyo, 03/26/03) reported that Tokyo resident Jun Miyakawa has stopped going to Starbucks and no longer buys Pampers diapers for his baby. Although his government was among the first to back the U.S-led invasion of Iraq, Miyakawa, a private sector worker, is part of Japan's increasingly vocal anti-war movement. The "Peace Choice" campaign, which he helped organize, is urging boycotts of American products from McDonald's hamburgers to

Ford cars. "My family and I want to continue to live on this planet, and I want this war to stop," he said Wednesday. "It's unbelievable that in this day and age a nation would invade another nation." Miyakawa's effort has drawn six grass roots groups. Supporters are busy handing out leaflets at protests and urging more people to join the boycott. While the campaign has yet to hit consumption of US goods, it is symbolic of growing public doubt in Japan about the United States - the biggest influence on culture and lifestyle here for the past half century, and Tokyo's most important ally. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said his decision to support the war was critical for the US-Japan alliance, the pillar of postwar diplomacy between the two countries. But Koizumi's stance has come under attack from opposition lawmakers and voters alike, threatening his already shaky hold on power. As the only country in the world to have suffered nuclear bombing, Japan has a potent peace movement that influences public opinion, artistic and intellectual circles. "Anti-war sentiments are deeply rooted," said Takashi Inoguchi of the Institute of Oriental Culture at the University of Tokyo. "And no one outside Japan has really noticed that Tokyo has voiced support for the war." "What Bush is doing is conquering with military force anyone who opposes him," said Shinichi Iida, a 25-year-old university student. "I think it's the most barbaric act in the world."

2. US Baghdad Missile Mishap

Reuters ("US CANNOT CONFIRM BAGHDAD MISSILE MISHAP," Qatar, 03/26/03) reported that the United States sidestepped a report that an errant US missile killed at least 15 people in Baghdad on Wednesday, but said its invasion of Iraq (news - web sites) was on schedule. Brigadier General Vincent Brooks told reporters in a briefing at US Central Command's forward headquarters in Qatar he could not confirm reports that the United States had bombed a residential neighborhood in the Iraqi capital, spurring anger in the streets. Television reports of the attack showed a shattered apartment building and the dead and wounded in a rubble-strewn street crowded with agitated, shouting Iraqis. Reuters correspondents at the scene said they counted at least 15 bodies, many burned or dismembered. A pregnant woman was among the dead. Some of the bodies lay in the smoldering wreckage of mangled cars. The United States and Britain have launched powerful air attacks on Baghdad since invading the country last week to oust President Saddam Hussein for allegedly harboring weapons of mass destruction. Iraqi's government accused the US of bombing the neighborhood, but Brooks said it was too early to say. "We don't have a report that corroborates it, so I can't confirm it," Brooks said. "We don't know that they were ours. We can't say that we had anything to do with that." The general was pressed by reporters who reminded him that he opened the briefing, as he has all war briefings here, with videos touting the precision of US and British bombs and missiles. He acknowledged that "mistakes can occur," but insisted that he did not yet have enough information to comment. Brooks said neither fierce sandstorms that have swept Iraq the past two days nor stiff Iraqi resistance had thrown the US-led forces off a war schedule that has not been disclosed. "We remain on plan and we're confident we'll accomplish our objectives," he said.

3. ROK Parliament on Iraq War Request

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "S. KOREAN ASSEMBLY STALLS ON IRAQ WAR REQUEST," Seoul, 03/26/03) reported that the National Assembly dealt President Roh Moo Hyun an unexpected setback today by stalling on his request to send 700 ROK engineers and medics to help in the war against Iraq. The request still is likely to pass, according to political observers. But the parliament's unexpected opposition was a sign of the depth of public disapproval of the US action in the Middle East. "It's a surprise. Even though there are antiwar demonstrations in the street, people thought the assembly would pass it today," said Lee Chung Hee, a political analyst at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Public opinion polls have shown heavy opposition in the ROK to supporting the US

attack in Iraq. A few thousand people demonstrated outside the parliament today, continuing a series of small, regular protests. But political chieftains of Roh's party and the opposition party had agreed with the president's decision to support the United States as a loyal ally. A revolt by legislators concerned by the public mood delayed the vote until after April 2, when Roh is scheduled to lay out his arguments in a speech to the National Assembly. But after what was reported to be a difficult debate, Roh decided last week to support the Iraqi invasion with a small force of non-combatants. The vote scheduled in the parliament today had been considered a formality. There was no immediate comment from the government's Blue House.

4. DPRK on Japan Satellite Launch

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA SLAMS JAPAN'S PLANNED SPY SATELLITE LAUNCH," Tokyo, 03/26/03) and Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA WARNS JAPAN MAY FACE 'SELF-DESTRUCTION' OVER SATELLITE LAUNCH," 03/26/03) reported that the DPRK has warned that Japan would face "self-destruction" if it puts a spy satellite into orbit as Japan said it had stepped up vigilance amid reports that the DPRK may test a ballistic missile around the time of the satellite launch. Japan is due to launch its first two spy satellites on Friday, a move approved after the DPRK fired a suspected medium-range Taepodong missile over the country into the Pacific in August 1998. Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency accused Japan of acting as "a shock brigade" for the launch of a US pre-emptive attack and nuclear war against the DPRK. "If it takes the road of re-invasion, toeing the US policy to stifle the DPRK militarily, Japan will not have its security guaranteed but face self-destruction," KCNA said. "Japan should not run amuck, clearly mindful of such consequences." KCNA blasted Japan for the planned launching of the spy satellite "at a time when the United States has designated it (North Korea) as the next target of its attack after the ongoing Iraqi war."

5. Japan on DPRK Ballistic Missile

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN WATCHES FOR NORTH KOREAN MISSILE BEFORE SPY SATELLITE LAUNCH," 03/26/03) reported that Japan said it has stepped up its vigilance of the DPR as reports said that the DPRK may test fire a ballistic missile around the time of the launch this week of Japan's first spy satellites. The government's defense agency said the Maritime Self Defence Force (SDF) had dispatched a destroyer equipped with the Aegis guided missile system to the Sea of Japan between the Japanese archipelago and Korean Peninsula. "We are watching North Korean moves... but it is part of our efforts to strengthen information gathering and surveillance as a whole since attacks on Iraq started," an agency official said. Local newspapers said Japan's launch due Friday of its first two spy satellites could trigger the DPRK to fire a missile. The popular Mainichi Shimbun quoted an anonymous government source as saying North Korea may fire a ballistic missile "around Friday". "It is possible that North Korea takes Japan's launch as 'provocative act' and uses it as an excuse" to test fire a missile, the source was quoted as saying. North Korea test fired short-range anti-ship missiles on February 24 and March 10. The Yomiuri Shimbun reported "the government thinks North Korea may fire a ballistic missile around the same period of time as the (satellite) launch." The daily said the Cabinet Office had increased its purchase of pictures of the DPRK taken by commercial satellites to keep a watch on missile bases in the DPRK. Japan's Air Self Defence Force (SDF) planned to exchange radar information with the United States to help it detect signs of missile firing, it said. But the defense agency official said there was no evidence that the DPRK would test fire a missile as soon as reports suggested. "We have not obtained information that a missile launch is imminent," he said.

6. DPRK-US Military Relations

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA WITHDRAWS FROM REGULAR CONTACTS WITH US MILITARY," 03/26/03) reported that the DPRK has withdrawn from regular liaison meetings with US military authorities to protest an ongoing US-ROK joint military drill and arms build-up, the DPRK said. The Korean People's Army (KPA) told US military authorities it was pulling out of regular contacts between US and DPRK liaison officers, the Korean Central News Agency said. "And the message warned that if the US forces side continues pushing the situation on the Korean peninsula to the brink of war as now in gross breach of the armistice agreement, the KPA side will have no option but to take new important measure as regards the armistice agreement for its self-defence," it said. Officers from the DPRK and the US have met regularly at the Panmunjom border point to discuss matters concerning the 1953 armistice agreement signed at the end of the 1950-1953 Korean War.

7. DPRK UN Meeting Cancellation

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA CALLS OFF LIAISON OFFICERS' MEETING WITH US," Seoul, 03/25/03), Reuters (Martin Nesirky, "N.KOREA QUITS BORDER TALKS, BOATS STRAY SOUTH," Seoul, 03/26/03) and the Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA CALLS OFF UN MEETING, CONVENES PARLIAMENT AMID GROWING TENSIONS," Panmunjom, 03/26/03) reported that the DPR on Wednesday cut off the only regular military contact with the US-led UN Command that monitors the Korean War armistice, accusing the US of trying to attack the DPRK. The move will further isolate the DPRK amid heightened tension over its suspected nuclear weapons programs. ROK President Roh Moo-hyun on Wednesday dismissed as "groundless" allegations by the DPRK that US forces may attack and spark a "second Iraqi crisis" on the Korean Peninsula. The DPRK said Tuesday it would boost its defenses amid such fears. "There will be no war on the Korean Peninsula as long as we do not want a war," Roh's office quoted him as saying, adding that the US has repeatedly pledged to resolve the crisis peacefully. Meanwhile, UN envoy Maurice Strong said that DPRK officials told him in meetings in Pyongyang last week that they "reserved the right" to reprocess spent fuel rods that experts say could yield enough plutonium for several atomic bombs within months. Such a move would spike tension even further. The DPRK's Korea People's Army sent a telephone message to the UN Command saying it will no longer send its delegates to the liaison-officers' meeting at the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom. "It is meaningless to sit together with the US forces side to discuss any issue as long as it remains arrogant," the DPRK's official news agency KCNA quoted the DPRK message as saying. The UN Command had no immediate comment. US officials representing the UN Command have met DPRK officers at Panmunjom almost weekly since the end of the war.

8. ROK Spy Agency Appointment

Agence France-Presse ("HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER BECOMES HEAD OF SOUTH KOREA'S SPY AGENCY," 03/26/03) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun has appointed a human rights lawyer to head the ROK's powerful spy agency as part of a reform drive, the presidential Blue House said. Ko Young-Koo, who served as the head of the Lawyers for a Democratic Society, was named as the director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), it said. The appointment of a civic activist to the key post came after Roh, a former human rights lawyer himself, vowed to separate the NIS from politics and stop it being used for surveillance of political opponents. "The director-designate Ko has for a long time served as a key campaigner for reform in various sectors of the society and this fact has been much appreciated in his appointment," spokeswoman Song Kyung-Hee said. A senior presidential advisor Chung Chan-Yong said Ko's "strong reformist mind" was the main reason behind his appointment.

9. Japan on US Iraq Embassy Closure Request

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN REJECTS US REQUEST FOR CLOSURE OF IRAQ EMBASSY," 03/26/03) reported that Japan has decided to reject a US request to close the Iraqi embassy here in order to maintain diplomatic channels, a foreign ministry official has said. "The Japanese government studied (the request) from its own perspective and decided not to close it down partly because it is not favourable to shut a diplomatic route," the official said. Japan's own embassy in Baghdad is shut and officials are concerned that closing the Iraqi mission in Tokyo would cut direct communication with Iraq about Japanese nationals in that country. There were currently 46 Japanese in Iraq, most of them journalists, as of Tuesday, according to foreign ministry figures. Foreign ministry press secretary Hatsuhisa Takashima said Monday the US had asked Japan to close the Iraqi embassy last week. Japan supports the US-led military strike on Iraq but Takashima said "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.

10. Australia US War Summit Declination

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIAN PM DECLINES INVITATION TO WAR SUMMIT WITH BUSH," 03/26/03) reported that Australian Prime Minister John Howard has declined an invitation to attend a snap Iraq war summit in Washington with US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair. A spokesman for Howard said Wednesday Bush invited the Australian leader to attend Camp David talks to discuss the unfolding conflict during a phone call last Friday. He said Howard replied that he thought it best he stay in Australia for the moment. Howard would speak with Bush by phone as needed and would travel to the United States at a later date, the spokesman added. Blair and Howard have been Bush's staunchest allies in the showdown with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein over weapons of mass destruction. Blair announced he would travel to the United States this week to discuss the progress of the war, the humanitarian crisis in Iraq and how to rebuild the country if and when Saddam's regime falls. The Camp David summit was announced as US-led coalition forces are engaged in the biggest battle of the Iraq war so far in sand storms south of Baghdad. Australia, in defiance of strong domestic political and public opposition, committed 2,000 military personnel to the war, fewer than one percent of the total coalition force.

11. PRC Pneumonia Deaths

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA REPORTS 31 DEATHS FROM PNEUMONIA OUTBREAK," 03/26/03) reported that PRC authorities have reported 31 deaths from an unusual form of pneumonia which experts fear could be linked to an ongoing worldwide outbreak of a mysterious respiratory disease. As PRC state media reported the deaths from a wave of atypical pneumonia which climaxed in February, Singapore reported its first fatality from a disease now known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). It is strongly suspected that the earlier outbreak in southern PRC is the source of the current SARS problem which came to light when a US businessman died on March 13 in Hong Kong after traveling to the PRC and Vietnam. Following the death in Singapore, the number of patients officially listed as SARS fatalities has risen to 18, including 10 in Hong Kong, four in Vietnam and three in Canada. The deaths in the PRC include 24 from the southern metropolis of Guangzhou, just north of Hong Kong, and seven others in a number of other cities, the Guangzhou Daily said. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has yet to determine if the outbreak in the PRC was in fact the first eruption of SARS. A total of 680 cases were reported by late February in Guangzhou, with deaths reaching 24, the Guangzhou Daily said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Troop Dispatch Delayed to Pass

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Ji-soo, "TROOP DISPATCH IS PUT ON HOLD," Seoul, 03/26/03) reported that the National Assembly Tuesday put on hold ROK government's plan to dispatch 700 noncombatant troops to assist US in the war in Iraq. In the face of spreading anti-war protests, it agreed to take up the matter later. President Roh Moo-hyun, at a Blue House dinner, asked legislators to "deal with the law as soon as possible, even if you have to release members from party discipline." Roh said, "Cause and logic are important. But the decision should be based on what constitutes a desirable strategic choice for us in seeking a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, which is our paramount national interest. It is advantageous [for us] to resolve the matter in cooperation with the United States." The plan to send 600 construction engineers and 100 medics to Iraq seemed set for straight passage in the usually quarrelsome National Assembly. In the morning, the two parties had seemed prepared to give the government the go-ahead to dispatch ROK's assistance. The governing party said it would "recommend" passage to its members. The opposition Grand Nationals decided to endorse the plan for the "good of national interest." But voices of dissent, growing in the political sector and among the electorate, prompted the afternoon reconsideration. "No dispatch! No war!" was the shout of 600 demonstrators gathered in front of the National Assembly. Twenty-six members of the Pan-National Committee climbed over the wall and headed for the National Assembly building, shouting "No to dispatch." Some 30 entertainment celebrities and others working in the cultural sector gathered in front of the Assembly building in Yeouido, to oppose sending the Korean units. The Korea Teachers and Educational Workers Union said that an estimated 3,200 teachers at 771 schools have signed a "peace declaration."

2. ROK Minister Visit Washington

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Young-sae, "FOREIGN MINISTER TRAVELS TO U.S.; NORTH ON AGENDA," Seoul, 03/26/03) reported that foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan travels to US Wednesday for consultations on an array of national-security issues facing the two countries, the most urgent of which is DPRK nuclear program. US visit, jammed with meetings with senior US officials and US lawmakers, is part of the Roh Moo-hyun administration's diplomatic effort to resolve the nuclear problem. They are pondering the possible implications of indications that US-led campaign is not going to be as quickly won as had been expected. Yoon is scheduled to meet with Vice President Dick Cheney upon his arrival in Washington on Wednesday, and with Congressional leaders on Thursday. Separate meetings with Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice are set for Friday. Yoon will also coordinate President Roh's visit to US. He is also scheduled to meet Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld before departing Washington. ROK officials said that Yoon's main mission will be to further coordinate the international community's response to DPRK nuclear problem in a multilateral framework. Officials here note that April 10 could be a watershed in the North's campaign of threats, as the day will mark the legally recognized point at which its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty becomes official.

3. ROK Lawmakers Against Iraq War

Chosun Ilbo (Lee Myeong-jin, "ANTI-WAR LAWMAKERS TO OPPOSE DISPATCH OF TROOPS," Seoul, 03/26/03) reported that eleven ruling and opposition lawmakers and several civic groups agreed Friday to cooperate on anti-war efforts, such as voting against the motion to send troops to Iraq to support war efforts there. The legislators, including Kim Keun-tae of the Millennium

Democratic Party and Ahn Young-keun of the Grand National Party, met with civic groups, including the Citizens Solidarity for Participatory Democracy and the Korea Women's Association United, in the VIP Dining Room at the National Assembly. They agreed to vote against the bill for dispatching troops to Iraq when it reaches the National Assembly for a motion. Kim said that the war in Iraq was unjust and immoral, and that more national discussion was needed before the National Assembly approves the dispatch of forces.

III. Japan

1. Japan's Roles in Iraqi Reconstruction

The Asahi Shinbun ("JAPAN EYES BILLIONS FOR POSTWAR IRAQ," 03/24/03) reported that Japan's 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. Some of the money will also be earmarked for nations neighboring Iraq to help them recover from the effects of the war, the sources added. The government is planning to use the official development assistance (ODA) budget to pay for the aid. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Saturday a new law to deal with Iraq's reconstruction is unneeded, as long as the assistance is non-military in nature, such as providing food and medical aid. "These are essentials, needed before we even begin thinking about a new law," he said. However, Koizumi said he would consider a new law if Japan is asked to send Self-Defense Forces 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 that a new law to endorse the dispatch of the SDF is "impossible" in the absence of a U.N. resolution. The government said Japan's contribution to the U.S.-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. For instance, Japan's government decided on the economic aid due to concerns that the Jordanian economy will be seriously damaged if oil imports from Iraq are halted by an escalation of the war. The aid for the Palestinian governing body was also announced at the same time to show Arab nations that Japan is putting a high priority on the Middle East peace process.

2. Arab Nations Request to Japan over Iraqi Issue

Kyodo ("ARAB NATIONS URGE JAPAN TO STRIVE FOR QUICK END TO WAR IN IRAQ," 03/25/03) reported that diplomats in Tokyo from Arab nations on Tuesday urged Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi to make efforts to achieve an immediate end to the U.S.-led war on Iraq, ministry officials said. An Arab diplomat was quoted as telling Kawaguchi in a meeting that Arab nations strongly hope the "tragedy" will come to an immediate end, and that Japan should cooperate with the international community toward that goal. Kawaguchi met with 17 envoys in Tokyo from Arab nations as well as the Iranian ambassador to explain Japan's stance toward the U.S.-led war on Iraq. She told the envoys that Japan supports the use of force to disarm Iraq but expressed hope it will be a quick war with a minimum number of victims, the officials said. The officials said there was no criticism about Japan's position, but indicated it does not mean they are not critical of its stance. Kawaguchi also explained Japan's relief efforts for neighboring countries of Iraq and its efforts to promote peace in the Middle East, the officials said. The request by the Arab nations follows a resolution adopted at a Monday meeting in Cairo by Arab League ministers which declared the war on Iraq a violation of the U.N. Charter and demanded the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of U.S. and British forces from Iraq.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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