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I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Military Talks

Agence France-Presse ("TWO KOREAS END HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY TALKS, AGREE TO MEET AGAIN," 05/26/04) reported that the DPRK and ROK ended unprecedented talks between their military generals to reduce tensions on the world's last Cold War frontier. Both sides fell short of producing concrete steps on easing military tensions but agreed to resume the meeting next month, the first of its kind since the Korean War over five decades ago, officials said Wednesday. The meeting's formal session lasted for two hours at Mount Kumgang, a tourist enclave on the DPRK's

eastern coast, but was followed by another four hours of informal discussions between working-level officials. "Both sides agreed to reopen the general-level military talks at Mount Seolak in South Korea on June 3," Oh Jeong-Hee, a defense official in Seoul, stated. "Both sides agreed to study each sides' proposals and continue discussions in future talks," the defense ministry said in a statement later. The ROK, sending a navy general as chief delegate, hoped the day-long consultations would produce concrete measures to reduce the threat of clashes with the DPRK off the west coast. "Our delegates believe that the talks should be a first step towards reducing tension and building trust and most of all, work out measures to avoid accidental clashes in the West Sea (Yellow Sea)," Oh said. At the talks, the ROK intended to propose setting up a military hotline and shared radio frequencies and flag signals for vessels to help prevent maritime skirmishes, Yonhap news agency said. The ROK also wanted general-level talks to be held in a regular format for tension reduction, Yonhap said.

Bloomberg ("NORTH KOREA, SOUTH KOREA AIM TO STOP NAVY CLASHES," 05/26/04) reported that the DPRK and ROK are holding talks involving military commanders aimed at preventing clashes between their navies over access to fishing grounds, the British Broadcasting Corp. reported. Delegations to the one-day meeting at a DPRK resort near the Demilitarized Zone are headed by a major general and a navy commodore, the BBC said, without saying where it obtained the information. The meeting is aimed at avoiding naval clashes that occurred in 1999 and 2002 during the crab-fishing season, which begins this month. The ROK is also seeking ways to defuse tension along the border, the world's most heavily fortified frontier guarded by 1.7 million soldiers, including US troops.

2. ROK Prime Minister Resignation

Agence France-Presse ("SETBACK FOR ROK PRESIDENT AS PREMIER QUILTS," 05/25/04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Goh Kun in a setback to the ROK leader's plan for a partial cabinet reshuffle. Roh, who returned to office 11 days ago following a two-month suspension due to his impeachment, approved the resignation at a breakfast meeting with Goh, a spokesman for the president said. The outgoing premier, whose resignation takes effect immediately, stood as interim president during Roh's impeachment ordeal and made no secret of his desire to resign once the leader was reinstated. However, Goh's abrupt exit constitutes a political blow to Roh, who had pressed the prime minister to endorse a minor cabinet reshuffle before standing down. Prime ministers have power to recommend cabinet appointments and Goh effectively blocked the reshuffle by refusing to do Roh's bidding. "It seems that it will be difficult for me to carry out the cabinet reshuffle until after mid-June," Roh told a cabinet meeting, adding he intended to replace the unification minister, culture minister and health minister. Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hun-Jae will assume Goh's duties until a new premier is appointed, the presidential spokesman said.

3. DPRK-Libya Nuclear Connection

Financial Times: Stephen Fidler, "NORTH KOREA 'GAVE LIBYA MATERIAL FOR NUCLEAR ARMS,'" London, 05/26/04) reported that evidence that the DPRK supplied Libya with nuclear material in 2001 suggests the DPRK regime may be closer than the US suspected to acquiring uranium-based nuclear weapons. Pakistani scientists have told investigators from the International Atomic Energy Agency that in early 2001, the DPRK supplied Libya with a large consignment of uranium hexafluoride. The material is the feedstock for gas centrifuges used to enrich uranium into a condition usable in a nuclear weapon. According to diplomats at the UN agency's headquarters in Vienna, the agency - which does not have access to the DPRK - has no way of immediately validating

the claims. But they said the investigators considered the information credible, with no evident inconsistencies. The material - about two tons of it, enough to make one nuclear bomb - was enriched. If true, this would indicate that the DPRK may have moved faster than previously thought in the complex process of uranium enrichment. However, David Albright, president of the Washington-based Institute of Science and International Security, said his sources had told him the hexafluoride had not been enriched. Even this would imply, however, that unless North Korea bought the material from elsewhere, it had equipment to convert uranium oxide into uranium hexafluoride - a step Libya never achieved in its own nuclear weapons programme. Stephen Rademaker, US assistant secretary of state for arms control, said in London yesterday that he could not confirm that North Korea was the source of the Libyan material nor that it was enriched.

4. PRC on US Iraq War

Agence France-Presse ("STATE-RUN PRC PRESS LASHES BUSH SPEECH AND 'MISERABLE MISMANAGEMENT,'" 05/26/04) reported that the PRC's state-run press lashed George W. Bush's speech outlining his plan for Iraq, saying it showed increasing desperation and offered nothing new to right his "miserable mismanagement". "He offered old rhetoric but few specifics on how to rectify the administration's miserable mismanagement," the official China Daily said in an editorial Wednesday. "His 'five steps' toward Iraqi independence were merely a list of the tasks we already knew need to be done," it said. "Bush has yet to formulate a realistic plan for doing more than just getting through the June 30 transition." The editorial said there was "an increasing air of desperation" in discussions on the future of coalition efforts in Iraq. "Invading a sovereign state without UN authorization was a huge mistake. Designing a power transfer without handing over full state power -- again without UN blessing -- will be equally grievous."

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA STEPS UP IRAQI DIPLOMACY, PUTTING FORTH PROPOSAL TO SECURITY COUNCIL," 05/26/04) reported that the PRC has stepped up its Middle East diplomacy, phoning regional leaders and offering a proposal to the United Nations setting out its views on how to solve the Iraqi issue, state media said. The UN should address Arab concerns, PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing told Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia and Arab League Secretary General Amr Moussa in phone conversations Tuesday, the China Daily reported Wednesday. "The UN Security Council should heed and respect the opinions of Arab countries during its discussion," Li was quoted as saying. The diplomacy of the PRC was heating up as the US and Britain handed a draft resolution to the council on restoring sovereignty to Iraq by June 30. The PRC has itself handed what it referred to as a "proposal" to the Security Council, elaborating on the PRC's "goals and principles" on Iraq, the paper reported. The proposal aims to improve the security situation in Iraq and maintain its political independence while helping it to re-enter the international community, the paper said. The proposal also calls for the creation of conditions for the international community to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq with the UN playing an important role, the report said.

5. DPRK PRC Economic Tour

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREAN OFFICIALS TOURING SHANGHAI SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE," 05/26/04) reported that an official with Hyundai Asan's PRC office said Wednesday that a group of DPRK economic officials have been visiting the special economy zone in Shanghai since May 25. He also said that some officials from Hyundai Asan are accompanying the DPRK delegation consisting of seven to eight officials in charge of inter-Korean economic cooperation. They will visit the special economy zone in Shenzhen in southern PRC as well. The purpose of the visit is to study China's operation of special zones before opening the Kaesong industrial complex. The DPRK delegation includes chief economic officials from the Korean Asian Pacific Peace Committee, Kumkangsan

Corporation, and Kaesong Industrial Complex Development Office, while the ROK delegation includes Sim Jae-won, vice-president in charge of the construction of the Kaesong industrial complex. It is known that the DPRK delegation will visit! not only PRC companies but also Korean companies during its stay in the PRC until May 31. A source in Beijing said that the visit is expected to accelerate the opening of Kaesong complex.

6. DPRK-PRC Military Border

Choson Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA SAID BUILDING FENCE, TRAPS ALONG BORDER WITH CHINA," Seoul, 05/25/04) reported that the DPRK is reportedly building a 1,000-li (1 li equals approximately 0.24 miles) wooden fence (mokch'aek) along the DPRK-PRC border connecting Sinuiju, North Pyongan Province and Onsong, North Hamgyong Province, to cut off its residents' recent escapes at the source. In a recent phone conversation with (this) reporter, a DPRK military officer in the border area commented that according to the National Defence Commission's orders to "'completely block the border', border guards and all of the residents in the border area have been mobilized to construct a two meter-high wooden fence as of last month (April)". Construction is under way, beginning with the areas that are difficult to guard and thus can be used as an escape route from the DPRK, while construction in open and easy to guard areas have been deferred for now, he said. The military officer added, "I do not! understand who could have suggested such a preposterous idea when it is virtually impossible to block this entire section of the DPRK-PRC border that runs for more than 1,000-li." Kim Myong-sik (alias), a Korean compatriot in the PRC who carries out smuggling with North Korea, bitterly expressed, "I am struck dumb over the sudden wooden fence construction when it is difficult just to make a living," saying, "I wondered what was happening when construction with wood began in the DPRK region last month and later learned that it was to stop DPRK escapees." The DPRK is also reported to be preparing traps for people at various strategic points where they may traverse on the banks of Amnok River and Tumen River flowing along the DPRK-PRC border, in addition to building the wooden fence. A DPRK resident, who recently crossed the border, said that "traps set in the border area consist of 3 to 5 meter holes with sharp steel or wooden stakes protruding from the bottom so that someo! ne who falls in would be killed or become seriously injured".

7. Japan on DPRK Humanitarian Aid

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO WITHHOLD AID IF NORTH KOREA TEST-LAUNCHES MISSILES," Tokyo, 05/26/04) reported that a senior Foreign Ministry official indicated Wednesday (26 May) that if DPRK test-launches missiles, Japan will not give it the 250,000 tons of food aid Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged to provide last week. "If test launches are conducted, it would be a violation of the Japan-North Korea Pyongyang Declaration, and the situation would change," Mitoji Yabunaka, director-general of the ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, said during a session of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. Kim promised during the talks to continue a moratorium on missile test-launches, something the DPRK initially pledged to do in the declaration the two leaders signed at their first summit in September 2002.

8. PRC-DPRK Air Route

Business Daily Update ("NEW AIR ROUTE LINKS SHENYANG WITH PYONGYANG," 05/26/04) reported that an MD-90 passenger plane of the China Southern Beifang Airlines departed from the Taoxian International Airport at 7:30 am April 30, marking the official launching of direct flights between Shenyang, capital of Northeast the PRC's Liaoning Province, and Pyongyang. This was the

fourth international air routes Shenyang has launched in fewer than two months.

9. ROK-US Diplomatic Relations

Yonhap ("S KOREAN NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR TO VISIT US 1-4 JUNE," Seoul, 05/26/04) reported that ROK National Security Adviser Kwon Chin-ho is to make a four-day visit to Washington from 1 June to discuss pending security issues with senior US officials, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council (NSC) said Wednesday. "Kwon will meet US government officials and congressmen, including his counterpart Condoleezza Rice," the spokeswoman said. He is expected to discuss key issues related to security on the Korean Peninsula, such as the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, the redeployment of US troops in South Korea and the nation's additional troop dispatch to Iraq.

10. US Enriched Uranium Reclamation Plan

The Washington Post (Peter Slevin, "PLAN LAUNCHED TO RECLAIM NUCLEAR FUEL; INTENSIFIED US EFFORT WOULD THWART TERRORISM, ROGUE STATES, ABRAHAM SAYS," 05/26/04) reported that the Bush administration, citing the danger of nuclear terrorism, will announce intensified efforts to retrieve and secure tons of highly enriched uranium scattered among research reactors and repositories around the world. Decades after the US and Russia began supplying nuclear fuel abroad, the plan is to spend more money and sharpen the focus of both governments to repatriate it -- "to fill this enormous gap," Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said yesterday by telephone from Vienna, where he is to announce the \$450 million initiative in a speech today. Accelerating and concentrating existing efforts, Abraham said, the Bush administration will target the "most dangerous, least secure" nuclear materials first. In seeking to convert research reactors in the US and abroad to less dangerous fuel, the most vulnerable ones will take priority. Abraham's announcement, months in the making, comes after criticism from outside analysts and the Energy Department's inspector general that the administration has been moving too slowly. Auditors said in February that large amounts of highly enriched uranium produced in the US "were out of US control." Just this week, a pair of Harvard University researchers said less fissile material was secured in the two years after Sept. 11, 2001, than in the two years before. The makings of an atomic bomb exist in hundreds of buildings in more than 40 countries, the report said.

II. Japan

1. Japan Oppression against Anti-war Movement

The Japan Times (Hiroshi Matsubara, "Activists claim political oppression," 05/13/04) reported that after nearly 2 1/2 months in detention, three antiwar activists accused of illegally entering a Self-Defence Forces (SDF) housing complex in Tachikawa, western Tokyo, to distribute protest leaflets, were freed on bail on May 11. The three have admitted entering the complex, a series of nondescript apartment blocks with partial fences, to post handbills protesting the SDF deployment to Iraq. The handbills say SDF personnel may inevitably be forced to kill Iraqis and call on the service members to critically assess the government's decision to dispatch troops to Iraq. They argue their actions, which the group has been engaged in for two decades, violate no laws. But their legal battle before the Tokyo District Court's Hachioji branch continues. The Feb. 27 arrest of the three, members of local citizens' group Tachikawa Jieitai Kanshi Tentomura (Tachikawa Tent Village to Monitor ! the Self-Defence Forces), shocked many civic groups and legal experts, who see it as an attempt by

authorities to silence antiwar activists. After returning home, one of the three, a 47-year-old worker at a public school in Tokyo, said the arrest and subsequent detention caused irreparable damage to his social reputation and career. He said that on the day of his arrest, some media reported his name as a criminal suspect, and that he must stay away from work as long as his trial is ongoing. "I am afraid that this unprecedented arrest serves as exemplary punishment to discourage citizens from speaking out for what they believe in," he said. The SDF said the trio's arrest came after managers of the complex complained to the Tachikawa Police Station on behalf of residents. However, the case was handled from the outset by a section of the Metropolitan Police Department's public security division, which deals with monitoring labor activism and other politically charged movements. In March, Amnesty International recognized the three as prisoners of conscience whose detention violated the freedom of expression guaranteed under the Constitution and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It was the first time for the human rights watchdog to so recognize a Japanese. But this is not the only case over the past year where law enforcement authorities have apparently taken a strict stance against people who propagated their opposition to the war in Iraq or the SDF's dispatch. In April last year, a 25-year-old bookstore employee was arrested for vandalism, after writing antiwar graffiti on the wall of a public lavatory at a park in Sugunami Ward, Tokyo. The man said he was questioned by public security police, who grilled him over his political background.

2. Overseas A-Bomb Survivors

Kyodo ("More hibakusha living overseas seek benefits," Hiroshima, 05/13/04) reported that the number of survivors of the Hiroshima atomic bombing who are now living abroad and filing for recognition as victims entitled to medical stipends surged more than sevenfold last year to 801, according to Hiroshima municipal officials. The figure was 112 the previous year. The sharp increase in applicants from abroad -- including the ROK and the US -- comes after a 2002 landmark ruling ordering the government to pay medical allowances to an ROK survivor of the Hiroshima bombing. However, only 28 percent of the applicants have been issued health cards enabling them to receive medical allowances. The low rate of issuance, they said, is due to a number of factors, including difficulties in confirming whether an applicant is an actual survivor of the bombing, and a shortage of staff. The situation has sparked protests from atomic bomb survivors and their supporters who want the screening and confirmation process to be expedited, saying the plight of the survivors is a "race against time" as most are elderly.

3. Japan Nuclear Energy Policy

The Japan Times ("Nuke power will remain nation's key energy source," 05/15/04) reported that Japan will continue to use nuclear power as its main energy source while trying to expand other energy sources to diversify risks, according to an annual report on national energy policy released. The government report focuses on the merits of nuclear energy, which it says is recyclable and free of carbon dioxide. The report says the government should implement safety regulations, and power companies must try to restore public trust, which has been damaged by other scandals and accidents. Meanwhile, to promote the use of new energy sources, the government put a new law into force in April 2003 that requires power suppliers to use a certain percentage of designated new energy sources, including wind power and ground heat.

4. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch

The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "SDF vs. NGO -- an Iraqi tale of cost-effectiveness," 05/16/04)

reported that the Japan's Foreign Ministry announced on April 20 it would provide \$353,000, or about 39 million yen, to a Paris-based nongovernmental aid group, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED). ACTED has been engaged in a water-purification project in Al-Muthanna Province since the US declared last May that major military operations in Iraq were over. But the decision has raised a fundamental question among the public and critics over whether the military, in terms of cost-effectiveness, is suited to humanitarian work. With the grant, ACTED plans to supply 550 tons of safe water per day in the next six months to more than 64,000 people in 63 of the most needy villages in the province. By comparison, the Ground Self-Defence Force contingent in Samawah, the capital of the province, is providing 80 tons of water -- one-seventh of the amount ACTED plans to provide -- for 16,000 people a day by using the four purification units in the GSDF camp, according to the Defence Agency. Japan has spent 40.3 billion yen -- 1,000 times as much as the aid granted to ACTED -- for the GSDF's humanitarian mission in Iraq so far, according to the government's fiscal 2003 and 2004 budgets. "This issue can't be judged by the measure of cost-effectiveness alone," Defence Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba said when asked about the efficiency of the GSDF mission. "You have to take into account other factors, like the quality of water and the situation of the area you work in. "When you think about the benefits to the Iraqi people and the national interest of Japan, I think only the SDF can operate there," he said, adding that he feels no ill will toward the nongovernmental project. Critics have said a military force cannot contribute to reviving a local economy by creating jobs -- often the main concern of people in devastated countries -- because of its self-contained nature.

The Japan Times ("Cabinet bureau ruling on al-Sadr could pose legal problem for troops," 05/16/04) reported that the Japan's Cabinet Legislation Bureau considers militant Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr's following in Iraq a "quasi-government," which could pose legal problems for Japan's deployment of troops in Iraq. But the government has not adopted the view of the Cabinet advisory organ on laws and the Constitution, and the Defence Agency has opposed it, they said. Under the special law to support Iraqi reconstruction, the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) cannot be deployed in combat areas in which organized and systematic military activities by governments or quasi-governments are taking place.

Kyodo ("230 troops ship out," Sapporo, 05/16/04) reported that about 230 Ground Self-Defence Force (GSDF) troops left on May 15 for Iraq via Kuwait to replace the first team of GSDF troops deployed in the southern city of Samawah. Amid deteriorating security in Iraq, the unit, mainly from the Sapporo-based 11th Division, left on a chartered commercial plane from the Air Self-Defence Force's Chitose base in Hokkaido. "We cannot drop our guard ahead of the handover of sovereignty" to Iraq in June, Lt. Col. Akihiro Yanagisawa, commander of the unit, told reporters. "We will carry out our mission by making sure to not omit precautions."

The Japan Times ("Japan may participate in U.N. force in Iraq: Ishiba," 05/17/04) reported that Japan's Defence Agency Director-General Shigeru Ishiba indicated on May 16 that Japanese troops may participate in a UN multinational force in Iraq under a new UN resolution. Participation in a multilateral force "would depend on how the new UN resolution turns out, but it's not to say that Japan cannot participate just because it is a multinational force," Ishiba said on a Fuji TV talk show. Ishiba added that as a prerequisite, Japan must first figure out how its participation would relate to the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution, which denounces "the right of belligerency." Joining a multinational force on a mission of security maintenance has so far been considered as exercising the right to collective defense, but Ishiba indicated his belief to the contrary. On clashes between militants and Dutch forces as well as Iraqi police in Samawah, Ishiba admitted the security situation has deteriorated but mentioned no plan to withdraw the Japanese troops.

The Japan Times ("Troops hunker down," 05/17/04) reported that Ground Self-Defence Force (GSDF)

troops have been forced to almost lock themselves up in their camp in southern Iraq due to worsened security in the area, GSDF officials said on May 16. After a series of shootings took place from May 14 to 15 in Samawah between supporters of militant Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and Iraqi security officers, GSDF members supplied water trucks with purified water but stayed within the camp, according to the Ground Staff Office. For road and school repair projects in Samawah and its vicinity under Japanese initiatives, only Iraqis took part in the work those days, with no GSDF members at the sites, the office said. GSDF personnel with medical licenses have provided advice for treatment of patients at a Samawah hospital as part of their humanitarian assistance, but only once a week, on Thursdays.

5. Bashing against Released Japanese Hostages

The Japan Times ("Government demands \$500 from two other ex-hostages," 05/17/04) reported that the Japan's Foreign Ministry has asked two people held captive last month in Iraq to pay \$500 in travel and related expenses the government disbursed after their release, the former captives said. The demand on freelance journalist Jumpei Yasuda, 30, and Tokyo-based human rights activist Nobutaka Watanabe, 36, was made following a bill being given to three other Japanese held hostage in Iraq in April. "They did not make any explanations on the means of travel to Japan or costs I would have to shoulder, and I have not agreed to pay," Watanabe said. "I will decide what to do after asking the Foreign Ministry about the issue." Yasuda said, "I will pay what I have to pay after verifying the contents of the bill."

6. Japan Domestic Politics

The Japan Times ("Koizumi planning to shuffle Cabinet lineup in September," 05/17/04) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi planned to reshuffle the Cabinet in September, members of his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) said. Koizumi has begun discussing the issue with LDP members, and he thinks it necessary to make a fresh start following public criticism of the failure to pay pension premiums by seven of his Cabinet ministers, not to mention himself, the LDP members said. Of the seven, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda stepped down to take responsibility for the non-payment and was replaced by Hiroyuki Hosoda on May 7. The focus of attention is selection of a Cabinet minister to be in charge of postal privatization, and whether to replace Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, as some LDP lawmakers oppose her holding the post despite not being a Diet member, they said. Also at issue is whether to retain the six remaining ministers who failed to make pension premium payments in the past, they said. Of the six, Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki and Financial Services Minister Heizo Takenaka have taken a great deal of flak in connection with the scandal; they are closely involved in the effort to reform the pension system. The four others are Taro Aso, minister of public management; Shoichi Nakagawa, minister of economy, trade and industry; Defense Agency Director General Shigeru Ishiba; and Toshimitsu Motegi, minister in charge of Okinawa and Northern Territory affairs.

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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