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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Korea Herald ("BUSH PRESSES N.K. ON TALKS, DENIES DEADLINE", 2005-03-25) reported that US President George W. Bush urged the DPRK to return to six-nation talks aimed at ending the tense standoff over its nuclear program but denied he had set a June deadline for the negotiations to resume. "For the sake of peace and tranquility and stability in the Far East, Kim Jong-il must listen," Bush said. "We didn't set deadlines," Bush said. "What we said is what we've said to North Korea: if you want the way forward, if you want to be accepted by the world, if you want not to be isolated, get rid of your weapons programs."

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("US SEES N.KOREA AS AN EQUAL IN NUCLEAR TALKS: SEOUL", 2005-03-24) reported that the US is prepared to talk to the DPRK as an equal, and Pyongyang should take recent comments by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a signal of that commitment, the ROK's foreign minister said on Friday. Rice, during an Asian visit last week, called the North "a sovereign state," which foreign policy analysts said was an attempt to appease Pyongyang's demand that she apologize for having called it "an outpost of tyranny." "North Korea keeps talking about not getting treated right at the six-party talks, so (Rice) was noting a willingness to have dialogue as equals,"

the ROK's Yonhap news agency quoted Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon as telling a seminar.

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3. ROK on Inter-Korean Talks

Jooang Ilbo ("TOP OFFICIALS WANT TO REVIVE KOREAN TALKS", None) reported that top ROK officials hope they can restart inter-Korean dialogue by visiting Pyongyang and possibly meeting DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, officials told the JoongAng Ilbo. Juamhoe, an informal organization of Seoul officials who accompanied then-President Kim Dae-jung at the 2000 summit meeting with the DPRK's leader, has been leading a conciliatory drive to revive inter-Korean relations. A senior government official said yesterday that an invitation from Pyongyang was recently delivered to Moon Jung-in asking Mr. Moon to reopen talks to arrange a visit by the group to Pyongyang. The DPRK reportedly asked the group to build a library in Pyongyang. "The North's invitation shows that Pyongyang also feels the need to resume inter-Korean contacts," the official said.

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4. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("N KOREA BLAMES US-S KOREA EXERCISE FOR 6-WAY TALKS DELAY", 2005-03-28) reported that the DPRK Saturday blamed joint military drills conducted by the US and ROK for a delay in the resumption of nuclear disarmament talks. The weeklong military exercises, which ended Friday, were "derailing the resumption of six-way talks," the DPRK's newspaper Rodong Sinmun said in a commentary carried by its official news agency, KCNA. "The U.S. does not want either improvement of the relations with (the DPRK) and a solution to the nuclear issue ... but intends only to invade (the DPRK) by force of arms," the commentary said.

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5. Japan, France on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Bloomberg ("CHIRAC, KOIZUMI URGE NORTH KOREA TO RESUME TALKS ON WEAPONS", 2005-03-28) reported that French President Jacques Chirac and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, meeting in Tokyo for discussions on several economic and political issues, urged the DPRK to resume talks on nuclear weapons. "North Korea should return to talks," the two leaders wrote in a joint press release handed to reporters after the meeting.

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6. Japan on DPRK-Japan Talks

Yonhap ("HARAGUCHI PICKED AS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR FOR N.K. NORMALIZATION TALKS", 2005-03-28) reported that a former Japanese ambassador to the UN will likely be appointed as Japan's top delegate for normalization talks with the DPRK, a Japanese TV station said Monday. Koichi Haraguchi, if named to the post, will replace Katsunari Suzuki who completed a three-year term in the delegation, NHK said.

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7. DPRK-Japanese Relations

Donga Ilbo ("MONUMENT STOLEN BY JAPAN WILL BE RETURNED TO NORTH KOREA", 2005-0--28) reported that Buddhist groups from the ROK and DPRK agreed to ask Japan to return the Bukgwandaechupbi (the monument celebrating General Jeong Mun-bu's victory against a Japanese invasion of Korea in 1592), which has been abandoned in the Yasukuni Shrine, at its second working-level meeting held in Beijing yesterday. The monument will be restored at an original place in the DPRK.

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8. US on Sanctions on the DPRK

Asahi Shimbun ("ARMITAGE URGES CALM ON N. KOREA", 2005-03-28) reported that former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said that economic sanctions against the DPRK should be applied gradually when Tokyo steps up pressure on Pyongyang. Armitage said that once sanctions are declared, no options are left. Therefore, he recommended gradually increasing pressure. He said that stronger restrictions on DPRK ferries calling at Japanese ports were in fact sanctions and a good first step.

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9. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("CHINESE PRESIDENT HU MAY VISIT N. KOREA IN EARLY MAY: REPORT", 2005-0--26) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao may visit the DPRK for the first time in early May to meet with DPRK leader Kim Jong Il, the ROK daily Hankyoreh reported Saturday. The report, citing diplomatic sources in Beijing, said the PRC believes the time is right for Beijing to persuade Pyongyang to return to the stalled six-party talks on its nuclear arms program.

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10. DPRK Economic Reforms

New York Times ("NORTH KOREA EXPERIMENTS, WITH CHINA AS ITS MODEL", 2005-03-28) reported that at night, the view from the upper floor of a hotel looking out across the Yalu River toward the DPRK city of Sinuiju seems one of utter desolation. By day, though, the scene at the border in this bustling PRC city could scarcely be more different. Trucks steadily lumber across the bridge linking the countries, ferrying DPRK raw materials into the PRC and Chinese manufactured goods to market in the DPRK. The view from the PRC in cities like this, where small groups of North Koreans can be found in the downtown shops and hotels, scouring the city for bargains, is of a country already well into an experiment, however uncertain, aimed at rebuilding its economy and even opening up, ever so gingerly, to the outside world.

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11. DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

Wall Street Journal ("NORTH KOREA ACKNOWLEDGES BIRD FLU", 2005-03-28) reported that the DPRK acknowledged for the first time an outbreak of bird flu at poultry farms near its capital, in a

sign that the deadly avian virus endemic in Southeast Asia could be greatly expanding its geographic reach. Pyongyang's official news agency reported Sunday that hundreds of thousands of chickens had been destroyed in an effort to curb the spread of the disease, which had killed birds at "a few chicken farms." The Korea Central News Agency report also said that no people were known to have been infected with the virus.

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12. ROK on DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

BBC News ("SEOUL OFFERS N KOREA BIRD FLU AID", 2005-03-28) reported that the ROK has said it is ready to help the DPRK combat bird flu, after the DPRK publicly admitted on Sunday that it was fighting the virus. Pyongyang has not asked Seoul for assistance, but a ROK official said the official announcement appeared to indicate the DPRK would accept aid. "North Korea, plagued by food shortages, has struggled to modernise and build facilities for the breeding and processing of chicken, a main source of animal protein," Kwon Tae-jin, an expert on DPRK agriculture based in Seoul, told the ROK Munhwa Ilbo newspaper.

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13. Food Aid to the DPRK

The Associated Press ("A NEW FOOD CRISIS PLAGUES N. KOREA; U.N. AGENCY APPEALS FOR DONATIONS AS SUPPLIES DWINDLE AND DAILY RATIONS ARE REDUCED", 2005-03-27) reported that the U.N. World Food Program is launching a new appeal for food donations for the DPRK, an agency official said Saturday, warning that dwindling supplies were forcing it to cut off aid to children and the elderly in the isolated country. WFP received supplies in recent months that let it feed 6.5 million DPRK citizens, but those are running out, WFP's Asia director, Anthony Banbury, said at a news conference after returning from a trip to the DPRK. "Unless we get new contributions in the next weeks, we're going to face serious cuts," he said.

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14. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap ("S. KOREAN STUDENT GROUP DONATES GOATS TO N. KOREA: REPORT", 2005-03-27) reported that a group of ROK Protestant university students donated 120 goats as well as tons of hay and feed to the DPRK, a Washington-based radio station reported Saturday. The student group, Korea Campus Crusade for Christ, sent the goats to the DPRK through the port of Nampo, southwest of the DPRK's capital of Pyongyang, on March 8, Radio Free Asia (RFA) said in its Korean-language service.

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15. US on DPRK Nuclear Export

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. HANDED SOUTH KOREA INFORMATION ABOUT A NORTH KOREA URANIUM EXPORT", 2005-03-28) reported that it was confirmed that in early March, the US handed secret information to the ROK that the DPRK secretly exported uranium hexafluoride (UF6) to Libya and already finished the relevant monetary transfer. According to government senior official Michael Green, senior director for Asia of the White House National Security Council (NSC), upon visiting

the ROK on February 2, explained that the DPRK sold 1.8 tons of UF6 through a Pakistani illegal arms trafficking organization to Libya and notified specific evidence of trade through a separate channel.

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16. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Export

Korea Times ("SEOUL DENIES REPORT ON NK-LIBYA NUCLEAR DEAL", 2005-03-28) reported that the ROK denied a news report yesterday that it was informed by the US earlier this year of the intelligence that the DPRK had been paid by Libya after exporting nuclear material via Pakistan. "We have not been informed about transaction details," a ROK government spokesman said in response to reporters' question. "We are not in a stage where we can conclude there was a financial transaction between North Korea and Libya."

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17. US-ROK Relations

Choson Ilbo ("U.S. CONGRESS KILLED KOREA RESOLUTION: OFFICIAL", 2005-03-28) reported that an advisor to the US Congress said Friday a resolution drafted in 2003 to commemorate 50 years of the ROK-US alliance died a quiet death in the House over anger in Congress at anti-American demonstrations in the ROK. Dennis Halpin, an advisor to the House of Representatives International Relations Committee, said Congress considered resolutions commemorating US relations with Asian allies like the ROK, Taiwan and Japan in late 2003, but the ROK resolution failed to pass.

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18. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREAN LAWMAKERS SEE NORTH 'EXECUTION' TAPES", 2005-03-25) reported that grainy video purporting to show public executions in the DPRK captures the depravity of the DPRK, the ROK's opposition leader said on Friday, urging Seoul to press Pyongyang on human rights. Members of parliament from the main opposition Grand National Party and human rights activists screened two tapes at the South's National Assembly library that they say were smuggled from the DPRK. Activists say the tapes were made with a hidden camera and show thousands gathering at two separate events to watch public executions in and near Hoeryong, south of the DPRK's border with the PRC.

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19. DPRK Human Rights

Choson Ilbo ("N.KOREA 'GASSED POLITICAL PRISONERS'", 2005-03-28) reported that an associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center and member of the North Korean Freedom Coalition on Saturday said Pyongyang was performing poison gas experiment on political prisoners. In an article in the Washington Post, Rabbi Abraham Cooper urged the international community to intervene, saying some DPRK defectors told him they had taken part in gassing political prisoners. "It isn't necessary to insist on 'regime change' as a precondition of dialogue," he said but added the world community led by the US, PRC and Russia, must demand the DPRK improve its human rights record.

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20. Thailand, Laos on DPRK Defectors

Choson Ilbo ("THAILAND, LAOS TO KEEP OUT N.KOREAN DEFECTORS", 2005-03-28) reported that Thailand and Laos have agreed to tighten border security to prevent the entry of DPRK defectors, the Thai English-language daily The Nation reported Monday. The paper said the foreign ministers of the two countries expressed concern over the recent movements of DPRK refugees at a meeting in Laos over the last weekend. They decided to cooperate in beefing up security in their border areas.

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21. DPRK on US Nuclear Submarine

Yonhap news ("PORT CALL BY U.S. SUBMARINE VIOLATED NUKE-FREE KOREA PACT: N.K.", 2005-03-28) reported that following a revelation that a US nuclear-powered submarine docked in the ROK earlier this month, the DPRK on Sunday renewed its accusation that the US is in violation of an agreement to keep the Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons. With its cutting-edge weapons and the nuclear-powered submarine, "the warlike Americans are staging very dangerous war exercises for a preemptive nuclear strike against our republic," Radio Pyongyang said.

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22. US on Pro-Democracy Policy

Washington Post ("RICE DESCRIBES PLANS TO SPREAD DEMOCRACY", 2005-03-26) reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday set out ambitious goals for the Bush administration's push for greater democracy overseas over the next four years. Rice said she made the case to PRC officials that they cannot make a distinction between stability on the Korean Peninsula and the DPRK possessing nuclear weapons. "My discussion with the Chinese was to suggest to them that those two [concepts] are indivisible," Rice said. "They understand that a nuclear North Korea on the Korean Peninsula has potentially unpredictable effects that will not make the Korean Peninsula very stable, will not make the region very stable. And so I didn't find much pushback on that."

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23. US on Spent Fuel Storage

Washington Post ("STORAGE OF NUCLEAR SPENT FUEL CRITICIZED", 2005-03-28) reported that a classified report by nuclear experts assembled by the National Academy of Sciences has challenged the decision by federal regulators to allow commercial nuclear facilities to store large quantities of radioactive spent fuel in pools of water. The report concluded that the government does not fully understand the risks that a terrorist attack could pose to the pools and ought to expedite the removal of the fuel to dry storage casks that are more resilient to attack. The Bush administration has long defended the safety of the pools, and the nuclear industry has warned that moving large amounts of fuel to dry storage would be unnecessary and very expensive.

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24. ROK on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Reuters ("S.KOREA TO NAME 'ENVOY' FOR DISPUTED ISLETS-REPORT", 2005-03-28) reported that the ROK is to appoint an "ambassador" to make an international case for its ownership of a group of tiny islands which are also claimed by Japan, Yonhap news agency reported Sunday. Quoting a ROK official at the UN, Yonhap said President Roh Moo-hyun had chosen the country's current UN representative for the new post of "Tokto ambassador."

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25. Japan on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREAN TEXTBOOKS DISTORT DOKDO HISTORY: YOMIURI", 2005-03-28) reported that Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun said Monday ROK middle school history textbooks distorted the truth about the Dokdo islets. In a commentary in its morning edition entitled "Historical Background to the Frictions", the paper said, "Korean state-sanctioned history books claim that Japan took the Dokdo Islets by force during the Russo-Japanese War, but Japan never exercised force in the matter, nor were there protests from Korea."

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26. PRC on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Donga Ilbo ("CHINESE MEDIA, “DOKDO IS KOREAN TERRITORY” ", 2005-03-28) reported that “Korea has recorded Dokdo as its territory since 512 A.D. while Japan started regarding Dokdo as its possession only recently in 1905.” The PRC’s state-operated Xinhua News Agency reported this on March 27 on the issue of Dokdo. Xinhua News Agency printed a article titled, “To Whom Does Dokdo Belong?,” on its daily printed for Shanghai, and explained the motivation behind Japan’s assertion as being the advantageous location of Dokdo that is rich in marine resources and has gas and oil reserves at the bottom of the sea.

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27. DPRK on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Korea Times ("NK CHIDES JAPAN OVER ISLETS", 2005-03-28) reported that a history research center in the DPRK berated Japan on Saturday for its "undisguised" attempt to lay claim to the Tokto (Dokdo) islets in the East Sea, the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency reported. "Tokto is Korean territory that has been developed and protected by our people over the past 1,500 years," the center said in a lengthy statement. By occupying the volcanic islets, Japan is trying to obtain a military outpost to re-invade the Korean Peninsula and monopolize "inexhaustible" marine resources, the statement said.

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28. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO SET UP RADAR ON DISPUTED ISLANDS", 2005-03-28) reported that Japan said Monday it will set up weather radar on a pair of Pacific Ocean islands at the center of a territorial dispute with the PRC. The Land and Transport Ministry will spend $3.08 million to

install the radar in June atop an existing structure straddling the two rocky outposts that comprise the Okinotorishima islands. The radar will collect wave patterns and other meteorological data, but will also monitor ships within Japan's territorial waters, ministry official Toru Noda said.

(return to top) Reuters ("JAPAN SEEKS BETTER CHINA TIES, HALT TO GAS PROJECT", 2005-0--28) reported that Japan proposed to the PRC on Monday that they find ways to improve chilly ties, including a possible Beijing visit by Japan's foreign minister, but they remained at odds over the PRC's gas exploration project in the East China Sea. In a six-hour meeting of senior officials from both nations in Tokyo Monday, Japan asked the PRC to provide data on its exploration activity and again demanded that Beijing halt its development, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official told reporters. (return to top)

29. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("THOUSANDS PROTEST IN TAIWAN", 2005-03-28) reported that hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese marched through Taipei on Saturday to voice their opposition to an anti-secession law recently passed by the PRC. Chanting support for peace and democracy, the demonstrators carried banners and signs through the streets, proclaiming the law an act of aggression against Taiwan's 23 million inhabitants. President Chen Shui-bian marched with other officials in his party but did not address the crowd. Local news media said more than 500,000 and perhaps up to a million people were on the streets at one point or another during the protest, which lasted through the afternoon.

(return to top) The New York Times ("CHINA'S HARD LINE STIRS THRONG IN TAIWAN", 2005-0--28) reported that hundreds of thousands of Taiwanese marched on Saturday afternoon to denounce Beijing in one of the largest political demonstrations ever here, the clearest sign yet of how the PRC's antisecession legislation has poisoned relations across the Taiwan Strait. The size of the demonstration showed how much the political landscape has changed since the Communist Party-controlled National People's Congress in Beijing approved a law on March 14 calling for the use of "nonpeaceful means" to halt any Taiwanese attempt to declare independence from the mainland. Even some supporters of the opposition Nationalist Party here, which backs closer relations with the mainland, joined the march, although the party's leaders did not. (return to top) Reuters ("TAIWAN'S KMT LEAVES FOR HISTORIC CHINA VISIT", 2005-03-28) reported that a delegation of Taiwan's main opposition party Monday began its first official visit to mainland PRC since the civil war ended, but refused to say who it will meet in Beijing. The visit, led by Nationalist Party Vice Chairman Chiang Pin-kung, comes just two days after hundreds of thousands of people marched in Taipei to protest against an anti-secession law passed by the PRC. Analysts expect Beijing to give Chiang red-carpet treatment and cozy up to the party known in the PRC as the Kuomintang (KMT) -- which supports eventual unification with a democratic PRC -- while ignoring Chen. (return to top)

30. France on PRC Arms Ban

Reuters ("NO BIG ARMS SALES TO CHINA IF EMBARGO LIFTED -CHIRAC", 2005-03-27) reported that French President Jacques Chirac sought to reassure Japan on Sunday that lifting Europe's embargo on arms exports to the PRC would not result in an increase in weapons sales, saying the move was aimed at normalizing ties. France has led efforts to secure an early end to the European Union embargo despite pressure from the US to keep it in place out of fear the PRC may get access to advanced weapons. Speaking after a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Chirac said: "I told him that arms exports to China won't take place; the same with sensitive technology." Chirac said the reason for lifting the ban was political and that it was no longer appropriate.

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31. PRC Web Censorship

The Associated Press ("GROUP PROTESTS CHINA'S WEB SITE CRACKDOWN", 2005-03-28) reported that Shuimu.com is just one of the PRC's thousands of Internet chat rooms. But when non-students were barred this month from using the site at Tsinghua University in Beijing, it triggered a rare burst of outrage. A brief protest erupted at the school. Users posted appeals on other sites for Web surfers to speak up, with some comparing the crackdown to persecution in Nazi Germany.

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II. Japan

32. US Bases in Japan

The Asahi Shimbun ("IMPATIENT U.S. SEEKS JUNE TALKS ON BASES", 2005-03-24) reported that the US Defense Department is pressing Tokyo to hold a “two-plus-two” ministerial meeting in June to expedite talks on relocating US forces in Japan and reviewing mutual security cooperation, sources said. Behind Washington’s haste is a domestic timetable for reviews of the base realignment plan, according to the sources. The Pentagon faces deadlines for a domestic base realignment and closure (BRAC) round this year. The first will be May 16, when Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is required to hand in a list of proposed changes to a Congressional commission. The next step is the commission’s report to the president by Sept. 8.

(return to top) The Asahi Shimbun ("ON THE DEFENSIVE: OKINAWA’S GOVERNOR LOBBIES WASHINGTON", 2005-03-28) reported that Okinawa’s Governor Keiichi Inamine had been waiting for Tokyo and Washington to cut a deal on reducing the US military burden in his island prefecture. Knowing the timing was right to make a trip to the US, Inamine went armed with several proposals, but basically with one thing in mind: for all US Marines to be removed from Okinawa. On March 14, he met with Richard Lawless, US deputy undersecretary of defense for Asian and Pacific affairs, and explained what his government hoped to achieve. Lawless listened patiently to Inamine’s explanation, but made no commitment to incorporate any of the proposals in future policy. (return to top) The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN PUSHES FOR CIVILIAN USE OF YOKOTA AIR BASE", 2005-0--23) reported that the Japanese government is trying to hash out a deal with the US military to allow commercial flights to use the US Air Force Yokota Air Base so that the Tokyo area has a third airport. Initially, officials are considering 15 commercial flights a day as part of a plan to expand Yokota’s use. The plan has been presented to US officials, but Washington has not offered a formal response yet, sources said. (return to top)

33. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talk

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE OFFICIAL MOOTS JUNE DEADLINE FOR NORTH KOREA'S RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS", 2005-03-21) reported that a senior Japanese official has proposed ending the six-way negotiations on DPRK’s nuclear weapons program and taking the issue to the UN Security Council if Pyongyang does not return to the talks before June, sources close to the talks said. Akitaka Saiki, deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry’s Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, made the proposal at a conference on March 17 in Shanghai on ending DPRK’s nuclear weapons program.

The comments mark the first time a government official has publicly mentioned a specific deadline for ending the talks and referring the issue to the UNSC.

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34. Japan-ROK Territorial Dispute

Kyodo News ("SEOUL TO BUILD TSUNAMI CENTER ON DISPUTED ISLE", 2005-03-22) reported that the ROK plans to set up a tsunami observatory by around 2007 on an islet in the Sea of Japan also claimed by Japan. The new tsunami observatory planned for Tok-do, known as Takeshima in Japan, will be equipped with the latest tidal wave measurement devices as part of government efforts to improve anti-disaster systems, the Korea Meteorological Agency said in a Yonhap report.

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35. Japan Military Emergency Plan

The Asahi Shimbun ("ASDF PLAN: OKINAWA AIRPORT A CRISIS BASE", 2005-03-18) reported that under a defense plan for military emergencies, the Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) would use an airport in Okinawa Prefecture that has been designated for civilian use only. The fiscal 2004 plan to use Shimojijima airport on Shimojijima island in southern Okinawa Prefecture is part of recent SDF moves to heighten security in the area to counter the modernization of China's military.

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36. Japan New SDF Bill

The Asahi Shimbun ("BILL ON SDF PRIORITIES FACES DELAY", 2005-03-24) reported that the Japanese government will likely give up introducing to the current Diet session a bill that would upgrade the status of Self-Defense Forces' missions abroad to much the same level as homeland defense. For now, junior coalition partner New Komeito has come out against revising the SDF Law to make overseas activities -- such as helping to rebuild Iraq -- part of the troops' primary duties.

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37. Japan Iraq Troops Deployment

The Japan Times ("DUTCH-AUSSIE TROOP SWITCH TO BE SMOOTH, DOWNER SAYS", 2005-03-23) reported that visiting Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer expressed confidence that the transition from Dutch to Australian troops will go smoothly when the Aussies are deployed next month to southern Iraq, where the Self-Defense Forces are stationed. Australian Prime Minister John Howard's announced last month that Australia would send 450 troops to provide security for Japan after Dutch troops are withdrawn from the region.

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38. Japan Peacekeeping Operation in Sudan

The Asahi Shimbun ("DOESN'T HURT CHANCES OF U.N. SEAT: U.N. ENVOY: SDF ROLE DESIRABLE IN SUDAN", 2005-03-16) reported that a senior UN official called on Tokyo to commit Self-Defense Forces (SDF) members to a non-combat mission in Sudan. Shashi Tharoor, UN

undersecretary general for public information, told The Asahi Shimbun that Japan could provide valuable “medical and logistics specialists.” A decision to dispatch troops would be “a good gesture on the part of Japan,” particularly as it seeks a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, Tharoor also said.

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39. Japan Anti-piracy Measure

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO OFFER PATROL SHIPS TO CURB PIRACY", 2005-03-17) reported that the Japanese government will offer patrol vessels to Indonesia to help fend off pirates in the Malacca Strait, such as the ones who abducted two Japanese and a Filipino on March 14. Officials said the unarmed vessels, likely two or three midsized Craft Large (CL) patrol boats measuring about 20 meters in length, could be delivered by fiscal 2006. Officials stressed that since the CL patrol boats will not be armed, the offer will not violate Japan’s weapons-export ban.

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40. Japan UNSC Bid

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN WELCOMES ANNAN'S UNSC DEADLINE", 2005-03-28) reported that Japan welcomed UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s weekend report stipulating a September deadline for members to decide on UN reform, including expansion of the Security Council. Annan also supported the move to delete the former enemy clauses in the UN Charter that specify Japan, Germany and other nations.

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