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Korean Peninsula

1. UN DPRK Talks

The U.N. Security Council failed to reach agreement on Thursday on a common approach to confronting the DPRK for its plans to reactivate an atomic energy program capable of producing nuclear bombs. Facing stiff PRC and Russian opposition to U.N. action, the US, France and Britain temporarily ended their efforts to persuade the 15-nation council to adopt a statement criticizing North Korea. The US ambassador to the United Nations, John D. Negroponte, said the Bush administration would continue diplomatic efforts to restrain the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. But he sharply criticized the DPRK leadership for engaging the world in a game of deadly nuclear brinksmanship. "North Korea's behavior has cast a shadow over the Korean Peninsula and is of concern to the entire international community," Negroponte said after the council met to discuss the issue. The Bush administration had hoped to rally the council around a tough statement urging Pyongyang to reconsider by today's deadline. "North Korea has violated its obligations," Boucher said. "We do believe the council should act to go on record opposing North Korea's nuclear actions and warning against further provocation."

"US on DPRK Nuclear Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"UN DPRK Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"UN Security Council on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"UN on DPRK Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

2. DPRK on UN Action

The DPRK warned Tuesday that any actions taken against it when the U.N. Security Council meets to discuss the communist regime's nuclear ambitions would undermine attempts to resolve the crisis peacefully. Meanwhile, the PRC said the world body, which meets Wednesday, has no business discussing the DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons program. On Monday, PRC diplomats blocked efforts by some council members to draft a statement condemning the DPRK. "It is not appropriate for the United Nations Security Council to get involved in these issues," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. "No related parties should take actions that would further complicate this matter." The council eventually could discuss imposing sanctions against the DPRK if a political solution is not found. The PRC and Russia have said they oppose sanctions. The DPRK has warned that it would regard international sanctions as a declaration of war.

"KCNA on UN DPRK Resolution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"DPRK on UN Action" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

"KCNA on UN Security Council" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

"DPRK on UN Resolutions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

"The DPRK Nuke Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

"DPRK Nuclear Issue to UN" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

3. PRC-Russia UN Statement Obstruction

The PRC and Russia blocked UN condemnation of the DPRK as the DPRK was set to become the first country to withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The PRC, a key supplier of aid and trade, and Russia, with significant economic interests in North East Asia, have argued that UN intervention could deepen the six-month-old standoff. They have urged the US to engage in direct talks with the Stalinist regime to break the impasse. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said he was unable to predict what action, if any, the Security Council might take in the future.

"PRC-Russia UN Statement Obstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

4. DPRK on US Attack

In its strongest reaction yet to the war in Iraq, the DPRK said today that only by arming itself with a "tremendous military deterrent" could the country guarantee its security. The statement, coming after more than two weeks of relative quiet since the start of the Iraq war, flatly declared that the DPRK had abandoned faith even in the kinds of security guarantees that it has repeatedly demanded of the US in recent months. "The Iraqi war shows that to allow disarming through inspection does not help avert a war but rather sparks it," the statement said. "This suggests that even the signing of a nonaggression treaty with the US would not help avert a war." The statement, issued by the Foreign Ministry, comes on the heels of another DPRK declaration this weekend, saying that the country would not be affected by any United Nations resolutions about its weapons development programs.

"DPRK War Readiness" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

"DPRK Military" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"DPRK on US Attack" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

5. DPRK-ROK Cabinet Level Talks Cancellation

Cabinet-level talks between the DPRK and the ROK were abruptly canceled in a setback to efforts to get the DPRK to give up its nuclear program. The talks were canceled after the DPRK failed to confirm that the meetings would take place, the ROK's Unification Ministry said. Seoul had hoped to use the meeting to persuade its neighbor to scrap its suspected nuclear weapons program. The cancellation came ahead of a meeting Wednesday of the U.N. Security Council to discuss the North's nuclear program.

"DPRK-ROK Cabinet Level Talks Cancellation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

"DPRK-ROK Ministerial Talks Cancellation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

"Cancellation of Inter Korean Ministerial Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

6. US ROK Military Base Re-location

US and ROK negotiators agreed today to move the US Army command headquarters out of Seoul as soon as possible. A magnet for anti-American demonstrations, the one-square-mile base, which supports 23,000 people, is within range of DPRK artillery cannons about 40 miles north of here, along the demilitarized zone. The headquarters is expected to be moved to the southern part of the country, possibly by expanding an existing US base. US negotiators hinted that talks next month would focus on shifting southward a 16,000-soldier US division now posted in the border area with the DPRK. US conservatives argue that the presence of so many US soldiers and their dependents within artillery range of the DPRK ties the hands of policy makers who want to keep open the option of bombing the DPRK's nuclear facilities. The possibility of moving all or most of the division is to be discussed when Lawless returns here next month for a second round of negotiations. Any troop movements are also to be discussed when the ROK's new president, Roh Moo Hyun, meets with President Bush in Washington on May 14, part of a five-day trip to the US. It will be the first trip to the US for Roh.

"ROK-US Military Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, ROK)

"ROK US Army Relocation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"Opposition to Reduction and Relocation of US Troops" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, ROK)

"US ROK Military Base Re-location" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"ROK US Troops" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

"USFK Downsizing and Relocation in Seoul" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

7. ROK on DPRK Multilateral Talks

Agence France-Presse ("ROK FOREIGN MINISTER URGES NORTH TO BEGIN MULTILATERAL NUKE TALKS," Seoul, 04/08/03) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-Kwan urged the DPRK to reverse course and accept multilateral talks as the UN Security Council prepared to take up the peninsula's nuclear crisis. Yoon has been battling to persuade Pyongyang to seize the chance for multilateral talks in order to reach a settlement outside of the UN framework, thus averting any threat of sanctions and a possible slide into war. Through multilateral talks, the DPRK could obtain the security guarantees it seeks, as well as the chance for dialogue with the US it insists on, said Yoon. "Such talks may also provide an opportunity for comprehensive discussions on economic assistance," he said in comments to a National Assembly committee.

"ROK-US Relations on DPRK and Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

"ROK on DPRK Multilateral Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

"ROK-US Cooperative Diplomacy on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

8. ROK-US Presidential Visit

The ROK's president will make his first trip to the US next month to seek a peaceful solution to the standoff with the DPRK over Pyongyang's nuclear programs, his office said Wednesday. Roh Moo-hyun will meet President Bush on May 14 and spend five days in Washington, New York and San Francisco, Roh's office said in a statement. Roh and Bush "will hold in-depth discussions to forge a common stance on bringing about a peaceful resolution to the DPRK nuclear issue," the statement from Roh's office said.

"ROK President Visit to US in May" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, ROK)

"ROK-US Presidential Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"ROK-US Presidential Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"ROK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

9. DPRK on Japan Striking Distance

The DPRK warned Japan to remember it was "within striking distance" of the DPRK amid heightened calls in Japan to contain the DPRK regime. The Korean Central News Agency accused Japan of being emboldened by the US-led invasion of Iraq, which it condemned as "state-sponsored terrorism," in its ambition to remilitarize. "Japan should behave with discretion, clearly mindful that it is also within the striking range of the DPRK," KCNA said in a dispatch monitored here. "Japan is turning to the right and is getting militarized at such a rapid tempo that the call for destroying the DPRK, a legitimate sovereign state, is heard in the Diet (Japanese parliament).

"DPRK on Japan Striking Distance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

10. ASEAN on DPRK Nukes

The 10-member Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) have agreed to help mediate between the US and the DPRK to resolve the issue of the DPRK's revival of its nuclear programs. The 7th ASEAN-Republic of Korea (ROK) dialogue held in Makati April 8 and 9 agreed to have representatives of the US and the DPRK participate in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting scheduled early May this year. Lauro Baja Jr., senior foreign affairs undersecretary for policy, said, "There are now representatives of both US and the North Korea who will attend the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meeting early in May." A representative of the Republic of Korea, who requested not to be named, said, "Yes, we welcome the support of the ASEAN members for the peace and prosperity program of our government."

"ASEAN on DPRK Nukes" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

11. ROK New US Ambassador Appointment

The ROK has named a former foreign minister as its new ambassador to the US, officials said Friday. Han Sung-joo, 62, served as the country's top diplomat from 1993 to 1994. The US-educated politics professor is currently the acting president of the prestigious Korea University in Seoul. Han will replace Yang Sung-chul, a former lawmaker, who has been in the post since 2000.

"ROK New US Ambassador Appointment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

12. ROK Domestic Economy

The head of the ROK's largest bank warned today that the market-rocking scandal at the SK Group, one of the conglomerates that dominate the ROK economy, may not be the last. "There could be more problems left with Korean conglomerates," said Kim Jung Tae, president of Kookmin Bank. Kim won a reputation as one of Korea's shrewdest bankers when he rejected pleas for a bailout by several companies in the Daewoo conglomerate before the group collapsed in 1999. He said today that his bank cut its exposure to the chaebol, as the big conglomerates are known, by some two trillion won (\$1.6 billion), including 200 billion won to SK Global. The banking sector has often been battered by problems at the chaebol, and the present situation is no exception.

"ROK Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

13. ROK Stealth Warship

The ROK launched a stealth warship capable of spying electronically on the DPRK on Friday while the communist state's leader told pilots at an air force base he was satisfied with their readiness to "beat back the enemy." Both developments underscored tensions on the Korean Peninsula stemming from the DPRK's alleged development of nuclear weapons and efforts by the US to get the DPRK to scrap the program. ROK President Roh Moo-hyun attended the launch of the radar-evading warship, officials said. The vessel is named "Moonmu the Great," after an ancient king who unified the Korean Peninsula more than 2,000 years ago. The 450-foot-long ship is equipped for electronic monitoring as well as anti-ship and anti-submarine warfare, navy officials said. It is South Korea's most advanced warship with a top speed of 29 knots. It carries 300 personnel. The officials said ROK already has an unspecified number of stealth warships.

"ROK Stealth Warship" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

14. DPRK Black Market Exports

From drugs to missiles and counterfeit cash, the DPRK has carved out a lucrative export business in black-market goods even as most of its economy languishes amid a deepening nuclear crisis. The shady workings of the DPRK's economy are gaining importance as the US presses the U.N. Security Council to address the DPRK's alleged nuclear weapons program - a discussion that could eventually lead to economic sanctions. The DPRK's gross national income dropped from \$22.3 billion in 1995 to \$15.7 billion in 2001, mainly because of mismanagement, floods and severe droughts. Western countries are worried that financial woes have made the DPRK more desperate, and some analysts say its nuclear brinkmanship is aimed at blackmailing other nations for more aid. "North Korea's economy has hit the floor," said Scott Snyder, the South Korea representative for the Asia Foundation. Against this grim backdrop, however, sales of weapons and illicit goods have remained a reliable source of cash. "The DPRKs know their economy is in a crisis and they need to change," said Yoon Deok-ryong, an economist at the state-run Korea Institute for International Economic Policy

"DPRK Black Market Exports" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC and US on Iraq and DPRK

PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing held a telephone conversation with Secretary of State Colin Powell Friday to discuss Iraq and the DPRK, the official Xinhua news agency said. They talked about bilateral ties, postwar reconstruction of Iraq and the need for a peaceful solution to the nuclear dispute with the DPRK through dialogue, Xinhua said without elaborating. On Thursday, the PRC said the United Nations should play the leading role in Iraq's reconstruction and hoped the world body would draw up plans soon. The PRC, a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, opposed the war on Iraq and called for an end to the fighting soon after it began three weeks ago, but it has avoided taking a front-line role in the opposition camp

"PRC and US on Iraq and DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

2. PRC UN DPRK Statement Blockage

The PRC on March 9, 2003 stalled efforts to obtain a Security Council statement that criticizes the DPRK for refusing to submit to monitoring of its suspected nuclear weapons program by the United Nations, saying such a statement would "complicate" diplomatic attempts to resolve the standoff. The move was a setback for the US, France and Britain, which want the 15-nation council to pressure the DPRK to abandon plans to restart a nuclear enrichment plant capable of producing fuel for nuclear explosives. It also diminished the prospects of the council's playing a central role in managing the nuclear crisis.

"PRC UN DPRK Statement Blockage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

3. DPRK-PRC Nuclear Relations

DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il paid a secret visit to the PRC last month, shortly after the start of the war in Iraq, according to a US-based global intelligence consultancy citing Russian intelligence sources. During his visit, the reclusive Kim met new PRC President Hu Jintao, who said the PRC would not "stand idle" if relations deteriorated further between Pyongyang and Washington, according to Strategic Forecasts. The visit occurred during a 50-day period which ended last week and during which Kim, 61, disappeared from public view in Pyongyang, the report said.

"DPRK-PRC Nuclear Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

4. PRC-US Counter-Intelligence

A Chinese-American woman who worked for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has been accused of spying for Beijing. Katrina Leung has been charged with passing on classified nations security information to the PRC, allegedly obtained from her lover and FBI "handler", James Smith. Smith has also been charged with gross negligence after allegedly allowing her access to secret documents during "debriefing" sessions at her home. Correspondents say that the scandal could prove a great embarrassment to the FBI and the Republican party, with whom Leung - a Los Angeles socialite - had close links. Leung was arrested on April 9, 2003 and charged with "obtaining a classified national security document for the purposes of aiding a foreign nation." She has claimed that she is innocent, but has been denied bail. At the same time, Smith, a former FBI special agent, was charged with gross negligence but given bail. Authorities said that Leung was recruited to work for the FBI in the 1980s and began an affair with Smith. According to the prosecution's affidavit, she was paid \$1.7m over 20 years by the FBI, and operated under a number of aliases, including "parlor maid." But during this time, the prosecution alleged, she was also working as a double agent for the PRC government. Prosecutors said that they found classified documents at Leung's home, including a secret 1997 memorandum about PRC fugitives.

"PRC-US Espionage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

"PRC-US Counter-Intelligence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

5. PRC on Iraq Reconstruction

The PRC has indicated it will try its best to safeguard the PRC's economic interests in Iraq's post-war reconstruction. Wu Chunhua, Head of the PRC Foreign Ministry's Department of West Asian and North African Affairs, said the PRC wished to "enthusiastically" take part in the reconstruction of Iraq. The official China News Service on Thursday quoted Wu as saying "we shall try our best to fight for and safeguard the PRC's interests in Iraq's post-war reconstruction." Wu disclosed the Iraqi government still owed the PRC "a few hundreds of millions of dollars" in debts and other unpaid bills. He said the Foreign Ministry had already taken steps to protect the PRC's "rights and interests" in the war-torn country.

"PRC on Iraq Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

6. US on UN PRC Human Rights Resolution

The US has decided against introducing a resolution criticizing rights abuses in the PRC at the annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission, a State Department official said Friday. The decision comes two weeks after the annual State Department human rights report had cited continuing abuses in the PRC. The official, asking not to be identified, said progress is being made on protection of human rights in the PRC. The Bush administration will press for more progress despite setbacks, the official added.

"US on UN PRC Human Rights Resolution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

"PRC Executions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

7. PRC-US Relations

The PRC expresses strong dissatisfaction and firm objection to unreasonable accusations by the US on PRC's human rights situation, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao on April 2. When asked to comment on the report on the PRC of the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2002 just released by the US State Department, Liu said the report disregards facts and reprehends PRC for no reason. The PRC government has always devoted itself to the promotion and protection of human rights and basic freedoms, and has scored great achievements in this regard, which is a generally-acknowledged fact, said Liu "PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

8. Japan-PRC Relations

Japan is willing to develop "closer and interdependent" relations with PRC on the basis of respect for history, as the visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said on April 6 when meeting her Chinese counterpart Li Zhaoxing in Beijing. She stressed that Japan will honor key documents such as joint statements between the two governments and the remarks of former Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama when dealing with historical issues. During the meeting, Li said the two countries reached a significant common consensus on the importance of learning from history and facing the future, adding that he hopes Japan can implement these statements to ensure the healthy development of bilateral relations. Li also said PRC wants to maintain high-level contacts, strengthen exchanges at all levels and promote friendship between the two peoples.

"Japan-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

9. PRC's Disarmament Scheme

The PRC put forth a 10-point proposal to the 2003 Session of the UN Disarmament Commission on April 1 to promote sound development for disarmament and arms control. In an address to the session, according to the report, the head of the PRC delegation, Hu Xiaodi, said some recent developments "have been particularly worrisome," warning that the multilateral disarmament and arms control process is now facing a severe test. Hu stressed the need to create a favorable international security environment through a new security concept based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and co-operation to establish common security for all countries. The report listed the 10-point proposal Hu proposed, noting that these and other measures should lead to the negotiation and conclusion of a treaty on the complete prohibition and destruction of nuclear weapons, said the report.

"PRC's Disarmament Scheme" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

10. PRC SARS Cover-Up

The PRC been urged to reveal the full extent of its SARS outbreak amid claims that true case numbers are being concealed. The appeal came after a team of epidemiologists from the World Health Organization ended a six-day tour of Guangdong province, where the illness is believed to have first appeared. South Africa has now reported a "probable" SARS case - which, if confirmed by the WHO, would be the first on the continent. A spokesman asked the PRC authorities to be transparent about the numbers of people affected by the bug. The government says 19 people have been infected in the capital Beijing, with four deaths. But health workers in the capital have told the BBC that at least 100 people have been infected. PRC health authorities announced on Tuesday that the rate of new cases in Guangdong had more than halved in the past month. However, a PRC military doctor, Jiang Yanyong, has taken the highly unusual step of publicly contradicting the authorities, claiming that at least nine people had died in Beijing's four military hospitals alone. According to official figures, 103 people have now died in 32 countries, half of them in the PRC.

"PRC SARS Cover-Up" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"SARS Status" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"SARS PRC-Hong Kong Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

11. SARS Situation

There is a very real possibility that the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus could continue to spread and evolve into a "major health threat," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "Currently there are no adequate therapies and no adequate vaccines available," Fauci told the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions. He added that this new virus is unlike anything he's seen. SARS is believed to be caused by a type of coronavirus, which is only a single strand of RNA (ribonucleic acid). This point is of particular concern among the medical community because its structure makes it very easy to mutate. "SARS has the potential to spread quickly, we've seen that," said Julie Gerberding, director for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It also has the potential to spread globally, we've seen that." Gerberding testified there is no known effective treatment for SARS.

"SARS as Mutant Cold Virus" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

"PRC SARS Data" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"SARS Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

"SARS Cockroach Theory" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

"SARS Global Fatalities" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

"PRC Response to SARS Scare" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

Japan

1. Japan's Position on DPRK's Withdrawal from NPT

As a three-month waiting period DPRK had to observe to officially withdraw from the NPT ended Thursday, Japan refused to acknowledge the validity of its nuclear ambitions. But it was also trying to walk a fine line and keep from provoking a government that boasts of its nuclear ambitions. "We do not think there is an international consensus that (DPRK) left the treaty," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said. Under the provisions of the NPT, signatory nations wishing to leave the pact are required to notify the UN Security Council and all the other signatories of their intention three months in advance. But some countries say DPRK has not notified the other signatories, as required, and thus has not officially withdrawn. A senior Foreign Ministry official said nothing will change after Thursday, an apparent attempt to keep the legal debate over its withdrawal from further stoking the North. "Japan's Position on DPRK's Withdrawal from NPT" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, JAPAN) "Japan on DPRK NPT Withdrawal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

2. Japan's Role in Iraq War

Japan unveiled on April 11, 2003 a framework for humanitarian aid to Iraq that sets a limit of \$100 million on financial support for international organizations. The government immediately allocated \$25 million worth of assistance to the World Food Program, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNICEF. The government will give the World Food Program \$11.5 million so it can buy 7,000 tons of pulses and 10,000 tons of rice from Japan. Japan will also extend \$8 million to the ICRC and \$5 million to UNICEF to cover costs for medical supplies, food, and water facilities repairs. With the \$5 million emergency aid package for three international organizations unveiled last month, Japan's total aid now comes to \$30 million. Foreign Minister Kawaguchi said the government will decide how to allocate the remaining \$70 million after considering the situation in Iraq.

"Japan's Role in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, JAPAN)

"Japan's Role in Iraq War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, JAPAN) "Japan's Role in Iraq War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, JAPAN)

"Japan's Role in Iraq War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, JAPAN)

"Japan's Role in Iraq War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

3. Japan's Position over Iraq's Crisis

Iraq should surrender soon before the number of war victims grows further, Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters at his office, reiterating that Tokyo is prepared to do its utmost to help rehabilitate postwar Iraq. "It would be better for Iraqi forces to make a decision early as the situation has come to this point," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda, the top government spokesman, separately told reporters. "I hope that damage will be contained to as light as possible," Fukuda said. Reporting that between 2,000 and 3,000 Iraqi fighters were killed in the foray into Baghdad, the first since the start of the war on March 20, U.S. officials said Sunday that more incursions into the capital will follow.

"Japan's Position over Iraq's Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, JAPAN)

4. Japan Anti-War Sentiment

Japan's opposition lawmakers urged the US and Britain to end the Iraq war during a rally Tuesday at a Diet members' office building. "The use of force seems to solve situations but it actually just leads to new conflicts and terrorism," said Yukio Ubukata, a House of Representatives member of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). The rally, attended by about 200 people from civic groups and labor unions, was intended to press the government to scrap legislation on contingencies in case of foreign attacks on Japan. Lower House member Seiken Akamine of the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) criticized the government and the ruling coalition parties for trying to pass the war legislation "at a time when the (Japanese) people are feeling pain in their heart due to the Iraq war."
"Japan Anti-War Sentiment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, JAPAN)

5. Japan on Iraq Reconstruction

Japan is prepared to contribute up to US\$100 million in emergency humanitarian aid for people affected by the war in Iraq, its foreign minister announced Wednesday. Japan has earmarked US\$25 million for 10,000 tons of rice and 7,000 tons of other grains, along with medical supplies and other aid for people in Iraq and neighboring countries affected by the conflict, Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said. She said Japan is prepared to set aside as much as US\$100 million in total, although details have yet to be worked out. The assistance is in response to an appeal from the United Nations for US\$2.2 billion in emergency aid and a smaller request from the Red Cross.

"Japan on Iraq Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

"US on Japan's Role in Iraq Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, JAPAN)

"Japan on Iraq Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

"Japan's Position on Post-Conflict in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, JAPAN)

"Japan on Iraq Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, US)

6. Japan Air Missile Defense System

Japanese Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba refused last Friday to rule out the possibility of Japan deploying the Patriot PAC-3, the latest version of the US-developed air-defense missile system. "The issue should be discussed from the viewpoint of what the nation's missile defense should be, which includes cost-effectiveness as well as how to position it in our self-defense policy and what will be most suitable (as a missile defense system)," Ishiba told a regular news conference. He added that concrete debate has not yet begun over the possible deployment of the Patriot PAC-3. Yet Ishiba voiced caution on the matter. "I think we will have to wait before making final judgment (on whether the PAC-3 will be effective in Japan's missile defense)." Yoshimitsu Tsumagari, the Air Self-Defense Forces (ASDF) chief of staff, said later in the day that the ASDF is now collecting information about the PAC-3 "for study."
"Japan Air Missile Defense System" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 8, JAPAN)

7. Japan-PRC Relations

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Naoto Kan will meet with Chinese President Hu Jintao on April 16 in Beijing, an executive lawmaker of the party said Tuesday. The meeting was arranged as the PRC continues to give the cold shoulder to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi over his repeated visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine. "It will be meaningful to meet the new Chinese leader," the DPJ lawmaker said after party executives met and approved the trip. Kan's meeting with Hu would coincide with a regular Diet question-and-answer session between Koizumi and political leaders, meaning Kan will miss an opportunity to go face to face with the prime minister.

"Japan-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, JAPAN)

8. Japan's New Military Plane

Japan's aerospace industry is set for a new lease on life in the form of a project to develop the next generation of patrol and transport planes for the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), government sources said. And civil aviation spinoffs may not be far behind. An industry group led by Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd. is designing the transport aircraft code-named CX for the Air SDF and the PX patrol plane for the Maritime SDF. The two aircraft are to enter service in four years. The aircraft will replace the C-1 tactical transport plane and the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft, respectively. The two existing types begin to reach the end of their service lives in fiscal 2010. The project, which is part of the national defense program the government outlined in 1995, represents the first opportunity in three decades for Japanese industry to develop large aircraft.

"Japan's New Military Plane" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, JAPAN)

9. Japanese Logistic Support for US

A Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer with the advanced Aegis air-defense system left for the Indian Ocean on Thursday as part of Japan's support for US-led counter-terrorism military operations mainly in Afghanistan. The 7,250-ton Kongou left Sasebo base in Nagasaki Prefecture together with the 4,550-ton destroyer Ariake and 8,150-ton support vessel Hamanasu in line with a special antiterrorism law enacted in 2001. The Kongou, the Ariake and the Hamanasu, carrying a total of 580 crew members, will replace the Kirishima, another Aegis destroyer, and two other vessels, government officials said.

"Japanese Logistic Support for US" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, JAPAN)

"Japanese Logistic Support for US" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

10. Japan Human Shields in Iraq

Jamila Takahashi, who was in Baghdad to coordinate the activities of Japanese "human shields" protesting the US-led war on Iraq, said Sunday she wants to tell the world about the horrors of war. Takahashi, 62, left Iraq for Syria on Sunday evening. "I fully realized the misery of war, as I saw children whose hands have been blown off and residents dying right before my eyes," she said. "I decided to leave the country to tell others about the situation in Iraq and the activities of the shields, and to call for peace." Takahashi and the human shields made daily visits to Baghdad hospitals starting in late March, where they saw the wounded being treated, she said, adding that Iraqi authorities arranged transportation for their visits. "I never felt my life was in danger," she said. "The facilities at which the shields are present were not attacked, and so I think we have been effective in protecting the people's lifelines." Asked to respond to criticism that acting as human shields risks the lives of participants, Takahashi said, "Is there any other means to stop the war? We are calling only on those people who can take responsibility for risking their lives to take part."

"Japan Human Shields in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, JAPAN)

"Japan Human Shields in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

11. Japan Radicals US Base attack

A group of Japanese leftist radicals protesting the US-led war against Iraq has claimed responsibility for firing projectiles at a US military base near Tokyo last week, police said Monday. No one was injured in the incident at Atsugi Naval Air Facility, just south of Tokyo, said Kanagawa state police spokesman, Tsuneo Kosuge. The group, which calls itself the "Revolutionary Workers Association," sent a letter to Japanese media in which it said it acted in protest against the war in Iraq, he said. The group, and its various factions, have been responsible for sporadic attacks in the past. Local residents alerted police late Thursday to two explosions.

"Japan Radicals US Base attack" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, US)

12. Japan Nuclear Response Bill

The Japanese government has drafted a bill stipulating how it should respond to an attack involving nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. The bill states that the government is responsible for combating contamination if the country comes under attack with biological or chemical weapons. This is the first such mention in proposed legislation. Officials said the government will present the bill as early as next week to a special committee in the House of Representatives that has been scrutinizing legislation on how Japan should respond to a military attack. The outline stipulates that the government would have a major role in protecting and rescuing civilians in the event of an attack. According to other measures in the outline, the government would take enforcement measures if civilians do not obey official orders to contribute their supplies or allow the use of their properties. The national government would use its budget to cover all expenditures paid by local governments in protecting Japanese nationals, the outline says. The government would provide compensation if people die or sustain injuries in the course of helping relief activities, it says.

"Japan Nuclear Response Bill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

13. Japan Domestic Politics

As the Diet moves into the second half of its 150-day regular session, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's administration appears headed for more difficult times, politically and economically. Koizumi is fighting an uphill battle in pushing his reform agenda. The package on the table consists of three bills, including one that deals specifically with such attacks. A separate bill would revise the law governing the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). The package is an updated version that includes clearer definitions of "military attack situations." It also includes measures designed to cope with other threats to national security, such as intrusions by armed spy ships into territorial waters and large-scale acts of terrorism. Another major issue is the protection of government-held personal data. The revised bill is welcome in that it would ease restrictions on the media.

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, ROK)

14. Japan Domestic Economics

Its arsenal of traditional tools rendered largely ineffective, the Bank of Japan said today that it would consider taking the unconventional step of buying corporate debt to make it easier for small companies to borrow, and in the process battle deflation. The announcement is the latest in a series of moves by the central bank's new governor, Toshihiko Fukui, responding to pressure from the government to do more to shore up Japan's frail economy. In the month since he took up the bank's top post, Fukui has demonstrated that he is much more willing than his predecessor, Masaru Hayami, to work with lawmakers and to tinker with the central bank's policies. The bank concluded a two-day policy board meeting today, the first of Fukui's tenure, without taking other steps on monetary policy. The bank already sets short-term interest rates effectively at zero and has been pumping extra liquidity into Japan's money markets in various ways for many months, so there is little left in the standard central-bank playbook for it to try.

"Japan Domestic Economics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 9, US)

15. Japan Environment Tax

The Environment Ministry will levy an environment tax even if the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on global warming does not take effect on time, according to Vice Environment Minister Masaharu Nakagawa. "We must make efforts to curb global warming even if the protocol does not come into effect next year," Nakagawa said. The ministry plans to introduce the environment tax in fiscal 2005 if necessary to carry out the nation's commitments under the protocol. Japan is required to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 6 percent from 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012. The pact is expected to become effective before the end of this year, but some authorities have voiced concern over Russia's delay in approving the ratification process.

"Japan Environment Tax" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

Russia Federation

1. Russia on DPRK Guarantee

Russia's defense minister has said that the DPRK should be given a guarantee of its security as a way to resolve a nuclear standoff with the US. Sergei Ivanov, who is in Seoul for talks on the Korean nuclear crisis, said the DPRK should allow UN inspectors back into the country, but that the DPRK's confidence needed to be gained first. Ivanov's comments followed a UN Security Council meeting on Wednesday, at which Russia and the PRC blocked a statement to condemn the DPRK for pulling out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The PRC and Russia appeared to be concerned that UN involvement would only send the DPRK deeper into isolation. Ivanov said that talks with the DPRK were needed to persuade Pyongyang to re-enter the NPT and allow inspectors back.

"Russia on DPRK Guarantee" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 10, US)

2. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Inspections

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov made a fresh plea that the DPRK allow international nuclear inspectors back into its territory as part of diplomatic efforts to solve the Korean nuclear crisis. The suggestion was made Friday when Ivanov called on Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on the first day of his three-day visit here, the Japanese foreign ministry said. Ivanov and Koizumi agreed that the Korean nuclear stand-off should be solved only by "diplomatic and political means," ministry officials said, amid international worries that the DPRK could become the focus of armed conflict after Iraq.

"Russia on DPRK Nuclear Inspections" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

3. Russia on DPRK Economic Sanctions

A top Russian official said on Friday Moscow would review its long-standing policy of opposing international sanctions against the DPRK if Pyongyang developed nuclear weapons. "We will oppose this approach as long as our DPRK colleagues maintain common sense," Interfax news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov as saying. "But Russia will have to seriously consider its position, as the appearance of nuclear weapons in North Korea and the possibility of its using them close to our borders goes categorically against Russia's national interests." Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said in Seoul on Thursday that North Korea might ignore any U.N. decision on its suspected nuclear weapons program.

"Russia on DPRK Economic Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 11, US)

4. US-Russian Ties

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on April 4 that his country will make every endeavor to avoid Russia's involvement into the Iraq crisis. Putin stressed that divergence between Russia and US will render no negative influence on non-proliferation of mass destructive weapons and anti-terrorism efforts. Russia and US will continue cooperating in a series of global crisis, he noted. Putin also said as major nuclear states in the world, the two countries are shouldering "special responsibility" in stabilizing the world. Russia "is working and will work with the United States" to resolve global crisis, said Putin in the report.

"US-Russian Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

5. Russia-PRC Relations

PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing met on April 4 with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy V.Fedotov, who is in PRC for a working visit. The two sides exchanged views on bilateral relations, the Iraq and other international and regional issues of common concern, said the report.

"Russia-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 7, PRC)

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