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United States

1. Rumsfeld DPRK Connection

Fortune Magazine carried an analytical article that opined Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld rarely keeps his opinions to himself. He tends not to compromise with his enemies. And he clearly disdains the DPRK. So it's surprising that there is no clear public record of his views on the controversial 1994 deal in which the U.S. agreed to provide the DPRK with two light-water nuclear reactors in exchange for Pyongyang ending its nuclear weapons program. What's even more surprising about Rumsfeld's silence is that he sat on the board of the company that won a \$200 million contract to provide the design and key components for the reactors. The company is Zurich-based engineering giant ABB, which signed the contract in early 2000, well before Rumsfeld gave up his board seat and joined the Bush administration. Rumsfeld, the only American director on the ABB board from 1990 to early 2001, has never acknowledged that he knew the company was competing for the nuclear contract. In response to questions about his role in the reactor deal, the Defense Secretary's spokeswoman Victoria Clarke told Newsweek in February that "there was no vote on this" and that her boss "does not recall it being brought before the board at any time." But ABB spokesman Bjoern Edlund has stated that "board members were informed about this project." And other ABB officials say there is no way such a large and high-stakes project, involving complex questions of liability, would not have come to the attention of the board. "A written summary would probably have gone to the board before the deal was signed," says Robert Newman, a former president of ABB's U.S. nuclear division who spearheaded the project. "I'm sure they were aware." The full story can be found:

"Rumsfeld DPRK Connection" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US)

2. Canada US Missile Defense

Canada, ending years of inaction, said on April 28, 2003 it would study whether to sign up to a controversial US missile defense system amid signs that long-standing resistance to the idea in Ottawa is fading. The government, deeply split in the past over the concept, has consistently declined to express an opinion about missile defense on the grounds it has not been asked to take part. But ministers and officials now say that sitting on the fence is no longer an option given new security threats in the post-Sept. 11 world and Washington's decision last December to press ahead with the system. "We'll be discussing it and preparing a government approach to it and obviously the primary concern will be how we can enhance security for Canada and Canadians," Foreign Minister Bill Graham told reporters. "Canada US Missile Defense" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, US)

Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Nuclear Weapons Offer

The DPRK last week offered the US a plan to deal with both its nuclear weapons and missile programs, Secretary of State Colin Powell said. However, Powell said the DPRK wanted "something considerable" in exchange for giving up the programs and indicated it would take some time for the US to respond. The offer was made during talks in Beijing last week. "The North Koreans acknowledged a number of things that they were doing and, in effect, said that these are now up for further discussion," Powell told reporters at the State Department. "They did put forward a plan that would ultimately deal with their nuclear capability and their missile activities, but they, of course, expect something considerable in return," he said. "We are studying that plan, we are examining it with our friends and allies," Powell said. "US-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, Japan) "Diplomatic Resolution on DPRK Nuke" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, ROK) "DPRK on US Role in DPRK-US Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US) <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR30.html#item2> "DPRK on DPRK-US Resolution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US) "DPRK Nuclear Disarmament" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US) "DPRK-US Nuclear Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US) <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR29.html#item1> "DPRK Nuclear Weapons Offer" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, US) "DPRK-US-PRC Talks in Beijing" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, ROK) "Respective Countries' Response to Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, ROK) <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR28.html#item8>

2. US DPRK Nuclear Investigation

The White House officials have ordered the nation's intelligence agencies to conduct a review of whether North Korea could produce bomb-grade plutonium - as it says it has done - without detection by the US, according to senior administration officials. The order to the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies that have long monitored the DPRK's nuclear program was prompted by the blunt and direct nature of the DPRK's declaration last week, during negotiations in Beijing, that it was already a nuclear power. It said it had completed reprocessing of 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods that could provide enough plutonium for four to six additional weapons. So far the US has not been able to verify the DPRK's claim to have produced weapons-grade plutonium. "We can't establish that as a matter of fact with our intelligence community, but they said they did it," Powell said. "US DPRK Nuclear Investigation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

3. DPRK on US DPRK Policy

The US moves to stifle the DPRK will be steadily escalated and the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula will never find any solution as long as the former pursues its hostile policy toward the latter. Minju Joson today says this in a signed commentary as regards the DPRK-US talks on the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula held in Beijing. The commentary says: At the talks the DPRK set forth a new bold proposal to clear up bilateral concerns of the DPRK and the US, the parties concerned, at the same time from its stand to peacefully settle the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula at an early date. The US, however, repeated its old assertion that the DPRK should "scrap its nuclear program before dialogue" without advancing any new proposal to settle the issue.

"DPRK Nuclear Stance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US) "DPRK on US DPRK Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

4. ROK Stance on DPRK Unclear

ROK president Roh Moo-hyun, commenting on DPRK's admission in the Beijing talks that it has nuclear weapons, said that the comment should be treated like the negotiation card that it is. Roh told the staff of the Cheong Wa Dae newsletter Cheong Wa Dae Briefing on Wednesday that ROK should not conclude that the situation is exacerbated and take a firm stance. What DPRK says when it is engaged in negotiations could have the nature of negotiation cards or games, he said, adding that ROK should still be prepared. "We should not take everything North Korea says as the truth and act like something big has happened," he said. The president added that ROK and US should take a coordinated, strategic stance to solve the nuclear issue.

"ROK Stance on DPRK Unclear" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, ROK)

5. US-ROK-Japan Multilateral Talks

Senior US envoy James Kelly and Japanese government officials agreed over the weekend to continue close consultations to find a peaceful resolution to the DPRK issue, officials said. The move comes after Pyongyang's admission that it possesses nuclear weapons. Japanese officials were in accord with the US assistant secretary of state's plan to hold working level talks between Tokyo, Washington and Seoul in May to discuss the next move in response to the three-day talks between the US, DPRK and PRC in Beijing last week. Kelly met with Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda and Foreign Ministry Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Director Mitoji Yabunaka at the US ambassador's official residence in Tokyo on Saturday.

"US-Japan-ROK-PRC Relations over DPRK Issues" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, Japan) "US-ROK-Japan Multilateral Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0305/MAY01.html#item2>

6. DPRK-ROK Joint Communiqué

The ROK and the DPRK agreed in Cabinet-level talks early Wednesday to peacefully resolve the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, a joint statement said. "South and North Korea will thoroughly consult each other's position on the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and will continue cooperation to resolve their issue peacefully through dialogue," the joint communiqué said. The joint statement came after the DPRK insisted that the ROK should not meddle in the nuclear standoff, calling it a dispute between itself and the US. The three-day talks had been scheduled to conclude Tuesday but they were extended as the two sides had failed to reach agreement on the wording of the statement.

"Inter Korean Ministerial Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, ROK) "DPRK on Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US) "DPRK-ROK Nuclear Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR30.html#item5>

"DPRK-ROK Joint Communiqué" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US) "Inter Korean Ministerial Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, ROK) "Issues of Inter Korean Ministerial Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, ROK)

<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR28.html#item9>

"DPRK-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, US) "DPRK-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, PRC)

7. Japan-DPRK Diplomatic Establishment

The DPRK raised the establishment of diplomatic relations with Japan as a condition for scrapping its nuclear program in a proposal made in talks with the US last week, a major Japanese newspaper said on Thursday. The Yomiuri Shimbun, quoting a government source, said the DPRK side also demanded guarantees on the DPRK's security and the normalization of US-DPRK ties as pre-conditions for scrapping its nuclear program. In addition it expressed hopes that economic aid would be offered, the Yomiuri said, without specifying by which country.

"Japan-DPRK Diplomatic Establishment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

8. DPRK on Economic Sanctions Consequence

The DPRK said Wednesday that it would regard any US move to seek U.N. sanctions against the communist country as "the green light to a war." The warning came after the ROK and DPRK agreed to try to peacefully resolve the nuclear crisis, though the DPRK has said further talks with the US are useless unless it drops its demand that the DPRK first scrap suspected atomic weapons programs. DPRK says abandoning such programs would leave it defenseless and has in the past said sanctions would be seen as a step toward war.

"DPRK on Economic Sanctions Consequence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

9. Japan-DPRK Relations

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has urged a calm response to the escalating the DPRK nuclear crisis during talks with British counterpart Tony Blair, officials said. Koizumi, who met Blair for three hours in the British prime minister's private apartment at 10 Downing Street, stressed that the DPRK's sometimes bellicose public utterances should not always be taken at face value. "He said that sometimes there are discrepancies between what North Korea told us and what it intended to do, and that we think further analysis is needed," a Japanese official from Koizumi's delegation told reporters.

"Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, US)

10. DPRK-UK Dialogue

Britain held its first ministerial-level talks with the DPRK since Pyongyang sparked a crisis last October by throwing out international weapons inspectors. British Foreign Office Minister Bill Rammell said there had been "progress of sorts" in his discussions with opposite number Choe Su Hon, who said Pyongyang was ready to dismantle its nuclear facilities and readmit inspectors in return for a guarantee that it would not be attacked. But Choe refused to confirm whether the DPRK -- which Wednesday opened its first embassy ever in London -- actually has nuclear weapons, as it claimed last week. "The fact that they have engaged (with Washington) in the talks last week in Beijing and in discussions today is positive and there have been some positive statements," said Rammell after the meeting.

"DPRK-UK Dialogue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

11. DPRK Military

An account of the DPRK's overall capacity was provided to the Senate Armed Services Committee in March by Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, commander of the US military in Korea. LaPorte said DPRK's ground force is the world's third largest, with almost 1 million active duty soldiers and an estimated 6 million reserves. "About 70 percent of the DPRK Army is deployed south of Pyongyang, where they are capable of attacking with very little tactical warning," he said. "The preponderance of the DPRK long range artillery force can strike Seoul from its current location." Still, the ROK army of about 600,000 soldiers is more technologically advanced and better trained than the DPRK's. The ROK also has 37,000 US troops permanently based there to back them up.

"DPRK Military" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

12. ROK-US Relations

The ROK called for "rock-solid" ties with the US in guiding DPRK toward reconciliation and build lasting peace in Northeast Asia. Foreign Minister Yoon Young-Kwan said the strong alliance and close coordination between Seoul and Washington was fundamental to resolving the six-month-old crisis over DPRK's nuclear ambitions. "I have no doubt that the (South Korea)-US alliance will continue to be foundation on which the two nations strive to guide DPRK toward the past of reconciliation and cooperation and to build a lasting peace in Northeast Asia," he said.

"ROK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

13. ROK SARS

The ROK announced its first "probable" case of SARS, a man in his 40s who recently traveled to the PRC. National Institute of Health (NIH) chief Kim Mun-Sik told a televised press conference that the man was in hospital receiving treatment for classic symptoms of the killer disease. "This man is classified as a probable SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) patient," Kim said Tuesday. The man, identified only by his family name Park, returned from the PRC on Monday and was immediately hospitalized with a high fever and pneumonia. The NIH chief said the probable case had been reported to the World Health Organization.

"ROK SARS" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US)

14. DPRK Drug Smuggling

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer has expressed concern over the DPRK's possible role in trafficking drugs to Australia. Downer's comments came after an official from the DPRK's ruling Worker's Party was found on board a state-owned ship accused of bringing A\$80m (US\$50m) worth of heroin into Australia. "Whilst we can't prove that the government made the decision to send this ship... we are concerned that instrumentalities of the government may have been involved in this," Downer said. "We are concerned because the ship is DPRK-owned and it's a totalitarian state, so in effect it is government-owned," he added. Australian intelligence services raided the Pong Su freighter last month, off the country's east coast. The Australian forces seized the heroin and arrested approximately 30 crew members, most of whom are now awaiting trial in Melbourne.

"DPRK Drug Smuggling" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US)

15. ROK Demography

According to new figures, the ROK may have the lowest birth rate in the world. The average ROK woman has less than 1.2 children - well below the rate needed to keep the population at its current size. Experts say that if the trend continues, the ROK could face serious manpower shortages and lower growth. One rural community in central Chungcheong province has been hit by a rapidly dwindling population. Schooldays may be numbered for children in the village of Dongmyun, three hours from the capital. Their school is the last of four in the area. In the past 30 years, younger couples are moving out of the countryside to cities in search of better jobs, and a better lifestyle. But the falling birth rate is evident across the country. More working couples are thinking twice before having a baby. They are put off by the high costs of raising children and the lack of adequate childcare and social welfare facilities. If the downward birth rate trend continues, officials fear that within a decade, the country will face a shrinking workforce on top of a rapidly growing population of elderly.

"ROK Demography" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC-DPRK Relations

During a meeting with Jo Myongrok, first deputy chairman of the DPRK Defense Commission and director general of the Political Bureau of the Korean People's Army, Chinese President Hu Jintao said on April 22 that in recent years, PRC and the DPRK have enhanced understanding, trust, friendship and cooperation by maintaining the tradition of high-level visit exchanges and timely communication on major issues. The two nations, their leading parties and their peoples have established a profound friendship in the long-term revolutionary struggle and socialist construction.

"PRC-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, PRC)

2. PRC-Russia Oil Pipeline

Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov said Tuesday that Russia has opted to build an oil pipeline to the PRC and will leave open the possibility of building a pipeline to carry oil to Japan and beyond, Russian news agencies reported. Kasyanov told reporters that at present, there was enough oil available to fill a planned pipeline leading to the PRC city of Daqing, with an estimated construction cost of some \$2.5 billion. However, it is unclear whether there was a sufficient amount to fill a further planned segment that would lead to the Russian port of Nakhodka, on the Sea of Japan, for transport to Japan, the ROK, the PRC and the Pacific coast of the US.

"PRC-Russia Oil Pipeline" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US)

3. US-PRC Relations

PRC President Hu Jintao talked over the phone with US President George W. Bush on April 26 at the request of the US, according to Chinese Foreign Ministry sources. During the conversation, Bush said he appreciated PRC's contribution to the Korean Peninsular issue. He also agreed to continue negotiations to end the stand-off between the US and the DPRK. Hu said the Beijing talks were a good start and it is important to regional peace and stability to keep nuclear weapons off the Korean Peninsula. The security concerns of the DPRK should also be addressed, he said. While the issue of the DPRK's alleged nuclear program is complicated, Hu said it could be solved, if all involved continue to negotiate in good faith. PRC will continue to push for a peaceful resolution to the stalemate, Hu noted in the report.

"US-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, PRC)

4. PRC-DPRK-US Multilateral Talks

After four days of negative commentary about talks here last week between the DPRK, the US and the PRC, a PRC Foreign Ministry official conducted an unusual briefing for 20 Western diplomats that left a far more positive picture of the meeting, diplomats said tonight. The PRC official suggested that the DPRK offered last week to work out a deal with the US that included dismantling its nuclear program if the US would change its antagonistic attitude toward the DPRK. The DPRK also offered to suspend ballistic missile tests and halt missile exports, said the diplomats, who asked not to be identified. While US officials had previously disclosed the DPRK offer, they had characterized it in far more negative terms. According to US officials, the DPRK had said it would only give up its nuclear weapons and missiles after the US fulfilled a long list of conditions, including full diplomatic relations with both the US and Japan and completion of light-water nuclear reactors.

"PRC on DPRK-US Multilateral Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US) "PRC Calling for Trilateral Nuke Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, PRC) "Beijing Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, PRC) <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR28.html#item14>

5. PRC-ROK DPRK Crisis

PRC President Hu Jintao and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun agreed during a phone conversation on Friday to seek a peaceful solution to a nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula. Roh called Hu and thanked the PRC for its role in bringing together US and DPRK officials in Beijing last week for talks on the DPRK's suspected development of nuclear weapons, Roh's office said in a statement. Both Hu and Roh believed the Beijing talks were "useful," it said. "The two heads of state agreed to continue to cooperate for a peaceful solution to the DPRK nuclear issue, under the belief that the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear-free," the statement said.

"PRC-ROK DPRK Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US)

6. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Admission

The PRC said that the DPRK has never admitted to having nuclear weapons, contrary to US claims. "According to my knowledge, the DPRK (North Korea) has not made such a statement," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said when asked to comment on allegations that the DPRK had confirmed it possessed a nuclear bomb. The admission, according to US sources, came during talks in Beijing which concluded Friday and marked the first meeting between US and DPRK officials since the nuclear crisis erupted six months ago. Liu's statement appeared not to explicitly rule out that the DPRK did admit having a nuclear weapon during the talks.

"PRC on DPRK Nuclear Admission" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US)

7. PRC New SARS Cases

Beijing is likely to continue seeing new cases of SARS at the current high rate of more than 100 a day, a city health chief has said. But officials believe the outbreak is nearing its peak and the rate of infection could start to slow within 10 days. The PRC remains the worst-hit country and 11 new deaths announced there have pushed the worldwide toll over 400. Friday's figures revealed 176 new cases across the PRC, 97 of them in Beijing. The deputy director of Beijing's health department, Liang Wannian, said similar numbers of new infections could be expected in the coming days. "The high pattern of the number of cases will continue for some time. I think it will take a long time for us to eliminate this disease," he said. The death toll in the PRC, where the pneumonia-like virus originated, has now hit 181, with 3,823 people infected. In Hong Kong, eight deaths were announced but just 11 new cases.

"PRC New SARS Cases" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US) "PRC SARS Panic" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US) "SARS Global Outbreak" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0305/MAY01.html#item7>

"PRC SARS Warning" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US) "PRC SARS Medical Coverage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0304/APR30.html#item11>

"SARS Cellphone Rumors Arrests" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US) "PRC SARS Stock Exchange Closures" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

8. PRC SARS Riot

A town on the outskirts of Beijing has been hit by rioting after residents heard of plans to turn an old school into a building for quarantining SARS patients, officials said on Tuesday. The riot erupted on Sunday night in Chagugang, a town of about 32,000 people near the port of Tianjin, 70 km (45 miles) south-east of Beijing. It was the first recorded incident of social unrest over SARS which has so far killed at least 148 people in the PRC mainland. A mob of as many as 2,000 people are said to have set fire to the school building in Chagugang. They also ransacked government offices and overturned cars, reports say. The protesters were rioting at what they said were plans to earmark the abandoned school as a SARS quarantine center. The Health Bureau in nearby Tianjin, which is responsible for the town's medical care, denied it had plans to build a SARS ward in Chagugang.

"PRC SARS Riot" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US)

9. SARS Economic Consequences

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has reduced its forecast for economic growth in the region in 2003 from 5.6% to 5.3%. The impact of the pneumonia-like virus, SARS, and global economic difficulties are behind the reduction, but the ADB also said the economies of the Asia Pacific region will remain what it calls 'the world's economic bright spot.' The ADB said the developing Asian region was still expected to outperform the rest of the world including the US, Japan and the Eurozone. It said this was due to strong domestic demand in the region, improving export performances, and supportive and prudent fiscal and monetary policies. The ADB forecast follows a warning from the World Bank last week that the SARS virus and the aftermath of the war in Iraq are likely to knock almost one-sixth off economic growth in Asia this year.

"SARS Economic Consequences" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US)

10. PRC SARS Domestic Politics

Sixteen government officials in two PRC provinces have been sacked for neglecting their duties in fighting Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), state media said Monday. Seven cadres in Changsha city, in northern Hunan province, were dismissed, including the director of the city's center for disease control and prevention, the center's party secretary and head of the center's disinfecting office, the Legal Daily said. Those sacked also included other employees from the city's health department as well as two officials from the city's price control department.

"PRC SARS Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 28, US)

11. PRC Zhao Ziyang

There has been no official confirmation of the reported death of former Chinese Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang, who tried to avert the Tiananmen massacre in 1989. Zhao, 83, was reported to have died of a heart ailment in a Beijing hospital Monday, PRC sources told Kyodo News on Wednesday. The PRC press, including the state-run Xinhua, has made no mention of Zhao as of Thursday afternoon. A Hong Kong human rights activist said he made calls to Zhao's house on Tuesday and Wednesday, only to be told that he is alive. A PRC source speculated that the government will keep the death secret "for at least a week" so as not to create social tension when the public is already uneasy over the SARS epidemic. Zhao's main legacy is his tragic and ultimately useless emotional appeal to pro-democracy students in Tiananmen Square in mid-May 1989 to quit their protests, just weeks before the student protests were crushed in June. Martial law was imposed in Beijing and Zhao fell from grace. "PRC Zhao Ziyang" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

Japan

1. Japan on DPRK Talks

Japan wants to participate in future multilateral talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis, but does not want to be the go-between to soothe strained transatlantic ties over Iraq, Japanese officials said here. The standoff over Pyongyang's nuclear program and the reconstruction of war-ravaged Iraq will top the agenda for Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's dinner meeting with French President Jacques Chirac, set for 8:00 pm (1800 GMT). Foreign ministry official Jiro Okuyama stated, "We believe that the ideal format is a six-party forum" including the US, the DPRK, the ROK, Russia, and Japan. Japan and the ROK "are major players in east Asia and we believe that the nuclear issue will be best resolved with consultations in such a format," said Okuyama, who is acting as Koizumi's spokesman during his European tour. "Japan on DPRK Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 29, US)

2. Japan-US Relations

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush are expected to meet at the Camp David presidential retreat outside Washington sometime between May 20 and 22, Japanese sources said Wednesday. The two countries are now making the final arrangements for the one-day summit, the first of its kind since September, when Koizumi and Bush met in New York, the sources said. The nuclear standoff with DPRK and the reconstruction of postwar Iraq are expected to be high on the agenda at the upcoming meeting, which will be held before the Group of Eight summit in France on June 1-3.

"Japan-US May Summit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US) "Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, Japan)

3. Japan Role in Post-War Iraq

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Friday followed the declaration by US President George W. Bush that the Iraq war is over by again pledging Japan's support for reconstruction efforts in the Middle east country. "Japan will proactively support the Iraqi people's ambition to rise to establish a country under a free environment," said Koizumi, who has given the US-led war his full backing. The prime minister was speaking with reporters in a hotel here on the final leg of an eight-day European trip that runs through Saturday. On the issue of Saddam Hussein's alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction -- an issue used by Bush to justify the war -- Koizumi said, "Now (people concerned) are searching for them. I believe they will discover some sooner or later."

"Japan Role in Post-War Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US) "Japan's Role in Iraq Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, Japan)

"Japan Role in Post-War Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 30, US)

4. Japan's Diplomacy in the Middle East

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi urged Palestinian leaders Tuesday to promote the peace process based on a plan to be presented by the US, and asked President Yasser Arafat to support Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas. Arafat, whom Kawaguchi met despite international pressure to refrain from doing so, promised his full support to the Abbas Cabinet, and in separate talks Abbas conveyed his commitment to reaching a final peace accord with Israel, a Japanese official told reporters. In her meeting with Abbas, Kawaguchi pledged some \$22.25 million in aid to the Palestinians to support the renewed peace drive. It consists of \$12.9 million in humanitarian aid, \$7.85 million for reconstruction and \$1.5 million for a joint Israeli-Palestinian project to improve waste-disposal facilities and other confidence-building plans.

"Japan's Diplomacy in the Middle East" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, Japan)

"Japan's Diplomacy in the Middle East" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, Japan)

5. Japan Missile Defense Plan

As concerns mount over the threat posed by the DPRK, the debate over Japan introducing missile defense systems is heating up. Japan has been conducting research with the US on such a system since 1999. The government has, however, also decided to study the introduction of the missile defense system based on the Aegis destroyer, separate from the joint research with the US. This research is going ahead because the US has decided to deploy Aegis-based missile defense starting in 2004. The Defense Agency is now studying the introduction of two types of system to knock down incoming ballistic missiles. One is a sea-based system and makes use of Aegis-equipped destroyers; the other is a ground-based PAC-3 system, an advanced version of the Patriot missile defense system. With the two proposals in mind, the agency is preparing its budget requests for fiscal 2004.

"Japan Constitution Revision" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, Japan)

6. Japan Constitution Revision

The dominant Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) aims to amend the Japanese Constitution to state in explicit terms the legitimacy of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF), party lawmakers said. The party's Research Commission on the Constitution will formulate an outline for a draft amendment during the current Diet session, which is scheduled to end in June. The panel also envisages an outline enabling the SDF to take part in UN peacekeeping activities to do away with the ban on exercising its right to collective-self defense or fighting back against a foreign military attack on an ally of Japan, the sources said. An LDP member of the House of Representatives Research Commission on the Constitution, which was established in 2000, has asked political parties to propose their draft amendments so that the panel will discuss the matter based on the proposals. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) has worked out a draft and the Liberal Party, another opposition party, has released a policy statement saying it will seek revision of the Constitution.

"Japan Constitution Revision" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, Japan)

7. Japan Domestic Economy

Jolted by tumbling stock prices and the economic fallout from the SARS virus, the Bank of Japan's monetary policy board said today that it would flood the markets with yet more cash and expand the range of collateral that it accepts for loans. The moves are the latest in a series of incremental steps taken by the central bank's new governor, Toshihiko Fukui, who took office in mid-March. The measures are unlikely to provide any significant stimulus to the economy or relief to the nation's struggling banks, but Fukui is under pressure from the government to find ways to help halt the long slide in Japanese asset prices. Unlike his predecessor, Masaru Hayami, who resisted direct pressure from the government, Fukui has agreed to cooperate with lawmakers as much as he can. To that end, the central bank said today that it would begin accepting bank loans that had been turned over to the government-backed Industrial Revitalization Corporation as collateral for new lending.

"Japan Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

8. Japan DPRK Satellite Surveillance

A Finnish astronomer has photographed Japanese satellites spying on the DPRK despite Japan's efforts to keep details about them secret, a group of amateur astronomers said Friday. Petteri Kankaro, 26, took photos that clearly show trails of the two satellites moving at high speed through the night sky, suggesting it would also be easy for the DPRK to determine their orbits, they said. Japan's first spy satellites were launched March 28 as part of efforts to keep tabs on the DPRK. The satellites' orbits were also released April 1 by the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration. It said the satellites, designated 03009A and 03009B, orbit the Earth 15 times a day at altitudes of 485 to 510 km.

"Japan DPRK Satellite Surveillance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US)

9. Japan-India DPRK Relations

Japan, which slapped economic sanctions on India for its 1998 nuclear tests, is sending its defense minister to rope in New Delhi for a diplomatic offensive against the DPRK, diplomats said. Japanese Defence Agency Director General Shigeru Ishiba was to arrive Saturday for talks with his Indian counterpart George Fernandes on regional and international issues, they said. Ishiba's trip comes on the heels of a visit by French Defence Minister Michele Alliot-Marie, who spoke of the need for a "multipolar" world after the Iraq war, and coincides with a visit by top Vietnamese leader Nong Duc Manh. "China, Russia, South Korea and the US are the key players in the DPRK nuclear crisis but as Japan is directly threatened by any such weapons Pyongyang may possess, Tokyo would want to build a world opinion on the issue," said a senior diplomat who wished not to be named. "And thus Ishiba's visit to New Delhi has immense importance because India is a key part of this international community." Japan, India's largest donor of overseas aid, lifted the sanctions after the terror attacks on the US of September 11, 2001.

"Japan-India DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 2, US)

10. Japan DPRK Spy Ship

A DPRK spy ship that sank in the East China Sea in December 2001 after a shootout with Japanese patrol vessels will be exhibited in Kagoshima on May 17 and 18 and in Tokyo in June, the Japan Coast Guard said Thursday. The exhibit will include items found on the vessel after it was raised and taken to Japan, including some weapons, a small boat and a water scooter for landing, coast guard officials said. The exhibition in Kagoshima will be held at the private dockyard where the ship is currently located, and the number of visitors will be limited to 3,000. Tickets can be obtained on a first-come, first-served basis by sending a postcard application to the Japan Coast Guard Association's southern Kyushu regional headquarters, the officials said. The exhibits will be shown at the Museum of Maritime Science in Shinagawa Ward, Tokyo, in early June.

"Japan DPRK Spy Ship" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, US)

11. Japan-British Relations

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and British counterpart Tony Blair reaffirmed in a meeting Saturday that the international community should work together in rebuilding postwar Iraq, with the involvement of the United Nations. The two leaders also agreed that they, as leaders of nations that have traditionally backed the United States, will urge US President George W. Bush to support a substantial role for the UN. According to Japanese briefing officials, Koizumi told Blair that "it was the correct decision on the part of the British government" to send troops to participate in the war in Iraq, even though there were casualties. Blair, on the other hand, gave high marks to Koizumi for declaring Tokyo's support for Bush right after US troops opened fire. Blair said he and Bush agreed that Koizumi had made the right decision. On the issue of reconstruction of postwar Iraq, Blair was quoted as telling Koizumi that there was a need to convince Washington of the practical merits of including the U.N. in the reconstruction efforts.

"Japan-British Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, Japan)

12. Japan-Germany Relations

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder were in general agreement Wednesday on the importance of having the United Nations involved in an international effort to rebuild postwar Iraq and the need for diplomatic resolution of the DPRK crisis. Schroeder told Koizumi United Nations leadership in the reconstruction process was necessary to give legitimacy to the new government of Iraq and said Germany would support such an initiative. Koizumi told Schroeder he believes the policy dispute between the United States and Germany on Iraq is temporary, assuring him, "it is more important to bring about international harmony in the reconstruction process."

"Japan-Germany Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 1, Japan)

[\(return to top\)](#)

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