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United States

1. Pakistan on DPRK Nuclear Devices

Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist who sold nuclear technology around the world, has told his interrogators that during a trip to the DPRK five years ago he was taken to a secret underground nuclear plant and shown what he described as three nuclear devices, according to Asian and US officials who have been briefed by the Pakistanis.

"Pakistan on DPRK Nuclear Devices" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

2. US on DPRK Nuclear Weapons

US Vice President Dick Cheney warned in the PRC Thursday that failure to contain the DPRK's nuclear weapons program could trigger a new arms race that could sweep across Asia. He was bringing the same message to the ROK, arriving here in the middle of a national election on his final stop on a weeklong tour of the region. "US on DPRK Nuclear Weapons" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

3. US Cheney PRC Arrival

US Vice President Dick Cheney arrived in Beijing for his first-ever official visit to the PRC which was expected to focus heavily on the Taiwan issue. He is scheduled to meet with his counterpart Vice President Zeng Qinghong later Tuesday before meetings with Premier Wen Jiabao, President Hu Jintao and military chief Jiang Zemin Wednesday.

"US Cheney PRC Arrival" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

4. US-DPRK Joint MIA Search

The US and the DPRK have resumed a joint-search for the remains of American soldiers missing in action during the 1950-53 Korean War, the Pentagon said. Both countries have agreed to keep the remains issue separate from the nuclear problem, which is being addressed in six-nation regional talks.

"US-DPRK Joint MIA Search" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK Working Groups

The US will raise the issue of the DPRK's alleged uranium enrichment for nuclear arms as a priority at a proposed six-party working group meeting, a senior US official said in a recent interview. The US official said it may be difficult to hold a proposed working group meeting in April.

"DPRK Working Groups" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

2. ROK Parliamentary Election

The ROK began a new political era on Friday after a liberal party won a major election victory that ended conservative control of parliament and gave a vote of support to the impeached president. The Uri Party captured a majority in Thursday's election on a groundswell of support for President Roh Moo-hyun, tripling its seats.

"ROK Parliamentary Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 16, 2004)

"ROK Parliamentary Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

"ROK Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

"ROK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 16, 2004)

3. ROK on Iraq Reconstruction

The ROK plans to send 3,000 troops to Iraq by June. Those soldiers, on top of about 600 already in Iraq, will make the ROK's the third-largest national force in Iraq, after the US and Britain, and will amount to this country's biggest military expedition since the Vietnam War.

"ROK on Iraq Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

4. DPRK Domestic Politics

The DPRK's No. 2 leader Jang Song-thaek was demoted last month over his criticism toward the DPRK's economic reform policies, a Japanese newspaper said Tuesday.

"DPRK Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

5. DPRK Economic Development

The DPRK's first 24-hour convenience store has opened in Pyongyang. The store sells bread, milk, beer, cigarettes and flowers as well as small furniture items at prices higher than ordinary stores in Pyongyang. The shop opened recently in Munsu-dong, a neighborhood densely populated with Pyongyang's foreign residents.

"DPRK Economic Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

6. Russia on DPRK Railway Link

Russia will not pressure the DPRK to help promote a proposed connection between the Trans-Korea Railway (TKR) and the Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR), Russian Ambassador to the ROK Teymuraz O. Ramishvili said Tuesday. Ramishvili said the proposed link between the TKR and TSR should be resolved through a diplomatic compromise rather than external pressure.

"Russia on DPRK Railway Link" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

7. US DMZ Presence

The US military will relinquish a key outpost along the tense frontier with the DPRK this year as part of a force reshuffle on the divided Korean Peninsula, a US military official said Tuesday. The turnover of Observation Post Ouellette means that US troops will no longer patrol the tense border, except for a small contingent at the truce village of Panmunjom. Duties will be handed over to the ROK. "US DMZ Presence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC on Taiwan Presidential Elections

The PRC launched its biggest barrage against Taiwan since the island's presidential election last month, warning against any move towards independence from the mainland. While a ranking government spokesman declared the PRC's lack of faith in president-reelect Chen Shui-bian, top leaders sought to enlist US support on the issue in talks with visiting US Vice President Dick Cheney.

"PRC on Taiwan Presidential Elections" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

2. PRC UN Human Rights Censure

The PRC's wariness of the internet has led to abuses, the US says the PRC has evaded censure on its human rights record after the UN's Commission on Human Rights blocked a vote on a resolution criticizing Beijing. The US, which sponsored the resolution, wanted the UN to condemn the PRC for restrictions on freedom of assembly and expression. But 28 member states sided with the PRC against the motion, with 16 voting with the US and nine abstentions.

"PRC UN Human Rights Censure" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

3. Hong Kong Democratic Reform

Pro-democracy lawmakers say they will use a rare meeting with Hong Kong's leader to demand an explanation for his submission to that the territory is not ready for universal suffrage. Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa will meet 21 pro-democracy legislators a day after telling the PRC in a report that the former British colony should have universal suffrage, but not yet.

"Hong Kong Democratic Reform" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 16, 2004)

"Hong Kong Democratization" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

4. Cheney PRC Visit

US Vice President Dick Cheney has underlined US hopes for greater efforts by the PRC to end the DPRK's nuclear weapons program by presenting the PRC with new evidence suggesting the DPRK has already built some atomic bombs. "Time is not necessarily on our side ... We think it's important to move forward aggressively," a senior US official stated after talks between Cheney and top PRC leaders in Beijing on Wednesday.

"Cheney PRC Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

5. US-Taiwan Relations

The Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is closely monitoring US Vice President Dick Cheney's current visit to the PRC. Cheney arrived in Beijing that day on the second leg of an East Asian tour after a four-day trip to Tokyo. Shih said the Bush administration fully understands Taiwan's concern about Cheney's Beijing visit.

"US-Taiwan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

6. Taiwan PAC-3 Anti-Missile Purchase

Taiwan will buy advanced anti-missile systems from the US in June to counter the threat from hundreds of warheads pointed at them by the PRC. The defense ministry plans to buy anti-missile weapons, including six Patriot PAC-3 missiles, worth T\$100 billion (\$3 billion). The order is part of a huge weapons deal offered by President Bush to Taiwan in 2001.

"Taiwan PAC-3 Anti-Missile Purchase" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

7. PRC Nuclear Materials Export

The PRC is set to join a multilateral group which controls the export of nuclear materials and technology. The PRC also attended as an observer for the first time at a meeting in Paris in February of the Missile Technology Control Regime, another global institution aimed at preventing exports to countries outside the group's safeguards.

"PRC Nuclear Materials Export" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

8. PRC-Canada Relations

The PRC warned Canada it was fanning separatism and making a "drastic departure" in policy after Prime Minister Paul Martin agreed to meet Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. In a strongly worded statement, the PRC embassy in Ottawa pointedly compared the Tibetan issue with Canada's past struggle to prevent francophone Quebec province going it alone.

"PRC-Canada Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

Japan

1. Iraq Japanese Hostage Recovery

Three Japanese held hostage in Iraq for a week were resting in Dubai Friday night from their ordeal after arriving in the Gulf emirate to an emotional welcome from Japanese reporters who got only a glimpse of them Noriaki Imai, 18, Nahoko Takato, 34, and Soichiro Koriyama, 32, were undergoing medical check-ups at the American Hospital here and reported to be "relatively fine" by the Japanese official who headed a Amman-based task force in charge of seeking their release.

"Iraq Japanese Hostage Recovery" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 16, 2004)

"Japan on Iraq Hostage Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

"Iraq Japan Abductions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

"Iraq Japan Abductions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

"Iraq PRC Hostage Release" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

"Iraq Japanese Hostage Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 13, 2004)

2. DPRK Japan Abduction Reunion

The relatives of five former Japanese abductees may come to Japan, possibly by this summer. According to Hideshi Takesada, professor at the Defense Agency's National Institute for Defense Studies (NIDS), the DPRK is keen to work toward establishing diplomatic ties, and is aware that a resolution of the abduction issue is key.

"DPRK Japan Abduction Reunion" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 16, 2004)

3. Japan Yasukuni Shrine Controversy

The Fukuoka District Court ruled on April 7 that Junichiro Koizumi violated the Constitution by his first visit in August 2001 to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine as prime minister. At the same time, the court rejected a claim for compensation by 211 plaintiffs who were each seeking 100,000 yen on grounds the Yasukuni visit could be interpreted as an invasion of freedom of religion

"Japan Yasukuni Shrine Controversy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 15, 2004)

4. Japan New UN Envoy

The Japanese government said that it will appoint Shinichi Kitaoka, a University of Tokyo professor and a foreign policy adviser to the government, as an ambassador to the UN. Kitaoka's appointment is part of the Foreign Ministry's effort to recruit outside experts to serve as overseas envoys, government sources said. Kitaoka, 55, will replace Yoshiyuki Motomura, one of the two deputy permanent representatives to the UN. There are three Japanese ambassadors to the UN, headed by Koichi Haraguchi, the permanent representative.

"Japan New UN Envoy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

5. Japan Constitutional Revision

New Komeito leader Takenori Kanzaki suggested he would support a constitutional amendment that would define the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). "The SDF are thought of overseas as the military, and we could stipulate them in the Constitution," Kanzaki expressed.

"Japan Constitutional Revision" (NAPSNet Daily Report, April 14, 2004)

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

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