

DPRK Timeline of Recent Events part 2

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April 19, 2004

- Kim Jong-Il began a secret visit to the PRC for talks with PRC leaders, including President Hu Jintao, regarding the DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions and its economy.

April 16, 2004

- In an effort to improve diplomatic ties, the DPRK may send relatives of five former Japanese abductees to Japan, possibly by this summer.

April 15, 2004

- The DPRK's first 24-hour convenience store has opened in Pyongyang. Diplomats of foreign missions and staffers of international organizations will be the main customers of the store that sells bread, milk, beer, cigarettes and flowers.

April 14, 2004

- The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (OPHRD) named the DPRK as one of the 12 countries with the lowest standard of human rights in the world.

April 13, 2004

- Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist who sold nuclear technology around the world, has told interrogators that during a trip to the DPRK five years ago he was shown what he described as three nuclear devices.
- The DPRK have resumed a joint-search for the remains of American soldiers missing in action during the 1950-53 Korean War.
- DPRK's No. 2 leader Jang Song-thaek was demoted last month over his criticism toward the DPRK's economic reform policies.
- US military will relinquish a key outpost, Observation Post Ouellette, along the DMZ as part of a

force reshuffle. Duties will be handed over to the ROK.

April 12, 2004

- The ROK and DPRK have agreed to operate trains on two inter-Korean rails now under construction on the peninsula's east and west coasts between 8 am and 5 pm if they are connected across the demilitarized zone.
- Libya said that it will end all military trade with North Korea and convert its Scud-B missiles, limiting its firing range.
- Diplomatic sources and senior officials with expertise on the DPRK said yesterday that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is planning a rare trip out of his country to visit the PRC.

April 9, 2004

- The DPRK has completely abolished its system of food rationing as part of a broad-based macroeconomic policy reform that began on July 1, 2002.
- DPRK has replaced its trade minister as the impoverished communist country appeared to bring younger economic technocrats into its Cabinet, officials said Friday. New Trade Minister Rim Kyong Man replaced Ri Kwang Keun.

April 8, 2004

- The European Union (EU), backed by countries including the US, expressed concern on Thursday at reports of grave and systematic abuses in the DPRK, including "infanticide in prison and labor camps."
- Two teams of specialists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command located in Hawaii deployed today to the DPRK to recover remains believed to be those of American soldiers missing in action from the Korean War. This mission will mark the first time JPAC has ever supplied its teams via the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

April 7, 2004

- A UN expert may soon be appointed for the first time to investigate claims that the DPRK is testing chemical weapons on political prisoners and other allegations of human rights abuses.
- The DPRK has urged South Koreans to vote against "conservative forces" in next week's general election, in what amounts to a de facto endorsement of president Roh Moo-hyun and his supporters' left-of-centre Uri party.

April 6, 2004

- The ROK sent a proposal Tuesday to the DPRK calling for the resumption of rapprochement talks stalled over US-ROK military drills, officials said.
- Japan's ruling party coalition jointly proposed legislation that would ban ships from certain countries from entering Japanese ports. The law is said to target DPRK vessels.
- Australia has told the DPRK that ties between the two nations depend on progress in resolving a 17-month standoff over the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs.

April 5, 2004

- Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Monday denied that last week's meeting between senior members of his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and DPRK officials will adversely affect future negotiations between Japan and the DPRK.
- The DPRK told members of Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party that the DPRK is willing to hand over the family members of the five kidnapped Japanese who were sent back to Japan in October 2002.
- An inexperienced ROK official's joke about the DPRK's leader Kim Jong-Il sparked a serious disruption to reunions of separated families from the two Koreas. ROK Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun issued a public apology to the separated families.

April 2, 2004

- Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi criticised Taku Yamasaki, former secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and lawmaker Katsuei Hirasawa, for visiting the PRC in order to make unauthorised overtures to DPRK officials.
- Mitoji Yabunaka, director of the Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau of Japan's Foreign Ministry, ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo Hyuck and James Kelly, US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs plan to hold unofficial talks on the DPRK nuclear issue on April 7 and 8 in the San Francisco.
- A group of 491 elderly South Koreans left for the DPRK by bus Thursday for temporary reunions with their DPRK relatives.

March 31, 2004

- ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon said a DPRK proposal for a nuclear freeze would be unacceptable unless the DPRK shuttered all its nuclear facilities.
- The US is capable of repulsing any swift attack from the DPRK in the Korean peninsula, US General Leon Laporte, military commander in the ROK, stated before a congressional hearing.
- Kang Byong-sop, the DPRK man who leaked evidence that chemical weapons were tested on prisoners, has been handed back to the DPRK by the PRC. Kang confessed the evidence he supplied was in fact faked by his son.

March 29, 2004

- ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon stated that the DPRK remains committed to the six-party nuclear talks after meeting with top PRC diplomats.
- Radio Pyongyang carried a statement that explicitly rejected the US offer put forward in talks aimed at ending the DPRK's nuclear programs.
- The DPRK's only bank in Europe may be forced to shut down due to a lack of business to handle.

March 26th

- The DPRK offered to sell surface-to-surface missiles to the military leadership in Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, in a trade that concerns the US, a State Department official said.

- PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing returned to Beijing late Thursday after a three-day visit to Pyongyang. Li says he has received assurances from the DPRK that it will push ahead for a third round of six-party talks on its nuclear weapons programs.

March 25th

- Kim Jong Il hosted a rare meeting Wednesday with the PRC's foreign minister to discuss the region's nuclear dispute. Li Zhaoxing, who arrived Tuesday in the DPRK capital of Pyongyang, became the first foreign minister from the PRC to visit the DPRK in five years.

March 24th

- The DPRK has hinted at its willingness to take part in a working group for the six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear activities, ROK foreign minister Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday.
- North Koreans held rallies in Pyongyang denouncing the US military for holding annual joint military exercises with the ROK, the DPRK's state-run media reported.
- Japan's Foreign Ministry believes disagreement among DPRK officials on how to address its abduction of Japanese nationals can be blamed for a delay in setting the next round of talks on the abduction issue between the two countries, ruling party lawmakers said Wednesday.

March 23rd

- A PRC delegation led by Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing was received by DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Yong-Il and other ranking officials on arrival at a Pyongyang airport.
- Six technicians from one of the DPRK's most prestigious academic institutions are visiting Syracuse University for discussions on expanding information technology cooperation despite the international row over the North's nuclear arms program.

March 22nd, 2004

- According to Head of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency Mohamed ElBaradei, the United Nations and US are working closely together on a plan for the eventual return of nuclear inspectors to the DPRK

March 18th, 2004

- UN nuclear watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei stated in Washington DC that international inspectors would only return to the DPRK with "comprehensive" rights to examine its atomic program.
- PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing will visit the DPRK from March 23-26 to discuss six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons development program. It will be the visit by a PRC foreign minister in five years.
- The ROK's Constitutional Court will summon President Roh Moo-Hyun to appear in person on March 30, 2004 for a hearing on his impeachment

March 16th, 2004

- The DPRK accused ROK opposition parties of "creating the present state of anarchy and making it

impossible for both sides to have even a safe contact." The DPRK said "instability" makes the ROK an unsafe place to travel.

- The ROK's interim leader, Prime Minister Goh Kun, urged an early resumption of the negotiations between the US, the DPRK and ROK, the PRC, Russia and Japan.

March 15th, 2004

- A new classified intelligence report presented to the White House detailed the extent to which Pakistan's Khan Research Laboratories provided the DPRK with all the equipment and technology it needed to produce uranium-based nuclear weapons. The assessment, by the Central Intelligence Agency, confirms the Bush administration's fears about the accelerated nature of the DPRK's secret uranium weapons program,.

March 12th, 2004

- ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun was suspended from office in an unprecedented impeachment vote that triggered panic in financial markets and deepened political turmoil ahead of next month's general elections.

March 11th, 2004

- The DPRK's nuclear arsenal is designed for self-defense only, but the country is ready for more talks on the issue with the US and other countries, DPRK's parliamentary leader, Choe Thae Bok stated.
- The DPRK dismissed any idea it wanted George W. Bush to lose November's US presidential election, saying Thursday the key for the winner -- Democrat or Republican -- would be to change present US policy toward the DPRK.

March 10th, 2004

- DPRK said Monday that it may insist on the withdrawal of US troops from the ROK as part of a nuclear disarmament deal. The DPRK said it would push the new demands if the US failed to drop its own insistence that the DPRK "completely, verifiably and irreversibly" dismantle its nuclear weapons programs.
- A DPRK parliamentary delegation has left Pyongyang to visit the Czech Republic and Britain, according to the DPRK's official news agency.

March 8th, 2004

- The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization will ask Pyongyang to allow it to remove construction materials and tools for the construction of light-water reactors in the DPRK from the country in a working-level meeting between the two sides to be held this week in the DPRK.

March 4th, 2004

- ROK officials said Thursday that the DPRK still denies having a secret uranium-based program and that other crucial issues - including an agenda for working-group meetings - are up in the air.
- Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi fought off calls Wednesday to impose economic sanctions

against the DPRK over lack of progress on the abduction issue.

- Russian Ambassador to Seoul Teymuraz O. Ramishvili stated at a press conference, "International law does not permit the international community to restrict North Korea's right to develop nuclear resources for peaceful purposes."
- Speeches by the Massachusetts senator have been broadcast on Radio Pyongyang and reported in glowing terms by the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA).

March 3rd, 2004

- Australia appointed an ambassador to the DPRK in recognition of the DPRK's new-found commitment to talks aimed at ending its nuclear programs.

March 2nd, 2004

- The ROK's chief negotiator to six-nation talks aimed at ending the DPRK's nuclear drive said he hoped a first working group meeting on the issue would be held in two weeks.
- The PRC has decided to provide \$50 million USD to help the DPRK build a glass plant near Pyongyang. The financing assistance is the largest single amount of aid from the PRC in recent years. It was pledged by the PRC last October.
- A DPRK delegation arrived in South Korea Tuesday for talks on the construction of cross-border railways and roads and an industrial complex in the DPRK.
- The ROK's government said it would provide the DPRK with 200,000 tons of fertilizer aid. It will also put aside 47 billion won (40 million dollars) from its cooperation fund to help build infrastructure such as roads in an inter-Korean industrial park in the DPRK's Kaesong City.

March 1st, 2004

- Six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear program concluded with agreements for more talks in the future. No future dates were announced.

February 27, 2004

- Six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs have been extended by a day with sessions to take place Saturday.
- US Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard stated that the US will be prepared to offer energy and other basic necessities to the DPRK only after the DPRK makes the commitment to verifiably dismantle its nuclear arms programs.

February 25, 2004

- Six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear weapons program opened.
- DPRK and the US held a two-and-a-half-hour bilateral meeting -- the longest and highest-level known contact since the nuclear standoff began October 2002.

February 24, 2004

- Three separate working groups could be formed at the upcoming six-way nuclear talks if

participants agree to set up the framework to deal with technical details.

- The PRC held separate bilateral meetings with the US and the DPRK Tuesday, a day before six-party talks to resolve the standoff get underway.
- Envoys from the ROK and DPRK met separately for bilateral conversations.
- The DPRK insists that kidnapping of Japanese citizens should not be part of the six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program.
- Diplomatic sources close to the inspection team disclosed that the DPRK had unofficial contact in early February with the International Atomic Energy Agency over the U.N. nuclear watchdog's demand to resume inspections of the DPRK's nuclear facilities.

February 24, 2004

- The ROK will lay out a three-step proposal for freezing, verifying and dismantling all of DPRK's nuclear programs in talks in Beijing.
- ROK's top official on DPRK policy called for the US to "exercise flexibility" during the upcoming six-way talks.
- The six countries involved in the upcoming talks may deploy specialists in the PRC on a permanent basis to improve communication, according to a senior US official.
- Pak Pong-ju, premier of the DPRK Cabinet, met and had a conversation with a delegation of members of the European Parliamentary Assembly from political parties led by Jacques Santer, former president of the European Commission, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall on Sunday.

February 20th, 2004

- The DPRK may propose freezing its nuclear development program at the multilateral talks next week, PRC State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan said Thursday.
- DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan will head the DPRK's delegation to the multilateral talks. The chief delegate to the second round of talks will replace Kim Yong-il, the DPRK's other vice foreign minister and its head negotiator in the first meeting.
- The ROK may propose energy assistance to the DPRK at next week's six-party talks. The ROK is considering offering fuel oil supplies to the DPRK if it agrees to freeze its Yongbyon nuclear complex.

February 19th, 2004

- ROK President Roh Moo-hyun said Wednesday he will invite DPRK leader Kim Jong-il for a summit in Seoul after significant progress is made on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program through multilateral negotiations.

February 18th, 2004:

- The DPRK has canceled what was to be the first civilian inter-Korean event of the year, ROK organizers said yesterday. The DPRK's National Reconciliation Council did not mention plans for the March 1 event in the message it sent Friday, meaning it did not intend to mark the date in a joint manner.

February 6th, 2004:

- The DPRK is prepared to freeze operations of its nuclear complex in Yongbyon in return for a pledge that shipments of heavy fuel oil will resume.
- The DPRK and ROK pledged after ministerial talks to work together for the success of multilateral negotiations.
- The ROK's Foreign Ministry said it has established a task force that will deal exclusively with the DPRK nuclear issue.
- The US hopes the DPRK will promise to dismantle its nuclear weapons program at critical six-nation talks aimed at easing tensions, a top US envoy said.

February 4th, 2004:

- A fresh round of six-nation talks addressing the DPRK's nuclear weapons program was agreed to despite the fact that the two key players -- the US and the DPRK -- still hold widely divergent positions, officials close to the negotiations said.
- The DPRK demanded compensation from the US for freezing its nuclear weapons programs as a first step in resolving the nuclear crisis.

February 3rd, 2004:

- The DPRK agreed to resume six-nation talks on February 25, 2003.
- The US said it hoped a second round of six-way talks on the North Korea crisis would succeed -- but delivered a firm warning that it would not pay its "axis of evil" foe to end its quest for nuclear weapons.
- Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov said he is not expecting any breakthrough in the new round of six-nation talks to address the DPRK's nuclear ambitions.
- Japan and the US reaffirmed that the two countries as well as the ROK will cooperate in their efforts to urge the DPRK to completely dismantle its nuclear arms program.
- A five-member DPRK delegation arrived in South Korea for the 13th inter-Korean ministerial talks, which aim to boost bilateral exchanges and economic cooperation.

February 2nd, 2004:

- The founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, Abdul Qadeer Khan, for decades revered as a national hero, has confessed to leaking nuclear secrets to Iran, Libya and North Korea.
- Members of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) agreed to protest the DPRK's refusal to let it remove trucks and construction equipment from the site of a suspended nuclear power plant construction project, diplomatic sources said.
- Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly met the ROK's Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun and Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon early Monday, a day after meeting Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck.

January 30th, 2004:

- A top US diplomat praised the PRC for its efforts to reconvene negotiations about the DPRK's

nuclear program and expressed hope a new round of six-party talks could be held soon.

- The US said it was concerned about a proposed deal for the DPRK to sell Nigeria ballistic missiles and US officials hinted at the possibility of sanctions against the African nation.

January 29th, 2004:

- The ROK defense ministry has urged the DPRK to disclose and destroy its nuclear weapons program but said there was little hope the DPRK would fully comply.
- Deputy US Secretary of State Richard Armitage arrived in the PRC for a visit that the US embassy said would focus on the year-long DPRK nuclear crisis and Iraq reconstruction. Armitage, who travelled from Japan, told reporters that the US was "extraordinarily grateful" to the PRC for its efforts to organize six-nation talks on the nuclear issue, and hoped there would be a new round next month.
- PRC Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said that the timetable for a second round of six-party talks on the Korean nuclear issue has still not been fixed.

January 28th, 2004:

- US State Department's top East Asia hand James Kelly left for the region, in the latest stage of a grueling six-nation diplomatic bid to end the DPRK nuclear crisis. Kelly flew first to Thailand to take part in a US dialogue with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), before heading to Japan and South Korea for talks with top officials on the nuclear showdown.

January 27th, 2004:

- ROK's Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Ban Ki-moon said that advance agreement on a joint statement should not be mandatory for holding another round of six-nation talks on DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions.
- DPRK officials expressed hope for progress at cabinet-level inter-Korean talks slated for next month, according to the official paper of a pro-Pyongyang body in Japan.

January 26th, 2004:

- The ROK and the DPRK will hold cabinet-level talks next month, which are expected to focus on, among other things, the DPRK's nuclear arms program and cross-border economic projects.
- ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck said that the DPRK should attach no strings to its consent to rejoin six-party talks on its nuclear weapons development.
- The US and the PRC are in dispute over the DPRK's offer to freeze its nuclear activities as part of a solution to its nuclear standoff with the US, making the outlook of a second round of six-party talks bleak.

January 23rd, 2004:

- DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il has told visiting PRC delegation leader Wang Jiarui that he saw "positive moves in relations with Japan", reports say. The statement comes after a team of Japanese diplomats visited Pyongyang.
- The PRC government is stepping up coordination for holding the second round of the six-party

talks on the DPRK nuclear arms issue in light of the DPRK showing a positive attitude towards improving relations with Japan and the US.

- The DPRK is ready to make a deal on its nuclear weapons program but first it wants significant security guarantees and long-term economic aid, the top U.N. envoy to the nation said.

January 22nd, 2004:

- A US spokesman on the DPRK said he was "very hopeful" six-nation talks on dismantling the DPRK's suspected nuclear arms programs could resume soon.
- American nuclear expert who recently visited the DPRK's main nuclear facility said he was not allowed to see enough to make a judgment on the country's nuclear weapons capability.

January 21st, 2004:

- The US, Japan and the ROK opened two days of talks on the latest diplomatic moves to end the DPRK nuclear crisis, overshadowed by revelations about a trip to Pyongyang by a top US nuclear scientist.

January 20th, 2004:

- PRC Communist Party official had a "warm" meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il, the DPRK's official media said.
- Japan, the US and the ROK will hold talks this week in Washington on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said.

January 16th, 2004:

- DPRK officials told a US expert on Korea that they see no urgency in ending the impasse over its nuclear weapons programs because delays will give the country more time to expand its nuclear arsenal.
- Russia and the PRC tried to broker new talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis amid warnings from Pyongyang that every delay gives the DPRK more time to build a bigger and better atomic arsenal.

January 14th, 2004:

- The US said it had made a rare direct call to the DPRK to resume multilateral talks on ending its nuclear weapons development as senior US and PRC officials consulted on how to bring Pyongyang back to the table.
- ROK President Roh Moo-hyun called for patience in the search for an end to the DPRK's nuclear ambitions and said an unofficial US visit to the DPRK last week would help dialogue succeed.
- Senior diplomats from the US and the ROK met to continue consultations on the resumption of multilateral talks to end the stalemate over the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs.
- The ROK said that the US and its allies are discussing what to offer in return for the DPRK's proposal to freeze its nuclear weapons programs.

January 13th, 2004:

- The US and the PRC consulted on possibilities for a second round of six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis as Washington awaited detailed reports from two unofficial US delegations that visited Pyongyang.
- A senior PRC official told Japanese lawmakers that he expected the second round of six-way talks on DPRK nuclear crisis to resume in February, news reports in Japan said.

January 9th, 2004:

- The DPRK said that it would be foolish for the US to expect it to follow the example of "some Middle East countries," an apparent reference to Libya's decision to renounce weapons of mass destruction.
- Russia has been helpful in pressing Iran and the DPRK to address concerns about their nuclear programs, but the US believes it could and should do more to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, a senior US official said.

January 8th, 2004:

- The US will not detail security guarantees it will offer the DPRK until the DPRK proves to the outside world it has abandoned its quest for nuclear weapons.
- The DPRK plans to allow a US group to visit a nuclear complex to prove it is not bluffing about its progress toward making more atomic weapons.
- The ROK and U.S. welcomed an offer from DPRK to end all nuclear development programs, calling the proposal a positive step.

January 7th, 2004:

- The PRC told Asian diplomats it is not convinced of US claims that the DPRK has a clandestine program to enrich uranium for use in nuclear weapons.

January 6th, 2004:

- The ROK is saying nuclear crisis talks could be pushed back to the middle of the year as the DPRK and the US hardened their positions.
- US Secretary of State Colin Powell said he was encouraged by the DPRK's offer not to produce or test nuclear weapons, in unusually upbeat comments which raised fresh hopes for a breakthrough in the crisis.
- An unofficial delegation of Americans flew to the DPRK as part of what one called a visit to increase understanding - and perhaps offset the persisting standoff between the two nations over Pyongyang's nuclear program.

January 5th, 2004:

- Talks on ending the North Korean nuclear standoff were in limbo with the DPRK blaming the impasse on the US' demand for disarmament and the ROK saying it was unlikely a new round of negotiations would get off the ground this month.
- Most officials and analysts agree that the DPRK allowing two US teams to visit Yongbyon represents the DPRK's willingness to speed up negotiations with the US.

- According to Japanese government sources, Japan, the US and the ROK reached an agreement that the DPRK should not be allowed to use nuclear energy even for peaceful purposes as long as Kim Jong Il leads the country.

January 2nd, 2004:

- Fu Ying, head of the Chinese foreign ministry's Asian affairs department, told journalists that "the six countries share the view that the second round of talks should take place at the earliest possible date early next year. The DPRK has the same view...Details concerning the preparation of the second round of six-way talks have not yet been fixed."

December 24th, 2003:

- The US State Department named a new special envoy for negotiations with the DPRK five days after he arrived in Beijing on his first official visit.
- The DPRK can expect global diplomatic heat to be the next "rogue state" to fall into line, now that Libya has come in from the cold by renouncing weapons of mass destruction.

December 23rd, 2003:

- Japan, the US and the ROK have agreed to abandon drawing up an advance draft joint statement that would clarify the DPRK's obligation to end its nuclear weapons program, it has been reported.
- US President George W. Bush swapped views with the PRC's President Hu Jintao on ending the DPRK nuclear crisis, in a telephone call which also touched on mainland tensions over Taiwan, the White House said.

December 22nd, 2003:

- Despite delays that have pushed any possibility of six-party talks with the DPRK to curtail its nuclear arms program into 2004, a senior US official said it was too early to say diplomatic efforts had failed.
- The Bush administration is prepared to outline its "principles" for multilateral security assurances for the DPRK if six-nation talks on the nuclear crisis convene next year, but the administration will not float possible economic or energy incentives at the session.
- Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov said it is "realistic" for the next round of six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions to be held in mid-January.

December 21st, 2003:

- The DPRK said it will never give up its nuclear weapons program unless the US provides economic aid and security assurances.
- The US has insisted it was being pragmatic and flexible in its approach to the DPRK nuclear crisis talks, and again accused the DPRK of delaying the dialogue by establishing preconditions.
- President Roh Moo-hyun said his government will not remain idle if the US tries to resolve the DPRK nuclear crisis "with fists".

December 18th, 2003:

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- President Roh Moo-hyun said his government will not remain idle if the US tries to resolve the DPRK nuclear crisis "with fists".
- The PRC has appointed an ambassador to help resolve the DPRK nuclear issue, a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman said. Ning Fukui, who took up the position about a week ago, is concentrating on "working with his colleagues in the Foreign Ministry to prepare for the next round of six-party talks," ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said.

December 17th, 2003:

- The ROK joined the PRC and the US in resigning itself to the failure of international diplomacy to bring the DPRK to nuclear crisis talks before the end of the year.
- Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun predicted that there would be no major changes in the Roh Moo-hyun administration's "peace and prosperity policy" next year.
- Russia's energy minister, reversing his own remarks made a few months previously, said that North Korea is capable of making nuclear weapons.

December 15th, 2003:

- High-level Bush Administration officials say that the second round of six-party talks will likely be delayed until January 2004 due to DPRK's insistence on its conditions for the talks.

December 12th, 2003:

- A top EU delegate, who arrived in the ROK from talks in the DPRK, said his trip was "very good for all" amid efforts to coax Pyongyang to new six-party nuclear crisis talks.

December 10th, 2003:

- Six-nation talks on resolving the DPRK nuclear crisis are up in the air, the ROK's foreign minister said, after the US rebuffed the communist government's proposal to freeze its atomic weapons program.
- The ROK is on track to overtake the PRC as the largest importer of DPRK goods this year, showing how growing economic ties between the two Koreas are becoming increasingly important to the DPRK's survival.
- Amid a stalemate in multinational efforts to hold the next round of six-nation talks on DPRK's nuclear issue, U.S. is reportedly making its push to stage those talks within this month.
- The DPRK said that it would freeze its nuclear activities if U.S. took the country off its list of state sponsors of terrorism and suspended political, economic and military sanctions against it.

December 9th, 2003:

- The ROK's top envoy to nuclear crisis talks says time is running out for a new round this year in

the strongest indication so far that they will be put off until next year.

December 8th, 2003:

- The US, Japan and the ROK have hammered out a joint draft statement to be adopted at six-nation talks aimed at curbing the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, a top ROK diplomat said.
- The DPRK and the US are getting closer in their positions on the DPRK nuclear issue, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao said.

December 5th, 2003:

- The US denied it was to blame for a diplomatic hitch that could delay six-nation North Korea nuclear talks until next year, saying Pyongyang had demanded major concessions before the dialogue started.

December 4th, 2003:

- Amid growing concerns that a second round of nuclear talks may not be held before the year's end as widely expected, a top U.S. official expressed confidence that the six-party talks aimed at defusing DPRK's nuclear drive will soon take place.
- The DPRK has agreed in principle to a new round of six-way talks aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis in the DPRK.

December 3rd, 2003:

- The US is "ready to go" for six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear crisis, despite signs that a hoped-for December meeting may be pushed back to early next year, a senior US official said.
- The PRC voiced strong support for the establishment of an effective international mechanism to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but remained non-committal on whether it was ready to join a US-backed plan.

December 2nd, 2003:

- DPRK demands and US consultations with China, Japan and the ROK could delay resumption of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program until next year, a Bush administration official said.
- Senior diplomats from the ROK, the US and Japan will meet in Washington to discuss joint strategies ahead of soon-to-be-held multilateral talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program.
- The DPRK says the US should compensate it for halting work on two nuclear reactors there amid efforts to arrange a second round of six-nation talks on the state's atomic weapons program.

November 24th, 2003:

- The US denied that a date for new six-way North Korea nuclear talks had already been set, as a senior Russian official conferred with top US policymakers on the crisis.

November 21st, 2003:

- The Executive Board of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), consisting of the US, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the European Union, given that the conditions necessary for continuing the Light-Water Reactor (LWR) project have not been met by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), has decided to suspend the LWR Project in the DPRK for a period of one year, beginning December 1, 2003.
- Mongolian Prime Minister Nambaryn Enkhbayar told Japanese leaders that he has conveyed Japan's policy on the DPRK to the DPRK's leaders in Pyongyang prior to his trip to Tokyo in an effort to help resolve outstanding security issues surrounding the North.

November 20th, 2003:

- US top DPRK envoy, James Kelly, held prolonged discussions with ROK officials here on efforts to resume six-way nuclear crisis talks with the DPRK.

November 19th, 2003:

- US envoy James Kelly has headed into talks with the PRC's leaders as he seeks consensus on a second round of six-party negotiations on the DPRK's nuclear program.
- The ROK's foreign minister expressed optimism that progress will be able to be made in a new round of six-nation talks aimed at resolving the standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

November 18th, 2003:

- The US is committed to defending the ROK from an attack by the DPRK and would use nuclear forces if needed, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld told the government.
- A top US official on the DPRK has told Japan's foreign minister his talks here had provided a good basis for discussions with the PRC and the ROK on defusing the DPRK nuclear crisis.
- The defense chiefs of the US and ROK have urged the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear weapons drive in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

November 17th, 2003:

- The ROK's top presidential security aide said the second round of six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions would likely take place from December 17-18.

November 14th, 2003:

- DPRK diplomats said yesterday the nation was willing to give up its nuclear deterrent, stop testing and exporting missiles and permit annual inspections as part of a grand bargain with its four neighbors and the US. In exchange, the diplomats said, the DPRK expected written security guarantees and compensation for economic losses suffered by a decision to halt construction of two ROK-made nuclear power plants in the DPRK.
- Working-level military officials of the two Koreas met at the truce village of Panmunjom to discuss the operation of guard posts in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) dividing the Korean Peninsula.

November 13th, 2003:

- The PRC promised to provide the DPRK with fuel oil and food in a move thought to have facilitated an agreement to hold the second round of six-party talks on Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions.

November 12th, 2003:

- A Japanese newspaper reported the United States and the DPRK have agreed to hold a second round of nuclear talks from December 10 to 13 in Beijing, but officials in Seoul and Tokyo said no date has been set yet.

November 7th, 2003:

- The DPRK's threat to seize equipment and technical data from two nuclear power plants being built there is aimed at gaining leverage in future six-nation talks on its nuclear weapons development, a ROK official said.
- The DPRK's envoy in Britain said Pyongyang had a nuclear deterrent ready to use.
- PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi has briefed senior US officials on Beijing's behind-the-scenes drive to convene a new round of six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis.

November 5th, 2003:

- US Secretary of State Colin Powell poured praise on the PRC for delivering the US "message" to the DPRK that the US would not budge in its refusal to solve a nuclear crisis in one-on-one talks with the DPRK.

November 4th, 2003:

- The US has proposed creating a new multilateral peace mechanism on the Korean Peninsula to replace the armistice that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, a newspaper said.
- ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-Kwan said his government wants a one-year suspension, not an end, to a multi-billion dollar energy project in the DPRK.
- Wu Bangguo, chairman of the PRC's parliament, issued upbeat comments on the results of his recent visit to the DPRK, the DPRK's official broadcasting station reported.
- The PRC envoy will visit the ROK next week to discuss a new round of multilateral talks aimed at resolving the DPRK's nuclear crisis, a PRC foreign ministry spokesperson said.

October 31st, 2003:

- PRC envoy Wu Bangguo is heading home after securing the DPRK's agreement "in principle" to continue the six-party negotiations, a move welcomed by the US and the UN.
- The ROK foreign minister said that the DPRK's agreement to new 6-party talks "greatly enhances the prospects for a diplomatic resolution of the nuclear issue."

October 30th, 2003:

- The PRC and the DPRK agreed in principle to hold a new round of six-way talks to defuse a crisis over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, PRC state television said.
- PRC envoy Wu Bangguo told DPRK leaders that dialogue is the only way forward in the nuclear

crisis as his mission to steer the DPRK back to the negotiating table progressed "very well".

October 29th, 2003:

- The PRC's second-ranking politician Wu Bangguo began a three-day visit to the DPRK as signs grow that the DPRK could be lured back to talks on the year-old nuclear crisis.

October 28th, 2003:

- The DPRK is softening its stand on the dispute over its nuclear weapons development and there are hopes that another round of crisis talks will be held in December, top officials in the ROK stated.
- The ROK and DPRK will hold a new round of economic talks 5-8 November in Pyongyang, the Ministry of Unification said.

October 27th, 2003:

- The DPRK may have test-fired a short-range missile into the Sea of Japan for the third time in a week, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported.
- The DPRK said that it would consider the US offer of a written security assurance in return for dismantling its nuclear program, raising hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough in the year-old stand-off.
- The PRC's top legislator Wu Bangguo will head a State delegation to pay an official goodwill visit to the DPRK and hold talks on "important issues".

October 23rd, 2003:

- US President Bush for the first time offered Pyongyang written security assurances from Washington and its partners as he categorically rejected the DPRK's demand for a bilateral non-aggression treaty.
- The PRC said it will dispatch a top envoy to the DPRK next week, signaling a potential breakthrough in the nuclear crisis although optimism is tempered by the regime's rejection of US concessions.

October 22nd, 2003:

- US President George W. Bush said that Washington and its partners were serious about offering the DPRK security guarantees -- a move that Pyongyang has dismissed as "laughable."
- Japan's state broadcaster said the DPRK test-fired another missile, but the ROK said it had no evidence of a second attention-grabbing launch by Pyongyang.

October 21st, 2003:

- The DPRK is believed to have reprocessed some 2,500 nuclear spent fuel rods, or about 30 per cent of 8,000 in its stock to extract plutonium to make atomic bombs, a ROK official said.
- A nuclear-armed DPRK would enable Japan and the ROK to justify possessing their own nuclear weapons and set off an arms race in the Asia-Pacific region, a PRC military analyst said.

October 20th, 2003:

- US President Bush said he is willing to commit to a written guarantee not to attack the DPRK in exchange for steps by the country toward abandoning its nuclear weapons programs.
- The DPRK test-fired an anti-ship missile off its east coast.

October 17th, 2003:

- The DPRK and ROK ended talks in Pyongyang without an agreement on the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear weapons development.
- Moscow and Tokyo turned on the DPRK following its veiled threat to test a nuclear bomb as the ROK dismissed the latest statement from Pyongyang as brinkmanship.

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