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I. United States

1. DPRK Six-Way Talks

The Associated Press (Sang-hun Choe, "NORTH KOREA AGREES TO HOLD NUCLEAR TALKS," Seoul, 02/03/04) and Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA ANNOUNCES NUCLEAR CRISIS TALKS FOR FEB 25," 02/03/04) reported that the DPRK agreed Tuesday to resume six-nation talks on February 25, 2003. The new round of talks, to begin in Beijing, is expected to take up the DPRK's offer to freeze its nuclear programs as a first step toward what the Bush administration hopes will be a complete dismantling of them. "We hope that these talks will be successful," Secretary of State

Colin Powell said in Washington after meeting with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan. While the US is willing to see where the DPRK's proposal leads, its ultimate objective is the elimination of the DPRK's program, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said. "A freeze is not our goal," Boucher said. A State Department official said Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly is expected to head the US delegation. Kim Ryong Song, a DPRK Cabinet councilor who is in Seoul this week for high-level talks with his ROK counterparts, called the DPRK's proposals "fair" and said progress at the Beijing talks hinged on the US' stance. "The outcome of the second round of six-nation talks will depend on how the US thinks about our basic positions, and what measures they bring to the talks," Kim said.

Korean Central News Agency ("KCNA REPORT ON RESUMPTION OF SIX-WAY TALKS," Pyongyang, 02/03/04) reported that "The DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) and the US, the major parties concerned to the six-way talks, and China, the host country, agreed to resume the next round of the six-way talks from 25 February after having a series of discussion. A discussion was made with the parties concerned in this regard.

2. US on DPRK Multilateral Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US WANTS SUCCESS, BUT DELIVERS WARNING ON NEW NORTH KOREA TALKS," Washington, 02/03/04) reported that 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. "We need to discuss the elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons program," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. "That's the context in which anything else is going to take place." "We're not talking financial compensation to get North Korea back into the agreements that they should have been respecting all along." The DPRK had earlier said talks would open on February 25. While sticking to the formula that the US would not reward or pay the DPRK, Boucher did not rule out some sort of compensation to the DPRK from other parties to the talks. "If North Korea changes ... would there be some benefit or frill effect for North Korea? I suppose so," he said. He also added that the US side had not agreed to any preconditions from the DPRK before it agreed attend the talks.

3. ROK on DPRK Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA HAS AGREED TO RESTART TALKS ON ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ON FEBRUARY 25," 02/03/04) reported that Yonhap quoted state-run DPRK radio as saying: "Regarding the next round of six-nation talks, the primary countries involved in the talks -- the DPRK, the US, and the host China -- have held several rounds of consultations and agreed to hold six-nation talks beginning February 25." ROK's Foreign Ministry could not immediately confirm the date and had no comment.

4. Australian Role in DPRK Six-Party Talks?

Radio Australia ("DPRK SAID WILLING TO INCLUDE AUSTRALIA IN NUCLEAR TALKS," Melbourne, 02/03/04) reported that Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer says the DPRK has indicated it is willing to include Australia in any discussions. Downer says the object of the talks is to convince the DPRK to move towards nuclear disarmament. He says an Australian delegation has just returned from Pyongyang. (Downer) I sent a delegation up there to try to get these talks going again, and I must say they got a very good hearing and I'm pretty pleased with what they've reported back to me, which is that apparently the North Koreans will be willing to enter into the six-

party talks again, and pretty soon.

5. Russia on DPRK Six-Way Talks

Kyodo ("RUSSIA EXPECTS NO BREAKTHROUGH IN 6-WAY TALKS ON N. KOREA," Moscow, 02/03/04) reported that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov said Tuesday he is not expecting any breakthrough in the new round of six-nation talks to address the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, Russian media reported. "Of course, one should not expect any breakthrough," Interfax news agency quoted Losyukov as saying. "The positions are too different." Interfax also quoted Losyukov as saying the draft of a joint declaration being considered for adoption at the talks had not been agreed on by the six parties concerned. Losyukov headed Russia's delegation in the first round, but he is set to become ambassador to Japan. On whether he will serve as Russia's top delegate in the upcoming round, he said simply, "If there is such an instruction, I will go."

6. Japan DPRK Economic Sanctions Issue

Kyodo ("JAPAN RULES OUT IMMEDIATE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 02/03/04) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Tuesday (3 February) ruled out the possibility of imposing economic sanctions on North Korea in the near future. "We're not in a situation yet where we should impose economic sanctions" on the DPRK, Koizumi told reporters at his office. "Now is a sensitive time. Various arrangements are being made towards (the next round of) six-nation talks," the premier said.

7. Japan-US on DPRK Nuclear Diplomacy

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, US REAFFIRM COOPERATION TO SOLVE N. KOREA NUKES," Tokyo, 02/03/04) reported that Japan and the US reaffirmed Tuesday 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, Japanese officials said. The two countries also reconfirmed their commitment to boost efforts to help stabilize Iraq, while Japan asked the US to implement the realignment of overseas US forces in a way that reduces the burden on Okinawa Prefecture and maintains the current capabilities of the US military in Japan, the officials said. On the final day of the two-day Japan-US Strategic Dialogue, Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi told US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage that Japan wants the DPRK to completely, irreversibly and verifiably abandon its nuclear arms program, the officials said. He also noted the importance of promoting cooperation among Japan, the US and the ROK to that end, they said. Armitage agreed with Takeuchi's view and said the alliance by the three countries will be maintained, they said.

8. US on DPRK Uranium Enrichment Program

Chosun Ilbo (Lee Jae-hak, "US DISMISSES DENIALS BY NORTH KOREA ON URANIUM," 02/02/04) reported that brushing off a controversy about whether the DPRK has launched a uranium-based nuclear weapons program, a senior US official said yesterday that the US has specific evidence that the program exists. The official's comment to reporters here, on condition that no name be used. "I do have specific evidence, and I don't intend to disclose it. Our assessment of the uranium enrichment did not come from what the North Koreans said." He added, "There is no doubt in the US government; there has been important work going on for a long time, on a significant scale, on uranium enrichment." He said other countries are also interested in uranium enrichment because it is the most easily concealed route to nuclear weapons. "We firmly and quietly want to see some

progress on that as well as on other parts of the problem as the six-party talks unfold," the official continued. "It's something that needs to be dealt with." The official said he was skeptical about the DPRK's willingness to end the program, but pointed to developments in Iran and Libya. The DPRK, he noted, "has some choices."

9. DPRK-ROK Ministerial Talks

Kyodo News ("DPRK DELEGATION ARRIVES IN SEOUL FOR MINISTERIAL TALKS," Seoul, 02/03/04) reported that a five-member DPRK delegation arrived in South Korea on Tuesday 3 February for the 13th inter-Korean ministerial talks, which aim to boost bilateral exchanges and economic cooperation. The delegation, headed by Kim Ryong-song, a cabinet councilor, arrived in Inchon International Airport west of Seoul via Beijing shortly before 3 p.m. local time. At the talks until Friday, the ROK side is expected to urge the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program, ROK officials said. ROK Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun leads the ROK delegation. The inter-Korean talks are to be held amid reports a second round of six-way talks to settle the issue of the DPRK's nuclear arms development program will be held from 25 February. South Korea had been planning to try and talk the North into accepting the second six-party talks. Now, however, the Souths negotiators, headed by Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun, are expected to focus on inter-Korean issues at the talks, which run through Friday.

10. Cross-Straits Relations

The Associated Press (William Foreman, "TAIWAN'S LEADER CALLS FOR DMZ WITH CHINA," Taipei, 02/03/04) reported that Taiwan's leader on Tuesday proposed a demilitarized zone, special envoys and liaison offices with the PRC - this democratic island's biggest security threat. President Chen Shui-bian made his case during his first news conference in more than three years, and he linked his latest proposals to his much-criticized call for a historical March 20 referendum that deals with the PRC relations. Chen said that the referendum - which falls on the same day he seeks re-election - would give voters a chance to decide whether they favor setting up a "peace and stability framework" that would help ease the threat of war with the PRC. Chen said that a DMZ, special envoys and liaison offices could be part of this framework. "We hope that the two sides can work together to create a lasting, peaceful environment for interaction," said Chen, who didn't provide specifics for his new proposals.

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT OFFERS TO TALK TO CHINA," 02/03/04) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian offered to hold talks with the PRC to avoid a military confrontation and dampen a fierce cross-straits row ahead of the island's presidential elections. Chen proposed that the two sides swap representatives and liaison offices, forge closer political ties, set up demilitarized zones and organize exchange visits between members of the rival military forces. He said future talks should be based on "the principle of peace" and that disputes between the two sides must be resolved through peaceful and democratic means. "The use of military means should be banned, and both sides should pledge not to resort to force to settle their differences," he said. The PRC on Tuesday said it had noted Chen's latest comments and was mulling a response.

11. PRC-US on Taiwan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("ENIOR PRC OFFICIAL ARRIVES IN WASHINGTON FOR TAIWAN TALKS," 02/03/04) reported that the director of China's Taiwan Affairs Council opened talks with senior US officials here, as debate raged over the nationalist island's plans for a referendum which have

enraged Beijing. Chen Yunlin was due to hold talks with US Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman and other officials on Taiwan issues, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said. His visit follows a meeting Chen held in Beijing on Friday with visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, who reaffirmed US opposition to the referendum due to be held alongside presidential elections on March 20. Armitage told reporters in Beijing the referendum "raises questions about the motives of those who want to put it forward." "As I understand it, referenda are generally reserved for items or issues which are either very divisive or very difficult," he said. "And the wording I've seen of the referendum seems to be neither divisive nor difficult."

12. DPRK Energy Project Plans

New York Times (James Brooke, "TWO ENERGY PLANS FOR NORTH KOREA," Iigata, 02/03/04) reported that on the DPRK's desolate eastern coast, 600 miles directly across the Sea of Japan from here, soldiers guard an abandoned construction site where two light-water nuclear reactors were to be built. The DPRK is desperately short of energy, and agreed in 1994 to halt its nuclear weapons program in exchange for help from its capitalist neighbors and the US in building nuclear power plants. But work at the site was halted on Dec. 1 because the US said the DPRK had violated the 1994 agreement by pursuing nuclear weapons anyway. On Friday, the State Department said the civilian nuclear power program had "no future." In retaliation, the DPRK is holding hostage the construction equipment at the site belonging to contractors from South Korea, which has sunk almost $1 billion into the project. With the civilian nuclear power program off the table, North Korea needs another plan for expanding its energy supply, and its neighbors need a way to break the diplomatic stalemate. On Monday, at a regional energy forum here, energy executives from Russia and the US outlined two proposals. Both ideas - a 235-mile electric power line from Vladivostok and a 1,500-mile natural gas pipeline from Sakhalin - highlight Russia's future as an energy exporter to Northeast Asia. Just as Canadian power fuels much of the US, so the hydroelectric resources of the Russian Far East seem destined to flow south to the PRC, Japan, and the Koreas. "Everyone wants a nonnuclear solution" to North Korea's energy proablem, said John B. Fetter, an American consultant who traveled here from Philadelphia to present the $3 billion natural gas pipeline project proposed by the KoRus Gas Company, a consortium of American, Russian and ROK owners. The project calls for a pipe to be laid from the vast gas deposits off Sakhalin Island, southwest through Russian territory to the DPRK and, probably, on to Seoul, as well. Fetter said gas could flow through it as soon as 2008. For the DPRK, though, an electric transmission line promises faster, cheaper relief. For just $180 million or so, a 500-kilovolt line could be built in four years, according to Victor N. Minakov, general director of Vostokenergo, a subsidiary of Russia's state electric utility, United Energy Systems. The timetables for both projects are ambitious, and financing them could pose problems, industry experts said.

13. PRC-Africa Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PRC PRESIDENT CALLS FOR NEW IMPETUS IN SINO-AFRICA TIES," 02/03/04) reported that in a major policy speech on relations with Africa, visiting PRC President Hu Jintao called for a new impetus in Sino-Africa ties saying that "historic opportunities" existed. "We in China are ready to work with African countries in an effort to seize the historic opportunities, deepen cooperation on all fronts and promote common development," the PRC leader said in a speech before the Gabonese parliament. Hu, who earlier Monday signed a series of bilateral trade accords with his Gabonese counterpart Omar Bongo, proposed a three-point initiative to boost relations between China and the African continent. He said it was important for the two sides to increase governmental and non-governmental interactions at all levels and to enhance trade and economic ties as well as expanding cooperation in other sectors including technology and science.

Hu said the PRC was willing to provide "assistance to African countries to the best of our capacity and with no political strings attached." "Our economic cooperation in the future could focus more on infrastructure, agriculture and resources development, and we shall step up our mutually beneficial cooperation to promote common development, thus making both sides winners," he said. Speaking before a packed assembly that gave him a standing ovation at the end of his speech, Hu also vowed that the PRC, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, would endeavor to support the propositions and requests of developing countries. "All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal and are entitled to participate and play a role in international affairs," he said.

The Associated Press (Ellen Knickmeyer, "CHINA GOES UNCONVENTIONAL ROUTE FOR OIL," Dakar, 02/03/04) reported that the west African nation of Gabon isn't one of the world's more high-profile countries. So why a full-out state visit by the PRC's leader? That's easy: oil. Burning fuel at a record pace to run an economy in overdrive, the PRC since late 2003 claimed the No. 2 spot in world oil imports, second only to the US. And jostling with the world's other oil gulpers to keep their machinery moving, PRC leaders are looking far afield for a secure oil supply, locking down tough-term deals with easy-term cash. Which is what brought PRC President Hu Jintao to Gabon this week, welcomed by 3,000 dancing Gabonese women and a 21-gun salute from Gabon's less than formidable military. Hu opened the three-day state visit - his only sub-Saharan stop on a four-nation tour - pledging lasting, lucrative friendship between resource-rich Africa and resource-voracious PRC. The PRC's broadening drilling and mining in Africa comes "with the aim of promoting development by the principle of 'win-win,'" Hu told Gabon's lawmakers Monday. But industry analysts say the PRC today may be sinking some of its money into questionable sources of supply such as Kazakhstan, Peru, and Gabon. Exploring wells now increasingly are coming up dry - suggesting Gabon may soon be tapped out.

14. DPRK Human Rights Investigation Urged

The Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "GROUP SEEKS U.N. PROBE ON NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 02/03/04) reported that a US-based Jewish human rights group has urged the United Nations to investigate claims that the DPRK conducted gas chamber experiments on political prisoners, comparing the alleged acts to those in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. The Simon Wiesenthal Center made the appeal Tuesday after the British Broadcasting Corp. aired a TV documentary in which a man, claiming to be a former DPRK agent, described seeing prisoners gassed to death. There was no way to verify the claim. The BBC report said the DPRK man, identified as Kwon Hyok, was a former army intelligence officer who defected to South Korea in 1999. It also said that he was formerly chief guard at a DPRK prison camp, reportedly known as "Prison Camp No. 22." Kwon Hyok said the camp had a gas chamber made of glass so scientists could observe inmates as they were gassed. "I witnessed a whole family being tested on suffocating gas and dying in the gas chamber," he told the BBC. "The parents, son and a daughter." The Simon Wiesenthal Center urged the United Nations to establish an international tribunal to investigate the allegations.

15. Japan Iraq Troops Departure

Reuters (Toshiyuki Aizawa, "MAIN JAPAN ARMY CONTINGENT LEAVES FOR IRAQ," Chitose, 02/03/04) reported that the first troops of a main Japanese army contingent left for Iraq Tuesday with the public deeply divided over the nation's first military dispatch to what is effectively a war zone in nearly six decades. Japan plans to send about 1,000 military personnel in all to help with Iraq's reconstruction. About 90 soldiers left Chitose on Japan's northern island of Hokkaido for southeastern Iraq, where they will build a camp on the outskirts of the city of Samawa. "As Japan's representatives, we will do our best for the people of Iraq, for the stability of the region and for the

sake of Japan," said Colonel Yasushi Kiyota, who heads the unit. "We shall overcome all obstacles no matter how difficult and all return safely," he said at a farewell ceremony as some members of the soldiers' families wiped away tears. The rest of the main contingent of nearly 600 members of the Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), as the army is known, is expected to depart in three waves beginning later in February.

16. US on DPRK-Japan Abduction Issue

Asahi Shimbun (Taro Karasaki, "ARMITAGE: ABDUCTIONS ON AGENDA," 02/03/04) reported that visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on February 2 said Washington is willing to raise the issue of abductions of Japanese at the next multilateral talks with the DPRK. Armitage made the offer during a 40-minute meeting with family members of abductees. The meeting, with seven family members and their supporters at the US Embassy in Tokyo, was held at the request of the Association of the Families of Victims Kidnapped by the DPRK. Family members quoted Armitage as saying he believed a second round of six-nation talks could be held soon. The families of abductees sought the meeting because the Bush administration is due to report in April on countries that support terrorism. They want the DPRK cited because of the abductions. They said the DPRK had been "insincere" in dealing with calls from Tokyo to hand over family members of the five abductees who returned to Japan more than a year ago. Cautioning the matter should not be dealt with emotionally, Armitage said the US will decide whether to include abductions as a reason for naming the DPRK as a terrorist state after seeing how the DPRK responds to the issue at the next round of six-nation talks.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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