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I. United States

1. Post-Six-Way DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "NORTH KOREA TO CONSIDER US NUKE DEMAND," Washington, 03/02/04) reported that the DPRK agreed in the latest nuclear weapons talks to consider a US demand that it dismantle its programs based both on plutonium and uranium, the chief US negotiator told lawmakers Tuesday. "The North Koreans came to the table denying a uranium enrichment program," Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But, in a reversal, he said, "It was clear by the conclusion of the talks that this is now very much on the table." Kelly cited the developments in Beijing as evidence of "a very different, promising atmosphere" in the latest round of negotiations. As Kelly spoke, Secretary of State Colin Powell avoided specifics but offered an upbeat assessment of the talks and said cooperation at the negotiating table with the ROK and other allies was unprecedented. "There was a good deal of progress at the latest round," Powell said. "We haven't gotten where we need to be," he

said, "but what I am especially pleased about is that we have institutionalized now the process with working groups and we're already getting ready for the next meeting."

Asia Pulse ("N KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE OFF FROM CRISIS: THINK TANK," Seoul, 03/03/04) reported that the DPRK nuclear issue is no longer of crisis proportions, following the second round of six-way talks in Beijing last week, one of the ROK's major economic think tanks said Wednesday. Samsung Economic Research Institute said in a report, titled, "Prospects for the South-North Korea Relationship after the six-way Talks," that the talks have established a framework for solution through dialogue, although there was no agreement on the main areas of conflict. The report highlighted the direct talks between the US and North Korea during the session, which also involved South Korea, China, Japan and Russia, and pointed out that the six nations shared a number of positions. It predicted the positive development on the nuclear issue will decrease related risk, which could in turn help South Korea's credit rating. The credit rating of South Korea by Moody's has stayed at "A3", one level lower than China, the Czech Republic and Hungary. The report recommended inducing the North to change through the cooperation of the international community. It also recommended increasing economic cooperation with the North to help solve the nuclear issue. A further recommendation was that the two Koreas should consult on ways of improving the human rights situation in the North, which has been the subject of international concern.

2. US Post-Multilateral Talks Assessment

New York Times (David E. Sanger, "Bush Envoy Briefs Panel After Talks On A-Bombs," 03/03/04) reported that US President Bush's chief negotiator with North Korea told a Senate panel on Tuesday that it was "quite possible" that the country had turned all 8,000 of its spent nuclear fuel rods into plutonium to fuel nuclear weapons. The assessment, by James A. Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for Asia, left open the possibility that while the Bush administration has been conducting painstakingly slow negotiations with the DPRK, the government there made good on its threats to produce several new atomic bombs. But after his testimony, Kelly said that formal intelligence assessments of the DPRK's arsenal had not changed, and that "the operative phrase I used is, 'We don't know for sure.'" Until Tuesday, the administration's public position had been that it believed that the DPRK, at worst, had turned only a portion of the spent fuel rods into nuclear fuel. In his testimony, Kelly said the North Koreans continued to deny the existence of a second nuclear weapons program, one involving highly enriched uranium and based on technology obtained from Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist. But he said those denials were less vociferous than in the past, perhaps because the North Koreans knew that Khan had delivered a detailed confession of his activities. Kelly suggested that, slowly, the North Koreans might be willing to include the uranium program in the talks, even though he did not explain how they could do this without acknowledging its existence. "It was clear by the conclusion of the talks that this is now very much on the table," he told the senators.

3. DPRK on US Proliferation Security Initiative

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK CRITICIZES US 'DOUBLE STANDARDS' ON PROLIFERATION," Pyongyang, 03/03/04) reported that US President Bush made a "proposal for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)" in a recent speech at National Defence University in Washington. Nodong Sinmun today in a signed commentary dismisses this as a sheer fallacy intended to reinforce the US-led "security initiative to prevent proliferation" in a bid to paralyse the function of the present international legal system and realize its ambition for world supremacy. It goes on: Bush's proposal is aimed to legalize the US-led "marine and aerial blockade

system" for the expansion and strengthening of the "security initiative to prevent proliferation" publicized in 2003 and establish such a brigandish system for interfering in internal affairs of other countries as one for "punishing" independent non-nuclear states through the expansion of the sphere of its application. The proposal is an unequal proposal based on double standards quite contrary to the UN Charter calling for equality of all countries. What should not be overlooked is that the proposal is intended to isolate and stifle the DPRK. The US "security initiative to prevent proliferation" is a measure to isolate and blockade the DPRK in the light of its origin and purpose. The US is working hard to force other countries to follow its hostile policy towards the DPRK, not content with labelling the DPRK's increase of its military power for self-defence as a proliferation of WMD and even banning the export of goods for dual use. The US is sadly mistaken if it thinks it can browbeat the DPRK through the "security initiative to prevent proliferation". If the US sincerely wants the "non-proliferation of WMD" and the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, it should admit its responsibility for having proliferated WMD worldwide and take practical actions to drop its hostile policy to stifle the DPRK, first of all.

4. US on DPRK-PRC Diplomatic Relations

Reuters (Carol Giacomo, "CAUTION RAISED ABOUT CHINA ROLE WITH NORTH KOREA," Washington, 03/03/04) reported that relying so much on the PRC to facilitate six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear crisis may cause some problems, according to two senior US Senate aides who recently visited the DPRK. In a report, Keith Luse and Frank Jannuzi concluded that while the PRC shares the US goal of a non-nuclear Korean peninsula, the PRC "will always place its own interests first in this process" and its interests are "not identical" to the US'. In addition, they found after visiting the DPRK and other key East Asian states in January, that the North Koreans "are not certain that China has accurately transmitted messages between Washington and Pyongyang." Luse and Jannuzi, senior aides on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, do not elaborate in their report. However, the factors they identified could undermine the six-party talks. "China may be sugar-coating messages transmitted to the US and North Korea to keep everyone happy and on board" with the negotiating process, one congressional source familiar with the report's conclusions said. "The PRC may be papering over very significant differences that only come to light when the six parties come together, and then the revelations come as a jolt to both sides," he said.

5. ROK-US Relations

Yonhap ("ROK FOREIGN MINISTER, US PRESIDENT DISCUSS NORTH KOREA, IRAQ ISSUES," Washington, 03/03/04) reported that visiting ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon paid a courtesy call on US President George Bush at the White House Tuesday morning, an informed diplomatic source said. During the meeting, the two discussed the outcome of the just-ended six-way talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons programs and other issues of mutual concern, including South Korea's troop dispatch to Iraq, the source said. Ban originally planned to come to Washington Wednesday via New York, but advanced the schedule in order to meet with Bush, according to the source said. The minister arrived here earlier in the day to kick off his five-day trip to the US. Ban will fly to New York Wednesday to meet with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to discuss nuclear issues, troop dispatch and other issues, according to the source. On Thursday, he will return to Washington to meet with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, the source said. Topping the meeting's agenda will be last week's DPRK nuclear crisis talks, which ended inconclusively with an agreement on further discussions, the source said.

6. Australia-DPRK Relations

The Australian (John Kerin, "DOWNER APPOINTS AMBASSADOR TO N KOREA," Australia, 03/03/04) reported that Australia has appointed an ambassador to the DPRK in recognition of the rogue state's new-found commitment to talks aimed at ending its nuclear programs. "I have issued this instruction to encourage North Korea's continuing involvement in the six-party talks process and to improve Australia's ongoing dialogue with North Korea," Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told parliament yesterday. Downer said ambassador to PRC Allan Thomas would travel to Pyongyang to present his credentials. Dr. Thomas will maintain his post in Beijing.

7. DPRK-EU Relations

Korea Times ("IRELAND BACKS ENGAGEMENT WITH NK," 03/04/04) reported that the European Union is 100 percent supportive of the six-party dialogue process to resolve the DPRK nuclear standoff, according to Paul Murray, Ireland's recently accredited ambassador to the DPRK. Ireland currently holds the EU's revolving presidency. Murray also said that while the EU is not directly involved in the Beijing talks, it would favorably consider contributing to any aid deal offered to the North in exchange for scrapping its nuclear programs. "If we were requested to play any part, including aid, I think we would look at those issues constructively and positively," he told The Korea Times last week. But he said EU participation is at the end of the day a matter for the European Council to decide. Ireland forged diplomatic ties with the DPRK on January 28 during a visit to Pyongyang by Murray, who has also served as ambassador to the ROK since 1999. The ambassador said Ireland taking over the EU presidency for the first six months of this year was a key factor in the decision to form official relations with the DPRK. "It's important to be able to able to communicate with regimes such as the DPRK, where one has grave reservations about the regime as far as human rights," he said. "There is always a balance between, on the one hand, expressing disapproval by not engaging and, on the other, hoping to bring about positive change through engagement," he said. "We felt the balance had changed and that establishing relations was likely to be the most productive way forward." The decision leaves France as the only EU nation that does not have official relations with the DPRK. France on Monday reportedly expressed a willingness to join the multilateral nuclear talks, the second round of which ended Saturday with an agreement to meet again by June. But Murray said the EU would not want to intrude on the talks, and it is up to the six countries involved to decide if the format should be expanded.

8. PRC DPRK Refugees

The Washington Post (Anthony Faiola, "N. KOREAN WOMEN FIND LIFE OF ABUSE WAITING IN CHINA," Seoul, 03/03/04) reported that on Dec. 25, 2000, a young DPRK woman and her 5-year-old daughter approached the banks of the frozen Tumen River separating the DPRK and the PRC. The woman clutched her terrified daughter's hand and hustled across the frozen river, ducking armed patrols until the pair cleared the border. Once in the PRC, they joined a growing tide of refugees fleeing the DPRK. But along with tens of thousands of other female DPRK refugees, the 29-year-old woman quickly discovered that some nightmares don't go away -- they merely change dimensions. She recounted how, with few provisions, she made her way to a safe house described by a friend in the DPRK. Rather than offering her shelter, however, the owners of the house presented her to a middle-age PRC farmer for inspection. He gave her the once-over, examining her face and slim body before going off into a corner to haggle over a price for her as a concubine. The woman, who had already suffered years of beatings by her husband, said she fled in panic, seeking refuge in the home of a nearby PRC couple. They later sold her into a humiliating and violent life inside a hostess bar, where men pay to be entertained by women. "I was helpless; I had no money, I didn't speak PRC, and I had my daughter to support," said Young, who agreed to an interview in Seoul on condition that only her first name be used. "If you are a DPRK woman crossing the border, it's almost

impossible to survive without being abused or sold. It happens to almost all of us, because they know we are vulnerable." An estimated 200,000 to 300,000 DPRK refugees are now living illegally in the PRC, roughly half of them women, according to missionary and other religious-oriented groups working in the area. While many DPRK men end up finding jobs as cheap laborers, ROK government officials and human rights groups say the vast majority of the DPRK women are sold into temporary or long-term service as sexual slaves or suffer other kinds of sexual or physical abuse, often inside entertainment clubs. While female refugees across the world remain at high risk of abuse or exploitation, the DPRK women are extraordinarily vulnerable, aid groups say. The PRC government has refused to grant the North Koreans official status as refugees, largely based on the PRC's traditional ties with the DPRK, as well as fears that such a designation would dramatically boost the already steady influx over the border.

9. PRC Economic and Constitutional Reform

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S LEGISLATURE GEARS UP FOR LANDMARK CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES," 03/03/04) reported that the PRC's annual political season opens Friday with delegates to the parliament set to amend the 22-year-old constitution and discuss such volatile issues as rising unemployment, a widening gap between rich and poor and endemic corruption. The 3,000-odd delegates to the National People's Congress (NPC) begin their 10-day session with Premier Wen Jiabao giving his yearly state of the nation address. Wen will lay out economic policy for the coming year that is expected to center on maintaining last year's robust 9.1 percent growth rate, while focusing attention on the development of impoverished rural areas and the rich-poor gap. In recent months, the PRC's state-media has highlighted a glaring lack of economic opportunities among the country's 900 million peasants, with government corruption and power abuse at the local level cited as major reasons hampering the development of rural areas. Social dissatisfaction among the urban and rural poor, coupled with discontent over unabated corruption have raised alarms among the PRC's ruling elite, fearful of social unrest and turmoil. To this end, Wen is expected to call the development of rural regions key to the PRC's future sustainable economic development and the new focal point in an ongoing five-year effort to stimulate domestic demand and raise rural incomes. Meanwhile, the legislature will approve three constitutional amendments that also appear to be aimed at quieting rising social discontent during a year that marks the 15th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen democracy protests. The amendments include protections for private property, a clause on human rights protections and the enshrining into state ideology of the "Three Represents Theory" of former president Jiang Zemin, media reports said. A provision that "private property obtained legally shall not be violated," will place private property on an equal footing with public property, which is already deemed "sacred and inviolable" by the current constitution. If fully implemented, the provision could have wide-ranging implications for the PRC's market-driven economy and is also seen as a direct response to growing dissatisfaction over rampant government requisitioning of homes and farm land in the name of urban and rural development.

10. Inter-Korean Railway

Yonhap ("NORTH, SOUTH KOREA AGREE TO RECONNECT CROSS-BORDER ROAD BY FIRST HALF 2004," Seoul, 03/03/04) reported that the ROK and DPRK have agreed towards reconnecting a cross-border road by first half of this year, ROK officials said Wednesday. Economic officials of the ROK and DPRK met in Seoul Wednesday to review the progress of cross-border transportation links and other joint projects being pushed as part the historic inter-Korean summit in 2000. "Much progress has been made on reconnecting a road in the western section of the border," said Park Heung-ryol, a ROK spokesman, at a news briefing on the results of Wednesday's 50-minute session. A 27-member DPRK delegation, led by a vice Cabinet ministerial-level official, flew to Seoul Tuesday

for the previously arranged talks, the eighth since the historic inter-Korean summit in 2000. Officials of both sides had informal discussions on Tuesday. During Wednesday's opening session, the ROK proposed holding a symbolic ceremony to re-connect a cross-border road, timed with the fourth anniversary in June of the inter-Korean summit. At the meeting in Seoul, the DPRK requested electricity aid but the ROK rejected it, citing the nuclear tension, Park said. "Seoul believes it is not appropriate to discuss electricity cooperation at this juncture," Park quoted the ROK delegation as telling its counterpart.

11. DPRK Chemical Torture?

Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "NORTH KOREA'S USE OF CHEMICAL TORTURE ALLEGED," Seoul, 03/04/04) reported that a senior DPRK chemist who defected to the South two years ago says he witnessed the government testing chemical weapons on political prisoners. Although the chemist's information is dated - he says he saw one experiment personally in 1979 and heard about others until the mid-1990s - his statements mark the first time a high-level scientist from the DPRK has spoken out about human experimentation. Similar allegations have been made before. Last month, papers said to have been smuggled out of North Korea appeared to show that prisoners were sent to a chemical complex for gas experiments in 2002. But many of the prior reports had been made by former political prisoners and guards whose credibility has been questioned. The chemist said fear of retribution against family members still in the DPRK had kept him from speaking out until now but he decided to break his silence because of the need for the world to know. He asked that his name not be published. "It is not easy for me to speak about this because I am a criminal myself," said the chemist, a man in his 50s, at the beginning of a halting and emotional three-hour interview last week that was arranged by a US-based human rights group. The chemist said the experiment he witnessed took place at a military prison near Pyongsong, 15 miles north of the capital, Pyongyang. At the time, he was a PhD candidate. He was invited to witness the experiment because his dissertation involved the chemical compounds being tested - cyanide and ortho-nitrochlorobenzene. The chemist said that the prison was known to house political prisoners. He said that they were kept in stacked cages made of concrete and wire "like rabbit hutches." The two men in the experiment, he said, were unshaven and emaciated and "they looked barely human." They were brought to the chamber in wheelchairs, he said. He could not determine their ages. The chemist said the men were tested separately in a chamber with a large window on one side - where scientists and officials observed. It was outfitted with bright lights, a speaker system that allowed the scientists to clearly hear the prisoners' screams and a nozzle to spray the chemicals. "One man was scratching desperately. He scratched his neck, his chest. He was wearing a gray prison uniform, and he tore it off. He was covered in blood.... I tried to look away," said the chemist, who said he watched with other researchers from behind the glass. "I kept trying to look away. I knew how toxic these chemicals were in even small doses." It took three hours for each man to die, the chemist said. "It was horrible. They were screaming and yelling.... They seemed to develop some superhuman strength before they died. I kept thinking: It is not so simple to kill a human being after all," he said, his voice cracking. "This is not something you want to remember." The DPRK denied as recently as last month that it had gassed prisoners, and it is impossible to confirm the chemist's account of the human experimentation.

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

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