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I. United States

1. US on DPRK Multilateral Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA TALKS DIPLOMACY LIKE 'HERDING CATS': KELLY," Washington , 12/04/03) reported that painstaking diplomacy aimed at convening six-nation DPRK nuclear crisis talks is as tricky as "herding cats," the top US negotiator admitted. Following signs that the next round of talks may be delayed from a target date of the third week of December due to diplomatic hitches, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said Washington still hoped the dialogue would happen soon. "This is a six-party multilateral process on a very serious issue," he told reporters after meeting his Japanese and ROK counterparts at the State Department. "As one of my colleagues said today when we have six countries pursuing the details of these things, it's a little bit

like herding cats. It's a very difficult process. "We have now been through about ten different meetings. Each one advances the process a little bit, but we've got a ways to go and we have no firm date at this time for the six-party talks." Kelly said that Washington hoped the talks, also involving the PRC, Russia and the DPRK, would take place early in the new year if it proved impossible to convene them this month.

2. ROK-Japan DPRK Talks

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA, JAPAN MEET AHEAD OF THREE-WAY ON NORTH KOREA WITH US," 12/05/03) reported that ROK and Japanese negotiators met ahead of a three-way meeting also involving the United States, following signs that planned six-nation North Korea nuclear crisis talks could be put off until next year. Japanese envoy Mitoji Yabunaka, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau held talks with South Korea's Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck, a State Department official said. Lee met the State Department's North Korea pointman James Kelly on Wednesday. All three sides were due to sit down together at 3:00 pm (2000 GMT). Ahead of the meeting South Korea's envoy to North Korea urged Washington to soften its stance towards Pyongyang, after hopes that the six-way talks would happen this month in Beijing took a severe dent. "North Korea should stop pressing its demands too hard. The United States is also required to ease its stance for the momentum of dialogue," Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun said in Seoul.

3. ROK Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("ROK PARLIAMENT OVERRIDES PRESIDENT'S VETO OF SLUSH FUND PROBE," 12/04/03) reported that the ROK's opposition-controlled parliament has overridden President Roh Moo-Hyun's veto of an independent slush fund probe in an overwhelming vote which followed the arrest of one of the leader's sponsors. The vote revived a bill to name an independent counsel to investigate allegations of corruption involving Roh's associates suspected of receiving illegal corporate money. Of 266 lawmakers who voted, 209 endorsed the motion to overturn Roh's veto, while 54 voted against it. One abstained and two were invalid. The law requires a two-thirds majority to override any presidential veto. Roh cannot again veto the bill, which was proposed last month by the main opposition Grand National Party (GNP) after three of his associates were accused of graft and illegal fund-raising. The president's office expressed "regret" but indicated that the government would respect the assembly's decision. Roh's earlier veto had prompted the GNP to launch a legislative boycott that had paralyzed parliament for eight days. The boycott ended on Wednesday.

4. Australia US Missile Defense Program

The Associated Press (Peter O'Connor, "AUSTRALIA TO JOIN MISSILE DEFENSE PROGRAM," Canberra, 12/04/03) reported that Australia will join a US program to build a missile defense system, the government said Thursday, calling the threat of ballistic missiles too grave to ignore. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said several countries are developing ballistic missiles that could carry weapons of mass destruction, and joining the program would help protect Australia. Joining the program will "allow us to make an important contribution to global and regional security," Downer said in a statement. Washington hopes that developing a shield against ballistic missiles will protect it against potential threats from countries like the DPRK. It wants allies such as Britain, Canada and Australia involved in the project, particularly for the use of satellite tracking stations in their countries. Australia's decision to join the project was a "long term measure to counter potential

threats to Australia's security and its interests from ballistic missile proliferation," Downer said. Defense Minister Robert Hill said Australia will likely help research the multibillion dollar project and has no plans for a ground-based missile defense system on its own soil. Australia could incorporate missile defense systems into three planned air warfare destroyers for the navy.

5. Japan Missile Defense System

Reuters ("JAPAN TO INTRODUCE MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM, REPORT SAYS," Tokyo, 12/04/03) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi intends to introduce a missile defense system to protect Japan from the threat posed by the DPRK's ballistic missiles, a Japanese newspaper said on Thursday. Japan has conducted joint research with the United States on developing a missile defense system since the DPRK fired a ballistic missile that flew over Japan in 1998. The government will hold a meeting of cabinet ministers or convene a national security meeting soon for a formal decision on introducing the system, the Mainichi Shimbun daily said. Koizumi denied that any decision had been made but said the issue must be tackled soon as the draft budget for the next fiscal year from March must be compiled by the end of December. "I will give it thorough consideration as such moves are likely to come up as we compile the budget," he said, referring to the decision on whether to adopt the US weapons system. Under a Defense Ministry plan, Japan would spend 500 billion yen ($4.62 billion) from fiscal 2004/05 to 2007/08 to buy a two-stage system developed by the United States, Mainichi said. The newspaper said part of the system would come into operation in 2007 and that it would be fully deployed in fiscal 2011/12 or later. The Defense Ministry has already requested 142 billion yen in funding for fiscal 2004/05 starting next April to buy the system. A ministry official told reporters in August that the first stage of the system consisted of Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) equipment, which would be fitted to Japan's four existing high-tech Aegis destroyers starting next year. The second line of defense would be provided by ground-to-air Patriot PAC-3 missiles, upgrading the PAC-2 system Japan's armed forces already possess. The official declined to comment on how many PAC-3 missile systems the ministry wanted to buy, but said it planned to begin deployment in 2007.

6. PRC Military on Taiwan

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA MILITARY AGAIN WARNS TAIWAN," Beijing, 12/04/03) reported that the PRC would not be swayed by the threat of an Olympic boycott or condemnation from the international community if it decided to attack Taiwan, a PRC general said in comments published as Premier Wen Jiabao prepares to visit Washington. The comments add the military's voice to increasingly aggressive Chinese warnings over what Beijing says is a push by Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian to declare formal independence - a step that the communist government says would lead to war. Chen, however, told visiting Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., on Thursday that he had no plans for an independence vote. Beijing also won't be deterred by the possibility of Chinese deaths in battle or damage to its economy, the general said in a commentary in the magazine Outlook Weekly. The magazine is published by the official Xinhua News Agency. "We are prepared to pay these costs to uphold national unity and territorial integrity," wrote Brig. Gen. Peng Guangqian of the Academy of Military Science of the People's Liberation Army. The comments were widely reported by Chinese state newspapers and Xinhua, a sign that they were a reflection of official military policy and not personal opinion.

7. PRC-US Proliferation Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US VOWS NOT TO "SUGARCOAT" PROLIFERATION DIFFERENCES WITH

CHINA," 12/04/03) reported that the United States said it would not "sugarcoat" its differences with China on weapons proliferation, less than a week before PRC premier Wen Jiabao is due in Washington. The State Department did say it welcomed the PRC's efforts in the area after Beijing earlier called for the establishment of an effective international mechanism to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. "In a nutshell, we think that China has enacted good legislation on this issue and the focus is on implementation and enforcement," State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said on Wednesday. But he said there remain "ongoing" concerns on the issue. "We don't sugarcoat them. It's an issue. And it's one that we're working cooperatively to address." The United States frequently imposes sanctions on Chinese firms and state entities it accuses of evading proliferation controls and exporting missile components and other items useful in the production of weapons of mass destruction. The PRC habitually complains vocally at the largely symbolic sanctions, and the issue continues to be one of discord in generally improved Sino-US relations. Though it voiced support for a global bid to stem the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the PRC on Wednesday remained non-committal about joining the US-backed Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). "Unilateralism and double standards must be abandoned, and great importance should be attached and full play given to the role of the United Nations," said a State Council (cabinet) white paper on "China's Non-proliferation Policy and Measures." The paper was published a day after Washington announced the addition of four new countries to the 11 nations already signed up to PSI which aims to implement widespread powers to seize suspected WMD in international waters and airspace.

8. PRC German Plutonium Plant Sale

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA MUST VOW PEACEFUL USE OF GERMAN PLUTONIUM PLANT: MINISTERS," 12/05/03) reported that Germany's foreign and defense ministers said that a controversial proposed sale to the PRC of a plutonium facility must be tied to a guarantee from Beijing only to use it for peaceful purposes. Amid criticism in the ruling center-left government over the planned sale, Defense Minister Peter Struck and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer warned that any possible military use must be ruled out. But both also suggested they saw no other potential stumbling-block to the export, saying it was right to examine the bid. "The condition, of course, is a guarantee from the Chinese government that the plutonium factory will not be used for military purposes but for peaceful purposes to produce atomic energy," Struck told the Neue Presse daily. If a guarantee was forthcoming, he said, "I would have no concern about the sale of the facility." Fischer, the figurehead of the pro-environmental Greens, junior partner in the coalition, said his opposition to nuclear energy was clear but there were "sometimes situations where you have to make bitter decisions." German Chancellor Schroeder, who has just ended a visit to China, promised earlier this week to study the bid for the plant at Hanau, western Germany. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao earlier Thursday confirmed that a Chinese company was in talks with the German technology group Siemens, which owns the plant, about purchasing it. "This is completely a question of civil purposes and has no military goal," he said, adding it had "nothing to do with non-proliferation issues."

9. PRC Weapons Policies

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "BEIJING DETAILS WEAPONS POLICIES," Beijing, 12/04/03) reported that the PRC revealed in unusual detail yesterday its methods of preventing dangerous weapons from falling into the wrong hands, outlining its approach to nonproliferation just days before its premier visits Washington. At the same time, the Beijing government chided the United States' actions to root out such weapons, saying "unilateralism and double standards must be abandoned" - an allusion to pre-emptive US military action in Iraq this year, which China opposed.

The comments, in a "white paper" on nonproliferation, dovetailed with a major theme of the communist government's foreign policy in recent years: to establish China as a country that will follow international rules. "The proliferation of [weapons of mass destruction] and their means of delivery benefits neither world peace and stability nor China's own security," according to the report. The PRC said it had ensured that an array of procedures and penalties was in place to prevent companies from transferring technology or materials that could be made into chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. "No license, no exports," the report said. The report made no specific mention of the DPRK.

10. Elbaradei on Nuclear Program Detection Challenges

Reuters ("Louis Charbonneau, "ELBARADEI: EARLY A-BOMB WORK VIRTUALLY UNDETECTABLE," Vienna, 12/04/03) reported that laboratory-scale activities in the early phases of a clandestine atomic weapons program are virtually impossible to detect, the head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog said on Thursday. In an interview with a small group of reporters, Mohamed ElBaradei, Director-General of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), defended the IAEA against critics who fault the agency for failing to detect Iran's two-decade cover-up of potentially weapons-related research. "People have been saying Iran has been cheating the agency, if you like, for 18 years," ElBaradei said. "Yes, Iran has been successful in doing research and laboratory activities and this we were not able to detect, and I don't think we will be able to detect in the future." "But...if a country moves from research R&D to an industrial scale to develop weapons, I think the system, with all the technology that we have, makes it highly unlikely that this kind of program would go on undetected," ElBaradei said. ElBaradei also said that no matter how thorough and intrusive inspections are, there are clear limits to what they can detect. "There will always be easily concealable items -- one centrifuge or two centrifuges operating somewhere or a computer study," he said.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Powell Says He Thinks Future Six-Party Talks Optimistic

Chosun Ilbo (Arirang TV, POWELL SAYS HE IS OPTIMISTIC AFTER FUTURE SIX-PARTY TALKS, 12/04/03) reported that 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. In a press conference in Morocco on Wednesday, Secretary of State Colin Powell said he was optimistic that the six-way dialogue will take place in the near future although he stopped short of giving specific dates. Powell, who is on the second stop of his North African tour flatly denied recent reports that the proposed discussions had hit a snag. Meanwhile working-level officials from ROK, the U.S. and Japan are to discuss the issue in Washington this Thursday.

2. U.S. Official Says, DPRK Nuke Verifiers Could Include France,

Britain

Chosun Ilbo (Kang In-sun, Washington, "NK NUKE VERIFIERS COULD INCLUDE FRANCE, BRITAIN, U.S. OFFICIAL SYAS", 12/03/03) reported that John Bolton, U.S Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, said Tuesday that discussions have been made to have other nuclear powers besides the International Atomic Energy Agency verify the dismantling of

DPRK's nuclear weapons program. Bolton cited Britain and France as two examples of countries that might be involved in the process. In a meeting co-hosted by the U.S Institute for Foreign Policy and by Tufts University, Bolton said that U.S. has been discussing with some of the participants in the six-party talks on DPRK's nuclear program and with other nuclear nations like Britain and France having five legitimate nuclear nations involved in verifying the dismantling of DPRK's nuclear weapons program. The five countries could participate since they are the permanent member nations of the U.N.'s Security Council, he said. Bolton added that much of the technical work to verify DPRK's nuclear program has not yet been finished. Bolton said that rogue states like DPRK, Iran, Syria, Libya and Cuba that attempt to develop weapons of massive destruction should realize that their programs would be eventually discovered, and that they would inevitably pay a heavy price for the programs. U.S. will try to come up with diplomatic solutions if possible, but it could employ military deterrence or a stronger method, like seizing illegal materials if needed, he said, adding that all options are available at the negotiating table. The lesson of the war in Iraq is that U.S. will not let up on countries that develop weapons of massive destruction, he said. The undersecretary said that U.S. genuinely hopes that the next round of six-party talks on DPRK's nuclear program would be held as soon as possible, and is ready to provide a written security guarantee for Pyongyang in concert with the other participants. This guarantee will be provided only if DPRK agrees to halt its nuclear weapons development, and fulfills the promise, he said.

3. DPRK And Russia Finetune Details on Six-Way Talks

Chosun Ilbo (Arirang TV, "N. KOREA AND RUSSIA FINETUNE DETAILS ON 6-WAY TALKS, 12/03/03) reported that DPRK has agreed in principle to a new round of six-way talks aimed at resolving U.S.'s nuclear row. Russia's Interfax news agency reported Tuesday DPRK Ambassador to Moscow Park Ui-chun and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov agreed to cooperate in continuing multilateral nuclear talks. Prior to this meeting Russia's top DPRK negotiator had met with ROK's Ambassador to Russia Chung Tae-ik and Seoul's top envoy to PRC Ryu Ku-chan on Monday to discuss details for the second round of six-party nuclear talks.

4. Sia-Way Talks Are Unclear Whether To Be Held This Year

Donga Ilbo (Kwon Sun Taek, Cho Hun Joo, "SIX-NATION TALKS, UNCLEAR WHETHER TO BE HELD THIS YEAR", 12/03/03) reported that On November 3, the Japanese daily Mainichi Shimbun reported that the timing of the second round of the six-nation talks, aimed at persuading DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons programs, is now unclear and it is not sure if it will be held by the end of this year because of the difference in viewpoints between U.S. and DPRK. The U.S. tried to insert the phrase, "Abandon Nuclear Program" on the written agreement which will be produced at the end of the second round of talks, but DPRK gave priority to "Guarantee Safety" instead, and the chasm between each nations' viewpoint became harder to meditate, Mainichi Shimbun passed on, quoting the remarks of the source from the U.S-Japanese foreign affairs field. In particular, DPRK is trying to make it clear that the supply of crude petroleum should be resumed, reported Asahi Shimbun on Wednesday. DPRK informed this intention when PRC's Director-General of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fu Ying, met with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, but it is known that their request has been turned down. One of the U.S. officials, under the condition of anonymity, remarked that the second round of talks was expected to be held in the middle of December, but since DPRK is wary about the requests of direct and irreparable abandonment of nuclear weapons programs from the U.S., there is a chance for postponing the talks to next year. This official answered "Yes" to the question about whether the talks could be delayed to January or February of next year. About the exact date of resuming the six-nation talks, "We expect the talks to resume as soon as possible, but we do not have anything to talk

about regarding details such as the date of the conference," revealed the U.S. spokesperson for the State Department, Adam Ereli. Following the conference between Kelly and Fu, ROK assistant foreign minister, Lee Soo-hyuk, and Japanese head of Asian Affairs Department in the Foreign Ministry, Yabunaka Mitoji, are scheduled to discuss the next round of the six-nation talks, and will attract public attentions. In particular, PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao is scheduled to have a talk with U.S. President George W. Bush on Sunday, and there is still room for holding the talks this year, passed on the Japanese dailies.

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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Ilmin Internationl Relations Institute
BK21 The Education and Research Corps for East Asian Studies
Department of Political Science, Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China

International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),
Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan

Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Brandon Yu: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Young-soo: yskim328@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy84@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Saiko Iwata: saiko@akira.ne.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@online.ru
Moscow, Russian Federation

Wu Chunsi: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org