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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Freeze Proposal?

Asahi News (Nobuyoshi Sakajiri, "PYONGYANG TO PROPOSE NUCLEAR PROGRAM FREEZE," Washington, 02/06/04) reported that 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, sources here said. The DPRK is expected to offer the concession during six-nation talks in Beijing from Feb. 25 on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons development program. The first round was held six months ago. There was no immediate indication of how the Bush administration will respond. A high-ranking administration official said Wednesday, "We cannot comment until we have determined the whole picture." The DPRK is expected to propose freezing operations of the 5,000-kilowatt experimental graphite nuclear reactor and spent fuel reprocessing facility at Yongbyon, according to sources close to the six-way talks. Those facilities would eventually also be shut down. In addition, Pyongyang will allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to return to Yongbyon.

2. Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks

Reuters ("KOREAS PLEDGE TO HELP NUCLEAR TALKS SUCCEED," Seoul, 02/06/04) reported that the DPRK and ROK pledged on Friday after ministerial talks to work together for the success of multilateral negotiations in late February on ending the DPRK's nuclear programs. The Seoul meeting had been marked by testy exchanges that experts said showed the DPRK felt increasingly cornered in the world community, especially following revelations this week that a top Pakistani scientist had sold it nuclear technology. "South and North agreed to cooperate for a fruitful second round of six-party talks to resolve the nuclear issue peacefully," said a joint statement issued after three days of inter-Korean ministerial talks in Seoul. The two sides agreed to try to hold new military talks, although there was no guarantee the DPRK would follow through. The ROK's ersion of the statement said the two would hold military talks between generals as soon as possible with the intention of convening defense ministers' talks to follow up a one-off meeting in September 2000. But the DPRK, where the secretive military is the paramount authority, issued a statement saying only that both sides would propose military talks to their military authorities.

3. ROK DPRK Nuclear Task Force

Yonhap ("KOREA FORMS TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS NORTH NUCLEAR ISSUE," Seoul, 02/06/04) reported that the ROK's Foreign Ministry said Friday it has established a task force that will deal exclusively with the DPRK nuclear issue. Cho Tae-yong, a career diplomat who is now serving as a presidential protocol officer, will head the new team, the ministry said in a press release. Cho will also serve as deputy chief of the nation's delegation to six-party talks on the nuclear issue slated for 25-27 February in Beijing, the ministry said. Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck will be the chief delegate. The ministry has been pushing for the establishment of the task force as a way to take some of the burden off its North American Affairs Bureau so that the bureau can focus on other important issues, such as the country's alliance with the United States. The ministry said the task force will boost efficiency in the nation's diplomacy related to the nuclear issue.

4. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press ("US Envoy Hopes N Korea Can Promise To End Nuclear Program," Seoul, 02/06/04) reported that the US hopes the DPRK will promise to dismantle its nuclear weapons program later this month at critical six-nation talks aimed at easing tensions, a top US envoy said Friday. In a sign that the US and the ROK are coordinating an approach, the US Ambassador to the ROK, Thomas Hubbard, echoed the sentiment Friday in a New Year's address to Korean reporters in Seoul. "We do hope to see in these talks a DPRK commitment to dismantle its nuclear program completely, verifiably and irreversibly," Hubbard said. Once the DPRK's commitment is established, Hubbard said, it is "possible to talk about various interim steps that might lead in that direction. Our hope and expectation is that the North Koreans will come clean on their entire nuclear weapons program. They need to acknowledge what they already acknowledged to us at one point. That is that they were pursuing not only the plutonium program in Yongbyon, but a separate HEU program

5. ROK DPRK Humanitarian Aid

Korea Herald (Kim So-young, "SEOUL OFFERS RICE AID TO N. KOREA; TWO KOREAS AGREE TO HOLD HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY TALKS SOON," 02/07/04) reported that the ROK promised to provide about 1 million tons of rice this year to North Korea during ministerial talks that ended in Seoul yesterday, a reliable government source said. "We agreed to send about 1 million tons of rice, including direct assistance and provision through international agencies, to the North," the source said, asking not to be named. The ROK government also agreed to provide 200,000 tons of fertilizer

to the DPRK for the spring seeding season, the source and other officials said. But Deputy Minister for Unification Policy Shin Eon-sang, spokesman for the ROK delegation to the inter-Korean talks, denied the accounts, saying the DPRK did not ask for rice aid. He said there was only request for fertilizer and that the ROK was positively considering it.

6. DPRK-Iraq Nuclear Negotiations

Donga Ilbo ("Iraq in Secret Negotiations with NK for Missile Technology," 02/06/04) reported that George Tenet, the director of the US Central Intelligence Agency, revealed on February 5 that Iraq was in secret negotiations with North Korea to obtain some of its most dangerous missile technology. During his address at Georgetown University, Washington, Tenet told the group that "the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) has confirmed prewar intelligence that Iraq was in secret negotiations with North Korea to obtain some of its most dangerous missile technology." He added, "Intelligence also knew that Libya was working with North Korea to acquire longer-range ballistic missiles." He also added that they "discovered the extent of Pakistan nuclear scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan's hidden proliferating network of nuclear technology by tagging the proliferators," and that they "detected the network stretching from Pakistan to Europe to the Middle East to Asia offering its wares to countries like North Korea and Iran."

7. Japan-DPRK Direct Links

Agence France-Presse ("FERRY TO JAPAN PROVIDED NKOREA AT LEAST 1.8 MLN DLRS," 02/06/04) reported that the controversial ferry that provides the DPRK's only direct link to Japan helped the DPRK bring in at least 190 million yen (1.8 million dollars) in cash in 2003, a press report says. The sum was compiled from 69 known cash transfers of over one million yen, although further shipments in smaller amounts could have boosted the total, the Sankei Shimbun said, citing customs and police officials. The figure, just down from the 200 million yen in known cash handovers in 2002, proved the Man Gyong Bong-92 ferry remained an important channel for desperately needed hard currency, the paper said.

8. PRC on Taiwan Spy Ring

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN SPY RING BROKEN BY CHINA," 02/06/04) reported that the PRC has arrested three Taiwanese spys after breaking a massive network in what could be the worst setback for the island's intelligence operations since 1998, according to a press report. The network, centered on the PRC's Nanjing Military Region, covered targets such as the East Sea Fleet in Ningpo and Leping missile base in Jiangxi province which supervises People's Liberation Army (PLA) missile bases facing Taiwan, the United Daily News said. Taiwan's Military Intelligence Bureau colonel Li Yun-pu, head of the network, his nephew Kao Kuo-ning, colleague Wu Tse-ming and many others had been arrested on the mainland, the paper said citing reliable sources. Li, in his 40s, had been operating under the guise of a business executive with a technology firm, the paper said. He had successfully infiltrated {RC military units and recruited a number of PLA officers, it added. One PLA officer, Chen Zhihan, was also arrested, the paper added. Taiwan's defense minister Tang Yao-ming declined to confirm or deny the report. "The Ministry of National Defense will take the most proper measures to protect national security. We will not make any comment for the safety of the people engaging in such missions," Tang told reporters. It was the largest Taiwanese spy ring uncovered by the PRC since a similar one was broken in 1998, leading to the execution the following year of high-ranking PLA officers Liu Liankun and Shao Zhengzhong for espionage.

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.
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