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I. United States

1. Japan-ROK-US DPRK Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("US, JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA BEGIN UNOFFICIAL TALKS IN SAN FRANCISCO," Seoul, 04/07/04) reported that a part of ongoing efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, senior diplomats from the ROK, the US, and Japan are set to hold informal talks in the US city of San Francisco on Wednesday (7 April). High on the agenda are ways to kick start working-level discussions to proceed with the six-nation dialogue on the DPRK's nuclear tension. ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Director-General Mitoji Yabunaka are in San Francisco for the two-day informal

meeting aimed at maintaining the dialogue momentum gained during six-party nuclear negotiations in the PRC late February. The format of the proposed working-level contacts is the key issue to be addressed at the trilateral exchange. As the three sides work to launch the first working-level session within this month, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said that the lower-level meetings would focus on technical preparations and issues to pave the way for a third round of six-way talks.

2. PRC on DPRK Working Groups

Xinhua ("SIX-PARTY WORKING GROUP NOT TO BE SET UP DURING US VICE-PRESIDENT'S CHINA VISIT," Beijing, 04/07/04) reported that the establishment of a working group for the six-party talks needs the coordination of all the six nations, a PRC official said here Wednesday. "The visit of US Vice-President Dick Cheney to China doesn't mean that the working group can be established as he comes," He Yafei, director of the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of Foreign Ministry, said at a news briefing. "It involves all the six parties." Cheney will pay a working visit to the PRC from 13 to 15 April at the invitation of PRC Vice-President Zeng Qinghong.

Xinhua "DRAFT DOCUMENTS ESTABLISHING SIX-PARTY TALKS WORKING GROUP ACCEPTED," Beijing, 04/06/04) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said at a regular news conference on April 6th that the PRC has supplied the other five parties to the six-party talks with a draft document on the concept of establishing a work group for the six-party talks. The other parties have endorsed the draft document. Kong Quan said: In accordance with the consensus reached by various parties to the previous round of talks, the work group should be established as soon as possible. The work group's key tasks are to make technical preparations for facilitating specific agenda of the third round of the six-party talks so that the third round of talks can continue to make progress on a solid foundation.

3. PRC on Hong Kong "Political Reform"

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA MEDIA HAILS BEIJING'S CLAMP DOWN ON POLITICAL REFORM IN HONG KONG," 04/07/04) reported that the PRC's media hailed a legal interpretation by the PRC legislature as an important step that places Hong Kong's electoral reform squarely in the hands of Beijing. Leading mainland papers reported that the interpretation was a "timely and needed" step in realizing the PRC's promise of a high degree of autonomy to Hong Kong when it reverted to PRC sovereignty in 1997 under the "one country, two systems" policy. The PRC's National People's Congress (NPC) clearly stated Tuesday that any changes to Hong Kong's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, on how its leaders are elected would be dictated by Beijing. "The interpretations make it clear that it falls under the authority of the NPC Standing Committee to decide whether the provisions concerning selecting of (Hong Kong's) Chief Executive and forming of the Legislative Council need to be amended or not," the leading People's Daily said in an editorial. "The high-degree of autonomy for Hong Kong has been authorized by the central authorities, the constitutional structure of (Hong Kong) is provided for by the Basic Law... and local government has no authority to decide or change its constitutional system," it said. The editorial said that the interpretation would be "helpful for the Hong Kong people to have a comprehensive and correct understanding" of how the PRC intends to run Hong Kong.

4. US Taiwan Diplomat Resignation

Agence France-Presse ("US TAIWAN REPRESENTATIVE RESIGNS IN CHINA POLICY ROW,"

Washington, 04/07/04) reported that the head of the de facto US diplomatic mission to Taiwan resigned, the State Department said, after her involvement in a row over US policy toward the PRC and Taiwan. US Secretary of State Colin Powell has received the letter of resignation from Therese Shaheen, managing director of the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT), Deputy State Department spokesman Adam Ereli told reporters. "In it, she said that with the conclusion of elections in Taiwan it was an appropriate time for her to step aside and said that she wanted to spend more time with her daughter," Ereli said. But senior State Department officials, speaking to AFP on condition of anonymity before the announcement, said they had expected her to resign as she had come under intense criticism for failing to properly represent US policy about Taiwan and the PRC. Diplomatic sources had hinted strongly that Shaheen would be dismissed if she did not offer her resignation but Ereli refused to comment. " Officials suggest that Shaheen's replacement could be named within two months.

5. PRC on US-Taiwan Relations

The Associated Press (Stephanie Hoo, "CHINA ASKS US TO STAY CLEAR OF TAIWAN," Beijing, 04/07/04) reported that the PRC complained Wednesday about what it called US interference on Taiwan, Hong Kong and the PRC's government's human rights record. It also called on the US to lift restrictions on selling sensitive technology to the PRC, because doing so would put outdated Cold War tensions to rest - and, the PRC asserted, even lessen the US trade deficit. But Taiwan remains "the most important problem in bilateral relations" between the US and the PRC, said He Yafei, director of North American affairs at the PRC's Foreign Ministry. "The question bears on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity," he said at a news briefing.

6. ROK Iraqi Troops

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN FM VOWS TO PUSH AHEAD WITH SENDING TROOPS TO IRAQ," 04/07/04) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon vowed to push ahead as planned with the dispatch of thousands of troops to Iraq despite deteriorating security in the war-torn state. "There is no change at all in our principle of dispatching troops to Iraq," Ban said during his weekly press briefing. Ban spoke a day after two South Koreans were released following their 14-hour detention by the militia of Shiite radical leader Moqtada Sadr in Iraq. The duo, a relief worker and a company employee, were freed unharmed in southern Iraq, but the incident sparked concerns about the security of ROK troops to be deployed in the country.

7. UN DPRK Human Rights Investigation

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD UNDER UN SPOTLIGHT AS ACCUSATIONS MOUNT," 04/08/04) reported that 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 European Union put forward a new resolution on the DPRK at the United Nations' top human rights forum on Wednesday, which calls for a special rapporteur to probe allegations of torture in the country. "It is being tabled at the moment," said an EU official. The DPRK opposes the move and has urged other countries to reject it. The draft, which the 53-member UN Human Rights Commission will vote on next week, also uses stronger language than a historic resolution passed in 2003.

8. DPRK on ROK Presidential Election

Financial Times (Andrew Ward, "N KOREA ENDORSES ROH'S PARTY IN SOUTH'S POLL," 04/07/04) reported that 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. The DPRK's intervention appeared designed to deepen divisions in ROK society between older conservatives loyal to the country's military alliance with the US and younger liberals more sympathetic towards the DPRK. Without mentioning Uri directly, the DPRK's state news agency urged voters in the ROK to "totally bury the pro-US conservative parties including the Grand National party [GNP] and the [Millennium] Democratic party," and help the "pro-reunification candidates win in the election". The DPRK often comments on ROK affairs but rarely has the authoritarian state aligned itself so firmly with a political movement in Seoul. 9. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE PM KOIZUMI SAYS WON'T SEEK THIRD TERM: REPORT," 04/08/04) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has said he will not seek a third term because he wants to be "liberated as soon as possible" after realizing his reforms goal, it was reported. The prime minister said he intended to step aside after his term as leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party ends in September 2006. "For the next two years, I must grit my teeth and work hard. My mission will be completed once the reforms are realized. Then, I would like to be liberated from the prime minister's seat as soon as possible. Perhaps it would be easy if I were to just dump my responsibilities and quit. But since I became premier with the support of many people, I'd like to carry through with the reforms," Koizumi expressed.

10. Koizumi on Yasukuni Shrine Visitations

Agence France-Presse ("KOIZUMI TO CONTINUE WAR SHRINE VISITS DECLARED UNCONSTITUTIONAL BY COURT," 04/07/04) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi vowed to continue his controversial visits to a war shrine, despite a court declaring the pilgrimages unconstitutional in a landmark decision. Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni shrine, which honors war criminals among the nation's 2.5 million war dead, have enraged the PRC and ROK. The Fukuoka District Court said in ruling on a claim for damages Wednesday that Koizumi's visits were political in nature and therefore unconstitutional. The ruling handed more than 200 relatives of the war dead and members of religious groups a moral victory but their claims for damages were rejected. Koizumi immediately vowed to continue his annual pilgrimage. "I cannot understand why it violates the constitution as I pay homage due to my personal beliefs," he said. "I will continue to visit." Legal experts said the lower court ruling was not legally binding as it was a collateral opinion, not the main judgment on the damages claim, and Japan had no legal framework for people to seek declaratory judgments. The case was brought by 211 plaintiffs after Koizumi visited Yasukuni on August 13, 2001 which they claimed violated the constitutional separation of state and religion and caused them mental suffering. They had sought damages of 100,000 yen (943 dollars) each, but no injunction.

11. DPRK-Japan Relations

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA SAID TO SEEK RESOLVE WITH JAPAN," Tokyo, 04/07/04) reported that the DPRK wants to resolve its differences with Japan and restart talks with Tokyo on establishing diplomatic relations, a former Japanese lawmaker was quoted as saying Wednesday. Taku Yamasaki, a former national lawmaker in Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's conservative party, made the remarks while briefing Koizumi on recent meetings he held with DPRK officials in the PRC, Kyodo News reported. Yamasaki and another politician from the party went to the northern PRC city of Dailin last week on what was billed as a private diplomatic initiative to jump-start

negotiations with the reclusive communist state. He told Koizumi at a dinner late Wednesday he came away from the meetings "convinced" that the DPRK wants to normalize relations with Japan during the prime minister's tenure, Kyodo said, citing unidentified participants at the dinner.

12. DPRK Economic Reform

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "NORTH KOREA REFORMS SAID IRREVERSIBLE BUT NOT SUCCESSFUL," Seoul, 04/07/04) reported that the DPRK's economic reforms have passed the point of being reversible, but have not yet rescued the DPRK, a leading US expert on the DPRK's economy said on Wednesday. Economist Marcus Noland of the International Institute for Economics said wage and price increases implemented in July 2002 had boosted household economic activity but yielded "disappointing" results in the decrepit industrial sector. "North Korea today is stuck in a netherworld where they haven't managed to successfully reform, but they are going to have difficulty going backwards," he told a seminar in Seoul. Double-digit or greater increases in prices and wages had legitimised small food markets and other "coping behaviour" DPRK households had used to survive a severe economic crisis and the famine of the 1990s, Noland said. "It's probably hard to put that genie back into the bottle," he said. But the country's industrial sector resembles the "Soviet Union or the Eastern bloc before it reformed" more than China and Vietnam, purported reform models for North Korea, he said. "At this point, I'm not sure that that is reversible in the sense of going back to a classic centrally planned economy that may have existed in the 1960s or 1970s, but on the other hand, it's not clear that it leads anywhere either," he said.

13. DPRK-ROK Kaesong Complex Leasing Fees

Yonhap ("SOUTH, NORTH KOREA AGREE ON LEASING FEES FOR KAESONG COMPLEX," Seoul, 04/07/04) reported that the ROK and the DPRK agreed on the land lease fee for the Kaesong Industrial Complex, Korea Land Corp. and Hyundai Asan said Wednesday. The two companies said the amount that will be offered for the 1 million pyeong (3.3-million square meters) of land has been set at US$16 million. This, they said, includes the lease and money needed to tear down existing facilities.

14. DPRK-PRC Relations

Korea Times (Ryu Jin, "KIM JONG-IL TO VISIT CHINA, JIJI PRESS SAYS," 04/07/04) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is pushing for a visit to the PRC by June, when a third round of six-party nuclear talks will be held, a Japanese news agency reported on Wednesday. "The visit will highly likely be made by June at the latest," it said. If Kim's Beijing visit is realized, it will be the first since Hu Jintao was sworn in as PRC president in March last year. Kim visited the PRC in January 2001. Besides summit talks with Hu, Kim is expected to go on a tour of provincial cities, which are leading the PRC's economic development.

15. US Aegis East Sea Dispatch

Donga Ilbo (Young-Sik Kim, "US AEGIS WARSHIP TO BE DISPATCHED TO EAST SEA APRIL," 04/06/04) reported that the US is planning to send a cutting-edge Aegis warship, famous for the pivotal role they plays in organizing the Missile Defense system of the US, to the East Sea of Korea this September. This dispatch can be interpreted as a restraining effort against the DPRK, which already owns missiles, and another step in the movement of the front line of a missile defense system for Japan. Quoting the remarks of US Admiral Gordon England on April 5, Defense News, a

military magazine based in the US, has reported that "this warship will detect and trace the movement and flight of missiles in order to mutually exchange information about those missiles with the Army as part of a multi-layer defense system." This warship weighs 9,000 tons and is equipped with a missile-tracing radar system and an interceptor missile system. The US government has disclosed that they will dispatch a missile interceptor system to Alaska this autumn in accordance with their idea of missile defense system organization, in order to take countermeasures against the intimidation of the DPRK, together with the Aegis warship dispatched to the East Sea. The dispatch of warship is regarded as the first level of preparation in a three-step maritime defense plan which was urged by US President George W. Bush about two years ago.

16. Australia on US-DPRK Diplomacy

The Australian (Catherine Armitage, "TARDY US LETS NORTH STOCKPILE WEAPONS," 04/07/04) reported that the US is giving the DPRK more time to build nuclear weapons by its "lugubrious and languorous" handling of the rogue state's nuclear threat, former Australian foreign minister Gareth Evans said this week. Evans's criticisms of the US approach, which Australia wholeheartedly supports, co-incided with the first visit to the DPRK by Australian ambassador Alan Thomas. After a delay of one year meant to convey Australia's concern over first the nuclear issue and then the DPRK ship caught carrying drugs to Australia, Thomas travelled to the capital Pyongyang at the weekend where he presented his credentials to DPRK head of state Kim Yong-nam. Speaking on his return to Beijing yesterday, Thomas, who is also ambassador to China, said the visit was meant to encourage the DPRK to engage in "sincere" discussion on the nuclear issue at six-party talks brokered by the PRC. He said the DPRK was keen for more aid, trade, personnel exchanges and investment from Australia, but that "would not happen unless we see further substantial progress" on the nuclear issue. Evans, now head of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, said there was an "irony" that the US seemed to be "entirely comfortable" to have the problem "not publicly visible during an election year", while "at the same time (the US) is looking under every rock for weapons in Iraq".

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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