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I. United States

1. US-Japan-ROK Joint Statement on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("US AND ALLIES HAMMER OUT JOINT STATEMENT FOR NUCLEAR CRISIS TALKS," 12/07/03) reported that the US, Japan and the ROK have hammered out a joint draft statement to be adopted at six-nation talks aimed at curbing the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, a top ROK diplomat said. "The three countries have finished work on the wording of a joint statement to be issued" at fresh talks on the crisis, Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck said Sunday. The ROK envoy for nuclear crisis talks said the draft envisaged a security guarantee for Pyongyang in return for its declaration that it would scrap its nuclear program. "It will be conveyed soon to North Korea through China," he told a press conference Sunday, adding the statement was proposed first by the PRC and the ROK. The draft was endorsed at talks between Lee and his US and Japanese counterparts who met in Washington last week to fine-tune preparations for a new round of six-nation talks on ending the year-long impasse, he said. US and ROK officials said they still hoped six-nation talks could start soon after a first round in August ended with little progress. But Lee said the six-nation meeting, originally expected to take place in Beijing in the third week of December, could be delayed. "Talks can still come as planned but time is running short," he said.

2. US DPRK Policy

The Washington Post (Glenn Kessler, "US HAS A SHIFTING SCRIPT ON N. KOREA ADMINISTRATION SPLIT AS NEW TALKS NEAR," 12/07/03) reported that three times in the past year, Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly has led a US delegation to meet with DPRK officials. Each time, under instructions from the National Security Council, he has read -- literally -- from a script that had been tightly scrutinized by senior officials from across the Bush administration. Sometimes, Kelly has been held to an NSC-vetted script even when he met just with Japanese and ROK officials. The restraints placed on Kelly -- highly unusual for an official of his experience and stature -- illustrate the administration's delicate, and at times tense, behind-th--scenes struggle with the DPRK crisis. Ever since President Bush has outlined a strategy of steadily assembling a multinational coalition to confront the DPRK over its nuclear ambitions, his advisers have disagreed profoundly over how tough the coalition's tactics should be, according to more than two dozen interviews with current and former officials in key agencies throughout the US government. The result, many officials say, has often been a stalemate that has slowed decision making and hobbled the administration's strategy -- even as the DPRK has defiantly confirmed a clandestine nuclear program, ousted international inspectors, begun assembling a nuclear weapons stockpile and threatened to test a nuclear weapon. Now, as the US and the DPRK prepare for another six-nation round of talks, the administration has reached a critical point in the effort to restrain the DPRK -- and in its own internal deliberations. The arguments go beyond the traditional State Department-Pentagon split, frequently leading to intra-agency disputes pitting Asia hands eager for diplomatic engagement of the DPRK against nonproliferation experts pressing for containment and isolation. Each side in the administration believes it has the president's blessing. But both are frustrated: Those seeking a diplomatic resolution feel that even when they win a small policy victory, language and tactics become hardened when the policy is implemented. Meanwhile, their opponents seethe at what they see as an attempt to re-create failed policies of the Clinton administration. In the coming days, Kelly's script for the upcoming meeting will be drafted, argued and polished, but many issues remain to be settled. Bush has publicly offered the DPRK some sort of multilateral security assurances, but the form and timing of such a guarantee have not been decided. Moreover, US officials disagree on what the DPRK needs to do to obtain the assurances -- in particular, whether the DPRK needs to accede to inspections.

3. PRC on US-DPRK Nuclear Agreement

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA, US GETTING CLOSER ON NUCLEAR ISSUES: PRC PREMIER," 12/08/03) reported that the DPRK and the US are getting closer in their positions on the DPRK nuclear issue, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao said here late Sunday. Speaking to reporters after meeting with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Wen said there had been progress in efforts for the peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear crisis, the PRC news agency Xinhua said. The DPRK has said its ultimate objective is a nuclear-weapons-free Korean peninsula. It also wants security concerns addressed, Wen was quoted as saying. For its part the US has made it clear it has no intention of changing the government in Pyongyang, Wen said. "The positions of the two parties are getting closer," he said. Wen cited multilateral talks in Beijing in April and August as signs of progress toward resolving the issue, and said he hoped they could resume this month. "It's important to continue with the six-party process, to have these talks resumed as soon as possible," Wen said. "We hope that it will be possible to hold the six-party talks in the month of December. Of course, it still depends on the consensus and agreement among all the parties concerned."

4. PRC Wen US Visit

Agence France-Presse ("PRC PREMIER WEN ARRIVES IN THE US," 12/08/03) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao arrived in New York for an official visit to the US during which tensions over Taiwan and bilateral trade disputes are expected to top the agenda. Wen's visit is part of a four-nation tour which will also take him to Canada, Mexico and Ethiopia. The three-day US visit will take Wen to New York, Washington and Boston, diplomatic PRC sources said. President George W. Bush is to meet Wen at the White House on Tuesday. Wen left with an entourage that included Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Minister of the State Development and Reform Commission Ma Kai, the official Xinhua news agency said.

5. EU DPRK Visit

Agence France-Presse ("EU DELEGATION TO VISIT NORTH KOREA THIS WEEK," 12/08/03) reported that European diplomats will visit the DPRK this week amid a flurry of diplomacy aimed at bringing the communist country back to talks aimed at ending its nuclear military ambitions, officials said here. The 11-member European Union delegation led by Guido Martini of Italy, which holds the EU presidency, and Manahan Leslie of Ireland is to arrive in Pyongyang Tuesday for a three-day visit, the ROK foreign ministry said. "Discussions during their stay in Pyongyang are expected to focus on the DPRK nuclear issue," a ministry official told AFP. The European diplomats will visit Seoul Friday to brief ROK officials on the outcome of their talks with DPRK officials, he said.

6. Taiwan Independence Referendum

Asia Pulse ("REFERENDUM WILL NOT CHANGE CROSS-STRAIT STATUS QUO: MAC CHIEF," Tokyo, 12/09/03) reported that Taiwan wants to push for a referendum, but has no intention to use it to change the status quo in relations across the Taiwan Strait, Taiwan's top PRC policy planner said. Tsai Ing-wen, chairman of the Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), made the remarks in an interview with the Nihon Keizai Shimbun newspaper, which published the interview yesterday. On President Chen's plan to hold a referendum on March 20, 2004, Tsai said the referendum has "no intention to change the status quo that exists between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait." She elaborated that the US is now preoccupied with sensitive regions in the Middle East and the DPRK, and Taiwan knows perfectly well that the US does not want anything untoward to happen in the Taiwan Strait. On whether Taiwan has solicited the views of others on the issue of a referendum, Tsai said that it is

possible to take stock of the views of others, but the nation will have to make its own judgment and decision in the end. She said that interpretations on what constitutes major sensitive issues vary, so Taiwan's referendum will need "correct understanding" by related countries, implying the PRC and the US In addition, she said Beijing does not want to resolve the Taiwan issue through the US and is hoping to do this by resuming cross-strait negotiations. Asked whether one of the reasons for Taiwan authorities to advocate holding a referendum also include the increasing aversion of Taiwan people toward the mainland, Tsai said frankly that the people's aversion about Beijing has been rising unabated. She said further that affected by Taiwan businessmen's investment in the mainland, joblessness has worsened in Taiwan and the public also worries about Taiwan's increased investment in the mainland. She said that though Taiwan has handled cross-strait relations with caution, it will be unable to stop the voice of the public in a democratic society. On the principle role on cross-strait talks, Tsai said the PRC Communist Party is the only government representative in mainland China, while Taiwan has several political parties to represent the will of the people, and will not be represented by only one party. Tsai said that Taiwan has a semi-official organization to serve as the principal negotiator with the mainland, but it will not rule out the possibility of non-profit groups in the private sector representing Taiwan.

7. PRC-US Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PRC PREMIER TELLS US TO KEEP POLITICS OUT OF TRADE," 12/09/03) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao, on an official US visit, warned Washington against politicizing Sino-US economic disputes and sought to soothe US concerns over its massive trade deficit with the PRC. Wen, who earlier in the day had rung the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange, told a group of US bankers in New York that he had not come "to fight a trade war," despite heightened bilateral trade tensions. Frictions include US concerns that China is keeping its currency artificially weak against the dollar, intellectual property rights (IPR) violations and, above all, the PRC's huge trade surplus with the US. On a visit to the PRC in October, US Commerce Secretary Don Evans had said US patience with the trade imbalance was "wearing thin" and threatened to close off US markets to China's exports if Beijing failed to make greater efforts to open its doors. Wen warned that any attempt to reduce PRC exports would harm both countries, and especially US firms operating in the PRC. "A more realistic solution is for the US to expand its exports to China," the premier said, adding that China planned to import over one trillion dollars worth of goods from around the world over the next three years. Wen specifically cited the PRC's displeasure with US restrictions on the export to the PRC of high-tech products deemed to have potential non-civilian applications. "I ardently hope that the relevant US departments will make a clean break with those obsolete concepts and anachronistic practices, and throw them into the Pacific Ocean," he said. The premier, who will meet with President George W. Bush in Washington on Tuesday, is heading a high-powered trade delegation that includes Ma Kai, head of the State Development and Reform Commission, and Vice Commerce Minister Ma Xiuhong. Prior to Wen's address, both PRC ministers addressed criticism that Beijing's control of foreign exchange rates had aggravated the trade surplus by keeping the renminbi artificially low against the dollar. Ma Kai acknowledged the need for reform but said change could only come gradually. "If we reform the exchange rate system irrationally when the conditions are not there, it would only introduce disruption to the economy of China and to the global economy," he stated.

8. DPRK Humanitarian Crisis

Agence France-Presse ("UN SAYS MILLIONS OF NORTH KOREANS AT RISK IN FOOD EMERGENCY," 12/09/03) reported that millions of people in the secretive communist nation of North Korea are at risk of going hungry as the country remains in the grips of a food emergency, the

United Nations said. The UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said that up to three million people had been temporarily dropped from food handout lists this year because of a shortage of aid funds. "While the country is slowly recovering from the food crisis during the mid- to late-1990s, a chronic humanitarian emergency remains with no clear end it sight," it said in a statement. OCHA said that cereal shortages would affect up to 2.2 million people in the west of the country in the month of December, and that handouts to 700,000 elderly were stopped in November. "Unless new pledges are confirmed soon, by May, cereal shortfalls may affect 3.8 million people countrywide," it said, adding that more than 40 percent of DPRK children are malnourished. "Around 70,000 children are severely acutely malnourished and at high risk of dying if they do not receive critical hospital treatment," OCHA said. Masood Hyder, UN humanitarian coordinator in North Korea, said last week he was concerned that aid to the DPRK had slowed as international relief efforts focus on Iraq.

9. Japan PRC Chemical Weapons Recovery

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN RECOVERS 36,000 CHEMICAL WEAPONS LEFT BY TROOPS IN CHINA," 12/08/03) reported that Japan has retrieved some 36,000 chemical weapons left by its troops in the PRC, but they are yet to be destroyed as agreement on how to do this is still being thrashed out, state media reported Monday. A Japanese official working to seal 724 chemical weapons along with five barrels of mustard gas that killed one person and injured 43 in north PRC in August said progress was nevertheless being made. "A total of 36,000 chemical weapons including bombs, poisonous fume pipes and iron barrels containing chemical preparations have been retrieved and put under temporary safekeeping," the unnamed official said in an interview with Oriental Outlook magazine, carried by Xinhua on its website. Work first began on excavating the munitions in northern Heilongjiang in September 2000 and followed on in eastern Jiangsu and northern Hebei province. More than 700,000 chemical weapons are estimated by Japan to have been abandoned in the PRC by its armies, although PRC experts say as many as two million such weapons are still buried, giving the PRC the world's largest stockpile of abandoned chemical weapons. Under the UN Chemical Weapons Convention Japan has until 2007 to destroy them, but due to the large amount of stockpiles experts say it will take much longer to safely dispose of so many bombs. The official said both sides have agreed to build a center for the destruction of the weapons around Haerba Ridge in Dunhua city, Jilin province, but problems remained. "Actually, the retrieved chemical weapons haven't yet been destroyed because decisions haven't been made on what technologies should be adopted for their destruction," said the official. "What we have done are preparations for detoxification. The Japanese and PRC sides meet monthly to discuss how to dispose of these chemical weapons and what environmental standards should be complied with. "Why does the conferring between Japan and China take so much time? It's because the work has no precedent in human history."

10. PRC Energy Shortage

Agence France-Presse ("ENERGY-HUNGRY CHINA BRACES FOR POWER STRUGGLE AS WINTER DRAWS NEAR," 12/07/03) reported that from freezing shoppers in Shanghai to schoolchildren doing their homework by candlelight in Hunan, the PRC are preparing for a winter season rendered cold and dark by frequent energy shortfalls. The PRC's economy is rumbling ahead, and power suppliers have great difficulties keeping up, with potentially dire consequences for an increasingly energy-dependent economy. "The shortage will have a strong impact on the PRC economy, no doubt about it," said Xiao Yunhan, an energy expert at the PRC Academy of Science. "Aluminum makers, who depend much on electricity, will suffer a lot while the impact to parts of the chemical industry will be disastrous," he said. In one indication of how bad the situation is, officials in the PRC's northeastern

rust-belt have even had to buy power from the DPRK this year. In the PRC's largest city Shanghai, shopping malls and departments stores will turn off their central heating systems every day between 10:00 am and noon to avoid the peak daily power usage period. The measure is meant to ease an expected power shortfall of two million kilowatts in the winter season resulting from coal supply shortages and a seasonal drought. This is only the latest measure by the Shanghai authorities, who have also shut down all small fertilizer factories and drastically curbed the operations of energy-guzzling, low-added-value companies such as small steel plants. To a certain extent, energy shortages are just part of the price the PRC has to pay for becoming a richer society, analysts said.

11. Japan Iraq Troop Dispatch

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SET TO APPROVE TROOP DISPATCH TO IRAQ," 12/09/03) reported that Japan is set to approve a plan to dispatch some 500-700 ground troops to Iraq to provide humanitarian aid for between six months to a year, according to press reports. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's cabinet is expected to approve the plan Tuesday afternoon, major newspapers said. Under the plan, Japanese Self-Defense Forces troops will be sent to southeastern Iraq to provide medical services and water and to rebuild schools, the newspapers said. Although the plan does not specify the timing of the deployment, the reports said soldiers would likely be sent as early as February. Japanese air force personnel, who will be based in Kuwait to transport humanitarian relief supplies, could be sent in January, the reports said. Following the cabinet approval of the basic proposal, Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba will draw up more detailed operational plans to be submitted to Koizumi. Tuesday's expected cabinet approval follows the passage of a law in July by Japan's parliament, which authorized the dispatch of Japanese troops to support Iraq's reconstruction efforts. But that law prohibits the government from sending troops to combat zones.

12. ASEAN-Japan Summit

Asia Pulse ("MEGAWATI, KOIZUMI TO CO-CHAIR ASEAN-JAPAN SUMMIT," Jakarta, 12/08/03) reported that Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will co-chair an ASEAN-Japan Summit to be held in Tokyo on December 10-12. "President Megawati, in her capacity as the ASEAN chairperson, and Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi will co-chair the sessions of the two-day ASEAN-Japan Summit," Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Marty Natalegawa said here over the weekend. Indonesia currently holds the ASEAN chair - a position which each ASEAN member country holds for one year on a rotating basis. Indonesia's term will end next July. The heads of state and government of ASEAN's 10 member countries and Japan will attend the summit. The 10 ASEAN nations are Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. "The upcoming summit will be special as it will mark the first time for the ASEAN leaders to meet outside the region," Marty said. Dubbed the "Japan-ASEAN Commemorative Summit", the gathering was expected to produce a "Tokyo Declaration for a Dynamic and Enduring ASEAN-Japan Partnership in the New Millennium." The declaration would contain basic principles and main directives for the development of ASEAN-Japan cooperation along with an "ASEAN-Japan Action Plan."

13. ROK Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA'S EMBATTLED PRESIDENT SINKS INTO DEEPER TROUBLE," 12/07/03) reported that barely 10 months in office, Roh Moo-Hyun's presidency in the ROK is in trouble, with some analysts blaming his inexperience and lack of leadership for the current political turmoil. In an indication of his lack of support in parliament, Roh signed into law Saturday a

piece of legislation he had last month tried to throw out -- a bill allowing for an independent probe into corruption allegations against his former aides. He was compelled to sign the bill after his veto was overridden in the opposition-controlled parliament on Thursday by more than two-third's of lawmakers. According to analysts, the corruption investigation is likely to further undercut the embattled leadership of the president, who was elected on an anti-corruption platform. The probe will focus on three of Roh's aides -- Choi Do-Sul, Lee Kwang-Jae and Yang Gil-Seung -- who allegedly took millions of dollars of illicit funds from businessmen before and after the December presidential poll. The special investigation, expected to be launched by early January, will last for up to 90 days and the results will be revealed to the public just ahead of crucial National Assembly elections in April.

14. Russia Far East DPRK Refugees

New York Times (James Brooke, "TO FILL EMPTY FAR EAST, RUSSIANS LOOK TO REFUGEES," Slavyanka, 12/08/03) reported that in Slavyanka, or Slavic village, a European outpost north of the DPRK border, the Slavic population implosion is as clear as roadside meadows where cows graze among the concrete shells of abandoned houses. But the demographic transformation of Russia's Far East, local politicians say, could have a silver lining of global importance: providing new homes for refugees from the DPRK. The human drama of the estimated 150,000 DPRK refugees living clandestinely in northern PRC has so moved the US Congress that bills were introduced in late November in both houses to ease American visas for some refugees and to pay for the resettlement of others. On a tour of the Khasan district last week, Sergei Darkin, governor of Russia's Primorye region, said that he would take the North Koreans. Slavyanka lies 80 kilometers north of the DPRK border. "The US is moving in the right direction to solve the problem, and I support them," he said. "I am ready to help, and financially too." Djambulat Tekiev, the district's representative in the regional legislature, agreed, waving to a vast, empty vista here that evoked eastern Montana. "Look," he said. "No people, no development." This of course is only at the talking stage. Although the governor said he would welcome as many as 200,000 refugees, it is unclear whether the government in Moscow, which controls immigration policy, will want to risk increasing regional tensions and racial insecurities among Russians here. President Vladimir Putin "has said it is strategically important to get more people to move into the East," Pyotr Samoilenko, the federal government's regional spokesman, said in Vladivostok. "The only thing that North Korea has to offer is cheap labor." Two months ago, Darkin traveled by train from Vladivostok to North Korea. What he saw there, he said in an interview this week, gave him little hope for economic revival. "The economy there is still on a decline," he said. Noting that his train clanked along at 40 kilometers an hour, stopping frequently because of power shortages, he said, "They lack everything -- fuel, cement, fertilizer."

15. DPRK on Russia Defense Spendings

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA APPROVES MOSCOW DEFENSE BUILD-UP," Seoul, 12/02/03) reported that the DPRK said Tuesday plans to beef up Russia's military would benefit world peace and act as a check on a hegemonic US. Last month President Vladimir Putin said Russia would boost its nuclear weapons arsenal and could resort to pre-emptive strikes because Washington had already adopted the same policy. "Nobody can criticize Russia for opting to increase its national defence capability, especially its strategic armed forces," said Rodong Sinmun, North Korea's ruling Workers Party newspaper. It said Washington was pursuing a new military confrontation and had listed Russia as a target for nuclear attack. The DPRK, former Cold War ally of Russia, said Moscow's decision to build up its strategic arsenal was "a very just one" needed to contain Wshington's hegemonic and unilateral policies. "This is in line with the desire and interests

of the Russian people and helpful to ensuring global peace and security," the newspaper said in a dispatch carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

KCNA Statement ("MILITARY MEASURE TAKEN BY RUSSIA SUPPORTED PYONGYANG," 12/02/03) reported that Frokopenko, military attache of the Russian embassy here, called a press conference on Nov. 20 at which he introduced in detail the results of the meeting held at the Russian Ministry of Defence as regards the military principle of Russia and the document of the ministry "The immediate tasks for the development of armed forces of the Russian Federation". Referring to the issue of the nuclear deterrent, in particular, the document clearly stated that Russia can use nuclear weapons as actual means to check the US attempt to lower the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons. In this regard Rodong Sinmun today in a signed commentary says that the measure taken by Russia is a very just one in the light of the present international situation and from the viewpoint of holding in check the imperialists' hegemonic and unilateral policies and hard line and defending the security and interests of the country. It continues: Nobody can criticize Russia for opting to increase its national defence capability, especially its strategic armed forces, under the situation where the US is pursuing a new military confrontation after listing Russia as a target of its nuclear attack. Brisk in Russia is the work to beef up the armed forces of the federation as evidenced by the modernization of the strategic rocket force and the process of equipping its navy with new type weaponry. Thanks to these efforts fresh changes are taking place in the military field of Russia and the military and technical level and combat capabilities of its armed forces getting boosted. This is in line with the desire and interests of the Russian people and helpful to ensuring global peace and security.

II. People's Republic of China

1. PRC's "One Country, Two Systems" Policy

China Daily ("FULL BACKING FOR HK, MACAO PLEDGED," 12/04/03, P1) reported that Chinese President Hu Jintao said on December 3 that the central government will continue to implement the basic policy of "one country, two systems," pledging full support for the governments of Hong Kong and Macao, to maintain long-term prosperity and stability in the two regions. President Hu made the remarks while meeting separately with Tung Chee-hwa and Edmund Ho Hau Wah, chief executives of Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions (SAR) respectively in Beijing. The two chief executives are here reporting on their work to the central government. Hu said he hoped HK authorities would continue their efforts to improve communication with all walks of life in Hong Kong, and draw on the wisdom of the public to improve their services. During his meeting with Macao's Edmund Ho Hau Wah, the president praised the local government for achieving the good situation under which Macao enjoys social stability and a growing economy, while local residents live and work in peace and contentment.

2. PRC's Non-Proliferation Policy

People's Daily ("US WELCOMES NON-PROLIFERATION EFFORTS MADE BY CHINA," Washington, 12/05/03, P3) reported that the US Department of State welcomed the efforts made by the Chinese government in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction upon the latter's publication of a white paper entitled "China's Non-Proliferation Policy and Measures". The US welcomes PRC's efforts in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, missiles, conventional weapons and related materials and technologies through tighter export control regulations, a spokesman with the Department said at a news briefing, December 3. The US will continue its cooperation with PRC on this issue through the ongoing non-proliferation talks, the spokesman said,

adding that PRC has enacted good legislation on this issue and expressing the hope of its implementation and enforcement.

China Daily ("WHITE PAPER ON NON-PROLIFERATION ISSUED," 12/04/03, P1) reported that the Information Office of the State Council published a "White Paper on China's Non- Proliferation Policy and Measures" in Beijing on December 3. The 9,000-Chinese word White Paper, the first of its kind, reiterates PRC's firm stance against the proliferation of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and elaborates on the country's persistent non-proliferation efforts. "Over the years, with its strong sense of responsibility, China has step by step formulated a whole set of non-proliferation policies and put in place a fairly complete legal framework on non-proliferation and export control," says the White Paper, adding that the country has taken positive and constructive measures to accelerate the international non-proliferation process with concrete actions. It pledged that PRC will join the international community in making contributions to accelerating the improvement of the international non-proliferation mechanism and to promoting world peace, stability and development.

3. Russia-US Relations

People's Daily ("PUTIN TALKED WITH BUSH THROUGH PHONE," Moscow, 12/03/03, P3) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin talked with US President George W. Bush, his counterpart, through telephone on December 1, exchanged views on bilateral relations and international circumstances. The two part expressed satisfaction with the bilateral relations development since Putin's US visit in September. On other international issues, Putin stressed that UN must take active part in the reconstruction of the post-war Iraq.

4. PRC-US Talks

China Daily (Jiang Zhuqing, "TALKS FOCUS ON TRADE AND TAIWAN," 12/04/03, P2) reported that PRC-US trade links and the Taiwan question will be topics topping Premier Wen Jiabao's agenda during his four-day official visit to the US next week, Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong described the mammoth trade volume between PRC and the US as a win-win pattern and said it is beneficial to both sides. During Wen's visit, relevant departments of the two sides will sign a series of agreements in the fields of transportation, quarantine, public health and other areas, Zhou disclosed. Regarding the trade imbalance which has aroused great concern in the US Government, he said the deficit in favor of PRC is not as large as what the US estimates. Moreover, 90 per cent of PRC's exports to the US are labor-intensive products long abandoned by US enterprises, he explained. Wen leaves on Sunday and will stop in New York, Washington and Boston before traveling to Canada, Mexico and Ethiopia.

China Daily (Li Jing, "US URGED TO STRICTLY ADHERE TO COMMITMENT ON TAIWAN," 12/03/03, P1) reported that PRC hopes the US will strictly observe its commitment on the Taiwan question and clearly oppose any activity made by Taiwan authorities aimed at splitting China. Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao made those remarks at a news conference on December 2, just days ahead of Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to the US. Liu said the Taiwan question will be an important topic in meetings between Wen and top US officials during his December 7-10 visit. "We have noticed the United States has promised many times that it would stick to the one-China policy, honor the three Sino-US joint communiques and oppose Taiwan independence. We hope the US side will observe that commitment," said Liu. He made the comment when asked by China Daily about remarks made by US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher on Monday that the US opposes any Taiwanese referendum designed to change the island's status or move it towards independence.

5. Russia's Stance on Taiwan Issue

People's Daily (Guo Jianguo, "RUSSIA'S AGAINST TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE," Moscow, 12/03/03, P3) reported that the Russian Foreign Ministry said on December 2 that Moscow opposes any form of independence in Taiwan, noting that Taiwan is an integral part of China. "Russia's position is that there is only one China in the world. The government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legitimate government representing the whole of China, while Taiwan is an integral part of China," the statement said. "Russia has always considered the Taiwan issue as China's internal affair," it said. The ministry also expressed the hope that "the Taiwan problem will be settled without any damage to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region."

6. DPRK-US Relations China Daily ("DPRK CLAIMS US SENT SPY FLIGHTS," Seoul, 12/02/03, P1) reported that the DPRK said on December 1 the US military conducted at least 150 spy flights against it in November and accused US of "watching for an opportunity to crush" its government. Citing "military sources," the DPRK official KCNA news agency said reconnaissance planes such as the U-2, RC-12 and RF-4C had intruded into its airspace. KCNA then questioned US's commitment to seeking a peaceful resolution to a standoff over the country's suspected development of nuclear weapons. "Those acts clearly prove that the US imperialist warhawks are watching for an opportunity to crush the DPRK with arms, clinging to their anachronistic hostile policy toward it as usual, though they are loudmouthed about 'a solution to an issue' through negotiations," KCNA said.

7. Six-Party Talks

China Daily ("THREE PARTIES TO MEET ON TALKS," Seoul, 12/03/03, P1) reported that diplomats from the US, Japan and the ROK will meet in Washington this week to fine-tune their positions ahead of a fresh round of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, officials said on December 2. The allies will work towards a joint strategy tomorrow, when ROK Assistant Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck meets his Japanese counterpart Mitoji Yabunaka and US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly. The US, Russia, PRC, Japan, the DPRK and the ROK had hoped to hold the talks this month, but no date has been set. Japan, the ROK and the US are currently trying to draft an accord for the six nations to sign at the end of the next round, ROK Foreign Ministry has said. Seoul believes it's important for the next round to produce a written agreement, upon which future pacts could be built. Delegates from Japan, the ROK and the US will also hold bilateral meetings scheduled on December 3, an ROK Foreign Ministry official said. Japan's Kyodo news agency has reported that it would likely have all six participants agree on a DPRK agreement to abandon its nuclear program and allow inspections, while the five other countries provide the DPRK with security guarantees.

China Daily (Li Jing, "PREPARATIONS FOR TALKS ¡(r)IN FULL SWING'," 12/03/03, P1) reported that Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said at a news conference on December 2 that PRC has close contacts with all countries concerned and preparations for a second round of six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear stalemate are in full swing. "There are two key issues - one is to ensure a nuclear-free DPRK, the other is to solve the security concerns of the DPRK," said Liu. He said all parties involved still have differences on the two issues as well as other related questions. "We're hoping for an early date for the second round of talks," said Liu.

8. DPRK-US Relations

People's Daily (Ji Xinlong, "DPRK URGES US TO ACCEPT PROPOSED PACKAGE SOLUTION," Pyongyang, 12/02/03, P3) reported that the DPRK insisted on December 1 that a package solution

based on the principle of simultaneous action be the way to solve the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula, urging the US to accept the proposal at an early date. According to a commentary published in Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the Workers' Party of Korea, the proposal elaborates on the blueprint of a package solution and the order of simultaneous action to comprehensively and fairly settle the nuclear issue, including the US switchover in its hostile policy toward the DPRK, the DPRK's renunciation of its nuclear program and the normalization of diplomatic ties between the two countries. The de-nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is the estimate goal of the DPRK, the commentary said. The self-defensive measure was taken by the DPRK as the US totally scrapped the DPRK-US Agreed Framework, it said. The proposal for the package solution is the stance and attitude that the DPRK and the United States should take at the six-way talks, it said. On October 25, a spokesman for the DPRK Foreign Ministry said the country would be willing to take into account the written assurance of non-aggression proposed by US President George W. Bush after the package solution was adopted by both sides.

9. DPRK-Japan Relations

China Daily ("JAPANESE SPY SATELLITE LAUNCH ENDS IN FAILURE ONCE AGAIN," Tokyo, 12/01/03, P11) reported that Japan blew up a rocket carrying two spy satellites designed to monitor its neighbor the DPRK minutes after launch on Saturday. The failure echoed those that dogged its space program in the late 1990s. The disastrous launch is an extreme embarrassment for Japan. There was no immediate word on the cost of the launch. A spokesman for the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said that part of a booster rocket had not separated as expected.

10. PRC Stance on Taiwan Issue

People's Daily ("'ONE CHINA' WILL BE DEFENDED AT ALL COSTS," 12/06/03, P1) carried a commentary from the Xinhua News Agency on December 5, saying that Taiwan leader Chen Shui-bian's repeated proposal of staging a so-called "defensive referendum" is an extremely dangerous provocation. Now Chen is pushing for a so-called "defensive referendum" in the island's election next year using the excuse that Taiwan is facing a "military threat" from the mainland, which further hampers the development of cross-Straits relations, the commentary said. Having given an incompetent performance in his position, Chen is still addicted to power and tries to use every possible means to provoke confusion among the people and create tensions across the Taiwan Straits. The mainland has shown sincerity in promoting relations during the past two decades and more, and non-government exchanges and co-operation have seen remarkable progress, but the Taiwan authorities have incessantly hindered the relationship. If the Taiwan authorities and separatists collaborate to seek independence, the Chinese Government and people will spare no efforts to maintain the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of China at any charge, said the commentary.

China Daily (Xing Zhigang, "TAIWAN REFERENDUM CRITICIZED," 12/02/03, P2) reported that mainland researchers on cross-Straits studies on December 1 accused Taiwan leader Chen Shui-bian of starting an ill-considered attempt to initiate an independence referendum next year. The criticism over Chen came at a seminar organized by the Beijing-based Cross-Straits Relations Research Center to mark the 60th anniversary of the Cairo Declaration. The Cairo Declaration, a key document of international law, provided effective legal evidence for Taiwan's status as an unalienable part of China, according to about 20 scholars and experts who attended the meeting. They agreed that Chen's push for independence through the proposed independence referendum flouts international law and should draw firm opposition from the international community. The future of Taiwan should be determined by the Chinese People as a whole, rather than only the will of

a minority on the island, participants said. A military researcher made the comments in response to Chen's alleged plan to use the island's new referendum bill that gives him the power to hold a defensive independence plebiscite in case of an "external threat." He reportedly argued that a "defensive referendum" should be pre-emptive by nature; otherwise it would be of no use.

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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