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I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Freeze PRC Support

The Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "NORTH KOREA CLAIMS SUPPORT FROM CHINA," Seoul, 02/10/04) reported that the DPRK said Tuesday that it has received support from the PRC its proposal to freeze its nuclear weapons programs in return for free oil and other economic concessions from the US. The PRC signaled its support at a meeting in Beijing of the foreign ministers of the two countries that ended Tuesday, according to the KCNA. The PRC foreign minister "recognized the rationality" of the DPRK's proposal to help end the nuclear dispute, a DPRK foreign ministry spokesman told KCNA.

2. PRC-ROK DPRK Nuclear Diplomacy

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S TOP ENVOY TO VISIT SOUTH KOREA TO DISCUSS NUCLEAR CRISIS," 02/10/04) reported that PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi is to visit Seoul this week for talks with ROK officials on the crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions, the foreign ministry said. Wang, Beijing's top negotiator in the six-nation talks to resolve the nuclear crisis, will be here from February 13-15 following a visit to Japan, the ministry said in a statement. Wang's talks with top officials here will focus on "ways to promote cooperation for peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue," the statement said. Wang will meet Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon, Vice Foreign Minister Choi Young-Jin and Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck who serves as Seoul's chief delegate to the six-way nuclear talks.

3. Japan's Role in Six-Way Talks

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE FM SAYS TOKYO MUST REMAIN AS KEY PLAYER IN SIX-WAY TALKS," 02/10/04) reported that Japan's Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi rebuffed North Korea's attempt to bar Tokyo from six-way talks, saying there could be no progress in regional security talks without Japan, according to a news report. "Things will not get better without Japan when we discuss peace and stability in Northeast Asia," Kawaguchi was quoted by Jiji Press as telling reporters. "Firstly, North Korea must take responsible action." She made the remarks a day after the DPRK association for friendship with Japan called on its government to exclude Japan from the six-way talks on the North's nuclear ambitions, scheduled for February 25 in Beijing. The DPRK-Japan Friendship Association said in its statement that it was making the request as Japan "is doggedly pursuing its hostile policy towards the DPRK despite (the latter's) sincerity and magnanimity." The statement was reported by the Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Tokyo. The association's call was in response to Japan's final approval to a bill making it easier to block cash remittances to the DPRK in an effort to pressure the DPRK over its nuclear ambitions and its past abductions of Japanese.

4. DPRK-Pakistan Nuclear Deal Denial Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA DENIES NUCLEAR DEAL WITH PAKISTAN," 02/10/04) reported that the DPRK's foreign ministry denied the DPRK had received nuclear weapon's technology from Pakistan. In a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, the foreign ministry said the link was a "sheer lie" despite top Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan last week confessing to passing nuclear know-how to Iran, the DPRK and Libya. "The US is now hyping the story about the 'transfer of nuclear technology' to the DPRK (North Korea) by a Pakistani scientist in a bid to make the DPRK's 'enriched uranium program' sound plausible. This is nothing but a mean and groundless propaganda," the statement said. "This is so sheer (a) lie that the DPRK does not bat an eyelid even a bit."

5. DPRK Three Demands

Kyodo News ("NORTH KOREA TO RELAX "THREE DEMANDS" AT SIX-WAY TALKS," Tokyo, 02/10/04) reported that the DPRK is likely to relax its insistence that the US and its allies meet three demands in return for the DPRK's freezing of its nuclear activities, a source involved in six-nation talks on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program set for later this month said Tuesday. The source said the DPRK has conveyed to the PRC and other countries due to participate in the second round of six-nation talks to be held in Beijing from 25 February that it will not insist its three demands be met as part of first-stage measures it has proposed to resolve the dispute over its nuclear weapons program. PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who visited the DPRK in late December and who met with a senior DPRK official in Beijing earlier this month, is expected to convey the DPRK's view during visits to Japan and ROK this week. The DPRK said last month that in a "bold concession" to

the US, it is prepared to suspend testing and production of nuclear weapons and to freeze its nuclear facilities on condition that the US removes DPRK from a list of state sponsors of terrorism, that it lifts political and economic sanctions imposed against it, and that it and its allies supply the DPRK with heavy oil and other alternative energy sources.

6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA CANCELS TWO CIVILIAN EXCHANGE EVENTS WITH SOUTH," Seoul, 02/10/04) reported that the DPRK has cancelled its participation in two civilian inter-Korean events in an apparent protest at a "delay" in cross-border economic cooperation projects, the events' ROK organizers said Tuesday 10 February. The DPRK has rejected the ROK's offer to hold a joint ceremony in Pyongyang or Kaesong to mark the 1 March Korean independence movement protest against Japanese colonial rule, the ROK headquarters of the event said. The Koreas jointly commemorated the event for the first time in Seoul last year with over 100 DPRK religious and social group leaders attending. The DPRK was to host this year's joint event but has refused to do so, citing the tight schedule for preparations. DPRK officials said they are busy preparing the festivities for the birthday of their leader, Kim Jong-il, which falls on 16 February. Kim's birthday is one of the most important holidays in the DPRK.

7. DPRK-Japan Abduction Issue

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO REQUEST ABDUCTION ISSUE TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA ON 25 FEBRUARY," Tokyo, 02/10/04) reported that Japan plans to ask the DPRK to convene bilateral talks on the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK decades ago on 25 February, the first day of the second round of six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, government sources said Tuesday 10 February. The government will decide on the desirable timing for the bilateral talks after the PRC presents a detailed schedule for the six-nation talks, which are expected to last three days through February 27. But it is desirable "to have the bilateral talks as early as possible" to demonstrate Japan's resolve at the six-nation talks to resolve the abduction issue, one source said.

8. ROK Domestic Politics

JoongAng Ilbo (Kim Ji-soo, "SENIOR AIDES STEP DOWN TO GET READY FOR APRIL ELECTION," 02/10/04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun replaced six senior government officials yesterday, including Deputy Finance Minister Kim Jin-pyo, who has been the country's chief economic architect in the past year. Kim is stepping down in the widely-held expectation that he will run for an Assembly seat on the Our Open Party ticket in the April 15 elections. Kim's replacement is Lee Hun-jai, 60, who headed the Financial Supervisory Service during the 1997-1998 financial crisis. "Having worked in the Finance Ministry and the Financial Supervisory Service, and also 20 years in the private sector, Lee has vast knowledge and experience on economy and finance," said Jeong Chan-yong, the Blue House senior secretary for personnel affairs. In other appointments Roh named: - Kim Dae-hwan, 55, a business college dean at Inhan University, as labor minister, replacing Kwon Ki-hong. Han Duck-soo, 55, president of Korea Institute for Industrial Economics and Trade, as minister of government policy coordination, replacing Lee Young-tak. Roh promoted Chung Soon-kyun, a deputy in the government information agency, to head the bureau. Last year, Chung wrote a column in the Wall Street Journal sharply criticizing Korean journalists for accepting bribes and gifts. Chung replaces Cho Young-dong, who also may also run for a legislative seat.

9. PRC-US Annual Defense Talks

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA-US OPEN ANNUAL DEFENCE CONSULTATIONS," 02/10/04) reported that Senior PRC and US officials opened their sixth annual round of consultations on defence, state media reported. The PRC side is headed by General Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of general staff of the People's Liberation Army, while Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith is fronting the US delegation, the Xinhua news agency said. Feith's visit comes on the heels of trips to China last month by Deputy US Secretary of State Richard Armitage and US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers.

10. Russia Missile Defense Exercises

The Associated Press (Vladimir Isachenkov, "RUSSIA TESTS MEASURES VS. MISSILE DEFENSE," Moscow, 02/10/04) reported that Russia is in the midst of a strategic military exercise motivated in part by Moscow's concerns about US plans to develop new types of nuclear weapons, a top general said Tuesday. The exercise, which began in late January on the headquarters level, will later involve the launch of several ballistic missiles and flights by strategic bombers, said Col.-Gen. Yuri Baluyevsky, the first deputy chief of the General Staff of the Russian armed forces. Baluyevsky dismissed media reports that the exercise closely resembles Soviet-era simulations of an all-out nuclear war with the US, saying that it's not directed against any specific country. "The enemy is imaginary," Baluyevsky said at a news conference. "There is no hint whatsoever that the enemy is the US, or any other country." At the same time Baluyevsky said the exercise reflects Russia's concern about the development of low-yield nuclear weapons in the US, which he described as destabilizing. "Shouldn't we react to that?" he said. "I'm sure that we should and we are doing that."

11. Hong Kong Democracy Task Force

Agence France-Presse ("HONG KONG DEMOCRACY TASK FORCE FINISHES 'SATISFACTORY' TALKS IN BEIJING," 02/10/04) reported that a Hong Kong taskforce finished three rounds of talks with leaders in Beijing Tuesday on the future of democracy in the territory. Hong Kong's Chief Secretary for Administration Donald Tsang and his team completed the talks after their meeting with the PRC parliament, the National People's Congress, to seek their advice on holding full elections in Hong Kong by 2007. "The most important thing of the trip is to give us an opportunity to express the public opinion. I think we have reached that target," he told reporters, calling the result of the meeting "satisfactory." Tsang said Beijing wants thorough discussions on principles before Hong Kong proceeds with its constitutional development. When asked by journalists whether Hong Kong will be allowed to hold full elections in 2007, Li said: "Hong Kong returned to China for six years now... and as the party has said so many times, we support what is in the Basic Law."

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. Issue 152

Human Rights groups and the Korean-Canadian community are outraged by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board's decision not to grant asylum to a DPRK defector hiding in Toronto since 2001, on the grounds that "he was a member of the DPRK's repressive, authoritarian government." DPRK media outlets report that February 25 has been set as the date for the second round of 6-party talks. Pyongyang's acceptance of the dates can be seen as an answer to a counterproposal drawn up jointly by the US, RO Korea, and Japan, in which the six-party talks would centre on a nuclear freeze, as opposed to an immediate scrapping of all nukes. The World Food

Programme (WFP) announces that 4 million DPRK beneficiaries will be deprived of WFP cereal rations in February and March, due to a drop-off in donations. The Korea Business Consultants (KBC) - a group that specialize in helping businesses set-up shop in the DPRK - has issued an analysis of the 2004 New Year's Joint Editorial. This year's address is significant in that the DPRK leadership expresses its determination to find solutions through its reforms of economic management. South and DPRK people are beginning to communicate in a most unlikely place: cyberspace. The online bulletin board of an inter-Korean gambling site operated by North Koreans has become wildly popular with ROK internet users. "Axis to Grind" shows us "ordinary" North Koreans in a way not often seen in North America. In his multimedia exhibit, Canadian artist Irwin Oostindie, challenges our assumptions about the DPRK, exposing stereotypes and giving rise to a more 'nuanced' understanding, writes University of British Columbia graduate Liam Roberts in his review in this issue's EVENTS AND RESOURCES. The notion that North Korea is planning to attack anybody is implausible and a good intelligence service would be urging the government it serves to offer North Korea a security guarantee in return for abandonment of its nuclear weapons program, writes Gwynne Dyer in this week's OPINION.

For the full issue see: http://www.cankor.ca

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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