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I. United States

1. ROK on DPRK Uranium Processing

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA MUST INCLUDE URANIUM IN TALKS, SOUTH ENVOY SAYS," Seoul, 02/11/04) reported that the DPRK must be prepared to discuss its uranium-based nuclear arms program in negotiations this month with the US and neighboring countries, the ROK's ambassador to Washington said on Wednesday. Ambassador Han Sung-joo told reporters in Seoul that the confession by Pakistan's top nuclear scientist that he had sold nuclear arms technology to Pyongyang had "further confirmed" the existence of the DPRK's highly enriched uranium program. "Even among US domestic critics of the Bush administration, nobody who has seen the evidence doubts that North Korea has an HEU (highly enriched uranium) program," Han said in a briefing with reporters. "Previous intelligence, what has emerged from Pakistan and other information are more than enough to outweigh (doubts about US intelligence) in the Kay Report," he said. The Kay Report said that the US went to war in Iraq based on faulty intelligence about that country's weapons of mass destruction. The HEU program makes the DPRK's offer to freeze its plutonium-based nuclear program in exchange for compensation unacceptable to the ROK, the US and Japan,

Han said.

2. US on PRC-DPRK Diplomacy

Agence France-Presse ("US URGES CHINA TO JOIN CALLS FOR NORTH KOREA TO DROP NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Beijing, 02/11/04) reported that the US said the PRC recognized that the DPRK had become a "serious strategic problem" and urged it to show solidarity in calls for the DPRK to dismantle its entire nuclear program. The US argues that upcoming six-party talks in Beijing must focus on the DPRK's covert uranium-based program as well as on its well-documented plutonium-producing enterprise. The DPRK says the uranium program does not exist and the PRC too continues to view with skepticism the US allegations on uranium. KCNA said Tuesday it had received support from the PRC for its proposal to freeze its program in return for economic concessions from the US, rather than a complete dismantling.

3. Japan-DPRK Abduction Issue

Asia Pulse ("JAPAN DISPATCHES DIPLOMATS TO PYONGYANG OVER ABDUCTION ISSUE," Tokyo, 02/12/04) reported that Japan sent senior foreign ministry officials responsible for DPRK affairs to Pyongyang in an effort to reach a breakthrough on issues related to Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK, Japan's state-run broadcaster reported Wednesday. The Japanese government dispatched Deputy Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka, Mitoji Yabunaka, head of the ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and three other ministry officials, according to NHK. During negotiations with their DPRK counterparts, the Japanese diplomats will reportedly urge the DPRK to send to Japan as early as possible eight family members of five Japanese abductees that have returned to Japan. If the DPRK refuses to send them to Japan, the Japanese delegation may tell their counterparts that the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries will be impossible.

4. PRC DPRK Leak Arrest

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ARRESTS MAN WHO LEAKED SECRET NKOREAN GAS CHAMBER CLAIMS: REPORT," 02/11/04) reported that the PRC has arrested the man who leaked top secret government documents from a DPRK prison camp detailing routine testing of chemical weapons on political prisoners, a report said. The man, who was not named, was seized by PRC authorities after escaping across the border with his family, Radio Free Asia said, citing a ROK human rights activist who recently appeared in a BBC documentary on the subject. "I made contact with this person in a chemical factory in North Korea a long time ago," said the activist, Kim Sang-hun, who smuggled the documents out of the DPRK. "He has been waiting, and waiting to obtain this document. Then he got the chance, and it was smuggled out of North Korea. His words were not enough. He wanted to show the evidence to the world, but he was captured in China." According to the BBC documentary aired last week, entire families, including children, were regularly tortured and executed, while others had poisonous gases and other weapons used on them. The broadcast cited Kwon Hyok, who defected to the ROK in 1999 while stationed as a DPRK intelligence officer in Beijing, as saying he witnessed chemical experiments being carried out on political prisoners in gas chambers. Kim, 71, said the document he smuggled, and used in the documentary, was a transfer list ordering certain prisoners to be taken to the chemical facilities near the Russian border, known as Camp 22. "This is genuine. This is not a government-to-government document. This is a secret document, published for the eyes of a select few," Kim said, adding that it would be extremely hard to counterfeit an official DPRK government seal as they were manufactured under police supervision. He said the plan had been for the captured man to testify to the world in person about the truth of the reports and the

authenticity of the document. "Our plan was to be ready when North Korea denied it, then we would provide the document and further evidence … but the plan failed because they were captured," Kim said. "It is urgent. We must save them."

5. PRC on Taiwan Elections

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PLEDGES NOT TO GET INVOLVED IN TAIWAN ELECTIONS," 02/11/04) reported that the PRC claimed it did not care who won next month's presidential election in Taiwan and pledged not to get involved in the contest. China's attempts to influence voters ahead of the island's two previous presidential polls have backfired and it has restricted itself to claiming it was more concerned about the winner's attitude towards reunification. However, the promise to stay out of the election race was accompanied by continued criticisms of pro-independence President Chen Shui-bian and his "sinister intentions" for holding an island-wide referendum alongside the March 20 presidential vote. "We won't get involved in Taiwan's elections," said Zhang Mingqing, spokesman for the PRC'sTaiwan Affairs Office, at a regular briefing Wednesday. "We don't care who will be elected. What we care about is after they're elected, what is his attitude in developing cross-straits relations and national reunification."

6. PRC on Hong Kong Democracy

Agence France-Presse ("CONCERN AS BEIJING TELLS HONG KONG IT HAS FINAL SAY ON DEMOCRACY," 02/11/04) reported that Hong Kong's democracy movement suffered a major setback after the PRC effectively slapped down any hopes of full democracy within the next three years. After three days of meetings with a Hong Kong taskforce charged with seeking the PRC leadership's views on universal suffrage in the city by 2007, the central government declared democracy would have to wait. The government said it would have the final say on political change, according to the official Xinhua news agency. "The high-degree of autonomy for Hong Kong meant self-governing under the authorization of the central government," the Xinhua report quoted the government as saying. "The political system of Hong Kong should meet with the legal status of Hong Kong as a regional administrative zone directly under the central government," it went on. The city's status as an autonomous region within China was established during sovereignty negotiations between former colonial master Britain and China in the 1980s. At the handover in 1997, it was decreed Hong Kong should be governed according to the principle of "one country, two systems", meaning it could maintain its capitalist economy within the framework of a "one China" doctrine. Tuesday's declaration, however, stressed that maintaining "one country" was more important than preserving "two systems." 7. ROK on Koizumi Yasukuni Remarks

Asia Pulse ("S KOREA EXPRESSES REGRETS OVER KOIZUMI'S YASUKUNI REMARKS," Seoul, 02/12/04) reported that the ROK's foreign ministry expressed regret Wednesday over Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's remarks on the enshrinement of Class A war criminals with other war dead at Yasukuni. The ministry's spokesman, Shin Bong-kil, stressed that "proper" understanding of the past formed the foundation of ROK-Japanese relations. He added that it must be remembered that the Class-A war criminals among those honored at Yasukuni Shrine caused immeasurable suffering to the Korean people. The statement from the ministry came following a remark from the Japanese prime minister Tuesday, who said that he did not feel any opposition to the enshrinement of all war dead at the sacred shrine. He then said that expressing respect to the dead was a natural feeling, and that he had no intention of changing this view because of comments made by other countries.

8. ROK Domestic Politics

Asia Pulse ("OUTGOING KOREAN DEPUTY PREMIER VOICES CONFIDENCE IN SUCCESSOR," Seoul, 02/11/04) reported that the ROK's outgoing top economic policymaker said Wednesday that his successor has the ability to steer the ROK economy out of its current difficulty and achieve the government's major policy goals. "The new deputy prime minister and minister of finance and economy has such experience and leadership that he will be able to fulfill the government's road map for economic reform and development," Kim Jin-pyo said during a ceremony marking his departure from the post. President Roh Moo-hyun appointed former chief financial regulator Lee Hun-jai, 60, as new deputy prime minister and concurrently minister of finance and economy Tuesday, replacing Kim. Kim quit the job to enter politics and run in the general election in April.

9. US on PRC Missiles

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "US CONCERNED ABOUT PRC MISSILES," Beijing, 02/11/04) reported that a US defense official said Wednesday that he expressed concern to PRC officials about their buildup of missiles aimed at Taiwan and said the PRC might be damaging its own interests by increasing regional tensions. Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith was in Beijing for annual defense consultations. "We expressed our concern about the PRC missile buildup across from Taiwan and made the point that we have important shared interests, and we don't think those interests are being served by that missile buildup," Feith said. "That does not contribute to a reduction of tensions." The PRC government had no immediate comment.

10. US PRC Human Rights Resolution

Reuters (Evelyn Leopold, "US CONSIDERS HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION AGAINST CHINA," United Nations, 02/11/04) reported that the US is seriously considering introducing a critical resolution on the PRC's human rights practices at this year's session of the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Commission, a senior US official said on Wednesday. The US, as in the past, would probably also co-sponsor resolutions on the rights records of Belarus, Turkmenistan, Myanmar and the DPRK, the official told reporters. The 53-member commission, the top U.N. human rights watchdog, begins its annual six-week session on March 16. Censure by the commission brings no penalties but spotlights a country's behavior. The US did not sponsor a resolution against the PRC last year because the PRC had undertaken considerable reforms and was willing to let U.N. and US rights investigators enter the country. But few promises had materialized, said the official who asked not to be named. The US is seriously considering introducing a resolution on the PRC and even if it failed, it was important to air the grievances, the official added.

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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