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I. United States

1. US on DPRK Talks Date

Reuters ("U.S. SAYS NORTH KOREA TALKS SET FOR AUG 27 START," Sydney, 08/12/03) reported that six-nation crisis talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program would likely begin in Beijing on August 27, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said on Tuesday. Asked if the US had a likely start date for the talks, Armitage told Australian Broadcasting Corp television: "Yes we do, probably starting around the 27th of this month in Beijing." Armitage's statement is the first formal indication of the date and venue for the talks, which will follow months of tension after Washington announced last October that Pyongyang was pursuing a covert nuclear weapons program. The secretive communist state rejects the claims as interference in its internal affairs.

Reuters ("N.KOREA AGREES TO 6-WAY TALKS," Tokyo, 08/12/03) reported that the DPRK has agreed to hold six-nation talks on its nuclear weapons programs from August 27 for three days in Beijing, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported on Tuesday. The agency quoted unspecified sources

"related to Russia-North Korea relations" in Beijing.

2. US-Japan-ROK Multilateral DPRK Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US, JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA TO MEET WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY ON NORTH KOREA," 08/12/03) reported that senior officials from the US, Japan and the ROK will open two days of talks to refine their tactics ahead of six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis, officials said. The talks will take place amid a flurry of diplomatic contacts between parties to the six-nation talks. "We are planning to hold some informal trilateral consultations here in Washington with Japan and ROK, August 13-14," said State Department deputy spokesman Philip Reeker. The senior officials will discuss a common front for the six-nation talks, but will not meet under the formal umbrella of their so-called "Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group" (TCOG), which holds regular meetings on DPRK policy, he said. Earlier, in Seoul, Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck said the US was close to finalizing a proposal to be tabled at the six-party talks, and said Seoul would present a slightly different plan. He said the six-nation meeting could start anytime from August 25 in Beijing. In Tokyo, PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said Beijing planned to host the six-way talks on the nuclear crisis for about three days in late August, according to a Japanese official.

3. US on Bolton and DPRK Talks

Reuters (Michelle Nichols "U.S. SAYS HAWK BOLTON WON'T GO TO NORTH KOREA," Canberra, 08/12/03) reported that the the US said on Tuesday that a senior US official, condemned by the DPRK as "human scum" for a personalized attack on its leader, would not take part in nuclear crisis talks in Beijing this month. But U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told a news conference in the Australian capital Canberra that many in the US shared the views of arms control negotiator John Bolton on the reclusive communist state. Armitage later told Australian television that six-way talks in Beijing to defuse the crisis would most likely begin on August 27. "The US government will make the decision on who will participate in the upcoming six-way talks and Bolton was not scheduled and will not be participating in these talks," Armitage told the news conference. "His recent comments reflect a point of view in the US held by many. Clearly they did not affect the talks. We're going ahead with them in Beijing later in the month," he added. The US has not yet indicated who will attend the talks, which the PRC and Russia also say will start late this month.

4. Japan Missile Defense

The Associated Press ("REPORT: JAPAN SEEKING MISSILE DEFENSE," 08/11/03) reported that Japan's Defense Agency, worried about the threat from the DPRK's nuclear weapons and missile programs, hopes to have an anti-missile system in place within three years, a major Japanese newspaper reported Tuesday. The agency is expected to increase spending considerably in the coming years for the initial setup costs and high-tech telecommunications systems for the advanced missile defense, the national Asahi newspaper said. The agency will request nearly $1.2 billion next fiscal year. That request will be nearly nine times greater than the $132 million Tokyo spent on missile defense research from 1999 to 2003. Japan has 27 Patriot anti-missile batteries, but they can only down missiles with a shorter range and slower speed than the ballistic missiles North Korea is believed to be developing. One of the those missiles - the Taepodong - was test-launched over Japan's main island in 1998. The upgraded system would create a two-layer defense system. The first layer uses Aegis-equipped naval destroyers, which have top-of-the-line surveillance systems, to track incoming missiles and intercept them with ship-to-air missiles, Asahi reported. Backup would be

provided by an enhanced version of the Patriot PAC2, capable of downing ballistic missiles with a range of 620 miles, the daily newspaper said. In a government report last week, the Defense Agency urged accelerated research on an anti-missile system to protect against possible nuclear and terrorist attacks.

5. ROK US Military Plane Crash

Agence France-Presse ("TWO US MILITARY PERSONNEL KILLED IN ROK PLANE CRASH," 08/12/03) reported that two US military personnel were killed when a cargo plane crashed into farmland in South Korea, police said. The plane crashed into a garlic field at Asan, south of Seoul, and exploded after hitting a greenhouse, a police spokesman said. "We received a report on the deaths of two US soldiers after the crash," Sung Yeol-Kap told AFP from Asan, 85 kilometers (53 miles) from Seoul. "There were no casualties on the ground," Sung said. US military authorities said two US crew were aboard the C-12 Huron, a small twin turboprop cargo and passenger aircraft, when it crashed near a US base at 2:43 pm (0543 GMT). Major David Oten, a US Army spokesman, said: "It was a two-seater aircraft. Its pilot and co-pilot were dead. There were no civilian casualties and no significant collateral damage on the ground." Oten added the plane crashed into an open, "not densely-populated," field behind a restaurant. Yonhap news agency said the US plane crashed while trying to make an emergency landing. It said the bodies of the two soldiers were transferred to a nearby hospital. US officials said an investigation was under way. Fire and rescue personnel were on the scene.

6. ROK Domestic Politics Hyundai Scandal

Agence France-Presse ("FORMER PRESIDENT'S RIGHT-HAND MAN ARRESTED ON GRAFT CHARGES," 08/12/03) reported that Kwon Roh-Kap, the right-hand man of former ROK president Kim Dae-Jung has been arrested on charges of taking kickbacks from the Hyundai Group, prosecutors said. Kwon was arrested late Monday after being brought to a prosecutors' office in Seoul for questioning, the Supreme Public Prosecutors' Office said. Kwon, 73, is suspected of taking billions of won (millions of dollars) from Hyundai in 2000, it said. He became the first figure to be arrested by prosecutors who have investigated allegations that Hyundai lobbied politicians and government officials to keep afloat its troubled business in North Korea. Prosecutors declined to give details but newspapers said investigators had traced Kwon's bank accounts, based on the testimony of Hyundai executive Chung Mong-Hun and other Hyundai officials. Chung, chairman of the Hyundai Asan Corp. that was established by its parent group to conduct projects in North Korea, jumped to his death from his 12th-floor office last week after being probed for making illicit payments to North Korea. Chung had been one of the key figures standing trial in connection with Hyundai's illicit transfer of 500 million dollars to North Korea just before an inter-Korean summit in 2000.

7. DPRK on ROK Anti-US Activism

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA DEFENDS ANTI-US PROTESTS IN SOUTH KOREA," 08/12/03) reported that the DPRK defended anti-US protests in the ROK last week saying they were a legitimate way of trying to safeguard the security of the Korean peninsula. "Anti-American sentiment is a trend that cannot be reversed these days," a major DPRK state organization said in a Korean-language statement carried by Pyongyang's state media. The Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland also urged the ROK government not to punish anti-US protestors, saying the protests were "a legitimate struggle to safeguard peace and security of the fatherland."

The statement came after ROK police beefed up security around key US facilities in Seoul to stop anti-US demonstrations organized by the ROK's outlawed leftist campus group, Hanchongryon.

8. PRC Domestic Economy

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "CHINA DESTROYS 42 MILLION PIRATED DISCS," Beijing, 08/12/03) reported that authorities across the PRC reduced more than 42 million smuggled and pirated discs to slivers on Tuesday, part of a continuing anti-counterfeiting effort aimed at silencing critics overseas. The government, which stages such spectacles every few months, called it the largest-ever public destruction of illegal CDs, DVDs and other videodiscs. The PRC is a hotbed of intellectual-property theft, and officials have long promised to crack down on the problem. The country's admission into the World Trade Organization in 2001 came with increased obligations to ensure that such practices are targeted and eliminated. "We're trying to carry out the spirit of our smuggling crackdown and to show our determination to the international and domestic communities," a top customs official identified as Gui said on China Central Television's national evening newscast. "We have attached great importance to protecting intellectual property rights," Gui said. CCTV ran footage of noisy wood-chippers - what the official Xinhua News Agency called "pulverizers" - swallowing discs by the hundreds and spewing the remains of movies and music onto sidewalks and parking lots. More than 600 people, including consular officials from the US and Australia, were invited to a ceremony in southern Guangdong province's Shanwei city, where 26 million illegal discs were shattered, Xinhua said. It said 1.2 million illegal "audio and visual products" were destroyed in Beijing, the capital.

9. PRC Constitutional Reform

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA PLANNING CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES," Beijing, 08/12/03) reported that the PRC plans to amend China's constitution to formally enshrine the ideology of Jiang Zemin, the recently retired leader who invited capitalists to join the Communist Party, official media said Tuesday. The change would give Jiang a shot at his longtime goal - sealing his place in history alongside his legendary predecessors. Jiang's policies might find a place in the constitution along with those of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, who launched the country's economic reforms. The news reports gave no details of the possible changes. But foreign analysts say they include the communist era's first guarantee of property rights for entrepreneurs who have driven China's two-decade-old economic boom. "Certain amendments are still needed to promote economic and social development," said the party newspaper People's Daily. It said the changes were meant to cope with accelerating globalization and advances in science and technology. The amendments are to be debated in October at a meeting of the party's 356-member Central Committee, state media said.

10. ROK Domestic Politics

The New York Times (James Brooke, "RATINGS HURT ROK LEADER BEFORE TALKS," Seoul, 08/07/03) reported that ROK President Roh Moo Hyun's approval rating is plummeting, his private secretary has resigned because of a bar hostess scandal and prosecutors are questioning the president of his party about bribery allegations. But Roh says he has identified the real problem: the press. "What does it mean, `engaging reporters?' " Roh shouted when a press aide suggested recently that he reach out to the nation's newspapers and broadcasters. "Where do you do that?" he asked. "Wouldn't it be at bars? You buy them drinks and meals? What do you get for being friendly with them, for sharing a bottle of rice wine? A story the next morning that is pitch-black." To get

around what he calls the ROK's "tyrannical media," Roh has vowed to set up his own Internet newspaper. The collisions between Roh, a liberal, and the nation's three largest newspapers, all conservative, could be written off as colorful bumps along the road of the ROK's evolving democracy. But Roh's troubles come at a delicate time. The ROK, long seen by the Bush administration as wishy-washy on the DPRK, may be even more of a weak link now. When Roh was inaugurated last February, he floated on an outsider's aura that kept his approval rating in the 75 percent range. Six months later, the latest poll figures place his approval rating at 23.4 percent. "If you want a negotiated solution, a weak ROK government is probably not in your interest," said Marcus Noland, a Korea expert at the Institute for International Economics in Washington.

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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