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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Reactor

The Associated Press (Christopher Torchia, "DEFIANT NORTH KOREA SAYS IT WILL REACTIVATE NUCLEAR REACTOR THAT WAS FROZEN UNDER 1994 DEAL," Seoul, 12/12/02) and the Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA SPARKS CRISIS FEAR OVER NUCLEAR PROGRAMME, BLAMES US," 12/12/02) reported that the DPRK said it would reactivate a mothballed nuclear program because of a US decision to cut off fuel aid. The statement sparked alarm in the ROK and came as a direct challenge to US intensive efforts to force the DPRK to abandon its nuclear ambitions. The ROK expressed "grave concern" after President Kim Dae-Jung called an emergency National Security meeting and Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said the statement was "extremely regrettable." The DPRK move came as the US pondered possible military action against Iraq and a day after US concerns about the DPRK' nuclear and missile programs were highlighted by the seizure of a DPRK consignment of Scud missiles bound for Yemen. In a report carried by the Korean Central News Agency, the energy-starved state said it would scrap a 1994 agreement to freeze its plutonium-producing nuclear facilities because it needed extra power production. "The DPRK government has no choice but to lift a nuclear freeze which had been enforced on the precondition

of supplies of 500,000 tonnes of heavy oil annually in accordance with the DPRK-US Framework Agreement," said the DPRK statement. It said the DPRK would "immediately resume operation and construction of nuclear facilities necessary for electric power generation." But North Korea also said that it was committed to finding "a peaceful solution to the nuclear issue" and hinted that it would consider a re-freeze depending on how the US responded.

The New York Times (Don Kirk, "NORTH KOREA TO REOPEN NUCLEAR PLANT OVER OIL CUTOFF BY US," Tokyo, 12/12/02) reported that the DPRK said today that it was immediately lifting a freeze on a nuclear reactor that has been mothballed since a 1994 crisis that nearly led to war between the two countries. The DPRK justified the surprise decision, which is the latest in a sharply downward spiral in relations with the US, by invoking a recent US suspension of fuel oil deliveries to the DPRK. The fuel cutoff, in turn, was announced as punishment for a secret nuclear weapons program, whose existence US diplomats say the DPRK acknowledged in early October. The DPRK Foreign Ministry said in a statement: "The prevailing situation compelled the DPRK government to lift its nuclear freeze adopted on the premise that 500,000 tons of heavy oil would be annually supplied to the DPRK. under the DPRK.-US Agreed Framework and immediately resume the operation and construction of its nuclear facilities to generate electricity." The statement, which was published by the official Korean Central News Agency, added, "Whether the DPRK refreezes its nuclear facilities or not hinges upon the US."

2. ROK Response to DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA URGES NORTH KOREA NOT TO REACTIVATE OLD NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Seoul, 12/12/02) reported that the ROK said Thursday that it was dismayed by the DPRK's announcement that it will revive an old nuclear program, and urged its neighbor to reverse the decision and abide by international nuclear non-proliferation accords. The ROK government expressed "deep regret and concern" over the DPRK's announcement earlier Thursday. "The government strongly urges North Korea to withdraw its decision to lift the nuclear freeze," Seok Dong-yun, a South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman, said in a statement. Ahead of the ROK's presidential election on Dec. 19, major presidential contenders also urged the DPRK to abandon plans to revive the plutonium-based nuclear program. "North Korea must immediately stop its brinkmanship diplomacy as it could bring a crisis on the Korean Peninsula," said Lee Hoi-chang of the main opposition Grand National Party. Lee's main contender, Roh Moo-hyun of the pro-government Millennium Democratic Party, urged dialogue between the US and the DPRK to resolve the problem. "North Korea must reconsider its decision. I also hope the United States will soon resume talks with North Korea," said Roh, a strong supporter of the "sunshine" policy.

3. US Response to DPRK Nuclear Reactor

Reuters (Steve Holland, "US CALLS N KOREA NUCLEAR MOVE REGRETTABLE," Washington, 12/12/02) and the Associated Press (David Rising, "NORTH KOREA URGED TO RECONSIDER RESUMING ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Berlin, 12/12/02) reported that the US on Thursday described as regrettable the DPRK's decision to restart a nuclear power plant and said it would seek a peaceful resolution to the new challenge presented by the DPRK. "The statement that North Korea made ... is regrettable," said White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, with President Bush on a visit to Philadelphia. "The announcement flies in the face of international consensus that the North Korean regime must fulfill all its commitments, in particular dismantle its nuclear weapons program," he said. He said the US sought a peaceful resolution to the DPRK dispute and vowed the US would not be pressured by the DPRK into returning to the negotiating table. The US, he said, would not enter into dialogue with the DPRK "in response to threats or broken commitments."

4. PRC-US on DPRK

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "US ENVOY SAYS CHINA EXPECTED TO URGE `DIFFERENT BEHAVIOR' FROM NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 12/12/02) and Reuters (Jeremy Page, "ARMITAGE SAYS CHINA SHARES CONCERNS OVER NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 12/12/02) and the Agence France-Presse ("ARMITAGE SAYS CHINA AGREES NKOREA SHOULD DENUCLEARIZE," 12/12/02) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said on Thursday that the PRC agreed that the DPRK should drop its nuclear weapons program and he was sure the PRC would help put pressure on the DPRK. Armitage also said he had good talks with "our Chinese friends" on Iraq before heading to Australia for the final leg of a tour that has already covered Japan and South Korea. Armitage's trip was designed to drum up support for US plans on Iraq as the US assesses Baghdad's weapons declaration and to coordinate efforts to rein in North Korea's nuclear weapons program. But the seizure of a DPRK ship carrying Scud missiles to Yemen threw an additional spotlight on the DPRKs weapons exports as Armitage arrived in Beijing from Seoul. "It's not for me to give messages to the Chinese leadership," he told reporters before meeting China's Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and Vice Premier Qian Qichen on Thursday. "But I think that China shares the same concern that the United States has, that Seoul, Korea has, that our Russian friends have, that the Japanese have and that is that we have to find a way to denuclearise the peninsula of Korea," he said. "And I'm sure the Chinese will be urging some different behavior on the North Koreans." Armitage, who also met the PRC's new chief of general staff, Liang Guanglie, said the seizure of the DPRK ship sent a strong message even though it was allowed to continue to Yemen. "I think that the signal that was sent to Pyongyang is: 'we know what you're doing, we know where you are, you can't hide'."

5. US Releases DPRK Missile Ship

The Washington Post (Glenn Kessler and Thomas E. Ricks, "US FREES SHIP WITH NORTH KOREAN MISSILES," 12/12/02) reported that the US yesterday agreed to release a ship containing DPRK missiles bound for Yemen after strong protests by the Yemeni government suggested that Monday's seizure of the vessel by Spanish and US forces would affect Yemen's cooperation in the war on terrorism. The unflagged ship, carrying 15 Scud missiles along with conventional warheads and rocket propellant, had been tracked for weeks by the US before it was intercepted in the Arabian Sea 600 miles southeast of Yemen. The delivery appeared to violate a commitment made by Yemen in July of last year, before the Sept. 11 attacks, not to purchase any more DPRK missile equipment in exchange for avoiding sanctions for previous suspect deals with DPRK. But in a flurry of phone calls between Yemeni officials and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Vice President Cheney, Yemen successfully argued that the ship was carrying equipment that predated that commitment.

6. ROK Presidential Election

The New York Times, "James Brooke, "ONCE AGAIN, NORTH KOREA UNSETTLES SOUTH KOREA'S POLITICS," Seoul, 12/12/02) reported that with one week to go in the ROK's tight left-right race for president, the search and release of a DPRK freighter carrying Scud missiles may help the conservative candidate by reminding voters of the DPRK military threat, political analysts here say. As television news programs endlessly played videotapes of Spanish marines occupying the DPRK ship, a "northern wind" suddenly blew through a campaign that had been stamped by complaints over the conduct of the 37,000 US here. In past elections, conservative candidates here have been helped by reminders of the security threat posed by the DPRK. "In the current political situation in South Korea, the intention would be to calm down anti-American feelings ignited by the schoolgirls' deaths by the US army vehicle and to show US power at the last moment of presidential election," an

analyst wrote in Hankyoreh Shinmun, a liberal daily. In their responses Wednesday, Roh, the liberal, appeared eager to play down the missile issue, while Lee, the conservative, prepared to make the most of it. "The North did not halt its brave gamble of exporting missiles amid nuclear crisis, and Korea-U.S relations are on the brink of collapse," warned Lee. "Despite the fact that national security is on the line, Roh has continued to argue for cash aid to the North." For his part, Roh issued a statement urging the DPRK to stop selling missiles. "The North should not export weapons of mass destruction such as missiles," he said, "and our government should prevent the North's proliferation of those weapons through close cooperation with the United States and Japan." The ROK news media are prohibited from publishing polls taken during the month before election one December 19. But four polls taken last week indicated that Roh had a slight edge over Lee.

7. PRC-US Military Ties

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "BEIJING HAPPY WITH INCREASED CHINA-US MILITARY TIES," Beijing, 12/12/02) reported that the PRC painted an optimistic picture of its resurgent military contacts with the US on Thursday, saying the sides were building good momentum with talks between high-level defense officials in the US this week. Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said the contacts demonstrated both sides' commitment to set aside differences and focus on security issues. "China has always been very positive toward relations between the two militaries," Liu said at a regular briefing. "We are going to work with the US side to put aside obstacles." People's Liberation Army Gen. Xiong Guangkai is meeting in Washington this week with Defense Department officials, the latest in a string of military contacts scheduled after President Jiang Zemin met with US President George W. Bush in Texas in October. Liu said Xiong also met National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, among others. Also this week, Adm. Thomas Fargo, commander of the US Pacific Command, is visiting the PRC - including four cities in its south and west, Liu said.

8. ROK US Soldier Conviction

The Associated Press ("US SOLDIER CONVICTED IN SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 12/11/02) reported that the ROK's supreme court convicted a US soldier charged with hitting a Korean woman in a car accident and sentenced him to eight months in prison. The ruling Wednesday required the US military to hand Ronnie D. Kirby, 27, over to ROK authorities to have him serve the term in an ROK prison. "Since the accident occurred not while on official duty, South Korea has jurisdiction on the case," said Lee Ferguson, a spokesman for the US military command in Seoul. The supreme court upheld a lower court ruling against Kirby. Charges filed against him included driving without insurance and violating a traffic signal and hitting a victim. The 61-year-old female victim, identified only by her last name "Chun," is in a coma from the accident. Kirby was driving in Osan, a city 44 miles south of Seoul, on July 1 last year when he ran a red light and hit the woman. He was off duty at that time. The Supreme Court said that in issuing the ruling, it considered the extent of injury caused on the victim and failure by Kirby to reach an out-of-court settlement with her. Kirby's hometown was not available. Under the Status of Forces Agreement, the ROK has jurisdiction over US soldiers involved in crimes committed while not on official duty. But even in such cases, soldiers can remain under US custody until all appeals under the Korean legal system have been exhausted.

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

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