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I. United States

1. UN DPRK Nuclear Breach Declaration

The New York Times (James Dao, "ATOM AGENCY FINDS PYONGYANG IN VIOLATION OF ARMS ACCORDS," Washington, 02/12/03), The Associated Press (George Jahn, "UN NUKE AGENCY SET TO CITE NORTH KOREA," Vienna, 02/12/03), BBC News ("UN DECLARES NORTH KOREA IN NUCLEAR BREACH," 02/12/03), the Agence France-Presse ("UN NUCLEAR AGENCY SENDS NORTH KOREAN CRISIS TO SECURITY COUNCIL," 02/12/03) reported that the governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna today found the DPRK in breach of international nuclear weapons agreements and sent the issue to the United Nations Security Council. The move is a crucial first step toward intensifying international pressure on the DPRK to abandon its weapons program, which the Bush administration has pledged to halt through diplomatic rather than military

means. Russia and Cuba abstained from the vote. Russia had contended that referring the issue to the Security Council would only provoke the DPRK leader, Kim Jong Il, and inflame the crisis. Russia had called for delaying action to allow time for its own diplomatic initiatives to Pyongyang, Western and Russian diplomats said. The resolution by the agency's 35-member board, which had been widely expected to pass, also called on the DPRK to peacefully resolve the crisis through diplomatic means. "We have all of our options available to us," Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said on Tuesday in testimony before Congress. "The option we're pushing is a diplomatic one, and we want to do it within a multilateral framework."

The Associated Press (George Jahn, "UN NUCLEAR CHIEF SAYS AGENCY COMMITTED TO PEACEFUL END TO NORTH KOREA STANDOFF," Vienna, 02/12/03) reported that declaring the DPRK in violation of international treaties, the U.N. nuclear agency raised the stakes in the standoff Wednesday by sending the dispute to the Security Council - a move that could lead to punishing sanctions. Russia and Cuba refused to join in, saying the International Atomic Energy Agency's decision would detract from a flurry of diplomatic efforts aimed at easing the crisis. Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said the IAEA would continue to press for a peaceful solution, but he said months of intransigence on the part of the DPRK's reclusive communist regime had left the U.N. nuclear watchdog no choice. "The current situation sets a dangerous precedent," ElBaradei said. He said that the DPRK was only a "month or two" from producing "a significant amount of plutonium" that could be diverted for making weapons, now that IAEA inspectors no longer controlled the country's nuclear programs. ElBaradei suggested the Security Council would stop short - for now - of punishing the already impoverished country with sanctions. "The message is that "let us first try a diplomatic solution as we are trying in Iraq," he said. "But if it doesn't work, I haven't heard any member say that the Security Council is not considering other options."

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "SOUTH KOREA URGES NORTH ON PEACEFUL FIX," Seoul, 02/12/03) reported that U.N. sanctions against the DPRK could prolong the standoff over its nuclear weapons development, a top European Union official warned on Wednesday. "I don't think it is the moment to do sanctions," Javier Solana, the EU's foreign policy chief, told reporters in Seoul. "I do think that sanctions will contribute to the opposite of what we want to obtain, which is defusing of the crisis." The International Atomic Energy Agency later Wednesday sent the issue to the U.N. Security Council, setting in motion a process that could lead to the imposition of sanctions against the communist country.

2. DPRK Appeal Against UN Security Involvement

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "NORTH KOREA APPEALS FOR TALKS WITH US UN ATOMIC MONITORS PREPARE TO SEEK SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION," Tokyo, 02/12/03) reported that the DPRK today appealed to Britain to persuade the US to enter negotiations aimed at resolving its nuclear crisis, as the U.N.'s top atomic agency monitoring group prepared to refer the issue to the Security Council. While repeating its threats to retaliate against a military threat, the DPRK's Foreign Ministry made an unusual suggestion of involvement by Britain in resolving the standoff over its nuclear intentions. The Foreign Ministry said the DPRK sought a peaceful resolution of the nuclear crisis, but stopped short of saying the regime would cooperate with a Security Council debate on the matter.

3. PRC on DPRK-UN Security Council Resolution

CNN News (Lisa Rose Weaver, "CHINA AGAINST UN NORTH KOREA DEBATE," Beijing, 02/12/03) reported that the PRC says it does not advocate taking the issue of the DPRK's nuclear program to

the U.N. Security Council and has instead called for early dialogue between the US and the DPRK. "Despite constant developments on the North Korean issue, diplomacy is the only way out," Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said. Explaining the difference between the PRC's support for U.N. consensus in resolving the Iraqi issue while insisting that the DPRK can only be dealt with through dialogue between two parties, Zhang said that U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 already provides a mechanism for weapons inspections and a diplomatic approach that involves several countries. "Regarding the DPRK question, although it touches on regional security and nuclear proliferation issues, undoubtedly the key to the solution of this issue is the restoration of dialogue between the US and the DPRK," said Zhang. Zhang added Pyongyang's "particular security concerns" have to be taken into consideration in dealing with North Korea.

4. Russia on US War on Iraq

The LA Times (Sebastian Rotella, "RUSSIA MIGHT VETO A WAR, PUTIN SAYS," Paris, 02/12/03) reported that Russia warned Tuesday that it might use its veto at the U.N. Security Council to block a US war on Iraq, and the White House urged NATO to overcome a potentially crippling diplomatic standoff as trans-atlantic tensions persisted. Russian President Vladimir V. Putin put rhetorical muscle behind an emerging antiwar alliance with France and Germany during the second day of a visit to France. Putin said he opposes the use of force in Iraq without U.N. approval and warned that Russia and France, both permanent members of the Security Council, might team up to veto a US military operation. "If today a proposition was made that we felt would lead to an unreasonable use of force, we would act with France or alone," Putin said when asked during a French television interview about a veto. "I am convinced that it would be a grave error to be drawn into unilateral action outside of international law." Putin rejected the idea that Russia, France and Germany, which a day earlier proposed reinforcing arms inspections in Iraq as an alternative to war, have formed a bloc to defy Washington. But it appeared likely Tuesday that the Bush administration would have to contend with a serious challenge from the three countries at the U.N. before it can confront Baghdad.

5. Japan on Franco-Russo-German Stance on Iraq

The Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN ISSUES WARNING AGAINST FRANCO-RUSSO-GERMAN STANCE ON IRAQ," 02/12/03) reported that Japan has warned that a declaration by France, Germany and Russia urging an alternative to a US-led war on Iraq could send the wrong message to the regime about the international community's resolve. "There is a concern that this may give Iraq the wrong message," the government's top spokesman Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference. "It is necessary for the international community to react firmly to this situation with the same way of thinking," he said. France, Russia and Germany on Monday issued a joint statement saying "there is still an alternative to war" and that the countries are "determined to give every chance to the disarmament of Iraq through peaceful means." The three nations united behind proposals made last week by French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, which called for a doubling or tripling of the number of UN arms inspectors. Fukuda said Japan doubted the commitment of Iraq to disarm despite its unconditional acceptance Monday of flyovers by U-2 spy planes to bolster UN inspections.

6. Tenet on DPRK Missile Capacity

CNN News ("TENET: NORTH KOREA HAS BALLISTIC MISSILE CAPABLE OF HITTING US," Washington, 02/12/03) reported that CIA Director George Tenet and top US intelligence officials

said Wednesday that the DPRK has an untested ballistic missile capable of hitting the US. While testifying at a Senate committee hearing in Washington, Tenet was asked whether the DPRK had a ballistic missile capable of reaching the US West Coast. Before answering, Tenet turned to very quickly consult with aides sitting behind him. "I think the declassified answer, is yes, they can do that," Tenet said. Defense Intelligence Agency Director Vice Adm. Lowell Jacoby, also testifying at the hearing, said outside the hearing room that the DPRK missile has not yet been flight tested. Moments earlier Tenet said it was likely that the DPRK had been able to produce as many as two plutonium-based nuclear weapons. The estimate is not new -- it was laid out in an unclassified CIA document in December 2001-- but Tenet is the most senior US official to say so publicly. The 2001 report said North Korea's Taepo Dong 2 missile may be capable of hitting the West Coast of the US, as well Alaska and Hawaii

7. DPRK-US Relations

CNN News ("NORTH KOREA 'READY TO TALK' ON NUKES," Pyongyang, 02/12/03) reported that the DPRK says it is ready to talk with the US over its nuclear program but warned a military build-up in the region will have a negative effect on any peaceful resolution of the issue. The DPRK accused the US of not being genuine in its desire to have direct talks on the matter and reportedly urged the United Kingdom to act as a go-between for negotiations. The DPRK also reiterated that it had no intention of developing nuclear weapons despite pulling out of the global nuclear non-proliferation treaty and moving to re-start a reactor capable of producing weapons grade plutonium. "The peaceful solution to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and an arms build-up can never go together," the Rodong Sinmun said. However, "The DPRK is ready for both dialogue and confrontation," the news agency reported.

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("KCNA ON US CONTRADICTORY ASSERTION ABOUT 'DIRECT DIALOGUE,'" Pyongyang, 02/12/03) carried a story which read "The US is going to have direct talks with North Korea to discuss Pyongyang's suspected nuclear weapons program but we do not want the nuclear issue to become simply a problem to the US and North Korea. US deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage was reported to have said on Feb. 4 in a hearing before the US senate foreign relations committee. After his remarks some media claimed that the US policy and stand toward the DPRK have changed, saying it proposed "direct dialogue," "direct talks to the DPRK" and "there is no doubt in starting dialogue." But a scrutiny of the US stand and attitude after his remarks shows that the US proposed "direct dialogue" is nothing but a broad hoax. There is nothing new in Armitage's proposal for "direct dialogue."

8. ROK-DPRK Diplomacy

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "SOUTH KOREA SEEKS EASING OF NUCLEAR CRISIS AT ECONOMIC TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 02/12/03) reported that officials from the two Koreas sat down Wednesday for regular talks on economic cooperation during which the ROK hoped to convince the reclusive communist nation to defuse the crisis over its nuclear activities. The nuclear dispute was not on the agenda for the meetings, the fourth time that officials from the uneasy neighbors have gathered to discuss joint economic projects since a historic summit meeting in 2000. But ROK officials made clear that they planned to take advantage of the opportunity to urge the DPRK to ease tensions over its nuclear program. "The talks are taking place in a difficult circumstances, but let's understand each other and cooperate," Vice Finance and Economy Minister Yoon Jin-sik, the top ROK delegate, said before the closed-door talks. The DPRK has been willing to discuss the dispute with the ROK in various forums. They have not budged from their stance, however, that only direct talks with the US can end the crisis.

9. US DPRK Satellite Image Uncertainty

The Los Angeles Times (Paul Richter and George Miller, "US WARNS NORTH KOREA OVER SATELLITE IMAGES," 02/01/03) reported that the Bush administration confirmed on January 31, 2003 that recent satellite photos show the DPRK may be resuming production of weapons-grade plutonium, and warned the DPRK not to build nuclear bombs. Satellite photos taken have shown covered trucks pulling up to a building at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, where about 8,000 spent fuel rods are stored. US officials said the purpose of the activity at Yongbyon is not completely clear, but it could mean that the DPRK is making good on threats to begin extracting plutonium from spent fuel to build nuclear weapons, a process that could yield weapons within several months. Although "we don't know for sure what's happening ... you've got to be concerned that spent fuel rods are being brought out of the facility," said one US official. The satellite pictures were taken so recently that there has not been enough time to establish a pattern or determine exactly what the North Koreans are doing, US officials said. One official said there is no way of knowing for certain from the images whether rods have been loaded into the trucks and moved. Trucks do not need to be specially equipped to handle fuel rods, which can be transported in containers. [Editor's note: This story is two weeks old. However, its highlighting of US uncertainty is decidedly in contrast to the New York Times story run on NAPSnet on 02/01/03.]

II. Japan

1. US Bases in Japan

The Japan Times ("REMARKS ON OKINAWA BASE CAUSE MORE FALLOUT," 01/30/03) reported that Hiromu Nonaka, former secretary general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), resigned as chairman of the party's Okinawa Promotion Committee in protest over remarks made by a senior party executive on the relocation of a major US base. The move was sparked by remarks by Taro Aso, chief of the LDP Policy Research Council, who voiced opposition toward spending huge sums on a planned military-civilian airport that will serve as a replacement base for the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, central Okinawa. During a meeting at the party's local chapter in Naha, Aso said, "The idea of spending 600 billion yen for something that will be demolished 15 years later will not win public understanding." Nonaka told reporters, "After going through various developments, we were finally able to decide on a candidate site for the facility thanks to the cooperation of successive Cabinets, ruling parties and local people concerned. "I cannot tolerate remarks by a party executive in charge of policy affairs that could throw a wet blanket on the issue."

The Japan Times ("HIROSHIMA ISLAND MAY HOST NIGHT DRILLS," 01/31/03) reported that the Japanese government may shift noisy night-flying drills by US Navy warplanes to an uninhabited island in Hiroshima Prefecture and away from the Atsugi air base in Kanagawa Prefecture, defense sources said. Atsugi, which the US Navy shares with the Maritime Self-Defense Force, is in a densely populated area and there have been many complaints from residents about noise from the nighttime drills. The island of Okurokami is being considered as a possible relocation site for night landing drills involving US Navy warplanes. Town authorities of Okimi have agreed to allow the construction of a US drill site, including a 2-km-long runway for night-landing practice that would be built by the national government, the sources said. Okimi Mayor Hidekazu Tanimoto formally conveyed to the town assembly the municipality's desire to host the drills. Mayor Tanimoto said Okimi approached the national government last summer, and only he and the deputy mayor were involved in the negotiations. "This was not something that the national government pushed onto us," he said. adding that he hopes to explain the plan to local residents and hold discussions with neighboring municipalities.

Kyodo ("KAWAGUCHI VOWS OKINAWA EFFORT," Naha, 02/03/03) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi vowed to try to meet a call by Okinawa's governor for "tangible improvements" in reducing the heavy US military presence in Okinawa Prefecture. Kawaguchi said the issue must be dealt with under the framework of relations between Japan and the US. "It is important to change international situations in a favorable manner in an effort to reduce the burden on Okinawa," she said. Kawaguchi said she has been making efforts by taking up base issues during talks with the US, and she took up the issue later during a meeting with Lt. Gen. Wallace Gregson, US military coordinator of the Okinawa area. Meanwhile, at a meeting with mayors of about 30 cities, towns and villages that host US military bases in the prefecture, Kawaguchi introduced newly appointed ambassador to Okinawa Sadaaki Numata, a former ambassador to Pakistan. Numata, 59, took up the post Jan. 23. He expressed his desire to help bridge communication gaps between Okinawan citizens and the US, as well as between the governments of the two countries.

Kyodo ("HOSTING OF US NAVY FLIGHT DRILLS VOTED DOWN," Hiroshima, 02/04/03) reported that the town assembly of Okimi, Hiroshima Prefecture, voted down Mayor Hidekazu Tanimoto's plan to host contentious US Navy flight drills on an uninhabited island. The plan would have warplanes off the USS Kitty Hawk conduct night landing practice on Okurokami Island, which is under the town's jurisdiction. However, the 12 assembly members met and shot down the plan by a majority vote on the grounds that the mayor's explanations were insufficient, that such drills could adversely affect the environment, and because neighboring municipalities with which Okimi is in merger talks, as well as Hiroshima Gov. Yuzan Fujita, also oppose the plan. At the meeting, assembly members also withdrew their earlier decision to meet with the agency and visit the Atsugi base. The decision was made at a similar meeting on Jan. 30, when the assembly was suddenly told of the mayor's plan for the first time. Tanimoto told a news conference after the vote he hopes the assembly members reconsider and he will continue discussions with them. He added he will also hold talks with the Defense Facilities Administration Agency. But the assembly chairman, Tamotsu Kawano, told reporters he will not convene an assembly meeting even if Tanimoto wants to discuss the matter. He said he will also oppose the submission of any bill on the issue. Meantime, Defense Agency and Defense Facilities Administration Agency officials could not hide their surprise at the latest development. "If the assembly opposes (the plan), then the offer (for use of the island) is probably difficult to realize now," one senior official said.

2. Japanese Logistical Support for US

The Japan Times ("FUELING US PLANES THAT ATTACK IS LEGAL: OFFICIAL," 01/31/03) reported that US aircraft receiving fuel provided by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and subsequently attacking Iraq would not constitute an act of collective defense, Osamu Akiyama, Cabinet legislation bureau director general, said. "The logical conclusion is that it would not correspond to our country's use of force or exercising of the right to collective defense," Akiyama said in an appearance before the House of Councilors Budget Committee. During the same committee session, Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba said he has not confirmed any reports about US carrier aircraft using fuel provided by SDF vessels and then engaging in military activities in areas other than Afghanistan.

Kyodo ("MSDF DESTROYER IKAZUCHI SETS SAIL FOR INDIAN OCEAN," Yokosuka, 02/04/03) reported that a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer left its home port in Yokosuka on Feb. 3, bound for the Indian Ocean as part of Japan's rear-area support for US-led military operations in Afghanistan. The 4,550-ton Ikazuchi will meet and escort the amphibious force ship Shimokita, which will leave its base in Kure, Hiroshima Prefecture, on Feb. 6, the MSDF said. The 8,900-ton Shimokita will help transport construction equipment and personnel for the Thai military, and after it is loaded in Thailand, the two vessels will travel to an unidentified country along the

Arabian Sea in the northern Indian Ocean, the office said.

3. Mayoral Election in Hiroshima

The Japan Times ("HIROSHIMA MAYOR WINS RE-ELECTION WITH EASE," 02/04/03) reported that Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba sailed to re-election. Akiba, a former Diet member of the Social Democratic Party, kept his hold on the mayoral office thanks in part to support from reformist Nagano Gov. Yasuo Tanaka.

4. Fast Breeder Reactor Monju

Kyodo ("ANOTHER HURDLE FOR MONJU REACTOR," Tsuruga, 02/04/03) reported that the city of Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, will not give the go-ahead to renovate the trouble-plagued Monju fast-breeder reactor prototype until after the Supreme Court clears it of nuclear safety concerns, Mayor Kazuharu Kawase said. The move comes in the wake of the central government's decision to appeal a Nagoya High Court decision nullifying its 1983 approval to build the plutonium-producing reactor in the city. While expressing disappointment with the high court ruling, Kawase said the city may not be able to host the reactor if the top court judges that it poses significant safety threats, suggesting a delay in local approval. "We invited the facility because we were convinced that the state took (the appropriate) safety measures. But if the appeals court deems its safety level extremely low, then we can't let Monju remain in our community," he said. However, at the same time he noted the central role the reactor occupies in the nuclear fuel-recycling project for a country without significant natural resources. "Our city can contribute greatly to research and development" related to the energy-recycling project centered on fast-breeder reactors like Monju, Kawase said.

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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Ilmin Internationl Relations Institute
BK21 The Education and Research Corps for East Asian Studies
Department of Political Science, Korea University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

Center for American Studies,
Fudan University, Shanghai, People's Republic of China

International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),
Meiji Gakuin University, Tokyo, Japan

Monash Asia Institute,
Monash University, Clayton, Australia

Brandon Yu: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Young-soo: yskim328@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy84@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Saiko Iwata: saiko@akira.ne.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@online.ru
Moscow, Russian Federation

Wu Chunsi: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org