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I. United States

1. Pakistan on DPRK Nuclear Devices

New York Times (David E. Sanger, "PAKISTANI TELLS OF DPRK NUCLEAR DEVICES," Washington, 04/13/04) reported that Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist who sold nuclear technology around the world, has told his interrogators that during a trip to the DPRK five years ago he was taken to a secret underground nuclear plant and shown what he described as three nuclear devices, according to Asian and US officials who have been briefed by the Pakistanis. If Khan's report is true, it would be the first time that any foreigner has reported inspecting an actual DPRK nuclear weapon. Past CIA assessments of the DPRK's nuclear capacity have been based on estimates of how much plutonium it could produce and assessments of its technical capability to turn that plutonium into weapons. Khan, known as the father of the Pakistani bomb, said he was allowed to inspect the weapons briefly, according to the account that Pakistan has begun to provide in classified briefings to nations within reach of the DPRK's missiles. US intelligence officials caution that they cannot say whether Khan had the time, expertise or equipment to verify the claims. But they note that the number of plutonium weapons roughly accords with previous CIA estimates that the DPRK had one

or two weapons and the ability to produce more. White House officials declined to discuss the intelligence reports, saying through a spokesman that the subject was "too sensitive."

The Associated Press (Joohee Cho, "PAKISTAN DECLINES COMMENT ON KHAN CLAIM ON N KOREA NUKES," Islamabad, 04/13/04) reported that Pakistan on Tuesday said it was sharing information divulged by disgraced top scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan with other countries, but declined to comment on a report he had visited a secret underground plant in the DPRK and seen nuclear devices. The New York Times reported Tuesday that Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, had told interrogators that he inspected the weapons briefly during a trip to the DPRK five years ago. Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said Tuesday that Pakistan had shared information arising from its investigations of Khan to other countries but wouldn't give any details about what it had shared. "We have investigated scientists. We are in touch with the world," he told a press conference in Islamabad. Pakistani officials have previously said they have offered information on the investigation to the PRC, Japan, the ROK, as well as the US and the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency.

2. US Cheney PRC Arrival

Agence France-Presse ("CHENEY ARRIVES IN CHINA FOR FIRST-EVER OFFICIAL VISIT," 04/13/04) reported that US Vice President Dick Cheney arrived in Beijing for his first-ever official visit to the PRC which was expected to focus heavily on the Taiwan issue. Cheney touched down at the Beijing Capital Airport aboard Air Force Two from Tokyo accompanied by his wife Lynne, and was met by US ambassador Clark Randt. He is scheduled to meet with his counterpart Vice President Zeng Qinghong later Tuesday before meetings with Premier Wen Jiabao, President Hu Jintao and military chief Jiang Zemin Wednesday. Cheney will also visit Shanghai and address students at Fudan University. During his Tokyo visit, Cheney met with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and reaffirmed that the US would do its utmost to secure the release of three Japanese hostages held in Iraq. Seven PRC hostages held in Iraq were released late Monday.

3. Iraq Japanese Hostage Situation

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE HOSTAGE SITUATION UNPREDICTABLE: JAPAN," 04/13/04) reported that Japan is scrambling for fresh information about three Japanese civilians being held hostage in Iraq, after an apparent deadline for their execution passed with no news. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said the fate of the hostages remained unpredictable as what analysts have described as the biggest crisis of his premiership dragged into a sixth day. "We are not in a situation that allows any prediction amid conflicting information," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda quoted Koizumi as telling his ministers at an informal meeting earlier in the day. "We need to act calmly and cautiously," the prime minister said, reiterating he would do his utmost to rescue the hostages. Fukuda admitted the government was in the dark, saying it "has not confirmed the situation concerning the hostages at the moment." He declined to comment on what measures Tokyo was taking to bring about the release of humanitarian volunteers Noriaki Imai, 18, and Nahoko Takato, 34, and photojournalist Soichiro Koriyama, 32. Their kidnappers, an armed group calling itself the "Mujahedeen Brigades" have threatened to kill the hostages unless Japan withdraws 550 troops from the southern Iraq town of Samawa. Koizumi has refused to pull the troops out.

4. Iraq PRC Hostage Release

Agence France-Presse ("LIKELY CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY FOR RELEASED PRC HOSTAGES,"

04/13/04) reported that seven PRC citizens taken hostage in Iraq were likely mistaken for Japanese or South Koreans, diplomats said after the men were released and taken to a safe location in Baghdad. "There is a big possibility of misunderstanding," Jiang Xu, a diplomat at the PRC embassy in Iraq told the Shanghai Morning Post. He suggested the kidnappers mistook the PRC nationals for Japanese and South Koreans, who have joined the US-led coalition in sending troops to the shattered country. "The PRC government has been actively contributing to the re-construction of Iraq after the war and the PRC people have given the Iraqi people a very good impression," another embassy official, Yu Hailin, said. "Prior to now, rarely has one heard of violence aimed at PRC." The PRC men were taken hostage at the weekend in the rebel city of Fallujah, west of Baghdad, but were released late Monday. "They have arrived at a temporary dwelling in Baghdad accompanied by PRC diplomats from the PRC's Iraqi embassy. Their health and spiritual situation is generally good," said the foreign ministry in Beijing. It remains unclear who abducted them and details of their liberation were not given.

5. US-DPRK Joint MIA Search

Yonhap ("US AND NORTH KOREA JOIN SEARCH TO FIND MIAS," 04/13/04) reported that the US and the DPRK have resumed a joint-search for the remains of American soldiers missing in action during the 1950-53 Korean War, the Pentagon said. This week's recovery mission comes despite heightened tensions between the former adversaries over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. Both countries have agreed to keep the remains issue separate from the nuclear problem, which is being addressed in six-nation regional talks. In late 2003, US and DPRK negotiators scheduled five recovery operations for this year in Unsan County and near the Chosin Reservoir, the US Defence Department said in a news release. More than 8,100 American troops remain missing from the Korean War, including around 1,100 from the Chosin campaign. 6. Taiwan PAC-3 Anti-Missile Purchase

Reuters ("TAIWAN TO BUY PAC-3 ANTI-MISSILES IN JUNE - PAPER," Taipei, 04/13/04) reported that Taiwan will buy advanced anti-missile systems from the US in June to counter the threat from hundreds of warheads pointed at them by the PRC. The report by the China Times says that the defense ministry plans to buy anti-missile weapons, including six Patriot PAC-3 missiles, worth T$100 billion ($3 billion). The order is part of a huge weapons deal offered by President Bush to Taiwan in 2001. Taiwan proposed a $15 billion special budget last year to pay for the anti-missile systems as well as submarines, Kidd Class destroyers and submarine-hunting aircraft. Defense Minister Tang Yao-ming said in February the plan was to push through the $15 billion special budget after the Taiwan presidential election on March 20. The China Times said Tang and other ministry officials reported the planned PAC-3 purchase to President Chen Shui-bian on Monday, but gave no other details. Ministry officials were not available for comment.

Reuters (Adam Entous, "CHENEY TO PRESS CASE ON NORTH KOREA IN CHINA," Beijing, 04/13/04) reported that US Vice President Dick Cheney, armed with new evidence over the DPRK's weapons capabilities, will press the PRC on Wednesday to help jump-start talks aimed at ending the DPRK's nuclear programs. The US points to intelligence from A.Q. Khan, Pakistan's scientist believed to have sold nuclear technology to the DPRK as well as Libya and Iran, as third-party confirmation that Pyongyang probably already has nuclear weapons. US officials say they hope the information will end what they see as lingering PRC doubts. Khan told Pakistani interrogators he saw three nuclear devices during a trip to the DPRK five years ago. Economic issues will also be on the agenda when Cheney meets Premier Wen Jiabao.

7. Russia on DPRK Railway Link

Yonhap ("RUSSIA WON'T PRESS NORTH KOREA ON RAILWAY LINK: AMBASSADOR," Seoul, 04/13/04) reported that Russia will not pressure the DPRK to help promote a proposed connection between the Trans-Korea Railway (TKR) and the Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR), Russian Ambassador to the ROK Teymuraz O. Ramishvili said Tuesday. Ramishvili said the proposed link between the TKR and TSR should be resolved through a diplomatic compromise rather than external pressure.

8. DPRK Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("N KOREA'S NO. 2 LEADER DEMOTED OVER REFORM DISAGREEMENT: JAPANESE REPORT," Tokyo, 04/13/04) reported that the DPRK's No. 2 leader Jang Song-thaek was demoted last month over his criticism toward the DPRK's economic reform policies, a Japanese newspaper said Tuesday. Jang, who was an executive in the Workers' Party of Korea, was critical of the DPRK's policy of gradually introducing market economy, the Tokyo Shimbun said in a dispatch from Beijing. He believed such a reform would introduce "unhealthy, foreign ideas" to the DPRK, according to the newspaper, which quoted a source with detailed knowledge of DPRK affairs. DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, who is Jang's brother-in-law, received a report on Jang and decided to send him to study economics at a school under the Workers' Party, the newspaper said. Jang, who often disagreed with proponents of reform drives, including Premier Pak Bong Ju, was often seen as a possible successor to Kim, and some analysts believe he would be put back to a leadership position soon, the Tokyo Shimbun said.

9. PRC Nuclear Materials Export

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO JOIN NUCLEAR MATERIALS EXPORT CONTROL GROUP - REPORT," Shanghai, 04/13/04) reported that the PRC is set to join a multilateral group which controls the export of nuclear materials and technology, the Financial Times reported. The report said that the PRC's expected entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group next month coincides with Tuesday's visit to Beijing by US Vice President Dick Cheney. The PRC also attended as an observer for the first time at a meeting in Paris in February of the Missile Technology Control Regime, another global institution aimed at preventing exports to countries outside the group's safeguards. The report quoted weapons experts as saying that the decision by the PRC to sign up with the two bodies represents a major change for a country known for its long history sales of missile and missile-related technologies overseas.

10. US DMZ Presence

The Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "US TO PULL OUT OF KEY OUTPOST ALONG TENSE BORDER WITH NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 04/13/04) reported that the US military will relinquish a key outpost along the tense frontier with the DPRK this year as part of a force reshuffle on the divided Korean Peninsula, a US military official said Tuesday. The turnover of Observation Post Ouellette, a dusty crag with a view deep into the DPRK, means that US troops will no longer patrol the tense border, except for a small contingent at the truce village of Panmunjom. Duties along the heavily fortified buffer area, called the Demilitarized Zone, will be handed over to the ROK. Details on the timing of Ouellette's turnover and the eventual troop level at Panmunjom are still being decided in consultation with the ROK, Bertrand said, adding: "It will be this year." US Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, joint commander of the US Forces Korea and the United Nations Command overseeing the cease fire that ended the 1950-53 Korean War, told the US Congress last month that the changes were meant to give South Korea a greater role in defending itself. He said the "Republic of Korea will replace all US personnel directly involved in security patrols, manning observation posts, and base operations

support" along the DMZ, except for Panmunjom, where the US will maintain command over a battalion of joint US-ROK forces.

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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