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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Six-Way Talks Negotiation

Agence France-Presse ("US MAKES DIRECT CALL TO NKOREA ON SIX-WAY TALKS, CONSULTS WITH CHINA," 01/14/04) reported that the US said it had made a rare direct call to the DPRK to resume multilateral talks on ending its nuclear weapons programs as senior US and PRC officials consulted on how to bring Pyongyang back to the table. Joseph DeTrani, the new US special envoy for the DPRK, delivered the message to Pak Gil Son, the DPRK's ambassador to the United Nations, in "a brief introductory" meeting last week in New York, the State Department said. "DeTrani emphasized the importance of the six-party framework and the centrality of the six-party framework," deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said of last Thursday's meeting. He stressed that the meeting between DeTrani, who assumed the DPRK position in November, and Pak was not an indication that the US was ready to agree to bilateral discussions with Pyongyang on the nuclear issue. "There's no way ... anyone should take away from this the impression that somehow it's a

alternative to or a diversion from the multilateral handling of this problem," Ereli told reporters.

2. US-PRC on DPRK Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US, CHINA CONSULT ON RESUMPTION OF NKOREA TALKS," 01/14/04) reported that the US and the PRC consulted here on possibilities for a second round of six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis as Washington awaited detailed reports from two unofficial US delegations that visited Pyongyang last week. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage met with Fu Ying, the director of the Asian section of the PRC foreign ministry, to discuss Beijing's efforts to convince the North Koreans to return to the table, a State Department official said. Asked by reporters after the meeting whether there was progress toward convening a new round, Fu replied: "Yes." She did not elaborate. Fu is to meet later in the day with James Kelly, the top US envoy for Asia and the Pacific who led the US delegation to the last six-party talks in Beijing which ended inconclusively in August.

3. US Military PRC Visit

Agence France-Presse ("TOP US MILITARY GENERAL IN CHINA FOR HIGH LEVEL TALKS," 01/14/04) reported that US chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers arrived in Beijing for the highest level military visit since a US surveillance plane and a PRC fighter collided in mid-air nearly three years ago. Myers was expected to discuss a wide-range of issues with his PRC counterparts, but would mainly focus on military-to-military exchanges and mechanisms to promote better relations between the two armies, officials said. "This is a very important visit between China and the US in the military field, this is also a very important visit starting off 2004," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. "We believe that through this visit we can deepen understanding between the two militaries, expand bilateral consensus and develop bilateral friendship, while also promoting the healthy and stable development of Sino-US military relations." Myers arrived late Tuesday and would "probably" meet with PRC President Hu Jintao, Xinhua news agency said.

4. DPRK Humanitarian Aid

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CONFIRMS NEW AID PACKAGE TO NORTH KOREA," 01/13/04) reported that the PRC confirmed that it offered a new economic aid package to North Korea during a high level visit last year, but refrained from linking the assistance to six-party talks aimed at defusing the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. "During his visit to the DPRK (North Korea), chairman of the National People's Congress Wu Bangguo briefed the leaders there of China's decision to grant assistance to DPRK," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. "My understanding is that relevant authorities of the two sides are discussing the specific details of the assistance." Japan's Asahi Shimbum, in a dispatch from Washington Saturday, said that during Wu's October visit the PRC had offered 50 million dollars to buy heavy oil and food in exchange for the DPRK's participation in a second round of six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear program. "As a friendly neighbor to the DPRK, China has been giving economic assistance within its capacity, in this context, China briefed the DPRK to further economic assistance," Kong said.

5. PRC on DPRK Six-Way Talks

Agence France-Presse ("PRC OFFICIAL EXPECTS NKOREAN SIX-WAY TALKS NEXT MONTH: JAPANESE REPORT," 01/12/04) reported that a senior PRC official told Japanese lawmakers that he expected the second round of six-way talks on DPRK nuclear crisis to resume in February, news

reports in Japan said. PRC State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan made the remark to visiting Japanese lawmakers Fukushiro Nukaga and Kazuo Kitagawa in Beijing, major media said. "The US and the North Korea were apart on issues of stopping (DPRK) nuclear programmes and offering a security guarantee (to Pyongyang). But we now see signs that both sides are becoming conciliatory," Tang said, according to the Tokyo Shimbun newspaper. Negotiations over when to hold the next round of talks "should be resolved in February," he said, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported. The DPRK crisis will not be resolved unless economic aid including energy is provided to the country, Tang said, Japanese media reported. Nukaga and Kitagawa told Tang that Tokyo would not offer aid to Pyongyang unless it first resolved the issue of Japanese citizens abducted by DPRK agents, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said. Tang expressed his understanding of Japan's position but pointed out that Tokyo should not let the matter stand in the way of further negotiations, the newspaper said.

6. Australia US Missile Purchase

The Associated Press (Jamie Tarabay, "AUSTRALIA MAY BUY AMERICAN MISSILES," Sydney, 01/13/04) reported that Australia might buy US missiles as part of the Bush administration's planned defense shield, the defense minister said Tuesday while acknowledging the plan could fuel a regional arms race. The government announced in December that it would join the American plan to build a missile defense system, calling the threat of ballistic missiles too grave to ignore. Details of that involvement were being hammered out with US defense officials visiting Australia - one of Washington's staunchest allies - this week to negotiate a memorandum of understanding. Defense Minister Robert Hill on Tuesday offered the first hint about the contents of the agreement being discussed, saying the government might incorporate the missile defense systems on three air warfare destroyers planned for the Australian navy. Hill previously had said his country likely would help research the multibillion-dollar defense project and had no plans for a ground-based missile defense system on its own soil. Hill said he was impressed by last month's successful firing of a Standard Missile-3 interceptor missile from a Navy Aegis cruiser that knocked a target rocket out of the sky over the Pacific. "It's got the capability to basically meet and intercept missiles outside of the atmosphere," Hill told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio. Hill did not give more details about the missiles being considered and a spokeswoman declined to comment while discussions with the American representatives were ongoing.

7. DPRK-EU Economic Relations

The Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "EU MAKES ECONOMIC OVERTURE TO N. KOREA," Seoul, 01/13/04) reported that undaunted by blackouts, food shortages, crumbling infrastructure and a standoff over nuclear weapons, European businesses have opened their first chamber of commerce in the DPRK. The Korea-Europe Technology and Economy Services center, a two-person satellite office of the European Union chamber of commerce in Seoul, opened its doors Jan. 5 in the DPRK capital of Pyongyang. Unlike US competitors, who are hobbled by Cold War-era sanctions, European companies are relatively free to set up shop in the DPRK and see practicality, not politics, as the major hurdle. The mission of the new chamber of commerce is to help European businesses break into the DPRK market with support in finding partners, dealing with authorities, finding investment opportunities and funds, navigating red tape and jumping language barriers. "There's a lot of interest and requests about doing business in North Korea," said Jean-Jacques Grauhar, secretary-general of the European Union Chamber of Commerce in Korea. "Europeans have a long-term approach and are interested in having a foothold in the country." The Swiss-Swedish engineering company ABB is the only major European company with a permanent office in the DPRK. But European interest in an expanded presence underlines the potential in using economic incentives to help resolve the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear programs and possibly open up the DPRK. Europe

exported $384 million worth of goods, mostly machinery, to North Korea in 2002, while importing $128 million in goods from North Korea, according to the most recent figures. That's dwarfed by the $43.5 billion in two-way EU trade with the ROK.

8. Japan DPRK Nuclear Exportation Arrest

Dow Jones ("JAPAN ARRESTS 2 FOR ILLEGAL N KOREA NUCLEAR EXPORTS-KYODO," New York, 01/13/04) reported that the Kanagawa prefectural police arrested a Japanese businessman and a DPRK female resident of Japan on Tuesday on suspicion of illegally exporting to the DPRK a machine that could be used for nuclear development, the Kyodo News Service reported. According to the police, Yoshifumi Yoshihara, 44, president of ID Support, a trading firm based in Niigata Prefecture, attempted to export an inverter for an industrial washing machine from Yokohama to the DPRK last August, but the export application was rejected by the Yokohama Customs. Police investigations also revealed Tuesday that Yoshihara was frequently exporting cars and daily commodities through the controversial DPRK ferry Mangyongbong-92, Kyodo said. The Mangyongbong-92, which sails between Wonsan and Niigata on an irregular basis, has been strictly monitored by the government as Japanese authorities suspect it of involvement in illicit trading of missile parts and drugs, as well as espionage activities. In November, Yoshihara and Ri Yong Sun, 52, a resident of Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture, shipped the inverter to the PRC< from where it would be sent to the DPRK, without government approval, the police said. The inverter, however, failed to reach the DPRK, and was sent back to Japan from the PRC last month, they said. The police said the inverter was purchased from a local manufacturer and sent at the request of a client in Pyongyang. According to the police, the inverter could be used for stabilizing the frequency of electricity for a gas centrifuge used for enriching uranium.

9. Taiwan Defense Referendum

Agence France-Presse ("NO TURNING BACK ON TAIWAN REFERENDUM PLANS: FOREIGN MINISTER," 01/13/04) reported that Taiwan will not bow to pressure from China and abandon its planned referendum on defence, Foreign Minister Eugene Chien said here. The referendum was a domestic issue and not a step towards independence, he added. Chien, in the Marshall Islands for the swearing in of President Kessai Note, told AFP that PRC missiles targeted at Taiwan are a "threat to the security of Taiwan and the stability of the area. "China has 500 missiles across the Strait, and is adding 75 each year. This is a tremendous concern in Taiwan. People are quite worried by it." Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian has vowed to hold Taiwan's first ever referendum alongside presidential polls on March 20 to demand that China remove the 496 ballistic missiles aimed at the island.

10. Japan-PRC-DPRK Refugees

Agence France-Presse ("FREEDOM SOUGHT FOR JAPANESE ACTIVIST AND NKOREAN REFUGEES HELD IN CHINA," 01/13/04) reported that Japan is urging PRC authorities to release a Japanese man who has been detained for more than a month after he tried to help two DPRK refugees flee through China, officials here said. "We are requesting the return of the Japanese national at the earliest possible time after regular investigations," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a press briefing. The top government spokesman said China was detaining the Japanese under its domestic laws and that "We have no choice but to ultimately honour the judgement on China's part." A foreign ministry spokeswoman said Tokyo was also asking Beijing not to repatriate the two North Koreans, who have been held along with the Japanese, "from a humanitarian point of

view." Fukuda said the Japanese national, whom he refused to identify, had been held for attempting "illegal departure" with the two DPRK refugees. A non-governmental Japanese organisation, which has been helping DPRK defectors, identified the man as Takayuki Noguchi, 32, who handles the group's international relations.

11. ROK-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN FM REJECTS JAPAN'S PROTEST AT STAMPS SHOWING DISPUTED ISLES," 01/13/04) reported that the ROK's foreign minister has rejected a Japanese protest over the planned release here of postage stamps depicting a group of islets at the centre of territorial dispute, officials said. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi urged South Korea to reverse its decision to issue the stamps during a telephone conversation with her ROK counterpart Yoon Young-Kwan on Monday, officials said. "Saying Dokdo (islets) belonged to South Korea in terms of history, geology and international laws, Minister Yoon refused to accept the request to stop issuing stamps featuring the natural beauty of our sovereign soil," Yang Sok-Hwan, an official working for the foreign ministry spokesman, told AFP. During the 30-minute talks with Kawaguchi, Yoon "expressed regret over various comments on the postage stamps out of Japan" which have angered ROK people, Yang said. In Tokyo, a Japanese foreign ministry official confirmed Kawaguchi asked Yoon to halt the printing of the stamps, noting that "Takeshima is the proper territory of Japan." But both ministers agreed to make efforts not to let the issue create friction between the two sides, according to officials in the ROK and Japan.

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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