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I. United States

1. US DPRK Nuclear Program Warning

Reuters (Paul Eckert and Carol Giacomo, "NORTH KOREA URANIUM BOMB ADVANCE, MISSILE TEST FEARED," Seoul/Washington, 03/13/03), CNN News ("US: NUCLEAR NK 'WITHIN MONTHS,'" Washington, 03/13/03) and BBC News ("WARNING OVER NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR PROGRAMME," 03/13/03) reported that the US has warned that the DPRK's nuclear weapons program may be much further advanced than previously thought. US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said that the DPRK's uranium enrichment program could be months away from producing weapons-grade material. The DPRK has apparently already re-started its nuclear reactor

at Yongbyon and could soon be reprocessing nuclear fuel into plutonium - another way of making nuclear bombs. Some members of the US administration say the DPRK may already possess one or two nuclear bombs. The BBC's state department correspondent Jon Leyne says experts believe the DPRK could soon have a production line able to produce up to a bomb a month. On Thursday, Japan's Defence Agency said it was moving a surveillance warship closer to the Korean Peninsula. The move follows reports in Tokyo that the DPRK might be preparing to test a Rodong medium-range ballistic missile, capable of reaching most of Japan. The Japanese government played down the reports, saying it had "no specific information" on a possible launch. Such a launch would mark the end of the DPRK's self-imposed moratorium on ballistic missile testing. The DPRK has already launched two short-range missiles in the last two weeks.

2. DPRK-US Relations

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "US OFFICIAL PESSIMISTIC ON NORTH KOREA," Washington, 03/13/03) reported that a top State Department official says US-DPRK negotiations cannot resume until the DPRK agrees to eliminate its nuclear weapons programs and meets US requirements in four other areas. In addition to nuclear disarmament, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said Wednesday that the DPRK also must protect human rights, address US concerns about terrorism, cease the export of missiles and reduce conventional forces that target the ROK. Only then would the US be willing to take steps to "improve the lives of the North Korean people" and to establish normal relations, he said. There is a sense of urgency because the DPRK, already believed to have one or two nuclear weapons, could have several more by summer if it begins reprocessing existing stocks of plutonium. By restarting a nuclear reactor two weeks ago, the DPRK is in position to accumulate additional plutonium supplies which could lead to nuclear weapons. "We have to solve all of the nuclear problem, and the element of speed doesn't only apply to the plutonium issue," Kelly said, speaking before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "The enriched-uranium issue, some have assumed, is somewhere off in the fog of the distant future. It is not," Kelly said. "It is only probably a matter of months, and not years, behind the plutonium." While ruling out negotiations for the time being, Kelly left open the possibility of direct talks with the DPRK to make clear what US requirements are. Kelly held out little hope that the DPRK will meet US disarmament demands. "There is not the slightest sign they have any interest in stopping," he said.

3. Assistant Secretary James A. Kelly on DPRK Situation

The Washington File ("NORTH KOREA PURSUING MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE GOALS, KELLY SAYS," Washington, 03/13/03) reported that the DPRK can't have nuclear weapons and expect to end its international isolation, says Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly. "Over the past ten years, Pyongyang has been in pursuit of two mutually exclusive goals," Kelly told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee March 12. The first goal of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is nuclear weapons, he said. The DPRK's second goal is "redefining its place in the world community -- and, incidentally its access to international largesse -- by broadening its diplomatic and foreign economic relations." The DPRK "needs to accept that it cannot do both," he said in prepared testimony. "We must, in dealing with North Korea, be mindful that other would-be nuclear aspirants are watching," Kelly cautioned, "If North Korea gains from its violations, others may conclude that the violation route is cost free." Deterrence, he added, "would be undermined and our nonproliferation efforts -- more critical now than ever -- would be grossly jeopardized." The international community, Kelly said, "must, and indeed is, impressing on the North that it is in its own best interest to end its nuclear arms program." The US, he added, is open to ideas about the format for a multilateral solution.

Kelly's full report can be found:

http://usinfo.state.gov/cgi-bin/washfile/display.pl?p=/products/washfile/latest&f=03031202.elt&t=/products/washfile/newsitem.shtml

4. ROK on DPRK Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "SOUTH KOREA URGES NORTH KOREA TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE OVER NUCLEAR DISPUTE," Seoul, 03/13/03) and the Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "SOUTH KOREA PUSHES NORTH TO HOLD TALKS," Seoul, 03/13/03) reported that the ROK urged the DPRK on Thursday to defuse its nuclear standoff through multilateral talks, and the US warned that the DPRK was just months away from enriching uranium to make atomic bombs. Meanwhile, Japan sent a surveillance warship to the waters off the Korean Peninsula amid media reports that the DPRK could be preparing to test fire a ballistic missile. With the dispute dragging on, ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan criticized the DPRK's objections to multilateral talks as "illogical." On Wednesday, he urged the US to show more willingness to resolve the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear programs. "North Korea must come out with a more open stance," Yoon told the ROK's MBC radio. "It's illogical to exclude the potential aid providers from the talks," Yoon said. The ROK wants the two adversaries to use both direct and multilateral approaches to end the dispute peacefully through dialogue. President Bush and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun discussed the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear activities in a telephone conversation Thursday, Roh's office said.

5. US DPRK Spy Flights

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "'WITH CIRCUMSPECTION,' US PLANES TO RESUME SPY FLIGHTS OFF NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 03/13/03) reported that US spy planes will soon resume surveillance flights off the DPRK, following an aerial interception by MiGs from the DPRK 10 days ago, according to US military sources. But policymakers have rejected the idea of sending an armed fighter escort, believing that would increase the risk of hostilities with the DPRK. Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, would not discuss details of the flights, but said: "We will conduct legal and lawful missions in international airspace around the world. They are innocent and non-threatening, and they will continue." The modified Boeing 707 spy planes, which take off from Okinawa, Japan, to monitor missile launches and North Korean communications, will operate alone, according to several military and civilian sources in the US and the ROK. "We do not want to do anything provocative. We do not want an international incident," said a top military officer. "We are not going to stop doing it. But we will do it with circumspection."

6. US Nuclear Safeguard Plans

The New York Times (Jennifer Lee, "REPORT SAYS PLAN TO SAFEGUARD NUCLEAR MATERIAL IS LACKING," Washington, 03/13/03) reported that the US lacks a comprehensive plan for protecting the world's supply of nuclear material from terrorists, according to a report issued today by Harvard University researchers. The report, titled "Controlling Nuclear Warheads and Materials," is part of a three-year research project commissioned by the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a Washington foundation, to create a report card on nuclear security around the world. The nations of the former Soviet Union present the biggest risk, the report said, given their vast supply of nuclear material and deteriorating financial state. There were reports today that the police in Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic, had seized nine pounds of radioactive mercury and arrested two people they said were trying to sell it. Twelve years ago, the US began a program sponsored by Sam Nunn, the former

Georgia senator, and Senator Richard G. Lugar, an Indiana Republican, to protect the material and knowledge needed for nuclear weapons. Nunn and Lugar warned today that the pace and approach were inadequate, and they called for a high-level federal official to coordinate efforts full-time. "Until you have someone who has day-to-day authority over this, things will fall through the cracks," Nunn said. The report said that about 37 percent of the potentially vulnerable nuclear material in the former Soviet Union is being protected by initial security upgrades, and only 17 percent of the supply is protected under long-term security plans. Some 80 percent of senior nuclear weapons scientists from the former Soviet Union receive salaries to lessen the economic incentive of cooperating with terrorists. The report said the amount of nuclear material needed to create a bomb was insignificant compared with what is available worldwide.

7. PRC on UN DPRK Involvement

The Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "CHINA SAYS NO TO UN INVOLVEMENT IN KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE," Beijing, 03/13/03) reported that the PRC argued on Thursday against US efforts to bring the DPRK nuclear crisis to the U.N. Security Council, calling instead for direct talks between the US and the DPRK. "At present, it is not appropriate for the United Nations to be involved in resolving the nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. At the United Nations, Security Council diplomats who demanded anonymity said the PRC had blocked efforts to reach agreement among the five permanent council members on a statement that would condemn the DPRK's decision to pull out of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The US, which had pressed the International Atomic Energy Agency to refer the issue to the council, had been pushing for the statement. The PRC supports the DPRK call for direct talks with the US, but the US rejects the demand as a ploy to extract more economic concessions.

8. Japan Surveillance DPRK Ship

The Associated Press (Kenji Hall, "JAPAN DEPLOYS SURVEILLANCE SHIP AMID REPORTS NORTH KOREA READYING MISSILE TEST," Tokyo, 03/13/03) reported that Japan has sent a high-tech surveillance warship to the Sea of Japan, the Defense Agency said Thursday, amid reports that the DPRK may soon test an intermediate-range ballistic missile. Defense Agency spokesman Yoshiyuki Ueno confirmed that the Aegis-equipped destroyer - which includes top-of-the-line surveillance systems and ship-to-air missiles - was deployed to the waters between Japan and the DPRK. Ueno described its mission as part of regular patrol activities. Another agency official, Ichiro Imaizumi, later said the vessel left port last Friday. But the dispatch came amid reports that the DPRK was making preparations to test-launch its Rodong ballistic missile. The Yomiuri, Japan's largest newspaper, said US military officials in Japan had notified their Japanese counterparts of the possibility last Friday, the day of the deployment, after DPRK army vehicles were spotted gathering near several launching sites in the northeast and other parts of the DPRK. Japan's top government spokesman denied having received such US intelligence. "We don't have credible information that says whether North Korea is now preparing to launch a ballistic missile," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference. "But of course, given the situation, we are paying close attention and gathering information." A spokeswoman for the US Embassy in Tokyo said officials there never discuss intelligence information with the media. "We routinely share information with Japan and our allies," she added, on condition of anonymity.

9. Japan on DPRK Ballistic Missile Reports

The Japan Times (Junko Takahashi and Nao Shimoyachi, "GOVERNMENT SILENT ON PYONGYANG MISSILE REPORTS," 03/13/03) reported that Japan government officials refused to comment Thursday on reports that the DPRK may be preparing to launch a Nodong ballistic missile, which can strike almost anywhere in Japan. "We have varied information, but I should not talk about it," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters in the afternoon. Nodong missiles have an estimated range of 1,300 km. The Yomiuri Shimbun reported Thursday morning that the government has received information from the US military in Japan, gathered mainly via satellite, that DPRK military vehicles are gathering at several Nodong missile launch sites. The Mainichi Shimbun reported that drums believed to be containing liquid fuel for Nodong missiles were seen being transported from a storage area. The Yomiuri said it has yet to confirm whether Pyongyang has fueled any Nodong missiles. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said the government currently has "no information that validates (the reports)." However, Fukuda admitted that a Maritime Self-Defense Force Aegis destroyer has been dispatched to the Sea of Japan and will gather information. Asked when the government will disclose information about a possible ballistic missile launch, Fukuda said: "We will do it when necessary. Whether to disclose the information will depend on the circumstances of the time."

10. Russia-US Nuclear Arms Treaty Ratification

The Associated Press ("DEFENSE COMMITTEE IN RUSSIA'S DUMA RECOMMENDS RATIFICATION OF BUSH-PUTIN ARMS TREATY," Moscow, 03/13/03) reported that the general who heads the defense committee in Russia's lower parliament house recommended Thursday that the chamber ratify the nuclear weapons treaty signed by the Russian and US presidents last spring, suggesting that instability in the relationship because of disagreements over Iraq lend the matter some urgency. "This document should have been ratified in a stable situation; it is all the more necessary to ratify it in today's unstable situation," the Interfax-Military news agency quoted Gen. Andrei Nikolayev, chairman of the State Duma defense committee, as saying. He said he believes the Duma may ratify the treaty this month. The treaty, signed last May by President Vladimir Putin and US President George W. Bush, calls on both nations to cut their strategic nuclear arsenals to 1,700 to 2,200 deployed warheads by 2012 - down from about 6,000 for the US and 5,500 for Russia. The US Senate unanimously approved the treaty last week. "The treaty is necessary for Russia, it allows Russia to build its strategic forces as it deems necessary through 2012," Nikolayev said, adding that it also allows the system of control envisaged by the earlier START treaty in place through Jan. 1, 2009.

11. ROK Domestic Economy

BBC News ("KOREA BANK SEEKS TO PROP UP MARKETS," 03/13/03) reported that the ROK's central bank has pumped 2 trillion won (£744m; $1.6bn) into financial markets, in an attempt to combat jitters over the DPRK and a multi-billion-dollar corporate scandal. ROK shares and the won have fallen sharply in recent days, as investors worried that more corporate malpractice could be uncovered after a $1.2bn accounting scandal at conglomerate SK Group. The SK affair came at a time when tensions with communist North Korea have hit a peak. Fears of widespread defaults on corporate bonds were the immediate trigger for the central bank's intervention, but the ROK is also struggling to maintain the country's credit rating. Rating agency Moody's has confirmed it is not cutting the ROK's grade, but troubled markets by slapping a negative outlook on the country's creditworthiness.

12. DPRK on Foal Eagle Military Exercise

The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("KCNA BLASTS US DECISION TO SEND CARRIER TO SOUTH KOREA," Pyongyang, 03/13/03) reported that the US reportedly announced that it would soon dispatch its carrier Carl Vinson, now operating in the west pacific, to an ROK port. The US plan to send this super-class carrier dubbed "Golden Eagle" to the ROK to let it play a major role in the Foal Eagle joint military exercise betrays its operational intention to carry out the biggest-ever joint military exercise targeted against the DPRK. The US and ROK warhawks have ceaselessly staged north-targeted saber-rattling. But it is the first time for them to mobilize troops and operational means huge enough to wage a war and use all parts of the ROK as theatres for month-long war exercises to be staged in the sky and seas and on land. The US claims that the exercises are annual events which have nothing to do with the "nuclear issue" of the DPRK. But this is nothing but a broad hoax to mislead the public opinion and cover up its sinister military purpose. As the US campaign to internationalize the DPRK's "nuclear issue" and force it to scrap its "nuclear weapons program before dialogue" proved futile, the US launched the large-scale war exercises in a bid to attain its strategic goal of militarily pressurizing and threatening it, while watching for a chance to mount a preemptive attack on the nuclear facilities in the DPRK. This is clearly evidenced by recent war outbursts made by US President Bush that it would take a "military option" in case its diplomatic efforts to settle the DPRK's "nuclear issue" fail.

II. Japan

1. Human Shields in Iraq

The Asahi Shimbun ("COURTING DEATH: 'HUMAN SHIELDS' CALLED SUICIDAL," 03/13/03) reported that the Iraqi Embassy in Tokyo issued visas Tuesday to eight Japanese headed for Iraq to serve as "human shields," even as the US and its allies move ever closer to war with Saddam Hussein. Visa applications for six others have also been dispatched to Iraq. More than 25 visa applications have been received in total. A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said while the individuals may be well-intentioned, entrance into Iraq at this point is suicidal. However, an Iraqi Embassy official in Tokyo said, "We respect the intentions of the applicants who want to enter the country despite the imminent dangers. [...] The visitors will be welcomed as human shields. Their duration of stay is not specified, as it will be extended until the war is evaded." While there are new volunteers still trying to enter the country, the main human shield "program" has essentially collapsed, with "shields" either expelled by Iraq or fleeing the country on their own initiative. Peace activist and former US Marine Ken Nichols O'Keefe said: "Our movement is completely based on personal free will but the Iraqis wanted to interfere, specifying which facilities we should protect as 'human shields.' When we made objections, we were labeled American spies."

2. Japan's Role in Anti-terrorism

The Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN BRACES FOR EXPLOSION IN TERRORISM," 03/12/03) reported that Japan is ready to play a major role in combating international terrorism amid growing fears over Islamic radicals, as a US-led war to disarm Iraq will certainly raise the ire of Muslim-dominated countries. The US has already asked Japan to act when Cofer Black, the US ambassador-at-large in charge of countering terrorism, attended a ministerial-level meeting on anti-terror measures in Tokyo in late February. If the US attacks Iraq, anti-American sentiment would probably explode in Indonesia, and because the US could find trouble acting there, it needs Japan's help, Black was quoted as telling top Japanese Foreign Ministry officials. Black's concerns were underscored by the Bali disco bombing in November last year. As diplomatic relations between Japan and Indonesia have been smoothed by Japanese economic aid extended after World War II, Hiroshi Shigeta,

Japanese ambassador for counter terrorism at that time, granted Black's request. As part of the anti-terror moves expected by the US, the Japanese government plans to organize a seminar on polishing counter-terror measures by inviting security officials from Southeast Asian countries to Tokyo this spring. The Defense Agency is also discussing the possibility of dispatching the Self Defense Forces to US military bases in Japan to protect them from terror attacks. Although they think Japan was not a top target of international terror organizations, the government plans to include anti-terror measures in emergency measures that will be announced when the US-led war with Iraq begins.

3. US Bases in Japan

Mainichi Daily News ("SHELLS LAUNCHED AT U.S. AIR BASE," 03/13/03) reported that two shells were launched at the US Air Force's Yokota Air Base in Fussa, Tokyo, in what police said appeared to be a guerrilla attack. Investigators found two launching devices about 300 meters away from the base, along with wires, batteries, and a timing device. In a similar incident on March 11, a timed launching device was found in the grounds of a school in Tokyo's Chiyoda Ward, pointed in the direction of the Defense Agency about 300 meters away. Police said it was likely extremists had planted the device.

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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