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I. United States

1. Post-Six-Way DPRK Nuclear Talks

New York Times (Steven R. Weisman, "LASTING DISCORD CLOUDS TALKS ON DPRK NUCLEAR ARMS," Washington, 03/13/04) reported that almost two weeks after the DPRK agreed to new, supposedly more intimate "working groups" to discuss its nuclear weapons program, Bush administration officials say that the agenda for the talks remains unclear and that the discussions may not occur until April or May. The idea of trying to resolve disagreements over the DPRK's nuclear programs in one or more working groups came up in the last round of talks in Beijing at the end of February. Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said afterward that he was "quite satisfied" with how they went and that the working groups established "an institutionalized process to move forward in further discussions." The objective, according to administration officials, is to create an unpressured atmosphere in which North Korea may feel more free to negotiate steps toward the American demand for a "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of its nuclear programs. But there is dissent in the administration over how much the talks with the DPRK

accomplished and whether the working groups will produce further progress. "The premise is wrong," said a US official. "If the North Koreans are not willing to show flexibility at a high level, they're not going to let their munchkins do the job." Hard-liners in the administration say the main disappointment of the most recent talks was the failure to get a commitment on the dismantling of the weapons. Those who favor a more conciliatory approach say the main accomplishment was to get all the other participants in the talks to agree that the DPRK must commit itself to that goal. A top administration official described the proceedings as "grueling" and said that even minor progress was a real victory. "The consensus among us is that this is a ground game," he said, using a football metaphor. "We're going to move the ball five yards at a time."

2. DPRK-Pakistan Ties

New York Times (David Sanger, "US SEES MORE ARMS TIES BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND KOREA," Washington, 03/13/04) reported that a new classified intelligence report presented to the White House last week detailed for the first time the extent to which Pakistan's Khan Research Laboratories provided the DPRK with all the equipment and technology it needed to produce uranium-based nuclear weapons, according to American and Asian officials who have been briefed on its conclusions. The assessment, by the Central Intelligence Agency, confirms the Bush administration's fears about the accelerated nature of the DPRK's secret uranium weapons program, which some intelligence officials believe could produce a weapon as early as sometime next year. The assessment is based in part on Pakistan's accounts of its interrogations of Abdul Qadeer Khan, the developer of Pakistan's bomb, who was pardoned by President Pervez Musharraf in January. The report concluded that the DPRK probably received a package very similar to the kind the Khan network sold to Libya for more than $60 million - including nuclear fuel, centrifuges and one or more warhead designs. A senior American official described it as "the complete package," from raw uranium hexafluoride to the centrifuges to enrich it into nuclear fuel, all of which could be more easily hidden from weapons inspectors than were the DPRK's older facilities to produce plutonium bombs. In the report, Khan's transactions with the DPRK are traced to the early 1990's, when Benazir Bhutto was the Pakistani prime minister, and the clandestine relationship between the two countries is portrayed as rapidly accelerating between 1998 and 2002. At the time, the DPRK was desperate to come up with an alternative way to build a nuclear bomb because its main plutonium facilities were "frozen" under an agreement struck with the Clinton administration in 1994. But the new assessment leaves two critical issues unresolved as the Bush administration attempts to use a mix of incentives and threats to persuade the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear program, so far with little success. American intelligence agencies still cannot locate the site or sites of any DPRK uranium enrichment facilities, meaning that if the six-party negotiations over the DPRK's nuclear program fail, it would be virtually impossible to try to attack the facilities, which can be hidden in tunnels or inside mountains, undetectable by spy satellites. US intelligence has also been unable to forecast exactly when the new facilities would be able to produce enough uranium to make a nuclear weapon. It takes several thousand centrifuges to efficiently produce enough uranium to make a nuclear weapon, but the DPRK may only be assembling a few hundred a year. "The best guess is still in the next year or two, but it is a guess," said one senior US official with access to the new intelligence report. "That does not leave much time to find this thing and shut it down."

3. Nuclear Non-Proliferation

The Los Angeles Times (Paul Richter, "BUSH, ELBARADEI TO DISCUSS SAFEGUARDING NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY," Washington, 03/15/04) reported that Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief U.N. nuclear inspector and a critic of US claims about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, will meet with President Bush this week to discuss ways to tighten controls on nuclear technology and expertise.

The meeting, requested by the White House, comes as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is headed by ElBaradei, and nations worldwide search for the means to prevent advanced nuclear technology from being sold, as it was to Iran, Libya and North Korea. Bush wants to discuss proposals to make the sale of nuclear technology a crime, strengthen the IAEA's ability to monitor nuclear proliferation and reduce access to equipment used to enrich uranium, a key ingredient in nuclear weapons, according to US officials in Washington and diplomats in Vienna. The agenda is also expected to include Iran's decision Saturday to freeze IAEA inspections of its facilities. Tehran acted in response to a strongly worded resolution approved by the IAEA board that criticizes Iran for concealing some of its nuclear activities, which Washington alleges are part of a weapons program.

4. DPRK Nuclear Inspection

Agence France-Presse ("UN NUCLEAR WATCHDOG WANTS TO RETURN TO NORTH KOREA," 03/16/04) reported that UN nuclear watchdog chief Mohamed ElBaradei said Monday he would like inspectors to return as soon as possible to the DPRK, which has allegedly received black market supplies to make atomic weapons. "We know that some of the enrichment equipment according to (Pakistani scientist and black market leader) Mr. A.Q. Khan was also transferred to North Korea," International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief ElBaradei said in Washington, where he is to meet with US President George W. Bush on Wednesday. "Unfortunately, we are not in North Korea today to verify that," ElBaradei told reporters after meeting non-proliferation advocate Senator Richard Lugar. "I would like to see the agency going back to North Korea as early as possible and to make sure that North Korea again has a program that is absolutely dedicated for peaceful purposes," he said. "If that were to happen under international verification, North Korea would be able to join the international community as a full-fledged member and I hope that will happen soon," ElBaradei said.

5. ROK Presidential Impeachment

Reuters (Jack Kim and Martin Nesirky, "S.KOREA SAYS ROW WON'T AFFECT NORTH NUCLEAR TALKS," Seoul, 03/15/04) reported that the ROK played down the impact of President Roh Moo-hyun's impeachment on talks about the DPRK's nuclear aims, but said on Monday it would question the North's sincerity if it slow-pedaled because of the vote. Friday's opposition parliamentary vote to impeach Roh for breaking election law hit financial markets, sparked nightly protests by thousands of candle-waving South Koreans and thrust the country into political and economic uncertainty. In the first fallout for DPRK-ROK ties, Seoul canceled bilateral economic talks planned for Monday after Pyongyang asked for a venue switch to the DPRK because of the political uncertainty. But ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon saw little impact on the separate six-way talks on North Korea's nuclear plans. "The DPRK nuclear issue and impeachment are completely separate issues," he told reporters. "If North Korea is passive or decides to sit out a future round because of impeachment we will have to question North Korea's commitment to resolving the nuclear issue peacefully." He said six-way talks could be held in working groups next month and then once more before the main delegates from PRC, Japan, the two Koreas, Russia and the US meet again. South Korea's Constitutional Court has six months to decide whether to uphold the vote, and Prime Minister Goh Kun is acting president during that time.

6. DPRK on ROK Presidential Impeachment

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK STATEMENT VIEWS IMPEACHMENT OF SOUTH PRESIDENT," Pyongyang, 03/15/04) reported that a spokesman for the Central Committee of the National Democratic Front of South Korea (NDFSK) on March 14 issued a statement denouncing the

"Grand National Party", the "Democratic Party" and the "United Liberal Democrats" of South Korea for passing the "motion on impeachment against the president" through the "National Assembly" on March 12 despite the strong opposition of the people from all walks of life. Branding this approval of the motion at the NA as an unheard-of political rebellion committed by the GNP and the DP on the verge of collapse due to all sorts of irregularities and corruption and internal discord in a bid to stop the situation before the general election from turning unfavourable to them, the statement said: The situation created by the "motion on impeachment" has thrown this land into a bottomless abyss of political and economic catastrophe and brought the ROK the disgrace of being a politically underdeveloped country in the world. The introduction of the "motion on impeachment" spearheaded by the GNP and supported by the DP is a product of the despicable plot of the US to attain in the April general election what it failed to do in the last "presidential election" and its backstage manipulation. We do not recognize the "motion" passed through the NA under the manipulation of the US but strongly hold that it should be withdrawn at once and the pseudo "National Assembly" be dissolved unconditionally. We strongly urge the Constitutional Court to immediately and decisively turn down the brigandish "motion on impeachment against the president" as it does not accord with the legal principle.

7. Inter-Korean Economic Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA BOYCOTTS ECONOMIC TALKS WITH SOUTH KOREA," 03/15/04) reported that the DPRK pulled out of inter-Korean economic talks scheduled to start Monday in the ROK after demanding a change of venue over political unrest here, officials said. The ROK's Unification Ministry said DPRK officials did not turn up at the truce village of Panmunjom for their entry into the ROK. "Talks will not take place because DPRK delegates did not turn up, and there has been no official explanation on their action," a ministry official stated. ROK has yet to accept DPRK's earlier proposal to change the venue for working-level economic talks, which were to start Monday in the ROK city of Paju, 20 kilometers (12 miles) north of Seoul. The DPRK's chief delegate Choe Yong-Gon demanded in a statement issued Sunday through state-run Radio Pyongyang that the venue be changed to the DPRK city of Kaesong. Choe said the change was inevitable because of the ROK political crisis caused by the impeachment of ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun last week.

8. US on PRC Human Rights Guarantees

Agence France-Presse ("US ASKS CHINA TO PROVE SERIOUSNESS OVER HUMAN RIGHTS GUARANTEES," 03/16/04) reported that the US urged the PRC to swiftly implement legal guarantees on human rights and private property adopted at the weekend to underline its seriousness on the reform front. National People's Congress approved on Sunday long-awaited amendments to the state constitution on protecting human rights and private property, including a landmark provision that "the state respects and protects human rights." It is widely seen as an admission that existing constitutional protections on human rights are far from adequate. US State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said Washington welcomed the amendments, saying that protection of private property and human rights were the "cornerstones of a modern, open economy, and a productive and creative society governed by the rule of law." But he stressed that implementation of the new provisions "will be key," saying that "having laws on the books is one thing, but taking action to enforce them in a consistent way is another thing. "We'd certainly hope that the follow-through on these constitutional amendments will be robust and urge the Chinese government to revise laws to conform with these new constitutional provisions."

9. PRC on Taiwan Presidential Election

Chicago Tribune (Michael A. Lev, "CHINA SOFTENS TENOR BEFORE TAIWAN VOTE," 03/15/04) reported that PRC premier, Wen Jiabao, broke with a hard-line political tradition Sunday and avoided levying direct military threats against Taiwanese voters who are preparing for a presidential election. Wen, speaking at his annual news conference in Beijing, criticized Taiwan for adding a political referendum to the ballot in Saturday's election, but he also toned down the rhetoric the PRC used before the last two Taiwanese presidential elections. Wen indicated that he considered the referendum a step toward independence, presumably because a future ballot could ask the Taiwanese for their views on breaking away. As part of Wen's milder approach, he appealed to reunification by quoting a Taiwanese poet who wrote, "Only when the blood of the native son flows back to its native place will it stop boiling." In the most sensitive question he addressed at the news conference, Wen indicated that the PRC's government is not interested in re-evaluating the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen massacre, in which government troops killed hundreds to quash the democracy movement.

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. Issue #157

CanKor reports that in return for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" dismantling of the North Korean nuclear programme, the DPRK calls for the "complete, verifiable and irreversible" withdrawal of US military forces in the ROK. In what one Chinese trader in Dandong suspects might be indicative of sanctions against the DPRK, China has added food and crude petroleum to its list of "strategic goods", tightly controlling their export to the DPRK. Russia already suspended grant aid last month, exacerbating the critical food shortage some describe as reminiscent of the late 1990s. In what might be an attempt to combat an increase in official corruption, North Korean authorities are instructing all local administrative organs and groups to engage in trading to offset the "temporary" difficulties. Ending months of uncertainty, Canada's Public Safety Minister Anne McLellan ruled that the risk Mr. Ri would be tortured or killed if deported outweighed any danger he may pose to Canada. He was granted a temporary-resident permit which does not give him permanent status in Canada but means he is now a protected person who cannot be deported. The Canadian Council for Refugees provides an analysis of the puzzling incident, which reveals a number of "flaws" in Canada's refugee determination system. The shocking reality of life in a North Korean gulag was revealed to the greater public for the first time in 2001 with the publication of Aquariums of Pyongyang, the detailed memoir of ten years spent in Yodok camp as told by survivor Kang Chol-Hwan. Another account of imprisonment in Korean was published the very same year. Suh Sung, author of Unbroken Spirits, spent nineteen years a political prisoner in ROK.

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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