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I. **United States**

1. **DPRK Multilateral Talks**

Korea Times ("SEOUL PUSHED TO MEDIATE IN NK TALKS," 02/20/04) reported that the ROK is being urged to play a more active mediation role in next weeks nuclear talks as both the US and the DPRK, on Thursday appeared to soften their tone somewhat on the thorny issue of highly enriched uranium (HEU). The DPRK informed a third country of its readiness to discuss the suspected uranium-based nuclear weapons program in the second round of six-way talks to open next Wednesday in Beijing, an ROK government official said. "I am aware that the North recently told the third country it was willing to discuss the HEU issue with the Americans, the official said. "There are signs that Pyongyang's position is shifting. In a related development, the US also reiterated its willingness to take part in the multilateral dialogue despite the DPRK's denial of the HEU-based program. "We've said we're willing to go to the talks without conditions, Richard Boucher, the State Department spokesman, said during a regular press briefing. The DPRK has been taking a very low-key attitude ahead of the second round of talks, which are aimed at resolving its nuclear standoff with Washington. This marks a stark contrast to its more vocal approach in the days leading up to

the first round of talks last August. Given the rhetoric over the past couple of weeks, however, the US is highly likely to take up the issue of HEU, which many experts say will be the bone of contention during the whole negotiations. Some US officials still argue a failure by the DPRK to admit to the HEU program will make it difficult to continue the negotiating rounds. Well aware of the sensitivity of the HEU issue, critics have been asking the ROK government to play a more active facilitation role between the two rival sides. A group of officials from civic organizations made a visit to Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck, the ROK's chief delegate to the six-party talks, to call for the country's efforts to peacefully end the nuclear crisis. They argued Seoul should act as an active mediator by working closely with both the US and the DPRK to avoid wasting the opportunity.

2. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap ("KOREA'S PRESIDENT TO INVITE KIM JONG-IL IF SIX-PARTY TALKS PRODUCE RESULTS," 02/18/04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun said Wednesday he will invite DPRK leader Kim Jong-il for a summit in Seoul after significant progress is made on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program through multilateral negotiations. The ongoing tension over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions has been cited as the major stumbling block to the second summit. DPRK officials have said that their leader will visit Seoul at an opportune time. In an interview with a group of news media outlets based in Kyonggi Province and Incheon City surrounding Seoul, Roh said he would invite the DPRK leader to visit Seoul if the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program makes headway. "I want you to wait a little longer because we can push further improvements in inter-Korean relations if the DPRK nuclear issue is resolved somewhat," Roh said when asked whether he was willing to invite the DPRK leader. He said Kim Jong-il should make a return visit to Seoul but that he has not decided yet whether to invite him because of the nuclear tension.

3. DPRK-Pakistan Relations

Financial Times (Andrew Ward, "MUSHARRAF RETAINS TIES WITH N KOREA DESPITE NUCLEAR SCANDAL," Seoul, 02/19/04) reported that Pakistan has been embarrassed by revelations that one of its scientists leaked nuclear secrets to the DPRK, but it appears that General Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistani president, has not severed ties with the DPRK that was once among Islamabad's favourite arms-trading partners. The DPRK's state media revealed yesterday that Gen Musharraf sent a birthday greeting to Kim Jong-il, the DPRK leader, when he turned 62 on Monday, together with flowers from the Pakistani embassy in Pyongyang. Gen Musharraf's message expressed hope that friendship between the countries would "strengthen ceaselessly," the report said. In an interview with the Financial Times this week, Gen Musharraf denied allegations that Pakistan had provided nuclear expertise to the DPRK in return for missile technology. However, the extent of Pakistan's relationship with the DPRK will come under fresh scrutiny next week when the US, the PRC, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas gather in Beijing for a second round of talks about the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. A priority for discussion will be the highly enriched uranium (HEU) program that the DPRK allegedly set up with help from Khan. Diplomats in Seoul said the US was privately putting pressure on Pakistan to provide information about Khan's dealings with the DPRK, to strengthen its negotiating position in next week's talks. "The big question is how much information has the US got from Pakistan?" said a senior Asian official. "Washington needs to present some evidence that proves the HEU program beyond doubt. "I am worried that the talks could be derailed by a clash over HEU."

4. Russia Missile Developments

Los Angeles Times (Kim Murphy, "RUSSIA TESTS MISSILE THAT COULD EVADE US DEFENSE," Moscow, 02/19/04) reported that after two days of high-profile military exercises, Russian President Vladimir V. Putin said Wednesday that Russia had successfully tested a new strategic missile system, a development that analysts said could allow nuclear warheads to avoid US defenses. Putin, who is seeking reelection next month, did not identify the system, which he said would allow "deep maneuvering" of Russia's long-range missiles. Russian and US military analysts said his cryptic description could mean that Russia has developed a "maneuverable reentry vehicle" -- a technology under development for decades that could provide a rudimentary guidance system for intercontinental missiles and render them difficult or impossible to destroy. "Not a single country in the world has such a weapons system at the moment," Putin said, adding that the new "powerful means of warfare" would be deployed with the Strategic Rocket Forces "in the near future." Putin's announcement at the conclusion of Russia's biggest nuclear exercise in 20 years is a signal that Russia is prepared to commit billions of dollars to continue an arms race with the US "This illustrates that the US and Russia both continue to develop ever more modern and deadly ballistic missile systems, and the Cold War continues, despite the friendly words from Putin and despite the so-called arms-reduction treaty which they agreed to last year," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Assn., an arms control advocacy group in Washington. The Pentagon downplayed the announcement, saying that regardless of any successful test of new missile guidance technology, Russia has long had the capability to defeat the \$30.2-billion antimissile defense program to be deployed in the US this year, if only through the size of its ballistic missile inventory. But former Assistant Defense Secretary Phil Coyle, now a senior advisor at the Center for Defense Information in Washington, said that if the Russians had developed a maneuverable warhead, "I think it would be very alarming to the Pentagon, because this would represent a kind of threat against which no missile defense system would be effective."

5. DPRK Humanitarian Assistance

Chosun Ilbo ("LATEST ON NORTH KOREA'S FOOD CRISIS," 02/19/04) reported that while the DPRK is facing increasing outside pressure to abandon its nuclear pursuit, its people are in desperate need of food. The United Nations World Food Program is currently asking for more international donations to feed a third of the DPRK's entire population amid calls on the DPRK to get rid of its nuke programs if it were to find a long-term solution to the chronic food crisis. Ahead of next week's second round of six-party nuclear talks in Beijing, the British Ambassador to the DPRK says the DPRK will have to give up its nuclear ambitions in order to solve its chronic food shortage. "What this country really needs is the humanitarian and development assistance that would come in large quantities once DPRK comes in from the international cold. And we know that what is required for that is for the DPRK to get rid of the nuclear programs." David Slinn, the British ambassador to the DPRK said. Though no country has yet cited the nuclear issue as a factor in deciding whether to contribute, the DPRK continue to suffer a decline in donations. Last month marked by the height of winter in the DPRK, the World Food Program was forced to cut off food aid to 2.7 million women and children. The UN agency has set this year's aid target at 485,000 tons with plans to feed a total of 6.2 million of the DPRK's 20 million people. The US, Australia, Canada and the European Union recently pledged 77,000 tons of aid but this will take up to three months to arrive.

6. Inter-Korean Trade Decline

Yonhap ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE DECLINES 21.5 PER CENT IN JANUARY," Seoul, 02/19/04) reported that trade between the ROK and the DPRK declined by 21.5 per cent to 37m US dollars in the first month of this year compared with the same period of last year, the Unification Ministry said Thursday. The ROK imported 20m US dollars worth of goods from the DPRK, mostly agro-fisheries

and textile products, while shipping 16m dollars worth of goods, mostly steel, chemical and textile products, to the DPRK. The ministry attributed the decline to a steep reduction in bilateral non-trade transactions and processing-on-commission trade, which dropped by 47.7 per cent and 8.5 per cent, respectively. "The drastic decline in non-trade transactions over the suspension of the nuclear reactor projects in the North is to blame for the drop in inter-Korean trade in January," a ministry official said. Commercial transactions, including processing-on-commission trade, totalled 25.9m US dollars in the first month, up 0.1 per cent from a year earlier. Non-trade transactions dropped by 47.7 per cent to 11.1m US dollars. During the same period, the DPRK posted a trade surplus of 4,300 US dollars with the ROK. Even excluding non-trade transactions from the calculations, the DPRK recorded a trade surplus of 15,500 US dollars with the ROK. As of January, 159 southern firms, including 55 companies involved in processing-on-commission business, are engaged in inter-Korean commerce, trading 175 different types of items.

7. DPRK on Juche Ideology

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK AGENCY PRAISES JUCHE IDEOLOGY," Pyongyang, 02/19/04) reported that February is the 30th anniversary of the proclamation of the program of modeling the whole party and society on the juche (self-reliant) idea in the DPRK. In his historic address before party officials from across the country 30 years ago, leader Kim Jong-il formulated the revolutionary ideas of President Kim Il-sung as an integral system of ideology, theories and methods of juche and proclaimed it as the supreme program of the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) to model itself and society on the juche idea. Since the program was declared, the Korean party and people have convincingly advanced under the banner of the juche idea, a new and unique idea reflecting the demand of a new era in the human history, turning the country into a powerful socialist nation of juche. With the policy of modeling the whole party on the juche idea successfully implemented, the KWP has strengthened to be a glorious party of Kim Il-sung monolithic in ideology and leadership and united closely on the basis of the leader's ideas and to be a tested political guide of the Korean revolution. And it has fully displayed its might and dignity as a vanguard of the working class guiding the popular masses' cause of independence. The Korean people are now working hard to build a great prosperous powerful nation under difficult conditions, always sharing the same destiny with their leader. The fact is enough to prove the great vitality of the program.

8. Japan Nautical Self-Defense Force Rules Change

Asahi Shimbun ("SDF TO GET NEW RULES AT SEA,") Tokyo, 02/19/04) reported that the Self-Defense Forces would be allowed to fire on and sink commercial ships-even outside Japanese territorial waters-if vessels refuse to be inspected during a military crisis, according to the outline of a government bill. The bill, expected to be submitted to the current Diet session, would greatly expand the use of SDF weapons in the open seas. SDF vessels would be allowed to shoot at ships from other nations-even if they have not committed a serious crime within Japan's territorial waters. The government's bill intends to give the SDF the authority to stop and inspect foreign vessels suspected of carrying weapons or soldiers to an enemy nation during a foreign attack on Japan. If the vessels are found with such cargo or personnel, they will be ordered to change destinations or be escorted to Japanese ports. If they refuse the inspections, resist or try to flee, SDF ships will chase them and fire warning shots. If that fails to stop the ships, the SDF will fire at the propellers and their hulls-under certain conditions, according to the outline. Such vessels could eventually be sunk," a source said. The bill is part of the emergency legislation package to prepare Japan for a military attack.

9. Taiwan Presidential Elections

Agence France-Presse ("NO PLAN FOR TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE, PROMISES PRESIDENT CHEN," 02/19/04) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian pledged not to declare independence from the PRC if re-elected next month in an attempt to ease international concerns over his leadership. Chen, who faces a tough battle to retain his job at polls on March 20, said he already considered Taiwan independent but would stick to the promise he made when he secured an historic election victory in 2000 not to declare a permanent split from the PRC, a move that the PRC has promised would lead to war. Chen, leader of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party, said many people had doubted he would keep to his pledges, which included not changing the official name of the island, from the Republic of China, or promoting a referendum to change the status quo with the PRC. "It's unlikely that I will say one thing in 2000 and a different thing in 2004," he said in an interview with UFO radio. "Declaring independence is not an issue because we are already an independent country."

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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