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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Correction

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "NORTH KOREA REVISES CONFUSING NUCLEAR REPORT," Seoul, 11/18/02), Washington Post (Doug Struck, "N KOREA QUIETS BUZZ ON NUCLEAR ASSERTION," Tokyo, 11/19/02) and the New York Times (Howard W. French, "NORTH KOREA CLARIFIES STATEMENT ON A-BOMB," Okyo, 11/19/02) reported that the DPRK sent analysts scrambling for a day to try to decipher what appeared to be a claim that it had nuclear weapons, before quieting the buzz today by revising the broadcast. A commentary on Radio Pyongyang on Sunday night had included a sentence that seemed, to some ears, to move North Korea's official position beyond its often-stated stance that the country is "entitled" to possess nuclear weapons. According to a report by the ROK's Yonhap news agency, the broadcaster said North Korea had "come to have" the weapons. Yonhap's report caused analysts in Seoul and Tokyo to play and replay tapes of the

broadcast today. After much straining and repetition, the verdict was mixed. But Radio Pyongyang late today rebroadcast the commentary, substituting a clearly enunciated segment for the confusing sentence. The rebroadcast stuck to its long-held position on entitlement, quietly ending the flap.

2. US Japan Base Mystery Attack

The New York Times ("US BASE IN JAPAN HIT BY MYSTERY RAID," Tokyo, 11/19/02) and the Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "JAPAN POLICE PROBE US BASE BLASTS," Tokyo, 11/19/02) reported that Japanese police investigating two loud blasts outside a US military base said Tuesday they found a metal projectile and a crude mortar made from a metal pipe, suggesting leftist radicals may have targeted the base. No one was hurt in the Monday night explosions, and there were no reports of damage. US officials said the explosions were reported about 800 feet from the base. Japanese police spokesman Narihito Sasaki said two explosions were heard from a wooded area in the park just outside Camp Zama, a US Army base 25 miles southwest of Tokyo. Sasaki said the launcher was found in the park and there were burn marks nearby, indicating it had been used. He said the pipe was pointed toward Camp Zama and was 21 inches in length and two inches in diameter. Police later found a round, metal projectile nearly a half mile away from the launcher on the balcony of a private home. A few roof tiles on the home were broken, but no one was injured, said another police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. No projectiles were found in the base.

3. PRC-US Military Relations

The Associated Press ("FIRST US NAVY SHIP TO VISIT CHINA SINCE SPY PLANE INCIDENT TO ARRIVE NEXT WEEK," Beijing, 11/19/02) reported that a US Navy ship is scheduled to call at a PRC port next week, the first such visit since military ties were ruptured last April. The Paul F. Foster, part of the U.S. Seventh Fleet operating in the Western Pacific, will visit the eastern port of Qingdao, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing said in a brief news release Tuesday. It didn't say what day the ship would arrive. The Paul F. Foster, whose home port is Everett, Washington, has a crew of about 340. Two U.S. Navy aircraft carrier battle groups with more than 10,000 soldiers are scheduled to visit Hong Kong over the next two weeks.

4. PRC Domestic Politics

Reuters (Jeremy Page, "CHINA CONGRESS GIVES NO CLUES TO WHO'S HU'S HEIR," Beijing, 11/19/02) reported that the PRC's new Communist Party chief Hu Jintao was anointed heir apparent 10 years ago when he was catapulted to a leadership post at the age of just 49. But when Hu finally took the PRC's top job at the 16th party congress last week, there were no clues as to who might replace him in the next leadership succession, analysts said on Tuesday. They had expected at least one promising person in his forties to be moved into the party's highest echelons like Hu when he joined the seven-man Politburo Standing Committee in 1992. But last week, nobody under 50 made it onto the new 24-man Politburo -- let alone the expanded nine-man Standing Committee. "I was surprised not to see a single candidate from the next generation join the Politburo," said one Western diplomat. "I guess the next succession is still up for grabs."

5. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("CHINA CALLS FOR NUCLEAR-FREE KOREAN PENINSULA, DIALOGUE ON NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR DISPUTE," Beijing, 11/19/02) reported that a day after the DPRK

apparently retracted its claim to have nuclear arms, the PRC said Tuesday it wants the Korean Peninsula to remain free of such weapons. "The final objective is to maintain peace and stability on the peninsula," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. "We call on the sides for dialogue on the problem." The PRC has not commented directly on any of the reports, and Kong essentially repeated the PRC's standard statement on the issue of North and nuclear weapons.

6. ROK on DPRK Situation

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT SAYS NORTH KOREA IS RUNNING OUT OF TIME," Seoul, 11/19/02) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung urged the DPRK on Tuesday to quickly address international concerns over its nuclear weapons program, warning that time is running out. "North Korea must make a decision," Kim said in a meeting with pro-unification leaders. "They don't have much time left." Last week, the US and its allies, including Japan and the ROK, decided to cut off fuel oil shipments to the DPRK beginning in December and vowed to consider more punitive actions. Kim made it clear that the ball is now in the DPRK's court after US President George W. Bush stated over the weekend that the US has no intention of invading the DPRK. Kim said he regards Bush's statement as an answer to the DPRK's offer of a nonaggression pact with the US. There was no official DPRK response.

7. DPRK-Japan Abduction Issue

The Associated Press (Audrey McAvoy, "JAPAN PROBES OTHER POSSIBLE KIDNAPS," Niigata, 11/19/02) reported that since the DPRK's surprise confession two months ago that its spies abducted 13 Japanese in the 1970s and '80s, Japanese police are re-examining dozens of missing persons cases and now believe the DPRK may have abducted as many as 80 more people than it admits. Morimoto's sister, police say, is probably among them. "I've spoken to several experts on North Korea about her case, and they say there is no doubt she was also abducted. More and more, it seems to me that was the case," Morimoto said. Other suspected victims include a 27-year-old agriculture engineer who disappeared while heading back to his dormitory after dinner, a 29-yea--old noodle shop employee who vanished on a trip to Europe and a 51-year-old carpenter who had just gone to Tokyo to look for work.

8. Inter-Korean Railway Project

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "REPORT: NORTH KOREA PLEDGES TO PUSH AHEAD WITH INTER-KOREAN PROJECTS DESPITE NUCLEAR TENSIONS," Seoul, 11/18/02) reported that despite tensions over its recently disclosed efforts to develop nuclear weapons, the DPRK pledged to push ahead with all joint projects with the ROK, including plans to reconnect rail and road links across their border, a news report said Tuesday. The statement was broadcast by state media in the DPRK a day before officials of the ROK and the DPRK were to meet to review the progress made on the high-profile rail- and road-building projects. "No matter how perversely the United States behaves, our people will push ahead all inter-Korean economic cooperation projects, including cross-border railways and roads, more vigorously," the DPRK Central Radio broadcasted. The statement was attributed to Pak Chang Ryun, the DPRK's chief delegate at ongoing economic talks with the ROK.

II. Japan

1. DPRK Nuclear Issue

Chosun Ilbo (Kim In-ku, "PYEONGYANG SAYS IT HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS," Seoul, 11/19/02) reported that DPRK's state-run Radio Pyongyang broadcast Sunday the country "has come to have nuclear and other strong military weapons to deal with increased nuclear threats by the U.S. imperialists." DPRK has so far used future tense expressions concerning the right to possess nuclear weapons to stand against US pressure and the language, which appeared to go further than DPRK's previous claims to "be entitled to have nuclear weapons," may have been deliberately misleading as using the "past tense" is a first for the DPRK. A DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said in a statement on October 25 that it has nuclear weapons and even stronger weapons. Insisting that it was US side who violated the international agreements, including the 1994 Geneva agreement and non-proliferation treaty, the radio reported, "in the situation where the US and warlike forces proclaim the right of preemptive strikes on us on the assumption of having nuclear weapons, we cannot stand still."

2. DPRK's Specific Action Needed

Joongang Ilbo ("NK NEEDS MORE ACTION, ASSERTS UNIFICATION MINISTER," Seoul, 11/19/02) reported that DPRK must take specific actions to verify its intention to scrap a secret nuclear weapons program if it wants the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization to resume the delivery of fuel oil shipments to the communist country, Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun said Monday. In an executive board meeting held last week, the US-led consortium said it will freeze oil shipments to DPRK from December unless the country takes visible and verifiable measures to drop its nuclear weapons program. "And when they said visible and verifiable it most certainly includes international inspection even after the North scrapes its nuclear program," Jeong said in his speech hosted by Korea Society based in New York (American time). "Just a mere mentioning of words to abandonment would not be enough." "In the world of politics sometime even a single day could be as long as a lifetime of an average man," Jeong pointed out indicating the North is running out of time. "The North better go into specific actions within a month."

3. Inter Korean Railway Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("TALKS SET ON RAIL LINKS, BUT PROJECT IS STALLED," Seoul, 11/19/02) reported that ROK delegates to working-level discussions with DPRK on establishing railway and motor links across the Demilitarized Zone arrived at Mount Geumgang Monday with the project stalled over a procedural dispute. The talks are supposed to arrange supplies of construction materials to DPRK and detailed work schedules. But the overshadowing issue is whether the United Nations Command is entitled under the armistice agreement to supervise the dispatch of inspectors on the progress of the works. DPRK, insisting that it would not deal with the UN Command, suspended its demining work two weeks ago.

4. DPRK-Japan Relation

Joongang Ilbo ("JAPAN THINKS NORTH KIDNAPPED 80 MORE," Tokyo, 11/19/02) reported that Japanese media reported Monday that Japan is investigating the possibility that up to 80 more Japanese citizens could have been abducted to the communist country, in addition to the 13 whom DPRK has admitted to kidnapping. The reports came after DPRK threatened to break its promise to extend a missile test moratorium indefinitely beyond 2003. Relations between DPRK and Japan are rapidly deteriorating, darkening the future of bilateral security and normalization talks scheduled for this month. The Japanese government will seek DPRK's detailed answers about the additional abductees, the news reports said. At last month's talks with DPRK in Malaysia, Japan inquired about

three additional possible abductees.

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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