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CONTENTS

I. [United States](#)

1. [PRC on DPRK Nuclear Freeze Proposal](#)
2. [PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks Delay](#)
3. [ROK 'Concrete' Plan at Multilateral Talks](#)
4. [DPRK Delegation to Multilateral Talks](#)
5. [DPRK on Uranium Issue](#)
6. [ROK DPRK Energy Aid](#)
7. [US-ROK Evacuation Training](#)
8. [Taiwan Presidential Election](#)
9. [Russia Ballistic Missile Technology Development](#)
10. [Japan Terror Alert at Highest Level](#)

I. United States

1. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Freeze Proposal

Jiji Press (N. KOREA MAY PROPOSE FREEZING NUKE PROGRAM: CHINA'S TANG, Beijing, 02/20/04) reported that the DPRK may propose freezing its nuclear development program at the multilateral talks next week, PRC State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan said Thursday. He offered the prospect in a meeting with Takeshi Noda, a lawmaker of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party. While noting that both the DPRK and the US have recently been showing more flexibility than before, Tang cited the DPRK's increasing flexibility as a particularly positive development. Tang said that at the coming meeting, Japan should refrain from taking up the issue of the fate of Japanese citizens abducted by the DPRK decades ago and their families. He indicated the PRC's readiness to help set up bilateral talks between Japan and the DPRK on the abduction issue.

Xinhua Financial News ("CHINA NOT SURE WHETHER N KOREA AGREED TO TACKLE URANIUM ISSUE AT NUCLEAR TALKS," Beijing, 02/20/04) reported that the PRC's foreign ministry said it was not sure whether the DPRK has agreed to address its alleged uranium enrichment program at the upcoming six-nation nuclear talks. "I also just saw relevant reports through the media. I don't yet know or understand whether the DPRK (DPRK) side has clearly expressed a new position or

expression. So it's hard for me to comment on this," spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said at a regular briefing. "I am aware that North Korea has expressed its willingness through a third country to discuss the issue of HEU (highly enriched uranium) with the US," an unnamed top government official in Seoul told Yonhap. "There are signs of changing in North Korea's position." The comments came one day after top US envoy John Bolton warned the DPRK's refusal to discuss the program could derail the chances of finding a peaceful solution to the 16-month standoff over North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Zhang was also asked whether the PRC shared the view that Pyongyang's unwillingness to address the issue could jeopardize the second round of talks scheduled to start Wednesday. "I think the second round of six-party talks will begin soon. So relevant parties should make efforts to allow the talks to achieve substantive results," Zhang said. "Various sides' remarks or efforts should be in this direction."

2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks Delay

Asia Pulse ("CHINA SEEKS TO DELAY TALKS ON N. KOREA'S NUKE PROGRAM: REPORT," Tokyo, 02/20/04) reported that the PRC is floating an idea that the DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons program based on highly-enriched uranium should be discussed later, and not at the upcoming talks next week, a Japanese news agency reported Thursday. Citing diplomats in Washington, the Kyodo News Service reported that the host country for the talks aimed at resolving the DPRK nuclear crisis reportedly persuaded the DPRK not to deny its uranium-based nuclear weapons program at the upcoming session. The PRC's move came out of concerns that the second round of six-party discussions may fall through, as the two countries differ on the issue.

3. ROK 'Concrete' Plan at Multilateral Talks

Chosun Ilbo (Lee Ha-won, "SEOUL TO PRESENT 'CONCRETE' PLAN DURING SIX-PARTY TALKS," 02/20/04) reported that a high-level ROK government official said that during the next round of six-party talks set to open in Beijing on February 25, the ROK will present a "concrete solution plan" that the DPRK will evaluate positively. The official said Friday that if the DPRK freezes its nuclear program as a step to total dismantlement, the US, the ROK, and Japan can begin to show the DPRK "through actions" about the compensation it demands. This is interpreted as meaning that if the DPRK freezes its nuclear program with total dismantlement its eventual aim, the US, the ROK, and Japan will consider the DPRK's requests for the removal of sanctions, its dropping from the State Department's list of states supporting terrorism, and energy assistance. The officials said "About the compensation problem, we put a lot of energy into persuading the Americans," suggesting that a harmonization of views with the US has already taken place. Concerning the highly enriched uranium program that the DPRK denies having, the official hinted that the ROK's position on the matter might differ from that of the US. The official said, "During the three or four days of the second round of talks, so we can concretely come to an agreement about the problem of freezing [the nuclear program] versus compensation, we'll form working-level groups, and try to regularize the talks." He also said he has some idea concerning the timing of a third round of talks.

4. DPRK Delegation to Multilateral Talks

Korea Herald (Kim So-young, "N.K. COMES TO 6-WAY TALKS WITH NEW LINEUP," 02/21/04) reported that the DPRK is taking a fresh approach to next week's six-nation negotiations over its nuclear program. Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan will head the DPRK's delegation to the talks scheduled to begin Wednesday in Beijing, ROK and PRC officials said yesterday. The chief delegate to the second round of talks will replace Kim Yong-il, the DPRK's other vice foreign minister and its

head negotiator in the first such meeting also involving the ROK, the US, China, Japan and Russia. "North Korea seems to be throwing more weight behind a second round than the first meeting by appointing a more powerful figure as the chief representative," said Prof. Kim Sung-han of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security. Although both officials hold the same title, Kim Gye-gwan enjoys the foremost confidence of Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju and has exerted much more influence on the DPRK's foreign policy. Kang is considered one of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's closest associates. Kim Gye-gwan played a major role in the creation of a 1994 nuclear deal between Washington and Pyongyang, known as the Agreed Framework, under which the North froze its plutonium-based nuclear program in return for heavy fuel oil and less dangerous nuclear reactors. The veteran DPRK diplomat also took the lead in negotiating with the US on many other issues, including its missile program, bringing an end to a diplomatic standoff with the superpower in the 1990s.

5. DPRK on Uranium Issue

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA WILLING TO TACKLE URANIUM ISSUE WITH US: REPORT," Seoul, 02/19/04) reported that the DPRK has expressed its willingness to address its alleged uranium enrichment program with the US at six-nation nuclear talks in Beijing next week, Yonhap news agency said. "I am aware that North Korea has expressed its willingness through a third country to discuss the issue of HEU (highly enriched uranium) with the US," an unnamed top government official here told Yonhap. "There are signs of changing in North Korea's position."

6. ROK DPRK Energy Aid

Kyodo ("S. KOREA MAY OFFER ENERGY AID TO N. KOREA AT TALKS," Washington, 02/20/04) reported that the ROK may propose energy assistance to the DPRK at next week's six-party talks aimed at resolving the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear arms program, negotiation sources said Friday. The ROK is now considering offering fuel oil supplies to the DPRK if it agrees to freeze its Yongbyon nuclear complex as a first step toward the future dismantlement of its nuclear arms program, the sources said. Prior to the second round of the six-party talks that will take place in Beijing from next Wednesday, the ROK is discussing the idea with other members, they said. A US government official indicated Washington will not oppose the ROK proposal if the DPRK does not deny the existence of a uranium enrichment program and agrees to hold talks on the issue. "It depends on North Korea's behavior," the official said. "We do not oppose it at this moment."

7. US-ROK Evacuation Training

The Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "US TRAINS TO EVACUATE SOUTH KOREA, RANKLING COMMUNIST NORTH KOREA AHEAD OF TALKS," Seoul, 02/20/04) reported that this week the US military launched a three-day exercise to practice evacuating thousands of foreign civilians in South Korea in the event of attack. But this year's biannual drill, which began Thursday, comes amid heightened tensions over the DPRK's efforts to build an atomic bomb. The event quickly drew sharp criticism from the North as a provocation ahead of six-nation talks next week on efforts to persuade it to scrap its nuclear weapons program. "Going through the exercises makes me less worried," said Tucker, a native of Cincinnati who registered her two children at a makeshift processing center in Seoul. "The most difficult part? Making sure everybody gets out OK." US military officials say the regular exercise is not a response to the nuclear dispute. But the DPRK lashed out at the drill on Friday, saying it is evidence that a "new war by the US is drawing near on the Korean peninsula." The commentary, carried by the DPRK's official KCNA news agency, said the training sends the

wrong message ahead of the talks. The DPRK also warned that any US attempt to "survive" a war by evacuating civilians would fail.

8. Taiwan Presidential Election

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA LOOMS LARGE IN DIRTY CONTEST FOR TAIWAN'S PRESIDENTIAL VOTE," 02/20/04) reported that Taiwan's presidential election campaign starts Saturday in what is shaping up to be a spiteful contest hinging on the island's fraught relations with mainland China and a controversial referendum. Chen Shui-bian is seeking re-election on March 20 after scoring a stunning victory in 2000. Chen, lagging in the polls, has closed the gap with his rival, veteran politician and KMT chairman Lien Chan, after stepping up rhetoric against the PRC, its rival across the Taiwan Strait that has claimed the island as part of its territory ever since the two sides split in 1949. Lien has promised to promote closer economic ties with the PRC, but the PRC fears that Chen would attempt to guide his nation towards independence if he won. The presidential battle promises to be dirty, with rumours of domestic violence, allegations of corruption and the prospect of ethnic division already rife. The start of official campaigning also coincides with the second of two televised presidential debates Saturday between Chen and Lien. Neither candidate landed any serious blows in the first ever such debate last Saturday but the charismatic and ebullient Chen was considered to have emerged as the winner over his more pragmatic rival. The latest opinion polls have shown that Chen has closed within a few percentage points of Lien.

9. Russia Ballistic Missile Technology Development

Agence France-Presse ("RUSSIA DEVELOPING NEW BALLISTIC MISSILE TECHNOLOGY: ARMY COLONEL," Moscow, 02/20/04) reported that the Russian army is developing new ballistic missile technology that will be able to beat any other country's defence system, according to the army's second-in-command Colonel-General Yuri Baluyevsky. The planned "hypersonic" system is a response to "the creation of new anti-missile defence systems by a state or a bloc of states," Colonel Baluyevsky told a press conference Thursday, in an apparent allusion to developments in the US. During recent military maneuvers, the Russian army test-fired a "prototype" of the new system which "confirmed that we can build weapons which will render any anti-missile system defenseless against an attack by Russia's strategic forces," said Baluyevsky. He refused reporters' prodding to disclose what rocket would be used to launch the new missile. The new weapons "are not going to be there tomorrow," he said, adding that between now and 2010-2015 Russia would be capable of piercing existing anti-missile systems. "We are against the creation of anti-missile systems which threaten Russia," Baluyevsky told reporters.

10. Japan Terror Alert at Highest Level

The Associated Press (Kenji Hall, "JAPAN RAISES TERROR ALERT TO HIGHEST LEVEL," Tokyo, 02/20/04) reported that Japan intensified security at airports, nuclear plants and government facilities Friday as a precaution against a possible terror attack, a National Police Agency official said. The government's heightened alert sent a shiver through global financial markets, knocking the Japanese yen to 10-week lows against the dollar. The National Police Agency official refused to discuss whether the government had new information about a possible terror strike. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said riot police armed with automatic rifles would guard Tokyo and Kansai international airports and nuclear power and reprocessing facilities. Larger police forces were being mobilized and additional checkpoints set up around the prime minister's residence, US Embassy, military facilities and national and local assembly buildings, he said. Security was also

beefed up at ports, railway stations and shopping malls. The Yomiuri Shinbun, the nation's largest newspaper, also reported the increased security. Japan does not have specific levels of alert like in the US, but the official said this was the highest level of preparedness since the US-led military attack on Iraq in March 2003.

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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Ilimin International Relations Institute
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Department of Political Science, [Korea University](#), Seoul, Republic of Korea

Center for American Studies,
[Fudan University](#), Shanghai, People's Republic of China

International Peace Research Institute (PRIME),
[Meiji Gakuin University](#), Tokyo, Japan

[Monash Asia Institute](#),
[Monash University](#), Clayton, Australia

Brandon Yu: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Young-soo: yskim328@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hibiki Yamaguchi: hibikiy84@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Saiko Iwata: saiko@akira.ne.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Hiroya Takagi: hiroya_takagi@hotmail.com
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@online.ru
Moscow, Russian Federation

Wu Chunsi: cswu@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

John McKay: John.McKay@adm.monash.edu.au
Clayton, Australia

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:
nautilus@nautilus.org