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I. United States

1. PRC-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PRC OFFICIAL HOLDS 'WARM' MEETING WITH DPRK LEADER," 01/20/04) reported that a PRC Communist Party official had a "warm" meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il, the DPRK's official media said. PRC delegation leader Wang Jiarui conveyed the congratulations of leading PRC party officials, including President Hu Jintao, to Kim on the Lunar New Year holiday, the Korean Central News Agency said. Kim asked Wang to return the New Year greetings, the agency reported, adding: "He had a warm and friendly talk with Wang Jiarui." Xinhua news agency reported likewise that, according to the PRC embassy in Pyongyang, Kim and Wang exchanged views on issues of common concern in a cordial and friendly atmosphere. The PRC visitors held talks with their counterparts from North Korea's Workers' Party Sunday, KCNA said. "The participants

deepened friendly feelings, conversing with each other on further developing the friendly relations between the parties and peoples of the DPRK and China," it said. Sunday's meeting came just days after Fu Ying, the director of the Asian section of the PRC foreign ministry, returned to Beijing from Washington where the PRC's efforts to convince the DPRK to return to the negotiating table were discussed.

2. DPRK-ROK "Anti-US" Alliance?

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREANS WANT TALKS WITH SOUTH TO FORM ANTI-US ALLIANCE," 01/20/04) reported that the DPRK has called for talks with the ROK to plan for reunification and pool resources for a joint struggle against the US. Top officials from the Communist Party and the government set the agenda for "energetically pushing forward the movement for national reunification this year" at a meeting in Pyongyang on Monday, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency said. Preparatory meetings were proposed for Pyongyang, Seoul, Mount Kumgang, a South Korea-operated tourist resort in the DPRK, and other locations between officials from the ROK and DPRK "to pave a wide avenue for independent reunification through national cooperation," KCNA said. "All the Koreans in the north and the south should turn out in a sacred struggle to foil the US moves to provoke nuclear war by the concerted efforts of the nation," KCNA said. The ROK's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with the DPRK, said the meeting of top Pyongyang party and government officials was an annual event usually held in February or March. "North Korea has talked up reunification for quite a while. It is nothing new. We tend to think they are emphasizing national cooperation because of the international situation," said a ministry official.

3. Japan-ROK-US DPRK Discussions

Reuters ("JAPAN, US, S.KOREA TO DISCUSS NORTH THIS WEEK," Tokyo, 01/20/04) reported that Japan, the US and the ROK will hold talks this week in Washington on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said Tuesday. The discussions will follow a meeting between US and PRC officials last week on how to resume six-way talks with North Korea about dismantling its nuclear arms program. "We are now coordinating on how to move forward toward future six-party talks," Kawaguchi told reporters. Japanese, US and ROK officials will hold a two-day meeting in Washington from Wednesday, Kawaguchi said, adding that the three countries wanted six-way talks at an early date. "Japan, the US and South Korea have been saying that it is important to conduct it as early as possible even if there is no joint statement," she said. The Washington talks will be attended by Mitoji Yabunaka, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, and South Korea's deputy foreign minister, Lee Soo-hyuck, Kawaguchi said. Kawaguchi is also set to meet with ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun's national security adviser Ra Jong-yil on Wednesday in Tokyo for discussions on the six-way talks, a Foreign Ministry official said.

4. DPRK-Japan Relations

New York Times (James Brooke, "NORTH KOREA EASES STORMY TIES WITH JAPAN," Tokyo, 01/18/04) reported that facing a choice of Japanese sanctions or Japanese aid, the DPRK is quietly taking steps to unblock its longstanding political logjam with the government in Tokyo. After 15 months of unremitting hostility, the DPRK last week sent a series of signals that suggest a desire for warmer relations with Japan. First, six adult children of Japanese hijackers from the Red Army faction, an extinct left-wing terror group, unexpectedly arrived here on Tuesday from Pyongyang.

Then, the DPRK floated a March 20 deadline for sending to Japan the children of five Japanese who had been kidnapped by the DPRK years ago. The parents came here from North Korea in October 2002. On Saturday, four Japanese diplomats completed a visit to Pyongyang, the first by Japanese officials since relations between the countries soured in the fall of 2002. By clarifying the fates of as many as 100 kidnapped Japanese, the DPRK could win Japan's full participation in a second round of six-country talks, tentatively set for next month, that are intended to defuse the DPRK's nuclear threat. Normalization of relations could also mean the beginning of the payments, to total $10 billion, that Japan agreed to make in reparations for its colonial occupation of the DPRK in the first half of 20th century. "They now realize that without having the settlement of the abduction cases, Japan will not give anything to them, and this is why they are approaching us," Hatsuhisa Takashima, a Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said in an interview on Friday. "If they really want sincere direct talks with us, that is a good sign."

5. DPRK ROK DMZ Artillery Accusation

Asia Pulse ("N. KOREA ACCUSES S. KOREA OF PUTTING ARTILLERY INSIDE DMZ," Seoul, 01/19/04) reported that the DPRK accused the ROK on Saturday of bringing artillery pieces within the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The ROK "brought one artillery piece to an area very near the Military Demarcation Line" in the central part of the 248-kilometer DMZ by military vehicle on Friday, KCNA, the DPRK's state-run news agency, said, quoting military sources. The KCNA also asserted that the same provocation also happened on Thursday, but did not provide any details to back up its claims. The ROK's Defense Ministry dismissed the DPRK's allegations as groundless. "It is not true, and we cannot bring artillery into the DMZ," Lt. Col. Lee Bung-wu, told Yonhap News Agency. "It is just yet another piece of propaganda of the North."

6. US ROK Troop Pull Out

Agence France-Presse ("US AGREES TO PULL ALL TROOPS OUT OF ROK CAPITAL," 01/18/04) reported that the US has agreed to pull all its troops out of the ROK capital, raising security concerns as a crisis over DPRK nuclear programs persists, officials said. Under the deal, which came at talks last week in Hawaii, about 7,000 US troops in Seoul will move to a new base in Pyeongtaek, 70 kilometers (40 miles) south of the capital, by the end of 2007, the defense ministry said. The agreement, however, has to be approved by South Korea's parliament, which is controlled by opposition parties, it said. A group of 133 conservative lawmakers issued a statement Sunday opposing the relocation plan and vowed to vote down a related bill in the 273-member National Assembly. "President Roh Moo-Hyun and his government must take all the responsibility for the security vacuum in metropolitan areas," they said in a statement. The ROK's chief delegate to the Hawaii meeting, Cha Young-Koo, told Yonhap news agency that US delegates had refused to retain a symbolic number of forces in Seoul. "After considering various factors, we decided to accept a US proposal to relocate all Yongsan base forces (in Seoul)," Cha was quoted as saying. ROK military officials said the two sides would hold more talks on key issues such as the cost of a relocation, estimated at more than three billion dollars.

7. Dutch DPRK Uranium Enrichment?

Los Angeles Times (Douglas Frantz, "DUTCH CONFIRM POSSIBLE SPREAD OF ARMS SECRETS; NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED BY EUROPEAN CONSORTIUM APPARENTLY MADE ITS WAY TO LIBYA, IRAN AND NORTH KOREA, PERHAPS VIA PAKISTAN," 01/20/04) reported that two government ministers in the Netherlands acknowledged Monday that highly sensitive nuclear

technology developed by a Dutch company may have been transferred to Libya and the DPRK along with Iran and Pakistan. The disclosure in the Dutch parliament marked the first public confirmation of assertions that centrifuge technology for enriching uranium apparently found its way to Libya and North Korea. It was already known that Pakistan and Iran had the technology. The Dutch officials said it was not clear how the potentially arms-related technology may have been transferred. But diplomats elsewhere said the public comments were likely to increase pressure on Pakistan, which has already been linked to Iran's capability and is suspected of providing the technology to North Korea and Libya. US officials have long suspected that Abdul Qadeer Khan, who led the development of Pakistan's atomic bomb, stole the centrifuge secrets in the 1970s while working for the Dutch company Urenco. He was convicted of the theft, but the verdict was overturned. Urenco is a British-Dutch-German consortium, and officials said it has not been implicated in the spread of the centrifuge technology.

8. Cross-Straits Relations Agence France-Presse ("WORDS ASIDE, CHINA MAKES CLEAR ANY TAIWAN REFERENDUM IS UNACCEPTABLE," 01/20/04) reported that despite Taiwan softening its line on a planned referendum on ties with the PRC, the PRC has made clear that its real concern is that a vote is being held at all. In the days since Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian toned down the wording of the scheduled plebiscite, the PRC has merely responded by keeping up its rhetorical pressure, rather than lessening it. "The tension has decreased a little bit, but in the long run, the tension is still there," said Wong Yiu-chung, an expert on ties between the PRC and Taiwan at Hong Kong's Lingnan University. Taiwan's Chen said Friday that voters would be asked on March 20 about beefing up the island's defensive capabilities rather than demanding the PRC withdraw missiles targeting Taiwan, as had been expected. People will also be asked to decide whether Taiwan should engage in negotiations with the PRC on a "peace and stability" framework for cross-strait interactions, Chen said. The PRC has spelled out that it would find any referendum, regardless of the wording, unacceptable. "(The referendum) completely runs counter to the common desire of our Taiwan compatriots for peace, stability and development," former PRC foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan was quoted by state media as saying this week. "It doesn't amount to a 'deepening of Taiwan democracy' but is tantamount to misleading and manipulating the people of Taiwan," said Tang, now a state councilor in charge of foreign relations. No amount of stylistic refinement will change the PRC's vehement opposition to the referendum, which will coincide with Taiwan's presidential elections, analysts argued.

9. Japan Iraq Troop Arrival

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE TROOPS ARRIVE IN IRAQ, AS KOIZUMI PLEDGES FULL DEPLOYMENT," 01/20/04) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi vowed to push ahead with a full deployment of troops in Iraq, Japan's first to a combat zone since World War II, as an advance team arrived at its Iraqi base. The deployment has met with stiff criticism and protestors again took to the streets Monday, as the 39-strong advance unit reached its future base in the town of Samawa, 270 kilometres (170 miles) southeast of Baghdad. The troops, charged with a non-combat mission to help reconstruct the war-battered country, were greeted after nightfall by a crowd of Iraqi residents and journalists, many of them Japanese. In Tokyo, Koizumi worked again to sway public opinion, which a poll released Monday said risen to 40 percent in favor of the mission. "If we only make a material contribution and leave the humanitarian contribution to other countries, we cannot assume responsibility as a member of the international community," he said in an address at the opening a new parliamentary session. He said he was also prepared to accept the possibility of more Japanese casualties. Two Japanese diplomats were killed in Iraq in November. "We cannot say Iraq is safe, but peace cannot be achieved only with words," he said. Parliament must still formally approve the dispatch of hundreds of Japanese troops to Iraq announced on December 9. But

Koizumi's ruling coalition, which dominates both the lower and upper houses, is likely to secure parliamentary approval later this month. The vanguard of ground troops flew out to Kuwait Friday to set the stage for the humanitarian operation. Their convoy of a dozen vehicles crossed into Iraq Monday and arrived in Samawa at 9:00 pm. Up to 600 ground troops are to be deployed in Iraq by late March for non-combat operations such as providing medical services and water supplies, restoring war-damaged buildings and transporting material, but not weapons.

10. DPRK Human Rights

The Associated Press (Ramola Talwar Badam, "AMNESTY BLASTS NORTH KOREA ON FOOD REPORT," Bombay, 01/20/04) reported that starving North Koreans have been publicly executed for stealing food and others have died of malnutrition in labor camps, Amnesty International said in a report released Tuesday. The human rights group urged the DPRK government to "ensure that food shortages are not used as a tool to persecute perceived political opponents." The report - released in Bombay at the World Social Forum, an international gathering of anti-globalization activists - records the chilling testimony of DPRK refugees interviewed in the ROK and Japan and interviews with international aid groups during 2002 and 2003. The report accuses the DPRK government of distributing food unfairly, favoring those who are economically active and politically loyal. "Some North Koreans, who were motivated by hunger to steal food grains or livestock, have been publicly executed," Amnesty International researcher Rajiv Narayan told The Associated Press. "Public notices advertised the executions, and school children were forced to watch the shootings or hangings," he said. Public executions were at their highest from 1996 to 1998, when famine gripped the DPRK, the report said. The DPRK has relied on foreign aid to feed its people since revealing in the mid-1990s that its state-run farming industry had collapsed. The report appears to confirm fears of the US and others that food supplies are being diverted to the military or given as rewards to supporters of DPRK leader Kim Jong Il. "We were always so hungry and resorted to eating grass in spring," said one person, identified only as Kim, who served four years in a labor camp on treason charges. Kim spoke of meals being taken away as punishment if detainees were caught speaking to each other. "I saw people die of malnutrition," said Kim. "When someone died, fellow prisoners delayed reporting his death to the authorities so that they could eat his allocated breakfast."

11. PRC 1940-1950s Diplomatic Documents Declassifications

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "CHINA DECLASSIFIES DIPLOMATIC DOCUMENTS," Beijing, 01/20/04) reported that the PRC's secretive government says it has declassified thousands of diplomatic documents from the 1940s and 1950s, a move it touts as part of the country's opening to the world. The first cache of 10,000 items from the Foreign Ministry's diplomatic archives includes telegrams on establishing relations with Moscow after the PRC's 1949 communist revolution, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Monday. It said most of the items come from between 1949 and 1955. The state-controlled newspaper China Daily cast the decision as "an indication of social progress and the country expanding to the outside world." "It is not easy to take the first step," said Li Jiasong, the archives' former director-general, quoted by China Daily. The newly opened files include directives and speeches by then-Premier Zhou Enlai, who also was the country's foreign minister, and documents from international conferences, Xinhua said, citing Zhang Sulin, a ministry archivist. It wasn't clear how comprehensive the files would be or whether they include material about such sensitive issues as the 1950-53 Korean War, when the PRC fought alongside the DPRK against US-led United Nations troops. The ministry is opening the files under rules requiring historical records to be declassified 30 years after they are compiled. There was no explanation why this batch of documents - some of which are more than 50 years old - were not released earlier.

12. PRC Oil Consumption

Dow Jones (Victor Mallet, "CHINA BECOMES SECOND BIGGEST OIL CONSUMER," Hong Kong, 01/20/04) reported that the PRC's fast-growing economy has overtaken Japan to become the world's second largest consumer of crude oil after the US, according to figures from the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the government in Beijing. Latest IEA estimates say the PRC consumed 5.46m barrels a day last year, compared with Japan's 5.43m b/d. In the last quarter of 2003, the IEA says, the PRC remained the "main driver of global oil demand growth." The PRC on Tuesday reported economic growth of 9.1 per cent for 2003. The gap between the PRC and Japan is expected to widen this year. The US, consuming more than 20m b/d, remains by far the biggest oil user.

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. CanKor Issue #149

The unofficial US delegation to the DPRK returned to Beijing this week. They confirmed that they did indeed visit the Yongbyon nuclear facility, but have refrained from releasing details of their sojourn until they report to Washington. Japan's Foreign Ministry announced the arrival in Pyongyang of the first Japanese delegation to visit the DPRK since five abducted Japanese citizens were repatriated in October 2002. Officially, the delegation is there to discuss the case of a Japanese man arrested in North Korea on drug smuggling charges. However analysts point to recent signs that DPRK authorities may be willing to negotiate the release of family members of repatriated abductees who are still in the North. This may be a primary objective of the visit. A British businessman rejects accusations of excessive enthusiasm when he contends that the DPRK is poised to become the next Asian Tiger. The managing director of Korea Business Consultants, which has a branch office in Pyongyang, tells the Globe and Mail that Canadian firms are in a good position to invest. Some of the best potential in the DPRK is in sectors where Canada has long enjoyed experience and expertise. Every year, the three leading DPRK newspapers (Party, Military and Youth) issue a joint New Year's editorial. These editorials set the stage for the following year and acknowledge developments of the preceding year. All North Koreans are required to study these documents in detail. Korea watchers also examine them carefully for signs of policy objectives, a task that can take time and effort. The ROK Unification Ministry's analysis of last year's editorial wasn't released until April. The 2004 edition is found under RESOURCES AND EVENTS in this issue of CanKor.

For further information, please visit http://www.cankor.ca

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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