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I. **United States**

1. **DPRK Multilateral Talks**

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "US WEIGHS ENTICEMENTS FOR NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 02/23/04) reported that the US is considering a proposal by the ROK to encourage the DPRK to freeze its nuclear weapons program, a top ROK nuclear negotiator said Monday. A Japanese diplomat said the DPRK had expressed a "readiness" to abolish the program. The developments came as diplomats from the US, the ROK and Japan gathered in Seoul ahead of six-nation talks in Beijing on the issue. Lee Soo-hyuck, a top ROK negotiator, said the US was considering the ROK's proposal. He gave no details but said it entailed delivering "countermeasures" to the DPRK in exchange for stopping and eventually dismantling its nuclear programs. "The US shares a significant understanding of the conditions we attached to the proposed DPRK nuclear freeze," Lee said after a morning meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and their counterpart Japanese Foreign Ministry Director General Mitoji Yabunaka "We understand that the US does not have a strong objection to taking the countermeasures proposed by South Korea as long as the nuclear freeze comes with such conditions." Maureen Cormack, spokeswoman of the US Embassy in Seoul,

said she would have to check on Lee's statement before commenting on the US position.

Reuters (Jack Kim, "THE US, SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN INSIST THAT ANY SOLUTION TO THE NUCLEAR DISPUTE ADDRESS THE URANIUM PROGRAM," Seoul, 02/23/04) reported that the ROK will lay out a three-step proposal for freezing, verifying and dismantling all of DPRK's nuclear programs in talks in Beijing this week, ROK's chief negotiator said on Monday. ROK negotiators huddled with US and Japanese counterparts in Seoul to confirm positions before the three delegations. ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck said the three allies' goals for the talks were to get the DPRK to accept a joint statement in which it pledges to dismantle its nuclear programs, to establish a working group to regularize talks and agree to a date for a third round of talks. "The fundamental position of the three countries at this round is that all nuclear programs, including the highly enriched uranium program, must be dismantled," Lee told reporters after meeting the Americans and the Japanese. Lee, Seoul's chief negotiator, spelled out a three-stage plan for ending the 16-month-old impasse and rolling back the DPRK's two programs for making atomic bombs. He said it was a refined version of what the ROK presented at the first round in August. Phase one would have the DPRK declare its willingness to dismantle its nuclear programs and the US state its readiness to provide security guarantees for the DPRK. The pledges would be in writing, Lee said. The second phase would start with a freeze of DPRK nuclear activities that, once verified through inspections, would be met by "corresponding measures," such as energy aid and other rewards, Lee said, calling a freeze "the start of dismantlement." "A freeze is meaningless by itself," Lee said. "It is only meaningful when it is the first step toward dismantlement," he said, adding that US and Japanese accepted this formulation. The agreed freeze "should be in writing that includes commitment to verification," said Lee. "There can be no freeze without verification," he said. Phase three would see the verified dismantling of the nuclear facilities and the resolution of all related issues, Lee said.

Korean Central News Agency ("KCNA URGES US TO APPROACH SIX-PARTY TALKS 'WITH SINCERITY,'" Pyongyang, 02/23/04) reported that public figures of different countries, regions and international organizations and media hope to see a peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the US and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula with the successful holding of the six-way talks. Growing louder are voices urging the Bush administration to approach the six-way talks beginning from 25 February with sincerity. The Bush administration is delaying talks with Pyongyang, said a US Democratic Senator on 28 January. He added that it is time a sincere attitude was taken towards negotiation and if the president fails to instruct his officials to honestly approach negotiation and leave no room for this, the US will be unable to get the goal. Senator Kerry who is seeking presidential candidacy of the Democratic Party sharply criticized President Bush, saying it was an ill-considered act to deny direct dialogue with North Korea. McNamara, former US defence secretary, in his interview with Yomiuri Shimbun on 31 January criticized the US atom bombing in the Second World War and said if that had not happened, the era of a nuclear race would have been evaded and no nuclear issue would have cropped up between the DPRK and the US

2. ROK on US-DPRK Diplomacy

Washington Post (Anthony Faiola, "SEOUL URGES US 'FLEXIBILITY' IN NUCLEAR TALKS WITH NORTH," Seoul, 02/20/04) reported that the ROK's top official on DPRK policy called today for the US to "exercise flexibility" during talks next week aimed at resolving the Pyongyang government's nuclear weapons program, saying results are likely only through an agreement that allows the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions while also "saving face." In an interview, the ROK's Unification Minister Jeong Se Hyun underscored his nation's ongoing campaign to coax the DPRK out of isolation and forge common ground between the US and the ROK ahead of the nuclear talks. The

thorniest issue is likely to be the US insistence that the DPRK not only agree to dismantle its program to enrich plutonium for nuclear weapons, but also publicly acknowledge what US intelligence officials say is a second, secret program to enrich uranium. ROK and Chinese officials are pressing for diplomatic language aimed at assuaging both sides. The ROK is pushing a plan in which the DPRK and the US would sign on to a "first step," exchanging multilateral security assurances of a temporary freeze of "all nuclear programs," followed by their verifiable dismantling. Clarification of the uranium program could be worked out after that first step, along with the DPRK's demands for economic and diplomatic incentives, high-ranking ROK government officials say. "The US says that the North Koreans have made progress with the enriched uranium program, but the North Koreans deny that," Jeong said. "If North Korea is forced to admit [to the uranium program], it would affect their pride. That would not be an effective way to go about this. We need to work out an arrangement."

3. ROK on DPRK 'Freeze' Pledge

JoongAng Ilbo (Choi Jie-ho, "SEOUL DOWNPLAYS 'FREEZE' PLEDGE," 02/24/04) reported that two days before the talks on North Korea's nuclear issue in Beijing, a ROK official brushed aside Japanese press reports of DPRK willingness to eventually dismantle its nuclear programs, saying that position was "nothing new." Lee Soo-hyuck, a deputy foreign minister and the ROK's delegate to Wednesday's six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear programs, also gave more details of the ROK's proposal to step up its assistance to the DPRK if it would promise to end its programs. Referring to talks between a senior Japanese diplomat and the PRC's vice foreign minister in Beijing, the Kyodo news agency quoted PRC officials as saying the DPRK had also promised a complete freeze on its nuclear activities pending an agreement that would do away with them. But Lee said, "North Korea has repeatedly said it would abolish all nuclear weapons. I do not take seriously comments that were made outside of the talks." Lee also suggested that the ROK was proceeding independently with its offers of assistance to the DPRK in return for a promise from the DPRK that it would eventually scrap its nuclear programs.

4. DPRK Multilateral Working Group

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "S. KOREA TALKS MAY YIELD PERMANENT," Washington, 02/23/04) reported that the six countries involved in talks on ending the stalemate over the DPRK's nuclear weapons may deploy specialists in the PRC on a permanent basis to improve communication, according to a senior US official. The official said the possibility is expected to be discussed when the US and four regional countries meet with DPRK officials starting Wednesday in Beijing. It took the parties months to agree on ground rules for the coming meeting. The proposal for a permanent working group in the PRC not only would permit freer communication but also would enable the parties to claim progress from this week's meeting, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. If working groups are established, the US delegate would be Joseph DeTrani, who has served as chief US liaison with DPRK officials for the past several months, the senior administration official said. DeTrani is accompanying Kelly and may be designated deputy chairman of the US team in Beijing, a title that would enhance his stature if the six nations approve the working group concept.

5. DPRK-EU Relations

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK PRIME MINISTER MEETS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION," Pyongyang, 02/22/04) reported that Pak Pong-ju, premier of the DPRK (Democratic

People's Republic of Korea) Cabinet, met and had a conversation with a delegation of members of the European Parliamentary Assembly from political parties led by Jacques Santer, former president of the European Commission, at the Mansudae Assembly Hall on Sunday. Present there were officials concerned.

6. PRC-US Economic Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US SENDS FINANCIAL EXPERTS TO CHINA," 02/24/04) reported that US President George W. Bush's administration sent six experts to Beijing to help the PRC strengthen its financial system, a Treasury Department spokesman said. The Treasury Department officials were going to Beijing to provide technical assistance during discussions with their counterparts Wednesday and Thursday, said the spokesman, Rob Nichols. "This is the first of a planned series of meetings on technical cooperation on financial issues," he said. Discussions would include foreign exchange, Nichols said.

7. Taiwan Presidential Elections

Agence France-Presse ("CHEN CALLS FOR PEACE WITH CHINA BUT DEFENDS MILITARY BUILD-UP," 02/22/04) reported that Taiwan's pro-independence President Chen Shui-bian said in a live television debate he hoped to shake hands on a peace deal with the PRC within four years in a gesture aimed at winning re-election next month. In a debate marking the start of a month-long campaign ahead of the March 20 poll, Chen was forced to defend his plans to build up the military to counter a threat from the PRC. Chen, lagging in opinion polls, has closed the gap with his challenger Lien Chan after intensifying his rhetoric against the PRC. His increasingly hardline approach has infuriated the PRC which claims Taiwan is attempting to achieve independence by stealth. In the closing moments of the two-hour debate, Chen sought to soothe fears over his pro-independence strategies. "My biggest hope is that one day in the next four years we can shake hands with (Chinese) President Hu Jintao and make peace," he said. Chen has called a referendum on the same day of the election that will ask voters to strengthen the island's defenses if the PRC refuses to move the hundreds of missiles pointed at the island. It also calls on voters to back moves for peace talks with the PRC. "We don't want to engage in an arms race with China but it's necessary to step up our defense capabilities," Chen said during the debate with Lien.

8. Japan-ROK DPRK Diplomatic Strategy

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN ENVOY IN SOUTH KOREA FOR TALKS ON NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE," 02/22/04) reported that Japan's pointman on the DPRK arrived in South Korea to fine-tune strategies with allies ahead of six-nation talks in Beijing this week on the DPRK nuclear crisis. Mitoji Yabunaka, director-general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian Affairs Bureau, declined comment as he arrived at Incheon Airport west of Seoul. Yabunaka is to hold strategy sessions with Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck, the ROK's chief negotiator at the Beijing meeting, and James Kelly, the top US envoy on the DPRK. Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, is to arrive later in the day. ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon told Yonhap news agency Sunday that DPRK should first promise to completely give up its nuclear ambition before demanding compensation. "On the assumption that nuclear inspections should follow, North Korea's freeze of its nuclear weapons programs must be the first step toward the ultimate abolition of them, including the one based on highly-enriched uranium," Ban said during his trip to Saudi Arabia. "In that case, compensation can be considered," he said.

9. DPRK "Concessions"

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "JAPAN: NORTH KOREA READY TO ABANDON NUKES," Beijing, 02/23/04) reported that Japan said Monday that the DPRK has expressed "readiness" to abolish its nuclear program and the US hinted at new flexibility as well, as diplomats streamed into the PRC capital for a six-nation meeting. The US is considering a proposal by the ROK to encourage the DPRK to freeze its nuclear weapons program, a top ROK nuclear negotiator said. And a Japanese diplomat, after meeting with his PRC counterpart, said the DPRK might be willing to "completely abandon" its program. "North Korea is expected to propose a concession or two, and if this is the case, our side needs to make a concession to build trust," Roh said in an interview with the ROK's Mael Business Newspaper.

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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