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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. DPRK Uranium Processing Mistranslation?
2. DPRK-Japan Diplomatic Relations
3. DPRK-PRC Diplomatic Relations
4. DPRK-US Diplomatic Relations
5. Japan Troops in Iraq
6. Japan United Nations Funding Cuts 2007

I. United States

1. DPRK Uranium Processing Mistranslation?

Kyodo ("TRANSLATION PROBLEM SAID BEHIND US-DPRK URANIUM ROW," Tokyo, 01/23/04) reported that a US professor who led a recent private US mission to the DPRK said Thursday that a disagreement between the US and the DPRK over the existence of a DPRK uranium enrichment program may have resulted from a problem in translation from Korean to English. When the unofficial US mission visited the DPRK on January 6-10, the DPRK gave John Lewis, a Stanford University professor emeritus, a Korean-language transcript of the October 2002 meeting between US and DPRK officials in Pyongyang. The US said DPRK First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju admitted to having a secret program to enrich uranium for nuclear arms when he met US officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, in October 2002. But DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan told the unofficial US mission led by Lewis that it has no program, equipment or expertise for uranium enrichment. In an interview with Kyodo News, Lewis said the DPRK transcript quoted Kang as saying: "We are entitled to have a nuclear program." Kang continued: "We have a weapon more powerful than that," Lewis said. When Kelly asked whether it meant uranium enrichment, Kang said: "It's up to you to think about this. We will not take the trouble to interpret this for you," according to Lewis. Lewis said the DPRK denied the existence of a uranium enrichment program shortly after the US notified the DPRK that it has

information about it. "It isn't that they recently changed the story," he said. Lewis also said Kim told the five-member US team that the DPRK is willing to hold technical talks with the US to clarify the disagreement over the uranium enrichment program. Speaking to reporters Thursday, Kelly said: "I remain convinced by that conversation that a uranium enrichment program was admitted."

2. DPRK-Japan Diplomatic Relations

Agence France-Presse ("KIM JONG-IL SEES "POSITIVE MOVES" IN RELATIONS WITH JAPAN: REPORT," 01/23/04) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il has told visiting PRC delegation leader Wang Jiarui that he saw "positive moves in relations with Japan", reports say. The statement comes after a team of Japanese diplomats visited Pyongyang last week. "I have heard the information," Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi told reporters, when asked about the comment, which was reported in the Mainichi daily. But she added Kim did not appear to refer specifically to a reunion being negotiated between five Japanese abducted by the DPRK and their family members left behind in Pyongyang. Jiji Press agency cited Japanese foreign ministry officials as saying they were informed of the dialogue held Monday between Kim and Wang by the PRC government. It quoted other government sources as saying Kim told his PRC visitors that Japan's attitude had "become forward-looking."

Kyodo News Service ("JAPANESE PM GIVES 'GUARDED' WELCOME" TO KIM JONG-IL'S REMARKS," Tokyo, 01/23/04) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Friday 23 January gave a guarded welcome to reported remarks by DPRK leader Kim Jong-il that there are "proactive movements" between the DPRK and Japan. "North Korea has sent various messages, both true and false, so it's hard" to immediately assess Kim's remarks, the premier told reporters. But he added: "We can say the remarks were forward-looking." A Japanese Foreign Ministry source said Kim made the remarks during a meeting Monday in Pyongyang with Wang Jiarui, head of the International Liaison Department of the PRC Communist Party. Earlier Friday, Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi indicated that it is too soon for Japan to become optimistic about future negotiations with the DPRK.

3. DPRK-PRC Diplomatic Relations

Mainichi Shimbun, "CHINAONSIXPARTYTALKSCHINA SAID TO RESUME SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY ON NORTH KOREA AFTER LUNAR NEW YEAR," Tokyo, 01/23/04) reported that the PRC government is stepping up coordination for holding the second round of the six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear arms issue next month in light of the DPRK showing a positive attitude towards improving relations with Japan and the US. It is expected to send diplomats to the concerned countries and resume "shuttle diplomacy" in late January, after the Spring Festival (Lunar New Year on 22 January) holidays. According to a PRC diplomatic source, during a meeting with Wang Jiarui, head of the CCP PRC Communist Party International Liaison Department, on 19 January, the DPRK's General Secretary Kim Jong-il commended the "positive moves" in Japan-DPRK Democratic People's Republic of Korea relations. The PRC regards General Secretary Kim's remark and the recent moves in North Korea as a sign of willingness to improve relations. It plans to speed up the process of drafting the joint statement for the next round of talks at the working level.

4. DPRK-US Diplomatic Relations

The Associated Press (Edith M. Lederer, "NORTH KOREA WILL AGREE ON NUCLEAR ARMS BUT ONLY WITH KEY GUARANTEES, U.N. ENVOY SAYS," Davos, 01/22/04) reported that the DPRK is ready to make a deal on its nuclear weapons program but first it wants significant security

guarantees and long-term economic aid, the top U.N. envoy to the communist nation said Thursday. Maurice Strong told a panel discussion at the World Economic Forum that the US and the DPRK both have a sense that time is on their side - but that he thinks they are wrong and "the crunch will come this year." Strong, who is Secretary-General Kofi Annan's personal envoy, said the DPRK is a lot farther "down the track" toward developing nuclear weapons than Iraq was, and U.N. nuclear agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei said "it is almost certain that they have nuclear weapons." If nothing happens, Strong warned, there will be "almost a de facto acceptance" of the DPRK's ability to develop and deliver nuclear weapons, which Pyongyang would prefer. "The stakes really are very high," ElBaradei said. "We need all to bite the bullet and get a settlement as soon as we can. Everybody will lose" if there is no settlement. Strong also said the US has been very focused on getting rid of the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. "The real question is does the US really want to complete an agreement with a regime that many people in the US do not believe is legitimate and want to see gone? The US position so far has been to negotiate" and President Bush has said he wants a diplomatic solution, Strong said. The US has said it is willing to give some form of security guarantees, but the DPRK says this falls short of the non-aggression pact they are demanding, Strong said. The North Koreans also want simultaneous actions - with their first step of freezing their nuclear program matched by corresponding action on the US side. But the Bush administration wants the North Koreans to roll back their program before it takes any action, he said. "The North Koreans are ready for a deal. There is no question about that. But they are not going to abandon their program unless there is a significant security and economic support package," Strong said.

5. Japan Troops in Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE AIR FORCE TROOPS IN KUWAIT FOR IRAQ MISSION," 01/23/04) reported that a 104-strong detachment of Japanese Air Force personnel has arrived here to support troops performing humanitarian aid missions in neighboring southern Iraq, a military spokesman said. They followed advance units who arrived on Monday in the southern Iraqi town of Samawa, marking the first deployment of Japanese troops in a conflict zone since the end of World War II. "This is the main body of the Japanese Air Force in Kuwait", spokesman Captain Kazutoshi Ohmura said, adding that they would be followed in a week by another group, including 10 to 15 pilots. Japanese officials had earlier said the last group would be leaving for Kuwait on Monday, and would take total air force personnel in the Gulf emirate to 200, including the small advance party which arrived in Kuwait at the end of December. They Japanese will be based at the Ali Al-Salem air base, 60 kilometres (35 miles) west of Kuwait city. The number of Japanese military personnel in Samawa is meanwhile due to rise to 600 in coming weeks. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is expected to formally order the dispatch of the main ground-force contingents to southern Iraq as early as Monday, despite persistent fears of violence against them, and strong opposition to the deployment at home.

6. Japan United Nations Funding Cuts 2007

Agence France-Presse ("PAN EYES CUT IN FUNDS TO UN FROM 2007," 01/23/04) reported that Japan aims to cut funds to the United Nations from 2007 to make burden-sharing among member states fairer, a foreign ministry official said. The United Nations assesses financial contributions by member states every three years and Japan's share was set at 19.5 percent for 2004-2006 late last year, just behind 22 percent for the top contributor the US. "We believe contribution ratios should be fairer and more-balanced when the assessments are reviewed next time in late 2006 for 2007-2009 ... We aim at a lower ratio," he said. The review is made by 191 member states, he said. "It is not something that Japan forces upon other states or something that others force upon Japan," he said. The official said the government was "aware of the strong notion among people" that Japan,

bidding for a permanent seat in the Security Council for many years, has not been given its due despite its huge financial contribution. With the exception of the US, the other permanent members of the Security Council -- Britain, China, France, Russia -- contribute less than 10 percent of the UN budget each.

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.
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