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I. **United States**

1. **DPRK Multilateral Talks**

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH THREATENS 'BOMBSHELL DECLARATION,' IF SIX-PARTY TALKS FAIL," Washington, 02/24/04) reported that the second round of the six party talks to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue opens Wednesday in Beijing. On Wednesday and Thursday morning, two full sessions will be held, with bilateral contacts and working group meetings held in the afternoons. The US is expected to insist that if, and only if, the DPRK completely, verifiably, and irrevocably dismantles its nuclear program, including its highly enriched uranium program (HEU), can relations between the two nations improve. The US position is also that during working groups to be started during this round of talks, each nation discuss plans to make concrete the DPRK's abandonment of its nuclear program and verification mechanisms. The Chosun Shinbo, a news organ of the pro-DPRK General

Association of Korean Residents in Japan, said in a dispatch from Pyongyang on Wednesday that "North Korea will not depart from the formula of a comprehensive settlement and simultaneous action." It also said, "At this point, the stern reality is that North Korea possesses a nuclear deterrent, and if during the talks, the US reiterates its demand that North Korea give up its nuclear program prior to a deal, the head of the American delegation will hear an even greater 'bombshell declaration' than last time." The Chosun Shinbo hinted that the 'bombshell declaration' refers to the DPRK physically displaying its nuclear deterrent, and said "If a settlement to the nuclear issue is not reached during these talks, it could lead to an uncontrollable crisis."

2. DPRK on Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press (Ted Anthony, "NORTH KOREA SEEKS COMPENSATION FOR FREEZE," Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that ahead of six-country talks about its nuclear ambitions, the DPRK demanded compensation Tuesday in exchange for freezing its weapons program as the PRC, the host and mediator nation, played down expectations of an imminent breakthrough. The DPRK issued its latest condition hours before delegates from the ROK, the PRC, the US, Russia and Japan were to convene in Beijing on Wednesday. It was a common maneuver for the DPRK, which often deploys such statements as leverage in sensitive situations. "Only if the compensation issue is settled can the DPRK freeze plan be achieved," a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying in Pyongyang, the North's capital, by China's official Xinhua News Agency on Tuesday. "If the 'freeze first, compensate later' question is raised in these talks, North Korea will resolutely oppose it," the spokesman said in language that was nevertheless delicate for the DPRK.

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA DENIES URANIUM PROGRAM, CASTING PALL OVER CRISIS TALKS," Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that the DPRK rejected US allegations it has a weapons program based on enriched uranium, dampening hopes for a breakthrough on the eve of six-nation talks to address the country's nuclear ambitions. The DPRK foreign ministry in Pyongyang blamed the US for the 16-month nuclear impasse and warned the talks starting Wednesday would fail without US flexibility. "If the US insists on putting forward fictitious calls on a highly-enriched uranium program, and condemning North Korea, this will only result in the prolonging of the nuclear question. If the US administration had not put forward a hostile policy against North Korea, naming it as a part of the 'Axis of Evil', and broken the October 1994 DPRK-US Agreed Framework, then the present nuclear problem would never have emerged." The spokesman said the freezing of its plutonium-based nuclear program, which it first offered to do in December, would only happen once the issue of compensation was resolved. "If in this round of talks it is put forward to 'first freeze then compensate,' North Korea will resolutely oppose it," he said. "This will mean that the talks have been paralysed and this is not good for any of the parties."

The Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoom, "NORTH KOREA OPTIMISTIC ABOUT NUKE SUMMIT," Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that the DPRK's envoy to this week's talks aimed at persuading the communist nation to scrap its nuclear weapons program sounded an optimistic note Tuesday, saying his government was hoping for "good results" at the six-party summit. The ROK delegation arrived in Beijing Tuesday to join the PRC hosts and counterparts from the DPRK, Russia, Japan and the US for Wednesday's start of the first six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program since August. "The circumstance of the talks is better than the previous one, and we hope that we can cooperate closely with China and Russia," said DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, quoted by the PRC's official Xinhua News Agency. "We appreciate the efforts done by the Chinese side. We will do our best to make out good results at the talks," Kim said.

3. PRC Multilateral Talks Diplomacy

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA HOLDS BILATERALS WITH US, NORTH KOREA BEFORE SIX-PARTY TALKS," Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that the PRC, a longtime mediator on the DPRK nuclear crisis, held separate bilateral meetings with the US and the DPRK Tuesday, a day before six-party talks to resolve the standoff get underway. On Tuesday morning, the PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, the head of the PRC delegation, met with US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly to coordinate efforts for the talks opening Wednesday, the Xinhua news agency said. Soon after, the PRC held a bilateral meeting with the DPRK delegation, headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan, Xinhua said. The agency said the PRC will hold similar consultations with Japan and South Korea.

Xinhua ("CHINA DELEGATE SAYS NORTH KOREA TALKS ATTITUDE 'EARNEST AND SERIOUS,'" Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that the DPRK has been earnest and serious since the very beginning of the six-party talks on the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula, PRC Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi told Xinhua Tuesday 24 February. Wang, also head of the PRC delegation to the second round of the six-party talks, made the remark immediately after holding consultations with DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse Tuesday morning. The DPRK named Kim Kye-gwan as the head of the DPRK delegation to the second round of the talks, replacing the former head of the delegation to the first round of talks held in Beijing last August.

4. DPRK-ROK Bilateral Diplomacy

JoongAng (Choi Jie-ho, "ON EVE OF 6-WAY TALKS, NORTH AND SOUTH CONFERENCE," Beijing, 02/25/04) reported that on the eve of the second round of six-party talks aimed heading off nuclear arms development in the DPRK, envoys from Seoul and Pyongyang met separately before the formal multilateral negotiations begin today. The delegations from the DPRK and ROK, who arrived to mild weather in Beijing yesterday morning, began bilateral talks at 8 p.m. local time. The ROK announced it had also scheduled consultations with Russia at 7:30 am today. Following the events here are 600 reporters from all over the world. More than 40 reporters crowded around as the US delegation arrived at Beijing's international airport on Monday, but James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs and the chief US negotiator, refused any comment. Before leaving Seoul, a ROK delegation member said, "We can't say for sure what will happen in these talks. We don't know how North Korea will act or respond. It's really hard to predict anything." The formal opening session of the six-party talks will begin today at 9 a.m. and last until 12: 30 p.m. Unlike the first round of negotiations last August, the keynote speeches of the chief delegates will be made public.

5. DPRK-Japan Bilateral Diplomacy

Jiji Press Ticker Service ("JAPAN-N KOREA MEETING POSSIBLE WED. DURING 6-WAY TALKS," Tokyo, 02/24/04) reported that Japan and the DPRK may hold bilateral talks Wednesday afternoon on the sidelines of six-way negotiations on the reclusive country's nuclear weapons program in Beijing that starts the same day, Japanese government officials said Monday. The DPRK hopes for bilateral talks with the US, but it remains to be seen whether the DPRK will accept a separate meeting with Japan.

6. ROK on DPRK Working Groups

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREA ADVOCATES CONDITIONAL PLAN ON NORTH KOREA WORKING GROUPS," Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that three separate working groups could be formed at the

upcoming six-way nuclear talks if participants agree to set up the framework to deal with technical details designed to resolve the DPRK's nuclear arms program, ROK officials said Tuesday. A senior ROK official said the issue of providing energy and economic aid to the DPRK in return for its freeze of nuclear arms program could be dealt with in a working group. His remarks came one day before the multilateral talks in Beijing. The official also made it clear that the formation of working groups is possible if the DPRK's freeze covers all of its nuclear facilities and material, and is followed "in a short period of time" by steps towards complete nuclear dismantlement and verification of this. He added that all countries except the DPRK, must endorse the DPRK's moves to set up the working groups. The ROK also will press for a consensus to hold talks on a regular basis and for the formation of a working group to keep alive the momentum for multilateral talks aimed at defusing the nuclear tension. It remains unclear whether the working groups will materialize, because the US appears to be reluctant to provide compensation to the DPRK.

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "KOREA TALKS MAY YIELD PERMANENT FORUM TO FACILITATE CONTACT, OFFICIAL SAYS," 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.

7. Russia on DPRK Multilateral Talks

The Itar-Tass ("LOSUYUKOV: DOCUMENT MAY BE SIGNED AT ROUND TWO OF N KOREA SIX-WAY TALKS," Beijing, 02/24/04) reported that a final document may be signed on the results of the second round of the six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear program due to open on 25 February in Beijing, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov has said. "There is a common understanding of the need to set up a special group to work on the wording of the document and start preparing the final document on the meeting, which would be very important from the point of view of fixing the results of our talks on the issues of key importance," he said. At the same time, Losyukov did not rule out the possibility that the above joint document may reflect security guarantees for Pyongyang. "How far the DPRK side is ready to go as far as its nuclear program is concerned is an essential issue, which it would be better to clarify at the first round of talks. One can expect that this is what the discussion will focus on and an attempt will be made to fix these intentions," Losyukov said. He went on to add that "in response to the above, security guarantees for North Korea may be fixed." Losyukov said that in order to settle the region's nuclear problem, "complex and thorough work on the part of the experts" was required and that a work mechanism for these efforts would be of help. "Therefore the talks will most likely touch upon the possibility of creating a working group of experts which in-between the talks could deal with specific issues," he said.

8. DPRK-IAEA Nuclear Inspection Discussions

Kyodo ("N. KOREA DISCUSSED NUCLEAR INSPECTIONS WITH IAEA: SOURCE," Vienna, 02/24/04) reported that the DPRK had unofficial contact in early February with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over the U.N. nuclear watchdog's demand to resume inspections of the

DPRK's nuclear facilities, diplomatic sources close to the inspection team said Tuesday. A diplomat from the DPRK Embassy in Vienna in charge of nuclear issues and an IAEA official handling nuclear inspections met in Vienna over the resumption of international inspections on the DPRK's Yongbyon nuclear complex, according to the diplomatic sources. It was the first time for the DPRK and the IAEA to have full contact over the issue since the DPRK kicked out a team of international inspectors in December 2002. The sources also said the IAEA side reiterated in the meeting a request for the DPRK to return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, from which the country withdrew in January 2003.

9. DPRK-Japan Abduction Issue

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA SAYS NO TALKS ON JAPAN ABDUCTION ISSUE IN BEIJING," 02/24/04) reported that the DPRK has insisted its kidnapping of Japanese citizens should not be part of the six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program. Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan said "the abduction issue should not be on the agenda" as the DPRK had clarified its position when a Japanese delegation visited the DPRK earlier this month. Kim, the DPRK's chief delegate to the six-way talks in Beijing starting Wednesday, was speaking at Pyongyang airport as he prepared to leave for Beijing. The DPRK has previously warned it would oppose Japan's participation in the nuclear talks, if Tokyo brought up the issue. Last week Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said Japan would raise the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by DPRK spy agents in the 1970s and 1980s, despite the warning. But Japanese officials later played this down, saying they would seek a second round of abduction talks with the DPRK in March, instead of pressing the DPRK in Beijing.

10. DPRK Uranium Program Suspicions

Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "N. KOREA MAY HAVE NUCLEAR BACKUP PLAN PYONGYANG HAS INDICATED IT WOULD SHUT DOWN A PLUTONIUM-BASED PROGRAM, BUT THE US SUSPECTS IT HAS ANOTHER USING URANIUM," Yokohama, 02/24/04) reported that the middle-aged woman didn't attract any suspicion when she boarded China Air Flight 160 from Nagoya to Beijing. Her inconspicuous nylon suitcase went through the baggage check and customs without incident on Nov. 20. Had it not been for the Japanese police, who had been investigating the woman and an associate for months, the DPRK might well have acquired another component to build a nuclear bomb. The suitcase contained an inverter, a 3-pound, \$1,500 electrical device that controls the spinning of an appliance such as a washing machine or even a centrifuge. Intelligence agencies suspect that the part was headed for North Korea, which may indicate that the DPRK is forging ahead with a nuclear program that uses centrifuges to enrich uranium for bombs. "We're almost certain [the inverter] was not intended to be used for a washing machine," said Kiyo Kudo, a Yokohama police superintendent who is handling the case. The woman, an ethnic Korean, and her business partner, were arrested in January on charges of violating Japan's export-control laws. They are to stand trial March 10 in Yokohama. The inverter was returned to Japan from the PRC. This week, representatives from six nations converge on Beijing for a summit aimed at convincing the DPRK to give up its nuclear weapons development. Although the DPRK has signaled it is ready to shut down a large complex that produces weapons-grade plutonium in return for economic aid and security guarantees, the US suspects that the DPRK has an ace up its sleeve - a highly enriched uranium program. US officials say the DPRK admitted during talks in October 2002 that it had a program to enrich uranium but has since denied making such an admission. "The story about the 'enriched uranium program' much touted by the US is nothing but a whopping lie," the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency said Saturday. "You can't reach the issue of complete dismantlement, let alone verification, if they don't admit that it exists," John R. Bolton,

undersecretary of State for arms control, told reporters last week in Tokyo. The problem for US intelligence is that the uranium program is thought to be hidden away in the DPRK's vast labyrinth of caves and tunnels, unseen by the prying eyes of aerial surveillance. As a result, intelligence agencies have had to piece together how much progress the DPRK may have made by examining the components they've bought on the open market. It is, in effect, like solving a jigsaw puzzle with the pieces scattered across the globe. The inverter is only one of many such pieces. "The inverter case is very tricky. There are a number of different uses for inverters. It may not be possible to determine whether it was intended for missiles or a centrifuge or something entirely different," said Gary Samore, a nonproliferation expert with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Moreover, Samore said the case - along with several others in which potential weapon components had been intercepted - suggests that "North Korea might still have a long way to go in their highly enriched uranium program."

11. Inter-Korean Railway Talks

Yonhap ("INTER-KOREAN RAILWAY LINK TALKS TO OPEN 25 FEBRUARY," Seoul, 02/24/04) reported that the ROK and the DPRK will begin discussions this week to review the progress of two inter-Korean railways and adjacent roads severed more than a half-century ago. During the talks, scheduled to run from Wednesday through Thursday (25-26 February) in the DPRK's border town of Kaesong, the nations are expected to discuss the issue of inking an accord on the operation of trains across the heavily fortified border. The agenda may also include the ROK's possible provision of equipment and materials in building DPRK's southernmost train station near the border separating the Koreas. The ROK section of the railway and adjacent road in the western section of the border has already been completed, according to the Unification Ministry. If completed, one railway will connect the two capitals, Seoul and Pyongyang, and continue to Sinuiju, a DPRK city bordering the PRC. The other line is to run northward along the East Coast to the Russian Far East.

12. Taiwan Presidential Election

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL EYES "PEACE JOURNEY" TO CHINA," 02/24/04) reported that Taiwanese opposition presidential candidate Lien Chan offered Tuesday to visit the PRC if elected to negotiate the gradual removal of missiles targeting the island. The Kuomintang (KMT) party chairman said the plan would be part of his "roadmap to peace" to end the decades of hostilities with Beijing. "I hope before (my inauguration on) May 20, with the people's mandate, I could make a peace journey to China on the basis of equality and dignity," Lien said during an interview with Japanese press here. "We must ask China to freeze and phase out the missiles deployed along its coast, because Taiwan is not an aggressive country," he added. If elected on March 20, Lien said he would also start negotiations with the PRC on direct cross-strait shipping and air links, and a free trade agreement creating a "cross-strait common market." "If all these things go smoothly, we can then officially end the state of hostilities and sign a peace accord, bringing about at least 50 years of peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait," he said.

13. US on Cross-Straits Relations

Agence France-Presse ("POWELL STRESSES US OPPOSITION TO TAIWAN CHANGING STATUS QUO," 02/24/04) reported that US Secretary of State Colin Powell told PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing in a phone call that the US position on any plans by Taiwan to alter the status quo remained "firm and unchanged," said the PRC. During the telephone conversation, Li expressed appreciation for the statements US President George W. Bush made on December 9 during Premier

Wen Jiabao's visit to the US. Bush said then that the US opposes any unilateral decision by Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian to change the status quo, referring to Chen's then plans to hold a referendum demanding the PRC withdraw missiles pointing at the island. Powell Monday reiterated that the US side sticks to the "one-China policy." He said the policy that Bush and the US government stated on Taiwan remained "firm and unchanged", the ministry said. The US government opposes any statements and activities intended to unilaterally change the status quo of Taiwan, Powell said, according to the PRC.

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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Department of Political Science, [Korea University](#), Seoul, Republic of Korea

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[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