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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Firing

The Washington Post (Doug Struck, "NORTH KOREA FIRES MISSILE ON EVE OF TRANSITION IN THE SOUTH," Seoul, 2/25/03) reported that the DPRK fired a short-range missile into the Sea of Japan on Monday, officials said. The anti-ship cruise missile traveled about 30 miles over seas that separate the Korean Peninsula and Japan, then fell harmlessly into the water, the officials said. By their account, it did not appear to have been a multistage missile capable of traveling long distances. ROK and US officials sought to play down the launch. A State Department official in Washington said the missile launch was part of a military training exercise and appeared to be "a periodic event." An ROK military official agreed. But the timing of the launch appeared to be designed to upstage the

inauguration of ROK president, Roh Moo Hyun, as Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan arrived in Seoul for the ceremony today. "This certainly is not a congratulatory message. It is part of a detailed and calculated move to escalate this crisis," said Paik Jin Hyun, a professor of international law at Seoul National University. In his inaugural address this morning, Roh did not refer to the launch. He called North Korea's nuclear ambitions a "grave threat," but said the issue "should be resolved peacefully through dialogue."

2. Japan Response to DPRK Missile Test

The Japan Times ("JAPAN PLAYS DOWN NORTH KOREAN MISSILE PROVOCATION," 2/25/03) reported that Japan on Tuesday played down the impact of the DPRK firing a surface-to-ship missile into the Sea of Japan, saying launches of short-range missiles do not violate the Pyongyang Declaration. Under the declaration, signed between Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and DPRK leader Kim Jong Il in September, the DPRK vowed to continue its moratorium on ballistic missile launches. "We understand that the DPRK fired a ground-to-ship missile from its northeast coast," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda confirmed Tuesday. Fukuda said the government learned of the launch through intelligence-gathering efforts on Monday. However, neither Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi nor key members of his Cabinet, including Fukuda himself, were informed of the incident until Tuesday morning, as Defense Agency officials had apparently dismissed the scenario as nothing more than a routine drill. He said the launch "does not pose a threat to Japan's security," as the missile only has a range of about 100 km and landed in DPRK waters. "Such a short-range missile does not fall within the scope of the Pyongyang Declaration," he said. "What we have in mind under the declaration is a ballistic missile that is clearly intended to attack another country." A government source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Japan has a policy of ignoring provocation from the DPRK. "It's better not to make a fuss over it," the source said. "We are intentionally taking a low-key attitude to the issue." Fukuda said the DPRK did not issue advance notice of the planned launch, although another government source said earlier that the Japan Coast Guard received a warning from the DPRK prior to the launch of danger in waters where it landed. Several Japanese government sources also said they have received information that the DPRK would launch another missile Wednesday.

3. US Response to DPRK Missile Firing

The Associated Press ("WHITE HOUSE LABELS NORTH KOREA MISSILE LAUCH 'BIZARRE,'" Washington, 2/25/03), BBC News ("US UNRUFFLED BY NORTH KOREA MISSILE," 2/25/03) reported that the Bush administration has played down the significance of a missile launch by the DORJ, while stressing that the DPRK should not expect to gain from such moves. The DPRK fired a missile into the sea between Japan and the Korean peninsula hours before the inauguration of the ROK's new president. US Secretary of State Colin Powell, in the ROK for the ceremony, said it was not "particularly surprising or shocking or disturbing." And White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said it was the DPRK's way of attracting attention and saying "please pay me." "Typically at times of inaugural festivities, most countries send flowers or bouquets or visiting dignitaries - North Korea sent a short-range cruise missile. North Korea will not be rewarded for bad behaviour," he said. Despite the apparent calm from US officials, correspondents say it was a provocative move by the DPRK. The missile landed harmlessly in international waters east of the ROK. Reports suggested the missile was a short range land-to-ship missile which fell 60 kilometres (36 miles) from the Korean peninsula. The DPRK has a self-imposed moratorium on long-range missile testing. President Roh did not refer to the incident in his inauguration speech, but he did urge the DPRK renounce its nuclear ambitions. Powell played down Monday's launch, saying it was an old type of missile and that US officials had heard such a launch was impending.

4. PRC on DPRK Missile Test

The Associated Press ("CHINA URGES RESTRAINT AFTER NORTH KOREAN MISSILE TEST," Beijing, 2/25/03) reported after the DPRK test-launched a missile into the sea between Korea and Japan, the PRC called for all parties to show restraint Tuesday in the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear program. Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said he had only heard reports of the DPRK missile test, but that the PRC hoped all "relevant parties can exercise restraint and calm." "We feel that at this stage, the Korean Peninsula has the issue of the nuclear question, and the parties concerned should work together more to safeguard peace and stability," Kong told a regularly scheduled news conference.

5. DPRK Nuclear Development

The Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "NORTH KOREA SAYS IT HAS NO INTENTIONS TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS; CHINA URGES RESTRAINT," Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2/25/03) reported that hours after the DPRK test fired a missile into the sea near Japan, the DPRK No. 2 leader Tuesday tried to assure a summit of worried developing world leaders that DPRK is not developing nuclear weapons "at this stage." A DPRK diplomat, who declined to give his name, said he had not heard about the missile launch, but played down its significance. "Big incident? What big incident? Everybody has missiles. Is there a country that doesn't have them?" The ROK believed the missile was a small, conventional one - not a long-range, ballistic rocket that US officials fear could possibly hit the continental US.

6. PRC-US DPRK Diplomatic Relations

The New York Times (James Dao, "POWELL, IN ASIA, IS DEALT A SETBACK ON NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 2/25/03) and the Washington Post (John Pomfret, "BEIJING IS COOL TO POWELL'S PLEAS SECRETARY SOUGHT MORE SUPPORT FOR US ON NORTH KOREA, IRAQ," Beijing, 2/25/03) reported that US Secretary of State Colin L. Powell failed to reach agreement with the PRC government today on a response to the DPRK's nuclear weapons program and made no headway toward stronger support from the PRC for the US position on Iraq. After meeting with PRC leaders, Powell said at a news conference that the countries differ on the best way to deal with the DPRK. Official PRC media said Vice President Hu Jintao, recently appointed leader of the PRC Communist Party, told Powell that the PRC favors direct talks between the US and DPRK to resolve the nuclear crisis -- a path the US has resisted in favor of a multilateral approach. At his news conference, Powell countered that such an issue "cannot simply be treated as a bilateral matter between the US and North Korea." Powell implied, however, that the PRC was working through private channels to deal with the DPRK government. The secretary of state was in Beijing en route to Seoul, where he was to attend the inauguration of Roh Moo Hyun as ROK'snew president.

7. US DPRK Humanitarian Assistance

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "POWELL: US TO GIVE NORTH KOREA MORE FOOD," Seoul, 2/25/03) reported that US Secretary of State, Colin Powell announced today that the United States government will provide an initial donation of 40,000 metric tons of agricultural commodities and is prepared to contribute as much as 60,000 metric tons more of such aid to North Korea in response to the World Food Program s appeal for its 2003 emergency feeding operation. Our decision to provide 40,000 metric tons of food at this time is based on demonstrated need in North Korea, competing needs elsewhere, and donors ability to access all vulnerable groups and monitor

distribution. Additional U.S. food aid contributions for North Korea in 2003 will be based on these same factors. Funding for the initial donation will come from the U.S. Agency for International Development s PL-480 program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture s Section 416(b) program. This donation will bring total US food aid to the DPRK since 1995 to nearly 2.0 million metric tons, valued at approximately $650 million. The mix of commodities for this donation will be determined soon in consultation with the World Food Program.

8. DPRK-US Air Intrusion?

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA ACCUSES US OF AIR INTRUSION," Seoul, 2/25/03) and CNN News ("NORTH KOREA PROTESTS 'SPY' FLIGHTS," Seoul, 2/25/03) reported that the DPRK said Tuesday that a US reconnaissance plane intruded into its air space on a spying mission. "This is a premeditated move to find an opportunity to mount a pre-emptive attack on the DPRK," said the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency. The DPRK regularly makes such accusations, saying the US is preparing for an invasion. The US military had no comment on the latest claim, but has said in the past its maneuvers are defensive. The accusation came hours after the ROK said the DPRK had test-fired a missile Monday that landed harmlessly in the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

9. ROK New President Inaugeration

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "NEW SOUTH KOREAN LEADER VOWS WIDE PROGRESS," Seoul, 2/25/03) reported that Roh Moo Hyun was sworn in as president of the ROK today before a large and enthusiastic crowd and promised a brave new world for the ROK, his region and relations with the US. Roh, a liberal 57-year-old labor lawyer who scored a surprise victory after a topsy-turvy electoral campaign last December, took no note of the missile launching in his inaugural speech, which followed the land-to-sea launching by several hours. Instead, he spelled out an ambitious, even idealistic vision for reinventing economic and political relations in northeast Asia. In a nod to the US, which was represented at the ceremonies by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, Roh's address contained a clear warning to the DPRK that cooperation with the ROK would be imperiled by the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons. "The suspicion that North Korea is developing nuclear weapons poses a grave threat to world peace, not to mention the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia," Roh said. "North Korea's nuclear development can never be condoned. Pyongyang must abandon nuclear development. If it renounces its nuclear development program, the international community will offer many things that it wants," he stated.

10. PRC on Iraq Resolution

The Associated Press ("CHINA SAYS NO NEED FOR NEW UN RESOLUTION ON IRAQ," Beijing, 2/25/03) reported that the PRC sees no need for a new U.N. Security Council resolution on Iraq at present and wants the work of arms inspectors searching the country for weapons of mass destruction to continue, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. A previous Security Council resolution demanding that Iraq cooperate fully with the weapons inspectors must be fulfilled "strictly and in real earnest," ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. Kong said the PRC wants issues regarding Iraq to be settled diplomatically within the U.N. Security Council, but doesn't see a need now for any new resolution. "The PRC side thinks that there is currently no need to table a new resolution," Kong said, summarizing remarks made by Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan to US Secretary of State Colin Powell in a meeting in Beijing on Monday. The US, Britain and Spain submitted a proposed resolution to the Security Council on Monday declaring that Saddam Hussein has missed "the final opportunity" to disarm peacefully and indicating he must now face the consequences.

11. ROK-Japan Presidential Summit

The Japan Times ("KOIZUMI, ROH EYE FUTURE-LOOKING TIES," Seoul, 2/25/03) reported that Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and new ROK President Roh Moo Hyun agreed Tuesday to continue working with the US toward peacefully resolving the DPRK nuclear issues, a Japanese official said. In their first summit parley, which followed Roh's inauguration as president, the two leaders also decided to work on strengthening future-oriented bilateral ties based on recognition of their nations' "unfortunate shared past," the official said. They agreed to advance economic and cultural ties, including the conclusion of a bilateral free-trade agreement. Koizumi and Roh, who met for roughly 50 minutes at the Blue House presidential office, concurred that the DPRK missile standoff is a serious problem and reiterated the importance of continuing trilateral coordination. Roh said the ROK is prepared to contribute actively to efforts to peacefully and diplomatically resolve the impasse surrounding the DPRK's's nuclear weapons development, according to the official. Koizumi told Roh he hopes Japan and the DPRK will be able to normalize diplomatic ties by resolving such issues as the abduction of Japanese nationals and the nuclear and missile rows. Koizumi emphasized the importance of urging the DPRK to give up its nuclear weapons development program and making it understand the benefits of becoming a responsible member of the international community, the official said. Regarding former President Kim Dae Jung's policy of engaging DPRK in dialogue, Roh said he will continue such efforts, according to the official.

12. ROK Prime Minister Nomination

The Associated Press (Soo-Jeong Lee, "SOUTH KOREA DELAYS A DECISION ON NEW PRIME MINISTER NOMINEE," Seoul, 2/25/03) reported that the ROK's opposition-controlled parliament delayed a decision Tuesday on whether to approve newly inaugurated President Roh Moo-hyun's candidate for prime minister, as debate bogged down in political sniping. The opposition Grand National Party refused to approve Goh Kun's nomination until the National Assembly discusses allegations of corruption within the government of Roh's predecessor, Kim Dae-jung. Roh took office on Tuesday, pledging to push forward with many of Kim's key policies. Goh, a state technocrat who has held several public offices, is Roh's choice for prime minister and his nomination was expected to be approved. But the parliamentary schedule was slowed down by opposition demands to first discuss allegations that Kim's outgoing government may have used a corporate bribe from Hyundai to persuade the DPRK to agree to a historic 2000 summit between the two countries' leaders. A parliamentary committee clerk, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Goh's nomination was expected to be discussed on Wednesday. Goh, 65, is one of the ROK's most successful public officials. He has held gubernatorial, mayoral and Cabinet posts, and was prime minister in 1997-98 under President Kim Young-sam. He stepped down as Seoul mayor last year. In past governments, the prime minister's post has largely been a ceremonial one. But Roh has promised to delegate more power to his prime minister.

13. Japan Domestic Economy

The Associated Press ("JAPAN BANK CHIEF LASHES OUT AT GOVERNMENT," Tokyo, 2/25/03) reported that Japan's outgoing central bank chief Tuesday accused the government of trying to solve the nation's economic woes by weakening the yen and warned the move might spark an exodus from Japanese markets. In his final public speaking engagements as Bank of Japan governor, Masaru Hayami said finance ministry officials want to steer the Japanese currency lower, particularly against the US dollar. A weaker yen makes Japanese exports cheaper, and therefore, more competitive. It also boosts the foreign currency earnings of Japanese companies. But Hayami said not only would the strategy not work, it could backfire. A sharply weaker yen could damage the

credibility of Japanese assets, and would likely be opposed by the US government. "It is very difficult to guide the currency to 150 to 160 yen against the dollar," Hayami told a gathering of business leaders in Tokyo. In a worst-case scenario, he said investors could "sell Japan" - bailing out of Japanese stocks, bonds and other yen-based assets. Hayami's five-year term as central bank head ends March 19. On Monday, Toshihiko Fukui, a 67-year-old former Bank of Japan official, was nominated by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to succeed Hayami.

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. Issue #117

Given the wake of revelations concerning the DPRK's nuclear programme last October, Canada and a number of other countries have curtailed or halted their development assistance. Japan and the USA have taken the additional step of halting food aid to the impoverished country, leading to a renewed debate about the politicization of humanitarian assistance. Neither country admits that this is a case of using food as a political weapon. Rather, there are continuing doubts about the diversion of food aid to the military, amid claims that food aid monitors are not given sufficient access to do their job. UNESCO and the WFP released the results of a nation-wide nutritional survey this week, adding important evidence to substantiate the claim that international food aid has indeed reached the intended beneficiaries. The WFP warns once again that millions of North Koreans are at risk of starvation as humanitarian aid dries up. On his way to the inauguration of the new South Korean President in Seoul, US Secretary of State Colin Powell visits Tokyo and Beijing, saying that the USA would consider an array of assistance as soon as the DPRK ceases their nuclear weapons development programme. This week's edition of CanKor is a full-length FOCUS highlighting the results and controversies surrounding the DPRK nutritional survey.

For more information: 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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