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I. **United States**

1. DPRK Multilateral Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press (Jae-Suk Yoo, "SIX-NATION NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS OPEN," Beijing, 02/25/04) reported that the DPRK secured a rare private audience with the US on Wednesday and also won an offer of compensation from the ROK if it relinquishes its nuclear weapons program. The highly unusual meeting came on the sidelines of six-nation talks aimed at ending the standoff over the North's nuclear program. Assistant US Secretary of State James Kelly spent more than an hour in talks with DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan. No details were immediately available from either side. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, however, described the session as "useful," but said he didn't know how long the talks would last. The atmosphere was collegial as the summit got under way Wednesday, although there was no indication this round would be more fruitful than the first one in August, which ended with only promise to meet again. Both the ROK and the PRC already were talking about the need for a "framework" for future talks - a tacit admission

that no breakthroughs or resolutions were expected this week. At a dinner Wednesday night for the delegates, Kim and Kelly also conversed at length through their interpreters, according to ROK officials. Despite the good appearances, the tensions of the moment were obvious. Hours before the negotiations began, the DPRK issued a last-minute demand for compensation for shutting down its nuclear program, an extension of its longtime demand for humanitarian and economic aid. PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi opened the meeting, greeting delegates on behalf of a country that has shed its diplomatic reticence to broker a crisis in its own backyard. "The recent flurry of diplomacy is good preparation for these talks and helps in understanding," Wang told delegates and their assistants at a six-sided table.

Reuters (Jack Kim and John Ruwitch, "US, NORTH KOREA LAY THEIR CARDS ON THE TABLE," Beijing, 02/25/04) reported that US and DPRK envoys staked out widely divergent positions at six-party talks on the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear arms programs Wednesday. But host China said there had been some consensus among the participants by the end of the day, although differences remained. One PRC official described the atmosphere of the talks as pragmatic, sincere and frank. After half a year of shuttle diplomacy, delegates from the ROK and the DPRK, the US, the PRC, Russia and Japan kicked off the talks with a group handshake before taking their places at a hexagonal table in a state guest house for the second such meeting brokered by PRC. The ROK proposed six-way talks be held every other month, with working group meetings in between, its chief negotiator, Lee Soo-hyuck, told reporters after the talks.

2. DPRK-US on DPRK Multilateral Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US, NKOREA HOLD THEIR POSITIONS AS SIX-PARTY TALKS OPEN IN CHINA," 02/25/04) reported that six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program got underway Wednesday with Pyongyang and Washington showing few signs of backing down from their hardline positions. After clasping hands together for a group photograph, the six delegates sat themselves around a hexagonal table and were given two minutes each for opening remarks in front of television cameras. While the DPRK's chief delegate Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan said he was prepared to be flexible and hoped for a positive outcome, he insisted his party would be sticking to its "principles". "We will stick to the consistent position of our government, stick to our principles, but be flexible and cooperate in this meeting," Kim said at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. "I am looking forward to resolving the DPRK-US stalemate through dialogue." US envoy James Kelly was equally adamant in his address, reiterating his call for the DPRK to completely dismantle its plutonium and uranium-based nuclear programs. "As President George W. Bush has stated, the US is for the complete eradication of plutonium and uranium-based weapons," said Kelly, while assuring the DPRK that it had no plans to invade. "The US has no intention for invading or attacking the DPRK. We hope to open the prospect of fully normalised diplomatic relations among all parties."

3. DPRK-US Bilateral

Agence France-Presse ("US-NORTH KOREA HOLD 2.5 HOUR BILATERAL MEET," Beijing, 02/25/04) reported that the DPRK and the US held a two-and-a-half-hour bilateral meeting -- the longest and highest-level known contact since the nuclear standoff began October 2002. "The US-DPRK bilateral contact was held as scheduled. It finished at 6.30 pm (1030 GMT)," a ROK foreign ministry official told AFP. The meeting began Wednesday at 4 pm (0800 GMT).

4. DPRK-Japan Bilateral Meeting

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA AND JAPAN TO HOLD BILATERAL MEETING ON SIDELINES OF SIX-PARTY TALKS," 02/25/04) reported that the DPRK and Japan will hold a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of six-party talks which opened in Beijing over Pyongyang's nuclear program, PRC state media said. "Based on what we understand, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Japan will have a bilateral consultation this afternoon," China Central Television said on its noon news. "The exact time and location is not yet clear." The Japanese delegation has been pushing hard for a one-on-one meeting to discuss the kidnapping of Japanese citizens by the DPRK.

5. PRC on Taiwan Presidential Election

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA DISMISSES PROMISE BY TAIWAN'S CHEN TO PROMOTE PEACE IF RE-ELECTED," 02/25/04) reported that the PRC dismissed promises by Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian to promote peace with the mainland if re-elected, and suggested it did not believe he was sincere. To really show sincerity, Chen should create conditions for dialogue and consultations between Taiwan and the mainland, said Li Weiyl, spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office under the PRC Cabinet. "Otherwise, it just shows he's again trying to fool the Taiwan people and world public opinion," he told a regular briefing, held four weeks ahead of Taiwan's presidential elections. Chen said over the weekend he hoped to shake hands on a peace deal with the PRC if he won another four-year term in the March 20 poll, but the PRC said it was not convinced. "During his four years in power ... Chen Shui-bian has incessantly engaged in splittist activities, promoting 'creeping independence'," Li said. "What he has said and done over the past four years has all been harmful to peace and stability in the Taiwan Straits," he said.

6. PRC Arms Proliferation

Agence France-Presse ("NUCLEAR TALKS HOST CHINA HOPES TO PUT PAST AS ARMS PROLIFERATOR BEHIND IT," 02/25/04) reported that the PRC, the host of this week's six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis, may be wrestling with a problem partly of its own making, given its past as a major arms proliferator, according to analysts. While few believe China has directly assisted North Korea's nuclear program, it may have contributed in an indirect manner via its previous sales of sensitive technology to Pakistan. "It's pretty well accepted that there is a lot of PRC technology in Pakistan," said Ralph Cossa, the Honolulu-based president of the Pacific Forum CSIS think tank and an expert on proliferation issues. "It's also pretty well accepted that there has been a transfer of technology and equipment from Pakistan to North Korea," he said. The PRC, which has received kudos throughout the region for its efforts to bring about the six-party negotiations, has said repeatedly that it now abides assiduously to global norms for non-proliferation. "China has consistently opposed the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," the foreign ministry said in a faxed response to AFP. "It imposes strict export controls on relevant items and technologies through laws and regulations," it said. But careful curbs on exports of sensitive technology is a relative novelty in the PRC. As late as 1996, according to a CIA report, the China Nuclear Energy Industry Corporation sold advanced equipment apparently destined for a Pakistani heavy-water reactor. Company spokespeople denied any knowledge. "I've never heard of it," a company staff member, surnamed Niu, told AFP by telephone. Even if PRC's sales to Pakistan may have peaked years ago, there could be long-term consequences that only start to emerge now. In early February Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb, admitted passing on nuclear technology at the end of a two-month investigation into the leaking of secrets to Iran, Libya and the DPRK. It is too early to say if there is a PRC connection, as no one knows for sure what exactly the DPRK acquired from Pakistan, according to observers. "It is still unclear if North Korea obtained the design of an actual nuclear warhead from Pakistan," said Gaurav Kampani, a researcher at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California.

7. Japan Troops in Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE TROOPS UNDERGO LIVE TRAINING IN KUWAIT AHEAD OF IRAQ MISSION," 02/26/04) reported that some 140 Japanese ground troops, readying for deployment to Iraq, spent the day honing their shooting skills on this sprawling firing range in the heart of the Kuwaiti desert. "This is a basic shooting training ... We as a military must be prepared for any kind of training, including shooting. It is very important," commanding officer Colonel Koichiro Bansho told reporters as he oversaw the exercises, some 80 kilometres (50 miles) north of Kuwait City. "It is not directly related," to the security situation in Iraq. "This is quite a natural and scheduled training," Bansho said, as soldiers fired automatic rifles, machine-guns and anti-tank missiles at mock targets around them. Wednesday's were the first live fire exercises to be conducted by Japanese soldiers deploying to Iraq, but according to Bansho they were not an indication of concern for the grave security situation there. The group, which arrived in the emirate on Sunday, is expected to deploy to Samawa, southern Iraq, within the next few days to join some 100 Japanese ground troops already stationed in the city, 270 kilometres (170 miles) south of Baghdad, on a humanitarian mission. "This training makes us feel more confident and safe," said Lieutenant Colonel Shigeru Yamasaki, head of the Task Planning and Liaison Unit. "They (soldiers) are training on defensive skills and not offensive," he added.

8. ROK-Japan Free Trade Panel

Asia Pulse ("S. KOREA, JAPAN AGREE TO SET UP NEW FREE TRADE PANEL," Seoul, 02/26/04) reported that the ROK and Japan have agreed to establish another committee to help accelerate talks for a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said Wednesday. Wrapping up their second round of FTA negotiations in Tokyo, the two countries agreed to push FTA talks through discussions by a total of seven panels, said the ministry. At the first FTA meeting in December, the two sides agreed on the establishment of six committees - commodity trade, non-tariff measures, investment and service trade, other trade issues, cooperation and dispute settlement. At the just-ended Tokyo talks, they agreed to additionally create a mutual recognition committee. "At the second round of meetings, both sides reconfirmed principles for a broad trade liberalization in the fields of agriculture, commodities and services," said a ministry official. The ROK and Japan are scheduled to present each other's drafts for a bilateral FTA at the third round, scheduled for April 26-28 in Seoul.

9. US on DPRK Human Rights

Agence France-Presse ("US SAYS NORTH KOREA ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST 'INHUMANE REGIMES,'" Washington, 02/25/04) reported that the US in a grim portrait of a closed country said the DPRK was "one of the world's most inhumane regimes." In its annual review on global human rights, the US State Department said the Stalinist state ruled by Kim Jong-Il "committed widespread abuses of human rights" and that basic human rights were "unheard of." The 2003 review said "reports from North Korea continue to paint a bleak picture of one of the world's most inhumane regimes." "Rigid controls over information, which limit the extent of our report, reflect the totalitarian repression of DPRK society. Basic freedoms are unheard of, and the regime committed widespread abuses of human rights," according to the report. "This year's report details -- among other abuses -- killings, persecution of forcibly repatriated North Koreans, and harsh conditions in the extensive prison camp system including torture, forced abortions and infanticide." The report, in one of the harsher portraits continued within the global rights review, also highlighted individuals singled out for abuse. "Among the violations in this area of concern, pregnant female prisoners underwent forced abortions and, in other cases, babies reportedly were killed upon birth in prisons."

"There also were reports of trafficking in women and young girls among refugees and workers crossing the border into China, and children appear to have suffered disproportionately from famine." It said rights abuses were commonly committed by state agents, or members of the security forces, under government control. "Citizens do not have the right to change their government, and the leadership views most international human rights norms, particularly individual rights, as illegitimate, alien, and subversive to the goals of the State and Party," it added.

10. ROK DPRK Humanitarian Aid

New York Times ("SOUTH KOREA TO OFFER NORTH KOREA AID, NYTIMES REPORTS," New York, 02/25/04) reported that the ROK will offer the DPRK economic aid in return for a pledge to freeze and eventually dismantle its nuclear weapons facilities in talks beginning today in Beijing. Senior US and Asian officials, said the proposed aid would resume fuel oil shipments that were halted in late 2002. It would be unlikely for the ROK to be very specific about the energy offer, but it would probably be only a small fraction of the 500,000 tons of fuel oil a year halted in 2002, The Times said, citing an Asian official. President Bush would be unlikely to object to the offer after it was made, the report said, citing unnamed administration officials. "If it doesn't cross what might be considered an objectionable red line of ours, then I don't know that we would object to what another party might want to do," a senior US administration official said in reference to the ROK offer, The Times said Secretary of State Colin Powell as said (on) Monday that the US would offer no economic benefit to the DPRK in the first phase of a plan to dismantle its weapons, the newspaper reported.

11. US on PRC and Russia Human Rights

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "US CITES CHINA, RUSSIA ON HUMAN RIGHTS," Washington, 02/25/04) reported that the PRC has been "backsliding on key human rights issues," the State Department said Wednesday in a report that also accused Russia of manipulating elections and making threats against opposition parties. "We saw many developments covering the whole range from the dramatically uplifting to the disappointing," the State Department said in its annual report on the state of human rights worldwide. The report covers developments in 2003. On the PRC, the report said 2003 began with hopes that "incremental but unprecedented progress" the previous year would continue. Instead, the study said, the situation deteriorated. It cited arrests of democracy activists and individuals who discussed subjects on the Internet deemed sensitive by the government. PRC authorities in Tibet carried out executions without due process and engaged in torture and arbitrary arrest, the report said. The Bush administration traditionally seeks a resolution critical of the PRC at the annual meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Last year was an exception because of progress on the rights front in PRC. But Assistant Secretary Lorne Craner, the State Department's top human rights official, said Wednesday that such a resolution may be introduced at this year's meeting, starting next month. "We're heading in that direction," Craner told reporters. The report said the Russian government manipulated the October presidential elections in Chechnya and parliamentary elections held in December. "Both failed to meet international standards," the report said. It added that the last major non-state television network disappeared from Russia last year because of government pressure. The report also alleged that the government carried out criminal prosecutions and threats of prosecutions against major financial supporters of opposition parties.

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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