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I. United States

1. DPRK Multilateral Talks

Agence France-Presse ("SIX NATIONS AGREE DRAFT JOINT STATEMENT: REPORT," 02/28/04) reported that the six countries holding talks on the DPRK's nuclear program have agreed on draft joint statement to be issued at the end of the meetings, the ROK news agency said. The draft document states that the next round of talks will be held before April, Yonhap news agency said. It also states all six countries - the DPRK and the ROK, the US, the PRC, Russia and Japan -- should launch working-level talks within two weeks to handle technical and other matters. However, ROK foreign ministry officials refused to confirm the timing of the next round of talks and the working group. "It states that the issue of offering energy aid in return for North Korea's 'comprehensive dismantling of nuclear programs' should be discussed at working-group talks," said the Yonhap report, released after a closed-door briefing by ROK foreign ministry spokesman Shin Bong-Kil. The document has been sent to the countries' capitals for approval, Yonhap said. If endorsed, it would represent the first tangible progress in the process to resolve the stand-off over the DPRK's nuclear drive.

Reuters (Jack Kim and Jonathan Ansfield, "NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS PLAGUED BY

CONTRADICTIONS," Beijing, 02/27/04) reported that six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis were bogged down by "differences, difficulties and contradictions," but host PRC held out hopes on Friday for a joint statement to help end the 16-month-old stalemate. Late on a long third day of discussions in Beijing, senior negotiators struggled to hammer out the wording of the statement and agree on when another round of talks should be held. The DPRK again accused the US of hindering progress by pressing the same demands it had at a first round of talks in August, and a DPRK embassy official stated it has tried to show flexibility and sincerity. "Precisely because there are some differences, difficulties and contradictions, it is necessary to continue with the talks process," a PRC Foreign Ministry statement quoted delegation head Wang Yi as saying. The PRC said there was hope for a final document, but was already preparing for the possibility there may not be one. "Right now, the parties are in the process of carrying out intensive consultations on a document, so the hope still exists," Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. "If there is not a document, we should not say the talks were a failure." But Liu added that the gap between the different sides was being "narrowed gradually" although differences still existed, according to Xinhua news agency. ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck told reporters that deputy delegation chiefs were working to find a "common denominator on fundamental questions." "You can say that it is a difficult process," he said. The US and Japan rejected a draft prepared by the PRC because it did not contain a line on a "complete, verifiable and irreversible" end to the DPRK's nuclear programs, diplomatic sources said. The six sides also exchanged views on the establishment of working groups to push for a resolution of the crisis. A DPRK proposal to freeze its nuclear weapons program was met on Thursday by a ROK, PRC and Russian-backed plan to offer energy aid in exchange. "We are trying our best to show our sincerity," the DPRK embassy official told Reuters on Friday. "We are trying our best to show our flexibility." In a statement issued late on Thursday, the DPRK said the US was hindering a breakthrough in six-way talks by pressing "stale" demands and retaining a hostile stance.

2. DPRK Multilateral Talks Extension

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREAN TALKS EXTENDED BY A DAY," 02/27/04) reported that six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs have been extended by a day with sessions to take place Saturday, a ROK spokesman said. "The talks have been extended by one day. The talks will continue on Saturday February 28," ROK delegation spokesman Shin Bong-kil told journalists. "I think there is going to be a closing ceremony tomorrow, as well." The talks among representatives of the PRC, the DPRK, the US, the ROK, Japan and Russia are at a "pivotal" stage, according to PRC officials. While the DPRK Thursday offered to disarm if the US took a "corresponding" measure, the US side Friday reiterated its position that Pyongyang must completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its weapons programs. There would be no inducements, US diplomats said. 3. DPRK-Japan Abduction Issue

Asahi Shimbun (Taro Karasaki, "Chief negotiator Yabunaka careful not to embarrass China," Beijing, 02/27/04) reported that Mitoji Yabunaka, Japan's chief negotiator at the six-way talks, did something Wednesday he hasn't done recently: He avoided mentioning the DPRK abduction issue to reporters. When asked by journalists gathered in the lobby of his hotel to comment on Japan's main issue at the opening of the six-nation talks Wednesday, Yabunaka gave a stern look. The normally candid director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau paused for only a few seconds to answer. "Whatever it is, we will use our energies to bring about a positive result," Yabunaka said, before rushing to the foyer and entering > his limousine. He maintained his solemn appearance after arriving at the Diaoyutai State Guest House for the six-way talks. After a photo session in > the guest house, he proceeded straight to the conference hall while other delegates continued to mingle. Yabunaka had repeatedly stressed that a resolution of the abduction issue

would be Tokyo's priority at these talks. But since arriving here Monday, the Japanese delegation chief, usually known for his frankness, has been carefully choosing his words. The softer stance reflects Japan's desire not to embarrass host PRC, which has urged all delegates to take a "constructive stance," adopt a "cooperative and accommodating spirit" and "respect each other" to ensure success.

4. DPRK-US Humanitarian Aid?

Asia Pulse ("N KOREA TO GET US AID AFTER ENDING NUKE PROGRAMS: AMBASSADOR," Seoul, 02/26/04) reported that the top US envoy to the ROK said today that the US will be prepared to offer energy and other basic necessities to the DPRK only after the communist country makes the commitment to verifiably dismantle its nuclear arms programs. "As a first step, there should be a clear indication from North Korea that it will give up all nuclear programs," US Ambassador Thomas C. Hubbard said at a breakfast meeting organized by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The DPRK has demanded compensation for shutting down its nuclear weapons programs, while the US has asked for the wholesale elimination of the DPRK's nuclear activities with no preconditions. Hubbard also dismissed the the DPRK's argument that it is processing plutonium for generating electricity, noting that it is solely intended for the development of nuclear weapons. "The best solution to the nuclear problem is for North Korea to follow the example of Libya and completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantle its nuclear program," Hubbard said. "Once North Korea has completely and verifiably abandoned its nuclear ambitions, the same multilateral approach that we have used in the six-party talks may also be able to coordinate efforts to bring North Korea's economy and society into step with its neighbors and community."

5. US-Japan Military Ties

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, US BOOST MILITARY TIES WITH LOGISTIC SUPPLY AGREEMENT," Tokyo, 02/27/04) reported that Japan and the US signed an agreement to boost the sharing of military supplies and services if Japan is attacked, the foreign ministry said. The deal, which amends the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, was signed by foreign minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and US Ambassador Howard Baker, the ministry said in a statement. The pact allows the country for the first time to supply US forces with ammunition in the case of a sudden or foreseen assault on Japan, a foreign ministry official said. The previous agreement allowed only the sharing of supplies such as food and petroleum in the run-up to a military contingency, where a regional incident could threaten Japan's security, the official said. Japan's constitution bans the use of force in settling international disputes but it sent troops to Iraq earlier this month, the first deployment of the Self-Defence Forces to a combat zone since World War II. The new deal also expands the sharing of supplies in cases of international cooperation and large-scale disasters, but does not allow for the provision of ammunition by Japanese troops in Iraq to US forces, the official said. It will allow Japanese troops to share supplies with US forces in Iraq during security operations, whereas the old agreement was limited to humanitarian work. The new agreement "maintains the three principles regarding the export of weapons, which avoids the promotion of international disputes," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said in a statement.

6. Japan Doomsday Cult Leader Sentenced

Agence France-Presse ("DOOMSDAY CULT SHOCKED WORLD WITH CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACK," 02/27/04) reported that the Aum Supreme Truth sect, led by guru Shoko Asahara, who was sentenced to death, was the first terrorist group to make the nightmare of unleashing a weapon

of mass destruction on the public a reality. While Asahara's lack of testimony in his eight-year-long trial for masterminding 27 deaths left the motives for the 1995 nerve gas attack on the Tokyo subway unclear, his earlier utterances indicated he saw Aum at war with the Japanese state, and it had to strike a decisive blow. The doomsday cult, whose disciples included brilliant misfit scientists recruited to produce deadly chemical, biological and even nuclear weapons, shocked the world when they released Sarin nerve gas on the Tokyo subway, killing 12 people and injuring 5,000.

7. ROK Economic Reform

Asia Pulse ("S KOREA MUST CONTINUE ON REFORM PATH: EXPERTS," Seoul, 02/27/04) reported that the ROK must push forward wide-ranging corporate, labor and financial sector reforms that will allow it to meet future challenges, participants at an international conference to mark President Roh Moo-hyun's first year in office said today. Top economists and regional experts delivering keynote speeches at the roundtable talks said the ROK has undergone rapid transition in the last year. They also said at the first leg of the two-day "International Conference on a New Vision and Strategy under Changing Leadership in Northeast Asia" that despite some difficulties the country can look to the future with confidence. International Monetary Fund Managing Director Horst Kohler said the ROK had to stand on its own feet to effectively tackle the trend of globalization, which requires economic and political actors to constantly adapt to change. He said that the right sort of policy implementation will allow the ROK to look to the future with self-confidence and that President Roh's goal of raising the country's annual per capita income to US\$20,000 was achievable.

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. Issue #155

Excerpts from delegates' opening statements illustrate the atmosphere at the outset of the much-anticipated second round of six-party talks in Beijing. The DPRK reportedly told IAEA officials in a meeting at the DPRK embassy in Vienna that it might accept the resumption of inspections at its Yongbyon nuclear facilities, depending on the outcome of the Beijing talks. Will the talks be successful? Analysts hold out little hope for a breakthrough. A positive evaluation will largely depend on one's definition of "success," argues Ralph Cossa, president of the Pacific Forum, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in this week's OPINION. Next week's CanKor will analyze results of the six-party talks. In the meantime, readers are encouraged to consult the CanKor website (www.CanKor.ca) for additional material. Canada's Minister for International Cooperation Aileen Carroll announces that CIDA will respond to the humanitarian crisis brewing in the DPRK with a 2 million Canadian dollar contribution this month. This brings Canada's total humanitarian contribution from CIDA and the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to \$13.3 million this fiscal year. Canadian Immigration officials assigned to review the case of refugee-defector Ri Song Dae, disagree on their assessment of the controversial decision to deny him status. A Toronto official asserts that Mr. Ri should be allowed to stay in Canada on the grounds that he would be executed for treason if returned to the DPRK, while a more senior Immigration official in Ottawa disagrees citing the "nature and severity of the acts committed". It is believed that in January 2003, the DPRK had informed the Bush administration of its intention to repatriate the USS Pueblo, symbol of the long history of hostility between the two nations. There had even been informal contact between the two governments on the mechanics of the ship's return, but renewed animosity caused by the nuclear crisis overshadowed the negotiations. Retired Navy Cmdr. Lloyd "Pete" Bucher, who was in charge of the USS Pueblo when the ship and its crew were captured in 1968 and held captive for 11 months, died January 28, 2004.

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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