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I. United States

1. DPRK-US Relations

The Associated Press ("Joseph Coleman, "NORTH KOREA WARNS OF 'ARMED CLASH' WHILE HOSTING SOUTH KOREAN ENVOY," Seoul, 01/28/03) and the Associated Press (Paul Shin, "NORTH KOREA FRETS OVER US 'ARMED CLASH,'" Seoul, 01/28/03) reported that the DPRK accused the US on Tuesday of planning a massive attack on the DPRK even as the DPRK hosted an ROK presidential envoy trying to calm nuclear tensions. In an 800-word commentary against the US, the DPRK KCNA news agency said the US State Department was making "a final examination" of an attack plan that US forces - with help of the ROK military - could carry out hours after receiving the order. "The situation on the Korean Peninsula is deteriorating so rapidly that an armed clash may break out quite contrary to the desire of the DPRK for the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue," the report said. The DPR also said it was prepared to answer the threat of an attack with "the unlimited use of means."

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA ACCUSES US OF PREPARING SURPRISE ATTACK," Seoul, 01/28/03) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday accused the US of planning a massive military attack against the DPRK, and said the situation on the Korean Peninsula was "deteriorating rapidly." The DPRK news agency KCNA said the US State Department was making "a final examination" of an attack plan that US forces could carry out only a few hours after receiving the order. The US forces in the ROK and the ROK military have put together a contingency plan to invade the DPRK and are preparing to put it into action, KCNA said. The plan includes attacks against the DPRK's nuclear facilities, the report said. "The situation on the Korean Peninsula is deteriorating so rapidly that an armed clash may break out quite contrary to the desire of the DPRK for the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue," the report said.

2. DPRK Nuclear Diplomacy

Reuters ("REPORT: NORTH KOREA REJECTS MULTILATERAL TALKS," Moscow, 01/28/03) reported that the DPRK has insisted that only talks with the US can solve a nuclear standoff and rejected involving other countries, according to a Pyongyang statement carried by Russian news agency Interfax Tuesday. "We consistently stand against all and any attempt to internationalise the nuclear question on the Korean peninsula, and…we will not participate in multilateral talks in any way," said the DPRK Foreign Ministry statement. "The one and only way to achieve a peaceful and just solution to the Korean nuclear issue is direct talks on equal terms between DPRK and the US. There can be no other way." The DPRK has consistently said it will talk only to the US and is demanding it sign a non-aggression pact. US officials say it would be difficult to offer such a treaty, which would need Senate ratification.

3. PRC on US-Iraq Relations

The Associated Press ("China APPEALS FOR MORE TIME FOR IRAQ WEAPONS INSPECTIONS," Beijing, 01/28/03) reported that the PRC appealed Tuesday for more time for U.N. weapons inspections in Iraq, arguing against taking any action while there is a possibility of a political settlement. "We maintain that no conclusion should be jumped to at this stage," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue. Speaking at a regular press briefing, Zhang stressed that the inspectors' report Monday to the U.N. Security Council asked for more time to complete their work. "We should give continued support to the work of the weapons inspectors, and Iraq should strengthen its cooperation with the United Nations," she said. The PRC has said it sees no reason to endorse American pressure to attack Iraq. The PRC has pressed instead for a negotiated settlement through the Security Council.

4. DPRK Economic Reform

The Washington Post (John Pomfret, "REFORMS TURN DISASTROUS FOR NORTH KOREANS NUCLEAR CRISIS MAY HAVE ROOTS IN ECONOMIC FAILURE," Yanji, China, 01/28/03) reported that six months after the DPR announced unprecedented wage and price increases to jump-start its economy, runaway inflation is emptying millions of pocketbooks and bottlenecks in production are causing widespread shortages, according to PRC and DPRK and ROK sources. The black market price of rice has jumped more than 50 percent over the past three months in most parts of the country while tripling in others, according to DPRK and PRC businessmen and Western aid agency workers. Some factories in poorer parts of the country, such as the heavily industrialized east coast, have stopped paying workers the higher salaries that were a cornerstone of the reforms, recent DPRK arrivals to the PRC said. Others have taken to paying workers with coupons that can be

exchanged for goods, they said, but there are no goods in the stores to buy. "Their new economic policy has failed," said Oh Seung Yul, an economist at the government-funded Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul. "The hopes that were raised in July are today pretty much dashed." According to PRC sources close to Kim Jong Il, the DPRK has determined that it risks economic collapse without security guarantees and access to international lending institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, to which the US holds the keys. "Now the economic situation is more precarious than before the reforms. They can't do this halfway," said Cui Yingjiu, a PRC Korean economist and adviser to the DPRK government. "They risk social chaos and economic collapse."

5. Inter-Korean Relations

BBC News ("SEOUL ENVOY TO MEET NORTH'S LEADER," 01/28/03)

Lim Dong-won, special envoy from the ROK, is expected to meet DPRK leader Kim Jong-il as part of a key trip aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis. Lim Dong-won, an ROK presidential security advisor, hopes to give Kim a letter from ROK outgoing President Kim Dae-jung. Earlier on Tuesday, Lim met the DPRK's number two leader, the ceremonial head of state Kim Yong-nam. The ROK delegation is due to return to Seoul on Wednesday. Analysts say the DPR might be pushing for progress with the ROK as a way to undermine ROK's alliance with the US, which favors a much harder line policy on engaging with the DPRK.

6. PRC Domestic Labor Protests

The Associated Press (Stephanie Hoo, "BEIJING LETS UNPAID LABORERS PROTEST," Beijing, 01/28/03) reported that with no work in his rural hometown, Chen Dehai moved to Beijing, joining the flood of migrant labor that builds the PRC's skyscrapers, paves its roads and does the other dirty work of its economic boom. But Chen says that after six months of construction work at a luxury housing complex, he was never paid. So he and 100 coworkers did something that is becoming increasingly common in PRC - they protested in public, barricading the entrance of another property owned by the same company. "We're not getting wages, and that's not right," said Chen, 26. Police did something that is also becoming common - they watched but didn't interfere in the January 17 protest, or in a series of other small labor protests this month in Beijing. Not only are police allowing such protests, but state-run newspapers are taking the unusual step of reporting them. No one knows how long the government will let this continue, but it closely follows a Communist Party leadership change and a new official mandate allowing more rights for the PRC's low-paid migrants - all 94 million of them. Scholars say such toleration of small protests shows growing official sympathy for the struggles of economic migrants - so long as they don't try to organize unions or take other steps that the government considers a threat to its power.

7. Cross-Straits Relations

The New York Times (Erik Eckholm, "CHINESE ARE TEMPTING TAIWAN BY DANGLING ECONOMIC FRUIT," Beijing, 01/28/03) reported that PRC officials have stepped up their diplomatic offensive against Taiwan in recent days, dangling the fruits of closer economic ties and muffling their threat to bring Taiwan back to the PRC by force. On Sunday, in a step described here as encouraging but minor, a charter plane from Taiwan landed in the PRC for the first time in 53 years, to ferry Taiwanese businessmen home for the Chinese New Year holidays. But in accordance with Taiwan's restrictions on direct links, the plane had to detour and touch down in Hong Kong en route,

wasting several hours of flying time. In a special briefing for reporters today, a PRC official said that China's recent stance toward Taiwan was "extremely moderate" and that "stabilizing the situation in the Taiwan Strait" was vital to the PRC's broader goals of improved ties with the US and economic progress. Taiwan's once robust economy has faltered in the last few years, and its growth appears to be increasingly linked to the PRC. More than 60 percent of Taiwan's overseas investment is now on the PRC officials estimate, adding that Taiwanese now make more than 3 million trips to the PRC each year and that at least 300,000 Taiwanese, mainly business managers, now live there.

8. PRC on DPRK Asylum Seekers

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA SAYS TWO DETAINED SOUTH KOREANS SUSPECTED OF MIGRANT SMUGGLING," Beijing, 01/28/03) reported that two ROK citizens detained this month with a group of DPRK asylum seekers in eastern PRC are suspected of illegally organizing a migrant-smuggling attempt, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. Refugee activists say the ROK citizens - one a photographer whose wife says he was working as a journalist - were accompanying DPRK asylum-seekers who were trying to reach Japan and the ROK. The ROK citizens are "suspected of organizing the smuggling case," said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue. She didn't say whether they had been formally charged or what penalties they might face. Zhang said 30 people had been arrested, including citizens of the DPRK, ROK and PRC. Activists in the ROK say 58 DPRK refugees were taken in by PRC police who pretended to offer them help. Most are said to have been detained in the eastern port of Yantai, and others in the PRC's northeast. Zhang, speaking at a regular news briefing, said she had few details and didn't identify either ROK detainee by name. The PRC police have refused to release other information.

9. US on PRC Tibetan Execution

BBC News ("US CONDEMNS TIBETAN'S EXECUTION," 01/28/03) reported that the US has condemned the execution of a Tibetan man accused of a series of bomb attacks in south-west PRC. "We join the international community in raising concern over the reported execution of Lobsang Dhondup, and the suspended sentence of Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche," said Amanda Blatt, a spokeswoman for the State Department. Tibetan exiles said they would hold a demonstration outside the PRC embassy in Washington on Tuesday in protest. Lobsang Dhondup, 28, was executed on Sunday, after being convicted in a closed trial in December of bomb attacks in Sichuan province between 1998 and 2002. Activists have criticised the trial of Lobsang Dhondup and Tibetan monk Tenzin Deleg Rinpoche - whose suspended death sentence has been upheld - as unfair. The US State Department said it was also "closely watching" reports that 10 other Tibetans had been detained in the same case.

10. DPRK Japan Espionage

The Associated Press ("ALLEGED NORTH KOREAN SPY AGENT OPERATED FOR YEARS IN JAPAN," Tokyo, 01/28/03) reported that Japanese police said Tuesday they were investigating an alleged DPRK agent who reportedly used Japan as a base to spy on the ROK for decades. The 72-year old man, whose name was not disclosed, is a member of the DPRK Workers' Party and a former ranking member of a DPRK resident organization in Japan, said a Tokyo Metropolitan Police spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity. Police raided his home in Tokyo last month on suspicion he illegally obtained an alien registration card from the Japanese government in 1999 but have yet to decide whether to press charges, the spokesman said. During the raid, the police confiscated evidence showing the man allegedly gave instructions to agents in the RO, the spokesman said.

Japanese media, including public broadcaster NHK, reported that the man entered Japan illegally from the ROK in 1949 - before the 1950-53 Korean War - and had often received instructions from the skipper of the Mangyongbong-92, a DPRK cruise ship connecting the northern Japanese port of Niigata and the DPRK.

11. Japan Nuclear Waste

The Associated Press (Kenji Hall, "MISSING PLUTONIUM PROBE LATEST FLAP FOR JAPAN'S BELEAGUERED NUCLEAR POWER INDUSTRY," Tokyo, 01/28/03) reported that Japanese officials acknowledged Tuesday that it took a 15-year investigation to account for a more than 200-kilogram (440-pound) shortfall in plutonium at a major nuclear power facility, further damaging the industry's already wobbly safety record. Tokyo began investigating a fuel-reprocessing plant in Tokai, central Japan, after the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency pointed out in 1987 that the plant's records showed less plutonium than it was supposed to have. A report wrapping up the investigation - submitted Tuesday to a government nuclear safety commission - found the nuclear material had either been safely disposed of or never existed to begin with, said Education and Science Ministry spokesman Keiji Tsukamoto.

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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