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I. United States

1. US-PRC Talks on DPRK Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press ("US ENVOY HOPEFUL ON NEW N KOREA TALKS; WON'T CITE DATE," Beijing, 01/30/04) reported that a top US diplomat praised the PRC on Friday for its efforts to reconvene negotiations about the DPRK's nuclear program and expressed hope a new round of six-party talks could be held soon. But after a day of meeting with PRC leaders, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage wouldn't cite a potential date for the talks. An Australian government delegation was on its way to the DPRK on Friday to persuade the DPRK to agree to a second round, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said. "A constructive, diplomatic solution to North Korea's nuclear crisis, which escalated just over a year ago, is vital for the security of our region and stability in North Asia and among our allies and top trading partners," said Downer, who was leading the delegation, which will be in Pyongyang until Tuesday.

2. US on DPRK-Nigerian Missile Sale

Reuters (Saul Hudson, "US CONCERNED OVER ANY NIGERIA-N.KOREA MISSILE SALE," Washington, 01/30/04) reported that the US said on Friday it was concerned about a proposed deal for the DPRK to sell Nigeria ballistic missiles and US officials hinted at the possibility of sanctions against the African nation. A US ally and key oil supplier, Nigeria announced this week it could soon sign an agreement with the DPRK, which the US considers the world's largest exporter of ballistic missiles. "We expressed concerns about the possibility there might be a purchase of missiles from North Korea and that's an issue we will be discussing with them," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters, referring to talks with the Nigerian government. US officials doubted Nigeria, which faces no obvious military threat, would go ahead with a deal but said the government had so far failed to assure US diplomats it would reject the DPRK's offer. They said the US arsenal of tools to stop such deals include seizing arms in transit or imposing sanctions on nations buying from a country that President has labeled part of an "axis of evil" with Iran and pre-war Iraq. "We don't think the Nigerians are really going to do anything," said one State Department official, who asked not to be named. "But, as long as there is any gray, we will say publicly we strongly oppose any proliferation. And with any parties engaged in such proliferation we would look at using those legal means, including interdictions and sanctions." Since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks showed how vulnerable the country was, Washington has sought to clamp down on the trade of missiles and weapons of mass destruction to prevent militant groups from acquiring such arms. The US has intervened in recent DPRK missile deliveries to Yemen. Nigeria, which has bought arms from the US, Britain and Russia, says its weapons are needed for security and peacekeeping. Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria sees itself as a regional superpower and currently has troops in war-torn Liberia. The government of President Olusegun Obasanjo is a key Washington ally in Africa, and is the fifth-largest supplier of oil to the US. But Nigeria has also been reaching out to Asia in an effort to attract investment and alliances. Missile sales are a major source of revenue for cash-strapped North Korea, which is expected to resume talks soon with Washington and other nations on dismantling its suspected nuclear programs. Nigerian officials ruled out any nuclear-related purchases.

3. Libyan DPRK Missile Similarities

Donga Ilbo ("US SAYS, 'LIBYAN MISSILES ARE LIKE NK'S,'" 01/30/04) reported that the US has confirmed the Libyan ballistic missile was a copy of the DPRK "Rodong Missile," the Kyodo News Agency reported from Washington on January 30, quoting an official from the US government. The US government is having the guidance system of the Libyan Scud missile analyzed by experts after having obtained it on January 27. Libya had once declared it would disarm weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Kyodo News reported that the statements of the official supported the experts' assertion that North Korea had offered Libya technology for a short-range ballistic missile, so-called the "Scud C."

4. US Missile Defense Spending

Reuters (Jeremy Pelofsky, "BUSH SEEKING BIG INCREASE IN MISSILE DEFENSE," Washington, 01/30/04) reported that the Bush administration will ask Congress to boost spending on missile defense by $1.2 billion next year and nearly double funding to modernize the Army in the $401.7 billion US military budget for 2005, according to Pentagon documents released on Friday. The defense plan is part of a proposed $2.3 trillion federal budget President Bush will send to lawmakers on Monday. It calls for a 7 percent increase in defense spending over the current level of $375 billion. The Pentagon said the defense budget documents -- scheduled to be formally released on

Monday with the president's overall budget -- were inadvertently posted on the Internet on Friday morning. They were later removed. The administration seeks to boost funding for its controversial missile defense program by 13 percent to $10.2 billion next year from $9 billion requested for fiscal 2004. The new figure includes spending by the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency of $9.1 billion in 2005, up from $7.6 billion, as well as the Army's Patriot missile program.

5. Japan Iraq Troop Dispatch

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S RULING BLOC PUSHES IRAQ TROOP DISPATCH BILL THROUGH PARLIAMENT," 01/31/04) reported that Japan's ruling coalition pushed a bill through parliament's lower house to formally approve the dispatch of troops to Iraq in its first full military deployment to a combat zone since World War II. The ruling coalition, which has a majority in parliament, voted on the bill at around 1:00 am local time (1600 GMT) and was to send it to the upper house for final parliamentary approval next week, reports said. Japan on Monday ordered the dispatch of some 600 troops -- expected to be in place in March -- to provide humanitarian and reconstruction aid to Iraq. They are expected to leave next week. The bill can retroactively endorse or overrule this deployment. Several Japanese military contingents are already in Iraq or Kuwait on exploratory missions, and on Friday three air force cargo planes flew into Kuwait to beef up Japan's mission. A number of advance units from the Japanese defence forces have been operating in Iraq since late December. The lower House of Representatives vote was delayed Friday by opposition resistance to the bill, which has also met with widespread disapproval from the Japanese public. The ruling coalition forced an end to a dragging debate on the bill at a special lower house committee meeting, despite objections from opposition parties which said the troop dispatch violates Japan's post-war constitution banning the use of force in settling international disputes. Opposition lawmakers denounced the coalitions for its "forcible" approval of the bill, the Kyodo news agency reported. "There is no way we can have discussion in the House of Councilors" under these circumstances, Kyodo quoted Social Democratic Party leader Mizuho Fukushima as saying. "Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi must step down as he has failed to respond sincerely and fully explain" the deployment, Fukushima said.

6. US-Russia Arms Talks

The Associated Press ("US, RUSSIAN OFFICIALS HOLD ARMS TALKS," Moscow, 01/30/04) reported that US Undersecretary of State John Bolton met with Russia's top nuclear official on Friday, his second day of talks on strengthening controls against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Bolton and Atomic Energy Minister Alexander Rumyantsev discussed bilateral cooperation in the nuclear sphere, nonproliferation problems and "current issues of radioactive and nuclear safety in the world," the ITAR-Tass news agency reported. Bolton was expected to discuss continuing US concerns over Russia's participation in construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran. Moscow has dismissed US fears that the plant could aid Iran's nuclear weapons program, saying the project could only serve peaceful purposes. At the same time, Russia has said it will not ship nuclear fuel to Iran until the two countries sign an agreement under which all spent fuel would be returned to Russia -- a measure aimed to prevent it from being used for making weapons. The signing has been delayed repeatedly because of disagreements that both Russian and Iranian officials have described as technical. However, a US diplomat suggested Friday that Russia was stalling or being "very prudent" about sending the fuel. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the diplomat said Moscow had denied that Iran was seeking nuclear weapons until about two years ago, and now Russian officials say "we don't know."

7. ROK Domestic Politics Shake-Up

Agence France-Presse ("ROH REPLACES TOP DEFENSE, NATIONAL SECURITY AIDES," 01/30/04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun has replaced his top defense and national security advisors in a cabinet shake-up that comes at a pivotal point in efforts to end the DPRK nuclear crisis. The former deputy head of the National Intelligence Service, Kwon Chin-Ho, will take over from Ra Jong-Yil as national security advisor, presidential spokesman Yoon Tai-Young said. And Yoon Kwang-Ung, a retired admiral, will succeed Kim Hee-Sang as adviser for national defense, Yoon said. Some analysts linked the new shake-up to an effort to reduce pro-US influence in Roh's inner circle but officials said Ra's exit from the cabinet-level post would not affect policy. Two weeks ago, Roh replaced his foreign minister and top diplomats were axed amid a public row over foreign policy and relations with the US. "There will be no change in the foreign policy direction despite Ra's dismissal," said Yoon. "The reshuffle is merely aimed at bringing in a new team of presidential advisors as the government is entering its second year in office." Kwon, a 63-year-old retired three-star army general, is an expert in security and international affairs. He was in charge of security during the 2002 football World Cup co-hosted by the ROK and Japan. Two weeks ago Yoon Young-Kwan lost his job as foreign minister and was replaced by Roh's foreign policy adviser Ban Ki Moon.

8. PRC Corruption

The Associated Press (Elaine Kurtenbach, "AUDIT FINDS BILLIONS IN CHINA MISUSED," Shanghai, 01/30/04) reported that audits aimed at ferreting out corruption in the PRC uncovered $8 billion in misused or embezzled funds and widespread irregularities that produced "serious losses" of state assets, the government said Friday. Auditors investigated 130,000 state businesses and offices last year as part of the communist leadership's campaign against the pervasive graft that has soured public faith in the government. Li Jinhua, minister of the State Auditing Administration, told officials attending a national conference Friday that government auditors found larger-than-reported losses in the accounts of the State Power Corp., the former national power monopoly that was dismantled last year. Irregularities at the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China - one of the country's biggest state-owned banks - included housing and auto loans granted to organizations or individuals using false documents and excessive lending to local governments, Li said in an account posted on the audit office's Web site. The bank suffered "serious losses" from illegal loans granted by staff and related companies, it said without giving figures. The report also cited a "big batch" of major economic crimes but did not elaborate. As a result of the audits, $2.9 billion of the $8 billion in misused funds were returned to the government, and the cases of 749 officials were referred to prosecutors for criminal investigations, the audit office said. In recent months, thousands of PRC officials and managers of state companies have been punished in a renewed effort to root out rampant abuse of power. But thousands more have evaded capture. The Hong Kong newspaper Wen Wei Po, which is partly financed by the Beijing government, reported Thursday that 8,370 mainland officials were believed to have fled the country during the first half of last year and that another 6,528 had "disappeared" inside the country. Another 1,252 committed suicide during the same period, it said.

9. ROK Political Corruption

Chosun Ilbo (Lee Jin-seok, "PROSECUTORS SAY FORMER MDP CHAIRMAN TOOK BRIBES," 01/30/04) reported that prosecutors confirmed Friday that Han Hwa-gap, the former chairman of the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), approached the SK group to demand political funds, and illegally accepting W400 million during the 2002 presidential campaign. Han is also suspected of taking W650 million in bribes from a construction company ahead of the election for party chairman

held in April 2002. According to the prosecutors, the former MDP chairman received W600 million through Rep. Kim Won-gil, who was serving as the head of the party's campaign committee, and W50 million directly from the company president. On the other hand, the Seoul District Court delayed by one day a decision on whether to issue an arrest warrant for an MDP lawmaker to Saturday. "If the lawmaker refuses to present himself to the court, the prosecution will be allowed to take him into custody without the warrant or the court could issue an arrest warrant after holding a hearing without his presence," Judge Choi Wan-ju said. "As far as we understand, the lawmaker seems willing to show up, but other party members are trying to dissuade him." Prosecutors vowed that they would conduct a thorough investigation into charges of corruption among candidates for the 2002 presidential election and in the MDP party chairman's election. "The prosecution's position is that it will investigate any corruption charges sternly when they are detected," an official said.

10. DPRK Defector Radio Broadcasting

JoongAng Ilbo ("DEFECTORS FROM NORTH WILL START BROADCAST," 01/30/04) reported that DPRK defectors will set up an Internet radio broadcasting station "Free North Korea Broadcasting" (http://freenk.com), which will begin service in April. Kim Sung-min, chairman of One Korea, a defector group, said yesterday that the aim of the broadcast is to improve human rights in the DPRK and help democratize the country. "We will point out the problems of DPRK society and tell the tales of the defectors," Kim said. Testing will begin on Feb. 16 and the station will broadcast regularly from April 15 for one hour. It will be operated out of an office in Sinjeong-dong, Seoul, which was set up with 30 million won ($25,500) donated by defectors. The station may also sell its contents to Voice of America and Radio Free Asia, and will pursue short-wave broadcasting for people in the DPRK as well.

11. Aum Guru Death Sentence

Agence France-Presse ("AUM NERVE-GAS CULT CHEMIST SENTENCED TO DEATH," 01/30/04) reported that the Tokyo District Court has sentenced a senior chemist in the Aum Supreme Truth doomsday cult, responsible for the 1995 sarin nerve-gas Tokyo subway attack which killed 12 people and for other crimes, to death. Masami Tsuchiya, 39, became the 11th Aum member to receive a death sentence in court of first instance. A ruling in the trial of Aum guru Shoko Asahara is scheduled for February 27 at the district court. The court's ruling said Tsuchiya headed a chemical unit in the yoga-practising Japanese cult and was largely responsible for the production of deadly chemicals like sarin and VX gas. "He played a significant and indispensable role in producing highly deadly sarin gas," presiding judge Satoru Hattori said.

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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