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I. United States

1. DPRK Yongbyon Fuel Rod Movement

The New York Times (David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "SATELLITES SAID TO SEE ACTIVITY AT NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR SITE," Washington, 01/31/03) and the Washington Post (Walter Pincus, "HINTS OF NORTH KOREA PLUTONIUM OUTPUT," 01/31/03) reported that US spy satellites over the DPRK have detected what appear to be trucks moving the country's stockpile of 8,000 nuclear fuel rods out of storage, prompting fears within the Bush administration that the DPRK is preparing to produce roughly a half dozen nuclear weapons, US officials said today. Throughout January, intelligence analysts have seen extensive activity at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, with some

trucks pulling up to the building housing the storage pond. While the satellites could not see exactly what was being put into the trucks, analysts concluded that it was likely that workers were transporting the rods to another site, either to get them out of sight, or to move them to a reprocessing plant to convert them into bomb-grade plutonium. The Bush administration has said nothing publicly about the truck activity, deflecting questions about the subject. US intelligence analysts have informally concluded that the movement of the rods, combined with other activity that now appears to be under way at the Yongbyon complex, could allow the DPRK to begin producing bomb-grade plutonium by the end of March. "There's still a debate about exactly what we are seeing and how provocative it is," said one senior official. "The North Koreans made no real effort to hide this from us." The satellite photographs of the truck activity have been tightly held by the administration, and not yet shared widely with allies.

2. US Response to DPRK Fuel Rod Movement

Reuters ("US WARNS NORTH KOREA, WELCOMES UN REVIEW," Washington, 01/31/03) reported that the US on Friday warned the DPRK against taking steps to reprocess plutonium as US officials said some of the country's stockpile of nuclear fuel rods were being moved out of storage. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, although declining to formally confirm the movement of the rods, said the US backed plans to bring the issue of the DPRK's nuclear program to the U.N. Security Council. Intelligence analysts believe that the movement of the rods and other activity could indicate North Korea is working to make bomb-grade plutonium. But officials said they do not believe Pyongyang has actually begun reprocessing spent fuel rods into plutonium, a key fuel for nuclear weapons. Fleischer told reporters: "Any steps toward beginning reprocessing would be yet another provocative action by North Korea intended to intimidate and blackmail the international community." "Any such step would have the effect of further isolating North Korea from the international community, which is united in seeking a peaceful resolution of the current situation," he said. "We'll continue to work with our friends and allies."

3. UN Nuclear Agency Emergency Meeting

The Associated Press (Vanessa Gera, "UN NUCLEAR AGENCY HOPING TO HOLD EMERGENCY MEETING ON NORTH KOREA IN MID-FEBRUARY," Vienna, 01/31/03) reported that an emergency board meeting of the U.N. nuclear monitoring agency likely will take place on February 12 to pass the DPRK nuclear crisis to the Security Council, the agency head said Friday. Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, said he hoped the meeting of the IAEA's board of governors would take place on that date despite some disagreement among key member states on when to hold it. "We're still aiming for the 12th," ElBaradei said. "I think it's important that we meet." Key members of the agency gathered Thursday in Vienna to hammer out a date for the meeting. Such a meeting is especially sensitive because the 35-member board would be required to declare the DPRK's regime in noncompliance of international obligations not to use its nuclear facilities to produce weapons. That declaration would then be passed on to the Security Council, which could eventually impose sanctions on the isolated and poverty-stricken country. "I've already submitted the report to the board saying that North Korea is in noncompliance, so we need to get the board to certify that conclusion," ElBaradei told reporters upon arriving in Vienna from New York.

4. DPRK on Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "NORTH KOREA REJECTS MULTILATERAL TALKS," Seoul,

01/31/03) and the New York Times (Erik Eckholm, "NORTH KOREA PRESSES DEMAND FOR DIRECT TALKS WITH US," Beijing, 01/31/03) reported that blaming the current impasse on deceit and hostility by the Bush administration, a DPRK diplomat today renewed Pyongyang's demand for direct negotiations with the US on nuclear weapons. Speaking in Beijing, Choe Jin Su, DPRK ambassador to Beijing, rejected US proposals to take the issue to the United Nations. "We will never participate in any form of international talks" on our nuclear programs, he told reporters. The US wants the DPRK's compliance with nuclear agreements to be discussed at the United Nations Security Council, which would have the legal power to impose economic sanctions if violations were found. But the DPRK opposes United Nations involvement and has warned that it would regard sanctions as tantamount to an act of war. "This issue should be solved through bilateral negotiations between the DPRK. and the US," Choe said. The ambassador did not comment directly on new assertions by US intelligence officials that the North was moving stockpiled nuclear fuel rods out of storage, possibly preparing to reprocess them into bomb-grade plutonium. But he did day that the assertion by US officials last fall that the DPRK had admitted to starting a second covert weapons program, involving uranium enrichment, was "a sinister plot invented by the extreme warmongers in the US."

5. ROK Secret DPRK Funds Transfer

The New York Times (Don Kirk, "SOUTH KOREAN LEADER ASSAILED ON FUNDS TRANSFER TO NORTH," Seoul, 01/31/03) reported that ROK President Kim Dae Jung faced mounting pressure today to provide a detailed account of why nearly US$200 million was moved to the DPRK shortly before he flew to Pyongyang for his summit meeting with the DPRK leader, Kim Jong Il, in June 2000. The opposition Grand National Party, which controls a majority of seats in the National Assembly, said Kim "must reveal all details of secret-room deals with North Korea" and called on him to "apologize for lying to the people." Opposition politicians, as well as some news organizations, asserted that government officials had denied the money transfer until government auditors verified that the funds had moved through a large corporation involved in an elaborate tourism project with DPRK. Prosecutors are now weighing whether to bring charges against some of the major figures involved in the transfer and are also investigating reports that other funds also wound up in DPRK. Kim's foes have strongly suggested that the funds were linked to Kim Jong Il's decision to meet with his South Korean counterpart. The meeting was later cited in the citation awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Kim Dae Jung in October 2000. Noting that the government was no longer denying accusations of the transfer of funds, JoongAng Ilbo, Korea's second-largest newspaper, said the issue was "whether the government paid off the North to make a summit meeting between the two Koreas possible." The newspaper said President Kim should "come out with the facts" before the National Assembly "invokes its investigative power to get the facts out of him."

6. PRC DPRK Refugee Crackdown

USA Today (David J. Lynch, "CHINA TRIES TO STAUNCH INFLUX OF NORTH KOREANS," TUMEN," China, 01/31/03) reported that the PRC is in the midst of a harsh crackdown on DPRK refugees. Over the past two months, more than 3,200 DPRK asylum seekers have been seized inside the PRC along the wintry border with the DPRK and forcibly repatriated, according to the humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders. An additional 1,300 are awaiting their forced return in two PRC detention camps, including one near here that has its walls painted an incongruous pink. "Almost every day, they're arresting North Koreans and sending them back to brutal persecution," says Kim Sang Hun, a refugee activist in Seoul. "On the Korean issue, China is a status-quo power," says Chu Shulong of Tsinghua University in Beijing. "China does not want to see a hostile or chaotic North Korea."

7. PRC US Falun Gong Imprisonment

The Washington Post (Philip P. Pan, "CHINA JAILS US CITIZEN, ALLEGING FALUN GONG 'SABOTAGE,'" Beijing, 01/31/03) reported that PRC police have arrested a US citizen visiting relatives in China on charges he sabotaged radio and television systems in behalf of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement, US officials said today. Charles Li, 37, a businessman and Falun Gong activist from Menlo Park, California, was arrested January 24 immediately after arriving in the southern city of Guangzhou on a flight from California, friends said. Police transferred him two days later to a jail in Yangzhou, a small city about 100 miles northwest of Shanghai. A US consular official was allowed to visit Li on Wednesday and reported that he appeared to be in good health, a spokeswoman for the US Embassy said. She said PRC authorities have charged him with "sabotage of radio and television broadcast systems in Yangzhou." The PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Zhang Qiyue, said Li damaged public facilities and disturbed the lives of PRC citizens. "Those who damage China's public facilities will definitely be investigated and punished."

8. Japan HIV Increase

The Associated Press ("JAPAN'S HIV CASES ROSE IN LAST 3 MONTHS OF 2002," Tokyo, 01/31/03) reported that a total of 5,121 people in Japan had tested positive for HIV through December, an increase of 139 from three months earlier, Japan's health authorities said Friday. Most of the new cases, or 77, were transmitted via homosexual contact, said Makoto Iwakura, a spokesman for the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. An additional 45 people contracted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, through heterosexual contact. There were no reported cases of transmission through infected needles in Japan, where drug use is relatively rare. Also during the October-December period, 61 HIV-positive people developed full-blown AIDS, bringing Japan's total number of AIDS patients to 2,549, Iwakura said. Four other patients died from AIDS in the period, he added. Critics say actual numbers of HIV-infected patients in Japan are likely much higher, because many people shy away from being tested for the disease to avoid facing discrimination. The ministry's committee on AIDS surveillance began meeting every three months to compile statistics in 1984, when Japan's first AIDS patient was diagnosed.

9. Ehime Maru Final Settlement

The Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN SUB VICTIMS SETTLE WITH NAVY," Tokyo, 01/31/03) reported that the last two families of the 35 people on a Japanese fishing boat that was accidentally hit and sunk by a US submarine settled with the Navy on Friday. The settlement, signed at the US Embassy in Tokyo, ends all negotiations over compensation from the accident, said Makoto Toyoda, a lawyer representing the two families. Nine people were killed when the Ehime Maru sank on Feb. 9, 2001 after the USS Greeneville smashed into it during a surfacing maneuver. There were 35 high school students, teachers and crew aboard. Friday's signing brings the total settlement paid to the families of the nine victims and 26 survivors to US$16.5 million, the US Navy said in a statement. The figure includes a combined package of US$13 million for the other 33 families signed in November. Toyoda refused to disclose the amount paid to the two last families. Kyodo News reported that the amount roughly matched that of the others.

10. DPRK US Military "Photo Exhibition" The Korean Central News Agency of DPRK ("PHOTO EXHIBITION ON GIS' MURDER OF SCHOOLGIRLS OPENS," Pyongyang, 01/31/03) reported that a photo exhibition showing the US imperialists' killing of ROK schoolgirls was opened at the central youth hall here on Jan. 29. On display are photos showing the struggle of the ROK people and

students to condemn the US imperialist aggression troops for driving an armored car over ROK schoolgirls Sin Hyo Sun and Sim Mi Son to death, punish the criminals and drive the US troops out of South Korea. Exhibited are photos showing the US military court announcing the results of deceptive investigation and giving a verdict of not guilty to the criminals and the bereaved families getting angry at it. Other photos show candle-light demonstrations, hunger strikes, protest visits and other forms of anti-US struggle of the ROK people of all strata demanding punishment of the US criminals, an open apology of Bush, total revision of the unequal ROK-US Status of Forces Agreement and withdrawal of the US troops. An opening ceremony of the photo exhibition was attended by presidium members of the DPRK headquarters of the national alliance of youth and students for the country's reunification, members of its central committee, officials of the Kim Il Sung Socialist Youth League, youth and students in Pyongyang. Kim Kyong Ho, first secretary of the central committee of the youth league, made an opening address.

II. Japan

1. Japan on Possible US Attack on Iraq

Kyodo ("U.S. MUST PROVE IRAQI THREAT: KAMEI," Washington, 1/24/03) reported that the US should cooperate closely with the international community in responding to issues centering on Iraq, Shizuka Kamei, former policy chief of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), said. "When the US acts as the world policeman, it should gain the respect and trust of the citizens of the world," Kamei said in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Kamei, making a one-week US tour, said the US should provide specific evidence that Iraq is a dangerous country and obtain support from Arab countries for military action. "If those conditions are met, Japan, although there are constitutional restraints, will provide effective support to the US," said Kamei.

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN COULD USE SDF WARSHIPS TO EVACUATE CITIZENS FROM GULF," 01/24/03) reported that the Japanese government is considering using Self-Defense Forces (SDF) ships now in the Indian Ocean to evacuate Japanese nationals from the Persian Gulf area if the US attacks Iraq. If implemented, this would be the first use of SDF ships to extract Japanese from trouble spots abroad. The government plans to use government aircraft or SDF planes including C130 transports to airlift its citizens to safety if commercial flights are unavailable. However, acquiring the needed permits and flying these aircraft from Japan would be time-consuming. The sources said the SDF destroyers already on station in the Indian Ocean could reach evacuation points quicker. The Defense Agency and the Foreign Ministry are now conducting simulation drills for the evacuation of Japanese personnel, according to the sources.

2. Japan's Crisis Management Plan

The Japan Times ("MINISTRY PANEL MAY REVIEW CRISIS-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM," 01/23/03) reported that a Japanese Foreign Ministry advisory panel on ministry reforms agreed to think about reviewing its crisis-management system, according to the head of the panel. The panel agreed to consider the issue after members asked whether the deputy vice foreign minister, who is also in charge of crisis management at the ministry, would be able to respond to a crisis on a 24-hour basis over a long period, according to Yoshihiko Miyauchi, who is also chairman of Orix Corp. Panel members believe North Koreans and Japanese nationals fleeing DPRK could become a major problem, Miyauchi said.

3. SDF's Landmine

The Japan Times ("LAST SDF LAND MINES TO BE DESTROYED," 01/24/02) reported that Japan will finish disposing of antipersonnel land mines held by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) on Feb. 8, in line with the Ottawa Treaty, Tetsuro Yano, senior vice foreign minister, said. In line with the treaty, Japan was required to dispose of the SDF's roughly 1 million land mines by the end of February. A ceremony marking the completion of the land-mine disposal will be held at an Air Self-Defense Force base in Shinasahi, Shiga Prefecture, Yano said. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will attend.

4. US Bases in Japan

Kyodo ("USS KITTY HAWK LEAVES YOKOSUKA TO MONITOR KOREAS," Yokosuka, 01/24/03) reported that the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk left from the US Navy base in Yokosuka to monitor the Korean Peninsula, navy sources said. The sources said the 83,960-ton Kitty Hawk is expected to stand by off Japan, given increasing tensions in North and South Korea following DPRK's announcement of its withdrawal from an international nuclear accord, and will not head for Iraq. According to the navy sources, the US has yet to issue orders for the Kitty Hawk to be involved in a possible attack on Iraq. A local citizens' group protested the move, raising a banner reading, "Don't Kill," on a pleasure boat.

5. SDF's Anti-terrorist Drill

The Japan Times ("AGENCY DRILLS FOR TERRORIST ATTACK," 01/26/03) reported that the Japanese Defense Agency has conducted a drill involving geographic scenarios to prepare for the possibility of terrorist attacks involving biochemical weapons, Defense Agency sources said. The drill was the first of its kind to include participation by all three forces comprising the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) and the agency headquarters. Parts of the drill apparently reflected concerns about the DPRK, which is suspected of possessing biochemical weapons, the sources said. According to the sources, the exercise was carried out on the assumption that a number of citizens had been infected with smallpox and anthrax spread by terrorists. The agency is also considering conducting a drill that would involve actual mobilization of SDF personnel and equipment.

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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