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United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Situation

US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, on a visit to the ROK, also reiterated the US's willingness to hold talks with the DPRK, in spite of the DPRK's statement on Friday that it was pulling out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Kelly's visit came amid intense diplomatic efforts to defuse the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Kelly hinted at energy aid following an hour of talks with ROK President-elect, Roh Moo-hyun. "Once we get beyond nuclear weapons, there may be opportunities with the US, with private investors, with other countries to help North Korea in the energy area," Kelly said.

"US on DPRK Nuclear Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, US)

2. Russia-US Missile Defense Cooperation?

Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov on Tuesday reaffirmed Russia's criticism of the prospective US missile shield, but added that Russia might cooperate with the US in building its components. Repeating last year's statement by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Ivanov said that the US withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty banning such defenses was a "mistake" but not a threat to Russia's national security. "We don't exclude the possibility of cooperation with the United States on some elements of such system if it will be created," Ivanov told reporters after talks with visiting Japan's defense chief Shigeru Ishiba. "Our possible participation is linked to certain conditions - primarily our national security and economic interests," Ivanov said.

"Russia-US Missile Defense Cooperation?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK's NPT Treaty Withdrawal

The DPRK announced on January 13, 2003, that it was withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) and threatened to resume missile testing. The DPRK also warned US it could be turned into a "sea of fire." Yet despite these threats, DPRK also proposed holding a ministerial meeting with the ROK, and DPRK envoys held informal talks with a US governor to discuss ways to resolve the nuclear standoff. DPRK's top diplomats have also voiced the need for talks between the two countries.

"DPRK's Two Pronged policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, ROK)

"DPRK Missile Tests" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, US)

2. Powell on DPRK NPT Withdrawal

US Secretary of State Colin Powell January 10 condemned the DPRK's announced intention to withdraw from the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but also expressed his desire "to continue to search for a solution." "The Non-Proliferation Treaty is an important international agreement," Powell told reporters at the State Department, "and this kind of disrespect for such an agreement cannot go undealt with." Powell delivered his remarks following a January 10 meeting with Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in which ElBaradei briefed the secretary on proliferation issues relating to DPRK and Iraq. ElBaradei said the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT "is a very serious issue," because the NPT remains a cornerstone of nuclear arms control.

"Powell on DPRK NPT Withdrawal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, US)

"Global Response to DPRK Nuke Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

3. US on DPRK Diplomacy

A top US diplomat seeking Asian support in getting the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions said Wednesday he was "very reassured" at how talks were going. US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said he was looking forward to face-to-face contact with his PRC counterparts in his third visit to Beijing in as many months. Kelly arrived from Seoul on Tuesday night. "I had excellent meetings in (South) Korea," he said, leaving his hotel for the PRC Foreign Ministry on Wednesday morning. "I'm very reassured. We have to keep talking with each other to make sure that things are done in the best possible way."

"US on DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, US)

4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Capability

The ROK on Thursday it was prepared for a worst-case scenario that included war on the peninsula if diplomacy failed to resolve the crisis over the DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons ambitions. At the same time, the top US envoy for Asia said in Beijing the whole international community agreed that the Korean peninsula must be free of nuclear weapons but held out little hope of a speedy outcome. In Seoul, ROK Defense Minister Lee Jun told parliament that war would be unavoidable if diplomacy failed. "If the North Korean nuclear problem cannot be solved peacefully and America attacks North Korea, war on the Korean peninsula will be unavoidable," Lee said. "Our army is prepared for the worst-case scenario."

"ROK on DPRK-ROK Nuclear Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

"ROK on DPRK Nuclear Capability" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

"ROK-US Relations on Nuclear Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

5. DPRK Response to US Nuclear Diplomacy

The DPRK today dismissed the Bush administration's recent offer to resume aid if Pyongyang abandons its nuclear weapons programs, calling the overtures "nothing but a deceptive drama to mislead the world public opinion." "The US loudmouthed supply of energy and food aid are like a painted cake pie in the sky," the DPRK's Foreign Ministry declared in a statement distributed by the official Korean Central News Agency. The DPRK's rejection of the Bush offer left the administration with few policy options while facing the likely prospect that the DPRK will now resume its recent course of confrontation. On Tuesday, the DPRK issued a veiled and vague threat that it would soon employ "options."

"DPRK Response to US Nuclear Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

"DPRK Response to US Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

"DPRK on Nuclear Standoff" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

6. PRC-US DPRK Diplomacy

The PRC offered Tuesday to host talks between the US and the DPRK in a bid to end their standoff, and the DPRK warned it was running out of patience with the US, threatening to exercise undefined "options." A vaguely worded statement from the DPRK did not specify what options it was considering, but suggested the DPRK was prepared to escalate the crisis over its drive to develop nuclear weapons. The US welcomed the PRC's offer but stopped short of calling the development a breakthrough.

"PRC-US DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

"DPRK Nuclear Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

"PRC, US Views on DPRK Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

7. DPRK-ROK Cabinet Level Talks

The ROK and the DPRK agreed Wednesday to hold Cabinet-level talks in Seoul next week amid tension over the DPRK's nuclear weapons development, the ROK said. The ROK accepted the DPRK's proposal to hold the talks on January 21-24, a week later than suggested by the ROK, said Kim Jung-ro, a spokesman at the ROK's Unification Ministry. ROK officials have said they would use the talks to persuade the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions. The DPRK and ROK have held eight rounds of Cabinet-level talks since a historic summit of their leaders in 2000. The last round of talks was held in October, days after US officials said that North Korea admitted to having a secret nuclear weapons program using enriched uranium.

"DPRK-ROK Cabinet Level Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

"DPRK-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

8. Russia DPRK Diplomacy

Russian President Vladimir Putin is sending a special envoy to Beijing, Pyongyang and Washington to help mediate the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear program, Russia's defense minister said Tuesday. Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov will travel shortly to the PRC, the DPRK and the US as part of international efforts to negotiate a diplomatic solution to the conflict, Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov told reporters after talks with Japan's defense chief Shigeru Ishiba. Ivanov wouldn't give exact dates for Losyukov's tour or elaborate on his mission. "During the last few days, there have been encouraging statements that mean that the situation could be returned to as it was the before North Korea withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and the status quo could be restored," Ivanov said. He reaffirmed Russia's condemnation of the DPRK's withdrawal from the landmark treaty barring the spread of nuclear weapons, saying the move was "deplorable." However, he said that DPRK should not be threatened. "The problem should be solved by political means without dictating to and pressuring North Korea," Ivanov said.

"Russia-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

"Russia DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

9. Asking EU and Russia to Cooperate

Foreign Minister Choi Sung-hong called European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, Monday to seek European countries' support in persuading DPRK to abandon its nuclear threats, Choi's aides said. The aides said Choi emphasized that DPRK's nuclear issue should be resolved through diplomatic and peaceful means based on close cooperation among relevant countries, including EU countries and Russia. On Saturday, Choi called his Russian counterpart Igor Ivanov to ask for Moscow's assistance in settling the nuclear tension.

"Asking EU and Russia to Cooperate" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, ROK)

10. US DPRK Aid

US President Bush made an overt appeal to the DPRK yesterday, offering to consider agriculture and energy aid to the desperately poor country if it dismantles its nuclear weapons programs. President Bush insisted the US would not be "blackmailed" and said he would only contemplate assistance after the DPRK took steps to end its nuclear programs. But Bush's statement provided the clearest sign that the administration is prepared to engage in a dialogue it had once ruled out and would offer broad diplomatic and economic incentives to the DPRK for disarmament. "I had instructed our secretary of state [last summer] to approach North Korea about a 'bold initiative,' an initiative which would talk about energy and food, because we care deeply about the suffering of the North Korean people," Bush told reporters at the White House. "We expect them not to develop nuclear weapons. If they so choose to do so, their choice, then I will reconsider whether or not we will start the bold initiative that I've talked to Secretary [Colin L.] Powell about." The administration has not detailed exactly what was contained in the initiative, since it was never presented to the DPRK.

"US DPRK Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

"DPRK US Food, Energy Aid?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

11. Powell on New DPRK Agreed Framework?

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said the US will need "a new arrangement" to assure the DPRK was not producing nuclear weapons if the current crisis is defused, The Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday. Powell said a 1994 framework among the United States, allies and the DPRK to constrain Pyongyang's nuclear work "did not succeed in capping production" of fissile material. "I think, therefore, that we need a new arrangement and not just go back to the existing framework," Powell said in an interview with the newspaper. Incoming chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Indiana Republican Richard Lugar, said US allies support the 1994 framework but "would also support what Secretary Powell is suggesting, and that is there really has to be a better look-see by the rest of the world" at the DPRK's weapons work.

"Powell on New DPRK Agreed Framework?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

12. DPRK New Missile Development

The DPRK, which says it might resume missile tests, could be ready to test a two-stage rocket capable of reaching Alaska or Hawaii with a nuclear weapon-sized payload, according to US defense analysts. US officials say the DPRK is the world's No. 1 proliferator of missile technology, and the threat it poses is one reason why Washington plans to build a limited missile defense system by the end of 2004. US defense expert say the DPRK has one or two nuclear bombs, as well as chemical and biological weapons that can be deployed in warheads. DPRK technicians are believed to be working on the more advanced Taepodong-2. US defense experts believe that the missile, if deployed, could deliver a payload of several hundred pounds as far as Alaska or Hawaii, and a lighter payload to the western half of the continental United States.

"DPRK New Missile Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

13. DPRK DMZ Zone

The US military has spotted increased patrols by DPRK soldiers over the past week in one area of the Demilitarized Zone dividing the Korean Peninsula, said Lt. Col. Matthew Margotta, who commands a combined battalion of U.S. and South Korean soldiers. But the moves in the 4-kilometer-wide, 241-kilometer-long (2.5-mile-wide, 156-mile-long) DMZ were "not alarming, just unusual," and were probably "triggered by a heightening of tensions," said Margotta. The North Koreans have also occupied a guard tower in the DMZ that hadn't been used in years, he said.

"DPRK DMZ Zone" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

14. DPRK-ROK Cross-Border Railway

The DPRK on Thursday proposed opening talks next week with the ROK on connecting cross-border railway and roads. The ROK's Red Cross also said negotiators from the DPRK and the ROK would reopen talks next week about more reunions for family members separated when the peninsula was divided in 1945. The inter-Korean talks come amid tension over the DPRK's nuclear weapons development. On Thursday, the DPRK proposed the working-level talks for January 22-25 in Pyongyang, said Kim Jong-ro, spokesman for the ROK's Unification Ministry. The ROK did not immediately respond to the offer.

"PRK-ROK Cross-Border Railway" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

15. DPRK Energy Crisis

Most DPRK citizens get around on foot because there's little fuel to power vehicles, which lack spare parts. In winter, they often wear overcoats indoors because heating is scarce. The production of coal - a major source of energy - is low because there is not enough electricity to illuminate the mines. Factories that produce fertilizer in a country where food is in desperate need are often idle because of power cuts. By one estimate, the DPRK in rural areas get as little as 10 percent of the power that they had a decade ago. The United States has said it would consider energy aid for the DPRK if the dispute over its nuclear weapons development is resolved. "There's a lot that can be done across the board," said Timothy Savage, a Northeast Asia security analyst at Kyungnam University in Seoul.

"DPRK Energy Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

16. ROK US Military Force Visit

ROK's president-elect, Roh Moo Hyun, paid a hastily arranged ceremonial visit to US military headquarters here today, seeking to blunt a wave of anti-US sentiment and shore up the alliance as a nuclear crisis intensifies on the Korean Peninsula. "The majority of the Korean population does not forget the fact that US service members came to Korea to support us during the Korean war to ensure peace and freedom and sacrificed their blood in order to do so," said Roh, who takes office next month. "US forces in Korea are necessary at present for peace and stability, and they will be welcome and needed in the future," he told uniformed US military brass and their ROK counterparts. Roh acknowledged the frequent public demonstrations that have brought tens of thousands of people to the streets of the Seoul in recent months, many calling for an end to the US military presence.

"ROK US Military Force Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

"ROK US Military Base Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

17. IAEA on DPRK Aid

The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog said Wednesday that other countries are ready to help the DPRK if it resumes compliance with nuclear agreements and that Russia's plan to send an envoy there could be a catalyst in ending the crisis. At a news conference after meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, Mohamed ElBaradei said he made the assessment based on talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell, French officials and others. "There is full readiness ... once North Korea starts to come into compliance, to look favorably to North Korea's security concerns, North Korea's economic needs," said ElBaradei, who heads the International Atomic Energy Agency. "The elements of a solution are there on the table," he said. "I am heartened that Russia is sending an envoy. I hope that will start the process."

"IAEA on DPRK Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, US)

People's Republic of China

1. US Role in Across Taiwan Straits Relations

The US plans to participate in military exercises with Taiwan would damage the country's relations with PRC, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. "We have read relevant reports from the media and I want to point out here that any kind of military cooperation of exchanges between Taiwan and the US is a violation of the three Sino-US joint communiques and also damages Chins-US relations", ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said. According to the report, a local newspaper in Taiwan reported last week that the US military will participate in Taiwan's annual military drills later this year for the first time in 20 years. "US Role in Across Taiwan Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

2. PRC Internet Dissidence

The PRC has charged an internet dissident with trying to overthrow the government, according to a US-based human rights group. Ouyang Yi was charged by police in Chengdu, the southern province where he lives, on 7 January, Human Rights in China (HRIC) said. He is under detention, and his wife is reportedly borrowing money from friends in order to hire a lawyer to represent him in court. He could face up to 15 years in jail. Ouyang is the latest victim of a crackdown on free expression on the web. "PRC Internet Dissidence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 16, US)

3. PRC Domestic Economy

The PRC attracted a record \$52.7bn (£32.9bn) in foreign direct investment in 2002, but investment growth has slowed down from the previous year. Investment in the world's most populous country slowed to 12.5%, from 14.9% in 2001, after tailing off at the end of the year, the ministry of foreign trade said. The PRC government has made it easier for foreign companies to expand in the PRC and entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 has resulted in liberalization in some industries. "PRC Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

4. PRC and ROK on Koizumi Yasukuni Shrine

The PRC and the ROK have voiced their disapproval and anger over Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to a controversial shrine that honors his country's war dead. The PRC, which has been upset in the past at Koizumi's visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, said the move could "seriously damage" relations between the two East Asian nations. The PRC says the shrine glorifies Japan's military past and its mistreatment of Chinese during years of Japanese imperial rule. "It hurts the feelings of the Chinese people and other Asian countries," Foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue said on Tuesday. "We urge the Japanese government to treat seriously the issue with the correct attitude." The ROK said it felt "rage and great disappointment" at the visit. "PRC and ROK Reactions to Visit to Yasukuni" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, JAPAN)
"Koizumi Yasukuni Shrine Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

5. PRC's Commentary on Relations Across Taiwan Straits

According to the Overseas Edition of People's Daily, on Friday the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China approved the application of Taiwan's Far East Air Transport Corp to operate three round-trip Taipei-Shanghai charter flights during the Chinese New Year. To people who have wished for the opening of cross-Straits direct links, the first-ever Chinese New Year round-trip charter flights bring a renewed hope for more substantial progress that could come later this year. The article said that owing to barriers set by the Taiwan authorities, cross-Straits transactions have to be conducted via a third place, which has caused huge inconvenience and heavy economic loss.

"PRC's Commentary on Relations Across Taiwan Straits" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

6. PRC AID Humanitarian Crisis

Visiting US AIDS experts on Monday urged immediate action by the PRC to prevent further spread of the disease, while PRC health officials said the number of cases and deaths throughout the country had risen in the past year. "The AIDS epidemic is still very serious in China," said Qi Xiaoqiu, director general of the Disease Control Department in the Health Ministry. "Almost all the provinces and regions in China reported new cases of AIDS in 2002." Qi was among 120 participants at a one-day seminar aimed at increasing cooperation between the PRC and the United States in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

"PRC AID Humanitarian Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, US)

Japan

1. Japan-RF Relations over DPRK Issues

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was in the Russian Far East on the last day of a four-day visit to Russia. According to sources, Konstantin Pulikovskii, Russian President Vladimir Putin's representative for federal affairs in the region, who spent a great deal of time with Kim when he traveled to Siberia in August 2002, told Koizumi that Kim "is ready to negotiate as long as he is treated as an equal partner, be it bilaterally or multilaterally." Pulikovskii also reportedly told Koizumi that Kim wants to be "respected by his people and therefore reacts strongly when he appears to be under foreign pressure." Previously, there was speculation that Koizumi would ask Pulikovskii, who is in contact with Kim, to act as a mediator between Tokyo and Pyongyang on issues related to the abduction of Japanese by DPRK.

"Japan-RF Relations over DPRK Issues" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, JAPAN)

"Japan-Russia Relations on Nuclear Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, PRC)

2. Japan-RF Energy Relations

Junichiro Koizumi, on January 13, 2003, made the first visit since 1905 of a Japanese prime minister to the Russian Far East, a sprawling, resource-rich region that stretches from Siberia to disputed islands north of Japan. Donning a fur hat in the Arctic cold, Koizumi openly appealed for the construction of a 2,500-mile oil pipeline that would bypass the PRC, bringing Siberian oil to the Sea of Japan. "Russia, especially its Far Eastern region, has great energy potential, which must be fully used," Koizumi told reporters, echoing arguments he made in Moscow to President Vladimir V. Putin earlier in his four-day trip. Bringing Siberian oil east for the first time, the \$5 billion pipeline would be three times as long as the Trans-Alaska pipeline and would carry one million barrels of oil a day. The pipeline has a potential of cutting Japan's dependence on Middle Eastern oil to 65 percent, from 83 percent today, according to Japanese estimates.

"Japan-RF Energy Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 13, US)

3. Koizumi Yasukuni Shrine Visit

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Tokyo's Yasukuni shrine on Tuesday for the third consecutive year. The PRC said the visit could "seriously damage" relations with Japan. The shrine is dedicated to Japan's 2.5 million war dead, including wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, who was hanged for war crimes in 1948. Just hours after Koizumi's visit, the PRC's foreign ministry summoned Japan's ambassador in Beijing and issued an angry protest. Last October, then PRC President, Jiang Zemin, forcefully Koizumi never to visit the shrine again.

"Koizumi Yasukuni Shrine Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, US)

4. Japan Anti-war Movement

More than 30 Japanese non-governmental organizations will stage a demonstration in Tokyo this weekend to protest a possible US-led attack on Iraq, they said Tuesday. The rally will coincide with international antiwar protests in Washington and San Francisco that are expected to draw between 500,000 and 1 million people, as well as rallies in more than 25 countries and in more than 15 cities in Japan. The NGOs involved in the rally in Tokyo, which has been dubbed No More War! No Attack on Iraq, include Amnesty International Japan, the Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, Greenpeace Japan and Peace Boat. "The Japanese government says it will contribute to reconstruction of Iraq following a war, and is trying to get NGOs in on the plan," Maki Sato, a member of the No-War Network and the Japan International Volunteer Center, told a news conference. "But it's nonsense. The most important thing is not to go to war."

"Japan-RF Relations over DPRK Issues" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, JAPAN)

5. Japanese Plea for Banning Abductions

Japan has asked the UN to make abductions by foreign institutions illegal when international regulations on coercive disappearances are drawn up in the near future, Japanese officials said last Friday. The request was apparently filed to make it clear that the abductions of Japanese nationals by the DPRK between 1977 and 1983 were in violation of international law. Japan also called on the UN to include a clause in the new regulation that will ensure that abductees' children born in foreign countries return to their parents' home countries, the officials said.

"Japanese Plea for Banning Abductions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, JAPAN)

6. Ehime Maru Incident

Families of two victims of a 2001 collision between a US Navy submarine and the Ehime Maru, a Japanese high school fishing vessel, will reach a settlement with the Navy later this month in Tokyo, the families' lawyers said Tuesday. The lawyers said they will sign settlement accords with the Navy at the US Embassy on Jan. 31 on behalf of the relatives of Yusuke Terata, 17, who was a student at Uwajima Fisheries High School in Ehime Prefecture, and Toshimichi Furuya, 47, who was chief engineer of the vessel. The families are the last among relatives of the incident's nine dead and the 26 survivors from the ship to reach a settlement with the Navy.

"Ehime Maru Incident" (NAPSNet Daily Report, January 15, JAPAN)

[\(return to top\)](#)

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