

NAPSNET Week in Review 7 February, 2003

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United States

1. UN DPRK Meeting

The United Nations nuclear watchdog agency has decided to meet on February 12 to consider asking the UN Security Council to act against the DPRK, the head of the agency has said. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) wants the UN to consider what to do about the DPRK, which last month pulled out of a key anti-nuclear agreement. However, ElBaradei said he believed the Security Council would not necessarily opt for economic sanctions.

"UN DPRK Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

2. KEDO Budget Reduction

Joseph W. Bowab, deputy assistant secretary for foreign assistance programs and budget was questioned why the Bush administration had allocated no funding for continued heavy oil shipments to the DPRK for fiscal year 2004, Bowab said that when the budget was put together, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) had already decided to discontinue heavy fuel oil shipments. "As of the time we put the budget together, that decision still stands. So, naturally we did not request funding for heavy fuel oil in this budget." he said. Bowab said the KEDO secretariat is still operational, and there is sufficient funding in the secretariat to continue operations.

For the full transcript see:

"KEDO Budget Reduction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

3. US-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty

The US Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously endorsed a treaty today that obliges the US and Russia to cut their strategic nuclear arsenals by two-thirds over the next 10 years, granting President Bush a long-delayed foreign policy victory. The 19-to-0 vote sends the treaty, which was signed by Bush and President Vladimir V. Putin in Moscow last May, to the Republican-controlled Senate, which is expected to approve it later this month. The pact, known as the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, will reduce Russia's and the US' deployed nuclear arsenals to between 1,700 and 2,200 warheads, from about 6,000 each. Bush vowed to cut the US arsenal even if Russia did not match the reductions. But Russia did agree to cuts, provided that they were enshrined in a treaty. The new accord does not require the actual destruction of the warheads.

"US-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

4. US Citizens on DPRK

The Program on International Policy Attitudes ("Americans on North Korea," College Park, MD, 02/04/03) released a report today that according to a new poll by the Program on International Policy Attitude, the US public favors negotiation with North Korea, but are divided on whether the DPRK is willing to forego it's nuclear ambitions. 83% of respondents rejected the Bush administration's argument that "the US should not talk with North Korea until it first proves it is not developing nuclear weapons, because talking first would be submitting to blackmail."

For the full report:

"US Citizens on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK Nuclear Facility Re-activation

The DPRK said today it had carried out its vow to restart a small nuclear power plant that US officials suspect will be used to produce plutonium for weapons. In an announcement carried by its state-run news agency, the DPRK said the plant had resumed "normal footing" operation. The DPRK statement said the small research plant at Yongbyon, 55 miles north of the capital, would produce electricity for the power-starved nation. But experts say the five-megawatt plant is not large enough to provide any meaningful electrical power.

The ROK was unable to confirm on Thursday that the DPRK had restarted a nuclear reactor, Yonhap news agency quoted a Seoul official as saying. An overnight statement from the DPRK Foreign Ministry saying that the DPRK "is now putting the operation of its nuclear facilities for the production of electricity on a normal footing after their restart" pointed to a likely move to restart the facility at Yongbyon, the official was quoted as saying. "Carefully going over the text of the Korean Central News Agency report it looks more like language saying they were about to restart the facility, rather than they had actually restarted it," the unnamed official said.

"DPRK Nuclear Facility Re-activation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"ROK on DPRK Nuclear Re-activation?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"DPRK Nuclear Reactivation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

2. DPRK on Nuke Facility Attack

The DPRK warned Thursday that US pre-emptive attacks on its nuclear facilities would provoke a "total war." In an English-language statement, the DPRK said Wednesday that it "is now putting the operation of its nuclear facilities for the production of electricity on a normal footing after their restart." That triggered fears that Pyongyang was poised to produce weapons materials. However, a Korean-language statement monitored by the ROK's Yonhap news agency referred only to "our process to restart nuclear facilities for generating electricity and normalize their operation."

"DPRK on Nuke Facility Attack" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

3. DPRK-US Relations

The US White House on Thursday criticized the DPRK for talking about potential war over its nuclear ambitions, warning that the US has "robust plans for any contingencies," including military action. Presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer said there is a "real cause for concern" over the DPRK's assertions Wednesday that pre-emptive attacks on its nuclear facilities would trigger "total war." The US State Department's second ranking official said Tuesday he has no doubt that the US and the DPRK will open a dialogue on the DPRK's nuclear development programs.

The DPRK said on February 3rd, its military and people are fully prepared to counter what it called US plans to invade amid a nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. US officials have said they have no intention of invading the DPRK. "Our military and people are in full combat readiness to cope with US imperialist warmongers' indiscriminate military and political moves under their strategy to dominate the Korean Peninsula," the DPRK's official Radio Pyongyang quoted a military official as saying.

"US Response to DPRK War Threat" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"DPRK on ROK US Forces" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

"DPRK War Readiness" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

4. Senate Foreign Relations on Bush DPRK Policy

Senior members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday criticized the Bush administration's policy toward the DPRK as inadequate and called on the president to initiate talks to halt the DPRK government's nuclear program. Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.) charged that the US strategy is "largely reactive and predictable" and said the administration needs to regain the initiative. Committee Chairman Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) offered measured praise but said the White House should show "immediate US leadership" by opening a broad dialogue with the DPRK and designating a senior official to coordinate policy.

The full transcript can be found:

"Senate Foreign Relations on Bush DPRK Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"Senate Foreign Relations Committee on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

"Armitage DPRK Testimony to Senate Foreign Relations Committee" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

5. ROK-US-Russia DPRK Diplomacy

ROK President-elect Roh Moo-hyun plans to send envoys to Russia and the PRC this month for talks on the DPRK's nuclear development and other issues, his office said Monday. Roh aide Soon-hyung Chough will go to Russia, and Lee Hai-chan will go to the PRC, said Lee Nak-yon, Roh's spokesman. The envoys will discuss the DPRK's nuclear issue, bilateral relations and cooperation in Northeast Asia, Lee said. Details of the visit, including whom the delegation will meet, have not yet been finalized, he said.

"ROK-PRC-Russia Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

"ROK-US DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

6. US-ROK Military Reinforcements

The top US military commander in the ROK said he will consult with the ROK if reinforcements are needed amid a deepening crisis over the DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons development. "The combined (US-South Korean) forces are highly trained, well-equipped and superbly led," Gen. Leon J. LaPorte said Tuesday. "We will consult with the Ministry of National Defense if additional forces are required on the Korean peninsula for the accomplishment of our mission." LaPorte made his statement after US officials in Washington said US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld is considering sending an aircraft carrier to the waters off the Korean Peninsula and adding bombers in Guam.

"US-ROK Military Reinforcements" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

"DPRK Response to US ROK Reinforcements" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

"US Military on Reinforcements" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

"ROK US Military Reinforcements" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

"DPRK Rumsfeld US Bombers Alert" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

"US on DPRK Nuclear Plans" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

7. ROK "Secret Funds" Investigation

The ROK Grand National Party introduced a bill in parliament Tuesday that would appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate allegations that the ROK essentially bought a summit with the DPRK in 2000. The move to appoint an independent counsel came after state prosecutors decided Monday to drop an investigation into the alleged payoff scandal. "It's time to end illegal and abnormal South-North transactions," Park Hee-tae, acting chief of the Grand National Party, said on Tuesday.

"ROK "Secret Funds" Investigation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

"ROK DPRK "Secret Funds" Investigation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

8. DPRK-ROK Railway Opening

The ROK opened a road across its heavily militarized border with the DPRK on Wednesday, the first such connection between the countries in more than five decades. The ROK also said it wanted to take further steps toward reconciliation despite the DPRK's defiance over its nuclear program. In a conciliatory move on Wednesday, a group of 107 ROK tourism officials and business people traveled to a scenic mountain resort in the DPRK on a recently built cross-border road. Wednesday's trip was hoped to pave the way for organized tours by South Korean tourists.

"Inter-Korean Border Opening" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"DPRK-ROK Railway Opening" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

"Inter-Korean Tourism" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

9. Canada on DPRK Situation

Canada, one of the few nations to have diplomatic relations with the DPRK, said on Thursday it had urged the DPRK to show restraint in an increasingly tense nuclear stand-off with the US. But Foreign Minister Bill Graham distanced himself from the idea of sending a Canadian delegation to the DPRK, saying he did not want to do anything which could harm existing efforts to end the crisis.

"Canada on DPRK Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

10. DPRK Weapons Proliferation

A senior Bush administration official warned today that the DPRK, if allowed to reprocess spent nuclear fuel rods, could sell some of that fissile material to terrorists and other enemies of the US who are seeking to build nuclear weapons. The official, Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage, told senators on Capitol Hill that the DPRK's recent moves toward restarting a plutonium reprocessing facility could enable the country to build four to six new nuclear weapons within months. But Armitage also predicted that the DPRK, which is struggling to feed its people, would have sufficient bomb-grade plutonium to sell or trade to "a nonstate actor or a rogue state."

"DPRK Weapons Proliferation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

11. DPRK on Westernization

Bibles, pornography, mini-skirts and women wearing "very strange make-up" and artifacts of western culture has found its way to the DPRK, and DPRK government officials aren't happy about it, a Japanese newspaper reported Wednesday. Citing internal DPRK documents, the Sankei Shimbun daily said DPRK citizens who travel overseas on business were bringing home some unwelcome souvenirs. The result: a decline in morals, a growing divorce rate and rising popularity of fortune tellers. The 16-page document, which Sankei said was issued by a DPRK ruling party publisher and given to senior officials last year, contains ideas to be drawn upon in public speeches. The document also said those who own television sets and radios were listening to broadcasts from the ROK and other neighboring countries, and that young people in particular were memorizing ROK songs and bragging about it. Recent visitors to the DPRK, however, have seen no evidence of Western fads, even in the capital of Pyongyang.

"DPRK on Westernization" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC Response to US Iraq Attack

Asian reaction to the US case against Iraq has been cautious with major ally Japan stopping short of openly backing military action without United Nations endorsement and the PRC stressing that a political solution is still the best strategy. Speaking after US Secretary of State Colin Powell's address to the U.N. Security Council, PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan said the latest information would help weapons inspectors complete their task and that evidence should be handed over to them immediately. Tang also said it was the view of the U.N. arms inspectors that "now they are not in a position to draw conclusions, and they have suggested continuing the inspections." "We should respect the views of the two U.N. agencies and support the continuation of their work," he said. "As long as there is still the slightest hope for political settlement, we should exert our utmost to achieve that," he said.

"Asian Response to US Iraq Attack" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

2. PRC Media on US-Iraq Situation

There is an upsurge of stories and opinion-editorial pieces in the PRC media slamming the US "unilateralist" approach to the Iraqi crisis. The China Daily last week ran an editorial blasting the US' "arrogant and impatient" reactions to the findings of the United Nations weapons inspectors. Sina.com carried a provocative piece entitled "Do China's car owners have to foot the bill for the 'dump Saddam Hussein' [campaign]?" The article went further than saying oil prices would increase in the wake of war. It castigated the George W. Bush administration for hijacking the norms of international relations and forcing the rest of the world to subsidize its bid to punish Baghdad.

"PRC on US-Iraq Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

3. PRC Space Flight Goal

As the PRC laments the demise of the US craft and crew of "real heroes," it is looking beyond the disaster and intimating that its own dreams of the stars remain undaunted - including a first manned flight reportedly planned for later this year. Articles about the shuttle were peppered with musings about the PRC's own space program, increasingly a symbol of national pride characterized by the government as evidence that the PRC has become a world-class nation. "China hasn't made a ship that can be used repeatedly - ours is only for one-time use," he said. "This accident provides lessons and experiences for our research and manufacturing work."

"PRC Space Flight Goal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 3, US)

Japan

1. Japan on US-Iraq Situation

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Thursday that Japan wants a new United Nations resolution before the United States decides to attack Iraq, his spokeswoman said. "In the future, we will be monitoring the debate, while taking a stance that is in accordance with the international community," he was quoted as saying at his official residence by his spokeswoman, Misako Kaji. Kaji said he made the comment in response to Japanese reporters' questions. Following Powell's speech, Koizumi told Parliament Thursday that the US evidence had deepened suspicions over Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction. He stressed that Iraq holds the key to whether a peaceful solution can be reached. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, in a statement, also stressed that the onus is on Iraq.

"Japan on US-Iraq Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 6, US)

"Japan's View on Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

"View of Iraqis to Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

2. Japan on UN Inspection against Iraq

Japan agrees with the conclusion of the UN inspectors that Iraq has failed to cooperate sufficiently with their probe into its suspected weapons of mass destruction program.

"Judging from the result of the report and previous findings, we believe (Iraq) has not cooperated fully," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference after the inspectors' report to the UN Security Council was made public in New York. However, Fukuda said the report must be studied further and Japan continues to urge Iraq to clear up suspicions about its development and possession of weapons of mass destruction. Fukuda declined comment on whether UN inspectors should be given more time to conduct their investigations. "It's up to the Security Council to decide. We'll wait and see that discussion."
"Japan on UN Inspection against Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

3. Japan on DPRK Economic Sanctions

Japan plans to ask countries looking to have economic sanctions imposed on DPRK at an early stage to proceed cautiously, senior Japanese government officials said Monday. Japan is adopting this stance as the IAEA is likely to decide at an emergency meeting of its board members on Feb. 12 to refer the DPRK nuclear standoff to the UN Security Council. Japan also intends to strengthen its call to have the DPRK issue discussed by the five permanent members of the Security Council together with Japan and ROK.

"Japan's on DPRK Economic Sanction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

4. DPRK Japanese Nationals

A former DPRK spy said Wednesday that about 100,000 Japan-born Koreans and Japanese nationals living in the DPRK want to flee their "hell," and urged Japan to welcome those who make the dangerous journey. Disguised in a wig, sunglasses and a gauze mask, Kenki Aoyama said those who left Japan for the DPRK under a repatriation program organized by Pyongyang decades ago are living in near-starvation conditions in the DPRK. "I would say 100 percent of them want to come to Japan. Why? North Korea is hell," Aoyama, who goes by a pseudonym, told a news conference in Tokyo. Aoyama, a Japan-born Korean, was 21 when he left Japan for the DPRK in 1960.

"DPRK Japanese National" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

5. Japan DPRK Missile Exports?

A Japanese machinery firm suspected of exporting arms-related technology to Iran has also illegally shipped to DPRK equipment capable of producing solid fuel for missiles. Seishin Enterprise Co. Ltd. exported a Jet Mill grinder to a firm controlled by the DPRK Ministry of People's Armed Forces in 1994, Kyodo News and the Yomiuri Shimbun said Wednesday, quoting sources. The Tokyo-based grinding and measuring equipment manufacturer sold the equipment for 20 million yen (167,000 dollars) and shipped it through a DPRK cargo-passenger ship from Niigata, central Japan, the sources said. Japanese police alleges the grinder may have been used by the DPRK military, unnamed officials said. Neither police nor customs officials would comment on the case and the company also declined to comment. Exports of the grinder are restricted under the trade law because of its dual-use technology.

"Japan DPRK Missile Exports?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 5, US)

6. Japan Foreign Aid Reduction

Japan, the world's second-biggest aid donor, is planning to cut its overseas assistance again this year, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. The move underlines how the nation's sputtering economy has strapped the government budget. Spending on official development aid in the proposed 2003 budget is slated to drop 9.4 percent to \$9.64 billion from \$10.6 billion last year. The government shaved 11.9 percent from foreign aid in 2002. The proposed budget includes cuts in both overseas loans and grants. Grant aid for 2003 is to fall 8 percent from last year, while loan assistance is slated for a 3.5 percent decrease, a Foreign Ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

"Japan Foreign Aid Reduction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

7. Abduction Issue in Japan-DPRK Relations

The Association of Families of Victims Kidnapped by North Korea (AFVKN) fears interest in the issue will lose steam because world attention is focused on Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, not the abductions. The two members of the support group National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea (NARKN) are carrying a message to be handed to U.S. President George W. Bush and one addressed to the American public. The association representing the families as well as the support group are working for the return of all Japanese abducted by DPRK, as well as family members. The two groups also plan to send the delegation to Europe to rekindle global interest in the issue.

"Abduction Issue in Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

8. Lawsuit on Fast Breeder Reactor

The Nagoya High Court reversed a lower court decision and nullified the Japanese government's 1983 go-ahead for construction of the trouble-plagued Monju fast-breeder nuclear reactor in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture -- a ruling that could lead to the costly plant being mothballed. In a landmark decision favoring residents seeking to halt construction or operation of nuclear reactors, the ruling supported the claim of the plaintiffs, who blamed a massive leak of sodium coolant at the plant in 1995 on shortcomings in the government's preconstruction safety assessments. "Flaws exist in the safety assessments needed to prevent an accident like leakage of radioactive material inside a reactor to the neighboring environment," presiding Judge Kazuo Kawasaki said in the ruling at the court's Kanazawa branch. "Thus the possibility of concrete threats cannot be discounted."

"Lawsuit on Fast Breeder Reactor" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

9. Plutonium in Japan

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) ruled out the possibility of nuclear proliferation emanating from the Tokai nuclear fuel reprocessing plant, saying the plutonium shortfall detected at the plant matches an agency estimate. The UN nuclear watchdog has long bemoaned the inaccuracy of measurements conducted at nuclear fuel reprocessing plants, and has cited discrepancies at the Tokai plant between the calculated amount of plutonium in spent nuclear fuel prior to reprocessing and the actual amount extracted.

"Plutonium in Japan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, Japan)

Russia Federation

1. Russia on US Missile Defense Plans

The Associated Press ("RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS WASHINGTON'S MISSILE DEFENSE PLANS DESTABILIZING," Moscow, 02/04/03) re[ported that Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on Tuesday reaffirmed Russia's criticism of the US missile defense plans, saying they were harmful for Russia's security and global strategic stability. "Some negative trends in global politics challenge Russia's security interests," Ivanov said on a visit to the Khronichev State Research and Production Center, Russia's top rocket manufacturer. "There are many unresolved issues in the sphere of strategic stability, and they are exacerbated by unilateral US actions." US plans to develop a missile shield "may trigger a new race of missiles and counter-missiles," Ivanov said in speech before space officials.

"Russia on US Missile Defense Plans" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

2. Russia on DPRK and UN Security Council

The Associated Press ("RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY WARNS IT WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE TO REFER THE NORTH KOREA STANDOFF TO THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL," Moscow, 02/04/03) reported that the Russian Foreign Ministry warned Tuesday that it would be counterproductive to refer the nuclear standoff with the DPRK to the United Nations Security Council. "As before, we still believe that the possibility for diplomatic dialogue between the interested sides is not exhausted," Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko said, according to the Interfax news agency. "In this connection, submitting the question about North Korea to the U.N. Security Council now would be counterproductive." The US wants to bring the issue before the U.N. Security Council, which could impose sanctions against Pyongyang. The 35-nation board of governors of the U.N. International Atomic Energy is due to meet February 12 in Vienna to discuss the standoff, a meeting that could refer the dispute to the Security Council.

"Russia on DPRK and UN Security Council" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

3. Russia Oil Production

The New York Times (Sabrina Tavernise, "RUSSIA UNABLE TO SHIP ALL ITS PLENTIFUL OIL," Moscow, 02/04/03) reported that Russia may be bumping up against a ceiling on its ability to export more oil. One big producer is already experiencing pipeline bottlenecks, and a senior executive of another warned today that the country would face a serious problem by autumn. As Russia steps up its oil production and takes more market share from producers in the Middle East, its means of exporting oil - ports, pipelines and rail lines - are running at or near capacity. Oil companies here earn far more from exports than from domestic sales, and the big producers are scrambling to find new routes out of Russia for their crude. Several companies want to build new pipelines, which until now have been owned exclusively by a state monopoly, Transneft. At a news conference today, Leonid Fedun, a vice president of Lukoil, currently the country's No. 2 oil producer (the leader is Yukos), said that by November the Russian oil industry would have a pool of 58 million to 131 million barrels of oil that it cannot export because Russia's pipeline system will have no room for it. By 2005, he said, Russian export needs will exceed capacity by 211 million barrels a year, or 580,000 barrels a day. "Transport is the common problem for all companies and for the entire oil industry," Fedun said. "For us, Priority No. 1 is preparing oil transportation infrastructure," he added. "In 2003, all the oil companies will be on their own, trying to save themselves."

"Russia Oil Production" (NAPSNet Daily Report, February 4, US)

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

ruary-2003/

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