NAPSNet Daily Report 10 December, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 10 December, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, 2007, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-10-december-2007/

NAPSNet Daily Report 10 December, 2007

NAPSNet Daily Report 10 December, 2007

Contents in this Issue:

- I. Napsnet
  - 1. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 2. Six-Party Talks
  - 3. ROK Aid to DPRK
  - 4. US-DPRK Relations
  - 5. DPRK Removal From Terrorism List
  - 6. Inter-Korean Military Talks
  - 7. Inter-Korean Rail Link
  - 8. Reunions of Separated Families
  - 9. DPRK-ASEAN Relations
  - 10. US-DPRK Cultural Exchanges
  - 11. Taiwan Politics
  - 12. PRC-Japan Relations

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times ("ASSESSING NK'S NUCLEAR STOCK REQUIRES MORE TECHNICAL INFORMATION", Washington, 2007/12/10) reported that estimating the DPRK's nuclear stock requires information on the country's weapons design and technical operation of the main reactor, which is currently lacking, according to a recent U.S. congressional research report. "A key factor in assessing how many weapons North Korea can produce is whether North Korea needs to use more or less material than the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) standards of 8kg of plutonium and 25kg of highly enriched uranium per weapon," the report said. "The amount of fissile material used in each weapon is determined by the design sophistication. There is no reliable public information on North Korean nuclear weapons design," said the report titled "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Latest Developments."

(return to top)

2. Six-Party Talks

Yonhap ("SIX-WAY WORKING GROUP ON N. KOREA TO MEET THIS WEEK: MINISTRY", Seoul, 2007/12/10) reported that negotiators from the nations in the six-party talks will meet in Beijing this week to discuss the provision of energy and economic assistance, the ROK Foreign Ministry said Monday. The working group talks, chaired by the ROK, will meet Tuesday and Wednesday, said Cho Hee-yong, a spokesman for the ministry.

(return to top)

3. ROK Aid to DPRK

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NKOREA TO RECEIVE STEEL IN NUCLEAR DEAL", Seoul, 2007/12/09) reported that the ROK plans to send 5,010 tons of steel to the DPRK next week as part of an aid-for-disarmament deal, an official said Sunday. The steel shipment, the first of several, will depart for the DPRK port of Nampo on Dec. 17, the Foreign Ministry official said. The official also said Seoul is pushing for a working group meeting with the U.S. and other regional partners this week in Beijing to discuss the issue of energy-related equipment aid for the DPRK, though the exact date for the proposed meeting has not been finalized.

(return to top)

4. US-DPRK Relations

Donga Ilbo ("'BUSH SENT KIM A LETTER TO PREVENT DEADLOCK'", 2007/12/10) reported that US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill said December 7

that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has not yet replied to the letter from U.S. President George W. Bush. "But besides handing over the private letter, I also spent hours talking with North Korean officials, and I believe they will show a response," he added. “The Bush administration is waiting for a reply from Kim Jong Il,” said a source in Washington. “Through a number of diplomatic channels, the U.S. administration unofficially sent messages to the South Korean government asking it to play a role in receiving a reply from North Korea as it did when President Bush sent out the letter Kim Jong Il.”

(return to top)

5. DPRK Removal From Terrorism List

Yomiuri Shimbun ("SURVEY: 76% IN U.S. WANT N. KOREA KEPT ON TERROR LIST", 2007/12/10) reported that seventy-six percent of people in the United States think Washington should keep the DPRK on its list of state sponsors of terrorism until the issue of Japanese abducted by Pyongyang agents is resolved, eclipsing the 75 percent of Japanese who feel this way, according to a joint survey by The Yomiuri Shimbun and Gallup Inc. Fifteen percent of respondents on both sides of the Pacific said they "disagree" or "somewhat disagree" with this idea. Only 27 percent of Japanese respondents and 22 percent of the U.S. respondents believe the six-party talks will help persuade Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons.

(return to top)

6. Inter-Korean Military Talks

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "GENERALS FROM KOREAS TO TALK FISHING ZONE, BORDER SECURITY", Seoul, 2007/12/10) reported that the two Koreas' militaries will begin a new round of general-level talks from Monday to discuss the planned creation of joint fishing zones in the disputed West Sea and other tension-easing measures, Seoul's Defense Ministry said Monday. The two militaries will also seek ways to provide security guarantees for transportation to and from the Gaeseong Industrial Complex. The meetings will also seek improved communications and swifter customs inspections at the complex.

(return to top)

7. Inter-Korean Rail Link

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "KOREAS TO BEGIN REGULAR CARGO TRAIN SERVICE THROUGH BORDER TUESDAY", Seoul, 2007/12/10) reported that the two Koreas will Tuesday launch a regular cargo train service through the DMZ for the first time since the end of the Korean War, officials said Monday. A group of ROK officials, including Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung, will travel to the DPRK's Panmun Station, just north of the inter-Korean border, Tuesday morning for a ceremony marking the launch of the rail service, a ministry official said. The trail will run daily on weekdays and return to the ROK everyday after making its run to the DPRK station, according to the ministry.

(return to top)

8. Reunions of Separated Families

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. CONGRESS PUSHES FOR U.S.-NORTH KOREAN FAMILY REUNIONS", Washington, 2007/12/10) reported that Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that House and Senate leaders on Thursday agreed to include a provision calling for a report on reunions between Korean-Americans and their relatives in the DPRK in a Department of Defense authorization bill. According to the release, the provision "requires the President to submit a report to Congress within six months that calls for the President to describe any efforts the U.S. government has taken to facilitate reunions between U.S. citizens and their relatives in North Korea. Those efforts include discussions with the North Korean government to permit family reunions." The provision also calls for "planning at the U.S. Embassy in Pyongyang, in the event of normalization between the two countries, to ease the way for American families to plan a reunion with their relatives in North Korea," the release said.

(return to top)

9. DPRK-ASEAN Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA SEEKING CLOSER TIES WITH SE ASIA", 2007/12/10) reported that the Hong Kong weekly Yazhou Zhoukan on Sunday said the DPRK is clearly making efforts to establish better diplomatic ties with Southeast Asia. It is also promoting friendly relations at a civilian level, not least by opening Korean restaurants there. The magazine said the DPRK is also keen to nurture a pool of economic, diplomatic and science specialists. The Yazhou Zhoukan said Pyongyang's wooing of Southeast Asia was part of a bid to overcome its chronic food shortages, since the countries are rich in rice, fish and marine products.

(return to top)

10. US-DPRK Cultural Exchanges

New York Times (Daniel J. Wakin, "PHILHARMONIC AGREES TO PLAY IN NORTH KOREA", New York, 2007/12/10) reported that the New York Philharmonic plans to visit Pyongyang in February. The trip, at the invitation of the DPRK, will be the first significant cultural visit by Americans to that country. US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill stated, "It would signal that North Korea is beginning to come out of its shell, which everyone understands is a long-term process. It does represent a shift in how they view us, and it's the sort of shift that can be helpful as we go forward in nuclear weapons negotiations."

(return to top)

11. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press (Peter Enav, "TAIWAN LEADER WON'T DECLARE INDEPENDENCE", Taipei, 2007/12/09) reported that Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian pledged Monday that before he steps down in May 2008 he will not declare formal independence. "Some say I will do something unexpected during the election season, including declaring independence. This is completely not the case." Chen made the comments immediately after holding a two-hour meeting with Ray Burghardt, the head of the American Institute in Taiwan. Regarding a planned referendum in March on whether the island should join the UN, Chen stated, "The referendum was initiated by the people. It has nothing to do with the president, and the government cannot revoke the referendum."

(return to top)

12. PRC-Japan Relations

Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN INFURIATED BY CHINA'S DELETIONS FROM JOINT PRESS COMMUNIQUE", Tokyo, 2007/12/10) reported that the PRC deleted two views of Japan from a joint press communique that the two countries had agreed upon during bilateral economic talks on Dec. 1, sources said over the weekend. The deleted parts were Japan's expressions of hope for a rise in the value of the yuan and Tokyo's mention of the PRC's role in an energy charter. "It is a reckless act that must not be conducted in diplomacy," a Japanese government official said.

(return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-10-december-2007/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org