NAPSNet Daily Report 11 March, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 11 March, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 11, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-11-march-2008/

NAPSNet Daily Report 11 March, 2008

NAPSNet Daily Report 11 March, 2008

Contents in this Issue:

- I. Napsnet
  - 1. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 3. ROK Policy Toward DPRK
  - 4. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 5. DPRK Abductions of Japanese
  - 6. ROK Military
  - 7. US Military in ROK
  - 8. US-ROK Relations
  - 9. ROK Energy Procurement
  - 10. Sino-Japanese Relations
  - 11. Cross Strait Relations
  - 12. PRC Government Organization
- II. ROK Report
  - 13. DPRK Nuclear Program

- 14. PRC Policy Toward DPRK

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press (Kelly Olsen, "REPORTS: NKOREAN, US NEGOTIATORS TO MEET", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill will meet DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan in Geneva Thursday and Friday, Yonhap News Agency reported from Washington. Officials at the U.S. embassies in the ROK and Japan said they could not confirm the news reports, and the ROK Foreign Ministry said it was checking them.

(return to top)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Herald ("NEW NUKE TEAM FACES SAME OLD CHALLENGES", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that the ROK government is likely to name a new team of nuclear negotiators soon. Analysts expect the new team will put more emphasis on coordinating with Washington. The choice of negotiators is likely to reflect the new government's key foreign policy of closer and stronger ties with Washington, observers say. Kim Sook, a veteran diplomat who formerly led the American affairs bureau at the Foreign Ministry, is tipped as the most likely candidate for the position of chief nuclear envoy.

(return to top)

3. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Associated Press ("SKOREA TO FOCUS ON NK DISARMAMENT", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that the ROK will carry out large investment and aid projects in the DPRK if the country reports substantial progress in dismantling its nuclear weapons programs, the ROK Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. The ministry also said it will intensify summits with regional powers to step up diplomatic pressure on the the DPRK to keep its promise to declare all its nuclear programs.

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times (Kim Yon-se, "LEE PROPOSES SHUTTLE DIPLOMACY WITH N.KOREA", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak on Tuesday expressed the hope that the

leaders of the two Koreas will meet frequently whenever possible. He made the remark after getting a foreign policy briefing from Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Yoo Myung-hwan in Seoul. The President asked, "Why can't leaders of the two Koreas meet as frequently as possible at a time when I meet U.S., Japanese and Chinese leaders through shuttle diplomacy?" He said during his tenure, he wants to hold inter-Korean summits frequently.

(return to top)

5. DPRK Abductions of Japanese

Asahi Shimbun ("TWO FORMER AIDES TO KIM JONG IL SUSPECTED OF ORDERING ABDUCTIONS", Tokyo, 2008/03/11) reported that two former senior DPRK officials -- Li Wan-gi, former director of the overseas intelligence investigation division, and Kan Hae-yong, former deputy director of the same division -- are suspected of ordering agents to snatch Kaoru Hasuike, Yukiko Okudo, Yasushi Chimura and Fukie Hamamoto in 1978. The identification of the two comes as Japanese police investigators have been rounding up accounts from DPRK defectors and other sources. The finding suggests that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il may have had more firsthand knowledge of the abductions than he has acknowledged.

(return to top)

6. ROK Military

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "LEE VOWS TO SPEED UP MILITARY OVERHAUL", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak on Tuesday pledged to speed up efforts to overhaul the military in order to cope with the various security threats of the new century. At a graduation ceremony at the Korea Military Academy, Lee stressed that strong military readiness will bolster peace and the road to advancement. "The security environment in the world and Northeast Asia is in rapid transition. To cope with changes in the global security landscape, we have to optimize the military structure and raise the efficiency of defense management," Lee said in his congratulatory address. "With the spread of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, future security threats could come to us from anywhere and in any form. As the highest leader of the armed forces, I will actively support the military's efforts to renew itself and respect the military's honor," Lee said.

(return to top)

7. US Military in ROK

Washington Post (Thom Shanker, "PROPOSAL WOULD LET U.S. TROOPS IN SOUTH KOREA HAVE FAMILIES WITH THEM", Washington, 2008/03/11) reported that Gen. B. B. Bell, commander of US forces in the ROK, is urging the Pentagon to allow thousands of troops stationed there to have spouses and children live with them during tours of duty. It would reverse decades of policy for the ROK, recognizing that an attack from the DPRK has become unlikely given the enduring American presence as a deterrent and the growth in size and sophistication of the ROK armed forces. General Bell said in an interview, “I am arguing for a slow but real movement toward more accompanied tours over there. It would result in a more enhanced quality of life.”

(return to top)

8. US-ROK Relations

Korea Times (Kim Yon-se, "SENIOR BUSH VISITS KOREA", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that former U.S. President George Herbert Walker Bush, arrived in the ROK Tuesday to perform backstage diplomacy by meeting with Korean dignitaries. The issues include talks about the military arms trade and business cooperation in the private sector, according to sources. Bush is expected to meet with President Lee Myung-bak at Cheong Wa Dae this week, a government source said.

(return to top)

9. ROK Energy Procurement

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "SEOUL TO PUT PRIORITY ON ENERGY DIPLOMACY", Seoul, 2008/03/11) reported that the ROK government will emphasize boosting economic cooperation with energy-rich countries around the world to secure sustainable energy resources, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said Tuesday. Under the plans, the ministry aims to establish an "energy cooperation belt" with countries with rich energy resources such as Russia, nations in Central Asia, Latin America and Southeast Asia. The government plans to hold a conference presided over by the President on cooperation with foreign nations in the field of energy and resources within the first half of the year, it said.

(return to top)

10. Sino-Japanese Relations

Yomiuri ("CHINA: JAPAN DIPLOMATS WERE SPIES", Tokyo, 2008/03/11) reported that a final ruling handed down by the Higher People's Court of Beijing Municipality in September 2006 concluded that two Japanese diplomats were spies for the Intelligence and Analysis Service of Japan's Foreign Ministry, which it ruled was an espionage organization, sources in Tokyo said Monday. The ruling said that a current high-ranking ministry official, who had worked at the organization, and the then first secretary of the Japanese Embassy in Beijing were spies. The ruling was part of the Beijing higher court's decision to uphold a sentence of life imprisonment imposed on a Chinese man, 48, who had met with the two Japanese officials.

(return to top)

11. Cross Strait Relations

Associated Press ("TAIWAN: CHINA BOOSTS MILITARY SPENDING", Taipei, 2008/03/11) reported that the PRC's sharp increase in military spending this year will shift the military balance against Taiwan, Col. Gong Chien-hua, an intelligence expert in the deputy chief of staff's office, said Tuesday. Gong told reporters that Taiwan believes the PRC's defense spending in 2008 will actually range from $110 billion to $170 billion, as much as 22 percent higher than Taiwan's estimate for China's 2007 military spending. The PRC's military buildup "is seriously affecting the military balance in the region," Gong said. "It is also threatening the security of major countries around the

world."

(return to top)

12. PRC Government Organization

Associated Press ("CHINA TO REVAMP MINISTRIES", Beijing , 2008/03/11) reported that the PRC unveiled plans Tuesday to revamp bureaucratic government ministries and create new agencies to help it tackle pressing issues such as nuclear energy, food and drug safety, environmental protection and the Internet. Under the plan presented to the national legislature, the government would create or enlarge five ministries and abolish or realign the functions of others, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

(return to top)

II. ROK Report

13. DPRK Nuclear Program

Munhwa Ilbo ("THE FIRST US-DPRK TALKS IN GENEVA AFTER THE INAUGURATION OF NEW ADMINISTRATION", 2008/03/11) wrote that another opportunity has arisen that will allow people to estimate whether the six-party talks on DPRK nuclear issues will take place again. Christopher Hill, the chief delegate of US and Kim Kye-Kwan, the chief delegate of DPRK, is planning a talk in Switzerland from March 13 to 14. The DPRK while participating in the talk cannot ignore Seoul, for the political stance of the DPRK toward the new ROK administration will show in the talks. It is our consistent indication that the Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Mu-Hyun administrations, for 10 years, had almost assisted the DPRK nuclear issue resolution being postponed.

(return to top)

14. PRC Policy Toward DPRK

Chosun Ilbo (Andrei Lankov, "[OPINION] MEASURES FOR CHINESE INTERVENTION IN TIMES OF DPRK IN NEED", 2008/03/11 20:00:00 GMT+0) carried an article by a professor of Kookmin University which said that the basic goal of the PRC, which is well aware of dangers of steps toward the DPRK, is to maintain the security of the PRC, Northeast Asia and its surrounding areas. I got the impression that the PRC does not wish to control and take responsibilities of DPRK. In order for the ROK to avoid permanent division, there is a need to alleviate the threat of PRC intervention beforehand in times of the DPRK in crisis. At the same time, the ROK must make moves to approach the DPRK people. Unfortunately, the ROK neither has the will to sacrifice itself for its brothers in the DPRK nor has a composed determination for judgment.

(return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-11-march-2008/

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