

NAPSNet Daily Report 14 January, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 14 January, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 14, 2008,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-14-january-2008/>

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I. Napsnet

1. Six-Party Talks

Korea Herald ("S. KOREA PUSHES FOR RESUMPTION OF SIX-WAY TALKS IN EARLY FEBRUARY", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Song Min-soon told Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi Monday that a new round of six-party talks should be held before mid-February. "With regard to the nuclear issue, related nations are in consultations," Song told reporters after his one-hour meeting with Wang. "I talked with him about the need for the six-way talks to be resumed in the near future."

New York Times (C.J. Shivers, "RUSSIA REGRETS SLOW PACE IN SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2008/01/12) reported that Russia regrets the slowed state of progress in the six-party talks but will fulfill its commitment to provide the DPRK with fuel oil this month so as not to slow diplomatic efforts further, a senior Russian diplomat said.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press ("SKOREA PRESIDENT-ELECT WILLING TO MEET KIM", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that ROK president-elect Lee Myung-bak said Monday that he was willing to meet DPRK leader Kim Jong-il anytime to try to persuade the country to give up its nuclear weapons programs. "If the summit between the leaders of South and North Korea will be a help in persuading the North to give up its nuclear programs and improve South-North Korean relations, I can meet him anytime," Lee told a news conference in Seoul. "So far, South Korea-U.S. ties have been neglected for the sake of South-North Korean relations," Lee said. "But strengthened ties between South Korea and the U.S. will help make South-North relations better. And if South Korea-U.S. relations improves, North Korea-U.S. relations will get better."

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3. ROK on US-DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("LEE CALLS FOR U.S. DIALOGUE WITH N. KOREAN MILITARY", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that ROK President-elect Lee Myung-bak has reportedly asked the U.S. to engage in dialogue with the DPRK military leadership to assuage fears of regime collapse. In a meeting with chief U.S. nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill last Thursday, the president elect said, "Our people don't support the idea of giving lavish aid to the North, nor do they want to irritate it too much, I believe." In a separate meeting with U.S. Ambassador to Seoul Alexander Vershbow, the president elect was quoted by an aide as saying, "We must try to help North Korea so it doesn't feel uneasy about its system if we are to persuade it to open up. The U.S. holds the key to this matter." A Lee aide said, "We're thinking of ways to invite many North Korean government officials, military leaders

and politicians to the South or to foreign countries."

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4. Alleged DPRK Counterfeiting

McClatchy Newspapers (Kevin G. Hall, "U.S. COUNTERFEITING CHARGES AGAINST N.KOREA BASED ON SHAKY EVIDENCE", Washington, 2008/01/10) reported that a 10-month McClatchy investigation on three continents has found that the evidence to support charges of counterfeiting against the DPRK is uncertain at best. Many of the administration's allegations trace to DPRK defectors, but the McClatchy investigation found reason to question those sources. The Swiss Bundeskriminalpolizei reported, "Using its printing presses dating back to the 1970s, North Korea is today printing its own currency in such poor quality that one automatically wonders whether this country would even be in a position to manufacture the high-quality 'supernotes.'" "I never really saw the intelligence myself to make an independent judgment," said Carl Ford, who quit as head of the State Department's intelligence bureau in 2003 because he challenged the administration's phony claim that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The administration's reluctance to disclose details on the DPRK "doesn't pass the smell test," he said.

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5. DPRK Medical Aid

Joongang Ilbo ("'VACCINE DIPLOMACY' TO LAUNCH IN NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that the International Vaccine Institute, a Seoul-based international organization that develops and produces vaccines for developing countries, will begin inoculating an estimated 6,000 DPRK children against bacterial meningitis and Japanese encephalitis later this month, John Clemens, the director general of the institute, said. "One thing people commonly do not recognize is that malnutrition is a problem not only of not enough food. Infectious diseases, especially diarrheal diseases, are a major exacerbator of malnutrition in children," he said. "Because vaccines are non-controversial and non-political they are an ideal mechanism to bring people together," he said. "So we feel in a very small way that our work with North Korea is also an example of vaccine diplomacy, and we have a very good and trusting relationship with our North Korean colleagues in our joint efforts to vaccinate North Korean kids."

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6. ROK-PRC Relations

Yonhap ("CHINESE LEADER WANTS EARLY SUMMIT WITH LEE: ENVOY", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao wishes for an early summit with ROK President-elect Lee Myung-bak in Beijing to discuss ways of enhancing ties between the two countries, PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Lee on Monday. "President Hu Jintao sends his greetings to President-elect Lee Myung-bak and welcomes his visit to China," Wang Yi said. "The president hopes to meet you in Beijing soon to discuss ways of seeking a stronger relationship between the two countries." "I express my deep gratitude to President Hu Jintao for sending Vice Minister Wang Yi as his special envoy," Lee said. "I also thank China for taking a large role in seeking a solution to North Korea's nuclear standoff through the six-party talks."

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7. ROK Military Procurements

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "RAYTHEON TO BUILD MISSILES FOR F-15KS", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that Raytheon Missile Systems of the United States has been awarded a contract to build AIM-9X tactical air-to-air missiles for the ROK's F-15K aircraft, the U.S. Department of Defense said in a press release Monday. The ROK Air Force will receive a total of 102 AIM-9X missiles, and associated equipment and services, it said.

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8. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press (Peter Enav, "OPPOSITION WINS BIG IN TAIWAN POLL", Taipei, 2008/01/12) reported that opposition Nationalist Party won a landslide victory in legislative elections Saturday, 81 seats in the 113-seat Legislature, against only 27 for the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), with four going to Nationalist-leaning independents, and one to a Nationalist satellite party. President Chen Shui-bian resigned as chairman of the ruling Democratic Progressive Party immediately after the extent of the defeat became clear. "I should shoulder all responsibilities," Chen said. "I feel really apologetic and shamed."

Associated Press ("TAIWAN POLL RESULTS STIR BEIJING HOPES", Beijing, 2008/01/13) reported that PRC state media said Sunday that ties with Taiwan should benefit from the island's legislative election. The official China News Service quoted a pro-government scholar as saying the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's defeat would stymie the campaign for formal independence. "Speaking in the long run, this is beneficial to the development of cross-strait relations," CNS quoted Wang Jianmin of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences as saying.

Washington Post (Edward Cody, "DESPITE VICTORY, TAIWANESE PARTY URGES CAUTION", Taipei, 2008/01/14) reported that Taiwan Nationalist presidential candidate, Ma Ying-jeou repeatedly told supporters of the need to be "humble" and "cautious" in the two months remaining until the presidential election. "We have to work hard to fulfill people's hopes," he warned. "We still have a long road ahead of us." Emile C.J. Sheng, a political scientist at Soochow University in Taipei, said that the Nationalists' victory in legislative elections "is not an approval of the Nationalists but disapproval of President Chen Shui-bian, his style and his integrity."

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9. Taiwan Diplomacy

Reuters (Mabvuto Banda, "MALAWI ENDS TIES WITH TAIWAN IN FAVOR OF CHINA", Lilongwe, 2008/01/14) reported that Malawi has cut diplomatic ties with Taiwan after 41 years and established links with the PRC, Malawi's Foreign Minister Joyce Banda said on Monday. "We have decided to switch from Taiwan to mainland China after careful consideration on the benefits that we will be getting from mainland China," she said.

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10. US-PRC Military Relations

Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "US PACIFIC COMMANDER IN CHINA FOR TALKS", Beijing, 2008/01/14) reported that Adm. Timothy Keating, head of the U.S. Pacific Command, met PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in a closed meeting early Monday. Yang urged the U.S. side to maintain stability in the Taiwan Strait, saying it was the key to developing bilateral relations, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. "The Chinese side appreciates the United States government's adherence to the one-China policy" and its opposition to Taiwanese efforts to hold a referendum on U.N. membership, he said. Keating was also to meet Monday with Gen. Chen Bingde, the new chief of general staff in charge of day-to-day operations for the People's Liberation Army, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission General Guo Boxiong, and Lt. Gen. Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of the general staff for foreign affairs. Their discussions were expected to center on PRC-US military ties, Taiwan and international and regional issues, the official China Daily newspaper said.

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11. Sino-Indian Relations

BBC News ("INDIAN PM VISITS CHINA FOR SUMMIT", Beijing, 2008/01/13) reported that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh arrived in the PRC Sunday for a three-day visit. Singh will meet President Hu Jintao as well as Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and the Communist Party's second highest leader, Wu Bangguo. Their talks are expected to focus on territorial disputes and increasing bilateral trade. "It's going to be a major business event... bilateral trade has registered impressive growth," Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon told reporters before the delegation left Delhi. Singh said he would discuss "issues relating to the boundary."

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "INDIA PM: CHINA PARTNERSHIP A PRIORITY", Beijing, 2008/01/14) reported that Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Monday at the start of a state visit that expanding relations with the PRC was a primary goal of his government. "We attach the highest priority to developing the cooperative and beneficial partnership relationship with China," Singh said at the beginning of talks with PRC Premier Wen Jiabao. "Frequent meetings at the summit level have contributed greatly to the development of our two nations. They have served to demonstrate to the world our combined determination to forge a relationship of mutual understanding, cooperation and trust," Singh said. "India and China have a lot of convergence on larger global issues like trade, energy, the environment and terrorism ... They should be talking about these issues to harmonize their positions. But before they can do this they have to address their areas of mistrust and anxiety first," said C. Uday Bhaskar, a prominent New Delhi-based strategic analyst.

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12. Hong Kong Democracy

Kyodo ("THOUSANDS MARCH FOR UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IN H.K. BY 2012", Hong Kong, 2008/01/14) reported that about 22,000 people took to the streets Sunday demanding full democracy

here by 2012, after Beijing ruled out the possibility last month, organizers said. "The Communist Party is not trustworthy," said a 78-year-old man identified by his surname Suen who led the march. "I have marched in every demonstration calling for democracy. (Beijing) can keep deferring from 2007 to 2017, then to 2027 or even 2037. How can we believe them?" "For elderly people (the date) is important," said organizer and unionist legislator Lee Cheuk-yan. "It is urgent for them, whether they can see universal suffrage in their lifetime. They deserve something better."

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