

# NAPSNet Daily Report 19 February, 2008

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## Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 19 February, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, February 19, 2008,  
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-19-february-2008/>

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## **I. NAPSNet**

### **1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program**

The Associated Press (Anita Chang, "US: N. KOREA MUST DECLARE NUCLEAR PLANS", Beijing, 2008/02/18) reported that a US nuclear envoy said that the DPRK needs to make a proper declaration of its nuclear programs to revive a disarmament process that has stalled since the end of last year. "We're a little stuck on the need for a complete and correct declaration," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters. "I'm not too concerned about the sequencing of their obligations and our obligations," Hill said, when asked if the declaration or the removal from the terrorism list should come first. "I think the real problem is they've not yet been willing to provide a complete and correct declaration."

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### **2. DPRK Nuclear Program**

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "NKOREA, US ENVOYS IN BEIJING TALKS", Beijing, 2008/02/19) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill met his DPRK counterpart, Kim Kye Gwan, at Pyongyang's embassy in Beijing on Tuesday. No details of the talks were known.

Yonhap ("HILL-KIM MEETING SEEMS TO BODE WELL FOR NUKE TALKS", Seoul, 2008/02/19) reported that the unannounced meeting Tuesday between the top DPRK and U.S. nuclear envoys in Beijing may signal a long-awaited breakthrough in the stalemate over Pyongyang's declaration of its nuclear arsenal, ROK officials said. DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan's surprise move is viewed as reflecting Pyongyang's will to continue dialogue with Washington despite the deadlock in the implementation of the six-party deal. A ranking ROK Foreign Ministry official said the seasoned negotiators would not have held such surprise talks without the possibility of them bearing fruit.

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### **3. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks**

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA URGED NKOREA TO RESUME NUKE TALKS BEFORE US VOTE", Tokyo, 2008/02/17) reported that a PRC envoy who visited the DPRK last month pressed its leader Kim Jong-Il to resume a deadlocked nuclear disarmament deal before US presidential elections take place, a report said. Wang Jiarui, Director of the International Liaison Department of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, told Kim he believed it was "highly likely" a Democrat would win the election in November. "If that happens, officials in charge of the talks will be replaced by new ones so that negotiations in the six-party talks will get more difficult to bring forward," Wang told Kim, prompting him to resume the talks at an early date, the report said.

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### **4. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks**

Japan Times ("FUKUDA COMPLAINS ABOUT STALLED N KOREA TALKS", 2008/02/14) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda expressed displeasure over the stalled six-party talks on denuclearizing the DPRK while reiterating his willingness to resolve the issue of Pyongyang's past abductions of Japanese nationals and other obstacles lying between the two countries. "I'm disappointed that progress has not been seen" even one year after the six nations agreed on a denuclearization-for-aid deal, Fukuda told reporters.

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### **5. DPRK Economy**

Yonhap ("N.K. MARKS LEADER'S BIRTHDAY WITH CALLS FOR UNITY, ECONOMIC REVIVAL", Seoul, 2008/02/16) reported that the DPRK marked the 66th birthday of its leader, Kim Jong-il, with calls for loyalty and the reconstruction of its sluggish economy, according to the DPRK's state-run news media. The Rodong Shinmun, the newspaper of the Workers' Party, claimed in a lengthy birthday editorial that the DPRK is already powerful politically and militarily, thanks to Kim's "excellent" leadership. The DPRK, however, called for all-out efforts to make a breakthrough in its struggling economy by 2012, when the country honors the 100th birthday of former leader Kim Il-sung.

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### **6. ROK Government Transition**

Yonhap ("NEW GOV'T TO DOWNSIZE UNIFICATION MINISTRY", Seoul, 2008/02/17) reported that the incoming conservative government is expected to downsize the Unification Ministry in charge of inter-Korean affairs should the ministry be kept as a separate entity, sources in the presidential transition team said Sunday. Sources said that if the ministry is retained, its five divisions and one office may be reduced to a single office and three bureaus, with part of its work transferred to the other ministries. The office in charge of the Kaesong industrial complex may be turned over to the newly created Ministry of Knowledge-based Economy. However, the ministry may retain control of inter-Korean dialogue headquarters, the inter-Korean transit office, and a settlement support team

for people who have fled the DPRK.

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## **7. DPRK Telephone Service**

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA TO ALLOW MOBILE PHONES IN PYONGYANG", 2008/02/19) reported that the Tokyo Shimbun reported on Feb. 18 that the DPRK plans to lift its ban on the use of mobile phones in April starting from Pyongyang, quoting a source in Beijing. Some four years have passed since the communist regime prohibited mobile phone services after an explosion in the city of Ryongchon adjacent to the border of the PRC in April 2004. The mobile phone services in the North will use W-CDMA, a 3G technology used in countries such as the ROK and Japan. It is known to support a video call and high-speed data transmission.

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## **8. US-ROK Relations**

RTTNews ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT-ELECT NAMES HIS FOREIGN, DEFENSE MINISTERS TO "RESTORE U.S. TIES"", 2008/02/18) reported that ROK President-elect Lee Myung-bak named on Monday the ministers in charge of the nation's foreign affairs and defense, whom he handpicked to "restore Seoul's ties with Washington." The ROK's ambassador to Japan, Yu Myung-hwan will be the new foreign minister, and his main task will be to improve the country's relations with the US, Lee Myung-bak said in a news conference in Seoul. Former Defense chief Gen. Lee Sang-hee has been named the defense minister. He was involved in negotiations with the U.S. for restoring the ROK's wartime command of its own forces.

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## **9. ROK-Japan Relations**

Reuters (Isabel Reynolds, "JAPAN LAWMAKERS WANT "PEACE TUNNEL" TO SOUTH KOREA", Tokyo, 2008/02/16) reported that Japan and the ROK, long at odds over their wartime history, should be linked by a railway tunnel under the sea symbolising peaceful ties, a group of Japanese lawmakers was reported as saying. The cross-party group of parliamentarians is proposing a 128 km (80 miles) tunnel that would be part of a rail link between Karatsu on Japan's southwestern island of Kyushu and Pusan in the ROK via two Japanese islands, Kyodo news agency said. "This is a dream-inspiring project," Kyodo quoted former defense chief Seishiro Eto as telling reporters after a meeting with other interested lawmakers from various parties. "We'd like to promote it as a symbol of peace-building."

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## **10. US-ROK Trade Relations**

Joongang Ilbo (Limb Jae-un, "NO NEW FTA NEGOTIATIONS: OFFICIAL", 2008/02/19) reported that a senior official at the trade ministry said neither the ROK nor the US wants to renegotiate the free

trade agreement between the two countries. Lee Hye-min, the ROK's deputy negotiator for the ROK-US FTA, said yesterday in a radio interview that the two countries agree that there will be no additional negotiation or renegotiation of the agreement. He also said in a speech at the US Congress that the ROK-US FTA is not in line with new US trade standards and does not fully address the issue of protection for the nation's automobile and beef industries.

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## **11. Alleged PRC Espionage**

Associated Press ("TAIWAN DAMAGE SAID SMALL AFTER SPY LEAK", Taipei, 2008/12/19) reported that Taiwanese Defense Ministry spokesman Yu Sy-tue said Tuesday that Taiwan's new air defense system was damaged somewhat by an intelligence leak to the PRC but its key technology was not compromised. "The U.S. provides Taiwan with the system's infrastructure, but Taiwan still controls the key integral technology," he said. "The damage was within our expectations."

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## **12. PRC Environment**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("CHINA REFUSES TO RELEASE DATA ON YELLOW SAND", 2008/02/18) reported that a plan for Japan, the PRC, the ROK and Mongolia to observe and forecast airborne desert sand has been hampered as the PRC has withdrawn from the scheme, citing weather information as state secrets. The Environment Ministry's Web site, which is to release forecasts on so-called yellow sand to the public, will start the service later this month as planned, but without the cooperation of the country where most of the sand originates. According to ministry sources, with the PRC reneging on its promise of cooperation by refusing to provide data, the system's observation and forecast accuracy will be insufficient.

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## **13. PRC Energy Supply**

BBC News ("BEIJING PETROL STATIONS TO CLOSE", 2008/02/18) reported that the PRC is closing 10% of Beijing's petrol stations to improve air quality ahead of the Olympics in August. By the end of May, 144 will shut because they are not expected to meet higher environmental standards, according to state media. The remainder are to be fitted with devices to reduce the level of fumes which escape when vehicles fill up.

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## **14. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak**

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CONFIRMS BIRD FLU DEATH: STATE MEDIA ", Beijing, 2008/02/18) reported that a 22-year-old man in central PRC has died of bird flu, the country's ministry of health confirmed, according to state news agency Xinhua. The man, surnamed Li, from Hunan province, developed a fever and headache on January 16 and was hospitalised on January 22.

But his condition worsened and he died two days later, it added. The PRC's Centre for Disease Control and Prevention said his specimens tested positive for the H5N1 strain. The report did not identify how he might have contracted the disease, Xinhua said.

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## **15. PRC Security**

Canadian Press ("CHINA SAYS TROOPS TO UNDERGO ANTI-TERRORISM TRAINING FOR OLYMPICS", Beijing, 2008/02/18) reported that the PRC plans to boost anti-terrorism training for its military ahead of this summer's Olympic Games. The troops will focus on biochemical and nuclear threats, as well as emergency rescue operations, the official Xinhua News Agency said Monday. The PRC believes terrorism is the biggest threat facing the Olympic Games and has called for closer international co-operation to prevent possible attacks. While not a traditional target of international terrorism, Beijing faces a growing long-term threat from Islamic separatists among the Uighur population in western PRC's Xinjiang region.

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## **II. ROK Report**

### **16. Inter-Korean Relations**

DongA Ilbo (Kim Hyun-soo, "'RECONSIDERING 10.4 TREATY?' DPRK PRESS CRITICIZE PRESIDENT-ELEC LEE", Seoul, 2008/02/19) reported that one DPRK newspaper criticized ROK President-elect Lee Myung-bak's remark about the inter-Korean summit talks. The article, published last month, said that the ROK extreme right-wing should not assert that they would reconsider the issues that had already been agreed through the 10.4 treaty, mentioning the practicality and rationality of the agreement.

Hankyoreh Daily (Cho Joon-hyung, "NAM JOO-HONG NOMINATED AS CABINET MEMBER", Seoul, 2008/02/19) reported that Nam Joo-hong, a professor of Kyung-ki University, who was nominated as one of the 15 cabinet members by Lee Myung-bak, will be named as the ROK Unification Minister, if the ministry is maintained. Experts of inter-Korean relations say that the nominee, who has been a critic of the sunshine policy may give radical effects on the inter-Korean relations. Nam, who is often regarded as an expert on security issues, but not on inter-Korean relations, has been asserting that we should view the DPRK not only as a collaborative partner, but also as an enemy. However, experts also analyzed that since main decisions of DPRK policies are made by the President, it is also likely that his personal perspective on the issue may not affect the policy.

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### **17. DPRK-Japan Relations**

Yonhap News ("DPRK PRESS, 'JAPAN SHOULD RECEDE FROM SIX-PARTY TALKS'", Seoul,

2008/02/19) reported that the DPRK newspaper Minju Chosun has asserted that Japan should be excluded from dealing such crucial matters as the Korean Peninsula's nuclear problem. The aim of Japan in continuously trying to make confrontation is not to solve the nuclear problem, but only to take political benefits for their own nation, the paper added. They also criticized Japan for pressing the DPRK with "kidnapping matter" and taking a solitary position toward the DPRK, which caused negative effects. They pointed out that Japan was the one who kept the US from removing the DPRK from the terrorist-supporting nations list.

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## 18. DPRK Refugees

Chosun Ilbo (Kang Chol-hwan, "SENDING REFUGESS BACK IN SECRET, DERELICTION OF DUTY", Seoul, 2008/02/19) reported that Hong Soon-kyung, a former DPRK diplomat and the vice president of the DPRK Refugees Community said on Feb. 18 that sending the DPRK refugees back in secret was the dereliction of national duty. He added that the refugees will be investigated for several months and be brainwashed according to the priority of the communist country. He criticized the ROK National Intelligence Service (NIS) for such insufficient and hasty investigation. It is apparent that the refugees must have had a certain purpose, he exclaimed.

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