NAPSNet Daily Report 2 January, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 2 January, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 02, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-2-january-2008/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Declaration

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NKOREA MISSES NUKE DECLARATION DEADLINE", Seoul, 2007/12/31) reported that the DPRK failed to meet a year-end deadline to declare all its nuclear programs. DPRK state media made no mention of the missed deadline, but the DPRK renewed its call for Washington to scrap unfriendly policies. In the New Year's message carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, it said, "The source of war should be removed and lasting peace be ensured. An end should be put to the U.S. policy hostile towards the DPRK." It said the DPRK would "make earnest efforts for stability on the Korean peninsula and peace in the world" and that the country is ready to develop "relations of friendship and cooperation with all the countries that are friendly toward it."

Korea Times ("US TO CONTINUE KOREA'S DENUCLEARIZATION PROCESS", Washington, 2008/01/01) reported that the United States said denuclearization negotiations will continue despite the DPRK's failure to meet a Monday deadline on providing a declaration of its nuclear programs. "It is our view that that process should move forward. There is an opportunity to do that," Scott Stanzel, deputy White House spokesman, told reporters at Crawford, Texas. State Department Spokesman Tom Casey played down the delay, saying it was expected given the difficult nature of the negotiations. "The important thing is not whether we have the declaration by today or not," he said. "Important thing is that we get a declaration that meets the requirements of the agreement, which means it needs to be full and complete."

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2. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "LEE TO BE SELECTIVE ON SUMMIT ACCORDS", Seoul, 2008/01/02) reported that Nam Sung-wook, President-elect Lee Myung-bak's DPRK advisor, said Wednesday that Lee will divide the economic cooperation agreements reached at the inter-Korean summit last October into four categories according to implementation feasibility. "It is hard to say whether or not the next government will implement all the inter-Korean economic cooperation projects," Nam, a professor of Korea University in Seoul, said in a radio interview. "Probably, the new government will classify the agreements into four groups of which some will be immediately implemented and others will be deferred until North Korea makes progress on its nuclear programs," he stated. For example, money-consuming projects such as the reconnection of inter-Korean railways and improvement of railways and roads in the DPRK will be implemented in accordance with progress on the nuclear

issue, he added.

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "PYONGYANG URGES SEOUL TO HONOR SUMMIT ACCORDS", 2008/01/01) reported that the DPRK Tuesday expressed hope in a New Year's message that inter-Korean summit accords on economic cooperation will be implemented on schedule under the incoming administration. The DPRK refrained from commenting on President-elect Lee Myung-bak and his DPRK policy.

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3. Inter-Korean Peace Zone

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "PEACE ZONE PROJECT FACES DERAILMENT", Seoul, 2007/12/30) reported that Rep. Park Jin, the chief of a sub-panel on inter-Korean and security affairs on the President-elect's transition committee, expressed a negative view Sunday on establishing an inter-Korean industrial complex in coastal areas near the West Sea. "We need to deal with the establishment of a peace zone in the West Sea in a very careful and measured way because it involves the NLL issue," said Park. "It is problematic for the government to push ahead with the plan without considering the military's point of view."

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4. DPRK Refugees

Korea Times ("NK REFUGEES REACH US VIA CHINA", Beijing, 2007/12/25) reported that two DPRK refugees have made their way to the United States through a U.N. agency here, marking the second case in which the PRC allowed defectors to leave for the U.S. with the agency's mediation, sources here said Tuesday. The two, a woman in her 30s and a man in his 20s, were under the protection of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Beijing since July.

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5. PRC Hacking

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "MILITARY ISSUES WARNING ON CHINESE HACKERS", 2008/01/01) reported that the ROK military has issued a warning that computer systems of soldiers and defense institutes have become the victims of presumed PRC hacking activities, a military source said Tuesday. The source said hackers, believed to be PRC nationals, penetrated computers of soldiers by sending e-mail involving hacking programs falsely titled "the situation on North Korea's arms power." "We are now investigating several cyber hacking cases believed to be conducted by Chinese nationals based on evidence that the hackers stole information stored in soldiers' computers," the source said, asking not to be named.

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6. Taiwan UN Membership

Associated Press (Debby Wu, "TAIWAN: US CAVING TO CHINA ON REFERENDUM", Taipei, 2008/01/01) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said Tuesday that the United States is caving in to PRC pressure by opposing the island's referendum on its attempt to join the U.N. "We find it extremely regrettable that, under tremendous pressure from China, the United States and the European Union have expressed varying degrees of opposition to Taiwan's referendum on joining the United Nations," Chen said in his annual New Year's Day address at the presidential palace in downtown Taipei. Chen said the U.S. and Europe "are weighing national interests against democratic values." "The referendum is a grass-roots initiative" that "cannot be opposed or canceled by anyone, not even the president," he said.

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7. Sino-Japanese Relations

BBC News ("JAPAN PM URGES CHINA CO-OPERATION", 2007/12/30) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda called for increased cooperation with the PRC in the future, at the end of a four-day trip to the country. Fukuda said the neighbours could do more for the world by cooperating than each would achieve single-handedly. Earlier talks with PRC Premier Wen Jiabao and President Hu Jintao did not resolve a dispute over maritime gas fields.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("FUKUDA, HU AGREE TO SEEK GAS RIGHTS PACT", Beijing, 2007/12/29) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and PRC President Hu Jintao agreed to work toward an early settlement to the stalled dispute over gas exploration rights in the East China Sea before Hu's visit to Japan, which was confirmed for next spring. Before meeting Hu at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, Fukuda also talked with Premier Wen Jiabao at the Great Hall of the People. In addition to the gas exploration issue, Fukuda and the PRC leaders agreed to establish centers in major PRC cities to introduce Japanese energy conservation and environmental technologies, and to train 10,000 Chinese on environmental matters over the next three years.

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8. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Asahi Shimbun (Tsuyoshi Nojima, "CHINA'S SUDDEN SHOW OF FORCE SENT JETS SCRAMBLING", Taipei, 2008/01/02) reported that, according to Taiwanese military sources, bombers made more than 40 sorties in airspace around the disputed Chunxiao gas field in the East China Sea, known as Shirakaba in Japanese on two days in September. Japanese SDF jets were scrambled 12 times in response. Japanese government sources later confirmed the account. The PRC's action initially was seen as provocative. However, Japanese experts say the exercise could have been part of the military's readiness in the East China Sea in the event of an emergency situation in Taiwan.

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9. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Associated Press (Hiroko Tabuchi, "JAPAN PM PLEDGES NEW ANTI-TERROR MISSION", Tokyo, 2007/12/31) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda pledged Tuesday to resume naval

operations near Afghanistan. "At this very moment in the Indian Ocean, numerous countries are cooperating carrying on their fight against terrorism," Fukuda said in a New Year's message. "I want Japan to be working hard for the world along with other countries as soon as possible."

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10. Japanese Dual-Use Exports

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT SETS GUIDELINES ON DUAL-USE TECHNOLOGIES", 2007/12/26) reported that the government has compiled guidelines to prevent technologies that can be used for the development of weapons of mass destruction from being leaked to other countries from universities and laboratories, sources said. Dubbed "technological management guidelines on security export controls," the guidelines call for establishing information disclosure standards based on the contents of each technology, and the tightened screening of foreign students at such institutions. The guidelines stipulate careful consideration should be exercised before accepting students from countries the government fears are developing weapons of mass destruction, such as Iran and the DPRK.

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11. Japanese Textbook Controversy

Asahi Shimbun ("TEXTS TO REFER TO MILITARY ROLE IN SUICIDES", 2007/12/27) reported that Japanese Education minister Kisaburo Tokai said that he reinstated history textbook references about the Imperial Japanese Army driving civilians into committing mass suicide in Okinawa in 1945. Tokai's decision followed major protest rallies in Okinawa Prefecture in September over textbook screening, when the ministry under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gave instructions to cut references to the involvement of the Imperial Japanese Army in the suicides.

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II. ROK Report

12. DPRK on ROK Election

Chosun Ilbo (An Young-hyun, "DPRK, AN EXCEPTIONAL SILENCE FOR SIX DAYS", Seoul, 2007/12/26) reported that the DPRK government has not pronounced any comment about a ROK's president election in last week. Considering the reaction which the DPRK showed toward the last two elections in 1997 and 2002, it is an exceptional case. DPRK experts said that the position toward Lee Myung-park's government had not been organized yet. Not only some departments relating to ROK matters but also each leading figures of the DPRK have not reached a consensus.

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13. ROK-US Relations

Hankook Ilbo (Lee Eun-ho, "MB, ABOUT HIS POLICY ON THE US", Seoul, 2007/12/27) reported that Lee Myung-park's policies have been evaluated as stressing pragmatism over ideology. In his policy direction toward the US, he expressed that he would try to strengthen the US-ROK alliance and upgrade the ROK's position within the alliance. However, it is not easy for us to set the better position in the US-ROK relations since the US is the superpower in the world. Therefore, in order to draw more and further gains from the US, Lee should learn about the obstinate diplomatic actions from the present administration that sometimes acquired from desirable outcomes, such as the US-ROK FTA.

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14. ROK in Iraq

Seoul (Editorial, "THE ARMY IN IRAQ SHOULD STAY THERE FURTHER FOR NATIONAL INTERESTS.", Seoul, 2007/12/27) argued that there is a debate on whether the ROK troops in Iraq should stay there because many legislators oppose the deployment. In fact, Japan and Australia's army already retreated from Iraq. However, ROK soldiers should prolong their stay for the national interests, especially economic and diplomatic aspects. This issue has something to do with the regional economic benefits as well as the alliance relations with the US.

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