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Contents in this Issue:

- I. Napsnet
 - [1. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [2. Six-Party Talks](#)
 - [3. Alleged Pakistan-DPRK Nuclear Cooperation](#)
 - [4. DPRK Missile Tests](#)
 - [5. Korean Peninsula Military Balance](#)
 - [6. PRC-DPRK Relations](#)
 - [7. ROK Aid to DPRK](#)
 - [8. ROK Role in PSI](#)
 - [9. US-ROK Alliance](#)
 - [10. US-ROK Trade Relations](#)
 - [11. ROK Nuclear Energy](#)
 - [12. ROK-PRC Relations](#)
 - [13. ROK Aid to PRC Earthquake](#)
 - [14. PRC Earthquake](#)
 - [15. US on PRC Military](#)
 - [16. Japan on PRC Military](#)

- [17. PRC Military](#)
- [18. Japan-Africa Relations](#)
- II. Republic of Korea
 - [19. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [20. ROK Policy Toward DPRK](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

New York Times (Helene Cooper, "IN DISCLOSURE, NORTH KOREA CONTRADICTS U.S. INTELLIGENCE ON ITS PLUTONIUM PROGRAM", Washington, 2008/05/31) reported that Bush administration officials indicated that in the DPRK's declaration of its nuclear program, it is acknowledging it produced 37 kilograms of plutonium. That total would be more than the 30 kilograms that the DPRK has acknowledged previously but somewhat less than the 40 to 50 kilograms that American intelligence agencies had calculated in the past. Charles L. Pritchard, who is now head of the Korea Economic Institute and was a DPRK policy coordinator under Presidents Clinton and Bush, said that DPRK officials told him they would destroy their nuclear facilities but not necessarily destroy the weapons and material already manufactured. Pritchard said they also told him they expected to be provided with light-water reactors for dismantling their nuclear installations.

Associated Press ("ENVOY: NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR DECLARATION NEARLY DONE", Seoul, 2008/06/01) reported that ROK chief nuclear negotiator Kim Sook said Sunday that the DPRK is nearly ready to submit a declaration of its nuclear programs. Kim said that the DPRK is coordinating with the United States on when it will issue the declaration.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. Six-Party Talks

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "FOREIGN MINISTERS OF KOREA, JAPAN, CHINA TO MEET", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that the foreign ministers of the ROK, the PRC, and Japan will gather in Tokyo on June 14 to discuss ways to advance the six-party talks, officials said Monday. "Seoul, Beijing and Tokyo agreed to hold a meeting of foreign ministers in Tokyo to exchange views on the prospects of the six-party negotiations," an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said. "They will also discuss ways to help earthquake victims in China and support China's successful hosting of the upcoming Beijing Olympics."

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. Alleged Pakistan-DPRK Nuclear Cooperation

Washington Post (Glenn Kessler, "BHUTTO DEALT NUCLEAR SECRETS TO N.KOREA, BOOK SAYS", 2008/06/01) reported that former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, on a state visit to the DPRK in 1993, smuggled in critical data on uranium enrichment to help facilitate a missile deal with Pyongyang, according to a new book by a journalist who knew the slain politician well. The assertion is based on conversations that the author, Shyam Bhatia, had with Bhutto in 2003, in which she said she would tell him a secret "so significant that I had to promise never to reveal it, at least not during her lifetime," Bhatia writes in "Goodbye, Shahzadi," which was published in India last month.

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. DPRK Missile Tests

BBC ("NORTH KOREA 'TESTS SEA MISSILES'", Seoul, 2008/05/31) reported that the DPRK on Saturday fired three short-range ship-to-ship missiles off its west coast as part of a military training exercise, reports from the ROK say. A government source was quoted as saying missiles with a range of nearly 50km (30 miles) were fired into the sea west of Pyongyang.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. Korean Peninsula Military Balance

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA REMAINS POWERFUL THREAT TO SOUTH: MINISTER", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that the ROK remains exposed to one of the strongest military threats in the world even as inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation have increased, Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee said Saturday. Lee said that the DPRK poses a serious threat not only to peace in Korean Peninsula but also to regional stability, as it continues to develop weapons of mass destruction.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. PRC-DPRK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("CHINA'S INFLUENCE OVER NORTH RAPIDLY GAINING ECONOMIC WEIGHT", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that according to data from the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, the DPRK's trade with the ROK amounted to \$6.4 million in 2002, slightly short of the \$7.4 million worth of trade the DPRK did with the PRC during the same period. But the gap has rapidly widened in the following four years. Inter-Korean trade in 2006 stood at \$1.4 billion, far short of the \$1.7 billion between the North and China. Jo Dong-ho, a DPRK studies professor at Ewha Womans University, stated, "North Korea, because of international sanctions on the country, can hardly conduct any trade with Japan or the United States, and the North Koreans, given their current purchasing power, can hardly afford South Korean products. China is in the most favorable position to access the North Korean market given price levels and political ties."

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. ROK Aid to DPRK

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "RELIGIOUS, CIVIC LEADERS CALL FOR EMERGENCY FOOD AID TO N.KOREA", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that dozens of ROK religious and civic group leaders called on their government Monday to immediately provide food aid to impoverished the DPRK to save people there dying of starvation. "We should save starving people regardless of who they are. That's the spirit of humanitarianism," the groups said in a joint statement released at a news conference. They suggested that the Seoul government ship at least 200,000 tons of grain even if there is no official request for aid from the DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. ROK Role in PSI

Joongang Ilbo ("KOREA TAKES STEP TOWARDS PROLIFERATION INITIATIVE", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that ROK Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee said the country is considering fully joining the U.S.-led proliferation security initiative. At the seventh round of the Asia Security Summit in Singapore yesterday, Lee said that the ROK has a "firm belief that North Korea's weapons of mass destruction should never be proliferated," and has a "full understanding" of the need for the Proliferation Security Initiative.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. US-ROK Alliance

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "KOREA, US TO DISCUSS 'STRATEGIC FLEXIBILITY' OF AMERICAN FORCES", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates arrived in Seoul Monday and was scheduled to meet ROK Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee to talk on issues of mutual concern. High on the agenda for the Lee-Gates talks include the agreed transfer of wartime operational control of ROK troops during wartime, the relocation of U.S. bases to south of the Han River, the potential deployment of U.S. troops to other regions, and defense cost-sharing for maintaining the USFK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. US-ROK Trade Relations

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "SKOREA TO DELAY RENEWED US BEEF IMPORTS", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that the ROK government said Monday it was delaying the planned resumption of U.S. beef imports, after a request from the ruling party and large weekend street protests. ROK Agriculture Ministry spokesman Kim Hyun-soo said the ministry had decided to put off the final administrative step needed to clear the way for imports to begin. The ministry had earlier requested that new quarantine rules announced last week be officially published Tuesday in a government journal, which would allow for inspections of U.S. beef shipments to commence.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. ROK Nuclear Energy

Joongang Ilbo ("MINISTRY PLANS FOR NINE ADDITIONAL POWER PLANTS", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that the ROK is weighing a plan to construct more than nine new nuclear power reactors to generate electricity as part of efforts to cope with skyrocketing oil prices, the government said Sunday. By doing so, the government aims to raise the ratio of electricity generated by nuclear power to over 55 percent from the current 36 percent, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. ROK-PRC Relations

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "SEOUL MAY PROTEST CHINA'S REMARKS ON KOREA-US ALLIANCE", Seoul, 2008/06/02) reported that Seoul will ask Beijing to be more cautious about mentioning the US-ROK alliance, foreign ministry officials said Monday. "We will send a message to China that we are unhappy about [Foreign Ministry Spokesman] Qin's description of the alliance," Moon Tae-young, spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, told reporters. "China should know how South Koreans feel about the incident, but the point is that the issue should not develop into an unnecessary diplomatic dispute."

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. ROK Aid to PRC Earthquake

Donga Ilbo ("KOREAN MILITARY FLIGHTS AID CHINA", Seoul, 2008/05/31) reported that, on the last leg of his four-day state visit to the PRC, ROK President Lee Myung-bak visited the earthquake-devastated Sichuan province Friday. Lee said, "China's acceptance of our military cargo planes reflects our relationship as a strategic partnership. As far as I know, a Korean military plane has never entered China before. Though it is on the humanitarian ground, this has historical significance."

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. PRC Earthquake

Associated Press (Cara Anna, "CHINA SAYS IT'S WORKING TO PREVENT EPIDEMIC", Chengdu, 2008/06/02) reported that vowed Monday to prevent any outbreak of disease as it cleans up after last month's massive earthquake that killed nearly 70,000 people. The Health Ministry said authorities were working to ensure the safety of drinking water and food, checking public health conditions and were disinfecting bodies. "If we can do those four things properly, we have the confidence to guarantee there will be no epidemics after the disaster," ministry spokesman Mao Qun'an said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. US on PRC Military

Los Angeles Times (Peter Spiegel, "GATES WARNS OF ASIA ARMS RACE", Singapore, 2008/06/01) reported that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Saturday that fast-growing Asian powers "risk blundering" into confrontation and sparking a new arms race unless they follow widely accepted international rules. "A lack of clarity about a neighbor's strategic intentions all too often prompts reliance, and sometimes over-reliance, on counter-strategies and hedging that can, over time, yield to outright suspicion," Gates said. "This is a direction we seek to avoid."

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. Japan on PRC Military

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN URGES GREATER CHINESE TRANSPARENCY ON MILITARY PLANS", Singapore, 2008/06/01) reported that Japanese Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba urged the PRC Saturday to be more transparent about its military capabilities and step up dialogue with its neighbours to enhance regional security. "Japan does not subscribe to purposely overstating China as a threat. At the same time, we would like to urge China to further enhance the transparency of its military capabilities and their purpose," he stated.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. PRC Military

Los Angeles Times (Peter Spiegel, "CHINA DEFENDS MILITARY BUILDUP", Singapore, 2008/06/01) reported that Lt. Gen. Ma Xiaotian, the PRC People's Liberation Army deputy chief of the general staff, said that any instability in Asia was being caused by countries seeking to expand regional military alliances and develop missile-defense systems. "It is imperative China's armed forces keep up with this tide of world military development," Ma said. "China's growing economy and fiscal revenue make the defense budget increase both a logical and imperative reality."

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. Japan-Africa Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun (Osamu Kawakami, "CHINA RIVALRY MARKS TICAD IV", Tokyo, 2008/05/31) reported that the Japanese government believes it has built a concrete diplomatic footing with African countries at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), which closed Friday. However, it is unclear if TICAD IV will lead to African support for Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Japan's hosting of the conference has fueled its rivalry with the PRC over Africa.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. Republic of Korea

19. DPRK Nuclear Program

Kukmin Ilbo ("COMPLETE ABANDONMENT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF DPRK NUCLEAR ABANDONMENT", 2008/06/02) wrote that former US special envoy to DPRK, Charles Pritchard who recently visited DPRK has said that the official position of DPRK is that even if the disablement of nuclear and disposal process take place, the subject will be limited only to plutonium facilities in Yongbyon, and the transfer of nuclear materials and nuclear weapons is not included. If that is the DPRK's position indeed, it means that the DPRK is claiming the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula while possessing nuclear weapons. It is nonsense. It is interpreted that DPRK is at least attempting to hold on to the "nuclear of the past" including nuclear weapons already developed. However, that can never be tolerated.

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Hnakyoreh ("FOOD AID AND TRANSFORMATION OF DPRK POLICIES MUST NOT MISS ITS TIMING", 2008/06/02) wrote that the WFP has recently asked the ROK government for cooperation in food aid to the DPRK. The ROK government is negative concerning the aid, claiming that DPRK government not officially asking for aid proves that the food situation in DPRK is still not that urgent. The ROK government seems to mention DPRK's change of attitude that has criticized the DPRK policies of Lee Myung-bak administration. The solution is not far away. The ROK government can just manifest that it will fulfill 10.4 declaration as fully as possible, and propose a meeting for this. The food aid issue can be dealt in this meeting as well.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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