



NAPSNet Daily Report 21 June, 2010

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 21 June, 2010", NAPSNet Daily Report, June 21, 2010,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-21-june-2010/>

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2. Russia on ROK Ship Sinking

Chosun Ilbo ("RUSSIA HEDGES BETS OVER CHEONAN SINKING", 2010/06/21) reported that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Friday called for a "thorough investigation" of the sinking of the Cheonan before taking any action against the DPRK. Speaking to the Wall Street Journal, Medvedev said, "Although only one version has been broadly circulated, we should not take it immediately for granted. A thorough investigation is needed." "As soon as the results are obvious and become public knowledge, we can talk about punishing the guilty... I mean a certain state or some other forces," he said.

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3. DPRK Nuclear Energy

Chosun Ilbo ("RADIOACTIVITY DETECTED AFTER N.KOREA NUCLEAR FUSION CLAIM ", Seoul, 2010/06/21) reported that right after DPRK claimed a successful nuclear fusion test on May 12, the northernmost radiation detection station of the ROK's Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety detected an eightfold increase in the radioactive substance xenon, it emerged Sunday. Since nuclear fusion is the core process in hydrogen bombs, there is speculation that the DPRK actually ran a small-scale nuclear test to develop the technology at the time. A nuclear expert said fusion technology normally uses magnetic fields or laser beams to compress tritium. "But an atomic bomb is used to compress the tritium in hydrogen bombs. If xenon was detected, it must have been produced in such a process."

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4. DPRK Leadership

Korea Times ("NK LEADER MAKES ROBUST OUTINGS", Seoul, 2010/06/20) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il inspected a training base for military officers and a string of industrial facilities. Kim "inspected the training center for commanding officers of KPA Unit 593" while visiting a mine, an electronics factory, a co-operative farm and a machine complex in northwestern DPRK, the

Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in reports datelined Saturday. The reports did not say where the training base was, nor did it reveal the ranks of the officers.

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5. DPRK Internal Situation

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Young-jong, "KIM BEING DUPED BY SUBORDINATES", Seoul, 2010/06/21) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's subordinates are duping their leader with false or deliberately incomplete reports on national affairs, according to sources in Seoul informed of DPRK politics. The sources said there are two possible reasons why Kim is being cut out of the information loop. First, power may be shifting to his son Jong-un, perhaps faster than the DPRK leader desires. Other sources say the situation in the DPRK, in particular its economy, is simply too bad for Kim's subordinates to admit.

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6. DPRK World Cup

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL 'INSTRUCTS FOOTBALLERS BY INVISIBLE PHONE' ", Seoul, 2010/06/21) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il "gives regular tactical advice during matches using mobile phones that are not visible to the naked eye," the team's manager Kim Jong-hun told ESPN Thursday. The coach said that Kim Jong-il developed the technology himself. Xinhua news agency report that, "the North Korean Sports Committee gave tickets to Chinese nationals, many of them actors and singers, to attend the event." Reuters reported that extra tickets were sold to PRC nationals who wished to cheer for the DPRK.

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7. DPRK Defectors

Asahi Shimbun (Yoshihiro Makino, "SEOUL'S PROPAGANDA SEDUCED DEFECTOR", Seoul, 2010/06/19) reported that Cha Song Ju was one of several DPRK soldiers who succumbed to the ROK's psychological warfare. "We especially looked forward to the music. Songs about love and romance were like nothing we had in North Korea. We naturally memorized the lyrics," Cha said. The defector said he and his closest friends would whisper about the ROK's apparent affluence. While most of the troops were initially skeptical about the ROK announcements, they ended up believing what they heard. Using binoculars, Cha said, he caught a glimpse of life south of the border. "After seeing traffic jams on the highways and machinery used for farm work, I was convinced that what the broadcasts said was true."

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "NK DEFECTORS UNDERGO 6-MONTH DEBRIEFING", Seoul, 2010/06/18) reported that due to recent changes in regulations those who have escaped the DPRK will be required to undergo a minimum six-month debriefing before being allowed to live in the ROK as new settlers. The Ministry of Unification is pressing ahead with stricter rules after two spies were found to have attempted to enter Seoul on a mission to assassinate a high-ranking defector under the guise of ordinary defectors.

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9. US-ROK Military Exercises

Washington Post (John Pomfret, "U.S. DEBATES JOINING S. KOREAN MILITARY EXERCISES", Washington, 2010/06/19) reported that the Obama administration is wrestling over whether to send the aircraft carrier USS George Washington to take part in military exercises with the ROK. Some within the administration are arguing that dispatching the 97,000-ton carrier to the Yellow Sea could anger the PRC or cause the DPRK to react violently, according to officials involved in the discussions. Others say the United States needs to send a clear message to its allies and to the DPRK and the PRC that the United States is standing firmly behind the ROK. "It's a very tough call," said Susan Shirk, a former State Department official and an expert on Asian security at the University of California at San Diego. "You don't want to be too proactive. But you need to send a clear message."

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10. ROK Participation in PSI

Korea Times (Lee Tae-hoon, "SSEOUL SEEKS TO EXPAND ROLE IN ANTI-PROLIFERATION DRILL", Seoul, 2010/06/20) reported that the ROK plans to expand its role in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a foreign ministry official said Sunday. Seoul will join the Operational Experts Group (OEG) of the PSI this year as part of measures taken after the sinking of the Cheonan, the official said on condition of anonymity. Once the ROK enters the group, it will be able to play a key role in the initiative and secure better access and sharing of information on the DPRK's proliferation activities with 95 other member countries of the PSI.

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11. ROK-India Nuclear Cooperation

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "KOREA, INDIA AGREE TO DISCUSS NUCLEAR TREATY", Seoul,) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Yu Myung-hwan and his Indian counterpart Somanahalli M. Krishna agreed Friday to start working-level talks that will ultimately pave the way for signing a nuclear energy treaty. They made the agreement at the sixth Korea-India Joint Commission meeting in Seoul.

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12. Sino-ROK Relations

Korea Times ("CHINA TO BECOME TOP FAVORITE NATION OF KOREANS STUDYING ABROAD", Seoul, 2010/06/21) reported that a growing number of ROK students have been visiting the PRC to study there in recent years, probably outnumbering those to the United States this year for the first time if the current trend persists, a report shows Monday. According to the education ministry, 66,806 Koreans went to the PRC to study in 2009, up from 57,504 in 2008, 42,269 in 2007 and 29,102 in 2006. The growth rate for students heading to the United States, the most popular overseas education destination, was slower, recording 68,124 in 2009 compared to 57,940 in 2006. Those going to Japan totaled a little over 18,000 last year, up from some 15,000 in 2006.

Korea Times (Bae Ji-sook, "CHINESE ACCOUNT FOR 70% OF FOREIGN STUDENTS", Seoul,) reported that seven out of every 10 foreign students here are PRC nationals and more foreigners are visiting the ROK for academic purposes, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said Sunday. According to the ministry, there are 75,850 foreign students in Korea as of April 2009, up 18.6 percent from a year ago.

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14. Japanese Peacekeeping Operations

Asahi Shimbun (Kentaro Kawaguchi and Yukie Yamao , "KITAZAWA WON'T 'DO THE SUDAN THING'", Tokyo, 2010/06/21) reported that a dispute has arisen between the Japanese defense and foreign ministries over dispatching military helicopters to Sudan as part of Japan's contribution to U.N. peacekeeping operations, sources said Friday. Japan had been expected to send four Ground Self-Defense Force helicopters and 300 troops to Sudan to help oversee a referendum next January on the right to self-determination for the south of the country. But Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa is questioning the deployment on the grounds of cost and safety.

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15. Japanese Whaling

Agence France-Presse (Marlowe Hood, "PROPOSED KILL QUOTAS FOR WHALES TOO HIGH: SCIENTISTS", Agadir, 2010/06/21) reported that the International Whaling Commission's scientific committee is poised to deliver a report Monday saying the global body's proposed 10-year catch limits for the marine mammals are too high, sources said. Under the scheme, total allowable kills in each of the first five years would be just over 90 percent of the 2008-2009 figure, dropping further from 2015 to 2020. But the IWC's own scientific committee, meeting over the last two weeks, is set to say that these numbers are not sustainable, committee members said.

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16. PRC Nuclear Arsenal

Asahi Shimbun ("CHINA SEEKS TO NEUTRALIZE JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY TREATY", 2010/06/21) reported that a rapid buildup of nuclear weapons by the PRC and its apparent determination to restrict United States forces' access to the western Pacific is threatening to transform the balance of power in East Asia. New missiles include the Dong Feng 31A, an intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of 14,000 kilometers. The shorter range Dong Feng 21C missile has Japan well within its range and a new type of anti-ship ballistic missile can pursue vessels at supersonic speeds. The PRC is also constructing underground bases for nuclear missiles in mountainous areas in Henan and Shanxi provinces, aimed at protecting them from preemptive strikes. "If we place U.S. aircraft carriers and U.S. bases in Japan within the range of our missiles, the U.S. fleets will not be able to enter the western Pacific freely. As a result, we will make the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty ineffective," said a source close to the PRC's military.

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17. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "UIGHURS FLEE CHINA AFTER RIOTS", Beijing, 2010/06/21) reported that at least 300 Uighurs are thought to have fled the PRC since the July unrest, according to the World Uighur Congress. Some slipped illegally into neighboring countries in Central Asia, which regularly extradite Uighurs back to the PRC. Others with more money paid thousands of dollars to criminal gangs and smugglers for plane tickets and visas.

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18. PRC Labor Unrest

New York Times (Edward Wong, "AS CHINA AIDS LABOR, UNREST IS STILL RISING", Beijing, 2010/06/20) reported that PRC leaders have moved to empower workers by pushing through labor laws that signaled that central authorities would no longer tolerate poor workplace conditions, legal scholars and Chinese labor experts say. The laws, enacted in 2008, were intended to channel worker frustrations through a system of arbitration and courts so no broader protest movements would threaten political stability. But if recent strikes and a surge in arbitration and court cases reflect a rising worker consciousness partly rooted in awareness of greater legal rights, they also underscore new challenges. The labor laws have raised expectations, but still leave workers relatively powerless by Western standards. The Communist Party-run legal system cannot cope with the exploding volume of labor disputes.

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19. PRC Currency Reform

Reuters ("DOLLAR PEG IS DEAD AS CHINA VOWS YUAN FLEXIBILITY", Beijing/Washington, 2010/06/21) reported that the PRC said on Saturday it would gradually make the yuan more flexible. But the announcement by the PRC's central bank, which strongly suggested it was ready to break the currency's 23-month-old dollar peg, was conditioned by an explicit warning ruling out a one-off revaluation or major yuan appreciation. "The basis for large-scale appreciation of the RMB exchange rate does not exist," the People's Bank of China said.

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21. PRC Civil Rights

Jinghua Times ("KFC SIGNED FIRST COLLECTIVE CONTRACT IN MAINLAND", 2010/06/18) reported that KFC agreed to the demands of the Shenyang Labor Union to increase staff salaries and signed the first collective contract in the mainland PRC yesterday. When the contract goes into

effect, the minimum wage of KFC staff will increase from 700 RMB to 900 RMB per month.

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22. PRC Social Welfare

China Youth News ("SUMMER STUDY TOUR CARES FOR LEFTOVER CHILDREN", 2010/06/18) reported that 2010 Summer Study Tour, sponsored by China Foundation for Health and Sports of the Next Generation, aims to give teenagers a more healthy summer activity by holding summer camps of various themes. This summer, the summer camp will specially leave 300 free spaces for children in migrant families, to give them a happy summer vacation.

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