

# NAPSNet Daily Report 28 February, 2008

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## **I. NAPSNet**

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

Reuters (Arshad Mohammed, "RICE HINTS AT MOVEMENT ON NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE", Tokyo, 2008/02/27) reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hinted at progress toward ending the DPRK's nuclear ambitions and left a senior aide in Beijing to discuss the matter with PRC officials. "We've had constructive discussions yesterday ... we have had constructive discussions here today and those will add to our ability to perhaps build some momentum toward the completion of the second phase," Rice told reporters. "While I am not at all disturbed by delays in the second phase -- because it's hard -- I do think that the second phase is going to have to end in a way that inspires confidence that the third phase is going to make progress given the difficulties," Rice said.

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### **2. US-PRC Cooperation on DPRK Nuclear Issue**

Reuters ("HILL STAYS IN BEIJING TO WORK ON N.KOREA ISSUE", Tokyo, 2008/02/27) reported that the top U.S. negotiator with the DPRK stayed in Beijing for an extra day to work on reviving the stalled effort to persuade Pyongyang to give up its nuclear programs, the US State Department said. U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill cancelled plans to accompany Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Tokyo as he wants to continue talks with the PRC, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters. "We came with some ideas. They had some ideas," McCormack said, saying Hill's extended stay aimed to "see if we can tease out some of these ideas."

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### **3. US-Japan on DPRK Nuclear Issue**

The Asahi Shimbun (Tutomu Ishiai and Atsuko Tannai, "RICE: U.S. 'REGRETS' OKINAWA RAPE CASE", 2008/02/27) reported that visiting U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Wednesday stressed cooperation in dealing with the DPRK and expressed "deep regret" over the alleged rape of an Okinawa girl by a U.S. Marine. Rice, in an interview in Tokyo with media representatives, hinted

at resuming foreign minister meetings, such as those of the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) involving Japan, the United States and ROK. The TCOG has not met officially since 2003. Commenting on the possibility of Washington taking the DPRK off the list of states sponsoring terrorism, Rice made clear she understood Japan's contention that Pyongyang should remain on that list until significant progress is seen in resolving the issue of Japanese abducted to DPRK decades ago.

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## **4. Israel on DPRK Nuclear Issue**

The Asahi Shimbun (Tsutomu Ishiai, "ISRAEL SEEKS STRONGER DIALOGUE ON N. KOREA", 2008/02/27) reported that visiting Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert will propose increasing dialogue on the DPRK's military cooperation with Middle East countries when he meets with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Wednesday, Olmert's spokesman said. Mark Regev, spokesman to the prime minister, said his country holds serious concerns toward Pyongyang's missile and nuclear capabilities. He also said the DPRK is providing military technology to Israel's adversaries. "We are concerned with the link-up between a reckless North Korea and reckless regimes in the Middle East," Regev said.

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## **5. US-DPRK Cultural Exchanges**

Associated Press (Burt Herman, "NY PHILHARMONIC BRIDGES 2 KOREAS", Seoul, 2008/02/28) reported that the New York Philharmonic built a musical bridge between the two Koreas on Thursday, reprising its emotional performance of the Korean folk tune "Arirang" in Seoul after its unprecedented concert in Pyongyang. "There's no sides — there's no North and South in 'Arirang,'" Maazel told The Associated Press after the triumphant performance that brought the orchestra's trip full-circle. "It's a melody for everybody. All these artificially created barriers fade away." U.S. ambassador to the ROK Alexander Vershbow said the Pyongyang concert did not "change the system and the fundamental nature of the problems we're facing." Still, Vershbow said ahead of the Philharmonic's Seoul performance that its visit to Pyongyang could show the DPRK "the possibility of a different relationship with the United States."

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## **6. DPRK-Russian Relations**

Xinhua ("DPRK RELEASES RUSSIAN CARGO SHIP", Moscow, 2008/02/27) reported that a Russian cargo ship was set free by the DPRK Tuesday night after several days in the DPRK's territorial waters, Russian news agencies reported. "The ship called out of the port of Kimchaek at 09:40 local time Wednesday (2340 GMT Tuesday)," Vladimir Yeroshkin, a duty captain at the Maritime Salvage and Coordination Center, was quoted by the Itar-Tass news agency as saying. "All the 25 crew members are safe and sound," he said.

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## 7. ROK on Proliferation Security Initiative

Yonhap ("S. KOREA MAY PLAY BIGGER ROLE IN PSI UNDER NEW REGIME", Seoul, 2008/02/27) reported that the ROK's foreign minister designate hinted at the possibility that his country will expand its role and mission in the U.S.-led counter-proliferation drive. Responding to a barrage of questions from lawmakers at his confirmation hearing, Yu Myung-hwan, a veteran diplomat, avoided a direct answer when asked whether he will push for full membership in the PSI involving more than 80 countries. "The PSI is to beef up the international non-proliferation system and we have already expressed support for its purpose and effect," said Yu.

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## 8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong , "LEE WILLING TO RESCHEDULE TROOP-CONTROL TRANSFER", 2008/02/27) reported that Defense Minister-designate Lee Sang-hee said yesterday that the Lee Myung-bak government will reconsider the timing of implementing the ROK-US agreement concerning the transfer of wartime operational control. "If necessary, we will have to readjust the schedule," Lee said during a parliamentary confirmation hearing held in Seoul. "There is a need for adjustment to the plan based on North Korean threats, pace of our military buildup and budget," he said.

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## 9. Japan Maritime Incident

Agence France-Presse (Hiroshi Hiyama, "JAPAN DEFENCE MINISTER UNDER NEW PRESSURE", Tokyo, 2008/02/27) reported that Japan's government came under fresh pressure Wednesday as the opposition alleged an attempted cover-up into circumstances of an accident in which a naval vessel rammed a fishing boat. Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba admitted poor judgment in interviewing the Atago's duty officer soon after the accident, before a formal probe could be launched. The opposition, which is pushing Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to call a snap election, went on the offensive. "This cannot be tolerated," said Yukio Hatoyama, one of top leaders of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan. "You couldn't blame anyone if they thought that this was part of a cover-up. There is no doubt that the public will grow distrustful," he said.

Reuters ("JAPAN PM MAY FACE BRUISING LOSS OF DEFENSE CHIEF", Toyo, 2008/02/28) reported that Japanese Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba faced pressure on Thursday from within his own party to resign over the incident when a destroyer crashed into a fishing boat. An unnamed executive in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was quoted by the Nikkei daily as saying Ishiba must consider resigning over his handling of an inquiry into the collision. However, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said he should stay in place to root out the cause of the collision and overhaul the ministry. "(Ishiba) has the big task of reforming the defence ministry, and I would like him to do so thoroughly," Fukuda told reporters.

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## 10. US-Japan Relations

The Associated Press ("RICE SEEKS JAPAN'S HELP WITH NORTH KOREA ", 2008/02/27) reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she hopes the alleged rape of a Japanese teenager by a Marine on Okinawa will not harm U.S.-Japan ties. "We certainly hope that there will not be lasting effects, it's a long-standing and strong alliance," she said. "Our concern right now is to see that justice is done, to get to the bottom of it and our concern is for the girl and her family. We really, really deeply regret it." U.S. officials said they expected the Japanese would raise the case at most of Rice's scheduled meetings with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, Foreign Minister Masahiko Koumura and Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba, among others.

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## 11. Sino-Japanese Military Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, CHINA AGREE TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY TIES", Beijing , 2008/02/07) reported that top military officials from the PRC and Japan agreed to strengthen military ties as relations between the two Asian neighbors warm, state media said. The PRC Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan and Japan's Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff Takashi Saito agreed to step up cooperation between the two militaries during talks, Xinhua news agency said. "I hope the two sides can prudently and properly handle issues, deepen exchanges and cooperation, continue to consolidate the political basis of bilateral relations, and enhance mutual strategic trust," Cao was quoted as saying. Saito said he hoped that stronger ties between the defense departments of the two countries would strengthen high-level exchanges and enhance mutual trust and understanding, Xinhua said.

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## 12. Sino-US Military Relations

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "US, CHINA NAVIES DISCUSS JOINT DRILLS", 2008/02/27) reported that the PRC and US navies may hold joint drills within the year as part of efforts to build stronger ties despite recent tensions and lingering mistrust. The exercises were discussed this week during a visit by Maj. Gen. Thomas Conant, the US Pacific Command's director for strategic planning and policy, the PRC's official Xinhua News Agency reported, citing unidentified Defense Ministry officials. "The two sides exchanged views frankly and in depth on relevant issues concerning China-U.S. maritime military safety, and discussed holding a joint maritime exercise between the two navies within the year," Xinhua said.

United Press International ("GATES: U.S.-INDIA LINK NOT TIED TO CHINA", New Delhi, 2008/02/27) reported that US efforts to boost military ties with India aren't part of a strategy against the PRC, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said. "I don't see our improving military relationship in this region in the context of any other country, including China," Gates said during a briefing Wednesday in New Delhi. Gates said discussions between U.S. and Indian military leaders were on issues of working together to combat piracy, terrorism and providing disaster relief, the Financial Times reported.

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## **13. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute**

ANI ("INDIA, CHINA AGREE TO MAINTAIN TRANQUILITY ALONG LAC", New Delhi, 2008/02/27) reported that external Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee in response to a question in Lok Sabha today said that India and the PRC have agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on Sino-Indian border without prejudice to their respective positions on the alignment of the Line of Actual Control as well as on the boundary question. He said that both sides have agreed to clarify their positions on the LAC and will take up perceived violations through established mechanisms, including the Joint Working Group, the Expert Group, border personnel meetings, flag meetings and diplomatic channels until a final decision on the dispute is taken.

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## **14. Cross Strait Relations**

Reuters (Guo Shipeng, "CHINA DANGLES SWEETENERS AHEAD OF TAIWAN ELECTION", Beijing, 2008/02/27) reported that the PRC announced an invitation to Taiwan doctors and new economic sweeteners on Wednesday ahead of next month's presidential elections on the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own. The new favors include allowing licensed Taiwan doctors with more than five years' experience to work in the PRC without further tests. Four new business zones with preferential policies would also be added to the existing four for Taiwan farmers to grow cash crops, flowers, fish or livestock, officials said at a news conference by the policy-making Taiwan Affairs Office.

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## **15. PRC Environment**

China Daily (Zhu Zhe, "HEAVY FINES AWAIT WATER POLLUTERS", 2008/02/27) reported that company heads found guilty of polluting water face a fine of up to half their annual income, according to a draft amendment to the water pollution and control law. "Executives or other people directly responsible could be fined up to half their previous year's salary if their companies cause water pollution," stipulates the draft amendment, which was submitted for third reading to the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Tuesday. The draft raises the upper limits of penalties imposed on companies polluting water, making them responsible for 30 percent of the direct loss from "serious" incidents and 20 percent of the cost for "medium consequences".

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## **II. ROK Report**

### **16. ROK-PRC Relations**

Pressian (Wu Soo Goon, "LI MING BO (LEE MYUNG-BAK) DOES NOT KNOW CHINA' ", 2008/02/28) carried an article by a professor of Donghua University in Shanghai, which said that recently, the PRC has suggested a regular high-level talks among the PRC, US, and Japan on security issues in Northeast Asia, including the DPRK nuclear program. The ROK government, not being included, has expressed concern. Then how does the PRC government react to this? The reason the PRC has suggested the talks stems from the US and Australia discussing collaborative measures to deal with the PRC's economic growth and reinforcement of armament. The PRC's action obviously shows its awareness toward the US but ROK should not belittle the fact that this action also shows the PRC's reaction to Lee Myung-bak diplomacy, which neglects the PRC. Among Lee Myung-bak diplomatic team, which has a serious unbalanced diet on diplomacy, how many people would be able to detect the PRC's message, "Li Ming Bo does not know China. It is beyond not knowing."

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## 17. DPRK-US Relations

Saegae Ilbo (Yoo Ho-yul, "[unification forum] NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC PERFORMANCE IN PYEONG YANG, WHAT IS THE INTENTON OF DPRK? ", 2008/02/27) carried a commentary by a professor of North Korean Studies at Korea University, who wrote that the meaning of the historic Pyongyang performance of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra can be completed only with understanding and explanation of the reason the DPRK has welcomed and devoted itself to cultural exchange through music beyond ideology and system. The DPRK's action can partly be interpreted as a diplomatic strategy of Kim Jong-il to improve relations with the US by diluting the essence of the DPRK nuclear problem. Something we must remember is the empirical fact that social phenomena do not always happen as the leaders or administration intended. I hope that the Americans in Pyongyang helped promote the normalization of the DPRK.

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