NAPSNet Daily Report 4 June, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 4 June, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, June 04, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-4-june-2008/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group

Kyodo News ("U.S. WANTS TRILATERAL TALKS WITH JAPAN, S. KOREA AHEAD OF 6-WAY", Washington, 2008/06/02) reported that Chief US nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill said he wants to have a trilateral meeting with his Japanese and ROK counterparts ahead of any six-way session expected to be held this month. "If the Chinese put together a meeting, we will definitely figure out how to do a trilateral meeting, probably in Tokyo or Seoul on the way to the six-party's," he told reporters at an airport outside Washington.

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2. Inter-Korean Energy Talks

Xinhua ("S KOREA, DPRK TO HOLD TALKS ON ENERGY AID ", Seoul, 2008/06/03) reported that senior diplomats from the ROK and the DPRK will meet at the truce village of Panmunjom this week to discuss details on supplying fuel and energy-related equipment to the DPRK under a six-way deal signed last year, South Korean Foreign Ministry said. The meeting is to prepare for a broader six-party meeting also involving the US, PRC, Russia, and Japan to be held next week, it added.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee , "SEOUL HINTS AT TONED DOWN N.K. POLICY",) reported that the Lee Myung-bak administration's DPRK policies aim to develop inter-Korean relations in parallel with a resolution of the nuclear issue, a Unification Ministry official said. The comments were toned down

compared to its previous insistence that inter-Korean cooperation would come in step with the DPRK's denuclearization. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official said that there had been a misunderstanding that the government would not cooperate with the DPRK until after nuclear disarmament.

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4. US-DPRK Relations

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "NORTH KOREA IS "SERIOUS ADVERSARY": U.S.'S GATES ", Seoul, 2008/06/03) reported that the DPRK presents a serious security threat and US forces in the ROK are ready to respond quickly and decisively to counter any attack, the U.S. defense secretary and military leaders said. "We face a serious adversary across the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) in the North. That is why we have this alliance," Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters. General Walter L. Sharp, who took over as commander of US Forces Korea, said the allies were ready to deter DPRK aggression with "immediate and overwhelming firepower."

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5. US Food Aid to the DPRK

Kyodo News ("U.S. TEAM REPORTS PROGRESS IN FOOD AID TALKS WITH N. KOREA", Beijing, 2008/06/03) reported that the head of a US experts' team that visited Pyongyang to work out details of U.S. food aid to the DPRK said that while negotiations have yet to be concluded, progress was made in their just-ended stay. The team headed by Jon Brause from the U.S. Agency for International Development visited Pyongyang from Friday to discuss a U.S. plan to provide 500,000 tons of food assistance to the DPRK over the coming year. Asked if the team is still in talks with the DPRK, Brause said, "Yes, but it went well."

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6. DPRK Viral Outbreak

Korea Herald ("EPIDEMIC SPREADS IN N.K. BORDER TOWNS: AID GROUP", 2008/06/03) reported that an unidentified epidemic is spreading along some DPRK towns bordering the PRC, placing DPRK health authorities on high alert, a local aid group was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. The disease, suspected to be avian influenza by some DPRK doctors or hand-foot-mouth disease (HFMD) by some others, has already taken the lives of many DPRK children under seven years old, the Buddhist group Good Friends said in its newsletter.

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7. DPRK-UNDP Relations

The New York Times (Neil MacFarquhar, "NORTH KOREA DIDN'T DUPE U.N. OFFICE, REPORT SAYS", 2008/06/03) reported that American allegations that the DPRK duped the United Nations Development Program by diverting aid money for its own needs are not supported by any evidence,

according to a lengthy external review. There was no sign that millions of dollars were mismanaged, diverted elsewhere or unaccounted for, the report said, countering accusations made in early 2007 by the US Mission to the United Nations. Although the report acknowledged that some information the panel had sought was unavailable, the review's conclusion was that the money had been "used for the purposes of the projects."

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8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Yonhap News ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON AGREE TO MAINTAIN CURRENT U.S. TROOP LEVEL HERE ", Seoul, 2008/06/03) reported that the ROK's Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee and his US counterpart Robert M. Gates agreed to maintain the level of 28,500 American troops here, a senior defense official here said. The meeting in Seoul followed a summit between ROK President Lee Myung-bak and U.S. President George W. Bush in April when the two heads of state agreed to freeze a drawdown of U.S. forces in the ROK. "The defense ministers shared their view that maintaining the number of U.S. troops at the current level contributes to the joint combat readiness, and agreed to abide by the summit agreement between the two sides," the official said.

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9. ROK Nuclear Energy

Joongang Ilbo ("NO NUKE PROGRAM HERE: IAEA", 2008/06/03) reported that the ROK has been formally cleared of allegedly attempting to build a secret atomic weapons program to counter the DPRK's nuclear arsenal, the foreign ministry said, citing an annual report by the United Nations nuclear watchdog, In the Safeguards Implementation Report to be issued this week, the International Atomic Energy Agency will declare the ROK is free of nuclear weapons, it added. "The report says all nuclear materials in South Korea are being used peacefully," the ministry said.

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10. Japan WMD Response Drill

Global Security Newswire ("JAPAN PLANS WMD RESPONSE DRILLS", 2008/06/03) reported that more than 18 federal and local Japanese agencies plan to conduct a series of response exercises from October to February to prepare for acts of terrorism involving unconventional weapons, Kyodo News reported today. Scenarios in Ehime and Miyazaki prefectures are set to involve the release of dangerous biological materials, while emergency responders in Kanagawa would be forced to deal with terrorists in possession of a nuclear or radiological weapon. Evacuation exercises are planned for Nagano, Okayama, Tottori and Yamaguchi prefectures.

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11. US-Japan Security Alliance

Japan Times ("ISHIBA ASKS GATES FOR 'TRANSPARENCY' IN COST OF MILITARY RELOCATION",

Singapore, 2008/06/01) reported that Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba asked U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates to secure transparency when calculating costs that Japan would shoulder for the relocation of 8,000 US Marines from Japan's Okinawa Prefecture to Guam, Japanese officials said. Meeting on the sidelines of an international security confab here, Ishiba told Gates that Japan needs to know how the US estimates the costs involved so Tokyo can fulfill accountability, according to the officials. Gates replied that makes sense, they added.

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12. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, RUSSIA DEPUTY MINISTERS AGREE TO CONTINUE ISLAND ROW TALKS", Tokyo, 2008/06/03) reported that Japan and Russia agreed to continue negotiations to settle a longstanding territorial dispute to pave the way for the conclusion of a peace treaty between the two countries, but talks between their deputy foreign ministers in Tokyo reaped little concrete progress. On the dispute over four Russian-held islands northeast of Hokkaido, Sasae was quoted as telling Borodavkin that the two sides "must overcome the current situation in which relations have yet to be fully normalized because of the territorial issue." In response, the Russian deputy foreign minister said that Moscow would like to approach the negotiations with sincerity and to search for a mutually acceptable solution.

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13. Sino-Japanese Relations

The Financial Times (Mure Dickie, "CHINA TO HOST JAPANESE WARSHIP ", Beijing, 2008/06/03) reported that the PRC has announced plans for the first port visit by a Japanese warship since the departure of Tokyo's defeated imperial forces in 1945. The arrival of the Takanami will offer high-profile confirmation that the PRC and Japanese leaders remain determined to forge a closer and more stable relationship between east Asia's two pre-eminent powers. "This visit will promote exchanges and co-operation between the defence agencies of China and Japan and will promote understanding and friendship between the two sides," Qin Gang, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, said on Tuesday.

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14. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN SIGNALS DIPLOMATIC TRUCE WITH CHINA", Taipei , 2008/06/03) reported that Taiwan's new foreign minister said the island would work to strengthen ties with its allies rather than try to lure countries away from the PRC, signaling a major shift in diplomatic strategy. "Taiwan will no longer push to increase the number of countries that establish full diplomatic ties with us," Francisco Ou, who took office last month along with new President Ma Ying-jeou, said in a press conference. "We will try our best to enhance the existing ties with our friends and maintain friendships."

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA APPOINTS NEW HEAD OF TAIWAN AFFAIRS OFFICE: REPORT", Beijing, 2008/06/03) reported that the PRC's Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi was appointed head of

the Taiwan Affairs Office, the government's executive arm handling sensitive ties with the island, state media said. Wang, a career diplomat who was ambassador to Japan at one of the most difficult periods in Sino-Japanese relations between 2004 and 2007, will head up the office at a critical time in relations between the PRC and Taiwan.

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15. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press ("CHINESE POLICE OFFICERS PULL PARENTS AWAY FROM PROTEST OVER SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION", Dujiangyan, 2008/06/03) reported that dozens of parents who lost children in a quake-collapsed school knelt in front of a courthouse, cradling portraits of the dead before police moved in and forcefully led them away. The police action was the sternest response so far by authorities toward aggrieved parents who had been holding impromptu gatherings and memorial services to vent their anger over the deaths of their children. As journalists were dragged up the courthouse steps by police — "For your safety!" they shouted — the parents from the school in nearby Juyuan were forced along the sidewalk and out of sight. Surrounded by police at a side entrance to the courthouse, they tried to present what some described as a lawsuit, saying they had no other option because local officials weren't responding.

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II. PRC Report

16. PRC Civil Society and the 512 Earthquake

Xinhua News Agency ("RED CROSS SOCIETY OF CHINA TO TAKE MEASURES TO INCREASE TRANSPARENCY AND AUTHORITY OF DONATION INFORMATION", 2008/06/03) reported that as of now, Red Cross Society of the PRC had received donations for earthquake disaster totally valued more than 10 billion yuan. Vice President Jiang YIman of the Red Cross Society of the PRC said in an interview that the Red Cross Society is taking measures to increase the transparency and authority of donation information, including opening receipts and details of donations, bulletin audits, and notices to the society. THe group is accepting the oversight of all sectors of society.

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17. PRC Environment

China Business ("CHINA'S PROMOTION OF "LOW CARBON" PILOT", 2008/06/03) reported that although as a developing country, the PRC has not needed to take responsibility for carbon emissions, but in the post "Kyoto Protocol" era, the PRC will likely face carbon emission targets. On May 27, Baoding of Hebei Province and Shanghai were selected as the Low-Carbon Urban Development Project pilots by the State Development and Reform Commission and the World Nature Foundation. They are representatives of developed cities and seriously polluted medium-sized cities. Good experiences of energy-saving, renewable energy resources, manufacturing and application of energy-saving products from them will be studied and extended to the whole country.

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18. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua Net (Huang Quanquan, "POWER SHORTAGE IN THE SOUTH THIS SUMMER MAY REACH 8 MILLION KW", 2008/06/03) reported that it was expected that the eastern PRC, central PRC and some southern provinces would have a power gap during the peak hours of electricity consumption. The Wenchuan Earthquake will impact the Sichuan and Chongqing Power Grid and the Central PRC Power Grid. The rich water and electricity resources in Sichuan generally deliver 1-1.5 million KW of electricity outside. After the earthquake, due to the dam damage and the potential safety problems, hydropower generating capacity will decline, so Hubei, Henan, Jiangxi and other places may have a larger power gap than usual.

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III. ROK Report

19. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Maeil Business (Lee Sang-Hyun, "PRAGMATIC DIPLOMACY NEEDS CORRECTION", 2008/06/04) carried an article by the Research Director at Sejong Institute, who wrote that there is no need to be anxious about the current deadlock in inter-Korean dialogue. The DPRK has used a unyielding strategy for a certain period of time as a taming opportunity as a new administration was inaugurated in the ROK. If the government changes its direction out of anxiety, it is not different from letting both principles and pragmatism go. To quickly come up with follow-up measures for the "denuclearization, opening, 3000" plan is what the ROK government should focus on for now. If the DPRK aims at “open to US, isolate ROK,” the ROK must concentrate on the new strategy for inter-Korean relations supporting progression in US-DPRK relations.

Pressian ("DOES MB ADMINISTRATION HAVE ANOTHER SCHEME FOR AID TO DPRK AFTER BEEF SCHEME?", 2008/06/04) wrote that the ROK government has decided to provide 50 thousand tons of corn to the DPRK. There are predictions that this is a signal of change in direction from that which insisted on waiting for the DPRK’s request first. However, there are also viewpoints that this decision of the government is to avoid the criticism of neglecting the tragedy in the DPRK. This is because the amount is insignificant compared to the government’s evaluation that 1,200,000 tons of food is needed and the 500,000 tons that the US decided to send. There is also analysis that considering the fact that ROK is giving corn instead of rice—staple grains—the ROK is merely attempting to avoid criticism that the deadlock in inter-Korean relation since the inauguration of Lee Myung-bak administration was triggered by the DPRK’s “open to US, isolate ROK” attitude.

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20. ROK Police toward DPRK

Yonhap News ("MEANING AND PROSPECT OF PROPOSAL FOR CORN AID TO DPRK", 2008/06/04)

wrote that, as seen in the case of the corn, although the ROK government is willing to provide food aid to the DPRK under certain principles, the DPRK not showing response is causing a situation in which a breakthrough cannot be found. In such a condition, a realistically possible method for the ROK government is to aid the DPRK indirectly through the WFP regardless of the DPRK's response. However, the indirect aid, because inter-Korean conversation cannot take place together, has a limit of leaving not much hope for further effect than solving the food crisis. Also, the ROK government having officially said "food situation is not as bad for it is not requesting for food" can act as a variable.

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