NAPSNet Daily Report 4 March, 2008

Recommended Citation

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

NAPSNet Daily Report 4 March, 2008

NAPSNet Daily Report 4 March, 2008

Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 2. US on Six Party Talks
  - 3. Sino-DPRK Relations
  - 4. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 5. DPRK Missile Program
  - 6. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute
  - 7. US-Japan Relations
  - 8. Japan Defense
  - 9. Japan Internet Regulation
  - 10. Japan Environment
  - 11. US on PRC Military
  - 12. Sino-Indian Military Exercise
  - 13. PRC Parliament Meeting
  - 14. PRC Unrest

- II. ROK Report
  - 15. DPRK on US-ROK Exercises
  - 16. ROK Policy Toward DPRK
  - 17. Yellow Dust

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "DOORS STILL CLOSED IN NORTH KOREA", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that hours before the New York Philharmonic played a historic concert in the DPRK, senior officials told a visiting U.S. contingent that they would prefer not to account for weapons-grade enriched uranium that the US believes the government of Kim Jong Il has produced. At a lunch in Pyongyang, the capital, the DPRK also said they would prefer not to talk about alleged sales of nuclear material and technology to other countries, Evans Revere, a former U.S. diplomat, said. The DPRK wants those issues "set aside" for now while the United States fulfills commitments it made last year to provide the country with energy assistance and to lift diplomatic sanctions, he said.

Agence France-Presse (Hiroshi Hiyama, "NKOREA 'GUN-SHY' AFTER JAPAN ROW: FORMER US DIPLOMAT", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that the DPRK's deadlocked relations with Japan could have made the hardline regime "gun shy" about fully disclosing its nuclear activities, a former US diplomat said. "My sense is that their experience with the abductee issue left them a bit gun-shy," US diplomat Evans J.R. Revere told a press conference. "I think there is a fear in the DPRK somehow their acknowledgement of their past activities will be used against them, to prevent them from receiving the benefits that have been promised to them in the future," Revere said.

(return to top)

2. US on Six Party Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA COULD LEARN FROM VIETNAM, SAYS US NUCLEAR ENVOY", Hanoi, 2008/03/03) reported that Chief US nuclear envoy Christopher Hill, speaking in Hanoi on the last day of a 16-day Asian tour that included three stops in Beijing, also said he hoped six-party talks to end the DPRK's nuclear program could resume before the end of the month. "In terms of advice, certainly Vietnam has a lot to offer North Korea," he said. "Vietnam has come through a very difficult past, some very painful moments in the past, and Vietnam has made some very good decisions.

(return to top)

3. Sino-DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("HUMAN TRAFFICKING THRIVES ACROSS N.KOREA-CHINA BORDER", 2008/03/03) reported that a Chosun Ilbo news team became the first in the world to see the scale of human trafficking in the PRC-DPRK border. The exodus in the famines of the latter half of the 1990s has degraded into blatant human trafficking. In the PRC, the DPRK refugees live day and night in fear of deportation to the DPRK and poverty. DPRK refugees in the PRC are officially illegal migrants. They enjoy no legal protection, and when discovered they are deported to the DPRK.

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Herald ("SEOUL PRESSES N.K. TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS", 2008/03/03) reported that the ROK urged Pyongyang to improve its human rights situation during a U.N. meeting in Geneva. "The Government of the Republic of Korea, underscoring human rights as a universal value, calls upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take appropriate measures to address the international community's concern that the human rights situation in the DPRK has not improved," Park In-kook, the ROK's chief delegate to the U.N. Human Rights Council meeting, said.

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok and Jung Ha-won, "MILITARY ALERT AFTER NORTH WARNING", 2008/03/03) reported that just before stepping down from his post, former Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo warned military officers to be on alert for a possible confrontation with the DPRK this year. According to military sources, Kim, who left office last week, warned key officers to be ready for trouble with the DPRK, as Pyongyang's anger rises over the latest ROK-US joint military exercises. "Kim asked key military officials to be fully prepared for a possible confrontation," said the source. Kim, a military officer for more than three decades, spent most of his career as a strategist. He is the former chief of operations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and deputy commander of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command.

(return to top)

5. DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap ("N.K. STILL TRYING TO SELL MISSILES: US REPORT", Washington, 2008/03/03) reported that the DPRK is still trying to sell its missiles to foreign countries, although sales have been slowed by the country's increasing international isolation, said a U.S. intelligence report unclassified. At the same time, the DPRK continues to buy raw material to bolster its missile stock, the same report said.

(return to top)

6. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN HOPES MEDVEDEV WILL ADDRESS TERRITORIAL ROW -AFP", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that Japan voiced hope Monday that Russian president-elect Dmitry Medvedev would help resolve a long-festering territorial row, but doubted any major policy change

from incumbent Vladimir Putin. "We hope that the new president will bring a resolution to the territorial problem on which the two nations' arguments have remained apart for a long time, " chief government spokesman Nobutaka Machimura said. "We hope for further enhancement of Russo-Japan relations. We will do our best to that end and we hope the new president will also do the same," he said.

(return to top)

7. US-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse (Shaun Tandon, "US MILITARY SAYS EASING SWEEPING CURFEW IN JAPAN ", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that US forces in Japan said they would ease a sweeping curfew on troops that was imposed nearly two weeks ago in a bid to calm public anger after an alleged rape by a US Marine. The move comes despite a fresh incident that triggered official condemnation in which a drunken US serviceman allegedly defied the curfew and smashed an office window with a steel pipe. The US military said it was ending round-the-clock restrictions on the more than 20,000 troops on the southern island of Okinawa but would keep in place a curfew from 10:00 pm to 5:00 am.

(return to top)

8. Japan Defense

Reuters (Isabel Reynolds and Linda Sieg, "JAPAN PM SAYS DEFENSE CHIEF SHOULD NOT RESIGN: KYODO", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Sunday rejected calls for his defense chief to resign, saying he was needed to reform the scandal-ridden defense ministry, Kyodo news agency said. Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba has been harried by accusations of a cover-up over the circumstances behind a collision between a destroyer and a fishing boat last month. "It is Minister Ishiba's responsibility to take charge of reform and create a ministry and armed forces trusted by the people," Kyodo quoted Fukuda as telling reporters after visiting the relatives of two men still missing after the collision.

Kyodo ("FUKUDA SEEKS FULL DEFENSE MINISTRY REFORM TALKS AMID AEGIS COLLISION ", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Monday sought full-fledged discussions by a government panel on drastically reforming the Defense Ministry so that accidents such as the collision which occurred last month between a Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer and a tuna fishing boat can be prevented. ''I believe there have been many things that we have to truly reflect upon'' concerning the collision, Fukuda said at the panel's sixth meeting at his office. ''I would like to ask you to hold discussions on various topics including this incident.''

(return to top)

9. Japan Internet Regulation

International Herald Tribune (Michael Fitzpatrick, "JAPAN SEEKING TO GOVERN TOP NEWS WEB SITES", Tokyo, 2008/03/03) reported that a Japanese government panel is proposing to govern "influential, widely read news-related sites as newspapers and broadcasting are now regulated." The government is also seeking to rein in some of the more unsavory aspects of the Internet, leaving in

its wake, critics say, the censoring hand of government interference. The panel, set up by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, said Internet service providers (ISPs) should be answerable for breaches of vaguer "minimum regulations" to guard against "illegal and harmful content."

(return to top)

10. Japan Environment

The Asahi Shimbun ("YELLOW SAND BLANKETS MUCH OF JAPAN", 2008/03/03) reported that wind-borne yellow sand from the PRC's Gobi Desert and elsewhere in East Asia was recorded across vast areas of Japan on Monday in the season's first such blanketing. Yellow sand was observed in 34 prefectures from eastern to western Japan, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. In parts of Kyushu, such as Nagasaki and Kumamoto, so much yellow sand was billowing that visibility in some areas was reduced to just 3 kilometers or so.

(return to top)

11. US on PRC Military

The Financial Times (Demetri Sevastopulo, "CHINA LOOKS TO BUILD UP MILITARY, SAYS US", Washington, 2008/03/03) reported that the PRC military is increasingly developing capabilities, including counter space programmes, to conduct military operations beyond any conflict in the Taiwan Strait, the Pentagon said on Monday. In its annual report on the PRC military, the Pentagon said Beijing appeared focused in the short term on Taiwan. But it added that the People’s Liberation Army was building a force for other operations unrelated to Taiwan. The report said the PRC was continuing to develop its strategic nuclear forces by fielding long-range ballistic missiles. It added the PLA was improving its capabilities with the development of cruise missiles, the test of an anti-satellite weapon last year, and its abilities to operate in cyberspace.

(return to top)

12. Sino-Indian Military Exercise

IANS ("NEXT INDIA-CHINA WAR GAME LATER THIS YEAR: ANTONY", New Delhi, 2008/03/03) reported that India Monday clearly signalled its intention to ramp up its military ties with the PRC with the defence ministry announcing that the second war game between the two armies would be conducted in this country in September-October. 'The next joint exercise between India and China is likely to be held in September-October,' Defence Minister A.K. Antony said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. 'The joint exercises will be hosted alternately by the two countries,' he added.

(return to top)

13. PRC Parliament Meeting

Reuters (Benjamin Kang Lim, "CHINA PARLIAMENT TO APPROVE RESHUFFLE, STREAMLINING", Beijing, 2008/03/03) reported that the PRC's new parliament is expected to promote younger leaders

and possibly a non-Communist and will endorse plans to create powerful "super-ministries" in moves that will further consolidate President Hu Jintao's authority. "It's centralizing power to facilitate control," Jin Zhong, a Hong Kong-based veteran PRC watcher, said of the changes expected when the parliament holds its annual meetings. The National People's Congress, or parliament, takes place at the mid-way point of Hu and Wen's tenure, during which they have sought to moderate the pace of growth with a view to curbing widespread environmental degradation and reviving the lagging hinterland.

Xinhua ("GRASSROOTS VOICES GROW IN CHINA'S TOP LEGISLATURE", Beijing, 2008/03/03) reported that the PRC's ordinary citizens will have more "political mouthpieces" to represent their rights and interests as lawmakers nationwide gathered here for their annual full session. According to the name list of the 11th NPC, worker-turned NPC deputies have doubled the number of the previous term, while the number of deputies from farmers increased by more than 70 percent. Among them, three rural migrant workers now working in cities have been elected NPC deputies, making them the first batch of "spokespersons" in the top legislature for about 200 million migrant laborers. The proportion of deputies of provincial officials, however, was cut by one third.

(return to top)

14. PRC Unrest

Washington Post (Edward Cody, "IN CHINA, PROTESTERS CLASH WITH POLICE OVER DANGEROUS FACTORY", Beijing , 2008/03/03) reported that violent protests erupted in several southern PRC fishing towns after residents heard a chemical factory rejected as environmentally dangerous by the nearby city of Xiamen would be built in their area instead, witnesses and other residents said Monday. The protesters, who began their uprising peacefully on Thursday, clashed repeatedly with baton-wielding police Friday and Saturday in several towns on the Gulei Peninsula, about 50 miles south of Xiamen on the Taiwan Strait, the witnesses and residents said. A dozen people were injured and carried away for treatment in local hospitals, and about 15 were arrested, according to demonstrators and their family members.

Reuters (Lindsay Beck, "CHINA ORDERS 6-MONTH DRIVE TO PRESERVE ORDER", Beijing, 2008/03/03) reported that the PRC has ordered intensified efforts to preserve social order, state media reported on Monday, ahead of the Beijing Olympics and commemorations of the start of political and economic reforms 30 years ago. The Central Committee for Comprehensive Management of Social Security gave the order for March to September to eliminate conflicts, chaos and other activities concerning social order. "We should make concerted efforts to properly resolve outstanding problems affecting social harmony and stability," the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of China's ruling Communist Party, said in the brief report.

(return to top)

II. ROK Report

15. DPRK on US-ROK Exercises

Joongang Ilbo ("[editorial] NUCLEAR THREAT TO 'THE MAN,' NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC TO US", 2008/03/04) wrote that the DPRK shows strong repulsion to the US and ROK having a joint military exercise. One thing that worries people is the fact that the DPRK is repeating the nuclear threat. While sending gestures of reconciliation to the US, the DPRK is threatening the ROK with nuclear weapons. Therefore, there is a very high possibility that the DPRK nuclear issue is going to be a great challenge of National Security to the new administration. In order to resolve this problem, the ROK and US must cooperate in strictly sticking to the principle of “DPRK nuclear inutility.” While having conversation, DPRK must be made aware of the clear consequences that will come from the nuclear threat.

Yonhap News ("THE BACKGROUND OF DPRK CRITICISM TOWARD ROK-US JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE", 2008/03/04) wrote that it is a general understanding that the criticism by the DPRK on the ROK-US joint military exercise is another political measure. There is also analysis that DPRK is strongly reacting to “Key Resolve's” deployment of nuclear powered aircraft carrier Nimitz anchored in Busan, real fire training of the Striker brigade, and nuclear powered submarine Ohio in order to prevent misjudgment. An ROK government official said “the criticism of the DPRK will not be a fundamental obstacle to nuclear issues, but it would be probably the best to wait for the time being.”

(return to top)

16. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Hankyoreh Newspaper ("ETHICAL APPROACH TO POLICIES TOWARD DPRK IS ‘INEFFECTUAL'", 2008/03/02) wrote that Hankyoreh and the Researchers for Design of New Korea had an opportunity to evaluate the diplomatic security policies of the new administration. The debaters feared that the foreign policies of the new administration, especially its policies toward the DPRK, might end up being a unilateral moralism or value-based theory instead of pragmatism. The debaters mentioned that the “denuclearization, opening, $3,000 GDP plan” is a denuclearization-first theory that the US has already given up. They have also pointed out the need to have a comprehensive approach of an “Action to Action” principle concerning the DPRK nuclear problem and warned that the ROK might be isolated in times of improving relationships between the DPRK and the PRC, and between the DPRK and the US.

(return to top)

17. Yellow Dust

Hankook Ilbo ("A NATURAL DISASTER THAT KEEPS ON INTENSIFYING, THE YELLOW DUST", 2008/03/04) reported that for last two days, severe yellow dust has fallen on the Korean Peninsula. Recently, yellow dust comes over from the highlands of Mongolia and Manchuria areas. Furthermore, there is no plausible solution to the problem even though the source and course of movement to the ROK have been made clear. Constructing observatories at the main source of occurrence and along the course of movement, and receiving warnings from them is all that has been done. Preventing yellow dust from occurring or reducing the scale is not within human capabilities.

(return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-4-march-2008/

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