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I. ROK Weekly Report

- 1. ROK Weekly Introduction
  2. Ball in DPRK's Court
  3. US Leaves ROK on Our Own
  4. Process Unnecessarily Rushed
  5. Denuclearization Prospects Brighten
  6. US Surrenders to DPRK
  7. How Will DPRK Respond?
  8. $25,000 Not the Real Issue
  9. DPRK Next Move Unclear
  10. DPRK Must Move Quickly
  11. Compromise More Important Than Speed

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. ROK Weekly Report

1. ROK Weekly Introduction

ROK Weekly Report ("BDA FUNDS UNFREEZING", 2007-04-13) This week's report focuses on the ROK media's response to the unfreezing of the DPRK funds at the Banco Delta Asia. Some commentators criticized the US for caving into DPRK demands, and in some cases pointed to the decision to allow DPRK arms shipments to Ethiopia as evidence that Washington is abandoning its

principled stand on DPRK illegal activity. Other praised it as a pragmatic move to push things forward on the nuclear issue. Almost all called on the DPRK to respond quickly to fulfill its own obligations under the Feb. 13 agreement.

(return to top)

2. Ball in DPRK's Court

Seoul Shinmun ("BDA RELEASED, NOW DPRK'S TURN TO ANSWER", 2007-04-12) writes that the U.S. not only has striven to release the DPRK capital even after verifying BDA's trade of illegal capital, but also has ignored the fact that Ethiopia imported arms from the DPRK. This can be seen as diplomacy that ignores principles. But on the other hand, this also means that the U.S. government is trying its best to make the Feb. 13 agreement a success. Now the ball has passed to the DPRK to take the agreement and put it into practice.

(return to top)

3. US Leaves ROK on Our Own

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. IGNORES DPRK'S ARMS EXPORT", 2007-04-09) states that according to the benefit of the country, global society's yesterday and today are different. Right now, the U.S.'s position is that DPRK has to denuclearize in order to have a diplomatic relationship. From this we can learn that the safety of ROK is up to us.

(return to top)

4. Process Unnecessarily Rushed

Joongang Ilbo ("INCOMPREHENSIBLE DEALING METHODS OF U.S.-DPRK BDA ISSUE", 2007-0--26) writes that the decision to release BDA capital is understandable since peace-building is of a more fundamental importance than $25 million, but points out that the process is unnecessarily in a hurry. It states that the U.S. should have searched for other banks that would accept the money before promising only in words, and it seems as if they were only concentrating on accomplishing the diplomatic outcome.

(return to top)

5. Denuclearization Prospects Brighten

Hankook Ilbo ("BDA CAPITAL RELEASE BRIGHTENED PROSPECTS OF DENUCLEARIZATION OF DPRK", 2007-03-27) writes that the agreement on the BDA issue has removed the highest wall between the two countries, but more importantly, it is more meaningful to the DPRK since it means the U.S. is recognizing DPRK as a member of the global society.

(return to top)

6. US Surrenders to DPRK

Jajuminbo ("THE MEANING OF RELEASE OF BDA CAPITAL AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF U.S.-DPRK RELATIONSHIP", 2007-03-20) states that the release of BDA capital, when it was proven the money was illegal, means that the U.S. has surrendered to the DPRK. Although the DPRK has

promised that they will use the money in improving the lives of its people, there is no way the U.S. could keep an eye on how DPRK uses the money.

(return to top)

7. How Will DPRK Respond?

Pressian ("DPRK 'SILENCE' TO UNBLOCKING BDA", 2007-04-11) said that because the DPRK is not showing any response even though the frozen BDA account is unblocked, some view that the DPRK might not hastily make its move. There also is diagnosis that there is no reason the DPRK would go against the positive trend. However there are still assertions that DPRK will not accommodate the US's decision.

(return to top)

8. $25,000 Not the Real Issue

Pressian ("US SUPPORTS UNBLOCKING THE FROZEN DPRK ACCOUNT. ANOTHER DETOUR TO BDA SOLUTION?", 2007-04-13) also said that the US seems to be thinking that its role in unblocking issues is done, leaving Macao and the DPRK to finish their jobs. There are people who believe that leaving the jobs to the DPRK and Macao illustrates that the US has given up trying to solve the problem that originated from the US. The expression that Christopher Hill used, "the unblocking is a great step taken towards the end," is actually different from the reality, but rather is rhetoric used to avoid future responsibility. There is a possibility that the DPRK will accept the new solution, which is fundamentally the same as the original, because what the DPRK desires is not $25,000, but normalized financial trading.

(return to top)

9. DPRK Next Move Unclear

Ohmynews ("DPRK SILENT TO US'S FINAL MOVE", 2007-04-11) said that although the DPRK has made clear that it will approve the IAEA’s inspection as soon as it gets access to the BDA account, whether it is willing to accept the US’s final solution or not is not clear. The final solution is different from the original one that the US would send all $25.000 at once to the Bank of China. It is already difficult to observe the initial stage transfer in the agreement. However, regardless of the delay in its dates, the overall layout will be sustained.

(return to top) Kyunghyang Shinmun ("DPRK SHALL NO LONGER MAKE OTHERS WAIT", 2007-0--12) said that the DPRK, even though the US Treasury Department has solved the biggest problem regarding the nukes, the BDA account issues, shows no sign of fulfilling its agreement. Many are anxious that the DPRK might give up what is probably its last chance. For the US, which has shown its power diplomacy, the BDA issue had been a humiliation. If the DPRK does not further encourage advocates if engagement like Cristopher Hill, the position that the DPRK will have in future shall be in greater disadvantage. The DPRK must quickly invite the IAEA inspectors and begin the shutdown process. Making others wait will only damage the confidence. Time is no longer on the DPRK's side.
(return to top)

10. DPRK Must Move Quickly

Hankyoreh ("MUST ACCELERATE THE 2/13 AGREEMENT", 2007-04-11) said that the US, by

announcing that $25,000 frozen in the BDA can freely be taken out, has decided not to ask the DPRK about the money's legality and future usage. In this moment in which the BOC, or Bank of China, is not willing to take the money, the US's role seems to have finished. The DPRK must speed up the initial measures that it has delayed with BDA issue as an excuse. The DPRK must keep in mind that once illegal deeds are alleged, it has an effect on the global financial community. The six party talks, which re-opened with difficulty, can be thought of as the last chance for peacefully solve the nuke problem. The parties must persistently solve the problems by negotiations respecting each other. The DPRK has the responsibility to make a progress in actual shutdown of nukes and therefore prevent its reputation from further exacerbation.

(return to top)

11. Compromise More Important Than Speed

Hankuk Ilbo ("OBSERVATION AND SUPERVISION OF COMPROMISE ON DPRK NUKE ISSUES IN BROADER SENSE", 2007-04-12) said that although the evaluations vary, the fact that the condition for initial phase of 2/13 agreement is fulfilled is important. Instead of paying attention to all the various evaluations, we must concentrate on inducing DPRK's future cooperation with a broader view and open attitude. The time that is supposed to be taken dealing with technical problems is actually spent on erasing the label as illegal without damaging too much of the cause for the freezing. Some people only asking for faster implementation of initial steps was therefore absurd. Likewise, criticizing the DPRK for asking for 30 more days because the condition was not met is unjust. Understanding the positions of different countries and having insight into the benefits and harms to smoothly make progress without breaking the big flow is crucial.

(return to top)

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