NAPSNet Daily Report Friday, July 20, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Friday, July 20, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, July 20, 2007, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-friday-july-20-2007/

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I. ROK Weekly Report

1. Introduction

ROK Weekly Report ("NEXT STEPS FOR INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS", 2007-07-20) The DPRK's move to allow IAEA inspectors back into the country was seen as a positive development by most ROK commentators, but there was a good deal of disagreement over what the next step should be. While some felt that focus should now turn to negotiating a peace agreement for the Korean

Peninsula, others thought that clearing up the DPRK's past nuclear activities will be the main task. There was also disagreement on how much the ROK should move forward with such matters as food aid and a possible inter-Korean summit.

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2. IAEA Inspections

Poly News ("SIX-PARTY TALKS AND THE IAEA INSPECTION TO BE HELD SIMULTANEOUSLY IN JULY", 2007-06-30) writes that from the 26th to 30th, IAEA inspectors have visited DPRK to discuss the procedures of inspection. On 28th to 29th, visited Youngbyun nuclear facilities and declared about five facilities will be dismantled, as stated in Geneva Agreement of 1994. It also writes that Arsi Heinonen, the vice president of IAEA, was very satisfied with the inspection and the discussion. Song Minsoon, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, last 28th, at a meeting with Condoleezza Rice, stated the talks can start as soon as the inspectors visit DPRK, and also mentioned there is no need to wait for one stage to end in order to move on to the next. It seems, once IAEA inspectors decide when to visit DPRK, the six-party talks will be held simultaneously, and the peace discussion will be hitting the road.

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3. Peace Agreement

Joongang Ilbo ("DPRK'S NUCLEAR SYSTEM, THE KEY TO BRING PEACE TO THE KOREAN PENINSULA", 2007-07-11) writes that the discussions to be followed between the six countries do not seem so hopeful, but considering the current relationship between the U.S. and DPRK, there is more possibility of dismantling the nuclear system. It also explains that the US is hoping to start the talk on peace agreement from the end of this year if possible, and the ROK government, although it seems as if it is remaining silent, is examining various plans, including "the declaration of the end of Korean War." The DPRK has recently stressed "establishment of peace is an urgent agenda" as well. It states that possibly the Cold War, which has been maintained for about 60 years, can finally come to an end. It emphasized the six countries involved should take a careful and wise approach, and especially underlined the discussion on peace agreement must be carried on along with the nuclear issue.

(return to top) Daejeon Ilbo ("DENUCLEARIZATION SHOULD BE A PREREQUISITE FOR THE DECLARATION OF THE END OF WAR", 2007-07-11) writes that Bush's decision to declare the end of war is a strategic arrangement to lock DPRK in their fence through change in relationship between the two countries. It adds that ROK's position on the declaration cannot be the same as the US, and states that unless DPRK is completely denuclearized, there is no reason to hurry and declare the end of war. (return to top) Naeil Shinmun ("MUST ENDEAVOR TO DECLARE THE END OF WAR", 2007-07-11) writes that the declaration of the end of war would become the key to solving the nuclear issue and that although in international law, the declaration does not have any power, but its symbolic power is not small at all. It adds that the declaration will change the military confrontation that has been going on for about half a century and puts an end to the antagonism. Baek Seungjoo, a researcher in Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, also states that the declaration will simplify the parties concerned in the matter. Currently the concerned parties of suspension are the US and UN (since the US signed the Armistice as a commander of UN forces) the DPRK, and PRC. Moreover, the suspension not only causes military collision, but also has been used as political means. Therefore to concretize the declaration of the end of war, the government must endeavor to create a global environment for it. (return to top)

4. Clearing up HEU Problem

Naeil Shinmun ("ROK, DPRK, AND THE U.S., GRASPS THE ANSWER TO HEU", 2007-07-10) writes that the main agenda on future talks will be the range of nuclear system to be reported, the way to dismantle them, and especially verifying the existence of highly enriched uranium (HEU). It adds that ever since the Banco Delta Asia (BDA) capital was put on hold, the ROK government has been discussing the latter steps, such as verifying the existence of HEU, and not the dismantling of the nuclear system, which means there is high possibility they have agreed on much of it already. The most likely way is for the DPRK to clarify where the main components of the HEU program come from, and the U.S. to compare that information with theirs and solve the suspicion.

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5. Revocation of UN Sanctions on DPRK

Kukmin Ilbo ("SIX-PARTY TALKS TO BE HELD ON THE 18TH… SECURITY COUNCIL MIGHT RELEASE SANCTION ON DPRK", 2007-07-10) writes that Yves Sorokobi, the spokesperson of UN, at an interview with Voice of America, hinted the possibility of revoking the U.N.'s sanction on the DPRK by saying "considering recent DPRK's moves to execute 2.13 Agreement, in the near future things can change."

(return to top) Yonhap News ("SMOOTH FLOW OF NUCLEAR ISSUE: WILL IT MELT DOWN THE UN SANCTIONS?", 2007-07-12) writes that as the nuclear issue is being solved smoothly, the UN sanctions on DPRK are becoming a hot issue. The DPRK has been requesting the US to take off the DPRK from their list of terrorism sponsoring nations, as well as release the sanctions against them. As three permanent members of the UN Security Council -- the US, PRC, and Russia -- are in the six-party talks, as long as the six-party talks decide the nuclear issue has been improved, sanctions could be released even without the IAEA's approval. However, Resolution 1718 prohibits the testing of missiles, but the DPRK has fired them three times since May already. (return to top)

6. Change of Current

Segye Ilbo ("CHANGE OF CURRENT IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA", 2007-07-10) writes that there has been change of current in the Korean Peninsula as the BDA capital has been transferred safely and the DPRK is moving to implement the 2.13 Agreement. The US is considering declaring a peace agreement instead of declaring the end of war. The DPRK invited the IAEA inspectors even before the BDA capital was transferred completely and invited Christopher Hill to show their will to stop the nuclear system. The ROK government has also sent 400,000 tons of rice, 300,000 tons of fertilizers, and from the 25th will send $80 million worth of raw materials for light industries. The ROK government is also preparing for a summit conference.

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7. ROK Stuck between US and China

Chosun Ilbo ("IF U.S. AND CHINA'S EA STRATEGY CRASHES…", 2007-07-12) writes that the US is trying to denuclearize DPRK by nonmilitary attempts to recover from two nightmares, the 9/11 terror attack and the Iraq War, while the PRC is dealing with the nuclear issue completely from a "harmonious development" point of view. It continues that the Korean Peninsula is stuck in between the two, and is in urgent need for a new, 21 century "East Asia Strategies."

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8. ROK Should Take It Slowly

Nocut News ("PRIOR SETTLEMENTS FOR PEACE ON KOREAN PENINSULA", 2007-07-12) writes that the government is going over the plans including a summit meeting between ROK and DPRK and declaration of the end of war for peace agreement in the Korean Peninsula. It is a necessary step to reunification, but more realistic and possible alternatives must be thought of. It also states that summit meeting, the declaration of the end of war, and the peace agreement are all not likely to come true and are more of a strategic card for the upcoming presidential election. It emphasizes that as DPRK has not yet implemented all the measures of 2.13 Agreement, the government should take this slowly and make sure denuclearization of DPRK is successfully achieved.

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9. Conditions for Summit Meeting

CBS ("TWO CONDITIONS FOR THE SUMMIT MEETING", 2007-07-11) writes that although the government has started preparing the agenda for a summit meeting between the ROK and the DPRK, and Kim Daejung, the former president of the ROK, has also stressed the importance of holding a summit meeting, at the moment it seems unlikely. It explains that first the governing party must unite and regain political power through the presidential election because, as the presidential election will be greatly affected by this issue, the DPRK will not risk the harm they might get by trying to prevent GNP from coming into power if GNP gets elected. Secondly, the DPRK is not pleased by President Roh Moohyun's not so enthusiastic will to have a summit meeting. If these two conditions are fulfilled, the summit meeting between ROK and DPRK could be held after the summit meeting between ROK and the US in late September or October.

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10. Social Change the Key

Chosun Ilbo ("THE REASON I'M NOT INTERESTED IN THE SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2007-07-11) writes that although diplomatic policies and agreements have effects on the flow of history, it is not as important as the social changes or economic flow. Using the Cold War as an example, it explains that newspapers at the time dealt with many policy changes and agreements; however, the reason there were no World War III was because of the collapse of Soviet Union, and the nuclear issue was solved along with it. It adds that the reason Soviet Union collapsed is because of disappointment on Communism, an instable economy, and more knowledge on western developed countries, and that if DPRK's society changes, nuclear issues will be solved along with it.

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11. Nukes More Important Than Kidnapping

Hankyoreh ("DENUCLEARIZATION MORE THAN KIDNAP ISSUE", 2007-07-12) writes that in Japan, more people are inclining to the opinion that the nuclear issue is more urgent than the kidnapping issue. While kidnapping issue has not progressed at all, the 2.13 Agreement has been moving fast, and regardless of whether hard line policy is good or bad, more and more people are thinking it is more important to start thinking about what is best for the nation.

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