



NAPSNet Daily Report Friday, March 23, 2007

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1. Introduction

ROK Weekly Report From Seoul ("March 23, 2007",) This week's issue highlights the ongoing debate over the Feb. 13 agreement and the DPRK nuclear issue. Seo Jae-jeong, writing in the online journal Pressian, sees the agreement as the beginning of the end of American hegemony in Northeast Asia, while veteran conservative commentator Kim Dae-joong sees it as a betrayal of the ROK by the United States. We conclude with a discussion of moves by the main opposition party, the GNP, to soften their stance toward the DPRK ahead of this winter's presidential election, which suggests that a conservative political takeover might not spell the end of the Sunshine Policy after all.

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2. End of U.S. Hegemony?

Pressian ("DOES THE BEIJING AGREEMENT IMPLY THE END OF 20TH CENTURY?", 2007-03-21) wrote that the bilateral meeting between DPRK and the U.S. "is the first step toward the formation of a new multilateral system free from America's hegemony in east Asia." It also wrote "to Koreans, this means the dream of peace and unification, and through the agreement, this dream is coming to a reality."

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3. U.S. Betrays ROK

Chosun Ilbo ("UNTIL WHEN WOULD WE BE DRAGGED ALONG BY NORTH'S NUCLEAR ISSUE?", 2007-02-25) stated that "through this 2.13 Agreement, the ROK is faced with a potential security crisis because the DPRK will still have their nuclear weapons and the U.S. is leaving the ROK to the danger of nuclear threats. The U.S. will deny it, but we are feeling as if betrayed by Bush." It also said, "the U.S. has started to show that it does not want to take any charge of protecting the ROK, and the ROK, rather than trying to depend on the U.S., now needs to find new ways to maintain security."

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4. North-South Conspiracy to Deceive the Nation

A Chosun Ilbo editorial ("IF SOUTH AND NORTH CONSPIRE TO DECEIVE THE NATION", 2007-0-04) that there is a big possibility that the ROK will have to supply the DPRK with rice and fertilizers without any successful results, and that everyone knows denuclearization requires a lot of sacrifice, but if South and the DPRK conspire with each other to deceive the nation, the citizens have to reconsider the government's intentions.

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5. GNP Seeks Talks with DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("JUNGHYUNGGEUN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER TO PYONGYANG NEXT MONTH, NOTIFY GNP-STYLE 'SUNSHINE POLICY'", 2007-03-23) reported that the Grand National Party's top member of a taskforce team regarding the DPRK and unification, Jung Hyunggeun, is planning to visit Pyongyang in April to notify the DPRK that if the party wins the next election, they will continue the "Sunshine Policy" on the basis of reconciliation and cooperation. Also, on the 15th, GNP Representative Kang Jaesub stated the party will "proceed with flexible and positive policies about the DPRK," and on the 14th, Kim, Hyungoh, the floor representative, explained that "the DPRK is misunderstanding GNP Party." The party members explain that Jung's preparation to visit the DPRK is an incident that symbolizes that GNP Party's policies regarding the DPRK are converting into appeasement and that it is an attempt to eliminate any possibilities of a "New North Korean Typhoon" before the presidential election. Jung said that "GNP Party, once caught by the "anchor or ideology fight," will have hard time getting out," and that "the purpose of visiting the DPRK is to pacify the DPRK and ideology issue at the presidential election." One source from GNP Party said "Jung had planned to visit the DPRK," but the DPRK refused to invite him since he is from the GNP.

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Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org