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I. NAPSNet

- 1. [DPRK on Six Party Talks](#)
- 2. [US on Six Party Talks](#)
- 3. [Rice on DPRK at Asean](#)
- 4. [US Navy General on DPRK Weapons Capabilities](#)
- 5. [Inter-Korean Economic Talks](#)
- 6. [ROK FM Seeks Top UN Post](#)
- 7. [RO Koreans on DPRK](#)
- 8. [ROK Media Misreport](#)
- 9. [US-PRC Relations](#)
- 10. [US-PRC Space Cooperation](#)
- 11. [Cross Strait Relations](#)
- 12. [PRC Graft Crackdown](#)
- 13. [PRC-Japan Relations](#)
- 14. [Japan Defense](#)
- 15. [Japan Elections](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Six Party Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA WANTS NUCLEAR TALKS WITH US", 2006-09-23) reported that Selig Harrison, just back from a visit to Pyongyang, told a Beijing news conference he held lengthy discussions with Kim Kye-gwan, Pyongyang's top negotiator at stalled Six Party Talks on its nuclear ambitions. Kim said the DPRK plans to unload fuel rods from its nuclear reactor to obtain more weapons-grade plutonium and put pressure on the US. Harrison, director of the Asia Program at the Centre for International Policy in Washington, quoted Kim as saying that if Washington conceded the face-to-face talks it has long resisted, "both sides could put whatever they've got on their minds on the table".

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. US on Six Party Talks

Washington Post ("WITH N. KOREA TALKS STALLED, U.S. TRIES NEW APPROACH", 2006-09-21) reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice convened a meeting of a new group of nations that will focus on Northeast Asian security concerns. Diplomats have dubbed the group "Five Plus Five" to refer to the 10 countries involved, but the DPRK declined an invitation and the PRC and Russia did not send representatives.

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. Rice on DPRK at Asean

Bernama ("US WILLING TO MEET NORTH KOREA IN KL FOR SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2006-09-22) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she is willing to meet her DPR Korean counterpart in six-party talks in Kuala Lumpur next week when she attends the Asean Post-Ministerial Conference (PMC) and the Asean Regional Forum (ARF).

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. US Navy General on DPRK Weapons Capabilities

LA Times ("NORTH KOREA'S STRIKE RANGE CAST IN DOUBT", 2006-09-23) reported Navy Adm. William J. Fallon, the military's top officer in the Pacific, said that the failure of Pyongyang's test of a long-range missile in July was a sign that such technologies remain out of the regime's grasp. Fallon's position varies in some respects from that of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, who has continued to warn of the threat of the DPRK's Taepodong 2 long-range missile even after the recent test firing in which the rocket blew up less than a minute after liftoff. Since taking over Pacific Command 18 months ago, Fallon has traveled to the PRC three times and has emerged as a leading proponent of more active engagement with Beijing, particularly between the two militaries. The DPRK's ability to launch long-range missiles has become highly politicized, with Bush administration critics saying Rumsfeld has overstated the threat to gain funding for the Pentagon's multibillion-dollar missile defense system.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. Inter-Korean Economic Talks

Korea Times ("S-N ECONOMIC TALKS UNLIKELY TO RESUME", 2006-09-25) reported that a new round of economic talks, the only official channel of dialogue active between the governments of the two Koreas, is unlikely to open this month. In the latest round of meetings on Cheju Island in June, the two sides agreed on Seoul's conditional assistance for Pyongyang's light industries and the resumption of talks in Pyongyang this month. Inter-Korean relations turned sour after Seoul refused to give additional economic assistance in response to Pyongyang's launching of seven ballistic missiles in early July. The DPRK called off all government-level contact with Seoul and cancelled reunions of separated family members.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. ROK FM Seeks Top UN Post

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN SEEKS ANNAN POST ATOP U.N. ", 2006-09-22) reported that RO Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon is seeking to become the eighth secretary-general in the UN's 60-year history. There are seven candidates and more could emerge, although the prospects of Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Surakiart Sathirathai took a hit with the military coup on Tuesday. Most speakers focus on issues directly affecting their countries. Ban mentioned the Korean peninsula only three times in his 15-minute speech, urging the DPRK to return to talks and expressing concern over human rights. He also promoted the ROK's initiative for African development. He tackled the issues of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the Iranian nuclear issue, the challenges of U.N. peacekeeping, the Palestinian issue, Iraq, stability in Africa, the U.N.'s Millennium Development Goals and U.N. reform.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. RO Koreans on DPRK

Reuters ("S. KOREANS WORRIED ABOUT NORTH SPARKING WAR: POLL", 2006-09-22) reported that RO Koreans are more and more disenchanted with the DPRK, and a growing number are losing enthusiasm for unification. A poll by the daily JoongAng Ilbo was taken nearly two months after the DPRK test-fired missiles amid widespread speculation it was planning to test an atomic bomb. Some 57 percent of respondents said they thought it was possible the DPRK would provoke a war, up 15 percentage points from a similar poll last year. Just 12 percent thought unification was an absolute necessity. The overall percentage of those who showed support for unification fell seven percentage points. The DPRK also jumped a notch in the rankings of RO Korea's most-hated country from number three in 2005 to number two this year. The number one spot was kept by Japan, which colonized the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945 and whose relations with Seoul have again turned increasingly sour over the past few years. President Roh Moo-hyun fared poorly in this survey. About two-thirds of respondents said Roh had done nothing good in more than three years in office, up from just over half a year before.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. ROK Media Misreport

Korea Times ("MISREPORT ON NUKES DAMAGES DAILIES", 2006-09-25) reported that ROK media claims that the DPRK has developed at least five to six nuclear weapons were based on a satirical composition by a U.S. expert on DPRK issues. The series of news reports was based on an article recently posted at the Web site of the U.S.-based think tank, the Nautilus Institute, which was written by Robert Carlin, former chief of the Northeast Asia Division at the US State Department.

Most South Korean newspapers as well as a few broadcasters reported the story without verifying its veracity. The Nautilus Institute updated the introduction to the essay to clarify matters.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. US-PRC Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US-CHINA 'STRATEGIC DIALOGUE' NO PANACEA: ANALYSTS", 2006-0-25) reported that a new Sino-US "strategic economic dialogue," announced with much fanfare last week, should not be seen as a panacea for all problems in the troubled bilateral trade relationship, analysts say. "Although there may be no immediate, concrete results, the dialogue will serve as a platform for consultations between the two parties," said Mei Xinyu, an analyst with the PRC's ministry of commerce.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. US-PRC Space Cooperation

Reuters ("U.S., CHINA CONSIDER LIMITED SPACE COOPERATION ", 2006-09-25) reported that the US space agency and the PRC's civilian space program are considering working together on some projects, but joint missions into space are still a long way off, the agency's head said on Monday. Michael Griffin, the first National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) administrator to visit the PRC, said the two programs were considering holding annual meetings, and that areas for working together could include earth science, climate research, data sharing and robotics.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN'S CHEN FACES CRITICISM FOR MOVES ON NEW CONSTITUTION ", 2006-09-25) reported that Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian's push for a new constitution sparked fears that such a move could invite an invasion from the PRC. Chen, under pressure to resign over corruption scandals, raised the issue of a new constitution at a seminar Sunday sponsored by his independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a move likely to irk the PRC which regards the island as its territory.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. PRC Graft Crackdown

The Associated Press ("TOP SHANGHAI LEADER REMOVED FROM OFFICE", 2006-09-25) reported that Shanghai's top leader was removed from office Monday over the alleged misuse of city pension funds, the government said. The dismissal of Communist Party Secretary Chen Liangyu coincides with a top-level probe into allegations that at least a third of the \$1.2 billion fund was invested in real estate and other infrastructure.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. PRC-Japan Relations

Reuters ("JAPAN, CHINA TO DISCUSS FENCE-MENDING SUMMIT TALKS", 2006-09-25) reported that top diplomats from Japan and the PRC were set to kick off a fresh round of talks on Monday on whether their leaders could move ahead with an ice-breaking summit meeting soon. Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi and his PRC counterpart, Dai Bingguo, were due to meet in Tokyo for a second day amid growing speculation that a leaders' summit would take place soon after Shinzo Abe formally succeeds Koizumi on Tuesday.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. Japan Defense

The Associated Press ("JAPAN SEEKS FIGHTER JET MISSILE SYSTEM", 2006-09-25) reported that Japan's Defense Agency plans to develop a new missile system for its fighter jets that would be able to target aircraft and ships without emitting radio waves that could be detected by an enemy, an agency spokesman said. The Defense Agency will begin three years of research starting in 2007 to develop the new missile, Defense Agency spokesman Hirokazu Shirota said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. Japan Elections

Kyodo ("ASO MAY REMAIN FM OR TAKE ANOTHER MAIN CABINET MINISTER", 2006-09-25) reported that Prime Minister-in-waiting Shinzo Abe is likely to retain Taro Aso as foreign minister or give him another main post in his Cabinet, sources close to Abe said. Abe, 52, president of the governing Liberal Democratic Party, made final adjustments to determine ministers of his Cabinet to be inaugurated after an attestation ceremony at the Imperial Palace on Tuesday night.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo ("ABE NAMES CLOSE ALLY NAKAGAWA AS LDP 2ND-IN-COMMAND", 2006-09-25) reported that Prime Minister-in-waiting Shinzo Abe on Monday appointed former Chief Cabinet Secretary Hidenao Nakagawa, his close ally, as the Liberal Democratic Party's secretary general, the No. 2 party post in Abe's new leadership. New LDP president Abe, 52, also named former health and welfare minister Yuya Niwa as chairman of the party's decision-making General Council, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shoichi Nakagawa as chairman of the Policy Research Council. [\(return to top\)](#)

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