

# **NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, February 15, 2007**

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## **I. NAPSNet**

# 1. Six Party Talks

Washington Post ("U.S. FLEXIBILITY CREDITED IN NUCLEAR DEAL WITH N. KOREA", 2007-02-14) reported that the six-nation deal to shut down the DPRK's nuclear facility, four months after Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test, was reached yesterday largely because President Bush was willing to give U.S. negotiators new flexibility to reach an agreement. Ever since the DPRK nuclear crisis erupted in 2002, the Bush administration has insisted that the DPRK should not be rewarded for its bad behavior -- and many of the U.S. offers have required Pyongyang to give up a lot before it could receive anything in return. Now Bush has signed off on a deal that accepts the DPRK's original position -- a "freeze" of its Yongbyon nuclear facility -- and requires Washington to move first by unfreezing some DPRK bank accounts. The agreement leaves until later dealing with such vexing issues as the dismantlement of the facility, the stash of weapons-grade plutonium and even the admission of the nuclear program that started the crisis in the first place. As a result, the agreement came under attack yesterday, with conservatives labeling it a betrayal and Democrats charging that Bush allowed the DPRK to become a nuclear-weapon state without gaining much improvement over a Clinton-era deal that collapsed during Bush's first term. But Bush pronounced himself "pleased" with the accord, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a prime architect of the accord, said it is just the beginning of a long process. "This is not the end of the story," she said, calling it the result of "patient, creative and tough diplomacy."

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# 2. US Criticism of Nuclear Deal

New York Times ("OUTSIDE PRESSURES BROKE KOREAN DEADLOCK", 2007-02-14) reported that the six party accord came under fast criticism from right and left that it was both too little and too late. For years, Mr. Bush's administration has been paralyzed by an ideological war, between those who wanted to bring down DPRK and those who thought it was worth one more try to lure the country out of isolation. In embracing this deal, Mr. Bush sided with those who have counseled engagement, notably his secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, and her chief negotiator, Christopher R. Hill. Mr. Bush took the leap in the hope that in a few months, he will be able to declare that DPRK can no longer produce fuel for new nuclear weapons, even if it has not yet turned over its old ones. As the White House took credit on Tuesday for what it called a "first step," it found itself pilloried by conservatives who attacked the administration for folding in negotiations with a charter member of what Mr. Bush called the "axis of evil," and for replicating key elements of Mr. Clinton's agreement with DPRK. At the same time, Mr. Bush's advisers were being confronted by barbs from veterans of the Clinton administration, who argued that the same deal struck Tuesday had been within reach several years and a half-dozen weapons ago, had only Mr. Bush chosen to negotiate with the DPRK rather than fixate on upending its government. In two respects, however, the new accord is different: DPRK does not receive the incentives the West has offered -- in this case, about a year's supply of heavy fuel oil and other aid -- until it "disables" its equipment at Yongbyon and declares where it has hidden its bombs, nuclear fuel and other nuclear facilities. And the deal is not only with Washington, but with Beijing, Moscow, Seoul and Tokyo. But the administration was clearly taken aback on Tuesday by the harshness of the critique from the right, led by its recently departed United Nations ambassador, John R. Bolton, who charged that the deal "undercuts the sanctions resolution" against the North that he pushed through the Security Council four months ago. Democrats, in contrast, were caught between enjoying watching Mr. Bush change course and declaring that the agreement amounted to disarmament-lite. "It gives the illusion of moving more rapidly to disarmament, but it doesn't really require anything to happen in the second phase," said Joel Wit, who was the coordinator of the 1994 agreement. Asked in 2004 about DPRK, he said, "I don't think

you give timelines to dictators and tyrants." Now he appears to have concluded that sometimes the United States has to negotiate with dictators and odious rulers, because the other options — military force, sanctions or watching an unpredictable nation gain a nuclear arsenal — seem even worse.

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### **3. DPRK on Six Party Deal**

Kyodo News ("REPORT: NORTH KOREA READY TO IMPLEMENT SIX-PARTY AGREEMENT", 2007-02-15) reported that the DPRK is ready to implement an agreement reached earlier this week on initial steps for denuclearization. "The talks went well," Kyodo News agency quoted DPR Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan as saying on his return from the Beijing-hosted six-nation negotiations. "We are ready to implement the results of the meeting," he said at Pyongyang airport to both Russia's ambassador and a senior Chinese embassy official, according to Kyodo.

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### **4. ROK and Japan on Six Party Deal**

New York Times ("SOUTH KOREA AND JAPAN SPLIT ON NORTH KOREA PACT", 2007-02-15) reported that the six party deal has had immediate ripple effects in Japan and the RO Korea, apparently freeing the ROKorea's hands and tying Japan's. A day after the accord was brokered, requiring the North to shut its main nuclear reactor in return for food and fuel assistance, the South Korean government invited North Korea to resume ministerial talks suspended after its nuclear test last October. Seoul announced that officials from both sides had agreed to meet Thursday in Kaesong, just north of the demilitarized zone. "What is very important about the agreement is that it not only resolves the North Korea nuclear issue itself," RO Korea's president, Roh Moo-hyun, said, "but, in a further step, it includes a clause for discussions, negotiations on establishing a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula." But in Tokyo, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe came under attack from members of the opposition and his own party for his government's refusal to provide assistance to the DPRK over what it says are unresolved cases of Japanese abductees. Critics said Tokyo's narrow focus on this issue, seemingly at the expense of regional stability, would leave it isolated. Mr. Abe made his political career by championing the abduction issue, which critics say he has exploited to stir nationalist sentiments. Analysts say it would be difficult for Mr. Abe, whose approval ratings have plummeted after a series of scandals and gaffes, to compromise on the issue. The issue of the abductees is likely to be tackled in the working group, but Japan's emphasis is likely to bring forth a long list of historical grievances on the DPRK's part. The RO Korea, by contrast, appeared set to resume its economic and diplomatic engagement of the DPRK, a policy that had long strained its relations with the Bush administration. The deal also made it more unlikely that South Korea would alter its policy even if the conservative opposition were to win in next December's presidential election.

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### **5. EU on Six Party Deal**

Xinhua ("EU SAYS IT CONSIDERS SENDING MISSION TO DPRK", 2007-02-14) reported that the EU is planning to send a troika mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). "In order to underline the importance that the EU attaches to positive developments on the Korean Peninsula, the EU is considering sending an EU troika mission to DPRK," the EU German presidency said in a statement. However, the statement did not say the purpose of such a mission, nor the timing. The

statement welcomes the agreement which was reached by the participants at the last round of the six party talks that ended on Tuesday in Beijing,

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## **6. Inter-Korean Relations Resume**

Itar-Tass ("DPRK, S KOREA AGREE TO HOLD MINISTERIAL MEETING IN PYONGYANG", 2007-0-14) reported that representatives of the DPRK and RO Korea have agreed to hold a meeting at the level of ministers in Pyongyang on February 27-Marh 2. Such agreement was reached at consultations in the DPRK border city of Koson on Thursday. It means the resumption of the two Korean states' dialogue which was broken off after large-scale missile tests and a blast of a nuclear device last year.

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## **7. Russia on DPRK Sanctions**

Interfax ("IT'S PREMATURE TO DISCUSS LIFTING OF SANCTIONS ON DPRK - MOSCOW", 2007-02-15) reported it would be premature to discuss a possible lifting of sanctions regarding the DPRK. "The international community applied the sanctions in a broader format, and their possible lifting must be considered in a broader format as well. It would be premature to speak about a possible lifting of the sanctions," said Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov.

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## **8. US-ROK Trade Relations**

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, U.S. 'TO STRIKE TRADE DEAL BY APRIL'", 2007-02-15) reported that there are signs that the ROK will after all conclude a free trade agreement with the US by early April. ROK chief negotiator Kim Jong-hoon said Tuesday, the third day of a new round of bilateral trade talks, said there should be progress this time and it would be possible to clinch a trade deal "at the appropriate time."

[\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap ("S. KOREA-U.S. FTA TALKS HEAD FOR 8TH ROUND AMID LOOMING DEADLINE ", 2007-02-15) reported that ROK and US negotiators wrapped up their latest round of free trade agreement talks on Wednesday after making "substantial" headway in their nine-month-old negotiations. Encouraged by a telephone conversation by their presidents expressing their strong commitment to the success of the talks, both sides agreed to meet again in early March, a few weeks before their preset deadline. [\(return to top\)](#)

## **9. US-Japan Relations**

Kyodo News ("CHENEY TO PUT N. KOREA, IRAQ ON AGENDA OF TALKS DURING JAPAN VISIT", 2007-02-15) reported that Dick Cheney is expected to discuss ways for the US and Japan to cooperate over the DPRK and Iraq in his talks with top Japanese officials when he makes a three-day visit to Japan from next Tuesday. Cheney is expected to affirm the two countries' close cooperation in dealing with the DPRK nuclear standoff following an agreement at the recent round of the six-party talks.

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## 10. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

China Post ("S. KOREANS TO FILE SUIT AGAINST JAPAN WAR SHRINE", 2007-02-15) reported that a group of ROK citizens plan to file a lawsuit against a Tokyo war shrine that critics say glorifies Japan's militaristic past, seeking to remove the names of their late relatives. The suit will be the first-ever such case against the Yasukuni Shrine lodged by ROK citizens. The plaintiffs claim their relatives, who fought on the Japanese side during World War II as forced laborers, have been enshrined against their will. They plan to seek the removal of 10 names, but more names may join the list before the suit is officially lodged. More than 21,000 Koreans are believed to be enshrined.

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## 11. Whaling in Japan

The Associated Press ("JAPAN INCREASES PRESSURE ON INTERNATIONAL WHALING BODY", 2007-02-15) reported that Pro-whaling nations issued a draft statement Thursday accusing countries that are against whaling of "imperialism" for imposing a ban on commercial hunts, and Japan threatened to quit the International Whaling Commission unless it is changed. The statements came at the end of a three-day conference in Japan aimed at bringing changes to the commission. The meeting, however, was boycotted by half the commission's membership, including the United States, Britain and Australia, which oppose whaling.

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## 12. Sino-Japanese Relations

The Daily Yomiuri ("AGENDA FOR JAPAN-CHINA MINISTERIAL TALKS", 2007-02-15) reported that Japanese and PRC foreign ministers will be meeting this week to define the agenda for the visit and discussions between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and PRC Premier Wen Jiabao in Tokyo in mid-April. Unlike the previous five years, the two nations are looking to establish ways to talk to each other rather than talking past each other. To that end, the meetings between the foreign ministers and the April heads of governments are positive developments.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo News ("CHINA VOWS TO HELP JAPAN RESOLVE ABDUCTION ISSUE", 2007-02-15) reported that visiting PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing vowed to help Japan resolve the dispute over DPRK's past abductions of Japanese nationals while asking for Japan's understanding over PRC's recent anti-satellite missile test. On these matters, Li was quoted as saying, "China understands the concern Japan has with North Korea. We will continue to cooperate on the matter."

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## 13. Sino-US Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA TRIES TO PLACATE U.S. ON TRADE ISSUES", 2007-02-15) reported that the PRC will buy more US products and crack down harder on people who steal intellectual property, the Foreign Ministry said. "We are ready to expand our imports from the U.S. to improve the trade imbalance," said a ministry spokeswoman, Jiang Yu. "At the same time, we hope the US can relax its controls on high technology to China." The PRC frequently complains that US export controls prohibit the transfer of high-technology products, thereby keeping some goods out of the PRC. Jiang's comments were in response to a question about a plan by three US senators to introduce legislation that would strip the PRC of its permanent normal trade status with the US and

again subject the trade relationship between the countries to an annual review by Congress.

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