NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, June 21, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, June 21, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, June 21, 2007, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-thursday-june-21-2007/

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I. NAPSNet

- 1. US Envoy Visits DPRK
2. DPRK on Denuclearization
3. IAEA Inspection in DPRK
4. DPRK Funds Transfer
5. Jeju Peace Forum
6. DPRK UN Human Rights Monitor
7. DPRK Local Elections
8. Inter-Korean Relations
9. DPRK-Sino Relations
10. Sino-Iraqi Relations
11. ROK Labour Strike

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US Envoy Visits DPRK

Associated Press ("U.S. NUCLEAR ENVOY VISITS NORTH KOREA ", 2007-06-21) reported that the chief US nuclear envoy made a rare trip to the DPRK on Thursday in a surprise bid to accelerate international efforts to press the DPR Korean government to abandon its nuclear weapons program. Assistant US Secretary of State Christopher Hill's trip came ahead of the expected resumption of six-nation talks next month following the resolution of a key financial dispute that had blocked progress. "We want to get the six-party process moving," Hill said. "We hope that we can make up for some of the time that we lost this spring and so I'm looking forward to good discussions about that." Hill said he "got the message on Monday and we had to work fast to find an airplane," suggesting the visit was hastily arranged and based on a DPR Korean invitation.

(return to top)

2. DPRK on Denuclearization

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA WANTS DENUCLEARIZATION", 2007-06-21) reported that the DPRK is committed to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and to following a February deal to end its nuclear programme, the Philippine foreign minister said on Thursday after returning from Pyongyang. "Both President Kim and Foreign Minister Pak repeatedly stated to me that their overriding objective is to denuclearise the Korean peninsula," Romulo said. The two men "also stated to me their unshakable will to implement the action agreement of February 13, 2007. This is very encouraging to me", the minister said, speaking at the Beijing airport. "What was stressed to me by the foreign minister and the president of the DPRK is that the key to the implementation of the February 13 agreement is confidence amongst each other, and they stressed the principle of action-for-action," Romulo said.

(return to top)

3. IAEA Inspection in DPRK

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA PUTS ATOM MONITORS' RETURN ON HOLD OVER FUNDS", 2007-0--21) reported that a visit by UN nuclear monitors to the DPRK set for next week has been put on hold, a DPR Korean official said. But the signs of movement in a long stalled process faltered when DPR Korea's embassy in Vienna, headquarters of the IAEA, said Pyongyang had not received any of $25 million released from frozen funds. "As of now, the frozen funds had not reached our bank account. Nobody knows why the remittance is delayed," said Hyon Yong Man, counsellor at Pyongyang's embassy in Vienna. "So our side has informed the IAEA that we have no objection to them preparing the visit as a plan, but we are not ready to give our official confirmation for the visit as scheduled by the agency," he said.

(return to top)

4. DPRK Funds Transfer

Interfax ("TRANSFER OF FUNDS TO NORTH KOREA ALMOST COMPLETED - RUSSIAN DIPLOMAT", 2007-06-21) reported that the transfer of $25 million from a Macau-based bank to the DPRK has almost been completed, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak said. "All the necessary agreements have been reached, all the guarantees have been given, and, in my opinion, the problem has been resolved," he said. “It is now the question of pressing buttons, rather than

making political decisions. The money is being transferred while I am speaking to you," he said.

(return to top)

5. Jeju Peace Forum

Yonhap News ("WORLD LEADERS, EXPERTS SET SIGHTS ON REGIONAL PEACE, ECONOMIC COOPERATION AT JEJU EVENT", 2007-06-21) reported that an international conference opened in the ROK, setting the stage for discussions on the DPRK nuclear issue and ways for Northeast Asia to benchmark European security and economic cooperation. The 4th Jeju Peace Forum brings together more than 120 former and current heads of state, other political leaders, scholars and businessmen under the theme of "Peace and Prosperity in Northeast Asia: Exploring the European Experience," according to organizers. They include former Russian prime minister Yevgeni Primakov, former Filipino president Fidel Ramos, former Japanese prime minister Toshiki Kaifu, and Yasushi Akashi, former undersecretary-general of the UN.

(return to top)

6. DPRK UN Human Rights Monitor

Asia Pulse ("NORTH KOREA SLAMS UN OVER HUMAN RIGHTS MONITOR", 2007-06-21) reported that the DPRK on June 17 criticized a UN plan to maintain monitoring of its human rights conditions and vowed that it will not allow any foreign observers into the country. As the UN Human Rights Council is likely to decide on the future of its special rapporteur system for the DPRK, Myanmar, Cuba and Belarus on June 18, the body's president, Luis Alfonso de Alba, suggested in the latest report that a close watch should be maintained only on DPRK and Myanmar. Choe Myong-nam, a councilor at the DPRK's diplomatic mission to Geneva, denounced De Alba's proposal and vowed to maintain the DPRK's boycott on the council's operations on his country. "As it is unfair to extend the special rapporteur system on our country, we firmly denounce it," the envoy said. "We won't accept in any case any special rapporteur in relation to (North Korea's) human rights, and our position remains unchanged that we will keep rejecting a special rapporteur in the future," he said.

(return to top)

7. DPRK Local Elections

Asia Pulse ("NORTH KOREA TO HOLD LOCAL ELECTION IN LATE JULY", 2007-06-21) reported that the DPRK is to hold a local council election, which comes every fourth year, in late July, the DPRK's news outlet said on June 19. "The election of deputies to the Provincial (City under the Direct Control of the Government), City (District) and County People's Assemblies will be held in the DPRK on July 29 according to Article 133 of the Socialist Constitution and the decision of the Local People's Committees," the Korean Central News Agency said, quoting information released by the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly.

(return to top)

8. Inter-Korean Relations

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA THREATENS SOUTH OVER SEA INTRUSION", 2007-06-21) reported that the DPRK accused the ROK of sending naval vessels into its territorial waters off the west coast and warned of retaliatory action. Seoul denied its vessels had intruded into the North's waters. A

spokesman for the DPRK's Korean People's Army (KPA) naval command said in a statement the ROK has been sending a growing number of warships into its waters since May and the number had reached 36 by mid-June. "Such reckless intrusion that has got unabated despite the repeated warnings of the KPA navy may become a dangerous fuse to spark off the third skirmish in the west sea and, furthermore, a bigger war going beyond the skirmish," the spokesman said.

(return to top)

9. DPRK-Sino Relations

China Post ("CHINA'S FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT NORTH KOREA IN EARLY JULY", 2007-06-21) reported that the PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi will visit the DPRK in early July ahead of the expected resumption of six-nation talks on halting the Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said. "I think the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula will be included," Qin said when asked what would be discussed on Yang's visit. Yang will also discuss regional and international issues in North Korea, Qin said.

(return to top)

10. Sino-Iraqi Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA AGREES TO CANCEL IRAQI DEBT", 2007-06-21) reported that the PRC signed an agreement to cancel Iraqi debt at a ceremony after a meeting between PRC President Hu Jintao and his Iraqi counterpart Jalal Talabani.PRC Trade Minister Bo Xilai and three Iraqi ministers signed the agreement to cancel Iraq's debt towards PRC. No detail was however provided on this agreement or how much debt would be canceled.

(return to top)

11. ROK Labour Strike

International Herald Tribune ("SOUTH KOREA WARNS KEY UNION AGAINST STRIKE OVER FREE TRADE AGREEMENT", 2007-06-21) reported that the ROK warned a key labor union not to go on strike against a free trade agreement with the US, as the two countries began talks aimed at amending the accord. The Korean Metal Workers' Union, the country's largest with 150,000 members, plans to walk off the job for five days from Monday in protest against the free trade deal. "The general strike is a so-called a political strike and is obviously illegal as it has nothing to do with improving working conditions and aims to block the conclusion of the Korea-US FTA," Labor Minister Lee Sang-soo said in a statement. "The government will deal sternly with the general strike according to laws and principles," Lee said.

(return to top)

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