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I. NAPSNet

- 1. [Inter-Korean Relations](#)
- 2. [Inter-Korean Red Cross Talks](#)
- 3. [Inter-Korean Travel](#)
- 4. [DPRK Human Rights](#)
- 5. [US Strategy Report on DPRK](#)
- 6. [US on DPRK Nuclear Status](#)
- 7. [US on DPRK Refugees](#)
- 8. [ROK on DPRK-US Relations](#)
- 9. [Japan on ROK-PRC-DPRK Relations](#)
- 10. [Russia, PRC Meeting on DPRK](#)
- 11. [Russia, PRC on DPRK](#)
- 12. [US, Australia on PRC Military](#)
- 13. [PRC Military Training in Latin America](#)
- 14. [Russia, PRC on Iran Nuclear Issue](#)
- 15. [PRC-Russia Oil Pipeline Project](#)
- 16. [PRC-India Trade](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("USFK NOT UP FOR DEBATE IN PEACE TALKS: MINISTER ", 2006-03-16) reported that ROK Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok on Thursday said the two Koreas must accept the US Forces Korea as a "constant" on the road to any permanent peace treaty for the peninsula. "We cannot bring up the issue of the USFK in the discussions; we must look at them as a constant," the minister told an alumni reunion of the Department of Politics and International Relations at Seoul National University. But on the issue of the demarcation line between the two Koreas, Lee said the aim will be "joint supervision."

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

2. Inter-Korean Red Cross Talks

Yonhap News ("KOREAS TO DISCUSS ABDUCTED S. KOREANS AT RED CROSS TALKS", 2006-0-16) reported that the DPRK and ROK are to hold a working-level meeting of their Red Cross officials from this week, during which the sides are expected to discuss ways to resolve their humanitarian issues, including ROK citizens held in the DPRK. "A Red Cross meeting between working-level officials is to be held at the North's Mount Geumgang from Friday through Sunday," the country's Vice Unification Minister Shin Un-sang said in a press briefing Thursday.

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

3. Inter-Korean Travel

Yonhap News ("INTER-KOREAN TRAVEL JUMPS NEARLY TWOFOLD IN FIRST TWO MONTHS", 2006-03-16) reported that the number of RO Koreans and DPR Koreans traveling between the rival countries increased nearly 90 percent for the first two months of the year, the Unification Ministry said Thursday. The number rose to 12,849, an 89.3 percent increase from that of the same period last year, Vice Unification Minister Shin Un-sang said at a regular news briefing.

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

4. DPRK Human Rights

Reuters ("S.KOREA RIGHTS BODY MAY TAKE A RARE STAND ON NORTH", 2006-03-16) reported that the majority of the ROK's independent Human Rights Commission is pushing to tell Seoul it was time to take a stand on the DPRK's human rights record, commission officials said on Thursday. "Eight of the 10 members share the view that it is important for the commission to take a position and tell the government it needs to do the same," an official at the commission secretariat said by telephone.

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

5. US Strategy Report on DPRK

Associated Press ("EXCERPTS FROM PRESIDENT BUSH'S NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY REPORT", 2006-03-16) reported that "In addition to posing a nuclear proliferation threat, North Korea counterfeits U.S. currency, traffics in narcotics, threatens South Korea with its army and its other neighbors with its missiles and brutalizes and starves its people. ... The North Korean regime needs to change these policies, open up its political system and afford freedom to its people. In the interim, we will continue to take all necessary measures to protect our national and economic security against the adverse effects of their bad conduct."

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. STRATEGY PAPER DEEMS N.KOREA A 'DESPOTIC SYSTEM' ", 2006-03-16) reported that the White House on Wednesday published a new strategy paper that identifies six countries - the DPRK, Iran, Cuba, Syria, Burma, Zimbabwe and Belarus -- as "despotic systems" the US needs to protect itself with "all necessary measures." The National Security Strategy denounces the DPRK as a nation with a bad record of being dishonest in negotiations, especially on its nuclear development. [\(return to top\)](#)

6. US on DPRK Nuclear Status

Yonhap News ("NORTH KOREA CAN NEVER BECOME ANOTHER INDIA: UNDERSECRETARY BURNS", 2006-03-16) reported that the DPRK would never be given the same nuclear status as India because of its history of proliferation, US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns said Thursday. In a special briefing on the recent US-India nuclear agreement, Burns insisted that India is the "only possible country" with which the US could achieve the unique accord.

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

7. US on DPRK Refugees

Yonhap News ("ACCEPTING N.K. REFUGEES IS TEST OF U.S. SECURITY BALANCE: HADLEY", 2006-03-16) reported that accepting refugees from countries like the DPRK is a challenge because of security issues involved, but the US could certainly do more to open up to them, a presidential adviser said Thursday. Stephen Hadley, head of the National Security Council, said the issue involves a "trade-off" between opening up and helping the refugees and national security. "You want to be open to people. You want to be open to refugees," Hadley said at a question-and-answer session with the U.S. Institute of Peace. "...at the same time, we cannot be (in) a position of letting people into our country who, at the end of the day, do harm to it," he said.

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

8. ROK on DPRK-US Relations

Associated Press ("US SEEKING VARIOUS WAYS TO ENGAGE NORTH KOREA: OFFICIAL", 2006-03-16) reported that the ROK's new point man on the DPRK said Thursday the US is stepping up engagement with Pyongyang even as it has cracked down on the DPRK's alleged money laundering and poor human rights record. "The United States now has various thoughts when looking at North Korea. It wants to look at the North from a little wider perspective," Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok told a forum in Seoul. "This can, from some aspects, be a source of challenges, but also a source of opportunity."

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

9. Japan on ROK-PRC-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("JAPAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER RAPS S. KOREA, CHINA FOR AIDING N. KOREA", 2006-03-16) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso has expressed his dissatisfaction with ROK and PRC policies toward the DPRK, according to Japanese media on Thursday. Speaking to the budget committee at the House of Councilors on Wednesday, Japan's top diplomat was quoted as saying, "South Korea and China are helping North Korea. I can't understand why they do so?"

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

10. Russia, PRC Meeting on DPRK

Agence France-Presse ("ENERGY, IRAN AND NORTH KOREA TO BE FOCUS OF PUTIN VISIT TO CHINA", 2006-03-16) reported that energy and trade will top the agenda of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to the PRC next week, while the Iran and DPRK nuclear standoffs will also be discussed, officials said Thursday.

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

11. Russia, PRC on DPRK

Kyodo News ("RUSSIA, CHINA FAVOR DIPLOMACY ON IRAN, N. KOREA NUKE ISSUES", 2006-0-16) reported that Russia and the PRC are both aiming to achieve diplomatic solutions to disputes over Iran's and the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, the Russian ambassador to the PRC said Thursday. "Despite the differences in the nature of the two issues, Russia and China have the same position over them. We both believe that we need to see political solutions through diplomatic channels," Russian Ambassador Sergei Razov said at a news conference.

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

12. US, Australia on PRC Military

The New York Times ("U.S. AND AUSTRALIA TAKE DIFFERENT TONES ON CHINA'S RISING POWER", 2006-03-16) reported that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the foreign minister of Australia struck markedly different tones today over the rising power of the PRC, with Ms. Rice criticizing its military expansion and the Australian warning against trying to "contain" PRC ambitions. Noting that the PRC announced a 14 percent increase in military spending, Ms. Rice said: "That's a lot, and China should undertake to be transparent about what that means." Mr. Downer told Sky News: "We don't support a policy of containment of China. I don't think that's going to be a productive or constructive policy at all."

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

13. PRC Military Training in Latin America

The Associated Press ("CHINA TRAINING LATIN AMERICAN MILITARY, SAYS U.S. GENERAL", 2006-03-16) reported that the PRC is training increasing numbers of Latin American military personnel, taking advantage of a three-year old US law that has led to a sharp decline in US-run training programs for the region, an Army general said. Gen. Bantz Craddock testified before a Senate Armed Service Committee hearing where lawmakers from both parties called for the

elimination of the law that authorizes US training programs only under certain conditions -- requirements that some countries refuse to accept.

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

14. Russia, PRC on Iran Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("RUSSIA, CHINA URGE DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION FOR IRAN", 2006-03-16) reported that Russia and the PRC are urging a diplomatic solution to the crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions, Russia's ambassador to the PRC said. "We both believe we need to seek political solutions to the issues through diplomatic channels," Ambassador Sergei Razov told reporters in Beijing.

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

15. PRC-Russia Oil Pipeline Project

Xinhua ("PUTIN TO VISIT CHINA, OIL PIPELINE ON AGENDA", 2006-03-16) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin will discuss the possibility of building an oil pipeline from eastern Siberia to the PRC, Russian Ambassador Sergei Razov said in Beijing. Razov told a press conference that discussions on the feasibility of the construction of an oil pipeline extending from Russia's Skovorodino to the Russia-PRC border are underway between Transneft of Russia and China National Petroleum Corporation.

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

16. PRC-India Trade

Xinhua ("INDIA, CHINA TO REGISTER TRADE OF \$20 BN BY '07", 2006-03-16) reported that bilateral trade between India and the PRC is expected to reach 20 billion US dollars by the year 2007, a year ahead of the target set earlier, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Kamal Nath said in his keynote address at the India-China Joint Business Forum.

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

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