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I. NAPSNet

- 1. Six Party Talks
  2. Inter-Korean Oil Deal
  3. Inter-Korean Light Industry
  4. Inter-Korean Military Talks
  5. ROK on FTAs and Korean Unification
  6. ROK Trade Relations
  7. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation
  8. Japan Iraq Role
  9. Cross Strait Relations
  10. PRC Food Safety

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA TALKS WILL RESUME NEXT WEEK, REPORTS SAY", 2007-0--10) reported that the PRC has informed participating countries that the Six Party Talks will resume July 18. The ROK news agency Yonhap reported this from Beijing, citing an unidentified diplomatic source familiar with the negotiations. The PRC was expected to make an official announcement on the talks as early as Tuesday, but Qin Gang, spokesman for the Chinese foreign ministry, did not

confirm a date, stating that the date still needs "the consent of every party".

(return to top)

2. Inter-Korean Oil Deal

Yonhap ("GOV'T SIGNS CONTRACT WITH REFINERY SK FOR FUEL OIL AID TO N. KOREA", 2007-07-10) reported that the ROK has signed a contract with a local refinery to provide heavy fuel oil to the DPRK for shipment next week as part of a multilateral aid-for-disarmament deal. In late June, working-level officials from the two Koreas agreed on the shipping arrangements. The ROK portion of the aid should be sent within two weeks. The remaining 950,000 tons, to be split equally between the five parties involved in the six-way talks, will be given when the DPRK takes further steps to disarm.

(return to top)

3. Inter-Korean Light Industry

Korea Herald ("KOREAS AGREE TO COOPERATE IN LIGHT INDUSTRY SECTOR", 2007-07-08) reported that the Koreas agreed on ways to cooperate in light industry and natural resource exploration. The two Koreas announced they would carry out the written agreement following talks held in the border city of Kaesong. In Friday's overnight talks, the DPRK agreed to accept the materials at the price the ROK suggested. The North will pay the costs for transportation, cargo working and demurrage, while the South is to bear all the costs for shipping, insurance and using ports.

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Military Talks

Associated Press ("KOREAS HOLD MILITARY TALKS AMID SEA BORDER DISPUTE", 2007-07-09) reported that military talks between the two Koreas resumed on a downbeat note when the DPRK hinted at a long-running dispute over their shared sea border - an issue that stalled earlier sessions. The one-day working-level meeting is a follow up to high-level military talks between the divided Koreas in May when the two sides agreed to set up a joint fishing area around their disputed maritime border and cooperate on security arrangements for joint economic projects near the border. The waters around the border are rich fishing grounds and boats from the two Koreas routinely jostle for position during the May-June crab-catching season.

(return to top)

5. ROK on FTAs and Korean Unification

Yonhap ("FTAS WILL HELP SOUTH KOREA COVER REUNIFICATION COSTS WITH NORTH KOREA: TRADE MINISTER", 2007-07-10) reported that the ROK's trade minister Kim Hyun-chong said the aggressive push to forge free trade agreements (FTA) with the United States and other countries will help make its economy stronger and bigger enough to cover the huge financial burden from possible unification with the DPRK. For now, reunification of the Koreas is unforeseeable, with predictions varying from 10 years to several decades, and some even say it will never be possible.

(return to top)

6. ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("FTAS WILL HELP SOUTH KOREA COVER REUNIFICATION COSTS WITH NORTH KOREA: TRADE MINISTER", 2007-07-10) reported that the ROK's aggressive push to forge free trade agreements (FTA) with the US and other countries will help make its economy stronger and bigger enough to cover the huge financial burden from possible unification with the DPRK, its trade minister said. "As you know, reunification needs astronomical amounts of money," Kim said. "The purpose of FTAs is aimed at increasing national wealth through reform and market opening and eventually helping fund the huge unification cost."

(return to top) Yonhap ("S. KOREA, EU EXCHANGE TARIFF OFFERS AHEAD OF 2ND ROUND OF FTA TALKS NEXT WEEK ", 2007-07-10) reported that the ROK and the European Union (EU) exchanged proposals on tariffs as the two sides prepared to hold a second round of negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) next week, the ROK's chief negotiator to the talks said. Government officials say a deal between the ROK and the EU may not be as difficult as one with the US as Seoul and Brussels may exclude sensitive farm goods from the proposed agreement, although automobiles, pharmaceuticals and intellectual property rights are emerging as potentially contentious issues. (return to top)

7. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN UNABLE TO INTERCEPT MISSILES FIRED AT US", 2007-07-10) reported that Japan said it was technically unable to shoot down a missile fired over its territory at the US, even as it moves to be legally able to do so. The admission came as the US military said it held its latest exercise with Japan aimed at improving coordination in the event of a missile launch. "The missile system that our country is now introducing is aimed consistently at defending our country," Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said. "But since missiles heading to other countries are supposed to fly fairly high, technically it is extremely difficult to intercept such missiles."

(return to top) Kyodo ("JAPAN, U.S. CONDUCT JOINT BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE EXERCISES", 2007-07-10) reported that Japan and the United States have conducted five rounds of joint missile defense exercises. The latest exercise was carried out Friday using three Aegis vessels from the U.S. 7th Fleet, one Aegis ship from Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force, and aircraft equipped with the Airborne Warning and Control System from Japan's Air Self-Defense Force. (return to top)

8. Japan Iraq Role

Kyodo ("JAPAN EXTENDS ASDF IRAQ MISSION UNTIL JULY 2008", 2007-07-10) reported that the Japanese government decided to extend the Air Self-Defense Force's airlift support mission for the reconstruction of Iraq in a one-year cycle to July 2008, instead of the half-year cycle as initially planned. The decision, made at a Cabinet meeting, apparently reflects the government's intention to prevent the contentious issue of the troop deployment to Iraq from grabbing the political and public spotlight every six months.

(return to top)

9. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN SEEKS U.S. ATTACK HELICOPTERS ", 2007-07-10) reported that Taiwan's army wants to buy 30 Boeing Apache attack helicopters from the US, an official said, in a

deal that would almost certainly roil the PRC. The deal, worth $1.5 billion, must be approved by the US government and Taiwan's Legislature. The PRC can be expected to pressure Washington not to approve the sale, in line with its efforts to prevent Taiwan from procuring sophisticated military equipment from abroad.

(return to top)

10. PRC Food Safety

BBC News ("CHINA FOOD SAFETY HEAD EXECUTED", 2007-07-10) reported that the former head of the PRC's State Food and Drug Administration, Zheng Xiaoyu, has been executed for corruption, the state-run Xinhua news agency reports. He was convicted of taking 6.5m yuan ($850,000; £425,400) in bribes and of dereliction of duty at a trial in May. The bribes were linked to sub-standard medicines, blamed for several deaths.

(return to top)

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