



NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, February 23, 2005

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, February 23, 2005", NAPSNet Daily Report, February 23, 2005, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-february-23-2005/>

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I. United States

1. US, ROK, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("TOP NUCLEAR NEGOTIATORS TO MEET IN SEOUL", 2005-02-23) reported that negotiators from the US, Japan and ROK will meet in Seoul this weekend to discuss resuming nuclear disarmament talks with the DPRK after the DPRK's leader hinted at a possible compromise, officials said Wednesday. The three allies, which routinely coordinate their strategies on how to end the DPRK's nuclear threats through six-nation talks, will try to work out remaining differences, Japanese Ambassador Toshiyuki Takano said in Seoul.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("BAN SAYS NORTH CAN'T SET CONDITIONS ", 2005-02-23) reported that following US appeals for solidarity in dealing with the DPRK, Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon made a pointed declaration yesterday that Pyeongyang needed to return to nuclear disarmament talks unconditionally. "I have said it several times," Mr. Ban said at a press conference in Seoul. "For the participants in the talks, there can be no preconditions to resume negotiations as the talks were already in process." Mr. Ban's statement comes after the US urged that a coordinated approach be taken on the DPRK nuclear crisis.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. REACTS COOLLY TO KIM JONG-IL STATEMENT", 2005-02-23) reported that the US reiterated its demand Tuesday that the DPRK unconditionally return as quickly as possible to the six-party talks. This was in response to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's recent statement, made to visiting PRC Communist Party international liaison department head Wang Jiarui, in which he offered to accede to talks should conditions mature. US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said during a regular briefing that the other five parties to the six-party talks were ready to return to the negotiating table without preconditions, and that it was only the DPRK that was claiming that conditions weren't right.

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4. US, PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("CHINA AND U.S. SPEAK ABOUT NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2005-02-23) reported that the PRC has stressed to the US the importance of resuming six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear program, the PRC government said, in the latest diplomatic effort to resolve the issue since the DPRK declared itself a nuclear power earlier this month. PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing "exchanged views" with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in a telephone conversation Tuesday night, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

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5. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("CHINA CALLS ON U.S., NORTH KOREA TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE IN NUCLEAR STANDOFF", 2005-02-23) reported that the PRC called Tuesday on the US and DPRK to be more flexible in efforts to resolve their nuclear standoff, saying the situation was still precarious despite signs Pyongyang might rejoin stalled negotiations. The standoff is at "a crucial juncture," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a news conference after PRC delegates returned from meeting DPRK leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang. "The nuclear issue is a complicated one, and it is very time-consuming," Kong said. "We believe that all parties should demonstrate sincerity and flexibility.

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6. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("USFK CHIEF CONCERNED OVER N. KOREAN NUCLEAR-TIPPED MISSILES", 2005-0-23) reported that the chief of US troops in the ROK expressed concern Wednesday that the DPRK might attach nuclear weapons to its ballistic missiles believed to be capable of reaching the western part of the US continent. "The fact that North Korea self-proclaimed itself to have nuclear weapons needs to be a concern to all of us, because it's a serious threat to the international community," said Gen. Leon J. LaPorte during an Internet panel debate program in Seoul.

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7. US, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("N.K. NUCLEAR ROW TO TOP RUSSIA-U.S. SUMMIT, SAYS PERRY", 2005-02-23) reported that the dispute over DPRK and Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions will be one of the main agendas of the upcoming summit between leaders of the US and Russia, former US Defense Secretary William Perry said Wednesday. Perry told the Russian news agency RIA Novosti that the two governments are most concerned about the DPRK and Iran and that he hopes for constructive dialogue in the upcoming talks on nuclear issues.

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8. Research Institute on US DPRK Policy

Korea Herald ("ULTIMATE U.S. GOAL IS N.K. REGIME CHANGE", 2005-02-23) reported that a complete regime change in the DPRK is a long-term goal for the US, the head of a top American think tank told The Korea Herald yesterday. Edwin J. Feulner, president of the US-based Heritage Foundation, said in a discussion with Herald Media publisher Hong Jung-wook that Washington will eventually work toward that goal and stressed it would be the only way for true development in the DPRK. "I think it's a desirable long-term objective and that, until fairly recently, was one of the long-term objectives of the government in South Korea too."

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9. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("AP: HEAD OF UN NUCLEAR WATCHDOG URGES NORTH KOREA TO

ALLOW ITS RETURN", 2005-02-23) reported that the top UN nuclear inspector has called on the DPRK's leader to allow the nuclear watchdog agency to return to his country, offering to go personally to get things moving. Mohammed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, told Germany's Der Spiegel magazine in an interview published Saturday that his agency has no concrete information the DPRK has nuclear weapons, but he said Pyongyang has the know-how and enough plutonium to make "at least six to eight bombs." He appealed to the DPRK leader Kim Jong Il to allow the UN agency into the country to monitor its nuclear program.

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10. ROK, Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Yonhap ("JAPANESE LAWMAKERS TO VISIT SEOUL TO DISCUSS SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA: REPORT", 2005-02-23) reported that six Japanese lawmakers will visit the ROK next month to discuss the possibility of levying economic sanctions against the DPRK, Japan's state-run NHK television reported Wednesday. NHK said the Japanese lawmakers, members of a parliamentary team to review the prospect of sanctions against Pyongyang, decided to visit the ROK on March 5-6 because cooperation with Seoul is necessary to make sanctions effective.

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11. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Donga Ilbo ("JAPAN, "QUIET" SANCTIONS AGAINST NK ", 2005-02-23) reported that even though the Japanese government has not officially announced its economic sanction measures against the DPRK, it is pressing with "quiet sanctions" against the DPRK in various fields. Since the DPRK could use it as a reason for refusing to participate in the next six-party talks, Japan has not officially declared its enforcement of sanction measures against the DPRK. However, in reality, it is a heightened oppressive strategy that strictly applies the existing laws toward the DPRK.

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12. DPRK on Abductees

Kyodo ("JAPAN'S STANCE ON ABDUCTION KEY FOR 6-WAY TALKS: KIM JONG IL", 2005-02-23) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il told a PRC official the resumption of six-nation talks on settling the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula depends on not only the US position but also Japan' position on abduction issues, Itar-Tass news agency reported Tuesday. Quoting a source close to the PRC Embassy, the news agency said in a dispatch from Pyongyang that Kim conveyed the message to Wang Jiarui, international department chief of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the PRC, in a meeting in Pyongyang on Monday.

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13. Japan on Abductees

Kyodo ("JAPAN DOWNPLAYS N. KOREA LINKING 6-WAY TALKS TO ABDUCTION ISSUE", 2005-0-23) reported that Japan on Wednesday played down a report that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il has said the resumption of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program depends not only on the US position but also Japan's stance on abduction issues. "Since North Korea has repeatedly made that kind of remark, we see no need at all to make an issue" of the latest remarks, Hiroyuki Hosoda, the

Japanese government's top spokesman, said in a press conference.

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14. DPRK Intelligence Agency

Korea Times ("KIM JONG-IL HEADS INTELLIGENCE AGENCY", 2005-02-23) reported that the DPRK's leader Kim Jong-il may head the country's all-powerful intelligence agency alone, according to a diagram of the DPRK's power structure released by the Ministry of Unification on Wednesday. The State Security Agency might be under the direct control of the National Defense Commission, which is chaired by the "Dear Leader," Seoul officials said. The agency, which reorganized itself in 1993, has been known to be independent of the Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Pak Pong-ju, but the person in charge has never been made public.

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15. DPRK Rally

Korea Times ("NK HOLDS LARGE RALLY IN PYONGYANG", 2005-02-23) reported that the DPRK held a large public rally in Pyongyang and vowed to "crush" any enemy attempts to bring down its regime, the DPRK's state-run media said Tuesday. The DPRK's radio and television outlets did not specify who they were referring to, but the DPRK usually lists the US as its No. 1 enemy.

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16. Inter - Korean Athletics

Korea Times ("KSC PRESIDENT SEEKS TO FORM UNIFIED S-N OLYMPIC TEAM", 2005-02-23) reported that new Korea Sports Council (KSC) President Kim Jung-kil, said Wednesday he plans to visit the DPRK as a presidential envoy to sound out the possibility of forming a joint team between the two Koreas for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

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17. US - ROK Military Alliance

Seoul ("US PACIFIC AIR FORCES CHIEF ARRIVES IN SOUTH KOREA", 2005-02-23) reported that the commander of US Pacific Air Forces flew to the ROK Wednesday (23 February) for talks on bilateral military exchanges, the air force said. Gen Paul V. Hester was scheduled to meet the ROK's Air Force Chief of Staff Gen Lee Han-ho later Wednesday to discuss ways to facilitate bilateral military cooperation, such as the expansion of joint air force training, the air force said in a news release.

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18. Japan - ROK Territorial Dispute

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPANESE DOKDO ISLAND BILL DRAWS KOREAN IRE", 2005-02-23) reported that the ROK and Japan could be set for another clash over the Dokdo islets both nations claim as their own. The local council in Japan's Shimane Prefecture on Wednesday presented a bill calling for a "Takeshima Day" to be designated to mark the 100th anniversary of what it says was its legal

annexation of the islands now administered by Korea. The ROK Foreign Ministry in a statement expressed strong regret over the Japanese provincial government's move which it said infringed sovereignty over the Dokdo islets, which clearly belongs to Korea by virtue of history, geography and international law.

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19. US on PRC Weapons Ban

The New York Times ("BUSH SAYS EUROPE SHOULD NOT LIFT ITS CHINA ARMS EMBARGO", 2005-02-23) reported that a simmering dispute with Europe came to the forefront on Tuesday when President Bush said there was "deep concern" in the US that lifting the European Union's arms embargo against the PRC would change the balance of relations between the PRC and Taiwan. In his most explicit public argument, the president said lifting the ban would allow the transfer of critical military technology to the Chinese that would "change the balance of relations between China and Taiwan, and that's of concern."

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20. EU on PRC Arms Ban

AFP ("EU SEEKS TO APPEASE US OVER ENDING CHINA ARMS BAN", 2005-02-23) reported that US President George W. Bush voiced "deep concern" at European plans to lift a 15-year arms embargo on the PRC, as it emerged the EU is drafting a plan to try to allay Washington's fears. Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, told journalists: "This is a question which is being examined. We still haven't reached a final result."

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21. PRC AIDS Issue

The Associated Press ("CLINTON SECURES AIDS PROGRAM IN CHINA", 2005-02-23) reported that former President Clinton signed an agreement with the PRC on Wednesday to provide a year's supply of AIDS drugs to 200 children to help Beijing battle the disease. The program is part of a three-year, \$10 million deal reached last year between the Clinton Foundation and China's Health Ministry. The Chinese government says an estimated 840,000 people nationwide have been infected with the AIDS virus. The U.N. AIDS agency says the number of infections could increase to 10 million within five years if urgent action is not taken.

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