

NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, June 06, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, June 06, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, June 06, 2007,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-june-06-2007/>

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I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SHOULD HONOR DISARMAMENT PACT: BUSH", 2007-06-06) reported that the United States and Japan expect the DPRK to keep to an agreement to begin work on scrapping its nuclear weapons program. "We expect the North Koreans to honor agreements," Bush said, standing alongside Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at a G8 summit in Germany.

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2. DPRK Frozen Funds

Yonhap ("S. KOREA, U.S. AGREE TO RAPIDLY RESOLVE N. KOREAN BANKING ISSUE", 2007-0-06) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Song Min-soon and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, reached the agreement in telephone talks to find a solution to a financial dispute that is holding up the dismantling of Pyongyang's nuclear program in a way "that can satisfy all parties involved." Rice is also said to have had phone conversations with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi to discuss ways to resolve the issue. The discussions of the three foreign ministers focused on a U.S. proposal to lift sanctions on the BDA on condition that top bank executives resign to take responsibility for turning a blind eye to the alleged illicit acts and a demand for China's increased role in settling the financial dispute. On Tuesday, Moscow officials reportedly showed interest in assisting in the transfer of the North Korean funds if they receive written guarantees from the U.S. that it will not introduce any sanctions against Russian banks.

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3. Russia on DPRK Frozen Funds

Interfax ("U.S. YET TO SPECIFY GUARANTEES FOR TRANSFER OF NORTH KOREAN MONEY - LOSYUKOV", 2007-06-06) reported that the U.S. administration has promised to provide unspecified guarantees to a Russian bank that will agree to transfer the DPRK funds from the Delta Asia bank in Macau. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov told journalists after returning from Seoul that further negotiations are needed to determine exactly what those guarantees will entail. "One can write anything. But one must write what is really needed," the deputy minister said.

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4. ROK Anti-DPRK Protest

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN ACTIVISTS PROTEST NKOREAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS", 2007-06-06) reported that "tens of thousands" of activists and veterans staged a protest Wednesday against the DPRK during RO Korean Memorial Day to honour those killed in the 1950-53 Korean War. The demonstrators called for the United States and ROK punish the DPRK for refusing to honour a six-party nuclear disarmament deal. The protest was sponsored by Christian groups and the Korean Veterans Association.

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5. Singapore on Kaesong

Channel News Asia ("GEORGE YEO SEES HOPE FOR NORTH KOREA'S INDUSTRIAL CITY OF

KAESONG", 2007-06-06) reported that Singaporean Foreign Affairs Minister George Yeo said he sees hope for the DPRK's industrial city of Kaesong. Kaesong is said to be modelled after Suzhou Industrial Park - Singapore's flagship industrial park project in the PRC. He added that Singapore took the first initiative to include goods made in Kaesong in the Free Trade Agreement with the ROK.

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6. Mongolia on DPRK Refugee-Defectors

Mongolia Web ("MONGOLIA CLOSES BORDERS TO FLEEING NORTH KOREANS", 2007-06-06) reported that Mongolia has joined Thailand and Vietnam in closing its borders to defecting DPRK citizens seeking a route to the ROK.

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7. ROK Media Control

Chosun Ilbo ("INT'L PRESS CLUB SLAMS KOREA'S NEW MEDIA RULES", 2007-06-06) reported that criticism of the government's merger of press rooms and restriction of press access to government officials is spreading worldwide. The International Press Institute sent an open letter of protest to President Roh Moo-hyun on Friday, and on Monday the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) sent a similar letter to Roh signed by its chairman Gavin O'Reilly and World Editors Forum president George Brock. In the letter, WAN expresses concern on behalf of 18,000 media companies in 102 countries about the new rules' restriction of reporters' contact with public servants and warns of negative effects on news reporting.

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8. Australia-Japan Defense Relations

The Associated Press ("AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN FORGE 'INDESPENSABLE' PARTNERSHIP", 2007-06-06) reported that Australia and Japan called each other "indispensable" allies as they held unprecedented joint talks with foreign and defence ministers to coordinate on the DPRK and other threats. The Pacific allies agreed to explore further opportunities for military link ups but steered clear of any talk that their efforts were aimed at countering the PRC. The meeting was modelled on the so-called "two-plus-two" talks held regularly between the Japanese ministers and the US secretaries of state and defence.

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9. Japan-Russian Territorial Dispute

The Associated Press ("JAPAN WARNS RUSSIA OVER ISLANDS DISPUTE", 2007-06-06) reported that Japan's foreign minister warned Russia not to make any provocative moves over four Russian-held islands that both nations claim. Foreign Minister Taro Aso told Japan's parliament that Tokyo had filed a request through Russia's Foreign Ministry urging Moscow to avoid "any provocative actions" following last weekend's visit to the islands by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

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10. Russia-US Naval Drill

Interfax ("RUSSIAN-U.S. NAVAL EXERCISES TO BE HELD IN SEA OF JAPAN IN SEPTEMBER", 2007-06-06) reported that Russian-U.S. counter-terrorist exercises codenamed Pacific Eagle will be held in the Sea of Japan in September. US consul general in Vladivostok John Mark Pommersheim told the press on Tuesday that these will be the biggest joint exercises with Russia since 1998. The exercises will be counter-terrorist in nature.

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11. Hong Kong Political Reform

The Associated Press ("CHINA RESISTS QUICK MOVE TO FULL HONG KONG DEMOCRACY", 2007-06-06) reported that Beijing won't meddle with Hong Kong's successful capitalist system but nor will it back a quick switch to full democracy in the territory, one of the PRC's top leaders said on Wednesday. The chairman of the PRC's national congress, Wu Bangguo, said the "high degree of autonomy" guaranteed under Hong Kong's Basic Law was one of the keys to the territory's continued success. "To practice the capitalist system in Hong Kong with a high degree of autonomy is necessary for the maintenance of the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong," Wu said in comments quoted by state-run Xinhua news agency.

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12. PRC Environment

The Associated Press ("CHINA EXPECTS POLLUTION TO IMPROVE SOON", 2007-06-06) reported that the PRC should see a "turning point" this year in its fight against pollution and will likely meet its clean air and water goals in coming years, an environmental official said in an unusually optimistic assessment. Zhang Lijun, vice minister of the State Environmental Protection Administration, said that while the amount of ammonia and nitrates in waterways increased in 2006 and overall air quality declined, pollution control facilities and stepped-up enforcement would have an impact.

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org