NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, March 07, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, March 07, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 07, 2007, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-march-07-2007/

NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, March 07, 2007

NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, March 07, 2007

I. NAPSNet

- 1. Six Party Talks
2. Working Group: US-DPRK
3. Working Group: DPRK-Japan
4. Working Group: Energy
5. Inter-Korean Relations
6. Russia-DPRK Relations
7. DPRK Human Rights
8. US-ROK Military Exercises
9. US-ROK Trade Relations
10. Japan Comfort Women Issue
11. US on PRC Human Rights
12. PRC Rural Education Spending
13. PRC Anti-Corruption Efforts
14. Asia Environment

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Yonhap ("CHINA HOPING TO HOST WORKING GROUPS OF SIX-PARTY TALKS NEXT WEEK", 2007-03-07) reported that the PRC hopes to host working-group meetings next week ahead of the next round of nuclear negotiations on March 19. The dates have yet to be arranged with the other participants of the talks, according to sources here, but they said the PRC would like the meetings to begin Friday. The first meeting is widely expected to be of the energy and economic cooperation group, chaired by the ROK, followed by a meeting of the PRC-chaired group on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

(return to top)

2. Working Group: US-DPRK

Associated Press ("U.S. WANTS NORTH KOREA TO GO BEYOND AGREEMENT TO SHUT REACTOR", 2007-03-07) reported that the United States and DPRK wrapped up talks on establishing diplomatic ties on an optimistic note but the U.S. wants Pyongyang to "come clean" about any uranium enrichment program and eliminate all nuclear weapons before normalizing relations. "These were very good, very businesslike, very comprehensive discussions," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill told reporters at the end of two days of meetings that lasted more than eight hours. His DPRK counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, was also upbeat, telling reporters "the atmosphere was very good, constructive and serious." During a lengthy discussion with Kim on the highly enriched uranium issue, Hill said, they agreed to resolve the matter before the DPRK makes its final nuclear declaration to the six nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(return to top) Joongang Ilbo ("PYONGYANG RAISES THE URANIUM ISSUE IN TALKS WITH U.S.", 2007-03-08) reported that Christopher Hill said Pyongyang brought up - on its own - the controversial issue of its alleged uranium-based nuclear program. (return to top)

3. Working Group: DPRK-Japan

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA AND JAPAN SALVAGE TALKS FOR ANOTHER DAY", 2007-03-07) reported that Japan and the DPRK postponed their first diplomatic talks in more than a year on Wednesday after negotiations were suspended over discord about Pyongyang's abduction of Japanese citizens. The DPRK said they had done all they could about the issue and it is therefore meaningless to have any more discussions. The DPRK's Foreign Ministry pointed out in a statement Abe's denial that the Japanese Army itself had kidnapped the many thousand Asian women prostituted for its troops during World War Two.

(return to top)

4. Working Group: Energy

EnergyWashington ("U.S. MAY WANT TO GIVE MONEY, NOT FUEL OIL, IN DEAL WITH NORTH KOREA", 2007-03-07) reported that the U.S., along with other countries involved in negotiations with Pyongyang may consider providing the cost equivalent of the fuel over the fuel itself, since providing fuel would place a significant burden on the U.S., especially if other countries cannot follow suit. Sources stress the amount of aid or oil given will be equitable in terms of each countries contribution. No one can say, but the end result could be as extreme as 5,000 tons of fuel oil and the

rest of the aid in military food rations, said one well placed source. It will have to be worked out by the energy working group, he said. The working group will decide the way forward using the equivalent value of the cash balance of fuel oil, the source said.

(return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TO SEND FERTILIZER AID TO NORTH KOREA AS NUCLEAR TENSIONS EASE", 2007-03-07) reported that the ROK said it will send fertilizer aid to the DPRK. The DPRK delivered a message to RO Korea's Red Cross, formally requesting some 272,000 tonnes of fertilizer aid. However, it still remains unclear whether Seoul will give the total requested, as the ROK has to "go through a series" of processes for the aid shipment. Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung has said Seoul was willing in principle to resume rice and fertilizer shipments and indicated that Seoul may provide fertilizer before the DPRK fulfils its nuclear obligations laid out in a breakthrough Feb. 13 deal.

(return to top)

6. Russia-DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("RUSSIA HINTS AT SEPARATE AID TO N. KOREA", 2007-03-06) reported Russia might provide the DPRK with additional energy and electricity aid on a humanitarian basis, separately from that agreed upon in a recent international nuclear deal. Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov said Russia will assume its aid liability in line with the six-party agreement, and may also send more aid to North Korea on a bilateral humanitarian basis.

(return to top)

7. DPRK Human Rights

United Press International ("N.KOREA TOUGHENS PENALTY FOR ESCAPEES", 2007-03-06) reported that the DPRK has escalated its crackdown on people caught trying to flee the country. The DPRK has adopted since late 2004 a new policy of punishing border-crossers with up to five years in prison, where they then face forced labor and starvation, Human Rights Watch said in a recent report.

(return to top)

8. US-ROK Military Exercises

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. TO MOUNT MILITARY EXERCISES WITH S.KOREA", 2007-03-07) reported that the ROK and the US will stage joint military exercises called Reception, Staging, Onward movement and Integration, or RSOI, from March 25 to 31 at multiple locations throughout the ROK. UD Combined Forces Command in Seoul announced the drill, saying that about 29,000 US troops, including 6,000 reinforcements stationed outside the peninsula, will take part. Alongside the RSOI exercise, the two countries will conduct so-called Foal Eagle joint exercises, a field-training drill that focuses on moving combat assets from rear areas to the front.

(return to top)

9. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("S. KOREA, U.S. MAKE LITTLE HEADWAY ON BEEF ROW", 2007-03-07) reported that ROK and US negotiators have made little progress in resolving differences over a row involving Seoul's imports of American beef, an official said. "The US side adhered to its previously-held position that their beef is safe for consumption, and that South Korea should open its doors to bone-in beef, including ribs," the official said.

(return to top) Yonhap ("ROH, PAULSON OPTIMISTIC ON BILATERAL FREE TRADE DEAL", 2007-03-07) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun met with visiting US Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Wednesday and shared guarded optimism about the ongoing ROK-US free trade negotiations, Roh's office said. Roh said the decision to pursue a free trade agreement (FTA) with the US was a politically difficult choice for his government, but expressed confidence that a deal, if reached, would eventually help heighten the nation's economic competitiveness. (return to top)

10. Japan Comfort Women Issue

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SEEKS 'CONSTRUCTIVE' APPROACH TO SEX SLAVE ROW", 2007-03-07) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe insisted that Japan stands by a 1993 government statement that apologised to so-called "comfort women" and admitted the military was at least indirectly responsible. "The US resolution is based on a mistake of fact," Abe said, "It contains the misunderstanding that there was coercion, as in abductions carried out by the authorities," he was quoted by Kyodo News as saying. "There was no such thing and I was just stating the fact that there have been no documents or witnesses of proof."

(return to top) The New York Times ("CHINA STRESSES TIES WITH JAPAN DESPITE SEX SLAVERY ISSUE", 2007-03-07) reported that the PRC's foreign minister on Tuesday urged Japan to accept responsibility for its use of "comfort women" sex slaves in World War II but made clear that the issue would not dampen the PRC's desire to strengthen ties between the countries. The comments by the minister, Li Zhaoxing, were the PRC's first official response since Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan caused international outrage last week by denying that Japanese soldiers had forced foreign women into sexual slavery during the war. (return to top) Pravda ("NORTH KOREA CONDEMNS JAPAN FOR REJECTING SEX SLAVERY DURING WWII", 2007-03-07) reported that the DPRK condemned Japan for denying it coerced Asian women to serve as sex slaves for Japanese troops during World War II. The harsh rhetoric came a week after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said there was no proof that Japan forced Asian women to work in military brothels for its troops in World War II. Seoul's Foreign Ministry has expressed "strong regret" over the remarks, accusing Tokyo of attempting to gloss over its wartime past. Abe's comments came as the U.S. House of Representatives considers a resolution urging Japan to formally apologize for its treatment of the comfort women, the AP reports. Japan acknowledged in the 1990s that its military set up and ran brothels for its troops. In 1993, Japanese government issued an apology in 1993 but it was never approved by parliament. Abe's remarks triggered outrage throughout the PRC, RO Korea and the Philippines, which say Tokyo has not fully atoned. (return to top)

11. US on PRC Human Rights

Washington Post ("STATE DEPT. HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT FAULTS CHINA'S CURBS ON INTERNET", 2007-03-07) reported that the PRC is at the top of a list of countries blocking Internet access according to State Department officials who released the department's annual human rights report yesterday. Human rights in the PRC have "deteriorated on a number of areas," with no action

on promised legal reforms or changes in courtroom proceedings, and a continued "system of reeducation through labor." Thousands of demonstrations in the countryside showed that people were seeking redress and that accountability was still lacking, he added.

(return to top) Reuters ("CHINA SLAMS U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ", 2007-03-07) reported that Beijing has dismissed as groundless a report by the US that listed China among the world's most serious rights offenders. Qin Gang, the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that the PRC has continuously been making progress on improving human rights. "We would like to advise America to care more about its own human rights issues and stop interfering with other nations' domestic politics," Qin said. (return to top)

12. PRC Rural Education Spending

Xinhua ("CHINA SPENDS MORE ON RURAL EDUCATION ", 2007-03-07) reported that the PRC will invest a further 218.2 billion yuan (27.28 billion U.S. dollars) in rural education in the 2006-2010 period, according to the Ministry of Finance. The PRC is working to establish a mechanism that guarantees compulsory rural education funding. The mechanism is designed to ensure that the cost of rural education is covered by central and local finances.

(return to top)

13. PRC Anti-Corruption Efforts

Agence France-Presse ("CHINESE VICE PREMIER URGES GRAFT CRACKDOWN ON SHANGHAI OFFICIALS", 2007-03-07) reported that Shanghai's former top official Huang Ju urged city leaders to step up the fight against corruption, as another former high-level city leader awaited trial for graft, state press said. Huang Ju, currently a vice premier, met the Shanghai delegation to the ongoing National People's Congress, China Central Television reported. "We must strengthen supervision over leading officials, and root out all corrupt activities between officials and businessmen seeking personal profit and engaging in other (crimes)," the report quoted Huang as saying.

(return to top)

14. Asia Environment

Kyodo News ("ADB TO EXPAND LOANS TO TACKLE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN ASIA", 2007-03-06) reported that Asian Development Bank President Haruhiko Kuroda has indicated that the ADB may expand loans to tackle environmental problems and income gaps in Asia as well as poverty and economic development problems. "In the future, the ADB will play a role in addressing environmental and income gap problems caused by rapid economic growth (in Asia)," he told a news conference in Kyoto.

(return to top) The Los Angeles Times ("ASIAN AIR POLLUTION AFFECTING WEATHER", 2007-0--06) reported that researchers at the National Academy of Sciences have published findings asserting that Asia's growing air pollution is making the Pacific region cloudier and stormier, disrupting winter weather patterns along the West Coast and into the Arctic. The study is the first large-scale analysis to draw a link between Asian air pollution and the changing Pacific weather patterns. Satellite measurements reveal that high-altitude storm clouds over the northern Pacific have increased up to 50% over the last 20 years as new factories, vehicles and power plants in the PRC and India spew growing amounts of microscopic pollutant particles into the air. (return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-march-07-2007/

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