

MONTHLY RECAP: JUNE

DPRK NUCLEAR DECLARATION

On June 26, North Korea handed over a declaration of its nuclear program to Chinese officials. The declaration was welcomed by leaders of all nations in the six-party talks, although it was noted that the declaration was not complete and was not the final step in negotiations. The 60-odd-page declaration, six months overdue, does not cover the suspected enriched uranium program or an accurate account of nuclear technological assistance to Syria. The three sections of the report cover a list of nuclear facilities, the amount of plutonium produced and extracted, and how it was used.

U.S. SANCTIONS LIFTED

In response to the nuclear declaration made by North Korea, U.S. President Bush put an end to sanctions on North Korea imposed under the Trading With the Enemy Act and notified Congress that he intends to remove North Korea from the list of terror-sponsor states in forty-five days.

YONGBYON COOLING TOWER DESTROYED

On June 27, North Korean authorities destroyed the 60-foot tall cooling tower at the Yongbyon nuclear facility. The act was largely symbolic, as the cooling tower was non-functional, but was welcomed by the international community as a sign of North Korea's decision to cooperate with Washington.

DPRK NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Returning from Pyongyang, Korea Economic Institute President Jack Pritchard reported early in

June that DPRK officials compared themselves to Israel, suggesting they do not see abandonment of nuclear weapons a necessary precursor to relations with Washington. Prichard quoted a North Korean official as saying discussions nuclear weapons could begin only after “full and final normalization” of relations with the United States.

UNDP FUNDS IN THE DPRK

The report of the findings of an external review of allegations by the U.S. government of UNDP fund diversion in North Korea was publicized at the beginning of June, announcing the finding that there was no evidence of mismanagement or diversion.

DPRK-PRC RELATIONS

Chinese press reported on June 4 that North Korean Foreign Trade Minister Ri Ryong Nam said that North Korean people speak highly of Chinese economic achievements, and the Chinese ambassador in Pyongyang stated that “on the basis of the principles of mutual benefit, win-win cooperation and common development, the PRC will strengthen cooperation with the DPRK in infrastructure construction, exploration and processing of mineral resources, and border trade.’

It was reported on June 9 that the Chinese government has raised the yearly quota on grain exports to North Korea. Exports were initially capped at 50,000 tons in order to ensure rising Chinese domestic demands could be met, but now China will export up to 150,000 tons per year to North Korea.

DPRK-JAPAN RELATIONS

North Korean and Japanese officials met on June 7 in Beijing in order to discuss the abduction

issue and cooperation in six-party talks. At the meeting, the two sides agreed on the need for progress and to work toward normalization of relations, but no detailed agreements were reached during the unofficial bilateral meeting.

After two more days of talks during the week, on June 13 the Japanese Foreign Ministry called talks “serious and constructive,” and announced that some sanctions against North Korea would be lifted after North Korea agreed to reinvestigate the fates of Japanese kidnapes. Chartered flights and the movement of people between the two countries will be allowed, but the ferry between the two will still not be allowed into Japanese ports.

Yonhap News reported on June 10 that North Korea is asking Japan for 40 million USD to help build a facility that will produce gas from anthracite. The request was made via South Korean officials meeting with the North at Panmunjom on June 5. North Korea wants the facility as part of the energy-aid deal reached at six-party talks. Japan has refused to provide aid to the North until there is progress on its abduction issue.

CHONGRYON TO BE SUED

A Korean resident of Japan emigrated to North Korea in 1963 on the advice of a program for repatriation run by Chongryong, the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, a group sympathetic to Pyongyang. After defecting in 2003, Yumiko Chiba now lives in Japan and is planning to sue Chongryong for 11 million yen for their part in misleading residents into returning to North Korea.

U.S.-DPRK RELATIONS

An American delegation held talks with North Korean officials in Pyongyang on June 10 and 11 to discuss details of North Korea's denuclearization. North Korea called the talks "successful", and a U.S. representative stated that they discussed details of disablement of nuclear facilities as well as political and economic compensation.

DPRK HUMAN RIGHTS

A report released by the U.S. government in early June described North Korea as "a source country for men, women, and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. The most common form of trafficking involves North Korean women and girls who cross the border into China voluntarily. Once in China, they are picked up by traffickers, and sold as brides to Chinese nationals, usually of Korean ethnicity, or forced into prostitution." These conditions have earned North Korea a tier three classification under the U.S. Trafficking Victims Protections Act again for 2008.

ROK-DPRK RELATIONS

The two Koreas held a two-day joint celebration in Mount Kumgang on the eighth anniversary of the June 15 inter-Korean Joint Declaration. The small celebration included no government officials from either Korea, and approximately 450 civic representatives from the two Koreas and overseas groups.

Despite chilled diplomatic relations and only a trickle of humanitarian aid, a report released by the Ministry of Unification reported that inter-Korean trade jumped 14 percent in May, at 172.7 million USD. This is a 46 percent jump in commercial trade compared to May 2007.

ROK HUMANITARIAN AID

South Korea announced on June 4 that it is willing to provide 50,000 tons of corn to the North, and has requested a meeting with Pyongyang through Red Cross channels to discuss the aid, but has not yet received a response. Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong also said that South Korea would consider sending the aid through international organizations if the North continues to stonewall.

On June 26, 1.22 million USD-worth of medical supplies shipped out of South Korea heading for Nampo, in the North. The supplies are to help prevent the spread of malaria this summer, and included medicine for 50,000 people, 100,000 mosquito nets, insecticides, and malaria infection test kits.

JSA?

South Korea's Kangwon Province has drawn up plans for a joint inter-Korean park to be constructed inside the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and will include solar energy research facilities and a tourist resort, as well as a solar heating system and solar powered- energy generation facilities capable of providing electricity to nearby areas in both Koreas. The park, named, "Joint Sunshine Area (JSA)", will be 16,000 square meters and cost the province 11.5 million USD, if approved.

DPRK ENERGY AID

During an inter-Korean meeting held at Panmunjom, North Korea complained on June 5 about "very slow" delivery of energy aid agreed upon through six-party talks. DPRK Deputy Negotiator Hyun Hak-bong protested that "while the disabling [of Yongbyon nuclear facilities]

has been completed for more than 80 percent, overall energy cooperation business is going very slowly- at 30 percent to 36 percent.” Other demands by North Korea included the delivery of the remaining heavy fuel oil by September, an adjustment in the price of the oil to reflect the latest oil-price hikes, the green light to break ground on a coal gasification plant for fertilizer production, and a meeting with China and South Korea to work out details regarding the remaining non-fuel energy aid.

RUSSIAN FOOD AID

Moscow reported on June 18 that it had begun delivery of 3,000 tons of flour to the North, with the first loads arriving on June 11 and all deliveries to be completed by June 30. The deliveries will be part of Russia’s voluntary contribution to the UN World Food Program, according to the Russian Foreign Ministry.

DPRK EDUCATION AID

Yonhap news reported on June 23 that North Korea is improving technical educational facilities with the help of international funding. A new building at the Koryo Songgyungwan, a university located near Kaesong focusing on light industry, and new facilities at Kimchaek University of Technology are said to be the focal points of the project. Funding is coming in from Australia, Switzerland, Vietnam, Finland, and Canada.

DPRK STANCE ON TERROR

The North Korean Foreign Ministry released a statement on June 9 stating that it “will firmly maintain its consistent stand of opposing all forms of terrorism,” and “take active part in the international efforts to prevent substance, equipment and technology to be used for the

production of nuclear, biochemical and radioactive weapons from finding their way to the terrorists and the organizations that support them.”