East Asia Science & Security Network Report, Jan. 17, 2007

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1. PRC Nuclear Power

At the Nautilus Asia Energy Security workshop held at Tsinghua University from Nov. 5-7, 2006, Wu Zongxin presented a summary of the policies and plans for future nuclear energy development in China.

PRC Nuclear Power

2. International Plutonium Shipments

A new study by the Institute of Science and International Security notes that as international plutonium shipments are becoming more common, providing security to prevent theft is vital. The examines the current and likely future status of the plutonium trade.

Plutonium shipments

3. US-India Nuclear Cooperation

Writing in Foreign Affairs, Harvard University's Ashton Carter writes that the US-India nuclear deal has yet to yield the strategic partnership that its proponents promised. Nonetheless, such a partnership seems likely to emerge in the future.

How Washington Learned to Stop Worrying and Love India's Bomb

4. PRC Middle East Policy

Writing in Japan Focus, M K Bhadrakumar argues that despite China's dependence on Iranian oil imports, Beijing has shown signs of taking a stronger stance against Tehran's nuclear program. The author attributes this to China's greater reliance on Saudi oil, and subsequent interest in maintaining stability in the Middle East.

China's Tortuous Middle East Journey

5. PRC Center-Local Clash Over Environment

The Wall St. Journal (Shai Oster, "China Cracks Down on Power Companies As Frustration Over Pollution Grows," 1/12/07, p. A9), reports that Beijing is trying to enforce environmental standards on power companies, but is running into difficulties as the companies are often protected by local officials. Newsweek (Jonathan Ansfield, "Beijing Battles to Control its Booming Coal Biz," 1/15/07) reports that China's main power companies are building large, cleaner, and more efficient coal-fired power plants. But reining in the multiple small, dirty plants erected by local officials remains a challenge. Newsweek (Jonathan Ansfield and Melinda Liu, "As China pushes 'Green GDP,' officials fear careers may depend on cutting the costs of pollution," 1/15/07) reports that China's attempt to quantify the costs of environmental damage is worrying officials who are accustomed to getting promotions based on their success in promoting economic growth.

China Cracks Down on Power Companies

Beijing Battles to Control its Booming Coal Biz

China pushes Green GDP

6. Japanese Energy Efficiency

The New York Times (Martin Fackler, "The Land of Rising Conservation," 1/6/07) reports that Japan has developed a national culture of energy efficiency and conservation that makes it much better equipped than the United States to prosper in a time of high oil prices.

The Land of Rising Conservation

7. Taiwan Bullet Train

The New York Times (Keith Bradsher, "Taiwan’s Bullet Trains Can’t Outrun Controversy," 1/4/07) reported that proponents of Taiwan's new bullet train say that the system will greatly cut emissions compared to traveling by bus or car. But critics cite cost and safety concerns, and point out that the emission-cutting benefits will be largely eroded if more people travel to take advantage of the high-speed transit.

Taiwan’s Bullet Trains Can’t Outrun Controversy

8. Hybrid Vehicle Development

The Christian Science Monitor (Mark Clayton, "New race for automakers: build a better battery," 1/12/07) reported that American car manufacturers are trying to catch up with the Japanese in the hybrid car market by developing new batteries that can go farther and last longer.

New race for automakers: build a better battery

9. Engineering Solutions to Global Warming

The Economist ("Dr. Strangelove Saves the Earth," Jan. 17, 2006) reported on "geo-engineering," which is attempting to develop technologies to counter global warming through large-scale, planetary level engineering projects.

Dr. Strangelove Saves the Earth

10. India Using UAVs in Anti-Terrorism

According to strategypages.com, India is expanding the use of its unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV's) to find Maoist rebel camps in the jungle.

UAVs Searching Jungles

11. Global Urbanization

The Christian Science Monitor (Brad Knickerbocker, "World First: In 2008, most people will live in cities," 1/12/07) reported that researchers believe that, sometime in 2008, for the first time in human history a majority of people will live in urban areas. The Worldwatch Institute warns that the social implications of this shift are enormous.

In 2008, most people will live in cities

The East Asia Science and Security Network (EASSNet) delivers timely news and innovative research across a range of issues relating to science and security, including energy security, bio-security, nano-technology, nuclear fuel cycle, missile technology, and information technology, especially within the East Asia region. The network draws on research from Nautilus Institute and its partners in China, Japan, South Korea, Russia, Australia, and North Korea, as well as grantees of the MacArthur Foundation, of MacArthur Foundation, Ploughshares Fund, New Land Foundation, Korea Foundation, Ford Foundation, and US Department of Energy. The service provides researchers, journalists, and policymakers access to and understanding of developments beyond their own disciplinary, academic, or industrial communities.

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