East Asia Science & Security Network Report, Jan. 31, 2007

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1. Russian Nuclear Power

At the Nautilus Asia Energy Security workshop held at Tsinghua University from Nov. 5-7, 2006, Alexander Dmitriev presented a summary of the policies and plans for future nuclear energy development and nuclear fuel cycle activities in Russia.

Russia Nuclear Power

2. DPRK Nuclear Tests

In a letter to the editor of Arms Control Today, Jungmin Kang, Frank Von Hippel, and Hui Zhang question Harold Smith's claim that the type of material used in North Korea's nuclear test can be determined solely by measuring radioactive noble gases released by the test.

Monitoring Nuclear Tests

3. US Plutonium Recycling

The U.S. Energy Department announced that it has awarded more than $10 million for studies on whether 11 different sites around the country could house spent nuclear fuel recycling plants as part of the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership.

U.S. Funds GNEP Site Feasibility Studies

The Chattanooga Times Free Press (Pam Sohn, "Handling nuclear waste") reports that nuclear scientists at Oak Ridge believe that they can safely recycle the nuclear waste currently being kept at

power plants around the country. But opponents charge that such recycling, and the massive shipments of radioactive waste needed to carry it out, is highly dangerous, and that the project is a waste of taxpayer's money.

Handling nuclear waste

4. Australian Nuclear Fuel Cycle

The University of Sydney published a report entitled "Life-Cycle Energy Balance and Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Nuclear Energy in Australia." The report brings together previous work in a concise yet comprehensive way to provide a more complete, integrative study of all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle in Australia.

Australian Nuclear Lifestyle

5. Nuclear Proliferation Danger

Agence-France Presse ("Global warming more dangerous than nuclear weapons: Blix," 1/25/07) reported that former chief UN weapons inspector Hans Blix argued that the threat from global warming is more dangerous than the spread of weapons of mass destruction. For that reason, he called for an increase in nuclear power to cut global emissions. Meanwhile, The Independent (Rupert Cornwall, "The Doomsday Clock: Nuclear threat to world 'rising'," 1/17/07) reported that scientists at the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists have moved ahead the hands of the nuclear "doomsday clock," symbolizing their belief that the threat of nuclear Armageddon is greater that at any time since the 1980s.

Global warming more dangerous than nuclear weapons: Blix

The Doomsday Clock

6. Chinese Renewable Energy

The New York Times (Matt Richtel, "A Light Bulb Goes on, and China Starts Thinking 'Alternative Energy'," 1/19/07) reported that venture capitalists are beginning to see opportunities in China for financing renewable energy development projects.

A Light Bulb Goes on

7. Climate Change

The International Herald Tribune (James Kanter and Katrin Bennhold, "Emerging economies are under pressure to cut emissions," 1/24/07) reported that officials attended the World Economic Forum in Davos say that emerging countries like China and India will need to play a greater role in curbing emissions when a successor to the Kyoto Protocol is negotiated. The Guardian (David Adam, "Surge in carbon levels raises fears of runaway warming," 1/19/07) reports that new figures from dozens of measuring stations across the world reveal that concentrations of CO2, the main greenhouse gas, rose at record levels during 2006, raising fears that humanity may have less time to tackle global warming than previously thought.

Emerging economies are under pressure to cut emissions

Surge in carbon levels raises fears of runaway warming

The Washington Post, (Marc Kaufman, "Cutbacks Impede Climate Studies," 1/16/07, A01) reported that a two-year study by the National Academy of Sciences concluded that the U.S. ability to monitor climate change of all types has been greatly hampered by funding cutbacks in NASA's earth science program.

Cutbacks Impede Climate Studies

8. Energy Dependency

In an op-ed in the Boston Globe ("Calling an End to Oil Alarmism," 1/23/07) Philip E. Auerswald of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University argues that concerns about the security of oil supplies are overblown. Noting that high oil prices hurt producers as much as consumers, Auerswald maintains that dealing with climate change is far more important than worrying about dependence on foreign oil.

Calling an End to Oil Alarmism

10. Bird Flu

Writing in Policy Innovations, Matthew Hennessey argues that, while the recent number of bird flu cases appear to have dropped, experts believe that the world is closer to a global pandemic than at any time since 1968.

Remember Bird Flu?

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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