



NAPSNet Daily Report 10 March, 2010

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 10 March, 2010", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 10, 2010,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-10-march-2010/>

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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap News ("U.S. TO CONTINUE PRESSING TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS IN N. KOREA: KING", 2010/03/09) reported that the US said it will continue pressing to improve human rights conditions in the DPRK. "We are very concerned about humanitarian issues there," Robert King, U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights issues, told reporters. "We will continue to press human right issues as we've done in the past."

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2. Sino-DPRK Relations

Global Times ("CHINESE TOUR GROUPS PREPARE TO VISIT N. KOREA", 2010/03/09) reported that PRC travel enthusiasts can now plan a trip to the DPRK, which is opening as a tourism destination for PRC nationals from April 12. Several Beijing-based travel agencies have already planned travel routes to take tourists there. Zhao Hui, who is responsible for tours to the ROK and DPRK at China Comfort Travel Agency, said that the first tour group organized by tourism bureaus of the two countries, and composed of 400 tourists, will depart on April 12 and 13. An online survey by the Global Times, in which about 800 web users participated, shows that around 65 percent of respondents would be interested in visiting the DPRK.

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3. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("RED ARMY MEMBERS WANT TALKS WITH JAPAN ON RETURN FROM N. KOREA", 2010/03/09) reported that four of nine former Red Army Faction members who defected to the DPRK

after hijacking a Japan Airlines plane to the country in 1970 plan to request talks with the Japanese government about their return to Japan, their agent said. The four also plan to ask for return from the DPRK of two Japanese women who are married to two of the hijackers, Yukio Yamanaka, head of a Tokyo human rights group helping the hijackers, told reporters.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press (Kwang Tae Kim, "NKOREANS SEEK ASYLUM AT SOUTH CONSULATE: ACTIVIST", Seoul, 2010/03/09) reports that two the DPRK citizens who fled poor conditions at a Russian logging camp and later worked odd jobs sought asylum Tuesday at the ROK consulate in an eastern Russian city, according to a human rights activist and news reports. The former lumberjacks climbed over the fence of the ROK mission in the city of Vladivostok, said Rev. Peter Chung, head of the Seoul-based human rights group Justice for the DPRK. Chung said that the two would demand to be sent to the United States, saying he knew about their plans through a member of his group in Russia.

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "SEOUL CLOSELY WATCHING N. KOREA'S OPENING OF PORT TO CHINA", Seoul, 2010/03/09) reports that the ROK is keeping a close watch over the DPRK's efforts to draw greater foreign investment to one of its ports, as the move might indicate Pyongyang is opening up to the outside world and signal its return to stalled international nuclear talks, officials said Tuesday. The DPRK has agreed to give a 50-year lease on its Rajin port to Russia, and the country is also in talks with a Chinese company on extending its 10-year lease by another decade, according to an official from the PRC's Jilian Province, currently in Beijing for the National People's Congress.

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5. ROK Food Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO SEND POWDERED MILK TO N. KOREA: RED CROSS", Seoul, 2010/03/09) reports that the ROK's Red Cross said it will send 20 tons of powdered skim milk to the DPRK on Wednesday as part of humanitarian aid to the impoverished neighbor. The aid worth 156 million won (US\$137,000) will be delivered on two 11-ton trucks across the inter-Korean border and unloaded in the border town of Kaesong, the Red Cross said in a release.

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6. DPRK Economy

Financial Times (Tom Mitchell and Pan Kwan Yuk, "NORTH KOREA DRAWS ON TOBACCO FOR CASH", 2010/03/08) reports that a the DPRK desperate for foreign exchange has been generating hard currency by re-exporting British cigarettes. The DPRK and other Asian trading entities started re-exporting State Express 555 cigarettes, manufactured by British American Tobacco, in February last year.

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN TRADE MINISTER NOW HEADS SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE", 2010/03/09) reports that the DPRK regime has appointed former foreign trade minister Rim Kyong-man as the mayor of the Rajin-Sonbong Economic Special Zone, which was promoted to a special city in January. A source said Rim was appointed as part of a reshuffle and new regulations for the city. Rim is known as an expert in trade who served as the minister for foreign trade from April 2004 to March 2008, and headed the DPRK trade representatives to Dalian in the PRC. He also toured Africa (June 2005), Latin America (November 2005), Libya and Malaysia (June 2006) and Russia (March 2007) as the leader of the DPRK economic delegation.

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7. DPRK Diplomacy

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "REPORT: NKOREA TO REPLACE TOP DIPLOMAT IN GENEVA", Seoul, 2010/03/10) reported that Ri Tcheul, DPRK ambassador to U.N. agencies in Geneva, is to step down as early as late this month following about 30 years of service in Switzerland, Yonhap news agency reported, citing an unidentified diplomat in Bern. The 75-year-old Ri is one of Kim Jong-il's closest associates, believed to have managed the leader's illicit money in secret bank accounts in Switzerland, the report said. There was no word on who will succeed him.

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8. DPRK Leadership

Korea Times (Lee Tae-hoon, "'KIM JONG-IL SUFFERING FROM KIDNEY FAILURE'", 2010/03/09) reported that a analysis of photographs of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il appears to support the growing speculation that he is suffering from kidney failure. Pictures of the 68-year-old Kim taken since April last year display common symptoms of renal disease ? abnormally white fingernails and dark hands. The signs of the kidney disease ? discoloration of the skin ? are evident in Kim's recent photographs, including those taken during his inspection of an Air Force base in May, talks with former US President Bill Clinton in August and meeting with senior PRC official Wang Jiarui in February this year.

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9. DPRK Food Supply

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA CAMPAIGNING TO INCREASE FARMING WORKFORCE", 2010/03/09) reported that the DPRK has launched a massive campaign to persuade people into farming to make up for a shortage, giving them ideological indoctrination and offering large benefits, sources say. Civic group North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity said the party held seminars at party chapters on Feb. 23 promising W10,000 in cash and 120 kg of food for households if they voluntarily move to farms. "To increase grain production the most important thing is to make up for a shortage in the rural workforce. This is why blue-collar workers and office workers in urban areas, senior officials in particular, should lead the vanguard in the campaign."

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

Xinhua News ("S KOREA REJECTS SPECULATION ON DELAYING TRANSFER OF WARTIME OPERATIONAL CONTROL", 2010/03/09) reported that the ROK 's Defense Ministry rejected growing speculation at home that Seoul and Washington are moving to delay the planned transfer of wartime operational control from the US back to the ROK. "We never asked the U.S. about putting off the plan," Defense Ministry spokesman Won Tae-jae told reporters in a briefing. "The transfer plan is a pledge between the two countries," he said, adding the transfer process is ongoing.

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11. ROK-Afghan Bilateral Relations

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "AFGHAN DIPLOMAT VOICES HOPE FOR KOREAN RECONSTRUCTION TEAM", Seoul, 2010/03/09) reports that Afghanistan's government and people are very much looking forward to the early deployment of an ROK Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), a visiting Afghan official said Tuesday. Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Kabir Farahi, who arrived in the ROK Sunday for a four-day visit, also urged Seoul to extend additional support in the fields of manpower exchange, agriculture and energy, among others, to help rebuild his country.

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12. ROK PKO Meeting

(Jung Sung-ki, "SOUTH KOREA TO CO-CHAIR INT'L PKO CONFERENCE", 2010/03/09) reports that the ROK and Thailand will co-chair an international conference of peacekeeping experts from March 10 to 12, the Ministry of National Defense said Tuesday. The fourth ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Peacekeeping Experts' Meeting is to be held in Bangkok, the ministry said in a news release. The meeting will serve as a venue for regional peacekeeping experts to share their experiences and seek ways of enhancing cooperation on multilateral and international peacekeeping efforts, it said.

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13. ROK-Japan Relations

The Korea Herald ("KOREA, JAPAN TO SIGN E-GOVERNMENT DEAL", 2010/03/09) reports that the ROK and Japan will sign an agreement on e-government cooperation and technological exchange later this month, according to a government source. ROK IT companies have sold electronic government systems to Japan's local governments since 2004, but it will be the first such deal between the central governments of the two countries.

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14. US-Japan Nuclear Pact

Reuters ("JAPAN VOWS TO KEEP NUCLEAR ARMS BAN AFTER REPORT", 2010/03/09) reported

that Japan's government on Tuesday vowed to stick to its ban on nuclear arms after a probe showed its predecessors may have turned a blind eye to breaches, but said ties with security ally Washington would not be affected. "This should not affect U.S.-Japan relations, at the same time, there is no need to change the three non-nuclear principles," Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told reporters, referring to Japan's policy of not possessing or producing atomic weapons, or allowing them into the country.

Agence France-Presse ("US PLAYS DOWN IMPACT OF JAPAN PROBE INTO US NUKES", 2010/03/09) reported that the US said it did not expect serious harm to ties with Japan after the new center-left government in Tokyo lifted the lid on past nuclear and military deals with Washington. The US government also said it has been faithful to agreements with Japan but declined comment on findings that it quietly brought nuclear weapons onto the allied nation's territory. "This investigation is a Japanese government matter," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley told reporters. "I don't think it's going to significantly affect the cooperation between the United States and Japan... We have faithfully honored our obligations under the treaty of mutual cooperation and security and will continue to do so."

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15. USFJ Base Relocation

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("OKINAWA LEADERS, LOCALS RAP PLAN TO MOVE FUTENMA TO LAND AREA", 2010/03/09) reported that the government's efforts to relocate the functions of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture to a land-based area of Camp Schwab in the prefecture have been dealt a new blow after local residents and leaders expressed strong opposition to the move. The Nago Municipal Assembly unanimously approved a resolution opposing the relocation of the Futenma base to a land-based section of Camp Schwab. However, following the municipal assembly's resolution, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said at a press conference, "Generally speaking, there are cases in which the central government has to take certain actions, even if those actions go against a resolution [of a local assembly]."

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16. Japan Energy Supply

Japan for Sustainability ("JAPAN'S LARGEST-SCALE PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER PLANTS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN WATERFRONT AREA, KAWASAKI", 2010/03/09) reported that Kawasaki city in Kanagawa prefecture, and Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) announced on December 3, 2009, that they have a basic agreement for a joint project to construct two photovoltaic power plants with a total output of 20,000 kilowatts (kW) in the waterfront area of the city. The project is known as the Mega Solar Power Generation Project, and the plants will be among Japan's largest, with an annual energy production estimated to be approximately 21 million kilowatt hours (kWh).

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17. Japan Climate Change

Kyodo News ("MINISTER WARNS JAPAN WOULD MISS EMISSIONS GOAL WITHOUT

INNOVATIONS", Tokyo, 2010/03/09) reports that industry minister Masayuki Naoshima warned Tuesday that Japan would fall short of its emissions reduction target without "green innovations," in remarks that could add fuel to a governmental debate over a bill to combat global warming. "We would not be able to achieve a 25 percent reduction without sufficient action in the private sector," Naoshima, minister of economy, trade and industry, told reporters in reference to Japan's repeated pledge to cut the nation's greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade by 25 percent compared with 1990 levels.

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18. Japan Politics

Christian Science Monitor (Peter Ford , "JAPAN'S HATOYAMA TRIES TO SHIFT MORE POWER TO THE POLITICIANS", 2010/03/09) reported that the new government has banned civil servants from the Diet, and forbidden them to give press conferences. Politicians have also held televised "budget screening" sessions, in which Diet members publicly hauled bureaucrats over the coals in search of wasteful spending. In the wake of such symbolic actions, however, the heavy work of reforming a well-entrenched and resentful bureaucracy has only just started. Key to the effort is a bill now before parliament that would give the government the authority to name senior civil servants, "a kind of revolution," says Takao Toshikawa, a journalist who specializes in Kasumigaseki , as the government bureaucracy is known. The government is also anxious to "break ministries out of their silo mentality," says Yoshito Sengoku , minister for national strategy.

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19. PRC Tibet Issue

Associated Press (Ashwini Bhatia, "DALAI LAMA: CHINA AIMS TO ANNIHILATE BUDDHISM", Dharmasala, 2010/03/10) reported that the Dalai Lama said Wednesday that PRC authorities had rebuffed all his efforts to reach a compromise over Tibet. "They are putting the monks and nuns in prison-like conditions, depriving them the opportunity to study and practice in peace," he said, accusing the PRC of working to "deliberately annihilate Buddhism." "Judging by the attitude of the present Chinese leadership, there is little hope that a result will be achieved soon. Nevertheless, our stand to continue with the dialogue remains unchanged," he added.

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20. PRC on Climate Change

Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "CHINA TELLS US TO DO MORE ON CLIMATE CHANGE", Beijing, 2010/03/10) reported that the PRC's top climate change negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, acknowledged the current U.S. administration's greater stress on greenhouse gas reductions, but said its pledges thus far fall short of expectations. "So we hope the United States will do more ... we hope the United States will not shift the responsibility for taking more active action to other countries," Xie said. He said Beijing wanted dialogue to achieve "fruitful results" at a climate change conference in Cancun, Mexico, in December. "We're willing to have such dialogue and cooperation and join with the rest of the international community in making positive progress," Xie said.

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21. PRC Government

The Associated Press ("CHINA VOWS TO IMPROVE SOCIAL SAFETY NET", 2010/03/09) reported that the PRC's top lawmaker said that legislative priorities this year would focus on improving social security and fostering more equitable economic development, but he rejected calls to open up the political system. In prepared remarks to be delivered to the PRC legislature, Wu Bangguo said delegates would put the final touches on a draft social security law and make adjustments to the legal system to "dispel the people's worries and better maintain social harmony and stability." Wu, despite some calls for reforms to strengthen the congress's powers, indicated there would be no changes toward a more open system. The congress has "reached a thorough understanding of the essential differences between our country's system of People's Congresses and Western capitalist countries' systems of political power," he said.

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22. PRC Media Control

Financial Times ("CHINA TO LOOSEN CONTROL OVER BOOK PUBLISHING", 2010/03/09) reported that the PRC's largest publishing house intends to transform itself from a propaganda vehicle into a global player as it spearheads Beijing's plans to restructure the industry while keeping it under state control. "There will definitely be significant changes in our international operations," Mr Nie said. "At least we can learn from some multinational publishers from developed countries, like Oxford University Press and Harper Collins ... We will not just be there to propagate Chinese culture, but also to run a commercial business." Last year, the General Administration of Press and Publications, the regulator, promised to dilute the state publishing houses' monopoly by allowing private companies to produce books for the first time in more than half a century.

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II. PRC Report

23. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua News Agency ("PART OF DONATION ON RURAL UTILITY EXEMPTS FROM INCOME TAX", 2010/03/09) reported that if an enterprise's donation is used on rural public utility projects, then the profit part which is not over than 12% of its annual total profits can be deducted before calculating corporate income tax, according to the central government's NO.1 document issued recently.

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24. PRC Environment

Huicong Chemical Industry Net ("FIRST LOW-CARBON INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO BE ANNOUNCED", 2010/03/09) reported that the PRC's first low-carbon industry development plan, which is drafted by the National Development and Reform Committee, is now under discussion on the National People's Congress, and is to be issued soon after the session.

People's Daily online ("50 BN RMB ON ENERGY-SAVING AND EMISSION REDUCTION THIS YEAR", 2010/03/09) reported that 50 billion RMB will be arranged for special fund of energy-saving and emission reduction this year, with a growth of 20 billion RMB than previous year, sources with Ministry of Finance yesterday.

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