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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. DPRK Missile Test
  - 2. ROK on DPRK Missile Test
  - 3. DPRK Nuclear Issue
  - 4. DPRK Terror List Status
  - 5. US on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 6. Trilaterial Coordination and Oversight Group
  - 7. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 8. Inter-Korean Maritime Border
  - 9. ROK on PSI Role
  - 10. Japan Economy
  - 11. Cross Strait Relations
  - 12. Uighur Detainee Issue
  - 13. PRC Environment
  - 14. PRC Energy Supply

- 15. PRC Public Health
- 16. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- II. PRC Report
  - 17. PRC Environment
  - 18. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

- II. ROK Report
  - 19. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 20. Korean Peninsula Peace Regime

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Test

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "N. KOREA USES AGED RUSSIAN AIRCRAFT TO FIRE MISSILES: SOURCE", 2008/10/09) reported that the DPRK used an aging Russian-made aircraft to fire two short-range missiles earlier this week, a source privy to DPRK affairs said. The source said the DPRK appeared to have used an AN-2 aircraft, but others argued against the account. "I wonder if that is technically possible," Won Tae-jae, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry, told reporters.

(return to top)

2. ROK on DPRK Missile Test

BBC News ("N KOREA 'TO LAUNCH 10 MISSLES' ", 2008/10/09) reported that DPRK is preparing 10 short-range missiles for a mass test-launch at Chodo, an island navy base, ROK news reports say. The Chosun Ilbo newspaper said ROK military authorities were watching after the reports that DPRK could fire several short-range surface-to-ship and ship-to-ship missiles. "It would be an unprecedented number of missile tests if the North fires all of them," the newspaper noted, adding that in 2006, DPRK tested seven medium-and long-range ballistic missiles. ROK media speculated that the possible missile launches from the DPRK could be a response to the ROK's current celebrations of the 60th anniversary of its armed forces.

(return to top)

3. DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Financial Times (Demetri Sevastopulo, "US TO BACK PYONGYANG NUCLEAR PROPOSAL",

Washington , 2008/10/09) reported that the US administration has agreed in principle to accept a DPRK offer on nuclear verification. Senior officials have concluded that Washington should accept the DPRK proposal, which Christopher Hill, the US negotiator on the nuclear issue, brought back from Pyongyang last week. The administration is now trying to convince the other members of the six-party talks, and in particular Japan, to accept the proposal before recommending that George W. Bush, the president, sign off on the deal.

(return to top)

4. DPRK Terror List Status

Reuters (Linda Sieg and Yoko Kubota, "U.S. TO TAKE N.KOREA OFF TERRORIST LIST IN OOC: KYODO", Tokyo, 2008/10/09) reported that the United States has told Japan that it will remove DPRK from its terrorist blacklist this month, Kyodo news agency reported on Thursday, quoting unidentified Japanese government sources. Kyodo reported that U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, in talks in DPRK earlier this month, agreed that Washington would not make verification of Pyongyang's uranium enrichment program or proliferation activities a condition of delisting. Hill also agreed that first verification of the DPRK's plutonium-related activities listed by Pyongyang in June would be conducted.

(return to top)

5. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yomiuri Shimbun (Satoshi Ogawa , "U.S. ASSUMES DPRK HAS N-WARHEADS", 2008/10/09) reported that the US military is prepared for any contingency based on the possibility DPRK possesses small nuclear warheads capable of being loaded onto missiles, Gen. Walter Sharp, the commander of U.S. forces in the ROK said. The US Defense Department had said earlier it was unclear whether Pyongyang possesses nuclear warheads.

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. URGES N. KOREA TO PRESENT VERIFICATION PLAN BEFORE DELISTING ", Washington, 2008/10/09) reported that the United States urged the DPRK to present a verification regime on its nuclear facilities. "At this point we're looking at the verification regime," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. "And should we get a verification regime that is acceptable to the five, as well as has the agreement of North Korea, all the other parties are prepared to meet their obligations in kind."

(return to top)

6. Trilaterial Coordination and Oversight Group

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA, U.S., JAPAN TO REGULARIZE HIGH-LEVEL SECURITY TALKS", Seoul, 2008/10/08) reported that top-level diplomats from the ROK, the US, and Japan will hold talks next week in Washington on regional security and other global issues, officials said. The tripartite meeting, slated for Oct. 14, compares with the now-defunct Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) that was formed in 1999 and played a key role in coordinating the three governments' policies on the DPRK. "While the TCOG focused discussions on the North Korean issue, the trilateral meeting this time will discuss ways of bolstering cooperation among the three

nations on Northeast Asia and major international issues beyond the TCOG's agenda," the official told a press briefing.

(return to top)

7. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA BUDGETS $460 MILLION FOR RICE, FERTILIZER AID TO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/10/09) reported that the ROK has earmarked 643 billion won (US$460 million) for a possible shipment of rice and fertilizer to the DPRK next year in humanitarian aid, a related ministry said. The government said it could resume the assistance if the DPRK accepts dialogue to discuss the issue.

(return to top)

8. Inter-Korean Maritime Border

RIA Novosti ("NORTH KOREA WARNS OF NAVAL CLASH IN YELLOW SEA", Moscow, 2008/10/09) reported that the DPRK warned that repeated violations of its waters by ROK warships are raising the prospect of a military clash in the Yellow Sea, the ROK's Yonhap news agency reported. The navy command said it would "deal firmly with any violations of its sovereignty."

(return to top)

9. ROK on PSI Role

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "MILITARY SUPPORTS PSI MEMBERSHIP: MINISTER", 2008/10/09) reported that the ROK military supports becoming a full member of PSI, Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee said. "Our stance remains unchanged in that we support full membership in the Proliferation Security Initiative because we are aware of its military significance," Lee said during a parliamentary audit. "It would be a boost for the military."

(return to top)

10. Japan Economy

The Asashi Shinbun ("ASO PLANS ADDITIONAL PACKAGE OF EMERGENCY ECONOMIC MEASURES", 2008/10/09) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso on Thursday instructed ruling coalition policy chiefs to compile additional emergency economic measures, including possible tax cuts and increased public works projects, to cope with the global financial crisis. Aso also did not rule out the possibility that the economic measures would be financed by new deficit-covering bonds. However, financing these additional measures could spark criticism about the financial standing of the nation, which is already trillions of yen in debt.

(return to top)

11. Cross Strait Relations

Taipei Times ("TAIWAN, PRC PURSUE MORE DIRECT ROUTE", 2008/10/09) reported that Ministry of National Defense (MND) spokeswoman Lisa Chi assured the public Wednesday that the government's plan to open straighter air routes across the Taiwan Strait would not undermine national security. Chi said the ministry had contributed its professional assessment to the plan and suggested that the air routes should not involve any direct flights across the median line in the Taiwan Strait. Based on this principle, the ministry has proposed several possible routes that would not put national security at risk, Chi said.

Reuters ("TAIWAN SAYS PRESIDENT TO MEET CHINA OFFICIAL", Taipei , 2008/10/09) reported that Chen Yunlin, head of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, will meet President Ma Ying-jeou in Taiwan at the end of October or at the beginning of November, a Taiwan official said.

(return to top)

12. Uighur Detainee Issue

Associated Press ("CHINA SAYS IT WON'T TORTURE GUANTANAMO DETAINEES", Beijing, 2008/10/09) reported that PRC on Thursday rejected concerns that it would torture Chinese Muslims held by the U.S. military at Guantanamo Bay if they are returned to PRC, saying they will be dealt with according to the law. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a news conference, "We have raised our position to the U.S. and we hope they will take this position seriously and repatriate these 17 people to China shortly," Qin said. The U.S. Appeals Court set a deadline of next Thursday for additional filings.

(return to top)

13. PRC Environment

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "CHINA SHYING FROM CLIMATE OBLIGATIONS, ADVISER SAYS", Beijing, 2008/10/09) reported that the PRC and other rising economies must shoulder growing obligations to cut greenhouse gases as they climb the development ladder, said Hu Angang, a public policy professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Hu is the most influential PRC expert to criticize his government's stance that the country should not assume international obligations to curb emissions.

(return to top)

14. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua Net ("GASOLINE PRICE WAS INCREASED AGAIN IN BEIJING", 2008/10/07) reported that from October 7, according to a National Development and Reform Commission's notice, the price of Beijing's gasoline and diesel oil will be increased by 200 and 290 yuan per ton respectively. The most widely used No.93 gasoline's price will be 6.37 yuan/liter, up 0.17 yuan.

(return to top)

15. PRC Public Health

The New York Times, Asia Pacific (Edward Wong , "CHINA BANS A COMPANY'S HERBAL MEDICINE ", Beijing , 2008/10/09 20:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the PRC government announced that it had banned the sale and use of Siberian ginseng made by Wandashan Pharmaceutical after three people injected with it died and three others fell seriously ill. The State Food and Drug Administration posted a warning on its Web site late Wednesday. The agency said it had discovered two harmful batches of the medicine and urged people across PRC to report any problems with the product.

Associated Press (Tini Tran, "SCANDAL FORCES REFORM IN CHINA DAIRY INDUSTRY", Hohhot, China , 2008/10/09) reported that daily inspections are part of a raft of new safety measures and increased supervision over the PRC's dairy industry in the wake of the country's tainted milk crisis. "They (government regulators) have tightened quality control and the farmers understand that. The farmers know they have to feed their cows well and not give them antibiotics or other things," said Wang Guifeng, an inspector. "Nowadays we're a lot stricter."

(return to top)

16. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Interfax ("CHAIR OF CHINESE STATE COUNCIL TO TAKE PART IN SCO SUMMIT IN ASTANA - CHINESE AMBASSADOR", Astana, 2008/10/09) reported that Wen Jiabao, the Chairman of the State Council of the PRC, is going to visit Kazakhstan for the first time and take part in a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Astana, the PRC's Ambassador to Kazakhstan Qing Gopin told a press briefing in Astana on Oct. 8 after delivering a credential letter to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev.

(return to top)

II. PRC Report

17. PRC Environment

China Radio network (Hu Xiao, "POYANG LAKE WETLAND OBSERVATORY SETS UP, NANCHANG", 2008/10/08) reported that Poyang Lake Wetland Observatory, which was supported by PRC Academy of Sciences and Jiangxi Province was unveiled in Xingzi County of Jiangxi Province recently. Poyang Lake is the PRC's largest fresh water lake, and is also one of the world's six major wetlands. But now it is facing a serious ecological challenge. Thus, there is an urgent need to do a dynamic monitoring to resources, environment, and the wetland ecosystem of Poyang Lake. Xingzi County has an area of 60 hectares of Poyang Lake wetland, accounting for about 12% of the total wetland area. The county's wetland area also has the typical characteristics of the Poyang Lake wetland and is the best sample for study and research.

China Radio International (Qiao Xingquan, "CHINA TO ESTABLISH THE FIRST NATIONAL PARK", 2008/10/08) reported that recently the PRC Ministry of Environment Protection and National Tourism Bureau has approved setting up China's first National Park, Heilongjiang Tangwang River National Park, according to the a news conference held on Oct. 8. The Park is located at south of Xiaoxingan Mountain. This area has rich species with over 600 kinds of wild plants and 250 kinds of wild animals. In addition, the region has more than 100 granite peaks which constitute a unique geological formation.

(return to top)

18. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Xinhua Net (Yao Runfeng, "RURAL WATER CONSERVATION AND WATER SUPPLY TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION SETS UP", 2008/10/07) reported that Rural Water Conservation and Water Supply Technology Association was set up in Beijing on Oct. 7. From 2000 to 2008, the PRC has put 61.6 billion yuan into rural water conservation and solved the water drinking problem of 1600 million rural people. The Association was set up to enhance the research and investigation of rural water conservation, to organize professionals for the water supply technology development, to coordinate with the government on water drinking safety training, and so on.

(return to top)

II. ROK Report

19. DPRK Nuclear Program

TongilNews (Kwak Tae-hwan, "DPRK VERIFICATION REGIME, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM AND SOLUTION?", 2008/10/10) said in a column that concerning the verification regime, the DPRK will try to get concessions from Bush Administration or post-Bush U.S. administration by performing 'brinkmanship'. From a short-term point of view, they will try not to be hasty in processing disablement while watching how the U.S. Presidential Election proceeds. From a long-term point of view, DPRK's disablement, establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula, and the way for peaceful unification of the nation are closely related. Problems existing on the Korean Peninsula will be solved eventually by the six-party talks.

(return to top)

20. Korean Peninsula Peace Regime

Peace Korea (Cheong Wook-shik, "REGIME IN 2012", 2008/10/10) said in a column that if the denuclearization and the establishment of peace on the peninsula are achieved, the DPRK forms relationships with the U.S. and Japan, the two Koreas commence a united regime, and the ROK-U.S. alliance becomes smoother and horizontal by 2012, we would call it the '2012 regime'. The first key to achieve those is the incoming U.S. administration's DPRK policy, which will reflect their reelection strategy. 2012, the year of the next U.S. Presidential Election, is also an important year for the DPRK. In that sense, the Lee Myung-bak Administration's overseas policies are a failure.

They are losing an important opportunity to make the 2012 regime become more active and independent. A large-scale project such as the one agreed at the recent ROK-Russia summit would be a sign of practical changes in Lee's overseas policies.

(return to top)

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