NAPSNet Daily Report 12 September, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 12 September, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, September 12, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-12-september-2008/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Takeo Miyazaki, "U.S. 'FLEXIBLE' ON N. KOREA N-REPORT VERIFICATION", Washington, 2008/09/12) reported that the US is ready to be flexible about how to verify the DPRK's reports on its nuclear development, Christopher Hill, the chief US negotiator for the six-party talks over the DPRK's nuclear program, said to reporters. "[The DPRK declaration] needs to be verifiable," Hill said. But he added, "We want to be flexible--we really want to be flexible on format." His comment indicated Washington is prepared to make some compromises over the disputed verification process.

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2. US, PRC on DPRK Leadership

Beijing News ("US, CHINA HOLDING TALKS IN CASE NORTH KOREA COLLAPSES", 2008/09/12) reported that the US and the PRC are holding talks about what to do if the government in Pyongyang collapses after DPRK leader Kim Jong Il became physically impaired from a stroke apparently suffered last month. A senior Bush Administration told FOX News the US is naturally engaging the PRC about what to do if there is ensuing instability in the DPRK. The source said the Chinese are reluctant to admit the discussions publicly, because of their close relationship with the DPRK.

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3. DPRK Leadership

JoongAng Ilbo (Chae Byung-gun and Ser Myo-ja, "NORTH'S POWER ELITE HONOR DICTATOR", 2008/09/12) reported that the DPRK's elite organizations, ranging from the legislature and cabinet to the military, sent a letter to Kim on Tuesday, pledging their unwavering loyalty to "Dear Leader" Kim. It is not the first time that the most powerful organs in the DPRK have issued such a letter, but the timing was unusual. The letter expressing their devotion is normally sent to Kim on his birthday, Feb. 16. Observers in the ROK said the rare timing this time was to comfort Kim while he was on his sickbed.

Agence-France-Presse (Simon Martin, "NKOREA'S KIM WELL ENOUGH TO BRUSH HIS TEETH: SEOUL OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2008/09/12) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il has recovered enough from an apparent stroke and brain surgery to brush his teeth unaided, a ROK government official said. Government officials in Seoul have tended to stress that the 66-year-old is recovering fast and still in control. But media reports and a legislator speak of some degree of paralysis and irregular convulsions. Chosun Ilbo newspaper said Kim is suffering irregular convulsions and that PRC authorities believe his long-term ability to govern will be impeded.

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4. DPRK Anniversary

Korea Herald ("N. KOREANS RECEIVE SPECIAL RATIONS ON ANNIVERSARY: PRO-PYONGYANG DAILY", 2008/09/12) reported that North Koreans received special rations of liquor, cookies, blankets and sports shoes earlier this week in honor of the communist country's 60th founding anniversary, a mouthpiece for a pro-Pyongyang group in Japan was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. "Holiday rations were distributed across the country to mark the 60th anniversary of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," said Choson Sinbo, organ of Chongryon, or the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.

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5. UNDP Operations in the DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("UNDP MAY RESUME OPERATIONS IN N.KOREA NEXT YEAR ", 2008/09/12) reported that the United Nations Development Programme could soon resume operations in the DPRK. According to ROK diplomatic sources at the UN headquarters in New York, the UNDP's five-step roadmap was approved by the agency's executive board at an informal meeting.

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6. US-ROK Security Alliance

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "OUTGOING U.S. AMBASSADOR SAYS ALLIANCE STRONGER,

MORE BALANCED ", Seoul, 2008/09/12) reported that the ROK-US alliance stands stronger and much more balanced now than it was three years ago as the countries continue to work together on various regional and international challenges, including the DPRK nuclear issue, the outgoing US ambassador to the ROK said Friday. Alexander Vershbow also noted how upcoming changes in the alliance, such as the transfer of wartime operational control of ROK troops back to Seoul from Washington, will help forge an even more balanced alliance that will represent the ROK's improved stature in the international community.

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7. ROK Energy and the Environment

Chosun Ilbo ("GREEN ENERGY GETS GOVERNMENT BOOST", 2008/09/12) reported that the government will spend W3 trillion (US$1=W1,110) until 2012 on researching and developing new and renewable energy in cooperation with the private sector. It plans to increase production of 'green' energy nine-fold, from US$1.8 billion last year to $17 billion. In a briefing presided over by President Lee Myung-bak, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy announced a blueprint for developing the green energy industry as a new economic growth engine.

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8. US-Japan Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN WELCOMES DEPLOYMENT OF US AIRCRAFT CARRIER", Tokyo, 2008/09/12) reported that Japan's government welcomed Friday the announcement that the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS George Washington will arrive later this month at its new home base south of Tokyo. The arrival of the carrier has been controversial, however, because it is expected to bring a small increase in the number of sailors based at Yokosuka and also because of concerns of a possible accident or leakage from its nuclear reactor.

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9. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("KOIZUMI TO SUPPORT KOIKE IN LDP LEADERSHIP ELECTION ", Tokyo, 2008/09/12) reported that former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will support former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election, in which four other candidates are running, LDP lawmaker Seishiro Eto, who is also backing Koike, said. While former Foreign Minister Taro Aso is widely regarded as the frontrunner, Koizumi's remarks are likely to give Koike a boost ahead of the Sept. 22 election to pick Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's successor.

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10. Sino-Japanese Relations

The Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "LIKELY NEW JAPAN PM VOWS TO BOLSTER CHINA TIES ",

Tokyo, 2008/09/12) reported that Taro Aso, an often brash former foreign minister seen as the most likely candidate to replace Japan's prime minister, said Friday he believes good relations with the PRC are an important part of Japanese foreign policy and shrugged off criticism that he is too hawkish. "We will live together with China," he said. "Friendship is only a tool, the real goal is the co-prosperity of Japan and China."

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11. Russo-Japanese Energy Trade

Vladivostok TImes ("JAPAN HOPES THAT THE “EASTERN SIBERIA – PACIFIC OCEAN” PIPELINE AND OIL TERMINAL TO BE BUILT IN TIME", 2008/09/12) reported that the development program of the Far East and Transbaikalia is in the national interests of Russia as well as Japan, as Mr. Motoyuki OKA, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the “Sumitomo Corporation”. The second stage of construction of Pacific pipeline, which is also the solution for power security of Asia, is among the projects, which have great influence on bilateral relations of the countries. The development of Elginsky coal field (Yakutia, the biggest coal field in Russia), which has great influence on coal supply to Asia, is also a very important project.

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12. Cross Strait Relations

The Financial Times (Jamil Anderlini , "BEIJING USES FOREX RESERVES TO TARGET TAIWAN", Beijing, 2008/09/12) reported that the secretive government agency that supervises the PRC’s foreign exchange reserves used its funds to help convince Costa Rica to sever ties with Taiwan and establish relations with Beijing last year, according to documents obtained by the Financial Times. The purchase of US-denominated Costa Rican government bonds by the PRC’s State Administration of Foreign Exchange (Safe) is the clearest proof yet that Beijing regards its $1,800bn in foreign reserves – the world’s biggest – as a tool to advance its foreign policy goals, as well as a potential source of income.

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13. PRC Security

Reuters (Ben Blanchard , "CHINA SAYS WEST IS INCITING UNREST IN XINJIANG ", Beijing, 2008/09/12) reported that the governor of west PRC's tense Xinjiang region has lashed out at Western countries for instigating unrest in the area, but said their schemes would never succeed as only very few people supported separatism. The region's governor, Nuer Baikeli, said "Western hostile forces" unhappy with the PRC's rise were directly supporting groups opposed to Beijing's rule in the region in the name of democracy and human rights. "They all along have been direct behind-the-scenes backers and patrons of the 'three forces' at home and abroad," Baikeli said, referring to terrorism, separatism and extremism.

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14. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua News ("CHINA ADDS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT FOR CHARITY ACTIVITIES", 2008/09/12) reported that a new department to promote charity and social welfare was set up on Thursday under the PRC's Ministry of Civil Affairs. The department would deal with welfare lottery, charity activities, donations and welfare projects for the elderly, disabled and children, a ministry statement said. The department will draft rules on volunteers affairs and work on a nationwide volunteer network.

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15. PRC Protest

The New York Times (Edward Wong, "WOULD-BE PROTESTERS FIND THE OLYMPICS FAILED TO EXPAND FREE SPEECH IN BEIJING ", 2008/09/12) reported that the case of Ms. Huang and the other disgruntled residents of Liuzhou, who came here to hold demonstrations over four cases of property seizure or destruction, shows that when it comes to freedom of protest, the Olympics changed little in the PRC capital. The PRC government still requires citizens to register to protest, and it has yet to grant any permits for people to hold lawful protests in three designated parks in Beijing.

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16. Shanghai Cooperation Organziation

Itar-Tass ("SCO BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETS IN SIBERIA", Irkutsk, 2008/09/12) reported that Business Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held a session in the East-Siberian city of Irkutsk Thursday, the Council's president Dmitry Mezentsev told reporters. One of the issues on the agenda of discussions by Business Council members was the setting up of a SCO energy club. Also, the sides raised the issues of public health and social security of population of the member-states, inter-state initiatives in the field of insurance, establishing of a SCO university, and innovative development projects.

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II. PRC Report

17. PRC Civil Society and the 512 Earthquake

Xinhua Net, (Hua Yedi, "SOONG CHING LING FOUNDATION AND MORGAN STANLEY DONATE BOOKS TO DISASTER AREAS", 2008/09/10) reported that as the annual Teacher's Day approaches, Shanghai Soong Ching Ling Foundation and Morgan Stanley company co-sponsored a "Love Stack" activity, announcing a plan to donate $250,000 to the primary schools and kindergartens of the earthquake-stricken Dujiangyan city of Sichuan province, for the purchase of books and shelves, and the establishment of libraries. According to reports, this "Love Stack" activity will benefit more than

78,000 children of school age in over 78000 classes of 60 schools.

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18. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Xinhua News Agency (Li Rong, "CHINA'S GREEN SUPER RICE ATTRACTS GATES FOUNDATION", 2008/09/11) reported that learning from the Symposium "Green Super Rice" held in Shagnhai on Sep.8, Gates Foundation showed great interests on the "Green Super Rice" program put forward by PRC scientists. Once the program is formally approved, it will cultivate relevant species of rice for southwest PRC, Africa, and Southeast Asia. The aim of the program is on the base of increasing the quantity and improving the quality, the rice production strives to avoid the using of pesticides, reduce the application of chemical fertilizer, and pay more attention to water conservation and drought control.

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19. PRC Credit Associations

People's Daily (Zhanglei, Xuguang, "DONGYING CITY ESTABLISHES VEGETABLE CREDIT ASSOCIATION",) reported that vegetable farmers in Dongying district, Dongying City, Shandong province recently established a "Vegetable Credit Association", under the support of Dongying Vegetable Association and Shengli Rural Cooperative Bank. The Vegetable Credit Association helps vegetable farmers establish credit files, assess credit ratings, and approve different loan amount from 3000 yuan to 300,000 yuan. The loan rate enjoys a 30% decline. At present, the Association has developed over 200 members, and dealt with 88 loans. The loan amount reaches 4 million yuan.

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III. ROK Report

20. Inter-Korean Relations

Hankook Ilbo ("SEVERAL REASONS TO RECOVER INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP ASAP", 2008/09/12) wrote that it is true that the DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's health problem made the recovery of the inter-Korean relationship more difficult. However, since it is also burdensome for the DPRK to continue the current tension on the peninsula, there is also a possibility that they are also trying to break the ice. Recently, Kim Yong-nam, the DPRK's second highest leader, said to Harmut Koschyk, a German member of the parliament, that it is up to the ROK's attitude whether to resume the inter-Korean dialog. The ROK's strong will to fulfill the 6. 15 and 10.4 agreement should be confirmed above all, he added. Thus, the government should be more active in demonstrating its will to fulfill the promises.

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21. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Ohmynews ("ABANDONING OPLAN RATHER WISER THAN DEVELOPING IT", 2008/09/12) wrote that some authorities of the ROK are asserting that concerning the rumor about the DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's health problem, the ROK and the U.S.'s joint contingency plan, referred to as OPLAN 5029, should be further developed into an operational scheme. However, it is wiser to abandon the plan completely. The government should not overlook the importance of strengthening the relationship with the PRC and Russia. It is enough for the ROK-U.S. alliance to devote on defense even if a contingency occurs in the DPRK.

Hankyoreh ("INAPPROPRIATE C0UNTERMEASURES TO NORTH KOREA ", 2008/09/12) reported that the ROK government and the ruling party's response to the rumor about DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's illness is somewhat inappropriate. It is problematic for the Grand National Party to set up a special organization to respond to a 'DPRK contingency'. Rather one possible way is to announce that the government is willing to fulfill the 10. 4 summit agreement and send the DPRK a special envoy. Being very prudent, the U.S. is now emphasizing the necessity of the talks on the nuclear verification mechanism, while avoiding the official mention of Kim's illness. The ROK government should learn from such response.

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22. ROK Contingency Planning for DPRK

PRESSian ("MB ADMINISTRATION SHOULD NOT SPREAD UNCERTAIN RUMOR ABOUT KIM JONG-IL'S HEALTH", 2008/09/11) argued that the Lee Myung-bak Administration's announcement about the DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's health problem is way too straightforward. Some argue that the government is scheming to take advantage of it by revealing information to the public and mentioning a DPRK contingency. Reports that the government is trying to develop the OPLAN 5029, which was a conceptual plan, into a scheme of operations that will be reported during the ROK-U.S.'s annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) escalates the possibility. Further, along with the affair of Won Jong-hwa, the spy, it gives the administration more reasons to strengthen the ability to collect information, organizations, and facilities to respond to the DPRK more effectively.

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23. ROK Intelligence on DPRK

DongA Ilbo ("ABILITY TO GATHER DPRK INFORMATION, WEAKENED IN 10 YEARS", 2008/09/12) wrote that the ROK government's ability to gather information about the DPRK has weakened to some extent for the past ten years. This means that the government needs to invest more on the field, so that they can gain more information about the DPRK personnel situation. One way to achieve this goal is to strengthen the alliance with U.S., which will facilitate information exchange between the two nations. Also, the government should devote more on resuming the joint contingency plan wit the U.S., dubbed OPLAN 5029, which was suspended since it might provoke the DPRK.

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