NAPSNet Daily Report 13 August, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 13 August, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, August 13, 2009, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-13-august-2009/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "NORTH KOREA LOOKS AT NEW DEAL OF ITS NUCLEAR CARDS", 2009/08/12) reported that the DPRK seems in no rush to restore its old plutonium-producing plant, but that does not mean it has given up on building a bomb and it may now be betting on uranium enrichment instead for its next nuclear bargaining chip. "There is a terrifying way that North Korea could overcome its limitation while simultaneously helping another nuclear aspirant: it could work with Iran," Siegfried Hecker. Hecker, a professor at Stanford University, wrote separately in an email this week that it makes little sense at this time for for the DPRK to switch from plutonium to HEU because it would take several years to build a programme, even with Iran's help.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters (Jonathan Lynn , "CHINA URGES DIPLOMACY IN IRAN, NORTH KOREA NUKE ROWS", Geneva, 2009/08/12) reported that the PRC stuck to its "hands-off" line for resolving international disputes on Wednesday, calling for diplomatic approaches and respect of sovereignty in hotspots from Myanmar to Iran and the DPRK. Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi urged the international community to deal with any efforts by Iran and the DPRK to acquire nuclear weapons through peaceful diplomatic means. "We maintain that all countries, big and small, strong and weak, rich and poor, are equal, and we respect the right of people of all countries to independently choose their own development path," Yang said.

Chosun Ilbo ("IS CHINA BEHIND N.KOREA'S CONCILIATORY MOVES?", 2009/08/12) reported that

speculation is running high about the reason DPRK suddenly decided to discuss the release of a ROK detained there. Sources familiar with DPRK affairs and defectors from the Stalinist country say the developments owe much to Pyongyang's staunch ally the PRC, which is implementing unprecedentedly tough sanctions against the DPRK.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. TO HANDLE N. KOREA BILATERALLY WITHIN 6-PARTY FRAMEWORK: RICE ", Washington, 2009/08/12) reported that the United States said Wednesday it is willing to deal with the DPRK bilaterally within the six-party talks on ending the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. "We're committed to the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice told MSNBC. "We're prepared to work towards that end in the six-party talks and bilaterally, but only if the DPRK gets serious and begins to implement the commitments they've already made."

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4. DPRK-US Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. SEES NO CHANGE IN N.KOREA'S ATTITUDE", 2009/08/12) reported that the U.S. government has arrived at a tentative conclusion that there is no significant improvement in the DPRK's attitude over its nuclear program. A ROK government official said the U.S. told Seoul and other countries after former President Bill Clinton's visit to the DPRK to free two U.S. journalists that it will take some more time before a final conclusion because a meeting between President Barack Obama and Clinton has not taken place yet. Another ROK government official said "The ball is still in the DPRK's court and the prevailing consensus in the international community is that sanctions should remain in place until the DPRK demonstrates a change in attitude."

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5. UN on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("U.N. CHIEF SAYS READY FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH N. KOREA", 2009/08/12) reported that U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon vowed to mobilize all available means to help restart denuclearization dialogue with the DPRK, saying the world body will make direct contact with Pyongyang if necessary. While paying a visit to the country's ailing former President Kim Dae-jung at a Seoul hospital, the U.N. chief said his organization "will work to find a breakthrough by any means necessary, and it has plans to directly contact North Korea if it needs to."

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "UN CHIEF EXPECTS BROADER ROLE OF SIX-WAY NUCLEAR TALKS IN REGIONAL COOPERATION", Jeju, 2009/08/13) reported that United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said Thursday the six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear program are expected to evolve into a broader framework for regional peace and security. "The six-party process provides a solid path towards a multilateral security mechanism in the region," Ban said in a keynote speech at the Jeju Peace Forum. "In my view, the effort would only benefit from partnership and collaboration with the United Nations."

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6. Inter-Korea Relations

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young , "RULING PARTY MOVES TO MEND S-N RELATIONS", 2009/08/12) reported that in a change of its hawkish tone toward the DPRK, the ruling Grand National Party (GNP) showed a softer stance Wednesday, urging the government to prepare measures to improve inter-Korean relations. The call came after Hyundai Group Chairwoman Hyun Jung-eun visited the DPRK in a bid to win the release of a ROK worker detained there and possibly break the icy relations between the two Koreas. "Hyun might have discussed the resumption of the tour program to Mt. Geumgang as well as the detainee issue," GNP spokesman Yoon Sang-hyun said. "The government needs to map out measures to enhance inter-Korean relations when she returns."

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun , "HYUNDAI CHIEF STILL WAITING TO MEET KIM ", 2009/08/12) reported that Hyundai Group chairwoman Hyun Jeong-eun was in Pyongyang for the third day yesterday, waiting for a meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to conclude what was expected to be a rescue mission. Kim appeared to have been out of town yesterday morning as the official Korean Central News Agency reported on his inspection of a northern naval academy in an early morning dispatch.

Agence France-Press (Lim Chang-Won, "NORTH KOREA FREES SOUTH KOREAN DETAINEE", Seoul, 2009/08/13) reported that the DPRK on Thursday freed an ROK worker it had detained since March. 44-year-old Yu Seong-Jin was handed over to officials from his company Hyundai Asan, unification ministry spokesman Chun Hae-Sung told reporters. An association representing ROK firms in Kaesong welcomed the release and urged the two Koreas to prevent a recurrence of such incidents and improve ties. "We hope (the release) will improve frozen ties between South and North Korea and rejuvenate the Kaesong industrial complex ," it said in a statement.

Yonhap ("CHEONG WA DAE VOWS NOT TO CHANGE N. KOREA POLICY DESPITE WORKER'S RELEASE", Seoul, 2009/08/13) reported that the ROK will not change its DPRK policy despite the release Thursday of an ROK worker. "It seems a bit too late, but it is a relief that Yu is finally returning to his family," Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Lee Dong-kwan said.

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7. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("N. KOREAN EYE CLINIC HEALS 'THOUSANDS' WITH S. KOREAN SUPPORT", 2009/08/12) reported that the DPRK 's sole eye clinic, built with support from the ROK, is expanding its quality service across the country, helping restore vision to thousands of people, the country's party newspaper said. The Pyongyang Lions Eye Hospital opened in Pyongyang in 2005 with a US$8 million won fund collected by the ROK branch of the Lions Clubs International, a charity organization, and other member clubs from around the world. Medical training and equipment were also provided.

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8. DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA URGES JAPAN TO DROP 'HOSTILE' POLICY, SANCTIONS AFTER ELECTION ", Pyongyang, 2009/08/12) reported that the DPRK wants the next Japanese administration after the upcoming general election to drop Tokyo's ''hostile'' policy toward Pyongyang through the lifting of sanctions and other ice-thawing measures, a DPRK official in charge of Japanese affairs said Wednesday.

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9. DPRK Military

Itar-Tass ("KIM VISITS MAJOR MILITARY MARITIME UNIVERSITY IN EASTERN NKOREA", 2009/08/12) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il noted that the Navy was particularly important to ensure security in the republic during a visit to the major Military Maritime University in Hamhung, eastern DPRK, the KCNA news agency reported without specifying the date of the visit. “For our country, which is surrounded by the seas from three directions, the naval forces are particularly important,” KCNA quoted the DPRK leader as saying.

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10. ROK Peace Forum

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "WORLD LEADERS, EXPERTS SEEK PATHS TO PEACE, CO-PROSPERITY IN EAST ASIA ", Jeju Island, 2009/08/12) reported that the largest international security conference hosted by the ROK kicked off Wednesday. The fifth Jeju Peace Forum brings together more than 130 world leaders, former and incumbent diplomats, scholars, and journalists for discussions on the DPRK nuclear issue and other regional security concerns, as well as ways to promote economic cooperation.

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11. Japan Politics

Agence France Presse (Kyoko Hasegawa , "JAPAN PM, MAIN RIVAL CLASH IN PRE-ELECTION DEBATE", Tokyo, 2009/08/12) reported that Japan's embattled Prime Minister Taro Aso in a pre-election debate Wednesday sought to claw away at his rival's strong lead by promising to rebuild the recession-hit economy and ensure national security. Opposition candidate Yukio Hatoyama pledged sweeping government reforms, better social security and a foreign policy focused more on humanitarian aid than military means.

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "IN DEBATE, JAPAN PM URGES VOTERS TO STAY COURSE", Tokyo, 2009/08/12) reported that Japan's prime minister urged voters Wednesday to stick with his long-ruling party in this month's elections because it has produced results while the opposition, which is surging in popularity, has not proven it can carry through with its promises. "They promise spending and programs that will cost money, but they do not explain how to pay for these

things," Aso said of Hatoyama's Democratic Party of Japan. "This is irresponsible."

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12. Japan-US Military Relations

Stars and Stripes (Travis J. Tritten and Hana Kusumoto, "NEW POLICY KEEPS HEAT ON DESERTERS IN JAPAN ", 2009/08/12) reported that The U.S. military in Japan has been more aggressive in charging and tracking deserters since a fugitive sailor stabbed a taxi driver to death last year, military legal staff and investigators said. Since then, a dozen servicemembers have been charged with desertion and five remain at large, according to figures supplied by U.S. Forces Japan, Japanese police and local bases. Commands have pushed to issue desertion charges earlier — within hours or days compared to the month of absence that can trigger a desertion charge under military law.

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13. Japan Climate Change

Globe Net ("JAPANESE UTILITIES TO TEST 'LOW EMISSIONS' COAL PLANT", 2009/08/12) reported that two of Japan's largest utilities -- Electric Power Development Co., Ltd. (J-POWER) and The Chugoku Electric Power Co. -- have joined forces in a new company, Osaki CoolGen Corporation, to undertake a large-scale demonstration test of oxygen-blown coal gasification combined cycle technology and CO2 separation and recovery technology. To date both companies have positioned coal, which offers both stable supply and economic efficiency, as an important and continuing energy source for Japan, and have worked toward improving its efficiency through high-temperature, high-pressure steam conditions in coal-fired power generating sites.

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14. PRC on Missile Defense

Agence France Presse ("CHINA WARNS AGAINST MISSILE DEFENCE SYSTEMS", Geneva, 2009/08/12) reported that the PRC's foreign minister warned on Wednesday that there was a "looming danger" of an arms race in outer space, as he urged countries not to deploy missile defence systems that could undermine global security. "The practice of seeking absolute strategic advantage should be abandoned," Yang Jiechi told the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. "Countries should neither develop missile defence systems that undermine global strategic security nor deploy weapons in outer space," he added.

Associated Press ("CHINA WARNS OF 'ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE'", Geneva, 2009/08/12) reported that the PRC's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi called Wednesday for international diplomacy to avert an "arms race in outer space." Space should be reserved for peaceful purposes, Yang told the 65-nation Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. "Outer space is now facing the looming danger of weaponization," he said. "Credible and effective multilateral measures must be taken to forestall the weaponization and arms race in outer space." He added that China welcomed moves to rid the world of nuclear weapons. "The complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and a nuclear weapon-free world have become widely embraced goals," Yang said.

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15. PRC Public Health

Agence France Presse ("CHINA CLOSES FACTORY AFTER 300 CHILDREN POISONED: REPORT", Beijing, 2009/08/12) reported that authorities in northern PRC Wednesday announced the closure of a smelting plant blamed for the lead poisoning of at least 300 children, state media reported. The children, all living near the Dongling Lead and Zinc Smelting Co. plant in Changqing, Shaanxi province, were found to have as much as four times the normal maximum level of lead in their blood, Xinhua news agency said.

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16. Sino-Australia Relations

Associated Press (Elaine Kurtenbach, "CHINA FORMALLY ARRESTS 4 RIO TINTO EMPLOYEES", Shanghai, 2009/08/12) reported that the PRC formally arrested four employees of Anglo-American mining giant Rio Tinto Ltd. for infringing trade secrets and bribery, but stopped short of laying politically explosive espionage charges in a case that has strained ties with key trading partner Australia. Investigations showed the four, including Stern Hu, an Australian citizen who headed Rio Tinto's iron ore business in the PRC, obtained commercial secrets about the PRC's steel and iron industries through "improper means" and were involved in bribery, the official Xinhua News Agency reported Wednesday. Rio Tinto and the Australian government appealed to Beijing to allow Hu legal representation and to handle the case in a transparent way.

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17. PRC Civil Society

Reuters ("WITNESSES HELD AS CHINA QUAKE ACTIVIST TRIAL STARTS", Beijing, 2009/08/12) reported that a famous Chinese artist was roughed up and reporters and witnesses detained on Wednesday, the first day of the trial of a Chinese activist who investigated the death toll from last year's devastating Sichuan earthquake. Tan Zuoren is formally accused of defaming the Communist Party in emailed comments about 1989's bloody crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrators around Tiananmen square. His trial adjourned without a verdict on Wednesday. Tan's supporters and Amnesty International say he was detained because he planned to issue an independent report on the collapse of school buildings during the Sichuan earthquake.

Guardian (Tania Branigan , "CHINESE POLICE DETAIN 11 WHO PLANNED TO ATTEND ACTIVIST'S TRIAL", Beijing, 2009/08/12) reported that PRC police are holding 11 people who planned to attend today's trial of an activist who investigated the death of schoolchildren in last year's Sichuan earthquake, a high-profile artist and government critic among the detainees. Ai Weiwei, a contemporary artist who designed the Olympics Bird's Nest stadium, said he and six others were detained at their hotel, while four others were taken to a police station.

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18. PRC Internet Use

Agence France Press ("CHINA'S INTERNET A MAJOR CONCERN TO OFFICIALS", Beijing , 2009/08/12) reported that the Internet in the PRC has become a major concern for officials, who are increasingly being scrutinised by the general public, a government adviser said Monday. "The Internet has become the most powerful media in every government official's daily life," said Steven Dong, an adviser to the State Council -- the PRC's Cabinet -- on publicity and crisis communications. "Last year, we had over 84 government officials who were (affected by cyber-vigilantism) and one third of them lost their jobs," he said.

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19. PRC Internet Censorship

Kyodo ("CHINA NOW SAYS 'GREEN DAM' FILTER SOFTWARE NOT COMPULSORY", Beijing, 2009/08/13) reported that the PRC Industry and Information Technology Minister Li Yizhong on Thursday said that while the software Green Dam-Youth Escort will still be installed on computers in public places including schools and cyber cafes, individual consumers had the freedom to choose if they wanted to use it. ''(It) will absolutely not be a case where every personal computer on sale will be forced to install the software. This problem does not exist,'' Li said at a press conference.

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20. PRC Environment

The Christian Science Monitor ("CHINA'S GREEN LEAP FORWARD", 2009/08/12) reported that behind the notorious clouds of filth and greenhouse gases that the PRC's industrial behemoth spews into the atmosphere every day, a little-noticed revolution is under way. The PRC is going green. And as the authorities here spur manufacturers of all kinds of alternative energy equipment to make more for less, "China price" and "China speed" are poised to snatch the lion's share of the next multitrillion-dollar global industry – energy technology. "The Chinese government thinks of renewables as a major strategic industrial option" that will help fuel this country's future growth, says Li Junfeng, deputy head of energy research at the PRC's top planning agency. "We will catch up with international advanced technology very quickly."

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

Public Welfare Times ("BENZ LAUNCHES 3RD CHINA WORLD HERITAGE CONTRIBUTION PROJECT", 2009/08/12) reported that the third phase of China World Heritage Contribution Project, sponsored by Mercedes-Benz and UNESCO was formally started recently. This time, the contribution site is Lu Mountain. Mercedes-Benz has so far donated 13 million RMB for China world heritage

protection.

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22. PRC Civil Society

Public Welfare Times (""TOYOTA GRANT" HELP TRAIN ELITE FOR ORGANIZATION", 2009/08/12) reported that an training activity that helps university students become elite of organization was formally closed yesterday afternoon in Beijing. This activity is sponsored by China Soong Ching Ling Foundation "Toyota Grant" Project.

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23. PRC Energy

China News Net ("TIBET MAY BECOME NATIONAL IMPORTANT HYDROPOWER DEVELOPMENT AREA", 2009/08/12) reported that last week, general manager of China Huaneng Group, a large hydropower development company, went to Tibet for investigation. It is said that this tour may mean that in the future decade, China's hydropower development will gradually move west, and Tibet may be the key area of the nation's hydropower development.

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