NAPSNet Daily Report 13 February, 2009

Recommended Citation

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

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US Policy Toward the DPRK

Reuters (Arshad Mohammed, "U.S. SEEN NAMING BOSWORTH AS NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR ENVOY", Washington, 2009/02/12) reported that Stephen Bosworth, a former US ambassador to the ROK , is expected to be named as the US envoy to six-party talks on curbing the DPRK 's nuclear ambitions, sources familiar with the matter said. The sources spoke on condition they not be identified, noting that the selection of the envoy was a sensitive matter before US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton 's visit to Japan , Indonesia, the ROK, and the PRC next week.

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong, "NO DECISION ON U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY FOR N. KOREA: STATE DEPT.", Washington, 2009/02/12) reported that US State Department spokesman Robert Wood said in a daily news briefing Thursday that the U.S. government has not yet made a decision on whether to appoint a special envoy for the DPRK. A diplomatic source, however, stated, "I understand the Obama administration is on the verge of appointing a special envoy for North Korea."

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2. DPRK Missile Program

The Times of London ("REPORT: U.S. LAUNCHES SPY OPERATION OVER N. KOREA", 2009/02/12) reported that the US military has launched an intensive spying operation over the DPRK. A US

military spokesman confirmed that unspecified monitoring “assets” – probably including spy satellites and high altitude spy planes – have been moved into position.

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA BEGINS ASSEMBLING LONG-RANGE MISSILE: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/02/13) reported that Chosun Ilbo on Friday the DPRK has apparently started assembling its longest-range missile and it could be ready for launch late this month. The newspaper, quoting an unidentified ROK government official, said the first and second stages of the Taepodong-2 missile had been transported by train to the launch site at Musudan-ri. "The Taepodong-2 missile has not been seen around the launch pad . It seems that the first- and second-stage rockets are now being assembled," the official was quoted as saying.

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3. ROK Policy Toward the DPRK

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "NEW UNIFICATION MINISTER WILLING TO MEET N. KOREANS, BUT TOUGH TONE ON NUKES", 2009/02/12) reported that Seoul 's new unification minister Hyun In-taek said he will seek to resume humanitarian aid and meet with DPRK officials to mend inter-Korean relations, but retained his tough message on the the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. "For the peace of the Korean Peninsula and the advancement of inter-Korean relations, I am willing to meet and talk with North Korea's responsible officials anytime, anywhere, on any agenda and in any form," Hyun said.

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4. DPRK Leadership

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young , "'NK MILITARY RESHUFFLE TO MEET POST-KIM ERA'", 2009/02/12) reported that a local expert in inter-Korean affairs said the DPRK's military shakeup a day earlier was seemingly aimed at preparing for the post-Kim Jong-il era. Pyongyang announced that Vice Marshal of the Korean People's Army Kim Yong-chun, 73, was appointed as minister of the People's Armed Forces of the National Defense Commission. Cheong Seong-chang, director of the Inter-Korean Relations Studies Program at the Sejong Institute, told The Korea Times that there was a need to convince the country that one of Kim Jong-il's sons was fully qualified to lead the army. "The heir for North Korea has been substantially narrowed down to either the second son Jong-chul or the third, Jong-un, but they are too young to control the country,'' he said. "Thus, a top, influential military official might be needed to persuade the people that a proper succession has been made.''

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5. Inter Korean Relations

Yonhap ("S. KOREA TO BEEF UP EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AGAINST N. KOREA: SPY CHIEF", Seoul, 2009/02/12) reported that the ROK needs to strengthen its early warning system with regard to the DPRK, the country's new spy chief said, calling for full preparations against security threats. "We need to beef up an early warning system to cope with any moves by North Korea," Won Sei-hoon, the head of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), told his staff. "We also have to fully prepare for any terror and international crimes."

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "N. KOREA'S POOR HEALTH TO POSE BURDEN TO S. KOREA AFTER REUNIFICATION: REPORT", Washington, 2009/02/12) reported that t he widespread malnutrition in the DPRK caused by famine in the 1990s will likely burden the ROK once the two Koreas are reunified, a U.S. government report has said. "If reunification occurs, South Korea will face costs not only of incorporating an economic void, but also those of a huge health-care burden," said the report of the National Intelligence Council released recently.

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6. DPRK Military

Xinhua News ("KIM JONG IL: DPRK ARMY CAN DEFEAT ANY ENEMY", Pyongyang, 2009/02/12) reported that Kim Jong Il, the top leader of the DPRK, has said the national army is capable of beating back a surprise invasion by any enemy, state media reported. Kim made the comments during an inspection tour of an artillery unit, following which he observed firing exercises, state media said without giving the date of the visit. The DPRK army, equipped with modern offensive and defensive means, could "wipe out the enemy in a single blow no matter from which part of the earth they come to invade the DPRK," Kim said.

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7. Japan Energy Supply

Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN LOOKS TO BOOST SOLAR ENERGY OUTPUT TO 55 TIMES CURRENT LEVELS BY 2030", 2009/02/12) reported that the Ministry of the Environment estimates that solar power production in Japan could rise to 55 times the current output by 2030, ministry officials said. This, in combination with the spread of other renewable energy sources, would see carbon dioxide emissions drop 8 percent from 1990 levels. The estimate is based on the assumption of the wide adoption of "feed-in tariffs," a practice whereby electric power companies buy power at fixed times and rates from individuals and companies producing renewable energy. By the ministry's calculations, this could spur total solar energy output to around 37,000 megawatts by 2020, and 79,000 megawatts by 2030, 55 times current levels.

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8. Japan Climate Change

Kyodo News ("GOV'T PANEL UNVEILS 6 OPTIONS FOR JAPAN'S 2020 EMISSIONS TARGET", Tokyo, 2009/02/12) reported that a government panel on Thursday unveiled six options for Japan's greenhouse gas emissions target for 2020, ranging from a 7 percent increase to a 25 percent reduction from 1990 levels. The six options are a 6 percent growth, a range of a 2 reduction to a 7 percent increase, a 4 percent decline, a 1-12 percent decrease, a 16-17 percent contraction and a 25 percent reduction. Taking the six options into account, the government will step up studies on a national midterm emissions reduction target, which Prime Minister Taro Aso has said Japan will announce by June.

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9. Japanese Politics

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN PM REELS FROM KOIZUMI FIRE", Tokyo, 2009/02/13) reported that Japan's cabinet rushed Friday to defend Prime Minister Taro Aso from criticism by former leader Junichiro Koizumi . Koizumi on Thursday attacked Aso's plan to hand out cash to the public to combat the recession. Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa stated, "It's hard for me to understand the opposition by someone who was a prime minister. He also supported the plan when it was formally decided inside the party, didn't he?"

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10. US-Japanese Relations

Kyodo ("CLINTON TO MEET NAKASONE, ASO, FAMILIES OF ABDUCTION VICTIMS", Tokyo, 2009/02/13) reported that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will hold talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and Prime Minister Taro Aso on Tuesday during a three-day visit, Nakasone said Friday. Clinton and Nakasone will sign a new accord on the planned relocation of some U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam. According to Japanese government officials, she will also meet the same day with family members of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK. Arrangements are also underway for Clinton to meet Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada.

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11. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Agence France Press ("CHINA SAYS JAPAN WARNED ON DISPUTED ISLANDS", Beijing, 2009/02/12) reported that Beijing said it had issued a sharp warning to Tokyo over media reports that Japan had positioned patrol vessels capable of carrying helicopters near a disputed island chain. A senior PRC foreign ministry official made "serious representations" to Japan's embassy in the PRC over the reports that appeared in Japanese media . The statement quoted the unnamed official as telling Japan that if the reports of Japanese ships in the Diaoyu islands were true, it marked "a severe violation of Chinese sovereignty, and China expresses strong concern."

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12. Sino-Indian Relations

Xinhua News ("INDIAN PRESIDENT PRAISES PROGRESS IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA", 2009/02/12) reported that Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil said that India's relations with the PRC have witnessed great progress while the two countries have been building a strategic and cooperative partnership. In a speech to the Joint Session of Parliament in New Delhi, Patil said relations with the PRC have witnessed "regular high-level exchanges, growing economic and trade ties, increased defense contacts and enhanced people-to-people exchanges." "Our Strategic and Cooperative Partnership with China is progressively acquiring a more regional and international perspective," she said.

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13. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN: CHINA DECISION ON OBSERVER STATUS A TEST", Taipei,) reported that Taiwan's ruling party chairman says the PRC's decision on whether to allow the island to obtain observer status in a U.N. health body will provide a key test in assessing relations between the sides. Thursday's comments by the Nationalist Party's Wu Poh-hsiung come amid Taiwanese hopes that Beijing will grant the island observer status in the World Health Assembly, the decision making body of the World Health Organization. On Wednesday, the PRC's Xinhua news agency said Beijing would permit Taiwan to have direct contact with WHO, but did not say if that was a prelude to acceding to its WHA demand.

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14. Sino-US Relations

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CAR RAMS GATE AT US EMBASSY IN BEIJING IN JANUARY", Beijing, 2009/02/13) reported that three Chinese men in a car rammed a gate at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing in late January, but little damage was caused and the incident is being investigated, an embassy spokesman said Friday. PRC police have released few details about the ramming, spokesman Richard Buangan said. The embassy did not report the incident at the time. The PRC Foreign Ministry confirmed the incident and said the driver appeared to be mentally ill.

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15. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France Press ("CHINA SAYS TIBET 'STABLE'", Beijing, 2009/02/12) reported that the PRC said that Tibet was "stable", a day after the Dalai Lama warned the Himalayan region could see another uprising as the one-year anniversary of anti-Chinese riots there approaches. However, a PRC foreign ministry spokeswoman declined to give a timeframe for when the PRC would lift a de facto ban on foreign reporters travelling to Tibet on their own to assess the security situation.

International Heard Tribune (Andrew Jacobs , "CHINA SAYS 21 MORE PEOPLE WILL GO TO PRISON IN TIBET PROTESTS", 2009/02/12) reported that the PRC said that judicial authorities in Tibet had imposed prison terms for 21 additional people convicted of participating in the deadly riots last March, bringing the total number punished for the mayhem to 76. He did not provide details about the length of the sentences or the crimes committed for the newest group of convicts. But he suggested that the government had shown leniency toward the 950 people who had been detained since the March 14 riots. "We have been restraining ourselves to a large extent," he said. "We haven't been using destructive weapons."

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16. PRC Environment

Agence France Press ("RAINS BRING RELIEF FROM CHINA DROUGHT", Beijing, 2009/02/12)

reported that drought-hit regions of northern PRC enjoyed rare rain on Thursday and more precipitation was expected in coming days, providing relief from a severe drought that threatened vital wheat crops . The parched capital Beijing shivered under a steady cold rain throughout the day, as did several of the important grain-growing provinces in the northern and eastern parts of the country hit hardest by the worst drought in decades.

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17. Sino-Russian Relations

Xinhau News ("CHINESE, RUSSIAN PREMIERS DISCUSS RELATIONS, ISSUES OF COMMON CONCERN ON PHONE", Beijing, 2009/02/12) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin held in-depth exchanges of views over the phone on bilateral relations and issues of common concern. Wen said the ongoing unprecedented financial crisis has inflicted a severe impact on the world's economic and political structure, and brought difficulties to the development of the PRC and Russia. He said the PRC and Russia enjoy firm mutual trust and have huge potential for cooperation in such fields as the economy, trade, energy, science, and technology.

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18. PRC Environment

China Daily ("GUANGDONG POLLUTION LEVEL FALLS", 2009/02/12) reported that emissions of sulfur dioxide and chemical oxygen demand (COD), two major indicators of pollution, fell 5.6 percent and 5.3 percent respectively last year in Guangdong, the provincial environmental regulator said. Due to the province's intensified efforts in recent years to reduce pollution, sulfur dioxide and COD emissions dropped to 67,100 tons and 53,700 tons last year, the Guangdong environmental protection bureau said. "It's all thanks to the province's efforts to cut pollution in major industrial projects and relocate a number of big energy-consuming plants," said Zhou Yongzhang, director of the environment research center of Sun Yat-sen University.

International Heard Tribune ("MEET CHINA'S GREEN CRUSADER", 2009/02/12) reported that PRC indifference to the environment is a myth. In the last few years the PRC has begun to take aggressive action to bring its air and water pollution under control. Credit for most of these measures goes mostly to one man, Pan Yue, vice minister of the newly established Ministry of Environmental Protection. "In 20 years, China has achieved economic results that took a century to attain in the West," Pan says. "But we have also concentrated a century's worth of environmental issues into those 20 years."

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19. PRC Earthquake Recovery

Associated Press (WORLD BANK GIVES CHINA $710 MILLION FOR SICHUAN, "", Associated Press, 2009/02/13) reported that t he World Bank said Friday it will provide a $710 million loan to the PRC to help rebuild areas hit by last year's earthquake. The money will finance infrastructure, health and education projects in western Gansu and Sichuan provinces, the bank said in a statement. "This

project will assist many communities affected by the devastating earthquake to rebuild their lives by restoring essential services," project manager Mara Warwick said in the statement.

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II. PRC Report

20. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Beijing News (Ma Li, "OVER 20 NGOS APPEAL FOR WATER CONSERVATION", 2009/02/12) reported that the PRC is experiencing the most severe drought for decades. More than 20 NGOs such as “Green Earth Volunteer” have jointly appealed for water conservation. This kind of proposal seems no more than a platitude, but in a background of great drought, these actions are of significant meaning. People living in urban areas should do more to help those who are facing drought.

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21. PRC Migrant Labor

Beijing Times (Huang Yuhao, "ANHUI RETURNED MIGRANT WORKERS ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION", 2009/02/12) reported that being an migrant worker was once an important way for farmers in Sixian county, Anhui province to change their life, but the financial crisis made them back to the beginning. What different is that they now regard the land as a tool of setting up their own business but not just for food. Farmers back to Dunji county established organization for watermelon planting. They integrated loan and purchase, and are exploring a way of highly efficient agricultural industry.

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22. PRC Environment

Xinhua Net ("200,000 VOLUNTEERS FIGHT AGAINST DROUGHT IN HEBEI PROVINCE", 2009/02/12) reported that the Communist Youth League in Hebei province along with Hebei Water Conservancy Department carried out “Spring Rain Action”, which gathered more than 200 thousand volunteers to take part in the campaign against great drought. Volunteers go to countryside to help farmers with scientific irrigation and help them to unplug emergent water facilities. Volunteers will also take part in the protection and restoration of dams, hydroelectricity plants, under the guidance of professional department.

Morning News (Yu Wenyan, "WETLAND AD TO BE UNVEILED IN SHANGHAI SUBWAY STATION", 2009/02/12) reported that according to Shanghai Green and Amenity Management Bureau, 30 big advertising light boxes will be put in major subway stations in Shanghai. This is the first time for Shanghai to publish advertisement of wetland topic in subway station. The ad will arouse people to think about the source of drinking water and aware the importance of water conservation.

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23. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Tibet Daily ("AID TIBET FOUNDATION STARTS “BRIGHT PROJECT” IN BUREN COUNTY", 2009/02/12) reported that Aid Tibet Foundation and Lhasa Bright Ophthalmic Clinic jointly organized a medical team to Buren County in Tibet to carry out an eyesight-regaining project. During the five days in the county, the medical team gave related consultation to over 300 patients with eye diseases, operated on 77 cataract patients, and did ophthalmic examination for 38 patients. It is understood that the total cost of this activity is 308,000 RMB.

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24. PRC Energy Security

Business Agency ("CHINA COAL TRANSPORTATION AND MARKETING ASSOCIATION TO ESTABLISH CHINA COAL TRADING CENTER", 2009/02/12) reported that as the sponsor, China Coal Transportation and Marketing Association is contacting with investment agencies to establish China Coal Trading Center in Beijing. The function of the Coal Center is to reasonably find coal price, to lower transaction costs, and to guide supply-demand balance of coal. The Coal Center is expected to be in trial operation in 2010, to carry out both short and long time spot trading of coal.

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III. ROK Report

25. DPRK-PRC Relations

PRESSian (Byunggon Jeon, Unification Institute, "DPRK FOCUSES ON CHINA AND US, WHAT ABOUT CHINA? ", 2009/02/13) wrote that the DPRK focuses its strategies on China and the U.S. by securing economic and diplomatic support from China before negotiating with the U.S. In other words, China’s strategic aim behind strengthening cooperative relations with DPRK is multidimensional and complex, overlapping with systems of North-South relations and of Northeast Asia. It is hard to predict whether China will be able to achieve all its aims. However, it is certain that the cooperative relationship between the DPRK and China is strategically formed, and China’s role and effect in the Korean peninsula will increase accordingly. It is necessary to carefully monitor China’s strategic aims and moves, and deal with it in multidimensional, complex ways.

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