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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. DPRK on Six Party Talks](#)
 - [2. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [4. ROK, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation](#)
 - [6. Inter-Korean Relations](#)
 - [7. DPRK-Nepal Relations](#)
 - [8. Japan Whaling Issue](#)
 - [9. Sino-Japanese Relations](#)
 - [10. Japan Demographics](#)
 - [11. PRC Olympics](#)
 - [12. Sino-Indian Relations](#)
 - [13. Cross Strait Relations](#)
 - II. PRC Report
-

- [14. PRC Energy Supply](#)
- [15. Sino-Russian Relations](#)
- III. ROK Report
 - [16. DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Six Party Talks

The Associated Press (Kwang-Tae Kim, "N. KOREA SAYS US IS HAMPERING NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT", Seoul, 2008/08/18) reported that the DPRK accused the US of using human rights to block progress in a six-nation agreement on eliminating nuclear weapons in the DPRK. President Bush "blustered that he would handle the 'human rights issue' as 'an element for negotiations with North Korea,'" the official Korean Central News Agency said. "We categorically dismiss this as a premeditated act of the U.S. to deliberately throw a hurdle in the process of the six-party talks" and avoid implementing key points of a disarmament deal, KCNA said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Xinhua News ("DPRK DENOUNCES U.S. FOR NOT REMOVING IT FROM TERRORISM BLACKLIST", Pyongyang, 2008/08/18) reported that the DPRK denounced the US for breaking its promise to remove the DPRK from its terrorism blacklist. The United States has breached the basic "action for action" principle of denuclearization, even though the DPRK has submitted the declaration of its nuclear inventory, said a commentary by the official KCNA news agency. This shows the United States is attempting to stonewall the six-party talks aimed at the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to impose pressure on the DPRK, the commentary said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. REPEATS CALL FOR N. KOREA TO PROVIDE COMPLETE VERIFICATION PLAN ", Washington, 2008/08/18) reported that the US reiterated that the DPRK needs to agree to a complete plan for verification of its nuclear program before it is removed from a U.S. terrorism blacklist. "We need action for action and what we require right now is that verification package from North Korea before we can go forward with the delisting," State

Department deputy spokesman Robert Wood said. "We are all waiting for that verification package."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. ROK, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("S.KOREAN, JAPANESE ENVOYS SEEK BREAKTHROUGH IN NUCLEAR TALKS", Tokyo, 2008/08/19) reported that chief ROK nuclear envoy Kim Sook and Japanese negotiator Akitaka Saiki on Tuesday discussed a strategy to persuade the DPRK to accept a proposed mechanism aimed at verifying its recent nuclear declaration, ROK officials said. Kim also received a briefing on the outcome of Japan's working-level negotiations with the DPRK last week, the officials added.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Donga Ilbo ("PRES. LEE PROPOSES `KOREAN PENINSULA ECONOMIC SYSTEM`", 2008/08/15) reported that President Lee Myung-bak yesterday proposed a joint Korean Peninsula economic system, saying, "The legend of the Republic of Korea will continue. The age of a great Korea will open. The age of a unified Korea will open." "In accordance with progress at the six-party talks and through international cooperation, I intend to proactively carry out substantive economic cooperation with the North and ultimately materialize a Korean Peninsula economic community."

Chosun Ilbo ("TOURISM TO N. KOREA DROPS 60% IN JULY ", 2008/08/17) reported that the number of tourists to the DPRK plunged more than 60 percent last month following the shooting death of a ROK tourist at Mt. Kumgang resort. The Unification Ministry says the number dropped to about 21,000, almost a 20 percent decrease from July of last year. The resort was closed after the shooting. The amount of trade between the Koreas also dropped 1.5 percent from last year.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "DEFENSE MINISTER WARNS AGAINST N. KOREA-FOSTERED UNREST ", Seoul, 2008/08/18) reported that the ROK's Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee called Monday on the country's armed forces to keep alert against the DPRK, saying the DPRK may be trying to foster social unrest in the ROK. "It is probable North Korea will attempt to corner the (Seoul) government and stir up a feud within the country when the South Korean side takes a hardline policy against North Korea," the defense minister said. Lee said the military is working to maintain full combat readiness that will allow immediate countermeasures against any enemy provocation. Each and every member of the armed services will have to be what he called "combat experts" to achieve that goal, he said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. DPRK-Nepal Relations

Xinhua News ("DPRK TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH NEPAL ", Pyongyang, 2008/08/16) reported that the DPRK said Sunday that it will strengthen the friendly and cooperative relations with Nepal. Kim Yong Il, premier of the DPRK cabinet, sent a congratulatory message to his Nepalese counterpart Pushpa Kamal Dahal, who was newly elected as prime minister of the country, the official KCNA news agency reported. Kim also wished for the political stability and prosperity of Nepal, it said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. Japan Whaling Issue

The Associated Press (Shino Yuasa, "JAPAN TO ARREST 3 ANTI-WHALING ACTIVISTS ", 2008/08/17) reported that Japanese police obtained arrest warrants against three activists from the U.S.-based animal rights group Sea Shepherd for allegedly attacking Japanese whaling ships last year, a news report said. Tokyo District Court approved the arrest warrants within hours of a police request, Kyodo News Agency said. Neither the court nor the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department could immediately confirm the report. The aim of the warrants was to place the two Americans, ages 41 and 30, and a 28-year-old Briton on an international wanted list, Kyodo said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. Sino-Japanese Relations

Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN, CHINA TO BOOST COOPERATION IN INVESTIGATING POISONED DUMPLINGS", Beijing, 2008/08/17) reported that top Japanese and PRC government officials agreed to step up cooperation in investigating the contamination of PRC-made gyoza dumplings with insecticide during a meeting here over the weekend. Visiting Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura met with Dai Bingguo, State Councilor of the PRC, and PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi on Sunday. "It is an extremely important issue, and we should get to the bottom of it as soon as possible," Komura said during the meeting.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. Japan Demographics

The New York Times ("AS ITS WORK FORCE AGES, JAPAN NEEDS AND FEARS CHINESE LABOR ", Kawakami, 2008/08/17) reported that with one of the world's most rapidly aging populations and lowest birthrates, Japan is facing acute labor shortages not only in farming towns like Kawakami but also in fishing villages, factories, restaurants and nursing homes, and on construction sites. Closed to immigration, Japan has admitted foreign workers through various loopholes, including employing growing numbers of foreign students as part-timers and temporary workers, like the PRC here, as so-called foreign trainees. But that unofficial supply route has left some businesses continually scrambling for a dependable work force and the foreigners vulnerable to abuse.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. PRC Olympics

The Washington Post (Edward Cody, "ACROSS CHINA'S COUNTRYSIDE, 'JUST TOO BUSY' FOR OLYMPICS", Fan Shen, 2008/08/17) reported that about two-thirds of the PRC's 1.3 billion people have remained tied to farming villages, despite the economic boom of the last 30 years. Focused on their land and their crops, many of them have felt little in common with the glitter of the Olympics, the \$40 billion makeover of Beijing and the nationalist pride of their countrymen as the PRC strides onto the international stage and take its place as a world power.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. Sino-Indian Relations

PTI ("CHINA KEEN TO STRENGTHEN TIES WITH INDIA: ENVOY", 2008/08/17) reported that advocating a long standing and peaceful relations with India, PRC Ambassador Zhang Yan has called for a better cultural and economic ties between the two neighbouring countries. "As fast growing economic powers, it was in the interest of both countries to strengthen mutual ties," Zhang said while inaugurating the Kerala Chapter of the India-China Economic and Cultural Council (ICECC). He said the PRC's cultural ties with India dated back to centuries and this could be further cemented by increased co-operation in areas like commerce and tourism.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. Cross Strait Relations

Kyodo News ("CHINA, TAIWAN TO MEET TO PREPARE FOR NEXT ROUND OF TALKS", Taipei, 2008/08/15) reported that negotiators from the PRC and Taiwan are to meet in either Hong Kong or Macao after the Beijing Olympic Games to hammer out details of the next round of negotiations, local media said Monday, citing anonymous sources. "Preparation meetings," reports said, would pave the way for talks between Beijing and Taipei on establishing direct cargo links.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. PRC Report

14. PRC Energy Supply

China News online (Lai Hailong, Xu Changan, "4 HYDROELECTRIC POWER STATIONS SET UP AT THE LOWER REACHES OF JINSHA RIVER", 2008/08/17) reported that on a press conference about the Three Gorges Project holding at Beijing International Message Center, deputy manager of China Three Gorges Project Development Corporation Cao Guangjing said, the Corporation has begun the planning and construction of another 4 hydroelectricity power stations at the lower reaches of Jinsha River. The total installed capacity of the four reaches nearly 40 million kw which amounts to 2 Three Gorges Project. Cao said that two of the stations have come into the operation stage and the other two will be open in the near future.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. Sino-Russian Relations

Xinhua News (Wang Xianwei, "CHINA AND RUSSIA SIGN AN AGREEMENT ON NATURE RESERVE PROTECTION IN HEILONGJIANG", 2008/08/17) reported that learning from HongRiver Natural Reserve Administrative Bureau of Heilongjiang province, the HongRiver Natural Reserve has signed an international cooperative agreement with Russian Khingansky Nature Reserve of Amur Region in jointly protecting the wetland. According to the agreement, the PRC and Russia will make use of their respective strengths in scientific research, management, ecotourism and other aspects. The two Natural Reserves both belong to Heilongjiang River valley. This is a major wetland ecological system with oriental white stork, red-crowned crane, white-naped crane, swan and many other rare and endangered wild animals.

[\(return to top\)](#)

III. ROK Report

16. DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("FIRST, TO SETTLE DPRK NUKE VERIFICATION MECHANISM", 2008/08/19) reported that the DPRK expressed dissatisfaction toward the U.S. delaying to remove them from the terrorist-support nation list for the first time. Even so, it is unlikely for the participating nations of six-party talks to accept the DPRK's perspective. What the DPRK needs to realize is that as long as the verification mechanism is not completed, they will not be able to achieve whatever they want. It is quite fortunate that they expressed dissatisfaction merely through an article by an official media, but not through the government, which means that they still do acknowledge the fundamentals of the six-party negotiations and have a will to conduct dialogue. No one knows better than the DPRK that it will be more advantageous for them to maintain the basis of six-party talks. That is why the DPRK should no longer postpone the verification issue.

Tong-il News ("SIX-PARTY TALKS, HOW SO FAR? ", 2008/08/19) reported that the DPRK's resistance is not as strong as analysts expected it to be. Due to such an atmosphere, officials view the current stalemate as U.S.-DPRK confrontation. Also, the fact that the talks between the DPRK and Japan, which have been another severe barrier, showed progress is a positive sign for the six-party talks. Talks between the DPRK and Japan which showed progress have been focused along with the 'declaration for terrorism delisting', in the sense that the second phase of the denuclearization was for 'disabling for economic and energy compensation'. If Japan does not participate in supplying heavy oil to the DPRK, the disablement step could be delayed indefinitely.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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