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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I.NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Relations

Agence-France Presse ("CLINTON TO GIVE OBAMA FIRST-HAND GLIMPSE INTO NORTH KOREA", Washington, 2009/08/18) reported that ex-president Bill Clinton will give President Barack Obama a rare glimpse inside DPRK 's opaque political power structure on Tuesday, in an hour-long White House briefing . Clinton will offer Obama his impressions of the Stalinist state and reclusive leader Kim Jong-Il in the secure White House Situation Room , following his visit this month to win the freedom of two US journalists.

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2. PRC-DPRK Relations

Bloomberg ("NORTH KOREANS SPURN TESCO'S HAM AS CHINESE BORDER TRADE WITHERS", 2009/08/18) reported that DPRK trade with PRC has slumped in the three months since Kim Jong Il's regime tested a nuclear warhead, say merchants in the PRC border town of Dandong, site of 40 percent of commerce between the countries. "The shrinking of trade has put serious pressure on North Korea to show its flexibility," said a PRC scholar specializing in the DPRK, Zhu. "Trade is an important source of leverage for us over the North," he said, adding that even though the UN sanctions were narrow, the effect on bilateral trade has been broad because it has crimped flows of money between the two countries. Official trade statistics, incomplete and not including goods smuggled by sea or across the 1,415-kilometer (880 mile) border, show two-way trade between PRC and DPRK fell 2.5 percent in the first six months of this year to $1.12 billion, according to PRC's Commerce Ministry. Trade between PRC and ROK during the same period was $67.6 billion.

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3. Inter-Korea Relations

United Press International ("FAMILY REUNION TALKS LIKELY WITH N.KOREA", Seoul, 2009/08/18) reported that the ROK government may propose talks on family reunions this week with DPRK, based on a Pyongyang pledge, a source told Yonhap news agency. The report quoted the source as saying ROK may make the proposal as early as Wednesday, either through military or maritime channels.

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun, "SEOUL TO PROPOSE TALKS TO N. KOREA", 2009/08/19) reported that Seoul is considering proposing Red Cross talks to Pyongyang this week to discuss DPRK's pledge to hold reunions of separated families in October, an informed source said yesterday. The source, requesting to be unnamed, said Seoul may make the proposal as early as Wednesday either through military or maritime channels, as the DPRK has unilaterally cut off communications between the Koreas' Red Cross offices which in the past organized the reunions.

Joong-Ang Ilbo (Yoo Jee-ho, "PYONGYANG HITS DIPLOMATIC BALL INTO SEOUL'S COURT", 2009/08/18) reported that the DPRK has thrown the diplomatic ball into ROK's court, and it remains to be seen if Seoul can field it adeptly. The DPRK is likely playing a shrewd political strategy by trying to force Seoul's hand. Pressure is now on ROK to respond. If it quickly accepts the offers, Seoul may be tacitly acknowledging that its prior negotiations on these issues have been a failure. But if Seoul fails to grab the ring, it risks further worsening inter-Korean relations, while at the same time taking the blame for a lack of progress.

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4. DPRK on Death of Former ROK President

Xinhua News ("DPRK TOP LEADER MOURNS FORMER SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT", 2009/08/18) reported that Kim Jong Il, top leader of the DPRK, mourned former ROK president Kim Dae Jung, praising his feats for national reconciliation, the official KCNA news agency said. "Upon hearing the sad news that ex-President Kim Dae Jung passed away, I express my deep condolences to Mrs. Ri Hui Ho and other bereaved family members," said the top leader in a message of condolences.

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5. DPRK Energy Supply

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN LEADER INSPECTS THERMAL PLANT, COAL MINE", Seoul, 2009/08/18) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has inspected a thermal power plant and a coal mine and demanded efficient management of the facilities to maintain a stable supply of the country's electricity, the DPRK's media reported Tuesday. Kim gave "field guidance" to the Pukchang Thermal Power Complex and the Feb. 8 Jikdong Youth Coal Mine, both in South Pyongan Province, the DPRK's Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said. The report gave no date for the visits as usual. The report also said that Kim underlined "the need to increase coal production at the relevant coal mines" to maintain power output at the thermal complex.

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6. DPRK Food Supply

Xinhua News ("DPRK TOP LEADER CALLS FOR PROMOTION OF FISH FARMING ", 2009/08/18) reported that Kim Jong Il, top leader of the DPRK, has called for a rapid development of fish farming to improve people's diet, the official news agency KCNA said Tuesday. Kim made the remarks while visiting the Kujang Fish Farm in the North Phyongan province, the KCNA news agency reported, without giving the specific date of Kim's visit. Kim underscored the need to develop fish breeding in a scientific and intensive way and "build more fish farms to make sure that every place where water is available teems with fish."

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7. US-ROK Military Drill

Chosun Ilbo ("LEE CALLS FOR 'CONSISTENT, COMPREHENSIVE AND FLEXIBLE N.KOREA POLICY'", 2009/08/18) reported that Seoul and Washington launched their annual combined military exercise Monday called Ulchi Freedom Guardian to defend against a preemptive strike by DPRK. And as part of the drill, Seoul's presidential office also held a special Cabinet meeting aimed at preparing the administration for war-time mode. President Lee Myung-bak used the opportunity to set directions for Seoul's relationship with Pyongyang while reiterating that the administration's DPRK policy should not only be "consistent" but also "comprehensive and flexible." The President further explained that Seoul's unwavering policy stance toward Pyongyang will gain support from the international community and eventually change DPRK society.

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8. ROK Space Program

Washington Post (R. Jeffrey Smith and Stella Kim, "S. KOREAN LAUNCH RAISES QUESTIONS", 2009/08/18) reported that the ROK on Wednesday plans to launch a satellite into space using technology capable, in theory, of eventually delivering nuclear warheads or other weapons of mass destruction. A successful launch from an island off the ROK's southwestern coast will add that country to an elite club of nine nations that have demonstrated the capability to orbit a satellite and -- if they choose -- to conduct long-range missile strikes against an enemy. But it will probably not attract the same kind of international criticism heaped on the DPRK when it recently attempted a similar launch. Proliferation experts say the launch is problematic, even if the ROK, a close U.S. ally, says it is for scientific purposes.

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9. ROK Climate Change

Joong-Ang Ilbo (Kim Mi-ju, "SNU TO HOST CLIMATE FORUM", 2009/08/19) reported that Seoul National University will host an international symposium with nine universities from other countries of the International Alliance of Leading Education Institutes today at 10 a.m. to discuss climate change. Under the theme, “Climate Change and Sustainable Development: The Response from Education,” university professors will discuss ways to develop education that lets citizens manage

sustainable development, to integrate climate change, and to improve conditions for interdisciplinary learning.

Joong-Ang Ilbo (Seo Ji-eun, "CLIMATE CHANGE NETWORK FORMED BY UNIVERSITIES", 2009/08/18) reported that at an international forum hosted by Korea University with universities from 11 countries around Asia and Africa agreed yesterday to establish an education and research network aimed at tackling climate change. The countries with universities involved in the effort include Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Laos, Nepal, Brunei, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and South Africa. The university presidents also decided to make the regional forum a regular event.

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10. Japanese Civil Society and Nuclear Proliferation

Kyodo News ("NGO QUERIES PARTIES ON NUKES", 2009/08/18) reported that the LDP and New Komeito say the US nuclear shield is an "appropriate" deterrent, but the Democratic Party of Japan said there should be more debate, according to the survey conducted by the International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament Japan NGO Network. Asked whether Japan should work toward calling on Washington to declare "no first use" of nuclear weapons, the LDP said Japan needs to respond practically — an indication of disapproval. The DPJ said it is "an issue that should be discussed" with the administration of President Barack Obama. The Obama administration's vision of nuclear abolition has had an impact on Japanese political parties . . . there are some emerging signs of policy shifts among opposition parties," said Masayoshi Naito, a corepresentative of the NGO network.

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11. Japan Politics

Asahi Shimbun ("SURVEY: DPJ MAINTAINS LEAD OVER LDP; MANIFESTOES FAIL TO ENTHRALL VOTERS", 2009/08/18) reported that the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) maintained its lead over the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in the latest Asahi Shimbun survey, but most voters doubt either party can carry out its election pledges. The survey results showed that neither party's manifesto has electrified voters. Only 27 percent of the respondents said they would seriously consider the manifestoes on election day. Fifty-four percent said they will consider "to a certain degree" the manifestoes.

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12. Japan Climate Change

Japan for Sustainability ("ATMOSPHERIC CONCENTRATION OF CO2 REACHES ALL-TIME HIGH IN JAPAN", 2009/08/18) reported that the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) announced on May 19, 2009, that the average atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide (CO2) at the stations that observe greenhouse gas levels in 2008 marked a record high, and that the atmospheric concentration of CO2 from March to April in 2009 reached an all-time high since observations began. In this decade, the CO2 concentrations have increased by 1.9ppm per year. In Ryori, where the first domestic long-term observation was launched, the average CO2 concentration has

increased by 37.3ppm since observations began in 1987.

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13. Sino Japanese Relations

Bloomberg (Megumi Yamanaka, "CHINA REJECTS JAPAN NAVY VISIT AFTER KADEER VISIT, ASAHI SAYS", 2009/08/18) reported that PRC rejected a requested port call by Japan's navy in a likely protest after a visit by an exiled Uighur activist to Tokyo, the Asahi newspaper reported in its English language edition. PRC on Aug. 12 rejected the visit to Hong Kong by three Maritime Self-Defense Force vessels because of "sensitive issues," the newspaper said, citing unidentified Japanese officials.

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14. Sino-Indian Relations

Press Trust of India ("INDIA, CHINA UNLIKELY TO ALLOW MUTUAL CONFLICT: MENON", 2009/08/18) reported that India and the PRC are unlikely to allow their high economic growth to be disrupted by any military conflict in the coming decades, a former Navy officer said today. "Both the neighbouring countries are on path of high economic growth and a war between them may ruin the process completely, which both the countries would not like to allow in the coming decades," Rear Admiral (Retd) K Raja Menon said here.

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15. Sino-Australia Relations

Reuters (Rob Taylor, "CHINA CANCELS AUSTRALIA VISIT AS RELATIONS SOUR", Canberra, 2009/08/18) reported that PRC's cancellation of a senior ministerial visit to Australia has pushed ties to a fresh low at a time when political tensions over Beijing's arrest of an Australian mining executive had appeared to be easing. Beijing canceled a visit by Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs He Yafei because Canberra granted a visa to exiled Uighur leader Rebiya Kadeer , blamed by PRC for instigating last month's ethnic riots in Xinjiang province.

Financial Times ("CHINA AND AUSTRALIA SIGN ENERGY DEAL", 2009/08/18) reported that the PRC's largest energy company agreed to buy $41bn worth of Australian natural gas at a signing ceremony intended to put a positive gloss on strained relations between the two trading partners. Martin Ferguson, Australia's energy and resources minister, was in Beijing to witness the signing of Petrochina's agreement to buy 2.25m metric tonnes a year of liquid natural gas from the Gorgon project off the coast of Western Australia.

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16. PRC African Trade

Reuters ("EXPANSIVE CHINA FACES GRASS-ROOTS RESENTMENT", 2009/08/18) reported that

Algerian shopkeeper Abdelkrim Salouda has witnessed the PRC's global economic expansion first-hand and he does not like it, especially since he was in a mass brawl this month with PRC migrant workers. From having a handful of tiny investments abroad less than two decades ago, the PRC has grown to the world's sixth-biggest foreign investor and overtook the United States as Africa's top trading partner last year. That breath-taking rise has brought problems: allegations from emerging countries that the PRC is stripping them of resources and suspicions in the developed world that obscure state interests lurk behind PRC investments.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Bloomberg (Tim Culpan, "TAIWAN'S MAJOR THREAT IS NATURE, NOT CHINA, PRESIDENT MA SAYS", 2009/08/18) reported that Taiwan's biggest threat is from nature, not mainland PRC, President Ma Ying-jeou said today when outlining plans for the island's military to do more to limit losses from natural disasters. "The armed forces will have disaster prevention and rescue as their main job," Ma said today after apologizing for his administration's slow response to Typhoon Morakot. Taiwan will spend $300 million to buy disaster relief helicopters and cancel 15 of its 60 orders for United Technology Corp. Blackhawk helicopters, Ma said today. "As a result of climate change, disasters like Morakot are not that unusual now, so we have to be prepared for the worst," Ma said. The military's "job of course is to defend Taiwan, but now our enemy is not necessarily the people across the Taiwan Strait, but nature."

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18. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua News ("CHINA TO MULL DRAFT RESOLUTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE", 2009/08/18) reported that the PRC's top legislature will consider a draft resolution on climate change and a draft amendment to its renewable energy law at a bimonthly session scheduled from August 24 to 27, according to the legislative body Monday. In a short-term goal, the country will work to fulfil the target of reducing energy consumption for every 10,000 yuan (US1,470.6) of GDP by 20 percent by 2010, raising the ratio of renewable energy to 10 percent of the total, and achieving a forest coverage of 20 percent by then.

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19. PRC AIDS Issue

Bloomberg (Simeon Bennett, "DRUGS DON'T WORK FOR HALF OF CHINA'S AIDS PATIENTS, STUDY SAYS", 2009/08/18) reported that half of PRC's AIDS patients stopped responding to treatment over five years and didn't have access to the back-up drugs available in developed nations, researchers found. Among 48,785 HIV patients who received free treatment under a government program from 2002 to 2008, the drugs curbed AIDS- related deaths but failed to treat 50 percent of the group over the period, researchers led by Fujie Zhang at PRC's Center for Disease Control and Prevention found. The results are similar to those for other low- and middle-income countries, they said.

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20. PRC Environment

The Associated Press ("CHINESE MAYOR APOLOGIZES FOR LEAD POISONING", 2009/08/18) reported that a mayor apologized to residents of two PRC villages where more than 600 children were sickened by lead poisoning, saying a nearby smelter targeted by angry protests would not reopen until it meets health standards, state media said. Authorities have promised to relocate hundreds of families within two years, the official Xinhua News Agency said, but residents were not reassured. "If they relocate us to these nearby places, who can guarantee that our babies will be safe?" said farmer Deng Xiaoyan, a resident of Sunjianantou, one of the affected villages.

United Press International ("CHINA'S AIR POLLUTION IS REDUCING RAINFALL", Richland, Washington, 2009/08/18) reported that U.S. Department of Energy research shows eastern PRC's air pollution during the past 50 years has reduced the amount of light rainfall by 23 percent. The study's results, officials said, suggest bad air quality might be affecting that country's ability to raise crops, as well as contributing to health and environmental problems. The study, led by atmospheric scientist Yun Qian at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, links for the first time high levels of air pollutants with conditions that prevent the light kind of rainfall that is critical for agriculture.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

Beijing Youth Daily ("HALF WETLAND SHRINKS IN BEIJING IN 50 YEARS", 2009/08/18) reported that according to Beijing Landscaping Bureau yesterday, in recent 50 years, the area of Beijing wetland has shrunk more than a half. In order to restore wetland and improve the city’s whole ecological environment, the Bureau will add large wetland restoration projects in the construction of Binhe Forest Park and Country Park.

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22. PRC Civil Society and Cross Strait Relations

Sina.com ("LI KASHING DONATES 100 MILLION TWD TO TAIWAN", 2009/08/18) reported that as the southern part of Taiwan was seriously hit by Typhoon Morak, Hong Kong business tycoon Li Kashing said yesterday that he will donate 100 million new Taiwan Dollar (TWD) to Taiwan Red Cross Society in the name of Li Kashing Foundation.

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