NAPSNet Daily Report 19 November, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 19 November, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, November 19, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-19-november-2008/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK Energy Aid to the DPRK

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA LIKELY TO PROVIDE NUCLEAR DEAL AID TO NORTH KOREA", 2008/11/16) reported that the ROK is likely to provide aid agreed under a deal with the DPRK despite differences in the DPRK's nuclear verification process, the ROK's Yonhap News Agency reported. "With consultations with respective countries, 3,000 tonnes of steel pipes is likely to be processed soon," Yonhap quoted the source as saying.

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2. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("LEE SHOULD WIDEN HIS VIEW OF DPRK-US SUMMIT TALKS", 2008/11/18) reported that the ROK President Lee Myung-bak continues to say that he would support the summit talks between the DPRK and the US, if it is helpful for solving the DPRK nuclear problem. Viewing the summit talks between the two nations only in the sense of 'DPRK nuclear program' is somewhat narrow. Rather than doing so as if nuclear issue is the only thing he cares, Lee would better not mention the talks at all.

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3. Inter-Korea Relations

Segye Ilbo ("10TH ANNIVERSARY OF GUMGANG TOURISM", 2008/11/18) reported that it has been ten years since Chung Joo-young drove cattle to the DPRK to honor the start of tourism in Mt. Gumgang. It is unfortunate for both Koreas to suspend the tourism which has been a symbol of inter-Korean collaboration due to the shooting death affair occurred in July. The DPRK should realize that it was them who made the situation worse. They should be willing to talk without mentioning any conditions.

JoongAng Daily (Ser Myo-ja, "SEOUL ENDORSES FUNDING OF PROJECTS IN THE DPRK", 2008/11/19) reported that the Lee Myung-bak administration endorsed a plan yesterday to spend millions of dollars on various inter-Korean projects. The Unification Ministry said that it gave the green light to five plans which will be financed by the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund. The decision to spend nearly 10.5 billion won ($7.31 million) was made last week to support civic groups' humanitarian projects in the DPRK, including plans to build a farming village, a medical clinic, a child care facility in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, and the construction of an incineration facility at the industrial park. Kim denied that Seoul is suddenly softening its attitude in the face of Pyongyang's tougher ROK policy of recent weeks. "Such projects were planned, prepared and implemented from the past," Kim said.

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4. Sino-DPRK Trade Relations

DongA Ilbo ("N. KOREA'S BORDER TRADE WITH CHINA PLUNGING", 2008/11/19) reported that the volume of border trade between the DPRK and the PRC has plunged in the wake of the global financial crisis, the Hong Kong daily Ta Kung Pao said. Trading in the market along the border line and approved by the PRC government has effectively stopped, the report said. The trade of mineral resources was hit hardest. Over the same period, the price of iron ore has plummeted nearly 70 percent from three to four yuan to 1.2 yuan.

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5. DPRK Environment

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK AUTHORITIES RECLAIM PLOTS FOR TREE PLANTING ", 2008/11/18) reported that the ROK civic organization 'Good Friends' recently reported that DPRK authorities have prohibited DPR Koreans from working private plots in the mountains which had been cleared and used for grain production, and have recently begun replanting trees in these areas. A source for Good Friends stated, "The Central Party decreed last September 29th, 'The Fatherland's mountains and fields must be adorned with green so that not one single desolate plot exists by the year 2012.'"

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6. US-ROK Security Alliance

DongA Ilbo ("`U.S. TO FINISH BASE RELOCATION IN KOREA BY 2016`", 2008/11/18) reported that the US has reportedly delivered to the ROK its final plan to relocate U.S. troops from Seoul's Yongsan Garrison and frontline bases in Gyeonggi Province to Pyeongtaek by 2016. Officials close to the matter said yesterday that Washington by 2015 will complete the relocation of Yongsan Garrison and move by 2016 the US 2nd Infantry Division and artillery regiment in Uijeongbu, Gyeonggi Province. "Korea wants to complete the relocation by 2014 or 2015 at the latest. But Washington said it's impossible to advance the schedule due to budget and technical problems," one source said.

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7. ROK Military

CNET News (Mark Rutherford, "NEW 'HALO'-ESQUE LOOK FOR ROK'S TROOPS", 2008/11/18) reported that the Agency for Defense Development will begin the two-phase development on a new combat uniform beginning next year, according to The Korea Times. The new battle uniforms would provide protection against nuclear, biological, and chemical attacks, and would feature automatic temperature control. In addition to keeping the lead out, the helmet will be prewired for minicam video transmission, GPS navigation, and assorted networking gear, the official said. The double-barreled K-11 assault rifle lets the shooter fire either NATO 5.56- or 20-millimeter grenades, all off the same trigger. Day and night aiming is accomplished with a thermal target seeker and laser that calculates distance automatically.

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8. ROK-US Free Trade Agreement

Yonhap News Service (Shin Hae-in, "NEW U.S. GOV'T MAY BREAK OFF FTA WITH ROK: U.S. LAWMAKER", Seoul, 2008/11/18) reported that the incoming U.S. leader may not support a pending trade deal with ROK, and may break it off altogether, a Korean-American member of the U.S. Senate said Tuesday. Senator Paull Shin from the U.S. state of Washington also expressed a negative view towards prompt approval of the ROK-U.S. free trade agreement (FTA) by Seoul's legislature, a government-led initiative challenged by opposition politicians here. "Yes, I must say there is certainly a possibility (that the new U.S. government might cancel the deal)," Shin told reporters after meeting with the ROK leader in Seoul Tuesday.

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9. ROK-MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement

Yonhap News Service (Jung Sung-ki, "ROK SEEKS FTAS WITH S. AMERICAN NATIONS", 2008/11/18) reported that President Lee Myung-bak called Tuesday for the launch of negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) between ROK and MERCOSUR, involving Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil. “South Korea and MERCOSUR countries have completed a joint feasibility study on the FTA, but have yet to open negotiations. A successful conclusion to the talks will further upgrade bilateral cooperative relations,” Lee was quoted as saying. The President highlighted three broad sectors ? mineral resources and plant construction; oil development and shipbuilding; and the biofuel, auto and green industries ? as targets for proposed ROK-Brazilian cooperation.

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10. ROK Environment

Korea Times (Kim Tae-jong, "CAMPAIGN STARTS FOR ELECTRIC SCOOTERS", 2008/11/18) reported that Seoul launched a campaign Tuesday to replace air-polluting scooters used by pizza and other food deliverymen with eco-friendly electronic motorbikes. “We hope the campaign will help reduce noise and air pollution to make the capital cleaner and quieter,” a city official said. A motorbike can produce much more polluting and harmful substances than a car. An electronic scooter can travel up to 40 kilometers per hour without producing any harmful substances.

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11. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Korea Times (Michael Ha, "'JAPAN SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE ROK'S DOKDO SOVEREIGNTY'", 2008/11/17) reported that a Japanese scholar reiterated Tuesday that it would be impossible for the Japanese to refute ROK's demand that Japan withdraw its claim on the Dokdo islets. Haruki Wada, a professor emeritus at the University of Tokyo, made the remarks at an international conference on Dokdo in Seoul."As time passes, Korea's actual physical possession will continue. South Korea's sovereignty claim will get stronger as time goes on. Japan's territorial claim will only prompt strong reactions from Koreans and just make the situation worse. This will make it more difficult for the Korean and Japanese governments to cooperate.''

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12. ROK Food Security

The Financial Times (Javier Blas , "LAND LEASED TO SECURE CROPS FOR SOUTH KOREA", 2008/11/18) reported that Daewoo Logistics of the ROK has secured farmland in Madagascar to grow food crops for Seoul, in a deal that diplomats and consultants said was the largest of its kind. The company said it had leased 1.3m hectares of farmland – about half the size of Belgium – from Madagascar’s government for 99 years. It plans to ship the maize and palm oil harvests back to the ROK. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

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13. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Role

Kyodo News ("ASO EYES LAW TO ENABLE MSDF TO DEAL WITH PIRATES OFF SOMALIA", Tokyo, 2008/11/18) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso reiterated he will consider proposing a law to dispatch the Maritime Self-Defense Force to waters off Somalia to deal with piracy attacks there in a meeting with lawmakers and sea-related organization leaders, they said. ''We need to study measures at an early date. It would be too late if a Japanese ship came under attack by pirates or its crew were taken hostage,'' Aso told the lawmakers including former Defense Agency chief Gen Nakatani, according to Nakatani.

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14. Japan Government

Reuters (Linda Sieg, "JAPAN OPPOSITION SEEKS TO FORCE EARLY ELECTION", Tokyo, 2008/11/18) reported that Japan's opposition stepped up efforts on Tuesday to force an early election by stalling key bills including help for struggling banks, a strategy that threatens policy paralysis as the economy sinks into recession. Legislation to extend Japan's naval mission in support of U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan after it expires in January has also become ensnared in the maneuvering, risking a rocky start to relations with U.S. President-elect Barack Obama. Prime Minister Taro Aso told reporters later on Tuesday that given the importance of the bills, an extension of the session might well prove necessary, depending on the opposition's stance.

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15. Japan Space Program

Asahi Shimbun (Tomooki Yasuda, "JAXA TO LEAD JOINT ASIAN SATELLITE PROJECT", 2008/11/18) reported that in an effort to bolster its standing in space development and help improve the engineering expertise of its regional neighbors, Japan will lead a group of Asian nations seeking to jointly develop, construct and launch a satellite. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency hopes the project will eventually lead to development of a full-fledged Earth observation satellite to meet participating nations' needs, such as disaster management.

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16. Japan Environment

Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "JAPAN'S TRASH TECHNOLOGY HELPS DEODORIZE DUMPS IN TOKYO", Tokyo, 2008/11/18) reported that Tokyo's Toshima Incineration Plant, which devours 300 tons of garbage a day, turns trash into electricity, hot water and a kind of recyclable sand. Japan burns more garbage in the heart of its big cities than any developed country. The Toshima plant is one of 21 factory-size incinerators that operate around the clock amid Tokyo's 12 million densely packed residents. Japan burns about three-quarters of its trash in the world's largest armada of incinerators. All this burning raised dioxin levels in Japan to dangerously high levels in the 1990s, but technological advances have since corrected the problem." About 186,000 people a year frequent the Toshima Incineration Plant to swim and exercise in the plant's handsome and affordable

fitness center.

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17. PRC in Afghanistan

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "PRC REJECTS SENDING TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN", Beijing, 2008/11/18) reported that PRC said Tuesday it would not send any troops to Afghanistan — rejecting recent speculation that Beijing might support the international coalition there. In a statement seen Tuesday on the PRC Foreign Ministry's Web site, spokesman Qin Gang said there had been no change to Beijing's approach to Afghanistan. Qin also said PRC remained committed to supporting Afghanistan's peace, stability, and development — a reference to PRC aid to the country that ranges from building hospitals to donating computers for government offices.

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18. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN LEADER SEES DAILY CHINA FLIGHTS IN 6 MONTHS", Taipei, 2008/11/18) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou said the island would likely launch direct flights with the PRC in about half a year, signaling closer trade ties between the two political rivals. Ma made the comments in a speech at a business event.

Bloomberg News (Tim Culpan, "TAIWAN TO SET UP CHECKPOINTS TO MONITOR CHINA SHIPS, CNA SAYS ", 2008/11/18) reported that Taiwan's defense ministry plans to set up checkpoints to ensure shipping links with the PRC do not endanger national security, the official Central News Agency reported. Taiwan will set up six locations in the seas surrounding Taiwan to monitor shipping to and from the PRC, the agency cited Defense Minister Chen Chao-min as saying. The checkpoints will examine every PRC ship heading for Taiwanese ports, Chen was quoted as saying.

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19. PRC Economy

UK Guardian (Tania Branigan, "PRC'S HUGE POVERTY GAP SLOWING GROWTH, UN SAYS", Beijing, 2008/11/17) reported that the gulf between rich and poor in PRC is affecting growth by deterring consumption and holding down productivity, according to a report released by the United Nations Development Programme. It tracks the vast and increasing gaps between rural and urban areas and regions of PRC - warning that differences in income are matched by disparities in social welfare, education and elderly care. While Beijing and Shanghai have reached the development level of countries such as Cyprus and Portugal, provinces such as south-western Guizhou are comparable to Namibia or Botswana. The Human Development Report argues that pressing ahead in providing basic healthcare, education and welfare to all PRC citizens will boost the country's economy in the face of the global slowdown.

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20. PRC-Russia Energy Trade

United Press International (Gleb Gorodyankin, Dmitry Zhdannikov, "RUSSIA SAYS OIL LOAN TALKS WITH PRC TO RESUME SOON", Moscow, 2008/11/18 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that Russia will resume talks with PRC over $25 billion in loans as part of a broader deal with Beijing over crude supplies within days, Russian energy minister Sergei Shmatko said on Tuesday. "I think talks will resume in the near future. I think next week," Shmatko told reporters.

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21. Sino-US Relations

Associated Press ("PRC DENIES TRYING TO OBTAIN US SPACE TECHNOLOGY", Beijing, 2008/11/18) reported that PRC on Tuesday dismissed suggestions that it is seeking to illegally obtain U.S. space technology after a scientist in the United States was convicted of violating the U.S. arms embargo on PRC. Qin Gang, a spokesman at PRC's Foreign Ministry, told reporters Tuesday that "the allegation that China is stealing outer space technology from the U.S. is being made with ulterior motives, and is in vain."

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22. Sino-Indian Military Cooperation

Beijing News (Praful Kumar Singh, "FIRST EVER SINO-INDIA JOINT COUNTER TERROR EXERCISE ON INDIAN SOIL", New Delhi, 2008/11/18) reported that a 10 member Indian Army delegation today left for Beijing to attend the final planning conference to decide the exact theme, setting and level of participation for first-ever Sino-Indian military combat exercise to jointly counter terror and insurgency. It is to be conducted for a duration of two weeks and will commence from either second or third week of December on Indian soil.

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23. PRC Energy

Wall Street Journal (David Winning, Shai Oster, "SLOWDOWN DEPRESSES PRC'S FUEL DEMAND", Beijing, 2008/11/18) reported that further evidence of PRC's economic slowdown emerged, as the nation announced its diesel imports plunged last month and its largest oil company said a sharp drop in demand is hurting business. PRC also was a net exporter of gasoline for the second month in a row, as budget-conscious drivers held back on using their cars. Imports of fuel oil used in power plants to generate electricity also dropped. Despite the drop in imports of refined oil products such as diesel, PRC's imports of crude oil in October grew at brisk pace, which could mean PRC oil companies are taking advantage of comparatively cheap global oil prices to rebuild their stockpiles. Some analysts also say they think that PRC's government is buying crude for its strategic petroleum reserve.

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24. PRC Government

New York Times (Andrew Jacobs, "RIOTERS ATTACK GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN NORTHWEST PRC", Beijing, 2008/11/18) reported that a local government's decision to move its administrative offices to another city has provoked two days of unrest in northwest PRC, according to state media and witnesses, who said Tuesday that protesters had burned police cars and looted government offices in Longnan, a prefectural capital in Gansu Province. Witnesses reached by telephone, said the crowds had swelled to more than 10,000, many of whom were still battling the police Tuesday night. Residents in Longnan said the disturbances there were fueled by economic distress, unchecked corruption and a lack of transparency by the local Communist Party. Officials have insisted the decision to abandon Longnan was based on the city's location in a seismically unstable area.

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25. PRC Enviroment

Reuters (Emma Graham-Harrison, "PRC CUTS KEY WATER, AIR POLLUTANTS IN EARLY 2008", Beijing, 2008/11/18) reported that PRC cut its emissions of water pollution and acid rain-causing sulphur dioxide in the first half of this year, as Beijing closed dirty power plants and the global economic crisis hit heavy industry, state media said on Tuesday. Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD), a measure of water pollution, dropped by 2.5 percent from the same period last year as new sewage plants came online, while sulphur dioxide emissions were down 4.0 percent, the official Xinhua agency said. "The dual reduction was achieved through continued pollution control measures, as well as the closure of some outdated plants that consumed too much energy," Environment Minister Zhou Shengxian was quoted saying.

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II. PRC Report

26. Sino-US Energy Cooperation

Xinhua Net (Wu Jingjing, "CHINESE AND AMERICAN EXPERTS GATHER IN BEIJING TO DISCUSS GREEN ENERGY DEVELOPMENT", 2008/11/18) reported that the first Sino-US Green Energy Forum was unveiled in Beijing Nov.17. Over 500 PRC and American officers, entrepreneurs, and experts of energy and environmental protection discussed the research, development and practice of green energy. The specific issues include energy and transportation system policy of the two countries, climate policy contrast, solar power, water and energy, intellectual grid and so on.

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27. PRC Civil Society

Changzhou News Network ("CHAGNZHOU ESTABLISHES FAST TRACK FOR THE REGISTRATION

OF NGOS", 2008/11/18) reported that to further transform governmental functions and improve services, Changzhou of Jiangsu province decided to establish fast track for the registration of NGOs. After the launch of the fast track, the whole registration process will be compressed from 90 days to 5-10 days.

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28. PRC Civil Society and Elder Care

XinMin Evening Papers (Yang Ruozheng, "SHANGHAI AGEDNESS FOUNDATION LAUNCHED WARMTH-GIVING ACTIVITIES FOR AGED", 2008/11/18) reported that as winter is coming, Shanghai Agedness Foundation launched a series of warmth-giving activities for aged. For example, in order to help the elder people living alone get out of the house and integrate into the community, the Foundation sets up “Mind House” in each of the elder people’s activity rooms. Elder people come here once a month, talking about news, chatting with each other, or play cards together. The Foundation also teaches elder people to use ATM to facilitate their lives.

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III. ROK Report

29. ROK Policy toward DPRK

PRESSian ("DPRK POLICIES NEED TO SHIFT", 2008/11/19) said in a column that though Lee Myung-bak Administration thinks that regards is the time for taming the DPRK, the position might reverse in the near future. The DPRK might take advantage of ROK government’s DPRK policy, which is either hostile or does not seem to exist. Thus, the government should consider seriously about shifting DPRK policies within this year.

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30. U.S. Policy toward DPRK

Peace Foundation ("ROK-US’S COOPERATION PLAN FOR ESTABLISHING PEACE IN EAST-ASIA", 2008/11/19) reported that Peace Foundation will hold the symposium titled ‘Suggestions for Obama Administration’s Korean Peninsula Policy to Establish Peace in North-east Asia’ to honor its 4 th anniversary. They will present a policy proposal which for establishing appropriate East Asia and ROK policy. The proposal includes overall evaluation of Bush Administration, ROK-US collaboration to solve DPRK nuclear problem and to establish peace on the Korean Peninsula, two countries’ roles for regional security and global collaboration, and policy suggestions etc.

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31. DPRK Nuclear Program

DongA Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL SHOULD LEARN FROM QADHAFI", 2008/11/19) reported that the DPRK should be aware of the positive change in the relationship between the US and Libya. Rather than expecting to take advantages of the Obama administration, it would be better to recognize that Obama will not be willing to give them help unless they abandon nuclear weapons as Qadhafi, the leader of Libya, did to improve the relationship with the US.

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