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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [2. US on DPRK Missile Program](#)
 - [3. US on DPRK Human Rights](#)
 - [4. US Aid to the DPRK](#)
 - [5. DPRK Refugees in the PRC](#)
 - [6. Sino-DPRK Relations](#)
 - [7. DPRK-Japan Relations](#)
 - [8. Inter-Korean Relations](#)
 - [9. ROK on KEDO LWR Project](#)
 - [10. US on DPRK Leadership](#)
 - [11. DPRK Leadership](#)
 - [12. DPRK Food Supply](#)
 - [13. Japan Politics](#)
 - [14. Japan Explosions](#)
 - [15. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute](#)
 - [16. Cross Strait Relations](#)

- [17. PRC Environment](#)
- [18. PRC Protests](#)
- II. PRC Report
 - [19. PRC Public Health](#)
 - [20. Sino-Japanese Relations](#)
 - [21. PRC Energy Supply](#)
- III. ROK Report
 - [22. ROK Intelligence on DPRK](#)
 - [23. ROK, US, PRC Cooperation on DPRK](#)
 - [24. Inter-Korean Relations](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("N. KOREA CAN RESTORE NUCLEAR PROGRAMME WITHIN YEAR: THINK TANK", London, 2008/09/18) reported that the DPRK can put its nuclear programme back on track in less than a year, after the reclusive state stopped disabling atomic plants, a leading think tank warned. Uncertainty over the health of leader Kim Jong-Il means the reclusive nation's stalemate with Washington over its nuclear programme is likely to continue, added the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS). "It will take North Korea less than one year to undo the steps that up until August it was taking to disable its declared nuclear facilities."

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

2. US on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. WARNS N. KOREA AGAINST LONG-RANGE MISSILE TEST", Washington, 2008/09/18) reported that the US warned that any long-range missile test by the DPRK would violate a United Nations ban, while refusing to confirm that Pyongyang actually did conduct a recent test. "I don't have any further information for you on those news reports of tests of an engine that would be suitable for a long-range ballistic missile," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. "I would only note, as I did yesterday, that any work in that regard would be contrary and in contravention of U.N. Security Resolution 1718."

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

3. US on DPRK Human Rights

Korea Herald ("US SENATE SET TO DELIBERATE EXTENSION OF N. KOREAN RIGHTS ACT: SOURCES", 2008/09/18) reported that the US Senate will deliberate this week on an extension of legislation to help DPRK defectors settle in the US and promote democracy in the DPRK, a source in Washington was quoted as saying. The extension of the North Korean Human Rights Act calls for "activities to support human rights and democracy and freedom of information in North Korea," "assistance to North Koreans who are outside North Korea" and "12-hour broadcasting to North Korea."

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

4. US Aid to the DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. GAVE N. KOREA \$1.2 BILLION IN AID", 2008/09/18) reported that the US is reported to have spent close to US\$1.3 billion on aid to the DPRK since 1995. The Congressional Research Service, a policy research arm of the US Congress, said around 2.5 million tons of food worth over \$700 million were delivered to the reclusive communist country in that time. Fuel oil provisions as part of the six-party nuclear negotiations have cost Washington close to \$150 million, and an international consortium to build a nuclear power generator in the reclusive regime another 400 million.

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

5. DPRK Refugees in the PRC

Korea Herald ("EXPERTS CALL FOR NATURALIZATION OF N.K. REFUGEES IN CHINA", 2008/09/18) reported that ROK legal experts called for the government to ease regulations on the naturalization of DPRK refugees living under dire conditions in the PRC without legal nationality, reported Yonhap News Agency. "The law should be revised to grant citizenship to stateless refugees who are recognized as 'de facto' North Korean defectors," Prof. Jang Bok-hee of Sunmoon University told a parliamentary human rights forum. "The second-generation of stateless North Korean refugees is yet another tragedy created during this decade of massive defections."

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

6. Sino-DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA AFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO N.KOREAN REGIME", 2008/09/18) reported that the PRC Ambassador to the DPRK Liu Xiaoming stressed that the PRC and the DPRK will continue to cooperate closely no matter how international and regional political situation changes. In the speech, made just three days after speculation on Kim's health hit the news, Liu expressed hope that the DPRK can achieve "new things in each of its Socialist projects under the leadership of the DPRK Workers' Party" led by Kim. Liu not only confirmed Kim's position at the center of power but also the PRC's support for him.

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

7. DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("NAKAYAMA ASKS U.S. FOR HELP IN RESOLVING N. KOREA ABDUCTION ISSUE", Washington, 2008/09/18) reported that Japan's minister in charge of the DPRK's abductions of Japanese citizens exhorted US officials to help Tokyo's efforts to resolve the decades-old row with Pyongyang even after a change of leader in Japan next week. Kyoko Nakayama said she made the pitch on the second day of her three-day visit to the US capital as she briefed officials. Speaking to reporters at the Japanese Embassy here, she quoted Wilder as saying that Washington will not take a soft approach to Pyongyang unless the reclusive country acts as agreed upon with other nations over its denuclearization.

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

8. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News (Yoo Cheong-mo, "LEE'S AIDE ADMITS ABSENCE OF INTER-KOREAN HOTLINE", Seoul, 2008/09/18) reported that a top security advisor to President Lee Myung-bak admitted that an inter-Korean hotline has not been maintained since Lee's inauguration in February. The Seoul-Pyongyang hotline was first set up in 2000 between then President Kim Dae-jung and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il as a result of their summit and was believed to have existed until the end of the administration of Lee's liberal predecessor, Roh Moo-hyun. "If the inter-Korean hotline refers to a high-level communication between the two Koreas, it has not worked under Lee's presidency," Kim Sung-hwan, senior presidential secretary for security and foreign policies, said in a parliamentary session.

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

9. ROK on KEDO LWR Project

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "'NK LIGHT-WATER REACTOR PROJECT WAS FAILURE'", 2008/09/18) reported that Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong said that providing the DPRK with a light-water reactor was a project that ended in failure. Rep. Chung Jin-suk of the governing Grand National Party (GNP) blamed the previous Roh Moo-hyun administration for the failure, pointing out that the project which ended in May 2006 cost Seoul nearly 1.1 billion won. The lawmaker proposed holding a public hearing on the matter.

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

10. US on DPRK Leadership

Agence France-Presse ("US CONCERNED ABOUT POTENTIAL FOR INSTABILITY IN NORTH KOREA", London, 2008/09/18) reported that US Defence Secretary Robert Gates acknowledged US concerns about the potential for instability in the DPRK amid reports its leader suffered a stroke. But Gates, who said it was unclear how seriously ill Kim Jong-Il is, foresaw no repercussions on US military commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, even if conflict erupts on the Korean peninsula. "In terms of our military forces it's irrelevant," he told reporters in London.

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

11. DPRK Leadership

Donga Ilbo ("HYON EMERGING AS POTENTIAL SUCCESSOR TO KIM JONG IL", 2008/09/18) reported that close aides to DPRK leader Kim Jong Il are under closer scrutiny in the wake of the reclusive leader's alleged health problems. One of them is General Hyon Chol Hae of the Korean People's Army, who frequently accompanies Kim at public events. A ROK Unification Ministry analysis on DPRK news reports said Hyon has been seen with Kim at the leader's public appearances over the past two years. Hyon's closeness to Kim is fueling speculation over his role and influence in the DPRK's power elite.

The Associated Press (Hyung-Jin Kim, "KIM'S CONSORT: A KEY PLAYER IN NORTH KOREA? ", Seoul, 2008/09/18) reported that Kim Jong Il's companion and former secretary is emerging as a key player in the DPRK after the autocratic leader's stroke. ROK officials are keeping a close eye on Kim Ok amid some intelligence reports that she's not only nursing the ailing leader but also is signing official documents on his behalf. "She is the closest person personally to Kim Jong Il," said Marcus Noland, a North Korea expert at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington. "In some ways, she's the one guarding the bedroom or hospital door. She would be in a position to convey his preferences."

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

12. DPRK Food Supply

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK JOURNAL STRESSES FOOD PROVISION REFORM", 2008/09/18) reported that the latest issue of the DPRK academic journal "Institute for Social Science Bulletin" (no.3, 2008) stressed that in order to resolve the DPRK's food shortage problems as quickly as possible, "it is necessary to take a good assessment of future food consumption [needs]." The journal also added, "The task of restructuring food production must start with an assessment of future food consumption and start off with a view of long term interests rather than starting from a standpoint of short-term interests in order to completely relieve food supply problems."

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA BEGINS HARVEST AMID CHRONIC SHORTAGES", Seoul, 2008/09/18) reported that the DPRK has begun this year's autumn harvest, state radio said, amid chronic food shortages in the DPRK. Banners and signboards on farms and loudspeaker broadcasts were appealing for all-out efforts to reap a bumper crop, the Korean Central Broadcasting Station said. The UN's World Food Programme (WFP) says hunger is at its worst since the famine years of the 1990s, with up to six million people in immediate need out of a population of 23 million.

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

13. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("LOWER HOUSE ELECTION SCHEDULED FOR OCT. 26", 2008/09/18) reported that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito set aside their differences and decided to dissolve the Lower House on Oct. 3 and hold a general election Oct. 26, senior coalition officials

said. The two parties also agreed that election campaigning will start Oct. 14. The parties will finalize the election schedule after the LDP presidential election Monday. LDP Secretary-General Taro Aso is the heavy favorite in that poll.

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

14. Japan Explosions

The Associated Press ("THRILL-SEEKER ARRESTED FOR BLASTS NEAR TOKYO PALACE", Tokyo, 2008/09/18) reported that a former Japanese serviceman who said he wanted to have fun was arrested for allegedly hurling explosive-laden fire extinguishers towards the Imperial Palace, police and reports said. Toshiyuki Ogawa, 34, who described himself as a kerosene vendor, was arrested for allegedly violating the law on explosives controls, a police spokesman said. "I did it for my own delight. I was interested in how people would react," he said.

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

15. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

PTI ("INDIA, CHINA HOLD BOUNDARY TALKS", Beijing, 2008/09/18) reported that after a year-long hiatus, India and the PRC today held a fresh round of boundary talks with Beijing saying the two countries must maintain peace and tranquility along the border to help in a speedy resolution of the protracted problem. "Both should maintain peace and tranquility in the border area before the boundary issue is resolved," PRC Vice President Xi Jinping said during a meeting with India's National Security Adviser M K Narayanan here at the ornate Great Hall of the People.

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

16. Cross Strait Relations

Kyodo News ("U.N. REJECTS TAIWAN'S BID FOR OBSERVER STATUS AT U.N. AGENCIES", New York, 2008/09/18) reported that a U.N. committee rejected Taiwan's request to include its bid to gain observer status at U.N. special agencies in the agenda of the General Assembly, the PRC ambassador to the United Nations said. The General Committee decided against taking up the issue during the 63rd General Assembly session that started Tuesday, Wang Guangya said.

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

17. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA 'BEGINS EMERGENCY WATER DIVERSION TO BEIJING'", Beijing, 2008/09/18) reported that emergency water started flowing to Beijing Thursday as a six-month scheme kicked off to keep the city of 17 million from running out of the resource, the government said. Some 300 million cubic metres (10.6 billion cubic feet) of water will be redirected from Hebei province, which surrounds the capital, the state's government said. Hebei also suffers severely from a lack of water, and the fact that it must pass on the scarce resource is testimony to Beijing's political clout, experts say.

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

18. PRC Protests

Xinhua ("DEMONSTRATION PARKS TO CEASE FUNCTION AFTER GAMES: OFFICIAL", Beijing, 2008/09/18) reported that the three parks in downtown Beijing designated as demonstration zones during the Beijing Olympics and Paralympics will cease function upon the ending of both Games, a senior official with the Games organizing committee said here on Wednesday. "In future, relevant departments will continue to accept and handle demonstration applications in accordance with China's law on assemblies, processions and demonstrations as well as the law's implementation methods," said Liu Shaowu, director of the security department under the Beijing Organizing Committee of the 29th Olympic Games (BOCOG).

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

II. PRC Report

19. PRC Public Health

China News online ("FOOD PRODUCT EXEMPTION FROM QUALITY SUPERVISION INSPECTION STOPPED", 2008/09/18) reported that according to the website of the State Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), the qualification of the food products which are exempted from national quality supervision and inspection will be stopped. In view of the major food safety incident caused by Salu group, one of the PRC's biggest dairy enterprises, AQSIQ decided to stop the qualification of those food products which are exempted from the national quality supervision and inspection, to further strengthen the supervision of food product enterprises.

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

20. Sino-Japanese Relations

China Daily online ("SINO-JAPAN FORUM HELD IN TOKYO", 2008/09/18) reported that from Sep.16-17, the fourth "Beijing - Tokyo Forum" was held successfully in Tokyo. The theme of this forum is "Asia's future and the role of China and Japan". Over 110 elites from all kinds of fields of the two sides have participated in this activity. The Forum was launched and organized by China Daily Agency and Japan Remarks NPO in 2005. It provides an open discussion space for PRC and Japanese political, economic, cultural elites. It has become an important channel for public diplomacy for the PRC and Japan.

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

21. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua Net ("LIANG GANGHUA, CHINA STARTS COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH ON COMBUSTIBLE ICE", Guangzhou, 2008/09/18) reported that according to Guangzhou Marine

Geological Survey Bureau of Ministry of Land and Resources, the "Basic Research on Combustible Ice in South Sea" project has been approved by authorities, which means that the comprehensive research of combustible ice is fully carried out in the PRC. The total organic carbon reserve in combustible ice is estimated to be two times that contained in today's known coal, oil, and natural gas reserves. The PRC's soaring energy demand in recent years, coupled with its relatively poor oil and natural gas reserves, have forced the country to accelerate research and development of potential new energy sources.

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

III. ROK Report

22. ROK Intelligence on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("HAVING LET THE KIM JONG-IL INTELLIGENCE OUT RECKLESSLY, NOW WE MUST PICK UP THE PIECES", 2008/09/18) reported that the problem of leaked intelligence on the DPRK goes beyond media reports where high-level officials directly discussed about Kim Jong-il's health as if they were watching the situation by his side. It shows the level of governmental intelligence capability and control of intelligence on the DPRK. Now it doesn't look like there is basic cooperation among government authorities.

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

23. ROK, US, PRC Cooperation on DPRK

The Segye Times ("CAREFULLY WATCH THE DPRK SITUATION, BUT DO NOT UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATE IT", 2008/09/18) wrote that Prime Minister Han Seung-soo warned at yesterday's Cabinet council against exposing information or intelligence more than necessary to avoid inciting problems with the DPRK. This is faulty judgment. The fact is that no independent intervention occurred after the internal emergency of the DPRK was disclosed. Hence, we have to support the internal stability and restore order in the DPRK on the basis of U.S. mutual-assistance and cooperation with the PRC. In this case we have developed the 'Concept Plan 5029', into 'Operation Plan 5029' for more effectiveness. However these preparation tasks or foreign policy issues have to be quiet and not disturb the DPRK.

Pressian (Jang Sung-Min, representative of The World and Northeast Asia Peace Forum, "[Column] U.S.-PRC CLOSE COOPERATION OVER THE KIM, JONG-IL SITUATION AND OPERATION PLAN 5029, WHY DID THE U.S. NOT NOTICE KIM, JONG-IL'S APOPLEXY FIRST?", 2008/09/18) wrote that the US was thought to have very good intelligence on the DPRK until the reports of Kim Jong-il's illness. The possibility that the US had been offered the information by the PRC can't be ignored. We need to know that the Korean Peninsula issues, including the DPRK, have been discussed in a more multidimensional, complex, and comprehensive framework of thinking between the U.S. and PRC. In relation to this President Lee Myung-Bak is still thinking that the ROK-U.S alliance is the whole of foreign policy and seems to still be convinced that he can control the situation in the DPRK by changing Concept Plan 5029 to Operation Plan 5029.

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

24. Inter-Korean Relations

Hankook Ilbo ("REMARKABLE PANMUNJEOM INTER-KOREA WORKING-LEVEL MEETING", 2008/09/18 20:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the intentions of the DPRK will be expressed at the Panmunjeom working-level meeting Friday. It is meaningful that the DPRK proposed an economic and energy support meeting inside the framework of the six-party talks. At least this means they have not rejected the framework of the six-party talks themselves. The possibility of changing decision-making related to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's illness could be checked through this meeting.

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

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