NAPSNet Daily Report 20 August, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 20 August, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, 2009, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-20-august-2009/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Interdiction of DPRK Vessels

Kyodo News ("INDIA ESCORTS SUSPICIOUS N. KOREAN SHIP TO MAINLAND FOR THOROUGH SEARCH", 2009/08/19) reported that a suspicious DPRK ship seized by India early this month was escorted by the Indian Coast Guard toward the mainland Wednesday to be checked thoroughly for any illicit cargo, the Press Trust of India reported. PTI said the vessel, M V Mu San, left Hut Bay in Andaman waters for Kakinada port in the southeastern state of Andhra Pradesh "where central security agencies and nuclear scientists will thoroughly search it." The ship's 39-member crew, which also includes a DPRK government official, would be questioned at the port, they said.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA BLASTS S. KOREA-U.S. DRILL, DEFENDS NUKE AMBITIONS", 2009/08/19) reported that the DPRK defended its nuclear program on Wednesday, renewing its criticism of an ongoing ROK-US military exercise as a preparation for an atomic war. "Lurking behind them is a dangerous scheme for aggression to mount a preemptive nuclear attack on the DPRK (North Korea)," the DPRK's foreign ministry spokesman was quoted as saying. The joint drill proves that North Korea's decision "to take one step after another for bolstering up its self-defensive deterrent was a right option in every aspect," the spokesman said.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

JoongAng Ilbo (Yoo Jee-ho , "U.S. SEEKS NUCLEAR MOVE BY THE NORTH", 2009/08/19) reported that the United States said yesterday it welcomed the DPRK's unusually conciliatory moves toward the ROK, but added that Pyongyang needs to take more steps to denuclearize. The U.S. response came after the DPRK said it would resume suspended tourism programs for the ROK and lift restrictions on cross-border travel. "Clearly these are welcome steps, in and of themselves," said State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley. But Crowley noted the DPRK needs to do more. "These marginal steps in and of themselves are not enough. We continue to reiterate what the DPRK has to do. We want to see them take definitive steps, irreversible steps, towards denuclearization."

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4. DPRK-US Relations

Agence France Presse ("RICHARDSON MEETS NKOREA DIPLOMATS", Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2009/08/19) reported that former UN envoy Bill Richardson began two days of rare meetings with DPRK diplomats on Wednesday amid signs of a possible thaw in relations between Washington and Pyongyang. The White House said the diplomatic initiative did not come at the behest of President Barack Obama's administration, but the mission is the latest in a series of encouraging gestures from the DPRK. The meetings had been requested by the DPRK, said a spokeswoman, stressing "the governor will not be negotiating with them in any way and is not representing the Obama administration."

Associated Press (Barry Massey, "RICHARDSON: TALKS WITH N. KOREANS A 'HOPEFUL SIGN'", Santa Fe, New Mexico, 2009/08/19) reported that Gov. Bill Richardson said that a meeting with a pair of representatives from the DPRK mission to the United Nations offered a "hopeful sign" of improving relations with the reclusive nation. During a brief appearance before photographers and reporters at the New Mexico governor's mansion, Richardson declined to comment on the substance of the talks or why the DPRK had requested the meeting with him. "Hopeful sign" was Richardson's only response when asked whether the meeting indicated a thawing U.S. relations with the DPRK.

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5. DPRK Leadership

Agence France Presse ("BILL CLINTON SURPRISED BY 'SPRY' NKOREA LEADER", Washington, 2009/08/19) reported that former US president Bill Clinton found leader Kim Jong-Il "unexpectedly spry" after mounting concern about his health. The New York Times, quoting anonymous officials, said Clinton found Kim to be alert during an hour-long meeting and a more than two-hour dinner, but neither side made overtures in a stand-off over the reclusive nation's nuclear drive. Also easing speculation of a leadership crisis, Kim appeared with two key DPRK officials whom US intelligence thought had been removed including Kim Kye-Gwan, the envoy to now-collapsed six-way denuclearization talks.

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6. US on Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "UNIFIED KOREA NOT A THREAT TO CHINA, JAPAN",

2009/08/19) reported that the United States will need to establish regional arrangements to assure China and Japan that a unified Korea would not undermine their respective security interests, an American expert said Tuesday. "The United States would likely take a special interest in ensuring that regional arrangements are in place and that the Korean Peninsula does not become a flashpoint for confrontation among regional powers,'' said Scott Snyder, director of the Center for U.S.-Korea Policy based in Washington D.C.

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7. Inter-Korean Relations

The Financial Times ("PYONGYANG TO SEND DELEGATION TO KIM FUNERAL ", Seoul, 2009/08/19) reported that the DPRK said that it would send a delegation to the funeral of former ROK president Kim Dae-jung in Seoul, in the latest sign of rapprochement after months of military brinkmanship. The visit would be the first to Seoul by an official northern delegation since before Lee Myung-bak took office as the ROK's president in early 2008. The DPRK's reaction to Kim's death contrasts with its much slower and more subdued response to the death in May of Roh Moo-hyun.

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL 'NOT AGAINST' N.KOREAN VISIT OVER KIM DAE-JUNG'S DEATH", 2009/08/19) reported that the ROK presidential office on Tuesday said it "would not oppose" it if the DPRK wants to send a delegation expressing the regime's condolences on the death of former ROK president Kim Dae-jung. "If the DPRK sends a condolence delegation, there will be no reason to oppose it," Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Lee Dong-kwan said.

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8. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

Yonhap News ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE FALLS FOR 11TH MONTH IN JULY ", Seoul, 2009/08/19) reported that Inter-Korean trade declined for an 11th month in July amid heightened tensions between Seoul and Pyongyang in the wake of the communist country's nuclear test, data showed Wednesday. According to the data by the Korea Customs Service, trade between the two Koreas amounted to around US$140 million in July, down 22 percent from the same month a year earlier.

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "'HYUNDAI-NORTH KOREA PACT NOT VIOLATING UN RESOLUTION'", 2009/08/19) reported that agreements made between the ROK's Hyundai Group and the DPRK to resume joint projects, including tours to the DPRK's Mt. Guemgang, are not seen as violating a U.N. resolution on sanctions against the communist state, a Seoul diplomat said Wednesday. But the diplomat said details on the implementation of the agreements would be decided after consultations with the United States, which will send a senior envoy overseeing Washington's sanctions on the DPRK to Seoul this weekend.

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9. ROK Missile Program

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA SCRUBS ROCKET LAUNCH DUE TO GLITCH", 2009/08/19)

reported that a technical glitch forced the ROK to abort liftoff of its first rocket into space Wednesday, delaying a launch that threatened to heat up tensions with rival DPRK even as they joined in mourning the death of an ex-president who pushed tirelessly for reconciliation. The ROK's planned launch could prove a setback to recent signs of easing tensions.

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10. ROK Military

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "ARMY PLANS TO DEVELOP DRONES TO STEP UP VIGILANCE OVER N. KOREA ", Seoul, 2009/08/19) reported that the ROK army plans to beef up its capability to monitor DPRK military bases by developing drones that can stay high above ground, an official said. The so-called aerostats will supplement the unmanned aerial vehicles the ROK currently operates to scrutinize the DPRK military. The officials said the aerostats will be able to fly at least 10km above the ground and take both daytime and nighttime aerial photos of DPRK facilities. "They won't cover the entire DPRK region, but they will help identify targets in areas that have traditionally been difficult to see with our existing equipment," he said. "We're expecting the aerostats will be developed by 2011," the official said.

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11. ROK Climate Change

Reuters (Cho Mee-young, "S.KOREA HOPES TO BECOME ASIA'S CARBON TRADING HUB", Seoul, 2009/08/19) reported that the ROK , one of the world's fastest growing polluters, said on Wednesday it hopes to become Asia's trading hub for carbon emission certificates and related products under its plan for a new carbon exchange from 2011. The government is also considering tax breaks to boost renewable energy consumption and investment, Ki-jong Woo, secretary general of the presidential panel on green growth. "Combining our financial market influence and knowhow, we believe South Korea has an advantage in carbon trading," he said.

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12. Japan-US Relations

Agence France Presse ("OBAMA'S NEW TOKYO AMBASSADOR PRAISES US-JAPAN TIES", Tokyo, 2009/08/19) reported that US President Barack Obama's new ambassador to Japan, John Roos, arrived in the country on Wednesday, praising the strong ties between the world's two largest economies. "Our nations have formed one of the most successful alliances in the history of the world," Roos told reporters. "Our nations are among the greatest democracies in the world," Roos said. "Together, we will promote security, stability and democratic values throughout Asia, and indeed in the rest of the world."

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13. Japanese Civil Society and Nuclear Proliferation

Asahi Shimbun (Yuki Edamatsu , "MAYORS AROUND JAPAN RUSH TO JOIN ANTI-NUCLEAR NGO", Tokyo, 2009/08/19) reported that mayors from around the nation are enthusiastically joining a global network of civic leaders dedicated to ridding the world of nuclear weapons. Proposed in 1982 by then Hiroshima Mayor Takeshi Araki, Mayors for Peace has 3,047 members from 134 countries and regions. Initially conceived to bind cities and towns around the world with Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the organization in February last year opened its membership to mayors from other parts of Japan. Since then, representatives have joined from 364 Japanese cities and towns.

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14. Sino-Japanese Trade Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA OUTSTRIPS US AS JAPAN'S NO.1 TRADE PARTNER", 2009/08/19) reported that the PRC becomes Japan's biggest trading partner in both exports and imports in the first six months this year, as the global economic downturn affected Japan-US trade more seriously, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) said Wednesday. It is the first time exports to the PRC surpassed those to the United States.

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15. Cross-Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN TOWN, FEARING TOXINS, REFUSES CHINA TYPHOON AID", Taipei, 2009/08/18) reported that a Taiwan town where 700 people were displaced after the island's worst typhoon in 50 years has declined mobile homes from the PRC, fearing the they might contain toxic chemicals, officials said on Wednesday. Chiatung Township refused 100 quick-assembly homes after Taiwan's notoriously anti-PRC county of Pingtung said that based on news reports in the PRC, they might contain formalin, a chemical that can be hazardous in high doses, deputy county magistrate Chung Chia-pin said.

Xinhua News ("MAINLAND TV STATIONS TO HOLD TELETHON FOR TAIWAN TYPHOON VICTIMS", 2009/08/19) reported that five satellite TV stations in the PRC will hold a charity telethon to raise funds for Taiwan victims of Typhoon Morakot on Thursday night, a TV source said. Shanghai-based Dragon TV said it will jointly broadcast the live charity event in its Beijing studio at 7:35 p.m. with Jiangsu Satellite TV, Zhejiang Satellite TV, Hunan Satellite TV and Shenzhen Satellite TV. The organizer will open 100 hotlines for donations during the four-hour TV special, "Love Across the Strait," featuring mostly by mainland pop stars.

Bloomberg News ("TAIWAN'S MAJOR THREAT IS NATURE, NOT CHINA, PRESIDENT MA SAYS", 2009/08/19) 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's deadliest storm in 50 years. "They have to change their strategy, tactics, their personnel arrangements, their budget and their equipment."

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16. Cross Strait Energy Cooperation

Dow Jones Newswire ("TAIWAN, CHINA TO COOPERATE IN WIND POWER INDUS, OPEN NEW MKTS", 2009/08/19) reported that Taiwan and the PRC's wind energy associations signed a letter of intent to cooperate in the industry, a step that will allow Taiwanese firms to enter the PRC, the fastest-growing wind power market, and other international markets. The agencies agreed to create a regular exchange platform, cooperate in industry standards and training, and work together to open international markets. The Taiwan Wind Energy Association and the China Wind Energy Association signed the letter of intent on the second and final day of a cross- strait wind energy forum.

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17. PRC Civil Unrest

Associated Press (Henry Sanderson , "CHINA WANTS PETITIONERS' CASES SOLVED BY LOCAL OFFICIALS INSTEAD OF IN BEIJING", Beijing, 2009/08/19) reported that the PRC has ordered local officials to meet regularly with people complaining of injustices in a bid to stop them from traveling to Beijing to petition the central government. The party also promised to send legal experts to the provinces to hear the cases, state media reported Wednesday — the first such proposal from senior party officials aimed at dealing with the regular deluge of petitioners.

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18. PRC Security

Xinhua News ("CHINA POLICE CHIEF URGES ALL-OUT EFFORTS TO ENSURE NATIONAL DAY SECURITY ", 2009/08/19) reported that police forces across the PRC must be mobilized to ensure National Day celebrations in October go safely and smoothly, Public Security Minister Meng Jianzhu said on Monday. "Security is currently our top priority," Meng said at a ministry teleconference. Meng urged police forces to carefully guard against and relentlessly crack down on sabotage activities carried out by hostile forces from both home and abroad, in order to protect the PRC's national security and social stability.

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19. PRC Civil Society

Financial Times (Kathrin Hille , "CHINESE ACTIVIST ARRESTED FOR TAX EVASION", Beijing, 2009/08/18) reported that Xu Zhiyong, a Chinese legal scholar and aid campaigner, was formally arrested Wednesday on tax evasion charges, in the latest step in Beijing’s crackdown on legal activists. Mr Xu was taken from his home on July 29 shortly after the government closed down the Open Constitution Initiative, a non-governmental group co-founded and run by him which provides legal assistance in public interest cases. The centre was closed after the authorities fined the group Rmb1.4m, saying it had failed to pay its taxes. Mr Xu’s detention came a day before he was due for a hearing on that case.

China Daily ("GOVT SEEKS BETTER TRACKING OF DONATIONS", 2009/08/19) reported that a new government initiative is being undertaken that will allow the public to see how their donations to charity are being used. The China Charity Information Center under the Ministry of Civil Affairs has started research on the new program, Liu Youping, the center's deputy director, said at a non-government organizations (NGOs) forum. As more Chinese are making donations to charity, the use of the money by the government and the NGOs has become a major concern.

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20. PRC Environment

Yale Environment 360 ("THE GREAT PARADOX OF CHINA: GREEN ENERGY AND BLACK SKIES", 2009/08/19) reported that a recent study published in the *Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* , conducted jointly by Peking University and Oregon State University, found that Beijing's $20 million investment to scrub the skies for the Olympics in fact had little impact on air quality. Yet for an entirely different perspective on the PRC's recent environmental progress, take the ultra-modern bullet train a half-hour southwest of Beijing to the port city of Tianjin. In just a little over four years, a mix of government and foreign investment has transformed this mid-sized PRC city into the global manufacturing hub of the world's wind power industry. The PRC may soon be simultaneously the greenest and the blackest place on earth.

Agence France Presse ("NUMBER OF KIDS POISONED BY LEAD IN CHINA RISES", Beijing, 2009/08/19) reported that the number of children affected by lead poisoning blamed on a smelting plant has risen to over 850, state media said Wednesday. A total of 1,016 children in Shaanxi province's Changqing township were tested, and 851 were found to have excessive lead levels in their blood -- more than 170 of which were hospitalised. This represents a significant increase from the 615 children initially reported to be suffering from lead poisoning.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Civil Society and Earthquake Reconstruction

Huaxi Ruban News ("CHENGDU: 50 VOLUNTARY PROJECTS GET MIL. FUND", 2009/08/19) reported that urban-rural environment cleaning service, caring about left-behind children, disaster prevention and relief service and other over 50 projects have got funds from 5,000 RMB to 50,000 RMB yesterday in Chengdu, for post disaster reconstruction of Sichuan. The sponsors include Sichuan Provincial Committee of the Communist Youth League of China, Sichuan Department of Civil Affairs, China Youth Daily, and so on.

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22. Sino-US Relations

Sina.com ("CHINA-US YOUTH EDUCATION PRACTICE PROJECT LAUNCHED IN KUNMING", 2009/08/19) reported that China-US Youth Education Practice Project was formally launched in Kunming of Yunnan province on August 17 th . The project aims at associating excellent young people of China and US, to provide qualified teachers for less developed areas of education in China, such as Yunnan province.

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23. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Jinghua Times ("LEUKEMIA CHILDREN TO GET 50 MIL. HELP", 2009/08/19) reported that according to China Red Cross Foundation, in order to satisfy the need of curing leukemia children, Ministry of Finance has approved to allocate 50 million RMB from national Lottery to the Foundation. Each approved applicant may get fund from 10,000 to 20,000 RMB.

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