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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
 - [2. US-DPRK Relations](#)
 - [3. US on PRC-DPRK Relations](#)
 - [4. Inter-Korea Relations](#)
 - [5. DPRK Cyberattacks on the ROK](#)
 - [6. DPRK Leadership](#)
 - [7. DPRK Economy](#)
 - [8. DPRK Food Supply](#)
 - [9. US-ROK Security Alliance](#)
 - [10. US on ROK Role in Afghanistan](#)
 - [11. ROK-Japan Relations](#)
 - [12. Japan Whaling Issue](#)
 - [13. Japan Energy Supply](#)
 - [14. US-Japan Security Alliance](#)
 - [15. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute](#)
 - [16. Japanese Historical Disputes](#)

- [17. Sino-Japanese Relations](#)
- [18. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute](#)
- [19. Sino-Russian Trade Relations](#)
- [20. Cross Strait Relations](#)
- [21. PRC Environment](#)
- [22. PRC Energy Supply](#)
- [23. Pacific Command Leadership](#)
- II. PRC Report
 - [24. PRC Civil Society](#)
 - [25. PRC Energy](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("ANY NORTH KOREA MEETING MUST LEAD TO SIX-WAY TALK: U.S.", Washington, 2009/10/19) reported that the US wants any bilateral contacts with the DPRK to result in the resumption of stalled six-country nuclear negotiations, the top US diplomat for Asia said. Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said "patience and caution are the order of the day" in taking up Pyongyang 's call for talks with Washington. "We would be prepared for, in the right circumstances at some point, some initial interaction that would lead rapidly to a six-party framework," he told a think tank forum in Washington.

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

2. US-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("U.S., N. KOREA OFFICIALS TO MEET IN SAN DIEGO NEXT WEEK ", 2009/10/19) reported that Senior U.S. and DPRK officials will meet in San Diego next week for a rare bilateral dialogue between the two nations, a high-ranking State Department official said.

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

3. US on PRC-DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINESE AID TO N. KOREA DISMAYS U.S. ENVOY", 2009/10/19) reported that the PRC 's recent offer of aid to the DPRK could undermine U.N. sanctions against Pyongyang and help feed a cycle of failed negotiations aimed at ending the isolated country's nuclear program, a former U.S. negotiator said. Victor Cha, a former deputy American nuclear negotiator for the DPRK, said that the PRC's "fairly substantial package of assistance" could lead to the repetition of a failed negotiating pattern with the DPRK. "We end up in the same cycle, which is they get some assistance to come back to talks. There is some negotiation that leads to some interim steps. There is another crisis, another provocation and the cycle starts all over again," Cha said.

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

4. Inter-Korea Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA URGES SOUTH TO END 'CONFRONTATION' MINDSET ", 2009/10/19) reported that the DPRK said that it wants to improve relations with the ROK and urged Seoul to depart from the "conception of confrontation." The commentary by the Rodong Sinmun, a major DPRK newspaper published by the Workers' Party, was in contrast to the frequent accusations and military warnings hurled by the DPRK's media earlier this year at Seoul's conservative Lee Myung-bak government. "If Koreans miss the chance and hesitate to take any action, obsessed with the conception of confrontation, the north and the south will neither get reconciled nor united," the paper said in the commentary carried by the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency.

Korea Times ("SEOUL DENIES SUMMIT PROPOSAL FROM N. KOREA", 2009/10/19) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has proposed summit talks with ROK President Lee Myung-bak in Pyongyang, a high-ranking U.S. official said. But Seoul's presidential office denied the claim, saying there had been no official summit proposal from the DPRK. Cheong Wa Dae also made it clear that President Lee would not sit down with his DPRK counterpart simply for a photo session.

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

5. DPRK Cyberattacks on the ROK

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN HACKERS INFILTRATED S.KOREAN MILITARY NETWORKS ", 2009/10/19) reported that the ROK's military Internet network was breached for 24 hours by DPRK hackers on March 5, causing around 2,000 national secrets to leak, according to the November issue of the Monthly Chosun. DPRK cyber warfare unit stole confidential information from the Chemical Accident Response Information System (CARIS) set up by the National Institute of Environmental Research (NIER) using a password obtained from hacking ROK Army command. A NIER official is quoted as saying, "Our system was hacked into on March 5 and we received a call from the National Intelligence Service on March 6 informing us that our Internet link with Army command had been severed."

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

6. DPRK Leadership

Yonhap News ("N. KOREANS AWARE OF POWER TRANSFER BUT FORBIDDEN FROM DISCUSSING: FOREIGN DIPLOMAT ", 2009/10/19) reported that most North Koreans know about the pending father-to-son power transfer in their country's ruling family, but are forbidden to discuss it in public, according a diplomatic source privy to DPRK affairs Monday. "My understanding is that the people are now aware of Kim Jong-un's existence. They are aware that he has been anointed as the successor (to Kim Jong-il)," a senior Western diplomat familiar with the inner workings of the DPRK government said, speaking strictly on condition of anonymity at an embassy in Seoul. "All the ordinary people know (of the existence of) Kim Jong-un, but they are not allowed to discuss. It has always been the case that any discussion of the succession is forbidden," the diplomat said.

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

7. DPRK Economy

BBC News ("WILL 'HOTEL OF DOOM' EVER BE FINISH", 2009/10/19) reported that infamously ugly and unfinished, the shell of the Ryugyong Hotel dominates the DPRK's capital, Pyongyang. But work on the skyscraper began again last summer after a 16-year hiatus and, as the company behind it tells the BBC's Matthew Davis, an end may finally be in sight. The company charged with finishing the Ryugyong is Orascom Telecom, part of an Egyptian conglomerate that took on the rebuilding work - "in partnership with a local firm" - as part of a \$400m deal to build and run a 3G mobile phone network in the DPRK. Dozens of Egyptian engineers and some 2,000 local workers are working on the Ryugyong project, which Orascom's chief operating officer Khaled Bichara tells the BBC is "progressing well", despite reported problems with suspect concrete and misaligned lift shafts.

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

8. DPRK Food Supply

IFES NK Brief ("NORTH KOREA EXPECTING SMALLER GRAIN HARVESTS DUE TO INCREASING TEMPERATURES", 2009/10/19) reported that as concerns over lean harvests and food shortages grow, North Koreans are growing more worried as rumors over worsening conditions next year make their way through DPRK communities. Especially in the northern areas of the country, the strange weather patterns have led to widespread rumors of food shortages by the end of the year and beyond. While the DPRK recorded average harvests this year, avoiding mass famine, the recently ended '150-day Battle', market restrictions, and other controls have led to rampant concerns of starvation, flood, and other threats.

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

9. US-ROK Security Alliance

Xinhua News ("S.KOREA'S STANCE ON TRANSFER OF WARTIME OPERATIONAL CONTROL REMAINS UNCHANGED: DM ", 2009/10/19) reported that the ROK reaffirmed that the country's stance on the transfer of wartime operational control of its troops from Washington to Seoul remains unchanged, stressing that all the preparations for the transfer due in April 2012 are underway properly. According to local media, a senior U.S. administration official on Friday hinted the

possibility of rescheduling the transfer process amid growing concerns over nuclear and missile threats from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), saying that "the decision will be made based on how things look in 2012."

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "COHERENT ALLIED AIRPOWER CRUCIAL IN DEFENDING S. KOREA: U.S. OFFICIAL", Seoul Airbase, 2009/10/20) reported that the ability of the ROK and the United States to perform "seamlessly as one" in air combat is crucial to defense against the DPRK, Bruce Lemkin, deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Air Force for international affairs, said Tuesday. "The most basic piece of interoperability is the one we already have," he said. "It is not just the airplanes, weapons, centers and systems. It's the concepts of operations that we share."

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

10. US on ROK Role in Afghanistan

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. UPS PRESSURE ON KOREA OVER AFGHANISTAN", 2009/10/19) reported that U.S. Defense Department press secretary Geoff Morrell on Sunday claimed the ROK has "an obligation" to support his government's war in Afghanistan. He made the remarks in an interview with the Chosun Ilbo on Sunday en route to Hawaii, the first stopover of Defense Secretary Robert Gates' Asian tour. Morrell said Korea has made "great contributions" to the execution of the Afghan war but urged it to continue at least the current level of support. He claimed all countries that wish for the peace and prosperity and economic growth of the world have an obligation to support Afghanistan.

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

11. ROK-Japan Relations

Yonhap News ("MORE JAPANESE VIEW RELATIONS WITH S. KOREA POSITIVELY: SURVEY ", 2009/10/19) reported that the percentage of Japanese who believe their country's relations with the ROK are positive increased this year, while that of PRC fell, according to a survey released Monday by a ROK state-run think tank. The survey, conducted by the Northeast Asian History Foundation, showed 65.5 percent of the Japanese polled saying they view their country's relations with the ROK as positive, up 12.5 percentage points from a similar survey conducted last year by the foundation.


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

12. Japan Whaling Issue

The Associated Press ("JAPAN CATCHES 59 WHALES OFF NORTHERN ISLAND", 2009/10/19) reported that Japan said it has caught 59 whales — one short of the maximum allowed by international guidelines — under a research program that critics say is a cover for commercial whaling. The annual expedition off the port city of Kushiro ended over the weekend after harvesting 59 minke whales, the Fisheries Agency said in a statement. A maximum of 60 is allowed under the research program authorized by the International Whaling Commission. As in previous years, the Fisheries Agency said the hunt off Hokkaido was aimed at studying the whales' feeding patterns and their effect on fish stocks. Findings will be presented at next year's meeting of the IWC.

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

13. Japan Energy Supply

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, UAE TO BOLSTER ENERGY TIES", 2009/10/19) reported that Japan  and the United Arab Emirates will strengthen ties in energy conservation and renewable energy, the two sides said at a meeting of their trade ministers. Trade minister Masayuki Naoshima told his counterpart, Muhammad al-Hamili, during talks that Japan will send a joint delegation from the public and private sectors to a trade fair on renewable energy to be held in Abu Dhabi in January, Japanese officials said. Al-Hamili said he "is aware of" Japan's interest in renewing rights to an oil field it has developed in the United Arab Emirates and added that he wishes Japan well in its bid to construct the Persian Gulf country's first nuclear power plant, the officials said.

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

14. US-Japan Security Alliance

The Financial Times ("US SEEKS CLARITY ON JAPAN ALLIANCE", 2009/10/19) reported that Robert Gates, the US defence secretary, arrives in Tokyo on Tuesday amid concerns in Washington over pledges that have threatened to change the tone of the relationship with its most important military alliance in Asia. Laying the ground for a visit next month by President Barack Obama, Mr Gates will be seeking reassurances from the new government that it will honour past agreements on the relocation and on assistance in rebuilding Afghanistan. Mr Gates's visit indicates how crucial the relocation agreement is to Washington, "and the underlying message is this is non-negotiable," Mr Kingston said.

The Asahi Shimbun ("U.S. COULD AGREE TO ALTER AIR BASE DEAL", 2009/10/19) reported that the United States may agree to amend plans to relocate the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, as long as the new site remains Nago's Henoko point in Okinawa Prefecture, a high-level Pentagon official said. In particular, the official said the United States was prepared to shift the proposed runway about 50 meters further out to sea than under the current plan. However, the official reiterated that no major revision to the plan would be acceptable to the United States, warning that failure to implement the current agreement would diminish trust between Washington and Tokyo.

Reuters (Phil Stewart, "NO ALTERNATIVE TO US TROOP REJIG DEAL IN JAPAN: GATES", Tokyo, 2009/10/20) reported that the United States wants to stick to a deal on realigning U.S. troops in Japan, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on Tuesday. "There are really, as far as we're concerned, no alternatives to the arrangement that was negotiated," Gates told reporters on his plane before arriving in Tokyo for meetings with Japanese officials. "We've looked over the years at all of these alternatives and they are either politically untenable or operationally unworkable."

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

15. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Kyodo News ("RUSSIA CRITICAL OF MAEHARA'S REMARKS ON 4 DISPUTED ISLANDS", 2009/10/19) reported that Russia on Monday blasted a Japanese state minister's weekend remarks

on four Russian-held islands off Hokkaido as going against new Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's policy of promoting dialogue with Russia. The Russian Foreign Ministry filed the criticism after Seiji Maehara, minister in charge of Okinawa and the Northern Territories, said Saturday that Japan should keep demanding Russia return the four islands it seized at the end of World War II as it is "illegal occupation." "Historically, the Northern Territories are an integral part of Japan. It is literally illegal occupation (by Russia) and Japan should keep saying so," Maehara said.

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

16. Japanese Historical Disputes

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN LAWMAKERS VISIT WAR SHRINE, PM STAYS AWAY", Tokyo, 2009/10/20) reported that more than 50 Japanese politicians on Tuesday visited the Yasukuni Shrine, but Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and his cabinet stayed away. "The prime minister should offer his prayers," said Hidehisa Otsuji, a lawmaker with the opposition Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), who led the group that also included members of Hatoyama's party. "It is unfortunate that he does not do it."

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

17. Sino-Japanese Relations

RTT News ("JAPAN TO EASE CHINESE TOURISTS' VISA REQUIREMENT ", 2009/10/19) reported that Japan's tourism minister Seiji Maehara says his government will consider granting tourist visas to more PRC tourists by further relaxing current requirements, considered an obstacle to people-to-people exchanges between the two nations. The assurance came during Maehara's meeting Sunday at Nayoga, Japan, with his PRC counterpart Shao Qiwei during which he said that he wanted to "ease visa requirements further," to boost the number of PRC visitors from an estimated 1 million last year.

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

18. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Press Trust of India ("INDIA TO TACKLE BOUNDARY ISSUE WITH CHINA BILATERALLY, PM SAYS", 2009/10/19) reported that against the backdrop of the war of words with the PRC over Arunachal Pradesh, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Monday said India will "tackle" the boundary question with the neighbouring country bilaterally. Singh said this to a delegation from Arunachal Pradesh led by Chief Minister Dorji Khandu which requested him to review the defence strategy for the eastern sector in view of incursions by PRC troops and other developments. "The Prime Minister told us not to worry. He said the Centre will tackle with the situation bilaterally," Congress MP from Arunachal West Takam Sanjoy, who was part of the delegation, said.

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

19. Sino-Russian Trade Relations

Xinhua News ("TRADE BETWEEN CHINA, RUSSIA DOWN 34.9 PCT IN FIRST NINE MONTHS", 2009/10/19) reported that trade between the PRC and Russia in the first three quarters topped 28.04 billion U.S. dollars, down 34.9 percent from the same period last year, said a report from the General Administration of Customs of the PRC. PRC exports to Russia in the first nine months stood at 12.01 billion U.S. dollars, down 48.9 percent year on year, and imports stood at 16.03 billion U.S. dollars, down 17.9 percent year on year.

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

20. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN URGED CHINA NOT TO BOYCOTT SOUTHERN CITY: REPORT", Taipei, 2009/10/19) reported that Taiwan has urged the PRC not to boycott its second city after it hosted the Dalai Lama and screened a film about an activist accused by Beijing of inciting unrest, a report said. The vice-chairman of Taiwan's quasi-official Straits Exchange Foundation made the appeal to his PRC counterpart last week during an official visit to the mainland, state Central News Agency said.

Reuters ("TAIWAN'S MA URGES CHINA TO SCRAP MISSILES", 2009/10/19) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou urged the PRC to scrap the growing number of missiles aimed at the self-ruled island that Beijing claims as its own, adding he would not exclude the possibility of meeting PRC leaders one day. Taiwan planned to buy more weapons from the United States to protect itself, although it did not want an arms race with the PRC as trade ties expand and with more deals expected to be signed in the coming year or so, Ma said. "(There are) more than 1,000 (missiles) and they haven't changed that. The number continues to go up. That is certainly a great concern for the people here," Ma told Reuters in an interview at the presidential office.

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

21. PRC Environment

United Press International ("CHINA POLLUTION CONTROL PLAN CRITICIZED", Beijing, 2009/10/19) reported that scientists say the PRC's limited acid rain control project might cause increases in the country's nitrogen emissions that can damage soil and plants. Lei Duan and colleagues at Tsinghua University in Beijing said they've determined the nation's sharp focus on reducing widespread acid rain damage by restricting sulfur dioxide air pollution might be offset by increases in nitrogen emissions. The study suggests government officials adapt a more comprehensive pollution control strategy that includes a new emphasis on cutting nitrogen emissions.

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

22. PRC Energy Supply

Bloomberg News ("CHINA MAY STUMBLE IN RACE WITH RIVALS FOR AFRICAN OIL", 2009/10/19) reported that the PRC's plans to buy into oil fields in Africa may suffer a third setback in as many months if Exxon Mobil Corp. succeeds in snapping up drilling rights in Ghana, one of the continent's newest oil nations. "The Chinese are frustrated that they're not doing more deals," said Kobus van der Wath, group managing director of The Beijing Axis, which advises PRC companies expanding overseas. "The interest, intent and general capacity to do deals is far greater." He estimates non-financial investments in Africa may climb as high as \$3 billion this year, double the 2008 level.

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

23. Pacific Command Leadership

The Associated Press ("US MILITARY GETS NEW COMMANDER IN THE PACIFIC", 2009/10/19) reported that a fighter pilot who made a cameo appearance as a Tom Cruise foe in "Top Gun" has taken over as the top U.S. military commander in Asia and the Pacific. Adm. Robert F. Willard assumed control of the U.S. Pacific Command in a Monday ceremony. At the Pacific Command, he'll lead all branches of the military in the Asia-Pacific, from California to the Indian Ocean, and will be in charge of some 325,000 personnel. Willard succeeds Adm. Timothy Keating, who is retiring.

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

II. PRC Report

24. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua News ("ASIA-PACIFIC REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CONFERENCE HELD", 2009/10/19) reported that the 5th Asia-Pacific Conference was held in Beijing on October 18th. President of the PRC Women's Federation Chen Zhili attended the Conference. "China is a responsible country with a large population that attaches great importance to family planning and reproductive health. China will enhance legislation and take effective measures to promote reproductive health and the life quality of the people," she said.

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

25. PRC Energy

Shanghai Security News ("2009 CHINA CLEAN ENERGY INTERNATIONAL FORUM TO BE HELD", 2009/10/19) reported that the 2009 China Clean Energy International Forum which is sponsored by China International Chamber of Commerce and Financial Times, is to be held in Beijing from November 2 to 3. Over 300 high-level decision-makers all over the world will come together and discuss related issues.

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

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