

NAPSNet Daily Report 22 January, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 22 January, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 22, 2009,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-22-january-2009/>

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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("RUSSIA DOES NOT SEE DPRK AS NUCLEAR POWER: ENVOY ", Seoul, 2009/01/21) reported that Russia does not acknowledge DPRK as a nuclear power and will continue working with regional countries to persuade Pyongyang to give up its nuclear drive, Moscow's envoy said Wednesday. Glev Ivashendsov, Russian ambassador to ROK, said regional stability is "crucial to Russia's economic development," as Moscow is pushing for natural resources development in Siberia and the Far East.

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2. DPRK on US Military Deployments

Yonhap ("N. KOREA SAYS U.S. PREPARING FOR WAR WITH NEW FIGHTERS IN S. KOREA", Seoul, 2009/01/22 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that the F-16 multi-role fighters the U.S. military plans to deploy in the ROK in March are evidence of an increasing nuclear threat from the U.S. "It is absolutely unpardonable crime for the U.S. to get frantic with arms buildup for aggression aimed at a preemptive nuclear strike at its dialogue partner behind the scene while paying lip-service to dialogue and the like," the KCNA said. It said Washington is "misleading the public opinion" by asserting that Pyongyang's nuclear drive is to blame for military tension on the Korean Peninsula. "The DPRK will never do such thing (denuclearization) first unless the U.S. rolls back its hostile policy toward the DPRK and fundamentally removes its nuclear threat to the latter," it said.

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3. Sino-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "PRC OFFICIAL WANG VISITING DPRK: STATE MEDIA ", Seoul, 2009/01/22) reported that a senior PRC official, Wang Jiarui, is visiting DPRK, Pyongyang's media said Wednesday. Wang's visit raises the possibility DPRK leader Kim Jong-il may appear to greet a foreign guest for the first time since he reportedly suffered a stroke last summer.

Xinhua News ("WORKERS' PARTY LEADER: DPRK-CHINA FRIENDSHIP TO GROW STRONGER", Pyongyang, 2009/01/22) reported that friendship between the DPRK and PRC will grow stronger this year through the joint efforts of both sides, Choe Thae Bok, secretary of the central committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, said. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties, and the "year of DPRK-China friendship." Choe met with a delegation of the Communist Party of China (CPC) that was headed by Wang Jiarui, leader of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee.

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4. DPRK Refugees

Agence France Presse ("SEOUL ALLOWS DPRK REFUGEES ID NUMBERS CHANGE TO AVOID BIAS", Seoul, 2009/01/21) reported that ROK's cabinet has approved a law allowing DPRK refugees to change their newly assigned social security numbers to avoid discrimination, officials said Wednesday. Former refugees are sometimes denied visas to visit PRC or shunned by ROK employers because their status is discernible from the numbers.

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5. Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("UNICEF TO REPLACE VACCINE REFRIGERATORS IN N. KOREA: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/01/22) reported that the United Nations Children's Fund plans to replace its vaccine storage refrigerators across the DPRK, after the outbreak of a measles epidemic in the DPRK in 2007 was attributed to its poor medical infrastructure, the Voice of America said. The relief agency launched a 10-year project this year to replace all outdated U.N. vaccine refrigerators in the DPRK with new ones, the US-based radio station said, quoting Kamrul Islam, chief of health and nutrition at UNICEF's branch office in Pyongyang.

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6. ROK Environment

Dong-A Ilbo ("HIGH LEVELS OF CARCINOGEN FOUND IN DAEGU TAP WATER", 2009/01/21) reported that the Daegu city government is on high alert after high levels of a cancer-causing material were found yesterday at one of the city's water purification facilities. Daegu Metropolitan

Waterworks said 1,4-dioxane levels at the Maegok water purification plant rose to 54 micrograms per liter, exceeding the 50 micrograms recommended by the World Health Organization. A prolonged winter drought and the ensuing loss of water in the Nakdong River are being blamed as the cause. 1,4-dioxane is a byproduct of polyester manufacturing.

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7. ROK Unrest

Yonhap News ("SEOUL POLICE CHIEF REGRETS, BUT DEFENDS, RAID ON PROTESTERS", Seoul, 2009/01/21) reported that the Seoul police chief said Wednesday that he regrets the deaths that occurred Tuesday during a standoff between police and a group of protesters, but defended the raid as necessary to preserve public order. "The situation where protesters were throwing makeshift bombs and golf balls at nearby areas and buildings could no longer be overlooked," Commissioner Kim Seok-ki, appearing at a parliamentary hearing, said as he explained how the decision was made to send in special police forces. He said he will "maintain a consistent and strict policy on illegal and violent protests," indicating he does not regret the decision.

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8. Sino-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap News (Nam Kwang-sik, "PRC PETROCHEMICAL MAKERS ACCUSE ROK FIRMS OF DUMPING ", Seoul, 2009/01/21) reported that petrochemical makers from ROK and PRC have been in a heated dispute over complaints by the PRC makers that cheaper ROK products eroded their earnings, industry sources said Wednesday. The specific petrochemical products in dispute are terephthalic acid (TPA), polypropylene (PP) and polyethylene (PE), all raw materials used to make plastic bottles, textiles and plastic shopping bags, government officials said. The PRC companies say that since July of last year, when falling oil prices pulled down the price of petrochemical products, ROK manufacturers began exporting their products to PRC at below market prices.

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9. ROK-Indonesia Trade Relations

Jakarta Post (Lilian Budianto, "ROK FOREIGN MINISTER IN TOWN TO BOOST TRADE", Jakarta, 2009/01/21) reported that Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda and visiting ROK counterpart Yu Myung-hwan agreed on Wednesday that both countries should boost more trade and investment especially in energy and forestry sectors. "Our cooperation in energy sector has been very active, we have an ROK Indonesia energy forum in addition to the task force on trade and business. We also develop excellent cooperation in our efforts to mitigate climate change," Hassan said.

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10. Japan, ROK Role in Afghanistan

Xinhua News ("S KOREA, JAPAN TO HOLD TALKS ON EXPANDING ROLES IN AFGHANISTAN", 2009/01/22) reported that ROK officials said that the ROK and Japanese government will hold talks on expanding their roles in Afghanistan. The two sides agreed to launch a working-level talks between director general-level officials from the two neighbors' foreign ministries on Jan. 30, the ROK's Yonhap News Agency said. The two sides are considering to take joint efforts in development assistance projects and expand contributions there, Yonhap said.

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11. Japan-US Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("ASO IN BIND OVER OBAMA TIES", 2009/01/21) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso has expressed confidence that he can forge close ties with the Barack Obama administration, but signs so far indicate the Japanese leader lacks the building blocks for such a relationship. "I have high expectations on the new U.S administration," Aso said. One way officials are trying to build trust with the United States is to create a comprehensive package to help stabilize Afghanistan. But an SDF dispatch would require new legislation, which would likely be rejected in the divided Diet. And fresh monetary support is nearly out of the question.

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12. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE TASK FORCE APPROVES NAVAL MISSION TO SOMALIA", Tokyo, 2009/01/22 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that Japan's ruling coalition Thursday approved plans to send naval ships to pirate-infested waters off Somalia to protect Japanese vessels and nationals, an official said. The navy would protect Japanese-registered ships and foreign ships with Japanese crew and passengers, or important cargo, said an official with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's junior coalition partner, New Komeito. The task force said that Japanese coastguards should be on board the navy ships to exercise police duties as the Japanese navy's role was limited strictly to self-defence, he said.

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13. Japan Nuclear Power

Kyodo News ("IAEA STARTS CHECK OF NUCLEAR PLANT", Tsuruga, Japan, 2009/01/21) reported that an International Atomic Energy Agency team began safety assessments Tuesday at Fukui Prefecture's Mihama nuclear power plant, where a fatal accident occurred in 2004. The IAEA team consisting of 13 experts from 12 countries, including the United States and some European countries, will conduct safety checks until Feb. 5 in nine fields, including operations, maintenance and radiation protection, and is scheduled to compile a report in six months.

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14. Japan-Taiwan Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN TO WOO JAPAN IN 2009", Taipei, 2009/01/21) reported that Taiwan will try to improve relations with Japan following strained ties with its former colonial ruler since President Ma Ying-jeou came to office, the government said on Wednesday. 'The government of Taiwan has designated 2009 as the year for bolstering its special partnership with Japan,' the foreign ministry said in a statement. 'During the next 12 months, Taiwan will intensify bilateral relations with Japan and will promote dialogue and cooperation.'

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15. Japanese Naval Collision

Kyodo ("DESTROYER PRIMARY CAUSE OF COLLISION WITH BOAT: TRIBUNAL", Yokohama, 2009/01/22 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the Yokohama Marine Accident Tribunal determined Thursday that Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer Atago was the main cause of a fatal collision with a fishing boat off Chiba Prefecture last February. The panel recommended that the 3rd Escort Flotilla, to which the Aegis-equipped destroyer belongs, provide thorough instructions on safe navigation.

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16. Japan Whaling Issue

Associated Press ("GROUP OFFERS TO STOP HARASSING JAPANESE WHALERS", Canberra, Australia, 2009/01/20) reported that a radical conservation group on Wednesday offered to abandon its dangerous campaign to disrupt Japanese whaling in Antarctica if Australia will agree to take legal action to save the whales.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN: ISLAND WILL DISCUSS COOPERATION WITH CHINA", Taipei, 2009/01/21) reported that Chiang Pin-kung, Taiwan's top PRC negotiator, says he will discuss financial cooperation and direct regular flights with the mainland this year. Chiang says he will discuss with Beijing how Taiwanese and PRC banks and brokerages can establish branches in each other's territory. He says he will also work with Beijing to transform existing charter flights into regular commercial flights.

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18. PRC-Myanmar Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA POLICE DETAIN TWO OVER MYANMAR KIDNAP SCANDAL: STATE MEDIA", Beijing, 2009/01/22) reported that Xinhua News Agency said Thursday police in Yuncheng city in Shanxi province have detained two people allegedly linked to the Myanmar-based kidnapping of at least 50 teenagers whose parents were sent ransom demands. The police said nine people were suspected of being involved in what was believed to be a cross-border gang. They said

that of the 19 youngsters known to have disappeared from Yuncheng, 17 had already returned home and they were searching for the remaining two.

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19. PRC Food Safety

Associated Press (Anita Chang, "2 DEATH SENTENCES GIVEN IN CHINA MILK SCANDAL", Shijiazhuang, 2009/01/22) reported that the Intermediate People's Court in Shijiazhuang gave a life sentence to Tian Wenhua, 66, the former general manager and chairwoman of Sanlu Group Co., over the tainted milk scandal. The court also sentenced Zhang Yujun to death for running a workshop that was allegedly the PRC's largest source of melamine, said spokesman Wang Wei. A second man, Geng Jinping, was also given the death penalty for producing and selling toxic food.

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20. PRC Food Security

University of Leeds (Dr Elisabeth Simelton, "INDUSTRIALIZATION OF PRC INCREASES FRAGILITY OF GLOBAL FOOD SUPPLY", 2009/01/21) reported that global grain markets are facing breaking point according to new research by the University of Leeds into the agricultural stability of PRC. Experts predict that if PRC's recent urbanisation trends continue, and the country imports just 5% more of its grain, the entire world's grain export would be swallowed whole. "China is a country undergoing a massive transformation, which is having a profound effect on land use," says Dr Elisabeth Simelton, research fellow at the Sustainability Research Institute at the University of Leeds, and lead author of the study. "Growing grain is a fundamentally low profit exercise, and is increasingly being carried out on low quality land with high vulnerability to drought."

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21. PRC Censorship

Reuters (Emma Graham-Harrison, "PRC EXTENDS 'LEWD' CRACKDOWN TO CELL PHONES", Beijing, 2009/01/21) reported that PRC has extended a crackdown on electronic porn to the country's mobile phones, after shutting down 1,250 websites because of their explicit content, the official Xinhua agency said Wednesday. "We will incorporate 'lewd' messages spread via mobile phones into the crackdown," the report quoted a joint notice from the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Culture and five other government offices saying.

Reuters ("CHINA DEFENDS STATE MEDIA'S OBAMA SPEECH CENSORSHIP", Beijing, 2009/01/22 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the PRC on Thursday defended the censorship on state television and domestic websites of inauguration speech references by U.S. President Barack Obama to communism and dissent. "I don't understand the situation you've raised. I think Chinese media, like media present here, have their own editorial rights," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told a

news briefing.

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22. PRC Public Health

Xinhua News (Edward Wong, "PRC TO SPEND \$123 BILLION ON UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE", Beijing, 2009/01/21) reported that PRC announced Wednesday that it intends to spend \$123 billion by 2011 to establish universal health care for the country's 1.3 billion people. The plan was passed Wednesday at a session of the State Council, the PRC cabinet. Prime Minister Wen Jiabao presided. Xinhua, the state news agency, said authorities would "take measures within three years to provide basic medical security to all Chinese in urban and rural areas, improve the quality of medical services and make medical services more accessible and affordable for ordinary people."

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23. PRC Bird Flu

Xinhua News ("PRC ENHANCES LIVE POULTRY MARKET MONITORING TO CONTAIN BIRD FLU ", Beijing, 2009/01/21) reported that PRC has ordered beefed-up monitoring and management of live poultry markets. The ministries of health, agriculture and the State Administration of Industry and Commerce in a joint circular on Tuesday urged local bureaus to closely work together in supervising and managing live poultry markets. Local offices must maintain a 24-hour on-spot supervision of the markets, and once bird flu or suspected bird flu cases are spotted, they must carry out emergency response, epidemiological investigation, epidemic source tracing and isolation of those having close contacts with the fowls to curb the spread of the epidemic . Localities were urged to close live poultry markets within the urban areas, and disinfect the markets every day if they cannot be shut down.

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24. PRC Energy

Radio Free Asia (Michael Lelyveld, "PRC OIL FUND FUELS CRITICISM", Beijing, 2009/01/21) reported that PRC's government is reportedly planning a large fund to help control oil prices as its energy policies remain in flux. On Jan. 9, the state-controlled China Daily said the country would establish "a giant government-led fund along the lines of the National Social Security Fund in a bid to stabilize oil supply, demand and prices." The fund, which reportedly awaits approval by the State Council, would be used to build up crude oil reserves and "increase the negotiating power of China in oil trade with other countries," China Daily said.

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II. PRC Report

25. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net (Wuyong, "LI ZHAOJI FOUNDATION DONATES 47 MILLION YUAN TO DEVELOP RURAL ECONOMY IN NINGXIA", 2009/01/21) reported that the Water Cellar and New Rural Health Room Project of Li Zhaoji Foundation was officially launched in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. It is understood that this project is funded by Li Zhaoji Foundation with 47 million yuan, focusing on the construction of 6000 water cellars in the driest counties of Ningxia, and 60 standard health rooms to raise the health care level in rural areas.

Xinhua Net (Gong Zhihong, "HEBEI PROVINCE ESTABLISHES YOUTH LOVE UNION", 2009/01/21) reported that in order to integrate social resources of public welfare, Hebei Provincial Communist Youth League guides to establish "Hebei Youth Love Union". At present, it has absorbed 192 social public welfare organizations and members about 30,000 people. The Union is a loose public welfare organization composed mainly by young people. All kinds of love social organizations, enterprises and public institutions, and young people with love can join in it. There is no Leader-Member Relation between the members. All members can join or quit on their own will.

China Youth Daily ("FIRST CHINA CIVIL SOCIETY BLUE PAPER ISSUED", 2009/01/21) reported that the PRC's first China Civil Society Blue Paper edited by Civil Society Research Center of Peking University was issued recently. Though the views of more than 20 experts were different, they all accepted that China had gone into civil society. They think 2008 is the first year of PRC society. During the Wenchuan Earthquake, the overall performance of Chinese people demonstrated this quality.

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