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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. U.S. on DPRK Energy Assistance
  - 2. Japan on DPRK Energy Assistance
  - 3. ROK on DPRK Terror List Status
  - 4. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 5. ROK-US Security Alliance
  - 6. Japan Elections
  - 7. Japan on Climate Change
  - 8. Japan-India Relations
  - 9. Cross Straits Relations
  - 10. PRC-Singapore Relations
  - 11. PRC Health Crisis
  - 12. PRC Civil Society
  - 13. PRC Economic Reform
  - 14. PRC on Climate Change

    - 15. PRC Pollution
    - 16. Shanghai Cooperation Organization
    - 17. Asia Pacific Climate Change
- II. PRC Report
    - 18. PRC Civil Society and Poverty Alleviation
    - 19. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction
    - 20. PRC Civil Society and the Environment
- III. ROK Report
    - 21. DPRK Nuclear Program
    - 22. Japanese Role in Six-Party Talks
    - 23. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. U.S. on DPRK Energy Assistance

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Satoshi Ogawa, "U.S. EYES OIL AID SOURCES FOR N. KOREA / REPLACEMENTS SOUGHT FOR JAPAN ASSISTANCE", Washington D.C., 2008/10/22) reported that the United States is discussing the option of asking several countries, including Australia, to provide engergy assistance to the DPRK. This is in response to Japan's delay in providing the DPRK with share of about 200,000 tons of oil. Asked whether other countries might be willing to make up for Japan's postponed assistance, Robert Wood, deputy spokesman of the U.S. State Department, indicated countries outside the six-party talks might join in the assistance program, saying in Monday's daily briefing, "That'll be up to other countries who may decide to do that."

(return to top)

2. Japan on DPRK Energy Assistance

Agence-France-Presse ("REFUSAL ON NKOREA AID WON'T WEAKEN JAPAN; PM", Tokyo, 2008/10/22) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso on Wednesday rejected criticism that Tokyo is losing clout through its refusal to give aid to the DPRK. Asked whether Japan was becoming isolated, Aso said: "Absolutely not. That kind of talk is a victim's mentality."

(return to top)

3. ROK on DPRK Terror List Status

The Korean Herald (Jin Dae-woong , "U.S. DELISTING OF N.K. NOT SET IN STONE", Seoul, 2008/10/22) reported that the ROK's top diplomat yesterday indicated that the United States may retract its removal of the DPRK from its terrorism blacklist if the DPRK's declaration of its nuclear programs proves to be inaccurate. "It would be a matter that other member nations to the six-party talks will decide on after consultations," Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said, answering a question from a ruling party lawmaker on how to react if the DPRK's nuclear list is falsified. "First of all, we can consider resetting a raft of sanctions on the North, which have been lifted."

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press ("S. KOREA SAYS N. KOREA RUNNING NORMALLY UNDER KIM", Seoul, 2008/10/22) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak believes the DPRK is running "normally under leader Kim Jong Il." Lee made the remark in an Oct. 18 interview with the French newspaper Le Figaro, his office said Wednesday. "I don't think there are any changes in North Korea because of Chairman Kim Jong Il's health," Lee said during the interview.

Korea Times (Michael Ha, "UNIFICATION MINISTER BLASTS N. KOREA FOR HOSTILE RHETORIC", 2008/10/22) reported that ROK Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong blasted the DPRK's recent string of hostile rhetoric against the Lee Myung-bak administration. "`It's not appropriate for Pyongyang to go on criticizing President Lee and the South Korean government if it wants to be a cooperative partner with us,'' Kim said Wednesday. The minister also called on the reclusive regime to resume inter-Korean dialogue if it wants the ROK to honor the Oct. 4, 2007, joint accord signed by Kim Jong-il and then ROK President Roh Moo-hyun.

(return to top)

5. ROK-US Security Alliance

JoongAng Daily (Lee Young-jong, "CITING BUDGETARY ISSUES, U.S. SEEKS BASE MOVE DELAY", Seoul, 2008/10/22) reported that The United States has asked to delay the scheduled relocation of U.S. military bases in the ROK by up to four years due to budgetary constraints, according to military sources in Seoul. The latest development is expected to further fan concerns about the cost of the military relocation that is already estimated to come to about 13 trillion won ($9.6 billion) - a figure that could well increase with any additional delay. According to Seoul sources, the U.S. military's annual budget allocated for the relocation was trimmed down to $300 million from $600 million, meaning it may not be able to relocate its forces here as planned.

(return to top)

6. Japan Elections

Mainichi Daily News ("ASO'S PLAN TO HOLD 3-NATION SUMMIT IN DECEMBER RAISES

ELECTION DOUBTS", 2008/10/22) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso has been sounding out the PRC and ROK over plans to hold a three-way summit in Fukuoka in December, it has been learned. However, an early December summit could clash with the political situation in Japan as the House of Representatives election is rumored to be held on Nov. 30. Japan had originally planned to hold a summit on Sept. 21, but the plans were put off with the sudden resignation of former Prime Minister Fukuda. If the summit is set for early December, it is certain that people will start to speak out over the difficulties of holding the Lower House election on Nov. 30.

(return to top)

7. Japan on Climate Change

Agence-France-Presse ("TOKYO LEADER BERATES COUNTRIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE", Tokyo, 2008/10/22) reported that Tokyo's outspoken governor on Wednesday berated national leaders for their "foolish" failure to halt global warming as the world's biggest cities met to plan action on the climate. Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara, in an opening address, lashed out at Russia and the United States for disputing rights to the North Pole, noting that the polar ice cap was melting at a record pace. Ishihara also said he was "very disappointed" with international talks on climate change including July's summit in Japan of leaders of the Group of Eight rich nations, who called for at least halving global carbon emissions by 2050.

(return to top)

8. Japan-India Relations

Agence-France-Presse ("JAPAN SIGNS BIGGEST LOAN DEAL WITH INDIA", Tokyo, 2008/10/22) reported that Japan on Tuesday signed its biggest ever loan deal for an overseas project to help India build a major railway between New Delhi and Mumbai. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Japanese counterpart Taro Aso signed the deal at a summit in Tokyo. Japan will initially provide some 450 billion yen (4.5 billion dollars) in low-interest loans to India. India will use the money to build a freight railway between its political and economic capitals, hoping to improve its creaky infrastructure blamed for holding back the fast-growing economy.

The Indian Express ("INDIA, JAPAN INK DECLARATION ON SECURITY COOPERATION", Tokyo, 2008/10/22) reported that India and Japan on Wednesday inked a landmark joint declaration on security cooperation but immediately assured the PRC that their enhanced ties were not aimed at it or any other country. Economic partnership and security cooperation between India and Japan “are not at the cost of any third country, least of all China,” Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at a joint press conference with his Japanese counterpart Taro Aso. The two sides stressed common commitment to democracy, open society, human rights and the rule of law and pointed out their deep respect for each other’s contribution in promoting peace, stability and development in Asia and beyond.

(return to top)

9. Cross Straits Relations

Financial Times (Robin Kwong and Mure Dickie, "CHINESE ENVOY ATTACKED IN TAIWAN

TEMPLE", Taipei, 2008/10/22) reported that the PRC's second-highest ranking negotiator on Taiwanese issues was pushed to the ground and punched by protesters in Taiwan on Tuesday, just weeks before a historic meeting between the two sides was expected to take place. Zhang Mingqing, vice-chairman of China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, was visiting Taiwan as part of an academic symposium. Protesters surrounded and attacked Mr Zhang while he was sightseeing at a Confucian temple with minimal police protection. One protester jumped on to Mr Zhang's car when he tried to escape. Tuesday's attack was a rare instance of a senior PRC official being met with personal violence from protesters. Both the PRC and Taiwan officially condemned the attack.

Xinhua News ("TAIWAN LOOSENS REGULATIONS ON MAINLAND STUDENTS", Taipei, 2008/10/22) reported that Taiwan's education authority has extended the period PRC students are allowed to remain on the island for study from four months to a year. The move was to facilitate cross-Strait educational exchanges, as the previous maximum of four months forced students to depart before completing a full semester, the education authority said. PRC students in Taiwan could apply for the extension, but the total number would be limited to 1,000 every academic year. Although no restrictions were set for PRC student study projects relating to literature, culture or industry, applications to study "sensitive" subjects, including nuclear sciences or Taiwan hydrology, would be scrutinized and might be rejected.

(return to top)

10. PRC-Singapore Relations

Wall Street Journal ("SINGAPORE, CHINA TO SIGN FREE TRADE PACT IN BEIJING", Singapore, 2008/10/22) reported that Singapore and the PRC will sign a free trade agreement in Beijing during a visit there this week by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, the city-state's foreign ministry said Tuesday. Lee will make an official visit to the PRCfrom October 22-27 in conjunction with his attendance at a summit of Asian and European leaders this weekend, the ministry said in a press statement. Negotiations for the PRC-Singapore FTA began in October 2006. The PRC is Singapore's third-largest trading partner, and Singapore is the PRC's eighth-largest trading partner.

(return to top)

11. PRC Health Crisis

The Korea Times (Kim Rahn, "MELAMINE FOUND IN EGG POWDER FROM CHINA", Seoul, 2008/10/22) reported that the harmful chemical melamine has been detected in five products containing Chinese egg powder used to make sauces and seasonings, the ROK Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries announced Wednesday. The finding came after the government started inspecting processed egg products shipped from the PRC last week, following reports that egg powder imported from the PRC to Japan contained the chemical. Melamine levels of the five products produced by two manufacturers, Dalian Hanovo Foods and Dalian Greensnow Egg Products Development, stood at 0.1 to 4 parts per million (ppm). "The amount of melamine found in the products is minute,'' a ministry official said. "We are making efforts to remove products that were already distributed to retailers from store shelves.''

(return to top)

12. PRC Civil Society

China Daily ("BEIJING EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS CREATIVITY OF GRASSROOTS NGOS", Beijing, 2008/10/22) reported that the World Bank's PRC Development Marketplace exhibition featured 115 different development projects, reflecting the huge development of the PRC's NGOs over recent years. David Dollar, PRC country director for the World Bank, the event's organizer, said: "The show brings grassroots organizations with good ideas together with corporations, affluent individuals and foundations that can provide funding." Tan Weiping, deputy director of the international cooperation department of the State Council Leading Group Office for Poverty Alleviation, said: "The ideas are good. The groups know their strengths, and their work is in accordance with the country's polices."

(return to top)

13. PRC Economic Reform

Xinhua News ("CHINA ANNOUNCES TAX EXEMPTION TO BOOST PROPERTY SECTOR", Beijing, 2008/10/22) reported that the PRC will exempt, starting from Nov. 1, the stamp tax on property purchase and the value-added tax of land on property sales to boost the recessive real estate sector, the Ministry of Finance said on Wednesday. The contract tax would be reduced to 1 percent, starting from Nov. 1, on purchase of the first unit of housing with a floor space no more than 90 square meters, the ministry said. The People's Bank of China, the central bank, said on late Wednesday that the down payment for first unit of housing with a floor space of more than 90 square meters for self use would not be less than 20 percent. The new practice will take effect as of Oct. 27.

(return to top)

14. PRC on Climate Change

Reuters ("CHINA REPORT WARNS OF GREENHOUSE GAS LEAP", Beijing, 2008/10/22) reported that PRC's greenhouse gas pollution could double or more in two decades says a new Chinese state think-tank study that casts stark light on the industrial giant's role in stoking global warming. Beijing has not released recent official data on greenhouse gas from the nation's fast-growing use of coal, oil and gas. Researchers abroad estimate that the PRC's carbon dioxide emissions now easily outstrip that of the United States, historically the biggest emitter. But in a break with official reticence, researchers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and other major state-run institutes have concluded that, without dramatic counter-steps, their nation's emissions will tower over all others' much sooner than an earlier government forecast.

(return to top)

15. PRC Pollution

Yangcheng Evening News ("MYSTERIOUS POLLUTION STRIKES PEARL RIVER", Guangzhou, 2008/10/22) reported that a section of the Pearl River that flows through Guangzhou City was polluted again yesterday. The river's water has turned black from pollution on several occasions in the past two years, but that there were still no convincing explanations as to what happened despite continuous complaints and some official investigations. The black water extended several kilometers

and the odor could be whiffed even on the top of a 32-story building nearby, the newspaper said. "Whenever the power plant discharges its waste water or it rains heavily, such dirty black water will turn up," a resident surnamed Tang told the newspaper. "We have complained a lot but nothing has changed."

(return to top)

16. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Xinhua News ("SCO MEMEBRS TO DISCUSS MEASURES TO DEAL WITH INT'L FINANCIAL CRISIS", Beijing, 2008/10/21) reported that PRC Vice Foreign Minister Li Hui said here Tuesday that members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) would discuss measures to deal with the current international financial crisis. Li told a press conference that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao will attend the seventh Meeting of Prime Ministers of the SCO Member States in Kazakhstan's capital Astana at the end of this month to discuss measures to deal with the international financial crisis by strengthening cooperation among the SCO member states. "They (the prime ministers) will also issue a joint statement and approve a new budget for the SCO cooperation in 2009 and an amended guideline concerning the implementation of the multilateral economic and trade cooperation within SCO member states," Li added.

(return to top)

17. Asia Pacific Climate Change

Kyodo News ("U.N. WARNS COASTAL MEGACITIES AT RISK FROM RISING SEAL LEVELS", Bangkok, 2008/10/22) reported that rising sea levels caused by global warming could result in catastrophic flooding of key coastal cities around the world, including Osaka, Kobe, Shanghai, and Mumbai, a new U.N. report warns. The latest State of the World's Cities report, compiled by the U.N. Human Settlements Program, or UN-HABITAT, noted that sea levels that rose by an estimated 17 centimeters in the 20th century are conservatively projected to rise 22-34 cm between 1990 and 2080. The report points out that 18 of Asia's 20 largest cities are coastal, located on a river bank, or in a delta.

(return to top)

II. PRC Report

18. PRC Civil Society and Poverty Alleviation

Public Welfare Times (Bai Xiaowei, "CHINA ASSOCIATION FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROPOSES 'ONE YUAN DONATION' TO ENHANCE RURAL INFORMATIONIZATION", 2008/10/22) reported that “China Rural Informationization Poverty Alleviation Forum” which was co-sponsored by China Association for Poverty Alleviation and China Zhi Gong Party Central Committee, was held recently in Beijing. The main reason for rural poverty has transferred from geographic and traffic factors to information, education, fund and other primary reasons. So the sponsors launched the “one yuan donation” initiative, calling the public to donate one yuan on Oct.17 (International Poverty

Alleviation Day) each year, in order to enhance rural informationization.

(return to top)

19. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction

Xinhua Net ("EXPERT SUGGESTS DAMMED LAKES TO BE DEVELOPED INTO SCENIC AREAS", 2008/10/21) reported that the hundreds of dammed lakes left by Wenchuan Earthquake are regarded as the most dangerous threats to the post-disaster reconstruction. But China's first Hydraulics doctor Wang Zhaoyin said yesterday at the 16th Asia-Pacific Regional Conference that most of the dammed lakes should be preserved. Some dammed lakes with high safety should also be developed into scenic areas like Jiuzhaigou Valley. The main reason to preserve the dammed lakes is that they can slow down the river water speed, which is good to stabilize the ecology.

(return to top)

20. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Forestry Bureau website ("GREEN INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL FUND OF GREEN CHINA FUND FOUND IN BEIJING", 2008/10/21) reported that Green Industry Development Special Fund of Green China Fund was found in Beijing on Oct.15. The first 1 million yuan of this fund was donated by Shanghai Cailian Industrial Development Co., Ltd.. The two sides plan to cooperate on woody grain and oil for the first stage, to plant oil camellia on the barren hills of Hunan, Jiangxi, and Guangxi province.

(return to top)

III. ROK Report

21. DPRK Nuclear Program

Ohmynews ("WOOKSHIK JUNG, REPRESENTATIVE OF PEACE NETWORK, CLAIMS OBAMA 'WON'T MAKE NUCLEAR ATTACK,' McCAIN 'NAÏVE IDEA'", 2008/10/23) said that a huge gap exists between the ROK and US versions of denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and that of DPRK. The former means denuclearization of DPRK, but the latter means prohibition of bringing (even temporarily) US nuclear weapons into ROK as well as ending the US nuclear umbrella. This signifies that as the six-party talks and DPRK-U.S. negotiation reach to the core, it will have to deal with the sensitive issues of America's nuclear strategy. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama claims as long as other countries have nuclear power, the U.S. will maintain its nuclear deterrent forces, but in the meantime it will hold summit meetings between the nuclear power states to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. On the other hand, Republican candidate John McCain said he would promote reduction of nuclear weapons, but he considers strong military forces including nuclear weapons are vital to the U.S. leadership and influence. If he is elected president, huge nuclear arms reduction is not likely to happen.

(return to top)

22. Japanese Role in Six-Party Talks

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("JAPAN'S NARROW-MINDED DIPLOMACY BRINGS ISOLATION", 2008/10/23) stated that Japan is persistently refusing to provide heavy oil to DPRK because of the unsettled abduction issue, thus weakening its voice in the six-party talks and instead earning complaints from other countries. If Australia provides heavy oil in place of Japan, Japan will no longer be able to have the right to speak in the six-party talks. A quick way to resolve the abduction issue is for DPRK and Japan to sit together and discuss, and the six-party talks could definitely be a big help in the process.

(return to top)

23. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Tongil News ("DPRK SPECIALISTS IN AND OUTSIDE OF KOREA CLAIM IN UNISON 'IT IS TIME TO CHANGE DIRECTION TO DEVELOPMENT AID'", 2008/10/23) states that, at present, aid for DPRK is facing a structural turning point. At an international conference, DPRK specialists from in and outside of the ROK agreed that it is time to change direction to development aid toward DPRK rather than emergency aid, and came up with several tasks. Edward P. Reed, representative of Asia Foundation in Korea, stressed that DPRK must first open its doors. Daeseok Choi, professor at Ewha Womans University, pointed out the importance of transformation in NGO's roles. Seunghwan Lee, director of policy planning committee at KCRC, said that it is questionable whether the present NGO system could last, and stressed the need for new paradigm and system.

(return to top)

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