

# NAPSNet Daily Report 24 January, 2008

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# **I. NAPSNet**

## **1. DPRK Nuclear Program**

Yonhap ("N.K. REAFFIRMS INTENT TO DENUCLEARIZE", Seoul, 2008/01/23) reported that the DPRK has "a firm intention" to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula in accordance with the "action-fo-action" principle of a key international deal, a pro-Pyongyang newspaper said. The report came as skepticism mounts in the United States and other nations over Pyongyang's commitment to denuclearization.

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## **2. DPRK Heavy Fuel Oil Shipments**

Interfax ("RUSSIA MAKES LAST FUEL OIL SHIPMENT TO N. KOREA", Moscow, 2008/01/23) reported that Russia has fulfilled its obligation to provide fuel oil to the DPRK. The last shipment was made on January 22, the press service of Rosneft, the oil company responsible for supplies to the DPRK, told the Oil News Agency. "Yesterday, the last shipment of fuel oil was unloaded from our tanker," the company said.

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## **3. US on DPRK Terror List Status**

Agence France Presse ("TOO SOON TO TAKE NKOREA OFF TERROR LIST: US", Washington, 2008/01/23) reported that the DPRK cannot be taken off the list of state sponsors of terrorism until it has made a full declaration on its suspect nuclear activities, the White House said. Asked if the US administration was about to remove Pyongyang from the list, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said: "No." "Right now where we are is waiting on the North Koreans to provide a complete and accurate declaration of their nuclear activities."

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## **4. Inter-Korean Military Talks**

Kyodo ("N., S. KOREA TO HOLD WORKING-LEVEL MILITARY TALKS FRI.", Seoul, 2008/01/23) reported that the DPRK and ROK will hold working-level military talks on Friday at the truce village of Panmunjom, the South's Defense Ministry said. At the talks, the two sides will discuss issues related to a cross-border cargo rail service launched in December last year, the ministry said.

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## **5. PRC-DPRK Energy Trade**

Kyodo ("CHINA'S OIL EXPORTS TO N. KOREA IN 2007 REMAIN FLAT ON YEAR", Beijing, 2008/01/23) reported that the PRC's oil exports to DPRK, a major energy source for the oil-starved country, remained on the same level in 2007 as a year earlier even as the PRC's overall oil exports dropped, PRC customs figures showed Wednesday. The PRC exported 523,160.27 tons of oil to DPRK from January to December, down 0.1 percent from the previous year, according to the General Administration of Customs.

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## **6. DPRK Economy**

Yonhap ("N. KOREA LURES FOREIGN TOURISTS TO SOCCER MATCH", Seoul, 2008/01/23) reported that the DPRK has invited foreign tourists to a rare soccer match between the two Koreas, set to kick off in Pyongyang in late March, a foreign tourism agency said Wednesday.

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## **7. US-ROK Security Alliance**

Yonhap ("S. KOREA'S ENVOY CAUTIOUS ON REOPENING OPCON", Washington, 2008/01/22) reported that a special envoy for the ROK's President-elect Lee Myung-bak showed caution over renegotiating the transfer of wartime military operational control of ROK troops from the United States to the ROK. Rep. Chung Mong-joon, on a visit to Washington, said, however, that some Korea experts he met in the U.S. expressed concerns that the transfer of wartime operational control may send the "wrong message" to the DPRK. The envoy is scheduled to meet U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates on Wednesday. "It was South Korea who wanted and proposed the OPCON transfer," Chung told reporters. "It would be difficult for us now to suggest we revisit the issue." He said he does not plan to raise the issue first when he meets Secretary Gates.

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## **8. US-ROK Relations**

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "LEE, BUSH AGREE TO BOOST ALLIANCE", 2008/01/23) reported that U.S. President George W. Bush yesterday signaled to President-elect Lee Myung-bak's envoy that bolstering the alliance with the ROK is one of his top priorities. "Bush emphasized that strengthening the alliance with Korea is a significant issue, and that he is hoping that the president-elect will visit as soon as possible," said one aide to envoy Chung Mong-joon. Chung also reportedly touched on a number of other key bilateral issues, such as the problem of ratifying the U.S.-ROK free trade agreement.

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## 9. ROK-Japan Relations

Donga Ilbo ("JAPAN TO BE LEE'S FIRST COUNTRY TO VISIT", 2008/01/23) reported that the Nihon Keizai Shimbun stated on Tuesday that regarding ROK-Japan relations, President-elect Lee Myung-bak selected Japan as the first country to make a state visit and both nations are negotiating on the details of the schedule. The Japanese newspaper analyzed that President-elect Lee plans to visit Japan and the U.S. immediately after his inauguration to quickly normalize ROKs ties with both countries which have been weakened by the Roh Moo-hyun administration.

Chosun Ilbo ("101 BODIES OF CONSCRIPTION VICTIMS COME HOME", 2008/01/23) reported that the remains of 101 Koreans pressed into labor and the army by imperial Japan during World War II will return to the ROK on Wednesday. A ROK government delegation and 50 family members of the victims held a memorial service on Tuesday at the Yutenji Temple in Tokyo, where the remains have been kept. Japanese foreign, health and labor ministry officials also attended the ceremony. Korean Ambassador to Japan Yu Myung-hwan called the memorial service a "valuable start to heal historical wounds between the two countries and create friendly and peaceful bilateral relations." Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Hitoshi Kimura offered an apology as a representative of his nation for having "inflicted suffering on Koreans." He promised to do his utmost to return the remains of other conscripts to the ROK as soon as possible.

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## 10. PRC Media Control

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA CALLS FOR STEPPED-UP PROPAGANDA", Beijing, 2008/01/23) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao has told officials to breathe new life into propaganda efforts, putting renewed emphasis on a key pillar of Communist rule ahead of this summer's Beijing Olympic Games. Hu's remarks at a major party gathering reflected the government's traditional focus on controlling information and guiding public opinion, yet also indicated concern that those efforts were losing their edge in the face of the Internet and other independent sources of information and entertainment. Officials should "perform well the task of outward propaganda, further exhibit and raise up the nation's good image," Hu said.

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## 11. PRC Environment

Reuters (Chris Buckley , "BEIJING OLYMPIC WATER SCHEME DRAINS PARCHED FARMERS", Baoding, 2008/01/23) reported that dusty villages far from the PRC's capital are paying their own price for the government's plan to stage a postcard-perfect Olympic Games, enduring shrunken crops, drained wells and contention over lost land and homes. The PRC is rushing to finish canals to pump 300 million cubic meters of "emergency" water to Beijing for its "green" Games, ensuring a lush, sparkling host city greets the world in August. The 309 km of channels and pipes cut into Hebei province, next to the capital, will take water from farming country already beset by drought and environmental strains. Villagers watching a frantic "100-day battle" to complete the main canal by a late-April deadline wondered how much of the price of a leafy Beijing they should bear.

The New York Times (Keith Bradsher, "CHINA OFFERS PLAN TO CLEAN UP ITS POLLUTED LAKES", Hong Kong, 2008/01/23) reported that the PRC government unveiled a detailed plan on Tuesday to limit pollution in the PRC's lakes by 2010 and return them to their original state by 2030. The State Council, the PRC's cabinet, ordered strict regulation of the release of wastewater, the closing of heavily polluting factories near lakes, the improvement of sewage treatment facilities and strict limits on fish farms, according to the official Xinhua news agency. The council also banned the use of pesticides with highly toxic residue near large lakes as well as detergents containing phosphorus. While national leaders in Beijing have shown greater interest in recent months in cleaning up the environment, their efforts have frequently met resistance from provincial and local officials more interested in maximizing economic growth.

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## 12. PRC Energy Supply

BBC News ("CHINA IN POWER SHORTAGE WARNING", 2008/01/23) reported that the PRC says it is facing serious power shortages as severe winter weather continues to cause unusually high demand for electricity. Thirteen regions have already started to ration power supplies, the official Xinhua news agency reported. It said coal reserves were down to emergency levels and stockpiles were only high enough to generate power for the whole country for eight days. The PRC's National Development and Reform Commission, which has control over energy issues, has called on coal suppliers and electricity providers to do their best to maintain output while promoting energy conservation.

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