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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. US-DPRK Relations
  - 2. US, ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 4. UN on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 5. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 6. Japan on Inter-Korean Relations
  - 7. DPRK Military
  - 8. DPRK Environment
  - 9. ROK-PRC Relations
  - 10. ROK Energy Supply
  - 11. ROK Space Program
  - 12. US-Japan Security Alliance
  - 13. Russo-Japanese Relations
  - 14. Japan Politics
  - 15. Japan Space Program
  - 16. Sino-US Disaster Relief Exercise

- 17. US-PRC Climate Change Collaboration
- 18. Sino-Indian Climate Change Collaboration
- 19. PRC Climate Change
- 20. Cross Strait Relations
- 21. PRC Environment
- 22. PRC Ethnic Unrest
- 23. PRC Security

- II. PRC Report
  - 24. PRC Civil Society and the Environment
  - 25. PRC Environmental Regulations
  - 26. PRC Civil Society and Cross Strait Relations

Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("US ENVOY PLANS NUCLEAR TALKS WITH NORTH IN SEPT.", Seoul, 2009/08/25) reported that Stephen Bosworth, the Barack Obama administration's special representative for DPRK policy, will travel to Pyongyang next month for the first bilateral nuclear negotiations between the two countries, a senior diplomatic source in Washington said. Bosworth will be accompanied by Sung Kim, Washington's point man for the six-party talks. "Since his appointment in February, Bosworth has openly and repeatedly said he would like to visit North Korea, but Pyongyang snubbed the offer by conducting missile and nuclear tests," the source said. "The North, however, recently expressed its intention to invite Bosworth." "A comprehensive package will be offered in return for the North's denuclearization during his trip to Pyongyang. The U.S. principle of having a bilateral negotiation with the North within the framework of the six-nation talks will remain unchanged," he added.

(return to top)

2. US, ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("US, SKOREA URGE NKOREA TO SCRAP NUKES", Seoul, 2009/08/24) reported that US and ROK officials stressed that the DPRK must give up its nuclear weapons. Wi Sung-Lac said the objective "is a complete verifiable denuclearisation of North Korea." Goldberg replied: "Absolutely, that is certainly our goal."

(return to top)

3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

JoongAng Ilbo ("LEE SENDS KIM JONG-IL DETAILED PLAN", 2009/08/24) reported that P resident Lee Myung-bak explained details of his DPRK policy to Pyongyang's envoys during their meeting in an attempt to convince the country to give up its nuclear arms program, a Blue House official said. If Pyongyang agrees, "we will work hard to help the North to become a member of the international community and provide economic assistance," Lee was quoted as saying. "The world is rapidly changing," Lee was quoted as saying. "It's the era of globalization. We are ready to help North Korea. Wouldn't it be incredible if the North becomes a member of the international community and prospers economically?"

(return to top)

4. UN on DPRK Nuclear Program

Financial Times (Harvey Morris, "UN CAUTIOUS ON PYONGYANG'S SOFTER STANCE", 2009/08/24) reported that the US and western allies this week acknowledged the emergence of a less confrontational stance from te DPRK, but signalled there would be no let-up in enforcing sanctions against Pyongyang for its missile and nuclear programmes. "North Korea decided to escalate, and has since decided to de-escalate. That's helpful in as far as it goes," said a western diplomat on the United Nations Security Council, which last month widened sanctions previously imposed by the 15-member body to include named officials of the regime. The diplomat said the council wanted to see positive steps by Pyongyang rather than just gestures.

(return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("NORTH NOT RESPONDING TO INTER-KOREAN PHONE LINK: OFFICIALS", Seoul, 2009/08/28) reported that the DPRK was failing to respond to calls from the ROK on a direct phone channel on Monday after briefly reconnecting the line during a visit by a DPRK delegation to Seoul, officials said. "As of Monday morning, the direct Red Cross phone line was not working, as the North was not responding to our calls," Unification Ministry spokesman Chun Hae-sung said. But the spokesman could not say whether the DPRK had suspended the phone channel again or was temporarily not taking calls.

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA COERCED SKOREAN'S FALSE CONFESSION: OFFICIALS", Seoul, 2009/08/25) reported that the DPRK coerced an ROK detainee into falsely confessing that he had once worked for Seoul's spy agency while holding him incommunicado for 137 days, officials said Tuesday. Yu was not beaten or tortured and was given adequate food and sleep, the ministry report said. But he underwent day-long interrogations every day for three months after his arrest on March 30, was verbally threatened and forced sometimes to kneel on the floor. Yu admitted he had criticised leader Kim Jong-il and the DPRK's political system in letters to a DPRK maid at a residence for ROK workers at Kaesong. He also urged the woman to defect and gave her gifts such as a watch and cosmetics, the ministry said.

(return to top)

6. Japan on Inter-Korean Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN PRAISES WEEKEND TALKS BETWEEN N. KOREAN OFFICIAL, S. KOREAN LEADER", 2009/08/24) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura praised the weekend talks between ROK President Lee Myung Bak a nd a senior DPRK official. "They were meaningful talks when you think about the future peace on the Korean Peninsula," Kawamura told a news conference. "It's important to resolve peacefully and comprehensively the pressing nuclear issue and other concerns through South-North dialogues, including the six-party talks."

(return to top)

7. DPRK Military

Xinhua News ("DPRK TO KEEP UP MILITARY-FIRST POLICY", Pyongyang, 2009/08/24) reported that the DPRK will keep up its military-first, or Songun, policy in a bid to build a powerful nation, a senior official said. "Songun represents the dignity and sovereignty of the country and nation and it is the unshakable will of the Party to build a thriving nation with the might of Songun," said Ri Yong Ho, chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA). Ri praised the top leader of having made "spectacular achievements ... despite the repeated military provocations of the U.S. imperialists," and he called on the people to firmly defend Kim Jong Il "politically and ideologically at the risk of their lives."

(return to top)

8. DPRK Environment

KCNA ("TIDELAND TURNS INTO ARABLE LAND", 2009/08/24) reported that the Taegyedo tideland constructors have recently dammed about 14 kilometers of rough sea to acquire 8,800 hectares of land. Prior to this, they had reclaimed the Pidansom tideland of 5,500 hectares so that Sindo County came into being. And they reclaimed the Tasado tideland of 1,000 hectares and Kwaksan, Soho and Sokhwa tidelands totaling 2,600 hectares. The sea dike makes it possible to protect the farmland from salt damage. Rice has already been planted in the paddy field of 2,600 hectares in the Taegyedo tideland, producing a large quantity of rice every year.

(return to top)

9. ROK-PRC Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA'S TOP POLITICAL ADVISOR VOWS CLOSER BONDS WITH ROK", 2009/08/24) reported that the PRC's top political advisor Jia Qinglin met with member and former deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea (ROK) Lee Sang Deuk on Monday, and called for joint efforts to boost the bilateral strategic cooperative partnership. "China is ready to work closely with the ROK to deepen exchanges and cooperation to boost bilateral ties," said Jia, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

(return to top)

10. ROK Energy Supply

JoongAng Ilbo ("NEW WIND FARMS, SUBSIDIES PLANNED", 2009/08/24) reported that in an effort to expand the supply of renewable energy to ROK households and support its producers, the government laid out an action plan that includes the construction of a wind-generated power complex and subsidies for the purchase and use of hydrogen fuel cells. The plan, announced by the Presidential Committee on Green Growth, hopes to raise the competitiveness of the renewable energy industry by helping it commercialize new technologies. It calls for the government to establish a 40-megawatt wind power complex on the Saemangeum tidal flat by 2014.

(return to top)

11. ROK Space Program

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA'S FIRST SPACE ROCKET BLASTS OFF", Seoul, 2009/08/25) reported that the ROK's first space rocket blasted off successfully Tuesday. Television pictures showed the first stage of the Korea Space Launch Vehicle-1 separating from the second stage, less than five minutes after the rocket was launched at 5 pm. The engines of the second stage were seen igniting and a satellite was successfully placed in orbit, according to media reports from the launch site at Goheung.

(return to top)

12. US-Japan Security Alliance

Kyodo News ("U.S. AIRCRAFT CARRIER NIMITZ MAKES PORT CALL AT YOKOSUKA BASE", 2009/08/24) reported that the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Nimitz made a port call at the US Navy b ase in Yokosuka, west of Tokyo, o n Monday. The U.S. Navy said the port call is intended to provide the crew with rest and replenish supplies. But observers said it may be part of U.S. efforts to make Yokosuka a hub for nuclear-powered a ircraft carriers. The Nimitz is scheduled to depart Yokosuka, K anagawa Prefecture, in a few days.

(return to top)

13. Russo-Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("SAKHALIN GOV'T WANTS TO CONTINUE VISA-FREE VISITS: JAPAN DELEGATION", 2009/08/24) reported that local government officials of Russia's Far Eastern Sakhalin Province have expressed their intention to continue a visa-free exchange program involving islands in dispute with Japan, former Japanese islanders said. Sakhalin officials referred to the significance of the program from a standpoint of private-sector diplomacy and Russia's policy is to maintain it, according to members of the delegation who returned Monday from a three-day visit on the program.

(return to top)

14. Japan Politics

Dong-A Ilbo ("JAPAN`S OPPOSITION PARTY PROPOSES `NAT`L STRATEGY BUREAU`", 2009/08/24) reported that the Democratic Party of Japan, which is expected to sweep the Aug. 30 general elections, has proposed a national strategy bureau controlling the budget, diplomacy and personnel management. The major Japanese dailies Yomiuri Shimbun and the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said the bureau will likely serve as the central governing body holding authority in the three areas. The party is devising detailed plans on state administration if and when it takes over after the elections. It has openly pledged to restore the authority over reshuffle policy to politicians from bureaucrats.

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "JAPANESE MINISTER WARNS HIS PARTY IS IN TROUBLE", Tokyo, 2009/08/25) reported that Japanese Finance Minister Kaoru Yosano on Tuesday predicted a tough battle in elections this weekend. "Each constituency across Japan, without exception, is in a difficult situation," Yosano said at a news conference. "My constituency is no exception. A huge wave of the DPJ is sweeping over Tokyo . It looks like they could control the parliament under a one-party dictatorship."

(return to top)

15. Japan Space Program

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT 'LIKELY TO OUTSOURCE' WEATHER-SATELLITE MANAGEMENT", 2009/08/24) reported that the Meteorological Agency is likely to outsource the management of two planned weather satellites, Himawari-8 and 9, to the private sector, agency sources said. It will be the first time for the agency to introduce a private finance initiative to operate weather satellites. Introducing PFI--a method to utilize private funds and technology--is expected to lead to reduced costs, the sources said. The private companies will provide the agency with ground transmitting facilities while also reorienting the satellites, adjusting their orbits, and transmitting and receiving observation data.

(return to top)

16. Sino-US Disaster Relief Exercise

Agence France Press ("US ARMY SEEKS DISASTER RELIEF DRILL WITH CHINA", 2009/08/24) reported that US army chief of staff General George Casey said he wished to improve ties with the PRC's military and would draft plans for a joint disaster relief exercise. Casey, who reportedly had a tense meeting with PRC military leaders last week, said humanitarian missions should be one of the ways to enhance ties between Washington and Beijing .

(return to top)

17. US-PRC Climate Change Collaboration

Bloomberg News (Alex Morales and Jim Efstathiou Jr., "CHINA NEARS CLIMATE-CHANGE DEAL

WITH U.S. OVER FUEL EFFICIENCY", 2009/08/24) reported that the PRC and the US may be moving toward agreement on how to rein in the 40 percent of the world's carbon dioxide pollution that comes from their cars, factories and power plants. "There is a good chance at the end of the day that we're going to be able to find an accommodation with China," says Todd Stern, the State Department's special envoy for climate change. Bilateral discussions are making progress, Stern says, while cautioning that there have been no "breakthroughs."

(return to top)

18. Sino-Indian Climate Change Collaboration

Hindustan Times ("INDIA EYES CHINA'S CLIMATE TECHNOLOGY", 2009/08/24) reported that last week, an official PRC think-tank surprised the world by estimating that with the right low-carbon technology the PRC could control its carbon emissions to peak at 2030 and fall to 2005 levels or lower by 2050. Now India wants to know how, and will nudge the PRC for details. On Monday, a team led by Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh will huddle in a three-hour meeting in Beijing to discuss climate change. "The emission gap between India and China is very large,'' he said. "Even so, our positions have converged. This meeting is the PM's way of signalling that we're in the same boat."

(return to top)

19. PRC Climate Change

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO 'DO ITS BEST' AT CLIMATE TALKS: TOP OFFICIAL", Beijing , 2009/08/24) reported that the PRC will do its best to ensure the success of international talks on a new climate change pact in December, the nation's top negotiator on the issue said Monday, according to state media. The PRC will "do its best with utmost sincerity" at talks in Copenhagen to push for a new treaty to succeed the Kyoto Protocol that expires in 2012, Xie Zhenhua told legislators in Beijing . "Talks with developing countries should be strengthened to safeguard our common interests," Xie, who will represent China in Copenhagen, was quoted as saying by the Xinhua news agency.

(return to top)

20. Cross Strait Relations

BBC News ("CALMER WATERS BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN?", 2009/08/24) reported that the PRC and Taiwan have held their first swimming race in the stretch of water that divides them. The crossing of the once-dangerous channel by 49 swimmers from the PRC and 48 from Taiwan on 15 August was a very different journey from those of the past. The swimmers were protected by the coast guards of both sides and greeted with fireworks instead of gunfire on arrival. It was all part of an event to mark the recent improvements in cross-straits relations.

(return to top)

21. PRC Environment

Caijing Magazine ("LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMBATS EUTROPHICATION IN INNER MONGOLIA", 2009/08/24) reported that dangerous eutrophication in Ulansuhia Nur, one of the PRC's eight largest freshwater lakes located in Inner Mongolia, has been halted, the official Xinhua news agency reported on August 23. The local government has implemented comprehensive efforts to combat intense algae blooms in the lake such as oxygenating the water and dredging the lake bottom. Ulansuhia Nur covers an area of 440,000 acres and is the largest wetland in the world for that latitude.

(return to top)

22. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S XINJIANG GOVT DENIES DATE SET FOR TRIALS", Beijing, 2009/08/25) reported that the government in Xinjiang on Tuesday denied a report that more than 200 people would be put on trial this week over recent ethnic unrest in the area. t present, there is no scheduled date for the trial," Li Hua, an official at the Xinjiang government media office, said. "I don't know how China Daily got that information, but it's not true. We will announce it to the media when there is a trial."

(return to top)

23. PRC Security

Agence France-Presse ("BEIJING DEPLOYS EXTRA POLICE FOR 60TH ANNIVERSARY", Beijing, 2009/08/24) reported that thousands of extra police have been deployed and checkpoints opened in Beijing ahead of the 60th anniversary on October 1 of the founding of communist PRC, state media said. Police manned hundreds of checkpoints at the weekend to monitor people and vehicles entering and leaving the capital, the China Daily reported, citing a top official with the special police forces, Wang Jun. Thousands of security personnel have been tasked with monitoring key infrastructure installations such as bridges and railways, and patrols have been stepped up in Beijing's underground rail system, the report said.

(return to top)

II. PRC Report

24. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

China News Net ("HONG KONG HAS ITS FIRST CAR FREE DAY", 2009/08/24) reported that Green Peace, an famous environmental protection organization, calls for all citizens of Hong Kong to participate the first Car Free Day in Hong Kong on September 22, which is to stop use private car that day. Most enterprises, as well as Director of Hong Kong Environment Department Qiu Tenghua have shown their support to this activity.

(return to top)

25. PRC Environmental Regulations

Xinhua Net ("REGULATION ON PLANNING ENVIRONMENT IMPACT ASSESSMENT ISSUED", 2009/08/24) reported that Regulation on Planning Environment Impact Assessment, made by the State Council, was issued on August 21, and to be formally implemented on December 1st, 2009.

(return to top)

26. PRC Civil Society and Cross Strait Relations

Wenhui Daily ("SHANGHAI YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION HELP CONSTRUCT SCHOOL IN TAIWAN", 2009/08/24) reported that Shanghai Youth Development Foundation has donated 1 million RMB, for reconstructing a primary school in Taiwan typhoon disaster area. The school will play a role for promoting communication and friendship between students from the two sides of Taiwan straits.

(return to top)

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