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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. Six-Party Talks
  - 2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 3. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation
  - 5. Sino-DPRK Trade
  - 6. DPRK-Myanmar Relations
  - 7. DPRK Food Supply
  - 8. DPRK Leadership
  - 9. ROK Environment
  - 10. Japan Nuclear Power
  - 11. Japanese Military Exercise
  - 12. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission
  - 13. Japan Civil Society
  - 14. Cross Strait Relations

    - 15. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute
    - 16. EU-PRC Climate Change
    - 17. Sino-Russian Trade
    - 18. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction
- II. PRC Report
    - 19. PRC Climate Change
    - 20. PRC Development
    - 21. PRC Economy
    - 22. PRC Civil Society and Cultural Preservation
- III. ROK Report
    - 23. ROK-Japan Relations
    - 24. DPRK Nuclear Program

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Six-Party Talks

Korean Broadcasting System ("SIX-PARTY TALKS TO RESUME NEXT MONTH", 2008/10/27) reported that a high-ranking government official says the six-party talks may resume in the second week of November to discuss nuclear verification protocol. The official projected that the talks are likely to resume at some point soon after the U.S. presidential election on November fourth.

(return to top)

2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press ("U.S. WANTS ON-SITE DPRK NUKE INSPECTIONS TO START BY YEAR'S END", 2008/10/23) reported that U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs Christopher Hill said Thursday on-site inspections of nuclear facilities in the DPRK should start as early as by the end of this year. Hill said in an interview that inspections will be launched once chief delegates to the six-party talks approve a recent U.S.-DPRK accord on how to check information Pyongyang provides about its nuclear activities.

(return to top)

3. DPRK Nuclear Program

Bloomberg (Seonjin Cha, "DPRK PRODUCED 30.8 KILOGRAMS OF PLUTONIUM, DONG-A SAYS ", 2008/10/24) reported that the DPRK told the PRC in June it had produced 30.8 kilograms of plutonium, Dong-a Ilbo newspaper reported. The DPRK used 2 kilograms of the material for a nuclear test in October 2006 and the rest to develop nuclear arms, the report said, citing an unidentified official. ROK's Foreign Minister Yu Myung Hwan told lawmakers in Seoul on Oct. 22 that DPRK could make six to eight nuclear weapons with the amount of plutonium it has processed.

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Herald ("DPRK INTENSIFIES CONTROL OF ROK DAILIES SENT TO GAESEONG", 2008/10/27) reported that DPRK has begun to more harshly censor ROK newspapers subscribed to by firms operating in the inter-Korean Gaeseong industrial complex, apparently to prevent workers there from reading reports on their leader Kim Jong-il's health, officials were quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency on Monday. "The North began to allow South Korean dailies to pass through customs only after cutting out articles critical of the country as of Oct. 20," a Unification Ministry official told reporters on condition of anonymity.

Korean Broadcasting System ("BUSINESS LEADERS TO VISIT DPRK's GAESEONG COMPLEX", 2008/10/27) reported that many ROK business leaders are visiting the Gaeseong Industrial Complex in DPRK this week. Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun said in Monday's news briefing that a group of 100 delegates from the association of companies doing business at the Gaeseong complex visited the DPRK border city on Monday.

(return to top)

5. Sino-DPRK Trade

Daily Yomiuri Online (Tetsuya Suetsugu , "PRC DEVELOPING ETHNIC KOREAN AREA / MOVE TO TURN DPRK BORDER REGION INTO TRADING BASE COULD CUT SMUGGLING", Changbai Korean Autonomous County, PRC, 2008/10/28) reported that according to local residents, food, clothing, home electrical appliances, gasoline, chemical fertilizers and other goods have been smuggled from the PRC into the DPrK. The smugglers return to the county with fisheries products, medicinal herbs, minerals, and sometimes illegal goods such as fake tobacco. During the opening ceremony of a county trade event on Sept. 8, Li Ping, secretary of the Changbai Korean Autonomous County Committee of the Communist Party of PRC, proposed turning the county into a big base for trade with the DPRK. A local PRC official said, "We aim to sell Chinese goods to North Korean trading firms. In the future, we want to set up a free trade zone where people can freely travel to North Korea to conduct business."

(return to top)

6. DPRK-Myanmar Relations

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "MYANMAR, DPRK FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET", Seoul, 2008/10/27) reported that Myanmar's foreign minister arrived in Pyongyang on Monday and met his DPRK counterpart, more than a year after the two governments resumed diplomatic ties. It was the first official visit to DPRK by a foreign minister from the military-ruled Southeast Asian nation in 25 years. Myanmar, which faces an arms embargo by the United States and European Union countries, also reportedly has bought weapons from the DPRK.

(return to top)

7. DPRK Food Supply

NK Brief ("DPRK STRESSING UNAIDED RESOLUTION TO FOOD CRISIS ", 2008/10/24) reported that the DPRK Workers' Party newspaper, Rodong Shinmun, reported on the international food crisis, and stressed, 'The only things we can trust in the face of today's severe food crisis are the efforts and self sacrifice of our blood, sweat, and tears,' emphasizing an autonomous resolution to the food problem. In particular, the paper stressed the urgency of the food problems, reporting, "Rice and food are of the utmost importance, like a lifeline to us," while admitting that fertilizer, agricultural chemicals, fuel, and other essential items were in short supply, but adding, "the basis of agricultural production is not physical conditions, but determination."

(return to top)

8. DPRK Leadership

United Press International ("FILM RENEWS HEALTH TALK OF DPRK'S KIM", Pyongyang, 2008/10/27) reported that a video of DPRK leader Kim Jong Il's oldest son in Paris apparently meeting with a top brain surgeon has reignited concerns about the leader's health. The videotape, made by a Japanese television station, shows a man identified by DPRK watchers as "undoubtedly" Kim Jong Nam as he entered a health clinic in Paris, The Times of London reported Monday.The precise date of the videotape wasn't known but some time later, a doctor was filmed arriving at Charles de Gaulle airport in a car owned by the DPRK mission and he reportedly didn't deny that Pyongyang was his destination.

(return to top)

9. ROK Environment

Korea Times (Bae Ji-sook, " 'ENVIRONMENT OLYMPICS' TO OPEN IN CHANGWON TODAY", 2008/10/27) reported that Environment Minister Lee Maan-ee said the largest gathering of 2,000 environmentalists from 158 countries in Changwon today will be a major catalyst to spur sustainable "Green Growth'' in ROK. "For a very long time we were unable to catch up with world standards in environment preservation and a growing call for natural sustainability. The convention will help us realize the importance of the environment and provide us with a vision for the wise use of wetlands for sustainable green growth,'' Lee said. Wetlands absorb about 40 percent of the carbon emissions produced worldwide. "Since Korea is known for its growing emission of carbon, designating wetlands for preservation and showing them to the world will be the key to preventing worsening climate change,'' Lee said.

(return to top)

10. Japan Nuclear Power

Daily Yomiuri Online (Keiko Chino , "N-POWER DEBATE AT CROSSROADS / FALLING OIL PRICES, POOR RESEARCH RESULTS CAST DOUBT ON INDUSTRY'S FUTURE", 2008/10/25) reported that the government's Atomic Energy Commission began looking into how the country's nuclear energy research should proceed in August because of a recent change in the circumstances surrounding nuclear energy. Budgetary allocations for research and development over the past 15 years have been less than 500 billion yen a year and young researchers in the field are expected to be in short supply. Part of the reason for the expected problems in the nuclear power industry is that few achievements from research and development have been put to practical use. In addition, the plunging price of crude oil is discouraging large investment in nuclear power research and the financial situation of the nuclear power industry is dire due to industry liberalization.

(return to top)

11. Japanese Military Exercise

Associated Press ("GSDF HOLDS HOME DEFENSE DRILL IN HOKKAIDO, LARGEST IN 24 YRS", Betsukai, Japan, 2008/10/27) reported that Japan's Ground Self-Defense Force held its largest homeland defense drill in nearly a quarter of a century Monday in Hokkaido, mobilizing around 3,000 personnel and using about 2,000 dugouts and trenches on a hilly site to hide personnel, tanks and control posts. The GSDF realized that the expertise gained in traditional hole-digging exercises for defensive purposes could be applied to various kinds of future overseas activities, GSDF spokesman Col. Kimihiko Kishikawa said, denying that the force had in mind any particular country as a potential enemy in the drill.

(return to top)

12. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Associated Press ("DPJ TO STEP UP CONFRONTATION WITH RULING PARTIES OVER REFUELING BILL", Tokyo, 2008/10/26) reported that the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan plans to step up its confrontation with the ruling coalition over the government's bill to extend Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean , given that Prime Minister Taro Aso has indicated his reluctance to call a general election anytime soon, DPJ lawmakers said Sunday. The DPJ's move will make passage of the bill, initially eyed for Thursday, uncertain. At the same time, Aso's caution drew mixed reactions from ministers and members of the Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito party.

(return to top)

13. Japan Civil Society

Japan Times ("NGOS ON THE GO", 2008/10/26) wrote in an editorial that Japan's election as a nonpermanent member of the United Nations Security Council in mid-October means that Japan will again be able to make positive marks around the world. The burden of foreign policy and

international action can be carried more easily through cooperation with Japan's numerous nongovernment organizations (NGOs). Cooperating with NGOs helps because most of these organizations run small-scale aid projects that give them invaluable insight into other cultures, governments and social customs. They offer a "third-track" diplomacy when difficult decisions must be made or dangerous situations arise. The Foreign Ministry has worked recently to improve its Official Development Assistance program. The newly reformed Japan International Cooperation Agency is a start. However, a better system for recognition of NGOs is required, along with greater transparency about distribution of ODA money.

(return to top)

14. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN POLICYMAKER VOWS TRANSPARENCY IN PRC DEALS", Taipei, 2008/10/27) reported that Lai Shin-yuan, chairwoman of Taiwan's mainland affairs council, on Monday defended upcoming talks with Beijing and pledged that any deal with the mainland will not jeopardise the island's sovereignty. Li said the Kuomintang government would not forge any secret deals with PRC during the talks, which are expected to begin next week. "Once agreements are signed, I will report to the Legislative Yuan (Taiwan's parliament)," he said.

(return to top)

15. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Asian News International ("PM MEETS HU JINTAO, SAYS BORDER TALKS ON TRACK", Beijing, 2008/10/26) reported that Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh met PRC President Hu Jintao on the sidelines of the seventh two-day Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in Beijing on Saturday. Dr. Singh said the PRC President agreed with him that the two countries would be able to achieve the trade target of 60 billion dollars set for 2010. Dr. Singh added that both the countries were holding discussions at experts' level to sort out problems regarding trans-border rivers."Now, we also touched upon the boundary issue. Both of us expressed our keen desire to find an early settlement. We both agreed that we should instruct our special representatives to expedite the process," Dr. Singh said.

(return to top)

16. EU-PRC Climate Change

Xinhua News Agency ("ASIA, EUROPE REAFFIRM DETERMINATION TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE ", Beijing, 2008/10/25) reported that leaders from Asia and Europe reaffirmed their resolutions to fight against global climate change and pledged to settle relevant negotiations for a deal at the Climate Change Conference at the end of 2009. In the Beijing Declaration on Sustainable Development issued after the conclusion of the seventh summit of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), leaders emphasized that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol are the main channels for international negotiations and cooperation in climate change. Leaders affirmed that developed countries should continue to show strong leadership and take measurable, reportable and verifiable nationally appropriate mitigation commitments, including quantified emission limitation and reduction objectives and providing

financial support and technology transfer to developing countries.They also recognize that climate change is interrelated with energy and should be addressed in integrated manner, with full consideration of the issues of safeguarding energy security, improving energy mix and raising energy efficiency and saving.

(return to top)

17. Sino-Russian Trade

International Energy Network ("CHINA AND RUSSIA TO SET UP ENERGY NEGOTIATION MECHANISM", 2008/10/27) reported that PRC Vice Premier Wang Qishan and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin jointly presided over the 12th meeting of the PRC-Russian Prime Ministers' regular meeting commission, as well as a meeting between the two countries' energy negotiators. During the meeting, the leaders of the two countries had an in-depth exchange of views and decided to set up Sino-Russia Energy Negotiation Mechanism to enhance the energy cooperation between the two countries.

Interfax ("SINO-RUSSIA TRADE REACHES $43 BLN IN NINE MONTHS - PRC AMBASSADOR", Moscow, 2008/10/27) reported that trade between the PRC and Russia is expected to top $50 billion by the end of 2008, PRC Ambassador to Russia Liu Guchang said in an interview. "Cooperation over trade and the economy, and in the energy, nuclear, research, technological and other sectors, has risen to new heights. Bilateral trade reached $43 billion from January to September 2008, and is expected to exceed $50 billion this year," Liu said. "[The two countries are] cooperating successfully in international affairs, including in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization," Liu said, and are "the leading constructive forces defending international peace, security and stability."

(return to top)

18. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction

Associated Press ("WORLD BANK, FRANCE LEND PRC $900M FOR REBUILDING", 2008/10/26) reported that PRC is receiving financial support from France and the World Bank to rebuild areas devastated by the May earthquake in Sichuan. The Xinhua News Agency said the World Bank will provide a loan of $710 million to the PRC to be used for the construction of roads, bridges, water pipelines, hospitals and child care facilities.

(return to top)

II. PRC Report

19. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua Net (Chen Yinan, "3 CHINESE ENTERPRISES JOIN IN THE CLIMATE GROUP TO HELP ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION", Beijing, 2008/10/24) reported that the Climate Group formally announced that it would partner with China Mobil, Broad Air Conditioning and Suntech

Power. The three enterprises are the first PRC cooperative partners of the Group. The sponsor of the Climate Group, also the former English Prime Minister Blair sent a special congratulation message to express admiration for the leadership the three enterprises demonstrating in the cause of environmental conservation, and hoped that they would bring more PRC enterprises joining into the action of CO2 emission reduction and atmosphere protection.

(return to top)

20. PRC Development

Xinhua News Agency ("PRC'S VICE PREMIER CALLS FOR EQUAL JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL AND URBAN RESIDENTS ", Beijing, 2008/10/25) reported that PRC Vice Premier Hui Liangyu said on Saturday farmers should share equal job opportunities with urban residents, which was key to realize the government goal of doubling farmer's income by 2020. Farmers were encouraged to start their own business and local government should work out more favourable policies including preferential taxation and easier market access to help farmers find jobs and business opportunities, Hui said at a prize award ceremony of the elite rural entrepreneurs.

(return to top)

21. PRC Economy

Associated Press ("PRC OKS $292 BILLION RAILWAY INVESTMESTS TO HELP FEND OFF ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN", Shanghai, 2008/10/27) reported that PRC's leaders have approved 2 trillion yuan, or $292 billion, in spending on railway construction, stepping up planned investments to help fend off an economic slowdown, the Xinhua News Agency said Monday. They are hoping to ease congestion, promote economic growth in isolated areas and bind regions such as Tibet and the Muslim northwest more closely to the rest of the PRC. Expanding the rail system would also help alleviate severe bottlenecks, especially for transport of the coal that is used to generate three-quarters of PRC's electricity supply.

(return to top)

22. PRC Civil Society and Cultural Preservation

Xinhua Net (Feng Guo, "CULTURAL RELICS PROTECTION FOUNDATION FOR DAMING PALACE RUINS OF TANG DYNASTY ESTABLISHED IN XI'AN", Xi'an, 2008/10/24) reported that one of the nation's first key cultural relics protection groups is working to preserve the history of an ancient palace building and ancient political civilization at the ruins of the Daming Palace from the Tang Dynasty. The Chairmen of the Foundation, also the famous writer Chen Zhongshi, said that after the establishment of the Foundation, it would collect the lost cultural relics of the Daming Palace Ruins paid or unpaid, and donate them together to the Daming Palace Museum.

(return to top)

III. ROK Report

23. ROK-Japan Relations

Kookmin Ilbo (Lee Won-duk, Professor, Kukmin Univ., "PRIORITY OF RELATIONSHIP WITH JAPAN", 2008/10/27) said in a column that a meeting between ROK President Lee Myung-bak and Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso held during the ASEM grabbed many people's attention. Japan's refusal to provide energy aid to the DPRK is likely to cause the DPRK to object to Japan's qualification to attend the six-party talks, which will make the DPRK nuclear problem complicated. Concerning several difficulties that the ROK and Japan would encounter, the governments should prioritize the issues so that they can respond more effectively.

(return to top)

24. DPRK Nuclear Program

TongilNews ("WHAT CHANGES HAPPEN TO DPRK AFTER DELISTING?", 2008/10/28) wrote that on the day when the U.S. State Department announced the DPRK was being removed from the terrorism blacklist, they also released a fact sheet entitled 'The Current Regime and Reporting Regulations about the DPRK'. This means that even though the U.S. no longer views the DPRK as a nation that supports terrorism, several U.S. domestic laws, international regulations, and ROK sanctions toward the DPRK still exist. Thus, there seems to be very little visible change, but considering its political meaning the action of 'delisting' itself will have a strong influence from the long-term point of view, experts analyzed.

(return to top)

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