

NAPSNet Daily Report 28 October, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 28 October, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2009,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-28-october-2009/>

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MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. US-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA BLASTS US OVER 'BUNKER-BUSTER' BOMBS", 2009/10/27) reported that the DPRK accused the US of stepping up production and deployment of "bunker-buster" bombs to mount a pre-emptive attack on its nuclear sites. The United States is deploying the bombs "to attack underground military targets and nuclear facilities" in the DPRK, the ruling communist party newspaper Rodong Sinmun said. This proved that Washington has not abandoned "ambitions to stifle" Pyongyang by force, it said.

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2. Sino-DPRK Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA, DPRK VOW TO INVIGORATE TRADITIONAL FRIENDLY TIES", Seoul, 2009/10/27) reported that the PRC is ready to work with the DPRK to invigorate their traditional friendly ties, a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) said. Liu Yunshan, head of the Publicity Department of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting with a delegation of the Workers' Party of Korea, which was led by Choe Thae Bok, secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. "In the new century, we have the responsibility and ability to ensure the better development of bilateral relations," Liu said.

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3. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

The Korea Herald ("KOREA STIFFENS IMPORT RULES ON N.K. PRODUCTS", 2009/10/27) reported that the ROK government has tightened rules on imports of sand, pine mushrooms and anthracite from DPRK, the Unification Ministry said Tuesday, in an apparent move to keep a close eye on cash flows into Pyongyang. The three items have been allowed into ROK only with a declaration to the customs office, but the toughened rules now require their importers to receive approval from the unification minister, said ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo. "This revision was prepared in consideration of two things -- transparency of inter-Korean trade and keeping the import volume at a proper level," she added.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN MILITARY UNDER FIRE OVER DEFECTION", Seoul, 2009/10/28) reported that the ROK military came under fire Wednesday after a civilian apparently fleeing arrest for assault cut his way through a barbed-wire fence on the DMZ and defected to the DPRK. The ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff said investigators found the barbed wire was "torn from south to north" into a rectangular hole, measuring 30 by 40 centimetres (12 by 16 inches). Spokesman Park Sung-Woo said the military would "sternly punish" those responsible after a thorough investigation.

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5. ROK Detainees in DPRK

The Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun, "SEOUL MULLS GERMAN MODEL FOR RELEASE OF DETAINEES IN THE NORTH", 2009/10/28) reported that Seoul recently said it was reviewing a German model of secretly offering money or merchandise in exchange for the release of ROK detainees held against their will in DPRK - apparently making it harder to adopt the idea. It is estimated that about 560 ROK detainees, mostly prisoners of war and fishermen whose boats strayed across the maritime border, are currently held in the DPRK. The Unification Ministry assigned an affiliate think tank last year to conduct a research on the German "freikauf" program and how ROK should apply it for its own use.

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6. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("GROUP OF JAPAN LOCAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS ARRIVES IN N. KOREA", Pyongyang, 2009/10/27) reported that a group of Japanese local assembly members arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday for a five-day visit. It is the first time for a group of Japanese local assembly members to visit DPRK since the launch of the government of Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama in September. The group, led by Seizaburo Eguchi, vice chairman of the Nakano Ward Assembly in Tokyo, is expected to discuss bilateral relations with DPRK during the stay.

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7. Japan on Abductions Issue

Kyodo News ("STEP UP ABDUCTEES EFFORTS: HATOYAMA", 2009/10/28) reported that at the first meeting of the administration's task force on Pyongyang's abductions of Japanese, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told his Cabinet ministers Tuesday to intensify efforts to ensure all the victims are repatriated. Hiroshi Nakai, state minister for the abduction issue, said the panel's secretariat will be expanded to about 40 members, from around 30 at present, including people to be picked from the private sector.

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8. India-DPRK Trade Ban

Press Trust of India ("INDIA BANS TRADE OF NUKE ITEMS WITH NORTH KOREA", 2009/10/27) reported that India today banned exports and imports of all items from DPRK which can be used in nuclear or ballistic missile plans of the communist nation. The decision conforms to United Nations Security Council resolutions and the International Atomic Energy Agency action imposing sanctions on DPRK in the nuclear field following the country not heeding to their demand of refraining from conducting nuclear tests or missile tests.

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9. DPRK Food Shortage

The Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA TO PRODUCE 5-10% LESS FOOD THIS YEAR", 2009/10/27) reported that the government estimates that DPRK will produce about 5 to 10 percent less food this year than last year. According to a government official in charge of DPRK affairs, DPRK needs at least 5 million tons of food to feed people and livestock each year, but it produces barely more than 4 million tons. The intelligence officer said, "If DPRK's food production falls below 3.5 million tons, there'll be mass defections and starvation. With international assistance significantly reduced since its second nuclear test, DPRK will likely suffer a more serious food shortage in 2010 than this year."

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10. DPRK Economy

Xinhua News ("DPRK CABINET MEETS TO DISCUSS ECONOMY ", 2009/10/27) reported that the cabinet of the DPRK had held a meeting recently to discuss economic issues, the official Minju Joson daily reported. The priority right now was to focus on another "100-day campaign," during which great efforts should be made to boost steel production, Kim announced. Focus was also needed on speeding up the construction of large- and medium-sized power plants, in a bid to "decisively solve the power shortage problem," the premier added.

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11. DPRK Leadership

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL HEIR 'IN SECRET VISIT TO ARMY CORPS'", 2009/10/27) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's son and rumored heir apparent on Sept. 9 visited the DPRK Army Corps in Chongjin, North Hamgyong Province which is in charge of guarding the DPRK-PRC border. The visit to the corps' commander and political commissars was conducted in tight secrecy and came amid growing fears about discipline at the unit. Kim Jong-un reportedly said, "The military unit which the general [Kim Jong-il] considers the most important is the Ninth Army Corps in charge of guarding the border."

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12. DPRK Human Rights

JoongAng Ilbo ("GROUP TO TAG KIM JONG-IL FOR ABUSES", 2009/10/27) reported that a Seoul-based private organization on DPRK human rights said yesterday it has begun efforts to take DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to the International Criminal Court for infringing on human rights and his failure to protect lives of his own people. The Anti-human Crime Investigation Committee announced in a press conference in Seoul yesterday that DPRK human rights must be improved through legal steps. The committee plans to file a suit against Kim at the ICC in December. The committee was formed in July of last year and is made up of dozens of NGOs and private groups representing the interests of DPRK refugees.

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13. PSI Drill

Kyodo News ("U.S.-LED INITIATIVE TO AVERT WMD TRANSFER HOLDS DRILL IN SINGAPORE", 2009/10/27) reported that a large-scale maritime drill under a U.S.-led initiative to prevent the transfer of weapons of mass destruction at sea began Tuesday in Singapore. More than 2,000 security personnel from 19 countries, including the United States and Japan, are taking part in the four-day exercise, code-named Exercise Deep Sabre 2. Some 18 vessels and eight aircraft are involved in the exercise at Changi Naval Base on the eastern coast of Singapore and the South China Sea.

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14. Japan-ROK Vessel Collision

Associated Press ("JAPAN WARSHIP COLLIDES WITH COMMERCIAL VESSEL", Tokyo, 2009/10/28) reported that a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer has collided with a ROK container ship on Tuesday night in the Kanmon Strait near the southern Kyushu, starting fires on both ships and injuring three crew members, defense officials said Tuesday. Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa quickly held a news conference and apologized for the accident. Kitazawa said the government has set up a task force to investigate the collision.

Kyodo ("JAPANESE DESTROYER TRIED TO STOP BEFORE COLLISION: DEFENSE CHIEF", Tokyo, 2009/10/28) reported that a Japanese destroyer that collided with an ROK container ship Tuesday night tried to stop before the crash, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said Wednesday. The Japan Coast Guard said the captain of the ROK ship told investigators that the 7,400-ton Carina Star was attempting to pass another ship ahead of it when it collided with the Kurama. "The (MSDF) vessel was going backwards, but it was too late" to avert the collision, the minister said, citing information provided by the Kurama's captain.

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15. Japan SDF Role

Kyodo News ("KAN ENCOURAGES MSDF TO BRACE FOR N KOREAN THREAT, FIGHT TERRORISM ", 2009/10/27) reported that Deputy Prime Minister Naoto Kan encouraged the Maritime Self-Defense Force to brace for increased threat from the DPRK and to combat terrorism during an MSDF fleet review in Sagami Bay off Kanagawa Prefecture. "As security conditions surrounding Japan have drastically changed recently, the Self-Defense Forces are required to respond to diverse situations involving the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles as well as terrorism," Kan said in an address aboard the 5,200-ton destroyer Kurama.

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16. US-Japan Military Relations

Kyodo News ("DEFENSE CHIEF HINTS AT ACCEPTING FUTEMMA RELOCATION IN OKINAWA", 2009/10/27) reported that Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa suggested Tuesday he will accept a plan to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to another city in Okinawa Prefecture as agreed on by Japan and the United States, effectively ditching the new government's efforts to explore different options. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada, who personally advocates transferring the Futenma base to the nearby U.S. Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, said Kitazawa's claim is "almost illogical" because the DPJ called for changing the bilateral pact that had already been agreed upon. Okada said he would like to verify again the feasibility of a plan to merge the Futenma and Kadena bases because it would bring "great merits" to consolidate "two big military facilities into one" in Okinawa.

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17. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo News (Takehiko Kajita, "U.S. CONCERNED BY JAPAN'S CHANGES IN FOREIGN POLICY", Washington, 2009/10/27) reported that the United States appears increasingly concerned about the new course of Japan's foreign policy, raising the specter of a showdown between Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and President Barack Obama at their summit in Tokyo. Differences among Cabinet members are compounding the issue. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said he does not "think it's an option" to move the facility out of Okinawa, while Mizuho Fukushima, minister in charge of consumer affairs and falling birthrate issues, insists the base be transferred outside the prefecture. In recent commentary, Carolyn Leddy, a former National Security Council director for counterproliferation strategy, criticized the Hatoyama government's "increasing security-policy

schizophrenia."

The Associated Press ("MAYORS ASK OBAMA TO VISIT JAPANESE A-BOMB CITIES", 2009/10/27) reported that Japanese newspapers and activists are calling for Barack Obama to become the first sitting U.S. president to visit Hiroshima or Nagasaki, the only two cities ever devastated by atomic bombs, ahead of his visit to Japan next month. The two cities' mayors formally invited Obama on Tuesday to visit sometime before next May, but U.S. officials say it is highly unlikely he will travel to either city during his Nov. 12-13 visit to Tokyo. "Many of the past Nobel Peace Laureates have visited ground zero," the Hiroshima-based Chugoku newspaper said in an editorial. "We urge him to go and see the place himself and renew his commitment to a nuclear-free world."

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18. US and Cross Strait Relations

Central News Agency (Sinyao Shih and Fanny Liu, "TOP U.S. ENVOY SUPPORTS TAIWAN'S PARTICIPATION IN U.N. AGENCIES", Taipei, 2009/10/27) reported that the United States' top envoy to Taiwan said Tuesday that the U.S. supports Taiwan's "meaningful participation" in U.N. specialized agencies and expects better bilateral relations between America and Taiwan. William Stanton, director of the American Institute in Taiwan, said that U.S.-Taiwan relations will be strengthened as mutual exchanges between non-profit organizations, academic institutions, think tanks and youth groups will help more people understand Taiwan and experience the warmth of the Taiwanese people.

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19. US-PRC Climate Change Cooperation

Associated Press (Elaine Kurtenbach, "ENVOY: NO CHINA-US CLIMATE PACT FROM OBAMA VISIT", Shanghai, 2009/10/28) reported that Todd Stern, the U.S. special envoy for climate change, said Wednesday President Barack Obama's visit to the PRC next month is not likely to yield a separate accord on global warming. "I don't think we're going to get an agreement per se," Stern said. However, he said Obama will work with PRC President Hu Jintao toward facilitating an agreement at the Copenhagen meeting. "It's never been an effort on our side to work toward a separate deal, but we're going to be trying to make as much progress as possible," Stern said.

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20. Sino-Indian Relations

Bloomberg ("CHINA, INDIA AGREE TO BOOST TRADE, ECONOMIC TIES TO BUILD TRUST", 2009/10/27) reported that the PRC and India agreed to boost trade and economic ties as part of steps to build trust that has been strained over a decades-old border dispute and the Dalai Lama's planned trip to a region claimed by both countries. "We had a fruitful exchange of views on all aspects of our bilateral relations," India's Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna told reporters today in Bangalore, following talks with his counterpart Yang Jiechi. "We agreed on the importance of further developing high level exchanges, enhancing trade and economic cooperation and on progressing our defense contacts," Krishna said.

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21. PRC, Russia, Indian Energy Security

Itar-Tass ("RUSSIA, INDIA, CHINA DISCUSSING ENERGY SECURITY", Bangalore, 2009/10/27) reported that Russia, India and the PRC have agreed to coordinate approaches to ensuring reliable energy security, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said, commenting on the results of a tripartite meeting of foreign ministers of Russia, India and the PRC. "We agreed to coordinate our efforts, aimed at creating a more democratic system both in the sphere of finances and in the security sphere. We agreed to coordinate our approaches to international discussions on ensuring reliable energy security and on problems of climate changing," he said.

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22. Sino-Australian Trade

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIAN FIRMS INK \$3.1 BLN IN CHINA DEALS: REPORT", Sydney, 2009/10/27) reported that Australian firms have signed 3.1 billion dollars worth of contracts for projects in Guangdong, a report said, with further deals possible according to the PRC province's governor. "At present, it is a good time for further enhancing the cooperation between Guangdong and Australia," Huang Huahua said in Sydney on Tuesday, the Australian Associated Press (AAP) reported. Huang called on Guangdong and Australia to focus on mineral and energy cooperation, two-way investment, and to strengthen scientific and technological cooperation in an effort to spur economic growth, the report said.

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23. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua ("TAIWAN AUTHORITIES RELAX RESTRICTIONS ON MAINLAND MEDIA ON ISLAND", Taipei, 2009/10/27) reported that a Taiwan official said Tuesday local authorities will relax restrictions on media coverage by mainland news organizations in the island. Chao Chien-min, deputy head of the Mainland Affairs Council, said mainland correspondents posted on the island no longer need to inform Taiwan's information authorities before making interview trips.

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24. PRC Civil Society

The Financial Times (Jamil Anderlini, "LACK OF CHARITY GREET'S CHINA TYCOON'S DONATION", 2009/10/27) reported that the PRC public and state-controlled media could be expected to welcome the founding of the country's largest-ever private charity by one of its wealthiest business tycoons. But when Chen Fashu, the 15th richest man in the PRC this year announced last week he would donate roughly Rmb8.3bn (\$1.2bn, €821m, £744m) to his new charitable foundation, state media responded by questioning his motives. Even the People's Daily suggested the charity might be used to evade a possible tax investigation and questioned whether the funds would all be used for charitable causes. The poor perception of charities and the immaturity of the regulatory system are

the main reasons why PRC philanthropy has been slow to develop, according to Mr Hoogewerf.

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25. PRC Environment

The Guardian ("SICHUAN EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS FACE POLLUTION THREAT", 2009/10/27) reported that residents report crops failing and health problems as aluminum plant coats earth in white dust. Survivors of the Sichuan earthquake face a new threat in the form of pollution from an aluminium plant that has been hailed by the government as a symbol of reconstruction. Villagers near the factory in Wenchuan county - the area worst hit by the disaster - have told the Guardian their health and crops have been damaged by airborne "white flake" pollution that falls and then covers the soil.

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26. Russian-East Asian Relations

Kyodo News ("RUSSIA SHOWS INTEREST IN HATOYAMA'S EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY INITIATIVE", Tokyo, 2009/10/27) reported that Russia showed interest in the idea of an "East Asian community" advocated by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama during talks Tuesday between Japanese and Russian deputy foreign ministers, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin told his Japanese counterpart Kenichiro Sasae that Moscow heeds Hatoyama's initiative to promote the concept of a regional community as a highly transparent cooperative entity which is open to other regions, the official said. Borodavkin said strengthening ties with the Asia-Pacific region has become a priority for Moscow, indicating Russia's deep interest in the Hatoyama government policy, the official said.

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