NAPSNet Daily Report 4 December, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 4 December, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, December 04, 2009, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-4-december-2009/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua News ("US AMBASSADOR REVEALS GOALS ON UPCOMING US-DPRK TALKS", 2009/12/03) reported that US ambassador to the ROK revealed goals her country is expecting to meet during an upcoming bilateral dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang, noting that it is aimed to secure the DPRK's reaffirmation of a 2005 six-party agreement. While addressing a forum here, Kathleen Stephens said the dialogue will "take place in the context of the six-party talks with the purpose of facilitating early resumption of the six-party talks." "We've always been clear that when we talk about the peace regime, or peace treaty, peace agreement, the issue of the US- ROK alliance is not on the table," she said, noting "that is a lasting commitment we have, and that is not on the table."

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2. DPRK Terrorism Charges

World Tribune ("GROUP SUES NORTH KOREA FOR 1972 TERROR ATTACK ", 2009/12/03) reported that families of victims have filed suit against DPRK on charges of supporting a major attack by the Japanese Red Army in Israel. The group, Shurat HaDin, has filed a suit in a US district court in San Juan, Puerto Rico for the families of the victims of the 1972 attack. During the assault on Lod Airport, 26 people were killed and 80 others were injured by attackers alleged to have been trained by DPRK. "This will be the first time North Korea is being held to account in a U.S. court for its support of terrorism over many decades," Shurat HaDin said on Dec. 1.

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3. Sino-DPRK Relations

Xinhua News ("DPRK TOP LAWMAKER MEETS SENIOR CHINESE LEGISLATOR ON TIES", 2009/12/03) reported that the top lawmaker of the DPRK met with a senior PRC legislator on efforts to further the friendly ties and legislative cooperation between their two countries. The DPRK-PRC

relations had withstood the test of history since their diplomatic links were established 60 years ago, said Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) of the DPRK, during talks with Chen Zhili, vice-chairperson of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) of the PRC. The relations not only benefited the two peoples, but also contributed to the peace and stability of Asia and the world, he said.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("SITES IN CHINA, VIETNAM CHOSEN FOR INTER-KOREAN INDUSTRIAL INSPECTION", 2009/12/03) reported that two industrial complexes in the PRC and one in Vietnam have been chosen as the most suitable locations for the two Koreas to conduct joint inspections in mid-December. Three officials from the Ministry of Unification began a three-day trip to those sites for preliminary research Wednesday, ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo said. The ROK and DPRK agreed last month to jointly inspect industrial parks in third countries in an effort to develop the Gaeseong Industrial Complex in the DPRK.

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5. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN PM SAYS HUMANITARIAN AID TO NORTH MUST CONTINUE DESPITE TENSION", Seoul , 2009/12/03) reported that Prime Minister Chung Un-chan said that the ROK must continue humanitarian aid to DPRK regardless of the political tension that has often weakened inter-Korean assistance. "Inter-Korean relations have been strained since last year, but humanitarian assistance to North Korean children cannot be compromised," Chung said in an opening speech at a gathering of a fledgling aid organization, Share Together Society.

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6. DPRK Censorship

Deutsche Welle ("GOETHE-INSTITUT TO CLOSE CENTER IN NORTH KOREA ON CENSORSHIP CLAIM", 2009/12/03) reported that after five and a half years in operation, the Goethe-Institut in the DPRK has said it will close its reading room in the capital city of Pyongyang due to censorship concerns. It was the first and only Western cultural institution to establish itself in the DPRK. Raimund Woerdemann, director of the Goethe-Institut in Seoul, told Deutsche Welle that, contrary to an agreement made with the DPRK government, access to the center was often hindered. "The building in which the reading room was located was often locked from the front," he said.

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7. DPRK Economy

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA 'SETTING UP FALL GUY FOR CURRENCY REFORM'", 2009/12/03) reported that while it is likely that the controversial decision to reform the DPRK's currency came from leader

Kim Jong-il himself, the regime is making sure that Premier Kim Yong-il is seen as being personally in charge, sources in the reclusive country said Wednesday. Why? Experts say this is so that the premier can take the fall for the supreme leader if things go terribly wrong. Some experts believe that the actual brain behind the currency reform is Pak Nam-gi, the director of the Financial Planning Department of the Workers' Party, who is in charge of the civilian economy.

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8. DPRK Security

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREA MILITARY ON GUARD AGAINST UNREST: REPORTS", Seoul, 2009/12/03) reported that the DPRK's military was on guard as public anger grew over the DPRK 's shock currency revaluation, reports said. The revaluation has sparked fury and frustration as some citizens saw much of their savings wiped out, according to reports and observers. They said the DPRK had tightened security against possible agitation, with a curfew reportedly imposed in a border region and shops closed across the country during the changeover period to a new currency, which ends Sunday. Military authorities have strengthened vigilance and are monitoring people's movements to forestall unrest.

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9. US-ROK Security Alliance

Yonhap News ("U.S. NOT TO TRANSFER TROOPS IN S. KOREA TO AFGHANISTAN: SOURCE", Seoul, 2009/12/03) reported that t he US will not transfer its troops stationed in the ROK to Afghanistan, a government source said Thursday, dismissing speculation that Washington could adjust the number of soldiers here to increase its forces in the war-torn country. "Wallace Gregson, assistant secretary of defense for Asian Pacific affairs, told ranking officials in our defense ministry Wednesday morning that there will be no such case in which the U.S. would transfer its troops here for Afghanistan, just hours before Obama announced his dispatch plan," the ministry source said.

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10. US-Japan Security Alliance

Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO PROPOSE ADDING ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS TO U.S. BASES TREATY", 2009/12/03) reported that the Japanese government will call for the addition of environmental regulations to the Japan-U.S. Status-of-Forces Agreement. Specifically, the Japanese government will call on the inclusion of provisions calling on the United States to clean up any pollution connected to its bases, and allow both local and government officials access for inspections. There have been accidental spills of toxic substances such as fuel on and around U.S. bases, but under the current status-of-forces facilities management terms the United States is not responsible for cleaning up such spills upon return of the land to Japanese control and does not allow Japan to conduct environmental pollution assessments.

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11. USFJ Base Relocation

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("PM ASKS MINISTERS TO FIND NEW LOCATION FOR FUTENMA", 2009/12/03) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama instructed Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa to find an alternative location for the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station other than Camp Schwab in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, according to sources. The same day, Hatoyama had expressed his intention to give up on resolving the issue of the air station's relocation by the end of the year. "It's not necessarily the case that we're discussing an issue that has to be concluded within the year," Hatoyama said to reporters.

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12. PRC Peacekeeping Operations

Washington Post ("CHINA SHOWCASING ITS SOFTER SIDE", 2009/12/03) reported that after bulking up its armed forces with new missiles and other advanced weaponry, the PRC recently invited US and other foreign military officials to inspect a less bellicose side of the People's Liberation Army: a fleet of bulldozers. The engineering unit that staged the show is spearheading the PRC's growing involvement in international peacekeeping, a cause that Beijing for decades denounced as a violation of its stated commitment to noninterference in the affairs of other nations but that it now embraces. Though the peacekeepers represent only a fraction of the PLA's more than 2 million soldiers the PRC's enthusiasm for peacekeeping signals a clear desire to project an image as a responsible and peaceable great power.

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13. PRC Ethnic Unrest

China Daily ("US TROOP PLAN SET TO IMPACT CHINA", 2009/12/03) reported that e xperts said Washington 's plan to send a huge new contingent of troops to Afghanistan could have a knock-on effect in the PRC, where it might help stifle separatist activity within the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. Other experts suggested the impact could be a negative one. Qi Huaigao, a scholar in international relations with the Shanghai-based Fudan University, said the US move will help the PRC combat the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, one of the major terrorist groups threatening Xinjiang region's security. But other experts said the decision to send more troops is likely to cause more problems than it solves.

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14. PRC Civil Society and HIV/AIDS

China Daily ("NGOS TO GET LEGAL STATUS FROM GOV'T", 2009/12/03) reported that Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) committed to fighting HIV/AIDS in the PRC will soon get legal status to operate, as the government is considering legally recognizing these organizations, experts close to the situation said. These efforts will help the fight against AIDS, said Shen Jie, secretary general of the government-backed Chinese Association of AIDS and STD Prevention and Control, on the eve of World AIDS Day. "If realized, that will not only facilitate the work of these

organizations but also give a long-term boost to China's anti-HIV/AIDS efforts," Shen said.

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15. PRC Transparency

Caijing Magazine ("SHANGHAI TO OPEN EXPENSE BUDGET TO PUBLIC", 2009/12/03) reported that Shanghai plans to make public its government expense budget, said the Shanghai Municipal Finance Bureau on Nov. 5. The collection, distribution and application of special funds, revenue of administrative and institutional units, welfare lottery revenue and sports lottery revenue will all be open to the public, according to the plan. On Oct. 9, Li Detao, a volunteer public budget observer, asked financial bureaus in Shanghai for government expense budgets. The bureau officials said that information on the budget could not be publicized, which aroused public criticism.

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16. PRC Public Health

The New York Times ("H.I.V. TESTS TURN BLOOD INTO CASH IN CHINA", 2009/12/03) reported that on any given night, in 14 cities around the country, hundreds of people flock to makeshift blood collection centers in bars, bathhouses and apartments where workers test for syphilis and H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS. But the Bill & Melinda Gates H.I.V. prevention program in the PRC is unusual because it offers a financial incentive to those drawing the blood — about $9 per sample and an additional $44 for those that come back positive — which is shared with donors. The program has provoked a flurry of criticism from some established AIDS organizations that say the money has given rise to a network of fly-by-night groups whose only interest is collecting money.

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17. PRC Climate Change

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SHOLD [sic.] ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE: METEOROLOGIST", 2009/12/03) reported that the PRC 's top meteorologist has warned climate change could cause "incalculable" damage to the country and that efforts should focus on adapting to global warming rather than slowing it. The comments by the head of the China Meteorological Administration appeared to mark a departure from the government stance that has so far stressed both as equally important. "Global warming is a fact. For a huge developing country like China it's more practical and urgent to adapt to climate change than to seek to slow down the process," said Zheng Guoguang.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Environment

Xinmin Net ("BEIJING PLANS TO RAISE WATER PRICE BY 24% AMID SHORTAGES", 2009/12/03) reported that Beijing is planning to raise water price by about 24 percent (0.9 yuan) to discourage residents from wasting water and ease shortages. The government would offer subsidies to low-income families to ensure their living standard not to be affected by the hike.

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19. PRC HIV/AIDS Issue

Xinhua Net ("GANSU REQUIRES HIV CARRIERS TO INFORM PARTNERS", 2009/12/03) reported that Gansu Province has required HIV carriers to inform their sexual partners of their health condition to curb the spread of the virus. A regulation adopted by the provincial Health Department requires HIV carriers and AIDS patients to inform their sexual partners within a month after they get their HIV test results, said Wang Xiaoming, Vice Director of the Department on Wednesday.

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20. PRC Environment and the Economy

Qilu Evening News ("ECO-ECONOMIC ZONE TO BE SET UP IN SHANDONG", 2009/12/03) reported that An “efficient eco-economic zone” will be built near the Yellow River Delta, the last untapped big river delta in the PRC. It will be modeled on an ecology-friendly and intensive mold encouraging a circular economic and industrial system and green factories which discharge few or zero waste.

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