

NAPSNet Daily Report 4 March, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 4 March, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 04, 2009,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-4-march-2009/>

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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Program

Bloomberg (Megumi Yamanaka, "NORTH KOREA LIKELY TO LAUNCH MISSILE BY MID-MARCH, SANKEI SAYS", 2009/03/03) reported that DPRK may test a long-range missile in the middle of this month to match the timing of military exercises between ROK and the U.S., the Sankei newspaper reported. Satellite images show a launch pad is being prepared, the report said, citing an unidentified official at Japan's Ministry of Defense. It will take as many as seven days to load fuel once the missile is installed on the platform, the newspaper said.

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2. DPRK-US, ROK Relations

Associated Press ("N. KOREA VOWS TO PUNISH U.S., S. KOREA 'WARMONGERS'", Seoul, 2009/03/03) reported that DPRK vowed Tuesday to punish U.S. and ROK "warmongers" after the American military said it would go ahead with annual joint exercises that Pyongyang calls an invasion rehearsal. "The revolutionary armed forces of (North Korea) are in full combat readiness to resolutely shatter any provocation of the enemy," the Minju Josen newspaper said in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

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3. DPRK Humanitarian Aid

The Oregonian (Richard Read, "N. KOREA OFFICIALS VISITING PORTLAND", Portland, 2009/03/03) reported that a high-level DPRK humanitarian delegation is visiting Mercy Corps in Portland this week. The delegation arrived here Thursday to visit Mercy Corps and other organizations that are delivering food to DPRK. A spokeswoman for Mercy Corps declined to provide specifics of the visit, saying it was intended to be low-key and private with no media coverage. "The purpose is to discuss the status and progress of . . . aid programs" conducted by humanitarian organizations, said Joy Portella, Mercy Corps communications director.

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4. DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA URGES PYONGYANG TO IMPROVE HUMAN RIGHTS", Geneva, 2009/03/03) reported that ROK urged DPRK to take "necessary measures" to address its abysmal human rights record at the regular session of the U.N. Human Rights Council on Tuesday. "My government, sharing the serious concerns of the international community regarding the dire human rights conditions in the DPRK, urges that the latter take necessary measures to improve its human rights situation in full compliance with its obligations under international human rights law and relevant treaties to which it is a party," said ROK Vice Foreign Minister Shin Kak-soo.

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5. DPRK Proselytization

Christian Newswire (Erika Castle, "COLORADO-BASED MINISTRY'S UNDERGROUND UNIVERSITY PREPARES NORTH KOREAN CHRISTIAN EXILES TO RETURN TO NORTH KOREA UNDETECTED", Colorado Springs, 2009/03/03) reported that a group of DPRK exiles at Underground University in Seoul, ROK are training to grow the DPRK church while avoiding the attention of Kim Jong Il's regime. These students are part of a 12-month intensive Underground University program that provides DPRK exiles with the skills and training they need to return to serve and grow the DPRK Church. Underground University is a new initiative launched by Colorado-Springs based ministry Seoul USA in partnership with The Voice of the Martyrs-Canada. "A modern-day Holocaust is occurring in North Korea. What Underground University students are preparing to do is deadly," says Mrs. H.S. Foley, Executive Director of Seoul USA. "But this program is designed to equip them to face these realities while spreading the Gospel to North Koreans."

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("PYONGYANG SCORNS LEE MYUNG-BAK'S CALL FOR DIALOGUE", 2009/03/04) reported that DPRK dismissed President Lee Myung-bak's latest call for dialogue as "disgusting sophism" and said cross-border ties are beyond repair. "He has zealously patronized the U.S. nukes and missiles for aggression against fellow countrymen," a spokesman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said in a statement late Monday. "Not content with such behavior, he went to the lengths of terming the launch of an artificial satellite for peaceful purpose the 'launch of a missile.' Such a vile traitor as him can not be found," the spokesman said in the statement carried by the DPRK Central News Agency.

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "UN COMMAND, N. KOREA LIKELY TO HOLD MORE TALKS", 2009/03/03) reported that the U.S.-led United Nations Command in ROK and DPRK are expected to hold follow-up talks this week to Monday's high-level military talks at the truce village of Panmunjeom, a report said Tuesday. According to Yonhap News agency, the two sides agreed to hold a colonel-level meeting and a general-level meeting, respectively, to discuss ways of reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula. A spokesman for the Ministry of National Defense said

representatives from the UNC and DPRK exchanged the views on holding additional talks later this week, but a fixed date has yet to be set.

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN FISHERMAN RETURNS HOME 33 YEARS AFTER BEING KIDNAPPED BY N. KOREA", Seoul, 2009/03/03) reported that an ROK fisherman returned home recently following his defection from DPRK last year and subsequent custody in an ROK diplomatic mission in PRC, a local civic group said Tuesday. An association for abductees' families said Yun Jong-su, 66, arrived in ROJ from PRC late last month.

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7. ROK Technology

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA RANKS SECOND IN WORLDWIDE IT DEVELOPMENT", 2009/03/03) reported that ROK has become the world's second most advanced country in terms of information and communications technologies. The International Telecommunications Union under the United Nations on Monday released its latest ICT Development Index covering a five-year period from 2002 to 2007.

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8. ROK-New Zealand Relations

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "LEE CALLS FOR SEOUL-WELLINGTON COOPERATION TO FIGHT CRISIS", Auckland, 2009/03/03) reported that visiting ROK President Lee Myung-bak urged increased cooperation between ROK and New Zealand on Tuesday, saying the two countries can do more to help overcome the ongoing global economic crisis. "Now, South Korea and New Zealand must upgrade their economic cooperation to the next level. The global economic crisis facing the countries is increasing the need to strengthen cooperation between the two countries," Lee said. One potentially lucrative area, Lee said, is green technology. "First of all, such cooperation can be made in agricultural reform and the agriculture, food sector," Lee said. "Secondly, the two can work together in developing bio-forestry technologies and fighting climate change." The president said New Zealand's success in reforming its agricultural sector and its leadership in bio-forestry could open up a new field of business he called a "clean development mechanism."

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9. ROK-Australia Relations

The Australian (Greg Sheridan, "RUDD PLANS SECURITY PACT WITH SEOUL", 2009/03/03) reported that ROK's President has proposed a historic diplomatic partnership between Seoul and Canberra embracing joint action on climate change and the global financial crisis, as well as a free-trade agreement between the two nations. He has also foreshadowed a new security agreement between Australia and ROK, along the lines of the agreement Canberra has with Tokyo. "I want to see a new era of partnership between Mr Rudd and myself, and between our two countries," Mr Lee said.

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10. Japan in Iraq

Kyodo News (Sharm El-Sheik, "JAPANESE MISSION ON LOOKOUT FOR BUSINESS POSSIBILITIES IN IRAQ", 2009/03/03) reported that a mission consisting of Japanese corporate and government representatives is in Baghdad seeking investment opportunities in view of Iraq's improving security situation. The mission, headed by Gotaro Ogawa, ambassador in charge of reconstruction assistance to Iraq, arrived Sunday. It paid courtesy calls on Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and Vice President Tariq Hashimi and exchanged views with other high-ranking Iraqi officials. "We are here to enhance our economic ties further," Ogawa was quoted as telling the top Iraqi officials. The Iraqi prime minister thanked Ogawa for Japan's continued economic cooperation, according to Japanese officials.

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11. Japan Politics

Japan Times (Masami Ito, "ASO DECIDES HE WILL TAKE CASH HANDOUT", 2009/03/03) reported that after several months of equivocating, Prime Minister Taro Aso finally came out and declared Monday evening he will accept his portion of the controversial ¥2 trillion cash handout, contradicting his previous position that he wouldn't take the cash. "I will accept the cash handout," Aso told reporters. "I will use it immediately to stimulate consumption."

Bloomberg (Toko Sekiguchi and Sachiko Sakamaki, "AIDE TO DPJ'S OZAWA ARRESTED IN JAPAN POLITICAL FUNDING PROBE", Tokyo, 2009/03/03) reported that a top aide to Ichiro Ozawa, head of the opposition Democratic Party of Japan, was arrested on suspicion of funneling illegal political donations from a construction company, Tokyo prosecutors said. Takanori Okubo falsely reported that Ozawa's personal fund-raising group Rikuzanai received 21 million yen (\$215,000) from two political organizations instead of from Nishimatsu Construction Co. Ozawa was not named in the statement. Under Japanese law, personal fund-raising organizations such as Rikuzankai are not allowed to accept corporate donations. Okubo denied the allegations and Ozawa told party officials that he was unaware of any wrongdoing.

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12. Japan Energy

Jiji Press ("JAPAN TO PROMOTE USE OF SOLAR PANELS AT PUBLIC FACILITIES", Tokyo, 2009/03/02) reported that the government will take the lead in promoting solar power generation in Japan by installing solar panels at public facilities like schools, government buildings and parks, informed sources have told Jiji Press. The move will be part of a Japanese version of the U.S. Green New Deal initiative, or a set of measures to stimulate demand and create jobs in environment-related sectors. The government will also try to stimulate replacement demand for energy-efficient home appliances by offering benefits to those who purchase products that emit less carbon dioxide than conventional models.

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13. PRC Energy

Reuters (David Lin, "CHINA'S HIMIN SOLAR PLANS A-SHARE IPO IN 2010", 2009/03/04) reported that Himin Solar Energy Group, PRC's top maker of solar water heaters, plans an initial public offering of mainland-listed A shares next year, its president, Huang Ming, said on Tuesday. The company may also consider an overseas listing, Huang told Reuters ahead of the start of the country's annual parliament meeting. He said that the company would invest more than 1 billion yuan this year and estimated that its production capacity would double by the year-end. The company also foresaw a more than 40 percent rise in sales this year, compared with less than 30 percent growth last year, he said.

Reuters ("INDIA'S SUZLON GETS ORDER FOR 80 TURBINES IN CHINA", Mumbai, 2009/03/03) reported that Indian wind turbine maker Suzlon Energy Ltd said on Tuesday a unit had secured an order to supply 80 wind turbines in PRC with total power generation capacity of 100 megawatts.

Beijing Review (Feng Jianhua, "CHINA'S DRAFT ENERGY LAW IS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION", 2009/03/03) reported that PRC's draft Energy Law has been submitted to the State Council's Legislative Affairs Office and will be considered at this year's executive meeting and then the National People's Congress will vote on it. It addresses energy management and supervision, energy strategy and planning, development and supply, conservation and emissions reductions, climate change, taxation and pricing, reserves and emergency response, science and technology policies and international energy cooperation. The PRC does not yet have systematic and comprehensive legislation governing the development, use and management of energy. The panel will also incorporate language that coordinates existing energy guidelines with other laws, guaranteeing the implementation of energy strategy and ensuring national energy security.

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14. Sino-US Energy Cooperation

Sunnyvale Sun (Cody Kraatz, "CHINESE, U.S. SWAP CLEAN ENERGY IDEAS AT FORUM", 2009/03/02) reported that a PRC delegation from the U.S.-PRC Clean Energy Forum visited Sunnyvale's Applied Materials recently to foster an exchange of ideas about solar energy and the nuts and bolts needed to one day connect an efficient energy grid based on renewable sources. The idea behind the forum is for the two nations — each of which is a major greenhouse gas emitter — to move simultaneously toward more energy-efficient and climate-friendly technologies.

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15. PRC Economy

Reuters (Ben Blanchard, "CHINA URGES BOSSES TO HELP WITH LABOR STABILITY", Beijing, 2009/03/03) reported that a top PRC Communist Party official on Tuesday called on private bosses to keep their workers on the payroll as he warned of the impact of "complex and severe" economic conditions on PRC's stability. "We encourage people from the non-public sector ... to shoulder their share of social responsibilities and work hard to ensure that no employees in their enterprises are laid off, or suffer pay cuts, or wage arrears, in order to create harmonious labor relations," Jia

Qinglin told the PRC People's Political Consultative Conference, an advisory body that meets once a year.

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16. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France Presse (D'arcy Doran, "OASIS 'BARRED FROM CHINA' OVER FREE TIBET GIG", Shanghai, 2009/03/03) reported that British rock supergroup Oasis said PRC authorities had banned it from performing in PRC because guitarist Noel Gallagher played at a Free Tibet benefit concert 12 years ago. "The Chinese authorities' action in cancelling these shows marks a reversal of their decision regarding the band, which has left both Oasis and the promoters bewildered," the band said in a statement on Monday. However, PRC authorities denied the ban was over Tibet, saying it was because of financial problems with the band's local promoters.

British Broadcasting System ("NO TIBETAN PROTESTS' IN SICHUAN", 2009/03/03) reported that a PRC official has rejected reports that protests have taken place in a Tibetan area of south-west PRC. "There were no such riots as some foreign media have reported," state media quoted Wu Zegang, head of Aba prefecture in Sichuan, as saying. Tibet campaigners say at least two monk-led protests have taken place in Aba in recent days.

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17. PRC Government

Associated Press (Chris Bodeen, "CHINA'S LEADERSHIP MEETS UNDER ECONOMIC STORM", Beijing, 2009/03/03) reported that PRC's Communist Party leadership is expected to use its biggest meeting of the year for an even tighter show of political unity in the face of the global economic crisis and public calls for political change. Delegates to the National People's Congress session that starts Thursday are being told to cool even their usually tepid debates. Lots of talk about getting the economy back on track is expected. Strong measures are not.

British Broadcasting System (Vaudine England, "MACAU LAW A 'BAD EXAMPLE' FOR HK", Hong Kong, 2009/03/03) reported that a new state security law has taken effect in Macau to punish crimes of treason, secession or subversion against the PRC government. It also punishes what it calls "preparatory acts" of these crimes, and the theft of state secrets. Rights watchdogs have criticised the ambiguous, catch-all language of the law. Democrat legislators have said the law in Macau is intended by PRC to set an example for less pliant Hong Kong. It provides for sentences of up to 30 years for political crimes.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Energy

China Daily (Sun Xiaohua, "CHINA TO BOLSTER OIL REFINING", 2009/03/02) reported that PRC is accelerating the build-up of its oil reserves to avoid the economic dislocations the country suffered in 2008 from fluctuations in the world oil price. PRC's National Energy Administration (NEA) recently released a plan to build nine large refining bases in coastal areas over the next three years, sources with the PRC Petroleum and Chemical Industry Association said last week. The plan involves building three 30-million-ton refinery bases in three cities (Shanghai, Ningbo and Nanjing) in PRC's economically dynamic Yangtze Delta and six 20-million-ton bases in other coastal areas from Tianjin in the north to Guangzhou in the south.

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19. PRC Civil Society

People's Daily Online ("", 2009/03/02) reported that the capital already has 50,000 volunteer teams, with the total number of volunteers exceeding two million, according to the Beijing Volunteers Association (BVA). Wang Lihua, Deputy Secretary-General of BVA, said that these volunteer teams include young volunteers, volunteers serving the community, volunteers for science popularization, volunteers helping the disabled, senior citizen volunteers, Red Cross volunteers, volunteers for narcotics control, volunteers for emergency rescue, care service teams and women volunteer service teams. The volunteer teams have provided an accumulated service time exceeding 500 million hours.

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