NAPSNet Daily Report 9 December, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 9 December, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, December 09, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-9-december-2008/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Bloomberg News ("NORTH KOREA TOLD WEAPONS BALK T WORK WITH OBAMA", 2008/12/08) reported that when the DPRK said last month it would bar inspectors from analyzing soil and nuclear waste to verify the extent of its weapons program, it raised concerns that leader Kim Jong Il was stalling talks until Barack Obama assumes the presidency in January. Maybe Kim t pay enough attention to what Obama said during his campaign. While he indicated he might be willing to meet directly with dictators like the s, his words, and probable appointments, show he is unlikely to offer a better deal than President George W. Bush.

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2. Six-Party Talks

Yonhap News Service (Lee Chi-dong, "NO PROGRESS MADE IN FIRST-DAY NEGOTIATIONS: ENVOYS", Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that negotiators here failed Monday to narrow differences

on the main agenda -- how to inspect DPRK's nuclear facilities -- in their first-day talks, the ROK's top envoy said. "There was no progress," Kim Sook told reporters, returning from PRC's state guest house Daioyutai, the venue for the six-party talks. "I felt that North Korea is not ready yet to have additional discussions and reach a compromise (on the verification issue)."

Associated Press ("PRC TO CIRCULATE DRAFT ON DPRK NUCLEAR VERIFICATION TUES. ", Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that PRC is set to circulate a draft protocol for verifying Pyongyang's nuclear information on Tuesday, Christopher Hill said. Hill said that no contentious issues emerged over the other goal of the meeting, which is to decide on when to complete the disablement of DPRK's key nuclear facility and the delivery of energy aid promised in exchange.

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3. US on DPRK-Japan Relations

Yonhap News ("U.S. PLEDGES TO DEAL WITH JAPANESE ABDUCTEES IN 6-WAY NUKE TALKS ", Washington, 2008/12/08) reported that the US said it will support Japan raising the issue of DPRK abductions in the six-party talks. "The issue of abductions needs to be dealt with," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. "We will continue to work with them -- the six-party framework to -- with the Japanese to find some answers to the questions that they have and try to help bring some closure for those families that have been waiting years, if not decades, for answers."

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4. DPRK on Six Party Talks

Xinhua News ("DPRK WISHES TO REMOVE OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS IN FRESH SIX-PARTY TALKS ", Pyongyang, 2008/12/08) reported that the DPRK said it welcomed the reopening of six-party talks in the coming days in Beijing. The DPRK believes that the talks should have two tasks. One is to "ensure the speed of economic compensation" to the DPRK as promised by the other five parties, and the other is to "achieve common understanding of the issue of verification," said a spokesman of the DPRK Foreign Ministry in a statement.

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5. Inter-Korea Relations

Korea Times ("ENVOYS DISCUSS CHILLED INTER-KOREAN TIES", 2008/12/08) reported that ROK and DPRK envoys to the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs in Beijing discussed denuclearization and inter-Korean relations Monday, a foreign ministry official said. ROK

chief negotiator Kim Sook and his DPRK counterpart, Kim Kye-gwan, met for an "earnest, substantial" discussion, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The inter-Korean meeting started around noon in Beijing and lasted more than an hour, according to a statement from the Ministry.

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6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("KAESONG FIRMS DEMAND GOV'T COMPENSATION ", 2008/12/08) reported that ROK companies at the DPRK's Kaesong Industrial Complex will demand that their government compensate them for lost revenue if inter-Korean relations continue to deteriorate. About 130 ROK firms with factories in the cross-border business zone say sales dropped by 60 percent last month due to escalating tension between the two Koreas. It remains to be seen whether the legal grounds exist for the companies to demand government restitution.

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7. DPRK Defense

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("DPRK REEMPHASIZES PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE INDUSTRIES", 2008/12/08) reported that the DPRK online Our Nation (uri emphasized on January 1 that development of national defense industries would be prioritized, stating that it the best way to move forward and harden a strong national defense while at the same time developing the entire The magazine The might of heavy industry can be further strengthened following the completion of the basis of the national defense industries, also ceaselessly developing light industry and The article noted that s military competition between nations is practically scientific and technological competition, strengtheninloomberg ("GS CALTEX OPENS ECO-FRIENDLY PLANT", 2008/12/09) reported that GS Caltex Corp., s second-largest refiner, started commercial output at a plant that produces higher-priced and cleaner-burning diesel. The refiner began operations at the 70,000 barrel-a-day diesel hydro-desulfurization plant on Dec. 6, it said in a statement yesterday. Units that remove sulfur from diesel, such as hydro-desulfurizers, help refiners to produce eco-friendly fuels that reduce city smog and meet tighter urban air-quality standards.

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8. DPRK Economy

DongA Ilbo ("1ST VIDEO OF N. KOREAN POPPY FIELDS UNVEILED", 2008/12/09) reported that the first video clip on poppies growing en masse in a district controlled by the DPRK military in

Taehung, South Pyongan Province, was unveiled yesterday. The Citizens Coalition for Human Rights of Abductees and North Korean Refugees, a Seoul-based civic group, released the 20-minute clip at a digital video exhibition for DPRK human rights at Gwanggyo Gallery in Seoul, saying it confirms the DPRK military-white bellflower as claimed by DPRK defectors.

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9. DPRK Food Security

Kyodo News ("40% OF S POPULATION NEED URGENT FOOD ASSISTANCE: U.N. REPORT", Rome, 2008/12/08) reported that about 40 percent of the population of DPRK, or about 8.7 million people, urgently need food assistance due to an expected cereals deficit in the coming months, two U.N. agencies said in a joint report Monday. The Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program, both based in Rome, compiled the report based on a field survey they conducted in DPRK in October last year.

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10. ROK Environment

Bloomberg ("GS CALTEX OPENS ECO-FRIENDLY PLANT", 2008/12/09) reported that GS Caltex Corp., s second-largest refiner, started commercial output at a plant that produces higher-priced and cleaner-burning diesel. The refiner began operations at the 70,000 barrel-a-day diesel hydro-desulfurization plant on Dec. 6, it said in a statement yesterday. Units that remove sulfur from diesel, such as hydro-desulfurizers, help refiners to produce eco-friendly fuels that reduce city smog and meet tighter urban air-quality standards.

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11. Japan International Relations

Mainichi ("LESS PEOPLE THINK JAPAN, U.S. HAVE GOOD RELATIONS", 2008/12/08) reported that a record low of 68.9 percent of the public think Japan and the United States have maintained good relations, a Cabinet Office survey on Japan's diplomacy shows. The figure is down 7.4 points from the previous survey conducted in October last year. A record 71.9 percent of the pollees said they do not think that Japan's relations with the PRC are good. A record 57.1 percent said they feel an affinity toward the DPRK.

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12. USFJ Base Realignment

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("100 BIL. YEN SOUGHT FOR U.S. FORCES REALIGNMENT", 2008/12/08) reported that the Defense Ministry will ask the Finance Ministry for about 100 billion yen in the fiscal 2009 budget to promote the realignment of U.S. forces stationed in Japan, a government source said Monday. The two ministries have already entered into preliminary negotiations on the matter, the source said. The envisioned figure far exceeds the 19.1 billion yen allotted for realignment in the current fiscal year, which ends in March.

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13. Japan Nuclear Safety

Mainichi Shimbun ("SMALL FIRE AT JAPANESE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT SICKENS WORKER", Tokyo, 2008/12/08) reported that a fire broke out at a nuclear power plant in northern Japan and a worker was sickened by smoke inhalation, but there was no release of radioactivity, the plant operator said Monday. A small fire broke out at a turbine facility at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear complex during welding of pipes aimed at enhancing quake resistance, Tokyo Electric Power Co. said in a statement. A worker was sickened from inhaling smoke, but not

seriously, said the company. (return to top)

14. Taiwan-Japan Relations

Agence France Press ("TAIWAN PARTY CHIEF BEGINS HISTORIC VISIT TO JAPAN", Tokyo, 2008/12/07) reported that Wu Poh-hsiung, the chief of Taiwan's ruling Kuomintang, on Sunday became the first leader of a ruling Taiwanese party to visit Japan. Wu is due to meet Tokyo Governor Shintaro Ishihara as well as officials from various political parties, officials said in Taipei. "President Ma is fully aware of the importance of Taiwan-Japan ties, which he defined as a 'special partner relationship,'" Wu said in a statement released Saturday.

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15. Japan Food Security

Associated Press (Joseph Coleman, "JAPAN STRUGGLES TO BOOST HOMEGROWN FOOD", Nara, Japan, 2008/12/08) reported that the Japanese on average get only 40 percent of their calories from

domestic food, down from 73 percent in 1965, the government says, putting the country's self-sufficiency rate near the bottom of the 30-country Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. "We have to wonder whether Japan should continue buying up food from around the world," said Hidenobu Ogawa, a food safety official with the Agriculture Ministry. The government has set a target of boosting the self-sufficiency rate up to 45 percent by 2015, and has launched a series of campaigns (return to top)

16. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA'S DM URGES U.S. TO CANCEL ARMS SALE TO TAIWAN", 2008/12/08) reported that the PRC's Defense Minister Liang Guanglie Monday urged the United States to immediately cancel its planned weapons sale to Taiwan, and cease all military ties with Taiwan. US Arms sale to Taiwan has poisoned the sound atmosphere of bilateral military relations and endangered the PRC's national security, Liang told Richard Myers, former chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who is in Beijing for a visit.

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17. Sino-Indian Joint Military Exercise

IANS ("SECOND LEG OF HISTORIC INDIA-CHINA MILITARY EXERCISE GETS UNDERWAY", 2008/12/08) reported that India and the PRC Saturday launched the second leg of their joint military exercise that is primarily focused on counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations. Nearly 130 Chinese personnel, including 40 officers, from the first company of the infantry battalion of Chengdu Military Area Command and soldiers from the Eight Maratha Light Infantry Battalion of the Indian Army are holding eight-day joint exercises termed as 'Ex Hand-in-Hand 2008' in three phases at the Belgaum military command.

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18. Sino-Russian Space Cooperation

Reuters ("CHINA, RUSSIA TO SEND PROBES TO MARS NEXT YEAR", Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that the PRC will team up with Russia to launch two satellite probes to take pictures of Mars and one of its small moons in October next year. A PRC-built probe will piggy-back on a Russian-built rocket which would also be carrying a Russian satellite, the Beijing News said, quoting a PRC lead designer on the project.

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19. Sino-US Trade Relations

Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "PRC IRKS US WITH COMPUTER SECURITY REVIEW RULES", Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that the PRC government is stirring trade tensions with Washington with a plan to require foreign computer security technology to be submitted for government approval, in a move that might require suppliers to disclose business secrets. Rules due to take effect May 1 require official certification of technology widely used to keep e-mail and company data networks secure. Washington complains the requirement might hinder imports in a market dominated by U.S. companies, and is pressing Beijing to scrap it.

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20. PRC Energy

Associated Press ("PRC OFFERS $10B TO DEVELOP BRAZIL OFFSHORE OIL", Brasilia, Brazil, 2008/12/08) reported that Brazil's top energy official says PRC wants to provide $10 billion to help develop massive new oil fields in deep water off the coast of Rio de Janeiro. Mines and Energy Minister Edison Lobao told the Folha de S. Paulo newspaper PRC will offer the financing to Brazil's state oil company, Petroleo Brasileiro SA (PBR).

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21. PRC Nuclear Energy

Asian News International ("PRC TO BUILD FIRST INLAND NUCLEAR PLANT IN HUBEI", Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that PRC has announced plans to construct its first inland nuclear plant in the central province of Hubei. The cost of the first two phases of the project, with an installed capacity of 4 million kilowatt is estimated at 50 billion Yuan (7.3 billion dollars). The PRC Guangdong Nuclear Power Group (CGNPG) and the Hubei provincial government agreed in March to jointly build the plant. CGNPG and Hubei Energy Group established a joint venture, known as Hubei Nuclear Power Ltd. Co., in June to develop nuclear power in the province.

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22. PRC Human Rights

British Broadcasting Corporation (Quentin Sommerville, "PETITIONERS IN PRC 'ABDUCTED'",

Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that the authorities in the eastern PRC city of Xintai have been abducting citizens who make complaints, according to a state newspaper. These people are held in mental hospitals until they withdraw their grievances, the Beijing News reports. An investigation found that at least 18 people had been detained in this way, after trying to take complaints about local officials to higher authorities. Some of those held were reportedly forced to take powerful drugs.

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23. PRC Food Safety

Associated Press ("LAWSUIT OVER PRC TAINTED MILK REJECTED", Beijing, 2008/12/08) reported that a court in PRC has refused to accept a lawsuit against a PRC dairy filed by dozens of families whose children were sickened by tainted milk. Lawyers involved in the case said Monday the lawsuit on behalf of defendants 63 including the parents of two children died who sought compensation from state-owned Sanlu Group Co. "We will continue to push the case" and put pressure on them, activist lawyer Li Fangping said.

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II. PRC Report

24. PRC Civil Society

Legal Daily (Yu Yingbo, "CHINA-U.K. SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECT SUCCESSFULLY ENDED", 2008/12/07) reported that the Social Innovation and Social Organizations Forum which was held on December 4, was an important part of the PRC-U.K. social innovation project sponsored by the British Council China and China Management Bureau of Civil Organizations. Governmental officials, experts, and representatives of hundreds of civil organizations came to the forum and carried out wide-ranging and in-depth studies and discussions on a series of issues. The issue of voluntary service became the focus of attention. The s voluntary service is still in the initial stage. There is no special law for the regulation of voluntary service and voluntary organizations. So legislation problems demand a prompt solution.

Xinhua Net (Yan Ping, "DALIAN ESTABLISHES INSURANCE YOUNG VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION", 2008/12/08) reported that Insurance Young Volunteers Association was established in Dalian on December 6. In recent years, the insurance industry of Dalian city, Liaoning province takes the initiative to join in public welfare. According to incomplete statistics, insurance companies in Dalian have held various public welfare campaigns over 300 times since 2004. The new Association will further promote the voluntary service of insurance industry.

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25. PRC Civil Society and International Relations

s Daily (Pei Guangjiang, "ANNUAL MEETING OF CHINA FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES HELD", 2008/12/08) reported that the annual meeting of China Foundation for International Studies was closed on December 7, Beijing. During the two-day meeting, center directors of the Foundation concluded the international situation of this year, looked into the next year, and put forward related work proposals. Over 40 senior diplomats of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant experts came to the meeting. The Foundation is planed to establish another two centers: Ecological Security Research Center and International Exchange and Cooperation Center, to further promote the research of international issues.

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III. ROK Report

26. DPRK Nuclear Program

TongilNews ("S DPRK POSSESSES NUCLEAR ", 2008/12/09) reported that the US Defense department specified the DPRK as a nuclear-possessing nation in their annual report. Experts analyze that the report reflected s recognition that they have no other choice but to acknowledge the DPRK as one of the nuclear-possessing nations. However, it does not necessarily mean that they will change their political and diplomatic policy toward the DPRK. The ROK government, which has been refusing to acknowledge the possession, considers the analysis as a mistake. Conservatives worry that the US might focus on nuclear non-proliferation while allowing the DPRK to keep its current stockpile. Meanwhile, Progressives view the s report as fairly reasonable.

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27. Six-Party Talks

PRESSian ("DPRK BEING WEIRD, US BEING WEIRDER, CONFLICTS OVER SIX-PARTY TALKS AND DPRK NUCLEAR", 2008/12/09) reported that concerning recent actions and remarks made by the DPRK and the US, the six-party talks may change their basic framework. Instead of directly mentioning the US, the DPRK started to make vague criticisms. Meanwhile, the US said that the sample collection is part of the verification protocol and emphasized the importance of Russia. It seems that the picture which has been hidden behind the rhetoric of ROK-US-Japan collaboration finally is being unveiled. Closely watching the picture, there is the ROK and Japan who do not want further progress of the DPRK nuclear program, the DPRK who resists them, and the US who tries to achieve the disablement on their terms.

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