

NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, September 24, 2007

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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("SCHEDULE ON FOR SIX-PARTY TALKS AMID SYRIA WOES", 2007-09-24) reported that in what appeared to be an acknowledgment that reports of a nuclear connection between the DPRK and Syria are being closely scrutinized, Foreign Minister Song Min-soon said that the six-party nuclear talks are also a venue to address proliferation concerns. The remarks echoed comments on the subject by US President George W. Bush on the same day that the PRC Foreign Ministry announced that the six-party talks will resume on Thursday for four days in Beijing.

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times ("RICE CALLS ON NK TO MAKE NUKE ISSUE TRANSPARENT", 2007-09-24) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called on the DPRK to make transparent fully its nuclear weapons program amid reports it was secretly assisting Syria to develop an atomic weapons facilities, the AFP reported. "There are frankly a lot of questions that remain to be answered and we want to be able to answer questions about all aspects of the North Korean nuclear program," AFP quoted Rice as telling reporters with her PRC counterpart Yang Jiechi beside her.

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3. Alleged Syria-DPRK Nuclear Deal

The Times ("ISRAELIS SEIZED NUCLEAR MATERIAL IN SYRIAN RAID", 2007-09-24) reported that Israeli commandos seized nuclear material of DPRK origin during a daring raid on a secret military site in Syria before Israel bombed it this month, according to informed sources in Washington and Jerusalem. They confirmed that samples taken from Syria for testing had been identified as North Korean. This raised fears that Syria might have joined the DPRK and Iran in seeking to acquire nuclear weapons.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Financial Times ("US FEARED N KOREA-SYRIA LINK BEFORE ISRAELI STRIKE", 2007-09-20) reported that the US had concerns about potential nuclear-related co-operation between the DPRK and Syria before recently receiving Israeli intelligence on the issue that Israel reportedly used to justify an air strike inside Syria. Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli opposition leader, appeared to confirm reports that Israeli fighter jets had earlier this month launched strikes inside Syria, which US and Israeli media reported were due to concerns that the DPRK was helping Syria develop a clandestine nuclear programme. Most experts have suggested that Israel was much more likely to have targeted some a facility related to for conventional weapons or missiles, over which the DPRK and Syria have co-operated in the past. [\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap ("N. KOREA DENOUNCES US FOR DEFENDING ISRAEL AGAINST SYRIA", 2007-09-24) reported that the DPRK denounced Washington and US media for siding with Israel after its air strike on Syria, but kept silent on suspicions raised by the New York Times and other US media about possible trade of nuclear materials between the DPRK and Syria. "But the U.S. has supported and defended Israelis' impudent behavior. US media have also run wrongful articles on Israeli warplanes' violation of the Syrian airspace," said the Rodong Sinmun, the newspaper of the DPRK's Workers' Party, in an article. [\(return to top\)](#)

4. Inter-Korean Summit

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN PRESIDENT CONSIDERS "WALKING ACROSS" BORDER FOR SUMMIT", 2007-09-24) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun is considering "walking across" the heavily-fortified border to the DPRK for a summit early next month, a report said Sunday. Roh is to visit the DPRK by car via the truce border village of Panmunjeon from October 2 to 4 for peace talks with the DPRK's leader Kim Jong-Il. "Using an overland route for this summit unlike the first one, we're considering showing the president walking across the border line, the symbol of the divided Korea," an unnamed government official told Chosun.

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5. DPRK Floods

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA SAYS TYPHOON WIPHA DESTROYED 107,910 HECTARES OF CROP FIELD", 2007-09-24) reported that heavy rains caused by last week's typhoon have destroyed some 107,910 hectares of crop field in the DPRK, the country's state media reported. Many parts of southwestern DPRK, including its capital Pyongyang, were flooded, leaving at least 14,000 homes and 8,000 buildings submerged or damaged from rains spawned by Typhoon Wipha, the the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said. However, it didn't report on possible human casualties.

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6. PRC Oil Exports to the DPRK

Kyodo ("CHINA'S OIL EXPORTS TO N. KOREA UP 3.7% IN AUG.", 2007-09-24) reported that the PRC's crude oil exports to the DPRK in August totaled 34,998.7 tons, up 3.7 percent from the same month last year, figures released by the PRC's General Administration of Customs showed. The total for the first eight months of the year stood at 370,160.6 tons, up 0.1 percent from a year earlier, according to the customs figures.

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7. Japan Government

The Asahi Shimbun ("FUKUDA DEFEATS ASO IN LDP PRESIDENTIAL RACE", 2007-09-24) reported that Yasuo Fukuda scored a convincing win in the Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election Sunday but will immediately face a host of problems as the nation's new leader. Fukuda received 330 votes in Sunday's vote while Taro Aso, the party's secretary-general, received 197 votes.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Financial Times ("JAPAN'S FUKUDA STARTS BUILDING HIS TEAM", 2007-0-24) reported that Yasuo Fukuda picked party faction leaders to take the LDP's three top jobs and another veteran to coordinate election strategy. The job of planning the election strategy, given to Makoto Koga, a former LDP secretary general, looks especially important in light of the upper house loss and growing pressure from the opposition Democratic Party of Japan for a full general election. Mr Fukuda's other appointments on Monday went to Bunmei Ibuki, a conservative former education minister who will replace Mr Aso as LDP secretary general; Sadakazu Tanigaki, a former finance minister who had criticised Mr Abe's focus on patriotism and other right wing pet issues and will head the party's policy research council; and Toshihiro Nikai, who stays on as general council chief.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo ("OPPOSITION SLAMS LDP LEADERSHIP SELECTION AS 'FACTIONAL' AND 'OLD'", 2007-09-24) reported that Opposition parties criticized Monday's appointment by new ruling Liberal Democratic Party President Yasuo Fukuda of new key LDP executives, saying the lineup

consists only of current or former party faction leaders. "The character of the old LDP has become exposed," said Yukio Hatoyama, secretary general of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan. "They're astonishingly faction-collusion personnel selections. It's quite an accomplishment to stick to a faction like this," Hatoyama said sarcastically to reporters. "It's impossible for the LDP to become a people-centered party." [\(return to top\)](#)

8. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

The Asahi Shimbun ("CAPTAIN SAYS MSDF REFUELED HIS SHIP IN IRAQ WAR", 2007-09-24) reported that a US Navy officer said the Maritime Self-Defense Force refueled his former ship that was used in the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The remark by Capt. Ronald Horton, who commanded the amphibious assault ship Juneau in 2005, contradicts the Japanese government's explanation that MSDF vessels in the Indian Ocean are refueling only US and other foreign warships engaged in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan.

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9. PRC-Indian Territorial Dispute

IANAS ("INDIA, CHINA KICK OFF BOUNDARY TALKS", 2007-09-24) reported that ahead of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Beijing later this year, special representatives of India and the PRC kicked off another round of talks here to resolve the contentious boundary dispute that has hobbled their bilateral ties for over four decades. The in-camera talks are aimed at finalising an agreed framework - a euphemism for a package settlement that may involve mutual territorial adjustments - to resolve the dispute that has cast a shadow over their bilateral ties since a brief but brutal war between the two Asian countries in 1962.

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10. PRC Rural Unrest

EastSouthWestNorth Blog ("THE SIEGE OF FOSHAN", 2007-09-24) reported that at Xintang village, Longjiang town, Shunde district, Foshan city, Guangdong province, the villagers have laid siege to the village committee building for more than two months already. They demanded the village officials to open up the account books to be reviewed by villagers. The books showed that there had been almost 100 million yuan in revenue that the villagers had never heard of.

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11. PRC Military

The Associated Press ("CHINA REPLACES MILITARY OPERATIONS CHIEF", 2007-09-24) reported that the PRC has named a new chief of general staff for its military, a commander once tasked with making war preparations against Taiwan, the Defense Ministry said. Chen Bingde's promotion as the People's Liberation Army's head of day-to-day operations came in the past six weeks, in a transfer that was unusually quiet even for an institution as secretive as the PRC's military.

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12. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA STRUGGLING TO TACKLE RISING POLLUTION", 2007-09-24) reported that the PRC is finding it increasingly difficult to cope with rising pollution and its impact on the environment despite record investment in clean technology, state media reported. Despite plans to cut pollutants by two percent last year, the report said the PRC's sulfur dioxide emissions grew to 25.9 million tonnes in 2006, up 1.5 percent from the previous year. The increased pollution came despite the state spending a record 256.8 billion yuan (34.2 billion dollars) on pollution control in 2006, up 7.5 percent from the previous year, it said.

[\(return to top\)](#) Reuters ("CHINA'S BANKS TOLD TO INVEST MORE ON GREEN PROJECTS", 2007-09-24) reported that the PRC's cash-rich state-run commercial banks should invest more in energy-saving and renewable projects, an academic and a government official said. Big state banks should divert 2 to 3 percent of their annual loans to green production, as funding on these projects falls well below the amount required, said Yang Fuqiang of the US-based Energy Foundation, which advises Beijing on energy-saving policy. [\(return to top\)](#)

13. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA TO BUILD NEW SATELLITE LAUNCH SITE", 2007-09-24) reported that the PRC is planning to build a new satellite launch site — the country's fourth — to boost its burgeoning space program, state media reported. The facility will be located in Wenchang on the southern island province of Hainan, about 38 miles away from the provincial capital Haikou, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The site is close to the equator which makes it well suited for launches because lower latitudes have stronger centrifugal forces, reducing the amount of energy required to launch rockets, Xinhua said.

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