

# **NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, August 24, 2006**

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## **I. NAPSNet**

# 1. Six Party Talks Diplomacy

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT TO VISIT CHINA TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR CONCERNS", 2006-08-24) reported that ROK president Roh will visit the PRC in mid-October for a summit to discuss the DPRK nuclear program, amid renewed concerns that it might test an atomic bomb. Several reports this week indicate that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il may be planning a rare trip of his own to the PRC, which is widely believed to have considerable influence over the country, but Beijing argues that its influence is limited. Renewed diplomatic efforts come after U.S.-based ABC News reported last week that U.S. officials were monitoring potentially suspicious activity at a suspected underground nuclear test site.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo News ("HILL LIKELY TO VISIT JAPAN, CHINA, S. KOREA IN EARLY SEPT", 2006-08-24) reported that Christopher Hill, the chief U.S. negotiator for the six-party talks is planning to visit Japan, the PRC and ROK in early September. Hill wants to meet with his counterparts from the three nations to discuss how to deal with the long-stalled talks as well as measures to stop the transfer of missile-related materials and technology to the DPRK in line with the U.N. Security Council resolution, the sources said. The sources said Hill is especially hoping to reaffirm and beef up cooperation among Japan, South Korea and the United States, and arrangements are under way for a possible trilateral meeting. [\(return to top\)](#)

# 2. Experts on Kim visit to PRC

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA'S KIM MAY VISIT CHINA NEXT WEEK: REPORT", 2006-08-23) reported that experts are skeptical over reports that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il may visit the PRC next week amid heightened concern over a possible nuclear weapons test. Kim's visit will be primarily to discuss the possible nuclear test with Chinese President Hu Jintao, the daily Chosun Ilbo reported a diplomatic source in Seoul as saying. But experts say Beijing is hardly in a welcoming mood because of what it sees as unnecessarily provocative moves with its weapons programs. Kim rarely travels abroad, but he went on a stealthy visit to the PRC in January and took a look at the places that helped drive Chinese economic development. Kim is also not likely to be seeking out the PRC now, an expert said, because of disappointment over what he sees as a failure by Beijing to convince Washington to drop a financial crackdown against it.

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# 3. DPR Korean Refugee-Defectors

Deutsche Presse-Agentur ("18 NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES BEING AIRLIFTED TO SEOUL", 2006-08-24) reported that 18 DPR Korean refugee-defectors are being airlifted to Seoul. Among 175 North Koreans held in Thailand, 18 were due to arrive in the ROK aboard Asiana Airlines, according to local news reports. They are 16 of the DPR Koreans who have papers giving them formal refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and two who have been separately detained by Thai immigration police, according to the RO Korean embassy in Thailand and NGO officials. The 16 RO Koreans are among 175 who were rounded up by Thai police in a raid on a Bangkok suburb Tuesday while they were hiding in a two-storey house with the help of ROK missionaries. Since 23 children under the age of 17 and the 16 RO Koreans who are listed as the Persons of Concern (PoC) on the UNHCR list are excluded from trials, 134 appeared in Thai court Thursday morning and were sentenced to fines amounting to 157 dollars each, local media reported.

[\(return to top\)](#) BBC ("THAI COURT CONVICTS NORTH KOREANS", 2006-08-24) reported that Bangkok has convicted 136 DPR Korean asylum seekers of illegal entry into Thailand. They were

part of a group of 175 found hiding in a house in the Thai capital. They were fined 6,000 baht (\$160, £84) each, but will serve 30 days in jail instead, as they were unable to pay. Once released, they are likely to be allowed to go to the ROK, which grants citizenship to DPR Korean refugee-defectors. Thailand is an increasingly popular transit destination for DPR Koreans, and this is the largest group ever intercepted in the country. Their discovery has presented Thailand with a dilemma. In the past, it has discreetly allowed all DPR Koreans to leave for the ROK, but it does not want to be seen as an easy haven for asylum-seekers. [\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap News ("NUMBER OF N KOREANS DEFECTING TO S KOREA INCREASES NEARLY 60 PERCENT", 2006-08-23) reported that the number of DPR Korean refugee-defectors coming to the ROK increased by nearly 60 percent in the first seven months of this year compared to the same period of last year. A total of 1,054 North Koreans have come to the country as of the end of July, up 59 percent from a year ago, the ROK Unification Ministry said in a report. Apparently hundreds more are waiting to find their way here, it said. The number increased to 1,139, breaking the 1,000 mark for the first time, in 2002, and rose to 1,281 in 2003 and 1,894 a year later. [\(return to top\)](#)

## **4. Aid to DPRK Flood Victims**

Korea Times ("SOUTH TO OFFER \$10.5 MILLION TO N. KOREA FOR RELIEF", 2006-08-24) reported that the ROK Ministry of Unification will begin providing financial support for humanitarian aid groups, which have sent, or have plans to send, flood relief materials for the DPRK beginning early next month. "The ministry plans to use the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund to meet the amount of contribution made by local private relief organizations under a matching fund system," said a ministry official. "Up to 10 billion won (\$10.5 million) will be subsidized for those civic groups beginning early next month." But the ministry has made it clear that the one-time aid package is unrelated to government's periodic aid provided annually to the DPRK that has been abruptly halted due to the missile threat.

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## **5. US-ROK Trade Relations**

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA SEEKS TO KEEP 288 FARM PRODUCTS OUT OF FTA", 2006-08-24) reported that the ROK has asked the US for "exceptional treatment" of 288 agricultural products or 20 percent of 1,452 agricultural items in their planned free trade agreement, a high-ranking government official said. Products on the list are either wholly protected from market opening or only a certain quota of them receives tariff-free access.

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## **6. ROK, PRC on Regional Free Trade Agreement**

Kyodo ("S. KOREA, CHINA SNUB JAPAN'S 16-NATION FTA PLAN", 2006-08-24) reported that the ROK and PRC on Thursday poured cold water on Japan's proposal for a 16-nation free trade area, maintaining that a 13-nation FTA involving just ASEAN, the PRC, Japan and the ROK should take precedence.

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## **7. PRC-Venezuela Relations**

The Associated Press ("VENEZUELA SAYS CHINA BACKS U.N. BID", 2006-08-24) reported that

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said that the PRC has thrown its support behind his nation's bid for a seat on the U.N. Security Council as the two countries signed deals to develop Venezuela's vast oil resources. PRC President Hu Jintao warmly welcomed Chavez, who has proposed an ambitious plan for his country — the world's No. 5 oil exporter — to almost quadruple sales to fuel-hungry PRC to 1 million barrels per day in the next decade.

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## **8. PRC-Vietnam Relations**

Kyodo ("CHINA, VIETNAM AGREE TO ACCELERATE JOINT OIL EXPLORATION", 2006-08-24) reported that the PRC and Vietnam have agreed to accelerate oil and gas exploration and extraction in border waters of the Gulf of Tonkin, known in the PRC as the Beibu Gulf, according to a joint communique released amid Vietnamese Communist Party leader Nong Duc Manh's visit to the PRC. On trade, the two sides decided to boost two-way trade to \$10 billion before 2010, with the PRC promising to firmly support Vietnam's bid to join the World Trade Organization.

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## **9. PRC-Russia Space Program Cooperation**

Reuters ("CHINA-RUSSIA PLAN JOINT MISSION TO MARS", 2006-08-24) reported that the PRC and Russia plan to launch a joint mission to Mars in 2009 to scoop up rocks from the red planet and one of its moons, a PRC scientist said on. Russia will launch the spacecraft, while the PRC will provide the survey equipment to carry out the unmanned exploration, Ye Peijian, a senior scientist at the Chinese Academy of Space Technology, told a meeting in Beijing.

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## **10. PRC Activist Arrest**

Reuters ("CHINA JAILS BLIND RIGHTS ACTIVIST FOR OVER 4 YEARS", 2006-08-24) reported that a PRC court jailed a blind human rights campaigner for four years and three months, state media announced, prompting other activists to warn of a clampdown on the PRC's "rights defenders." Chen Guangcheng, who was tried last Friday without his own lawyers present, drew international attention last year by accusing officials in east PRC's Shandong province of enforcing late-term abortions in a population control drive.

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## **11. Japan Militarization**

Kyodo ("JAPAN SHOULD SEEK WAY TO USE COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE: ASO", 2006-08-24) reported that Foreign Minister Taro Aso, who declared Monday he will run in the Sept. 20 presidential election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, indicated Thursday that Japan should seek changing the interpretation of the Constitution to enable the exercise of its right of collective self-defense.

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## 12. US Missile Sales to Japan

The Associated Press ("REPORT: U.S. OFFERS TO SELL JAPAN MISSILES ", 2006-08-24) reported that the US has offered to sell Tokyo up to 80 advanced Patriot interceptor missiles to boost its defenses following the DPRK's missile tests last month, news reports said. The PAC-3 Patriot missiles are to be delivered to a Japanese military base in March 2007, speeding up the planned development of missiles in the country by at least a year.

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