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United States

- 1. DPRK on Relations with the US
2. UK - DPRK Relations
3. UN on Libya - DPRK Relations
4. PRC on Multilateral Talks
5. Vietnamese - DPRK Relations
6. DPRK - Japanese Relations
7. DPRK Succession
8. DPRK Food Aid
9. DPRK Agricultural Policy
10. DPRK Defector
11. Inter - Korean Economic Talks
12. ROK - US on Kaesong Complex
13. ROK - US Military Relations
14. US - Japanese Military Relations
15. Edwards on the DPRK
16. RNC on the PRC, DPRK
17. RNC on the ROK, Japan
18. ROK LNG Line
19. ROK Cyberattacks
20. Gender Roles in Japan
21. Cross Strait Relations
22. PRC Hong Kong Elections

23. SARS Whistleblower
24. PRC Energy Supply
25. Sino - Russian Relations

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. DPRK on Relations with the US

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("NORTH KOREAN SPOKESMAN ON US PLANS TO "STIFLE" PYONGYANG", 2004-08-31) reported that the US is contemplating deploying a squadron of Alaska-based F-15E fighter-bombers from the US air force into the ROK in September for an exercise aimed to familiarize themselves with terrain conditions in case of contingency on the Korean Peninsula. The Bush administration has desperately escalated the massive arms build-up and war exercises targeted against the DPRK under the signboard of "dialogue" and "peace". This once again clearly indicates that its loudmouthed "talks" and "dialogue" are nothing but a deceptive farce to cover its aggressive and predatory nature and Washington remains unchanged in its ambition to stifle the DPRK by force.

(return to top)

2. UK - DPRK Relations

BBC News ("UK ANNOUNCES LANDMARK KOREA VISIT ", 2004-08-31) reported that Foreign Office Minister Bill Rammell is set to become the first British minister to visit the DPRK. The historic trip is expected to take place next month. It will focus on the international community's efforts to persuade the DPRK to give up its ambitions of developing nuclear weapons. Mr Rammell also plans to raise the issue of human rights abuses when he meets DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun and other senior figures. The visit had not previously been thought appropriate as the country had not been prepared to discuss human rights - something which had now changed. "I am not naive," said Mr Rammell. "I think this is going to be a long haul but the fact they are prepared to engage in that process I regard as some sign of progress."

(return to top)

3. UN on Libya - DPRK Relations

Washington Post ("IAEA QUESTIONS LIBYA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM; REPORT SAYS COUNTRY HAS GIVEN CONFLICTING STATEMENTS ON SOURCE OF URANIUM", 2004-08-31) reported that Libya has offered conflicting information about whether the DPRK or Pakistan supplied uranium for its nuclear weapons program. IAEA inspectors said efforts to resolve one of the biggest mysteries about Libya's program were complicated by statements from one Libyan, who said the uranium came from the DPRK, and from another who pointed the finger at Abdul Qadeer Khan, Pakistan's top nuclear scientist. "We've had conflicting reports and we can't nail it down," one IAEA official said, referring to the competing claims about Libyan suppliers. "But if North Korea is another player in the black market, then things are much worse than we know." In the US, a Bush administration official

familiar with the report said the source for the DPRK claim was credible, but there was nothing else to corroborate the story. The DPRK is not believed to have the capability to supply the type of uranium found in Libya, and there has been no firm evidence that it provides nuclear materials to other countries.

(return to top)

4. PRC on Multilateral Talks

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREAN MINISTER SAYS CHINA TO PUSH NORTH ON SEPTEMBER SIX-WAY TALKS", 2004-08-31) reported that, as to the DPRK nuclear issue, Ban reiterated his belief that the next round of six-party talks will be held next month as scheduled. "Six-party talks should take place in September as they were agreed upon by the six countries and I think there is such a possibility," he said. He also said that the PRC plans to send high-level officials to the DPRK, if necessary, to try to persuade the country to come to the negotiating table. Downplaying the harsh rhetoric, the US remains optimistic that the DPRK will keep its previous promise to attend the next round of six-party talks.

(return to top)

5. Vietnamese - DPRK Relations

Reuters ("N.KOREA RECALLS ENVOY IN REFUGEE PROTEST-REPORT", 2004-08-31) reported that the DPRK has recalled its ambassador to a Southeast Asian country to protest its role in the secret airlift of more than 460 DPRK refugees to the South, the ROK's Yonhap news agency said on Tuesday. Seoul brought the defectors to the ROK in July from a country that diplomatic sources say was Vietnam. Vietnam has not confirmed or denied it was involved. The recall -- a strong measure in diplomatic terms -- was accompanied by a DPRK demand for an apology from the country, Yonhap said, quoting a Western diplomatic source in Beijing.

(return to top)

6. DPRK - Japanese Relations

Yonhap ("N.K., JAPANESE WOMEN RALLY FOR EARLY NORMALIZATION OF TIES ", 2004-08-31) reported that DPRK and Japanese women's groups staged a rally in Pyongyang to call for an early normalization of ties between the two countries, the DPRK's state-run broadcaster reported Tuesday. The groups were led by Hong Son-ok of the DPRK women's association for solidarity with Asian women and Sumiko Shimizu of the Japanese women's liaison society for solidarity with DPRK women, the Korean Central Broadcasting Station said.

(return to top)

7. DPRK Succession

Chosun Ilbo ("DEATH OF 'NATIONAL MOTHER' RAISES SUCCESSION QUESTIONS IN N. KOREA ", 2004-08-31) reported that in the competition for succession, 33-year-old Kim Jong-nam, the son of Kim Jong-il's first wife Song Hye-rim, was the frontrunner. Jong-nam was not only Kim Jong-il's eldest son, but was regarded as the one most like his father in terms of appearance, gait, and even artistic ability. Moreover, Jong-nam is said to have fallen decidedly out of favor after he was deported from Japan in May 2001 after trying to enter the country illegally. His current whereabouts

are unknown, although reliable rumors have it that he is living in Macau. When Song Hye-rim died in Russia in May 2002, a "Koh Young-hee idolization" project began. This was seen as an undertaking to make Jong-chul or Jong-un next in line for the throne. There is no information as of yet on which of the two is in a stronger position. ROK intelligence is placing more weight on Jong-un. A high-ranking intelligence official said, "Within North Korea, they say that Jong-chul has the artistic skills of his father, but lacks the temperament for leadership. They say Jong-un is very involved with various activities and has leadership skills."

Yonhap ("KIM JONG-IL MAY NOMINATE SUCCESSOR NEXT MONTH: EXPERT", 2004-08-31) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il may officially nominate his heir as early as this year in what would become the DPRK's second hereditary power succession, an expert said Tuesday. Cheong Seong-chang, a research fellow of the independent Sejong Institute in Seoul, said Kim Jong-chol, one of the elder Kim's three sons, could be named as heir before his 23rd birthday in September. He noted that a key post in the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party, which was assumed by Kim Jong-il before being officially designated as the heir before his 32nd birthday in 1974, is now vacant. If Jong-chol is named to the post, it could signal a step toward the leadership, Cheong said. Cheong said Jong-chol's designation as heir could be made next year or in a few years even if the designation procedure is delayed.

(return to top)

8. DPRK Food Aid

Yonhap ("N KOREA'S FOOD RATIONING CENTERS PARALYZED: THINK TANK", 2004-08-31) reported that the DPRK's state-run food-rationing centers have been increasingly unable to function, forcing ordinary DPRK citizens to depend on their factories, companies and public offices for grain supplies, a local think tank said Tuesday. The Seoul-based Institute of North Korea Studies said the DPRK's worsening food shortage has virtually paralyzed the operations of its rationing centers nationwide since the 1990s.

(return to top)

9. DPRK Agricultural Policy

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA GOING TO POT IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE", 2004-08-31) reported that "Let's cover the whole country with hemp fields through a mass movement!" was the title of an editorial that appeared on the front page of the Aug. 25 edition of the Rodong Sinmun. It also described hemp as "The General (Kim Jong-il)'s sky-like love and essence of his benevolent affection." The DPRK introduced in the June 25 edition of the Rodong Sinmun that the country was researching new breeds of hemp and cultivation technology and trying to acquire seeds in accordance with an order from Kim Jong-il, and called on the masses to plant hemp for the first time. The Rodong editorial from Aug. 25 said the "hemp cultivation plan" had been placed alongside the "revolutionary potato cultivation plan" and "revolutionary two-crop farming plan," which are pillars of current agricultural policy. Meanwhile, in the ROK, laws on hemp cultivation are strict as the plant could be used in the manufacture of marijuana.

(return to top)

10. DPRK Defector

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREAN DEFECTOR INVITED TO JAPAN 15-17 SEPTEMBER", 2004-08-31)

reported that Japan's parliament has invited a senior DPRK defector to testify on Pyongyang's human rights situations but it was unclear whether the Seoul government would allow him to go to Japan, a diplomatic source said Tuesday. Hwang Chang-yop, 82, sought asylum in the ROK in 1997, becoming the highest-ranking DPRK official ever to defect to the ROK. Known as an architect of the North's ruling philosophy, juche or self-reliance, Hwang once tutored leader Kim Jong-il.

(return to top)

11. Inter - Korean Economic Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA BOYCOTTS TALKS WITH SOUTH KOREA", 2004-08-31) reported that the DPRK boycotted high-level economic talks with the ROK amid a deepening chill in relations which began cooling two months ago. Delegates from the DPRK did not show up for the four-day economic meeting which was to open in the ROK on Tuesday. The ROK voiced regret and urged the DPRK to return to talks about the construction of an industrial site in the DPRK border city of Kaesong and cross-border rail connections. "We hope North Korea will resume the suspended dialogue with South Korea as soon as possible to discuss and resolve pending issues on economic cooperation," the unification ministry said in a statement.

(return to top)

12. ROK - US on Kaesong Complex

Korea Times ("SEOUL SEEKS US CONSENT OVER KAESONG", 2004-08-31) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young will Wednesday seek US approval to allow the export of currently banned high-tech equipment to the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the DPRK - the final obstacle in the road to local companies moving into the inter-Korean business zone. Currently visiting the US to discuss the DPRK nuclear standoff and various bilateral issues, Chung is scheduled to meet with Kenneth Juster, US under secretary of commerce for industry and security, to discuss the US's concerns over the Kaesong project, according to Unification Ministry officials. "He will take every opportunity to bring up the issue during his meetings with high-ranking US officials," a ministry spokeswoman said.

(return to top)

13. ROK - US Military Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("USFK HEADQUARTERS REFUTES 'GOD DAMN IT! GET THEM OUT!' STORY ", 2004-08-31) reported that the headquarters of the US Forces in Korea refuted Tuesday reports of a statement by Moon Chung-in, the chief of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative and professor at Yonsei University, who said, "Reductions of US forces in Korea were advanced because of our [Korean] trivial mistakes." In a press release, USFK spokeswoman Marianne B. Comings said that for more than a year, the US and Korea have been closely and carefully discussing USFK reductions focusing on the future of the alliance, defending the ROK, regional security and US global commitments. She also said the mutually agreed-upon matters between the allies were not decided upon emotionally or suddenly, but based on a rational background. Mutually agreed-upon matters were decided upon through multiple talks and negotiations, she said.

(return to top)

14. US - Japanese Military Relations

Kyodo News ("U.S. TO DEPLOY 15 AEGIS DESTROYERS TO JAPAN VICINITY BY 2006", 2004-08-31) reported that the Defense Department plans to deploy 15 Aegis destroyers to Japan's vicinity in the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean by 2006 as part of defense against DPRK missiles, according to department sources. The Aegis vessels will be equipped with advanced systems capable of intercepting and tracking ballistic missiles, such as the DPRK's Rodong and Taepodong missiles, the sources said. With the Aegis system that provides advanced aerial defense and the capability to intercept the enemy's missiles over a long distance and extensive period of time, the destroyers are expected also to contribute by providing data to the US forces' ground-based missile defense systems.

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. SHIPS TO DETECT NORTH KOREAN MISSILES IN EAST SEA", 2004-08-31) reported that the weekly magazine Defense News reported on August 30 that under the U.S.' Missile Defense (MD) system, U.S. Navy ships would be deployed to the East Sea of the ROK from September to monitor the launch of Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles. The U.S. plans to send three destroyers and a cruiser by the end of this year and 15 destroyers and three cruisers in turn by 2006. The ships will have a patrolling mission targeting missiles. Republican Senator Wayne Allard said that the MD in the East Sea will have certain defensive capabilities against the DPRK's missiles. Meanwhile Philip Coyle said that the Cobra Dane radar, which will be used for the MD system, cannot detect DPRK missiles.

(return to top)

15. Edwards on the DPRK

The Associated Press ("EDWARDS DECRIES BUSH'S FOREIGN POLICY", 2004-08-31) reported that Vice presidential candidate John Edwards on Monday accused the Bush administration of making the nation less secure by miscalculating US foreign policy. The North Carolina senator said a Kerry administration would create a "Nuclear Whistleblower Initative" in which the US would give asylum and protection to any scientist in a foreign country - particularly Iran and the DPRK - who discloses an illicit weapons program. "These countries were labeled as part of an 'axis of evil.' Yet, two-and-a-half years later, the administration has stood on the sidelines while they advanced their nuclear programs," Edwards said. "In fact, during the past three years, the threats from North Korea and Iran's nuclear programs have only gotten worse. This is a failure of American diplomacy. A president must do more than shrug his shoulders when confronted with these dangers."

(return to top)

16. RNC on the PRC, DPRK

Agence France-Presse ("REPUBLICANS SAY US READY TO TAKE ON CHINA, NORTH KOREA", 2004-08-31) reported that President George W. Bush's Republican party warned the US would not tolerate aggression from the DPRK or any PRC military moves against Taiwan. In the section on Asia, the Republicans took special aim at the PRC, expressing "profound disagreements" on human rights, over Taiwan and on the PRC's "outdated path" of seeking to develop advanced weaponry. "We deny the right of Beijing to impose its rule on the free Taiwanese people. All issues regarding Taiwan's future must be resolved peacefully and must be agreeable to the people of Taiwan," the party said. "If China violates these principles and attacks Taiwan, then the United States will respond appropriately," it warned. "America will help Taiwan defend itself." "North Korea lies outside of the international system. Americans have shed their blood to stop North Korean

aggression before and remain prepared to resist aggression today," the party said.

(return to top)

17. RNC on the ROK, Japan

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. REPUBLICANS PLACE PRIORITY ON JAPAN OVER KOREA", 2004-08-31) reported that in its policy platform on Monday, the US Republican Party defined Japan as a key partner and the ROK as a democratic ally. The platform was adopted at the Republican Party's national convention held in New York. The Republican Party said in the platform that Japan is a key partner of the US and the US-Japan alliance is an important foundation of peace, stability, security and prosperity in Asia. It expects that Japan will continue to take the leading role in dealing with pending issues of the Asia-Pacific region and the world, the party stated. In regards to the ROK, the party said that the ROK is a significant US ally and the two countries are consolidating their alliance to expand stability in the region on a long-term basis and are staying vigilant against the DPRK. The Republican Party did not make detailed explanation about the different concepts. Analysts, however, said that the party places more value on Japan as an East Asian ally than the ROK.

(return to top)

18. ROK LNG Line

Agence France-Presse ("BP SIGNS TWO BILLION DOLLAR DEAL TO SUPPLY INDONESIAN LNG TO SOUTH KOREA ", 2004-08-31) reported that British energy giant BP has inked a two billion dollar deal to annually supply 800,000 tons of liquefied natural gas from a new facility in Indonesia's Papua province to the ROK's K Power, officials said on Tuesday. The 20-year deal, according to a statement from Indonesia's oil and gas upstream regulatory body, was made between BP and K Power, a joint venture between BP and the ROK's SK Corp. K Power will use liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the BP-run Tangguh project to supply its power plant, currently being built in Gwang Yang, ROK, which will start operating in 2006. The project had earlier secured a contract to supply 2.6million tons of LNG a year to the PRC's Fujian province and another for 550,000 tons of LNG a year to the ROK steel firm POSCO.

(return to top)

19. ROK Cyberattacks

Korea Times ("OVERSEAS-BASED HACKING ON RISE", 2004-08-31) reported that the number of domestic Web sites that have been attacked by foreign hackers has been on the increase for three consecutive months, sparking concerns for the nation's cyber security, according to the Ministry of Information and Communication on Tuesday. The ministry reported that in August, overseas hackers attacked 287 Web sites in the ROK, up from 262 in July and 172 in June. The ministry called for tighter cyber security by applying patch files and reinforcing passwords, in preparation for such accidents. According to experts, although the ROK has the most advanced Internet network in the world, its cyber security is weak compared to the US and other industrial nations.

(return to top)

20. Gender Roles in Japan

Washington Post ("JAPANESE WOMEN LIVE, AND LIKE IT, ON THEIR OWN GENDER ROLES

SHIFT AS MANY STAY SINGLE", 2004-08-31) reported that Japan is undergoing a major redefinition of gender roles as women enter the workforce in record numbers, according to analysts. The result is the rise of financially independent Japanese women. And when it comes to marriage, increasingly, they are just saying no to men. Today, some luxury condos around Tokyo are being marketed strictly to successful women. The Tokyo Stock Exchange recently offered a workshop aimed at luring well-off single women to invest. "There's no question the Japanese woman is changing, coming into the center from the periphery of society," said Eisuke Sakakibara, an economist at Tokyo's Keio University. "They have discovered they can stay single, spend money more freely, and have fun without having to take on the traditional responsibility of taking care of a man. With those options available, they are asking themselves, 'Why get married?'"

(return to top)

21. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN CANCELS WAR GAMES, MIRRORS CHINA MOVE", 2004-08-31) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian has called off annual war games as a goodwill gesture after the PRC canceled its military drills, Taiwan officials said on Tuesday. Analysts said an exchange of peaceful gestures by the rivals would help ease tension in one of the most dangerous flashpoints in Asia, although the PRC has yet to confirm it has scrapped its exercises. "China has canceled the military drills on Dongshan island, so we have decided that we will cancel the September 9 Han Kuang exercises," Chen told reporters on board a chartered plane to Hawaii, at the start of a six-day trip to Latin America. "We hope everyone on both sides of the Taiwan Strait can cooperate under the principle of peace for a win-win situation," Chen said in comments carried by the TVBS cable station.

(return to top)

22. PRC Hong Kong Elections

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA BLAMES COMMUNICATION BREAKDOWN FOR HONG KONG DEMOCRAT'S REJECTION", 2004-08-31) reported that a bureaucratic bungle was to blame for immigration officials' refusal to allow a leading Hong Kong democrat to enter the PRC at the weekend, a senior PRC envoy said in press reports. Li Gang, deputy director of the PRC's liaison office, has already denied there was a political motive for the turning away Saturday of Law Chi-kwong, a candidate for the Democratic Party in upcoming key legislative elections. "I believe this is ... an individual case. It will not and should not affect the liaison office's communication with all sectors of society in Hong Kong ... including the pro-democracy camp," he said. The incident followed a string of party scandals that democrats say were staged by the PRC to damage their image ahead of the September 12 polls.

(return to top)

23. SARS Whistleblower

Reuters ("CHINA SARS HERO'S DAUGHTER ACCEPTS MAGSAYSAY AWARD", 2004-08-31) reported that the daughter of a military doctor who exposed the PRC's SARS cover-up last year accepted Asia's equivalent of the Nobel prize on Tuesday, saying the award would encourage more Chinese people to seek the truth. An emotional Jiang Rui, her voice cracking and tears welling in her eyes, paused briefly before reading a short remark as she received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for public service on behalf of Jiang Yanyong. "This award is not only to honor him for his contribution to the public service, but it is also given to recognize his courage in speaking the truth and

encourage him to continue to seek the truth," she said.

(return to top)

24. PRC Energy Supply

Donga Ilbo ("DISPUTES FORECASTED AS CHINA PROMOTES OIL EXPLORATION ", 2004-08-31) reported that protests from neighboring countries are expected as the PRC promotes oil exploration in areas of the sea where disputes are likely to arise. The areas where three major PRC oil companies are trying to explore are the East China Sea and the South China Sea. Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported on August 31 that the reason why the PRC hurries to explore oil is because the PRC's dependency on imported oil has reached 35 percent, and the PRC ranked second among the oil importing countries. The PRC judges that they won't be able to continue to economically develop without raising the amount of oil it generates on its own. Japan has raised objection to the gas exploration, saying that it is likely for the company to exploit gas from Japan's side as the gas fields locate on the boundaries between the two countries.

(return to top)

25. Sino - Russian Relations

Kyodo News ("RUSSIA TO SELL CHINA 15 MIL TONS OF CRUDE BY 2006", 2004-08-31) reported that Russia has agreed to increase its sale of Siberian crude oil to the PRC from 6.5 million tons this year to 15 million tons in 2006, a Russian source in Beijing said Tuesday. The deal, to be formalized next month in Moscow, raises this year's PRC crude oil sale from 3 million tons to 6.5 million tons, sets next year's total at 10 million tons and the 2006 total at 15 million tons, the source said. The crude oil will reach northeast PRC's Daqing oil field by railway, a more secure route than the sea lanes by which much of the PRC's oil now reaches its destination from the Middle East. PRC and Russian officials also agreed this month to resume talks on an oil pipeline from Siberia to the PRC. Russia just finished the feasibility study for a 4,000-kilometer pipeline from the city of Taishet in eastern Siberia to the port city of Nakhodka, where the line could be extended to the PRC, Japan or the ROK.

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