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I. NAPSNet

- 1. [IAEA on Yongbyon Shutdown](#)
- 2. [DPRK on US-DPRK Relations](#)
- 3. [DPRK Nuclear Scientists](#)
- 4. [ROK Hostages in Afghanistan](#)
- 5. [Japan Election](#)
- 6. [Japan SDF Mission in Golan Heights](#)
- 7. [Comfort Women Issue](#)
- 8. [PRC Environment](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. IAEA on Yongbyon Shutdown

Reuters ("NUCLEAR INSPECTORS SAY NORTH KOREA COOPERATING", 2007-07-31) reported that the IAEA staff that monitored the closing of the Yongbyon nuclear complex said the DPRK has been cooperating fully with nuclear inspectors. Head of the IAEA group Adel Tolba, would not comment on the state of the nuclear facilities but gave no sign of any problems. He said the team was heading back to its Vienna headquarters where an assessment would take place.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK on US-DPRK Relations

Reuters ("N.KOREA VOWS 'CONCRETE' STEPS IF U.S. DROPS TERROR", 2007-07-31) reported that the DPRK called on the United States on Tuesday to scrap a strict trade ban and drop it from a list of countries Washington says sponsor terrorism, promising steps in return that would improve ties.

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. DPRK Nuclear Scientists

Reuters ("NOW WHAT WILL NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS DO?", 2007-07-27) reported that nations seeking to end the DPRK nuclear threat face the problem of what to do with the scientists who gave the poor state its budding arsenal. Officials and experts said they have been pondering this issue and it could come up soon in technical talks.

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. ROK Hostages in Afghanistan

Korea Herald ("SEOUL PLEADS FOR INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT", 2007-07-31) reported that in a desperate attempt to prevent the further killing of ROK hostages in Afghanistan, the ROK government yesterday pleaded for the international community's support in showing flexibility in negotiations with the Taliban kidnappers. The Afghan government, which has sworn never to exchange Taliban prisoners with foreign hostages again since March, has so far refused to consider the demands. The US, the influential backer of the Afghan government and harsh critic of prisoner-swaps, is keeping its distance from negotiations. News reports said yet another deadline, of 4:30 p.m., Wednesday, Korean time, has been set by the Taliban.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. Japan Election

Bloomberg ("OZAWA ATTACKS ABE FOR NOT RESIGNING AS JAPAN PREMIER", 2007-07-31) reported that Japan's opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa attacked Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for not resigning after voters handed the ruling Liberal Democratic Party coalition a defeat in Japan's upper house elections on July 29. "The Abe administration's attitude, words and behavior are against common sense and irrational from the point of view of the ordinary way of constitutional government," Ozawa said in a statement. Ozawa's comments were echoed by two ruling party lawmakers today, and Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki said there had been calls within the LDP for the resignation of Farm Minister Norihiko Akagi, who has been criticized for using a home owned by his mother and claiming expenses.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. Japan SDF Mission in Golan Heights

Kyodo ("JAPAN EXTENDS SDF PEACEKEEPING MISSION IN GOLAN HEIGHTS", 2007-07-31) reported that the Japanese government decided to extend the participation of the Self-Defense Forces in a U.N. peacekeeping mission in the Golan Heights for another six months until March 31. The decision, made at a Cabinet meeting, came in response to a U.N. Security Council decision to

extend the mission of the U.N. Disengagement Observer Force in the Golan Heights, Japanese officials said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. Comfort Women Issue

The Associated Press ("HOUSE WANTS JAPAN APOLOGY ON SEX SLAVES ", 2007-07-31) reported that the House passed a resolution urging Japan to apologize for coercing thousands of women to work as sex slaves for its World War II military. Though largely symbolic, the nonbinding resolution has caused unease in Japan and added tension to an otherwise strong alliance. The House resolution, which has no companion in the Senate, urges Japan to "formally acknowledge, apologize and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner" for the suffering of so-called "comfort women."

[\(return to top\)](#) Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN SAYS U.S. RESOLUTION ON SEX SLAVERY REGRETTABLE", 2007-07-31) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki told a news conference that Japan has already offered an extensive explanation to Washington, adding, "It is regrettable that this resolution was adopted." Shiozaki said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has "clearly explained his views" on this matter to the US. "The government has handled the comfort women issue with sincerity," he said. [\(return to top\)](#)

8. PRC Environment

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVING", 2007-07-31) reported that the energy efficiency of the PRC's fuel-guzzling economy is improving but the country — the world's No. 2 oil consumer — is still struggling to meet self-imposed conservation targets, the government said. Total energy consumption per unit of economic output fell 2.78 percent in the first half of the year from the year-earlier period, the Xinhua News Agency said, citing a government report. But it said electric power used per unit of output rose 3.64 percent.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo ("CHINA TO FAVOR 'GREEN' GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS", 2007-07-31) reported that the PRC's government is setting up a system to link officials' career prospects with their success in helping to protect the environment and reduce energy use, state media reported. The move comes after every provincial and local government except Beijing was found recently to have failed to meet environmental protection and energy-saving targets set by the central government, the China Daily reported. [\(return to top\)](#)

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org