NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, August 24, 2005

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, August 24, 2005", NAPSNet Daily Report, August 24, 2005, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-august-24-2005/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. US, ROK Agreement on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON SEEK CONCENSUS ON N. KOREA", 2005-08-24) reported that the ROK and US foreign ministers met in Washington to harmonize their positions for the restart of six-party talks, but differences over Pyongyang's civilian nuclear program seem to remain. Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon told a press conference afterward he believed the two nations had reached "a sufficient understanding" on whether to permit the DPRK to use nuclear energy peacefully. The suggestion is that things did not go beyond a restatement of positions and more has to be done before agreement between the two allies can be reached.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA AND U.S. AGREED IN PRINCIPLE ON PEACEFUL N.K. NUKE PROGRAM: OFFICIAL ", 2005-08-24) reported that according to ROK official, Seoul and Washington have agreed in principle to allow the DPRK's peaceful use of nuclear power in exchange for its complete dismantlement of its nuclear programs. The official said theoretically speaking, both the ROK and the US are seeing eye-to-eye to acknowledge the DPRKs future right to operate a peaceful nuclear program, adding that Pyongyang's desire should not be a stumbling block at the six-party talks. (return to top)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("N.K.'S NUCLEAR DISMANTLEMENT WILL TAKE AT LEAST 2 YEARS: BAN", 2005-08-24) reported that according to Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon, it will take at least two to three years to dismantle the DPRK's nuclear program. Technical experts will have to get involved in the scrapping, monitoring and inspection process to ensure transparency, he said." And through this period, North Korea will be able to build trust," the foreign minister said at a news conference wrapping up his Washington visit.

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3. Japan, PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program

Forbes ("JAPAN, CHINA SAY NKOREA SHOULD ACCEPT NUCLEAR OFFER", 2005-08-24) reported that according to a Japanese official, Japan and PRC agreed that the DPRK should give up its nuclear program based on the proposal already on the table. The chief negotiator from PRC said that friction between Tokyo and Beijing will not stop them from forming a united front to press the DPRK.

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4. DPRK-Pakistan Transfer of Nuclear Weapons Technology

BBC News ("KHAN 'GAVE N. KOREA CENTRIFUGES'", 2005-08-24) reported that according to Pakistan President Musharraf, Pakistani scientist AQ Khan supplied the DPRK with centrifuges and their designs, but that Dr Khan had not provided the DPRK with the expertise for constructing a

nuclear bomb.

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5. Inter-Korean Talks on POWs

Chosun Ilbo ("PYONGYANG CLAMS UP ON S.KOREAN ABDUCTEES ", 2005-08-24) reported that a second day of Red Cross talks saw the two Koreas discuss the fate of surviving ROK POWs. In a meeting of the delegation heads, Seoul called on Pyongyang to confirm the fate and whereabouts of "individuals whose fate became unknown during the war and after." A ROK official said, "There could be issues later concerning reunions" but confirmation must come first. The DPRK stuck to its position that it will not talk about those kidnapped after the war, and called instead for the issue to be resolved "according to past practice," essentially to include the abductees in the joint video family reunions project.

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6. DPRK Computerizes Public Identification Registration

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA COMPUTERIZES PUBLIC INDENTIFICATION REGISTRATION", 2005-08-24) reported that according to Yonhap News, the DPRK has computerized its identification system of civilians and soldiers in an effort to tighten state control over its people. Using a software program dubbed "Chungbok 2.0," DPRK police have been storing residents' personal information on computer networks since December 2003. The program gives access to details on gender, age, date of birth or death, family members, address and various demographical statistics, as well as monthly tallies of the number of participants in political rallies and details about those who were punished for violating laws.

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7. Japan-US Missile Shield

Japan Times ("JAPAN, U.S. WORK ON SEA-BASED MISSILE SHIELD", 2005-08-24) reported that Japan and the US have begun arranging for Japan to develop a rocket unit and the US to develop a warhead in a joint project to develop a sea-based missile shield, which will enter into the development phase in Japan's fiscal 2006, sources familiar with the matter said Tuesday. The two countries will conclude a new pact on the project to develop the enhanced Standard Missile-3 interceptor to be deployed on an Aegis vessel after the Japanese endorses the plan at the Security Council around the end of this year.

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8. Japan Textbook Issue

Japan Times ("CHINESE, KOREAN TRANSLATIONS OF HISTORY TEXT TO BE POSTED ON NET", 2005-08-24) reported that Chinese and Korean translations of parts of eight Japanese junior high school history textbooks centering on modern history will be made available via the Japanese Foreign Ministry's website beginning Wednesday, Deputy Press Secretary Tomohiko Taniguchi said Tuesday. The translations will also be accessible directly from the website www.je-kaleidoscope.jp.

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9. Japan on UNSC Bid

The Associated Press ("JAPAN'S U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL HOPES FADE ", 2005-08-24) reported that just a few months ago, Japan was optimistic about achieving its long-standing dream of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. But since then, Japan's leaders have watched their dream dissipate because of national and regional rivalries that have bedeviled expansion of the UN's most powerful body for over a decade.

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10. Sino-Japanese Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA HOPES JAPAN TO TAKE ACTION TO REALIZE ITS COMMITMENT", 2005-08-24) reported that the PRC hopes Japanese leaders would take concrete actions to effectively materialize their commitment so that bilateral relations could return to the normal track, said State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan here Wednesday. Tang told a Japanese delegation on educational and cultural exchanges that the PRC has noticed once again remarks by Japanese leaders on the historical issue, saying that having a correct approach toward history is the foundation of improving Sino-Japanese relations.

(return to top) BBC News ("POLL FINDS CHINESE WARY OF JAPAN", 2005-08-24) reported that the first thing most Chinese think of, when asked about Japan, is the Nanjing Massacre, a new survey has found. The second is electrical products, according to the China Daily, one of the organizers of the poll. The poll found that 63% of Chinese had a "very bad" or "not very good" impression of Japan, while 38% of Japanese felt negatively about the PRC. (return to top)

11. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN COASTGUARD HOPES TO BUILD LIGHTHOUSE ON ISLET DISPUTED WITH CHINA ", 2005-08-24) reported that Japan's coastguard says it hopes to build a lighthouse on a remote atoll in the Pacific in a move that could reinforce the country's claim in a territorial dispute with the PRC. "While nothing has been decided, we believe the construction is necessary as part of maritime safety measures in the area," a coastguard spokesman said, denying any link between the plan and Japan's territorial claim.

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12. Sino-Japanese Friendship Years

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, CHINA EYE DESIGNATING 2006-2007 AS FRIENDSHIP YEARS", 2005-08-24) reported that Japan and the PRC on Wednesday agreed to work on designating 2006 and 2007 as special years to boost bilateral friendship and setting a date for the next round of talks on the PRC's gas project in the East China Sea, a Japanese official said. Japanese Deputy Vice Foreign Minister Tsuneo Nishida and PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei reached the agreements during their talks in Tokyo, the official said.

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13. US on Sino-Russian Joint Military Exercises

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA, RUSSIA WAR GAMES NO THREAT, RUMSFELD SAYS ", 2005-0--24) reported that the US military is observing the first big war games between the PRC and Russia but does not regard them as a threat to Taiwan, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said. Rumsfeld said countries conduct joint military exercises together all the time, adding, "And so I guess I don't find it notable."

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14. Russia on Sino-Russian Joint Military Exercises

MosNews ("RUSSIA AND CHINA NOT PLANNING JOINT MILITARY BLOC", 2005-08-24) reported that Moscow has ruled out the possibility of setting up a military bloc involving Russia, PRC and joint groups of troops, Interfax reported Wednesday quoting a diplomatic source. “Today the issue of setting up a new military bloc involving Russia and China is not even being considered. Neither is the possibility of setting up joint troops structures being considered,” a high-ranking military and diplomatic source in Moscow told Interfax.

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15. Sino-Russian Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINESE PRESENCE GROWS IN RUSSIAN FAR EAST", 2005-08-24) reported that as the PRC and Russia embark on a new stage of cooperation by holding joint military exercises launched from the Pacific port of Vladivostok, the Chinese presence is growing in this hardscrabble region thousands of miles from Moscow. It's too early to talk of an imminent PRC takeover, local experts say, despite such worries by some Russian politicians. Still, they acknowledge that the PRC's hunger for resources and territory as its population and economy boom could eventually make the Far East an alluring target.

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16. Taiwan Arms Purchase

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN'S MEGA ARMS PACKAGE MAY FINALLY WIN APPROVAL AFTER BUDGET TRIMMED ", 2005-08-24) reported that Taiwan's plan for a huge US arms purchase may finally win parliamentary approval after the military agreed to trim its cost by more than four billion dollars, officials said. Eight conventional submarines and a fleet of submarine-hunting P-3C aircraft would remain intact under the new bill, estimated at around 340 Taiwan dollars (10.63 billion US).

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA WOOS TAIWAN STUDENTS WITH CHEAPER TUITION", 2005-08-24) reported that the PRC pledged on Wednesday to slash tuition fees this year for Taiwan students enrolled at domestic universities and grant them scholarships, Beijing's latest gesture to thaw ties. Starting this autumn, students from Taiwan would pay the same university tuition as their mainland counterparts and be eligible for state scholarships, Ding Yuqiu, deputy director of the Education Ministry's Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau affairs department, told a news conference.

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18. PRC Civil Unrest

The New York Times ("LAND OF 74,000 PROTESTS (BUT LITTLE IS EVER FIXED)", 2005-08-24) reported that there is a growing uneasiness in the air in the PRC, after months of increasingly bold protests rolling across the countryside. For reasons that range from rampant industrial pollution to widespread evictions and land seizures by corrupt local governments in cahoots with increasingly powerful property developers, ordinary Chinese seem to be saying they are fed up and won't take it any more.

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19. PRC One-Child Policy

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA OFFICIAL DENIES ONE-CHILD POLICY TO BLAME FOR GENDER IMBALANCE ", 2005-08-24) reported that a senior official has vehemently denied the PRC's decades-old one-child policy is the reason for the country's gender imbalance and instead blamed outdated traditional thinking and an inadequate social security system. There are 117 male births for every 100 female births in the PRC, compared with the global newborn ratio of between 103 and 107 boys for 100 girls.

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20. PRC Human Rights

The Associated Press ("UN: CHINA ALLOWS FIRST PROBE ON TORTURE", 2005-08-24) reported that for the first time, the PRC will let a top UN official visit detention centers as part of an investigation into torture allegations, the UN human rights agency said Tuesday. Manfred Nowak, the U.N. Human Rights Commission's special investigator on torture, will visit the PRC from Nov. 21 to Dec. 2 to meet with government officials and get a firsthand look at Chinese detention centers.

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21. PRC Disease Outbreaks

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA MULLS NEW LAW ON TOUGHER FARMING STANDARDS AFTER FOOD EPIDEMICS", 2005-08-24) reported that PRC lawmakers were deliberating tougher farming standards in an apparent bid to stem large-scale disease outbreaks that have claimed hundreds of lives in recent years. A new law, if passed, would require all farmers to report any disease outbreaks to local epidemic prevention and control centers and to take steps to curb epidemics, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported Tuesday.

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