NAPSNet Daily Report 04 March, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 04 March, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 04, 2003, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-04-march-2003/

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I. United States

1. DPRK US Plane Interception

Reuters (Paul Eckert and Charles Aldinger, "US ANGRY OVER NORTH KOREA NEAR-MISS AMID CRISIS," Seoul/Washington, 3/04/03), the Associated Press (Christopher Torchia, "INTERCEPT RAISES US-NORTH KOREA TENSIONS," Seoul, 3/04/03), the Washington Post (Bradley Graham and Glenn Kessler, "N. KOREA TAILS US SPY PLANE OFFICIALS CALL ACTION BY FOUR FIGHTER JETS A SERIOUS PROVOCATION," Washington, 03/04/03) and BBC News ("US CONDEMNS 'RECKLESS' NORTH KOREA," 3/04/03) reported that the interception of a US reconnaissance plane by DPRK fighter jets heightens tension on the Korean Peninsula amid fears that the North could make nuclear bombs within months. Lt. Cmdr. Jeff Davis, a Pentagon spokesman, said four DPRK fighter jets approached the US plane over the Sea of Japan on Sunday, coming as close as 50 feet. One used its radar to identify the plane as a target, but there was no hostile fire, he said. Davis said it was the first such incident since April 1969 when a DPRK plane shot down a US Navy EC-121 surveillance plane, killing all 31 Americans aboard. In the Sunday incident, Davis said, the four DPRK planes "shadowed" the unarmed American plane over international waters for about 20

minutes before breaking off. Two DPRK MiG-29 fighters and two other aircraft that Davis said appeared to be MiG-23 fighters intercepted the US Air Force RC-135S reconnaissance plane, which Davis said was about 150 miles off the DPRK's coast. The closest the fighters came was about 50 feet, Davis said. He did not know how many crew members were aboard the RC-135, although the standard number is 17, including two pilots. The US plane broke off its mission and returned to its home station at Kadena Air Base in Japan, Davis said. DPRK complaints about reconnaissance flights by US planes had grown more frequent before the incident. On Saturday, the DPRK said a US RC-135 reconnaissance plane had intruded into its airspace off the east coast daily for a week. RC-135 planes are modified Boeing 707s. The type of plane that was intercepted is loaded with electronic receivers and features large circular windows in the fuselage for the photography of foreign ballistic-missile tests at long range.

2. ROK-US Joint Military Exercise

The Associated Press ("US, SOUTH KOREA BEGIN MAJOR MILITARY EXERCISE," Seoul, 3/04/03) reported that the US and the ROK on Tuesday began a month-long joint military exercise that the DPRK says escalates the danger of war on the Korean peninsula. The "Foal Eagle" drill, held annually since 1961, is the largest joint US-ROK field training exercise and comes this year amid heightened tensions over the DPRK's nuclear program. Master Sgt. Dawn Hart, a spokeswoman for US Forces Korea, confirmed the exercise had started. It will last until April 2. US military officials say the annual maneuver is "defense-oriented" and is not related to the nuclear dispute. The DPRK demands that the US and ROK militaries stop the drill, calling it a rehearsal for a northward invasion. It has said the exercise escalates the tension on the Korean Peninsula to the "brink of war." Another joint US-ROK exercise called "Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration," or RSOI, will take place March 19-26.

3. PRC National People's Congress

The New York Times (Elisabeth Rosenthal, "CHINA'S DANCE OF POLITICAL POWER IS SET TO OPEN IN BEIJING," Beijing, 3/04/03) reported that when the PRC's annual legislative session opens on Wednesday, personalities will loom large and policies will be an afterthought, as the country formalizes its first sweeping leadership transition in a decade. At the end of the National People's Congress in just two weeks, a new group of men - led by the incoming president, Hu Jintao - will officially govern China. But it is the behind-the-scenes dance of power between Hu and China's current president, Jiang Zemin,that will determine this fast-changing country's future. Although Jiang gives up his presidential duties, he has a broad power base that assures he will remain a potent unofficial policy maker for many years, and he is expected to retain his post as chairman of the Central Military Commission.

4. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The Associated Press (Bill Foreman, "SPOKESMAN FOR CHINA'S LEGISLATURE: NO CHANGE PLANNED IN TAIWAN POLICY," Beijing, 3/04/03) reported that the PRC's new government leadership plans no changes in its approach to Taiwan and will maintain a policy of "continuity," a spokesman for the mainland's legislature said Tuesday. Jiang Enzhu, a spokesman for the National People's Congress, which convenes Wednesday, said he expects the new government leadership, to be named in coming days, to stick with the current approach. "Our Taiwan policy will maintain continuity and stability," Jiang said at a news conference, one day before the congress opens. Jiang comments may be welcomed by many Taiwanese because the remarks contained no new military

threats, which often cause the island's jittery stock market to plunge. But the spokesman's statement could disappoint others who hope The PRC's new leaders will soon revamp a policy that insists the island unify with the mainland under the "one country, two systems" model developed by the late PRC leader Deng Xiaoping. PRC officials have said that the formula - used for Hong Kong when it returned to PRC rule in 1997 - would allow Taiwan a wide degree of autonomy. But most polls report that the majority of Taiwanese oppose unifying with the PRC under such an arrangement. They only favor rejoining with the PRC if it becomes democratic and more economically advanced.

5. PRC Domestic Economy

The Associated Press (Elaine Kurtenbach, "CHINA STRETCHES RESOURCES IN GROWTH PUSH," Dalingshan, China, 3/04/03) reported that in the PRC, with 1.27 billion people, the problem of how to stretch scarce resources to generate the strongest possible economic growth is particularly acute. Buttressed by double-digit growth in exports and foreign investment, the PRC has shrugged off global economic fluctuations by spending billions of dollars on new dams, train lines, roads, ports and bridges. The jobs generated by that spending, and by policies encouraging foreign investment in factories in places like Dalingshan, have absorbed provided a lifeline to almost 100 million migrant workers. "The authorities are inheriting both a strong economy and a set of policies which are already well under way and moving in the right direction," said Jonathan Anderson, Hong Kong chief economist for greater China for Goldman Sachs. The new leaders are expected to stick to that formula and step up its cleanup of the bad debts hobbling state-owned banks and move more quickly to revamp inefficient state enterprises. "It seems that they are prepared to speed up the restructuring process," says Qu Hongbin, senior economist at the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Leaders have also pledged to help a growing underclass bypassed by boom times: farmers, migrant laborers and tens of millions of urban poor, mostly workers laid off by bankrupt state enterprises. Some economists question whether the PRC can afford to continue to buy growth with construction projects financed by billions of dollars in bonds. This year, plans call for a $16.9 billion bond.

6. PRC on UN Iraq Veto

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA SEEN AS WARY ON WAR, UN VETO," Beijing, 3/04/03) reported that emboldened by Russian and French opposition, the PRC is assuming a more vocal stance against the idea of US military action over Iraqi disarmament. But it's probably not about to veto the US-sponsored U.N. resolution paving the way for war. A veto could badly damage relations with the US, the PRC's biggest trading partner. But with two of the other five veto-wielding permanent members of the U.N. Security Council - France and Russia - also opposed, the PRC probably wouldn't have to use its veto. "If they just take an abstention, that would at least put them not in the front line," said Sin-ming Shaw, a PRC specialist at Oxford University's St. Antony's College. While the PRC has given no direct clue as to how it will act, it has made its rejection of US war plans increasingly pointed. That was evident again on Tuesday when President Jiang Zemin urged continued U.N.-based efforts to use "every possible method to avoid war." Jiang discussed the issue in a telephone conversation with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, the government's Xinhua News Agency said in what it called an urgent dispatch. "China adopts a very clear attitude in supporting the United Nations to continue arms inspections in Iraq and to take every possible method to avoid war," Xinhua paraphrased Jiang as saying.

7. Japan Spy Satellite

CNN News ("JAPAN TO LAUNCH FIRST SPY SATELLITE SOON," Tokyo, 3/04/03) reported that Japan plans to launch its first spy satellites next month as tension runs high over the DPRK's nuclear program and the DPRK's insistence that it is free to launch ballistic missiles, a Japanese newspaper said. Up until now, Japan has lacked the technology to detect missile launches and has depended on the US for information on regional security since the end of World War Two. The two satellites are set to be launched on March 28 from Japan's launch center on the southwestern island of Tanegashima, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun (Nikkei) said. Another two could be launched as early as this summer. Orbiting at a height of 400-600 km (250-370 miles), they will carry out surveillance primarily of areas surrounding Japan. Officials could not immediately be reached for comment. Japan has developed two types of satellite, one carrying light sensors capable of detecting earth-bound objects of one meter in length and another with radar capable of operating at night or in poor weather, the Nikkei said on February 22. One of each type is due to be launched in March.

8. DPRK World Cup Documentary

The Boston Korea Friendship Association and the Channing and Popai Liem Education Foundation are pleased to announce the national tour of The Game of their Lives. This remarkable film documents the World Cup soccer success of the 1966 DPRK team, the first from Asia ever to reach the quarterfinals of this tournament. England was the host of those games. ROK fans at last year's Japan/Korea World Cup held up signs saying "Again 1966" in recognition of this historic feat of their countrymen. The Game of their Lives weaves four themes: 1. the political drama of how England would host the DPRK a pariah in the international community in 1966; 2. the pure excitement of soccer at its best; 3. the adoption of the DPRK team by the working class town of Middlesbrough where the games were played; 4. the portrayal of the heart of this 1000 to 1 underdog as the determination of the DPRK people and their leadership. The director, Dan Gordon, and associate producer and DPRK specialist Nicholas Bonner, will accompany the tour. They are the first Westerners permitted by the DPRK to meet and interview surviving members of the 1966 team. Last October, they hosted a historic reunion between the team and the citizens of Middlesbrough where the returning players were greeted by 33,000 local fans. Prior to attending the U.S. screenings of their film, Mr. Gordon and Mr. Bonner will visit North Korea again to begin work on a second film project. They are available to meet with the press throughout the national tour. For more information on the film: http://www.thegameoftheirlives.com/index_2.htm

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. Issue #118

Despite tension over the DPRK's nuclear programme, the USA announces it will contribute 40,000 metric tons of agricultural commodities to the DPRK in response to the World Food Programme's 2003 appeal. Roh Moo-Hyun is installed as President of the Republic of Korea. His inaugural speech outlines the new administrations' "peace and prosperity" policy. With the DPRK he will venture to replace the Armistice Agreement with a "peace mechanism." On the day of Roh's inauguration, the DPRK test fires a short-range anti-ship missile -- to the surprise of delegates at a meeting of the 116-nation Non- Aligned Movement in Kuala Lumpur. The North Korean participants, led by Supreme People's Assembly President Kim Yong Nam, downplay the incident, as does US Secretary of State Colin Powell, attending the inauguration in Seoul. Inter-Korean economic talks end without agreement, though both sides reconfirm their commitment to continue joint projects currently underway. They plan to hold another round of economic talks in Pyongyang in April. CanKor's OPINION section features a Nicholas Kristof column in the New York Times, who writes that those

who do not believe the US "crazy enough" to consider a military strike against nuclear sites in the DPRK, or that Kim Jong Il would not "commit suicide" by retaliation, are badly mistaken. Thomas Walkom of the Toronto Star, quoting CanKor editor Erich Weingartner, suggests that contrary to public perception, neither the front-line states that surround the DPRK, nor the USA, are eager to see the Kim Jong Il regime collapse. On the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) Radio programme "Commentary", Peter Hayes of the Nautilus Institute in California critiques US DPRK policy. On the second anniversary of Canada's normalization of relations with the DPRK, Erich Weingartner regrets Canada's missed the opportunity to play a more significant role in the easing of tensions on the peninsula.

For more information: http://www.CanKor.ca

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development in partnership with:

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