NAPSNet Daily Report 06 November, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 06 November, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, 2003, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-06-november-2003-2/

CONTENTS

I. United States

1. PRC-US DPRK Talks
2. DPRK Nuclear Power Plant Data Threat
3. US on DPRK Power Plant Threat
4. PRC-India Joint Naval Exercises
5. PRC-Pakistan Relations
6. Japan Domestic Politics
7. DPRK-Japan Relations
8. Japan-ROK Student Visa Exemptions
9. Pakistan on DPRK Nuclear Drive
10. ROK Domestic Politics
11. US "Mini-Nukes" Weapons Funding

I. United States

1. PRC-US DPRK Talks

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ENVOY IN WASHINGTON FOR NORTH KOREA TALKS," Washington, 11/06/03) reported that PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi briefed senior US officials on Beijing's behind-the-scenes drive to convene a new round of six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis. Yi met the US pointman on the DPRK, Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, but neither side gave any indication when they expected the dialogue, the last round of which ended inconclusively in August, to resume. "We had in depth discussions -- this is a good opportunity to resume the six-party talks," Wang said through a translator as he left the State Department after the talks. Kelly said: "We are happy to work with the other partners towards resolution of this serious issue." Wang briefed Kelly on his recent trip to Pyongyang with parliamentary chief Wu Bangguo.

2. DPRK Nuclear Power Plant Data Threat

The Associated Press (Sang-hun Choe, "NORTH KOREA TO TAKE DATA, EQUIPMENT FROM NUCLEAR PLANTS AFTER US PULLS PLUG," Seoul, 11/06/03) reported that the DPRK will take equipment and technical data from two nuclear power plants being built there, its government said Thursday, days after a US-led group stopped the $4.6 billion US project in retaliation for the communist country's atomic weapons programs. The tit-for-tat came as the DPRK and the US vied for leverage ahead of six-country talks being arranged by the PRC to peacefully resolve the yearlong dispute over the DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions. The DPRK's Foreign Ministry on Thursday did not revoke its earlier agreement "in principle" to return to the talks, which have been stalled since the countries met in Beijing in August. But it warned that suspending the reactor project gives the government "a reason strong enough to take the most appropriate measure when necessary." It did not elaborate.

3. US on DPRK Power Plant Threat

Agence France-Presse ("US WARNS NORTH KOREA ON POWER PLANT THREAT," Washington, 11/06/03) reported that the US warned the DPRK not to seize the assets of an international consortium if it suspends a plan to build a nuclear power plant on its soil. A DPRK foreign ministry spokesman earlier said the consortium, led by the US, European Union, the ROK and Japan, could be prevented from taking equipment, documents and other items out of the DPRK. "North Korea is obligated to allow the safe removal of equipment from the site," said State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli. "KEDO has reminded North Korea of its obligations in this regard, and we expect it to comply." The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) was set up to build the plant under a now-ruptured 1994 anti-nuclear pact between Washington and Pyongyang. After a two-day meeting in New York, the consortium said Tuesday it would announce a decision on the fate of the project by November 21.

4. PRC-India Joint Naval Exercises

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA-INDIA TIES THAW WITH FIRST EVER JOINT NAVAL EXERCISES," 11/06/03) reported that India and the PRC will hold their first-ever joint naval war games next week, officials said Thursday a day after Pakistani leader Pervez Musharraf left Beijing trumpeting bilateral ties. The drills will take place off the Shanghai coast on November 14 in a sign that the frosty relationship between the world's two most populous countries is gradually thawing. "They will hold one-day search and rescue exercises on November 14. It's the first time. It's a landmark," a senior Indian diplomat in Beijing told AFP. "Both countries have good relations and we want to enhance them further." An Indian naval taskforce of three warships and 672 sailors is en route to the PRC. The INS Ranjit, a Russian-built guided-missile destroyer, heads the fleet, which includes the INS Kulish, a guided-missile corvette, and INS Jyoti, a replenishment tanker. They will be in Shanghai for four days from Monday, the official said, adding that the exercises were aimed at ensuring the safety of maritime trade and improving coordination in search and rescue at sea. The announcement comes a day after Musharraf left Beijing following talks with his PRC counterpart Hu Jintao. The Indian diplomat said this had nothing to do with Thursday's announcement.

5. PRC-Pakistan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("RELATIONS BETWEEN NUCLEAR POWERS CHINA AND PAKISTAN GET COZIER," 11/06/03) reported that the relationship enjoyed by two of the world's nuclear powers was made plain Wednesday in a joint declaration by Pakistan and the PRC in which bilateral ties were deemed "exemplary." Signed by Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and PRC counterpart Hu

Jintao, the communique described their cooperation as an "indespensable" factor in maintaining peace and stability in Asia. Musharraf has now left Beijing after a three-day state visit to cement ties with close ally the PRC. The trip allowed Musharraf to meet the PRC's new leaders, headed by President Hu Jintao, for the first time since they took office in March. A raft of bilateral agreements were signed and a joint statement pledging continued cooperation on trade, military and other strategic issues was issued. The partnership was defined by Musharraf as "deeper than the oceans, higher than the mountains" as he extolled the future global role of the PRC. "The past belongs to Europe, the present belongs to the US and the future belongs to Asia," he said in a speech to China Council for the Promotion of International Trade. "In that, China's role is critical. China's role is critical not only because of its economic strength and its performance, but also because of its geographic might." Yet despite the upbeat nature of his three-day visit, Musharraf failed to finalize a deal for the PRC's multimillion dollar assistance to build a nuclear power plant, although a consensus has been reached.

6. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("IN JAPAN, OPPOSITION PARTY HOPES TO FORGE REAL TWO-PARTY SYSTEM," 11/06/03) reported that Japan's main opposition party is campaigning for power in a general election Sunday but its more realistic goal, analysts say, is to establish itself as a viable alternative, forging a two-party political system. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) led by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has ruled Japan for all but 11 months since its formation in 1955 and most polls and commentators expect it to maintain its grip on power. "If we take over the administration, it would also improve the LDP. When we become good rivals, it would benefit us both," Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) leader Naoto Kan said earlier this week. The party is fielding 277 candidates for election to the powerful House of Representatives where the LDP holds 247. Kan is on record as saying the DPJ is targetting 200 seats, far short of a simple majority of 241 but higher than the 137 it now holds. Recent opinion polls suggest it will win around 160, and analysts' projections go as high as 177. But the opinion polls have also shown that there is a huge proportion of floating voters -- as many as 48 percent in poll published by the Asahi Shimbun on Wednesday -- many of whose votes the DPJ is expected to pick up.

7. DPRK-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SLAMS NORTH KOREA FOR UN SLUR, TO TAKE NO MORE ACTION: OFFICIAL," 11/06/03) reported that Japan denounces a DPRK slur on Japan made during a United Nations meeting but has no plan to issue further protest, a foreign ministry official said. A UN General Assembly meeting in New York late on Tuesday plunged into a name-calling row as North Korea's deputy UN ambassador Kim Chang Guk referred to the Japanese as "Japs." "It was outrageous" as Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda put it Wednesday, the official said Thursday. Despite the slur, however, the Japanese government had no plan to lodge a formal protest with Pyongyang, the official added. "Our representative already protested at the meeting," he said in reference to a rebuttal by Japan's deputy UN ambassador Yoshiyuki Motomura. UN General Assembly president Julian Hunte pleaded with speakers to mind their language during the heated UN discussion on the annual report of the UN's nuclear watchdog agency. The DPRK ambassador said he rejected pressure from the "Japs" over Pyongyang's nuclear program. He said he used the term because a Japanese diplomat the day before had referred to his country as North Korea rather than its official title, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

8. Japan-ROK Student Visa Exemptions

Asia Pulse ("JAPAN AGREES TO EXEMPT VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR'S KOREAN STUDENTS," Singapore, 11/05/03) reported that Japan agreed Wednesday to exempt visa requirements for ROK students on school excursions to Japan from March at the latest, officials said. Japan also agreed to consider implementing a temporary visa exemption for all South Koreans sometime in 2005 to mark the 40th anniversary of the two countries' diplomatic ties, Seoul's Foreign Ministry said in a statement summing up a two-day meeting of the two countries' consular chiefs. The ROK, in turn, agreed to make efforts to introduce a new type of passports with more anti-forgery features at an early date, according to the statement. Japanese visitors are exempt from visa requirements when entering the ROK, but South Koreans must obtain Japanese visa before visiting the neighboring country. The ROK move, which was adopted several years ago, is aimed at attracting more Japanese tourists, who account for more than half of the total number of foreign visitors to the country. Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi agreed in a meeting with ROK President Roh Moo-hyun in June that Tokyo would make efforts to implement visa exemption for South Koreans at an early date.

9. Pakistan on DPRK Nuclear Drive

Agence France-Presse ("PAKISTAN'S MUSHARRAF DENIES AIDING DPRK NUCLEAR DRIVE," 11/06/03) reported that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf met with ROK leader Roh Moo-Hyun here after denouncing as a smear campaign charges that Islamabad helped the DPRK's nuclear weapons drive. Pakistan, which maintains cordial ties with the DPRK leadership, has been repeatedly accused of aiding Pyongyang's atomic ambitions in return for help with Islamabad's own missile development. "I would like to assure you that all reports linking Pakistan to North Korea's nuclear program are totally incorrect and malicious in nature," said Musharraf in an interview with the Korea Herald newspaper. The one-hour meeting, the first between the two leaders, focused on the nuclear crisis and bilateral relations, especially trade, ROK officials said. Cooperation agreements on information-technology and energy and mineral industries were signed, they said. Musharraf earlier described the one-year standoff between Pyongyang and Washington as a "grave crisis" and urged the DPRK to show restraint and avoid escalating tension. But he made no direct call in support of international demands that Pyongyang scrap its nuclear weapons, according to the published interview transcript. "Pakistan is opposed to nuclear proliferation and is committed to universal and complete nuclear disarmament," Musharraf was quoted as saying. "We hope that despite its admission of nuclear capability North Korea would avoid escalating tension as it entails grave consequences for all."

10. ROK Domestic Politics

Asia Pulse ("KOREA'S FKI PROPOSES BAN ON DIRECT POLITICAL DONATIONS," Seoul, 11/06/03) reported that the ROK's business conglomerates are moving to ban direct political donations by individual corporations as part of efforts to help improve political fundraising transparency, the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) said Thursday. According to the FKI's revised guidelines for political fundraising, its member companies, mostly the units of South Korea's top-30 conglomerates, will be banned from offering political funds directly to lawmakers and politicians. Instead, the corporations will be asked to make political donations indirectly through the National Election Commission (NEC) or business organizations, like the FKI, paving the ground for a more transparent fundraising environment. In order to further enhance transparency, all political funds will be donated through the NEC-designated bank accounts, while business organizations will offer a full list of donators to the NEC. In particular, for all political donations valued at over 200,000 won (US$170) the names of the donors and exact sums of funds will be disclosed to the public. Domestic conglomerates will also be encouraged to use checks or credit cards for payments of political funds. Even through the indirect contribution system, however, corporate donators will be allowed to

designate the specific recipient or recipients of their funds.

11. US "Mini-Nukes" Weapons Funding

The Associated Press (Alan Fram, "BUSH FUNDED FOR SMALLER NUCLEAR WEAPONS," Washington, 11/06/03) reported that US President Bush will get funds for research on "bunker buster" bombs and other lower-intensity nuclear weapons, but not as much as he wanted. House-Senate bargainers agreed to the cuts Wednesday as part of a compromise $27.3 billion bill financing energy and water programs for the government's new budget year. Lawmakers hope to push the measure through Congress in the next several days. The bill also contains $580 million for early work on a nuclear waste storage site at Yucca Mountain in the Nevada desert - nearly the full amount Bush requested. Negotiators shook hands on the bill as lawmakers stepped up efforts to finish their business for the year and adjourn by Nov. 21. To do that, they still must complete nine of the 13 spending bills for the federal budget year that started on Oct. 1. They took a step in that direction Wednesday when the House voted 417-5 to approve a $9.3 billion measure for military construction. The Senate is expected to approve that measure soon. Bargainers on the energy-water bill provided $7.5 million for work on the bunker busters, bombs that would burrow through earth and rock to destroy underground targets. The administration wanted twice that amount. The bill would provide all $6 million Bush proposed for research into "mini-nukes" of less than 5 kilotons. But $4 million of that amount would be provided only after the administration submits a report on the status of the country's nuclear weapons stockpile. The lawmakers provided $11 million of the $23 million the Energy Department wanted for preliminary studies for manufacturing plutonium triggers for nuclear weapons. The department says the triggers are needed for the country's aging arsenal of warheads. They also agreed to enough money to shorten the current three-year lead time needed to resume underground testing of nuclear weapons to two years, not the 18 months the administration requested.

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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