

NAPSNet Daily Report 08 October, 1999

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 08 October, 1999", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 08, 1999,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-08-october-1999/>

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I. **United States**

1. **DPRK Economic Growth**

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA'S ECONOMY EXPECTED TO GROW," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that an ROK Unification Ministry report said Friday that the DPRK economy has stopped shrinking and is expected to grow slightly in 1999 for the first time in 10 years. It added, however, that the growth was mainly due to increased agricultural production and construction activity due to outside food and fertilizer aid. The report stated, "The potential of the North's economy has been significantly weakened because of years of contraction." It added, "It's difficult to say that the North's economy has entered a stage of full recovery. Continued outside aid is necessary for sustained growth."

2. **Remains of US Soldiers from Korean War**

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "U.S. ACCEPTS NORTH KOREAN DEMAND," Washington, 10/08/99) reported that US Defense Department spokesman Larry Greer said Friday that US specialists will resume efforts to recover the remains of US servicemen in the DPRK in late October. Greer said that Robert Jones, heads of the Office of MIA/POW Affairs, told DPRK officials that the US would no longer insist on UN Command involvement in repatriation, and the DPRK indicated earlier this week their tentative agreement to resume cooperation. Greer stated, "The highest priority for us has been to resume operations and to get the remains back." He said that details of the agreement are to be worked out at a mid-October meeting.

3. **Korean War Massacre**

The Associated Press ("SENIOR US OFFICIAL TO VISIT SEOUL TO DISCUSS NO GUN RI," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that officials at the ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry said that US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth will visit the ROK next week to discuss investigations of the alleged massacre of Korean civilians by US soldiers during the Korean War. US Embassy spokesman Gerald McLoughlin declined to confirm the ROK announcement, saying that Roth's itinerary has to be announced by the State Department. Also on Friday, ROK Foreign Minister Hong Soon-young and US Ambassador Stephen Bosworth agreed to cooperate in their countries' investigations. About 40 activists rallied peacefully in front of the US 8th Army base in Seoul, demanding a US apology and compensation for the No Gun Ri killings. Earlier Friday, 59 ROK civic groups said in a statement that they will join forces in their campaign to urge the government to conduct a thorough investigation into the massacre.

4. **Landmines in ROK**

South China Morning Post (Roger Dean Du Mars, "MILITARY HAS LOST TRACK OF THOUSANDS OF MINES ALONG DMZ," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that the ROK military has lost track of thousands of landmines along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). ROK army units use landmines to protect their bases, but do not retrieve them when they relocate. An unnamed official stated,

"Planting a landmine is easy and safe but digging them up is a dangerous task that is usually avoided." The ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff conducted a landmine audit from April to September that found that only 899 of 3,972 landmines were removed when army units moved to other sites. Officials plan to locate all abandoned and loose landmines by 2003. Floods in the past two years have unearthed many landmines, especially in Kangwon and Kyonggi provinces. Civic organizations and officials at the Joint Chiefs of Staff said that further flooding could severely curtail efforts to round up large numbers of mines.

5. ROK Nuclear Leak

The Associated Press ("BLAME FOR SOUTH KOREA NUCLEAR LEAK," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that an investigative team said Friday that both human error and mechanical problems led to a leak at the Wolsung nuclear power plant. Representative Lee Sang-hee, who led a three-member parliamentary investigation team, stated, "About 60 percent of the cause apparently stemmed from human error." The state-run Korea Electric Power Corporation, which owns and operates the reactor, said it would dismantle the parts that malfunctioned to determine the exact cause of the leak.

6. Japanese Nuclear Accident

The Washington Post (Kathryn Tolbert, "NUCLEAR SPILL MAY BE WORSE THAN REPORTED," Tokyo, 10/08/99, A21) reported that a spokesman for Japan's Science and Technology Agency said that the Japanese government has decided to expand its examination of people who may have been exposed to radiation near the uranium processing plant in Tokaimura. Masaru Hashimoto, governor of Ibaraki prefecture, stated, "Initially we did not see the accident as being so serious." Officials said they are likely to raise the accident's rating from Level 4 to 5 on the international scale of 7, which would indicate that they believe the risk of contamination outside the plant was extensive. Jan Rispens, an energy specialist with Greenpeace, said that the government should be testing people more thoroughly. He stated, "It's not enough to run Geiger counters over their arms and their feet." He said that the plant "had the safety standards of a bakery and not a nuclear facility. It was just a normal building." The nuclear chain reaction triggered by the accident apparently continued for 17 to 20 hours, until workers succeeded in emptying water from the tanks and pouring in boric acid.

The Wall Street Journal (Norihiko Shirouzu, "PRICE PRESSURE PLAYED A PART IN JAPAN'S NUCLEAR ACCIDENT," Tokyo, 10/08/99) reported that Japanese nuclear power companies blamed the need to cut costs to compete with foreign nuclear-fuel suppliers for the accident at Tokaimura reprocessing plant. An unnamed Japanese nuclear-power company executive argued, "What really caused last week's accident is the relentless cost-cutting pressure JCO was under; that drove JCO workers crazy enough to disregard the most elementary safety steps." Makoto Ujihara, a JCO director, admitted that the company had been "under cost-cutting pressure," but blamed the accident on a desire by engineers to lighten their workload.

The Associated Press (Joseph Coleman, "BARRELS LEAK RADIATION IN N. JAPAN," Tokyo, 10/08/99) reported that Shuetsu Shimaya, an official with Japan Nuclear Fuel, said Friday that a small amount of radiation leaked from barrels at a disposal center for contaminated materials. Shimaya said that the amount of radiation released was far below the level set by law as safe. Shimaya said that the leaks were discovered during an inspection. One barrel was found leaking on September 28 and the second one was discovered Thursday.

7. US Technology Transfers to PRC

The Associated Press (Michael J. Sniffen, "JUSTICE DEPT STUDIES CHINA CASE," Washington, 10/08/99) reported that the Justice Department has decided to pursue charges against McDonnell Douglas and the China National Aero-Technology Import Export Corporation for violating US export controls. The companies are accused of diverting machine tools licensed only for use on commercial aircraft to a facility that produces PRC Silkworm missiles.

8. India-Russia-PRC Relations

Pacific News Service carried an analytical article (Franz Schurmann, "A NEW STRATEGIC QUADRANGLE BETWEEN RUSSIA, INDIA, CHINA -- AND THE U.S.?" 10/07/99) which said that former Russian prime minister Yevgeny Primakov's suggestion of a strategic triangle among Russia, India, and the PRC could actually develop into a "strategic quadrangle" involving the US as well. The author noted, "By the year 2000, China, India and Russia may all have strategic partnerships with each other and -- at the same time -- with America as well." He argued, "It's an old truism among historians that countries go to war when they are rich and powerful, not poor and weak. America's destructive capabilities are awesome. But American leaders also know that war can end up in destroying the global economy, bringing America's robust economy down with it." He concluded, "Primakov's idea, far from being the script for a new Cold War, could help usher in the global peace, prosperity and freedom the Clinton Administration has been talking about."

9. US Arms Sales to Pakistan

The Associated Press ("INDIA CAUTIONS US AGAINST SELLING ARMS TO PAKISTAN-REPORT," New Delhi, 10/08/99) reported that Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Friday, in a letter to Representative Gary Ackerman, warned that lifting sanctions against US arms sales to Pakistan would be "a very negative development." Vajpayee warned that military sales could "complicate efforts to build a normal and friendly relationship with Pakistan."

10. Russian Missile Deployment

Reuters ("RUSSIA TO DEPLOY 2ND BATCH OF NEW NUCLEAR MISSILES," Moscow, 10/08/99) reported that RIA news agency quoted Colonel-General Alexander Kosovan as saying on Friday that Russia plans to deploy a second regiment of its new Topol-M nuclear missiles in the first half of December. Kosovan, who is a deputy defence minister in charge of military construction and housing, said that two missile early warning systems were near completion in Belarus and in the Russian Far East and a number of air and naval bases had been repaired this year.

11. Russian Ratification of START II

The Associated Press ("YELTSIN SAYS GOVT PUSHING FOR RATIFICATION OF START II," Moscow, 10/08/99) reported that Russian President Boris Yeltsin, in a letter Friday to Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, said that Russia was making "considerable efforts" for the prompt ratification of the START II nuclear arms reduction treaty. Yeltsin added that the Russian government also was eager to negotiate on deeper cuts under a proposed START III treaty. He said, however, that Russia is still opposed to modifying the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty.

12. US Ratification of CTBT

The New York Times carried an article by French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder ("A TREATY WE ALL NEED," 10/08/99). The three leaders argued, "Failure to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will be a failure in our struggle against proliferation. The stabilizing effect of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, extended in 1995, would be undermined. Disarmament negotiations would suffer." They warned, "Rejection of the treaty in the Senate would remove the pressure from other states still hesitating about whether to ratify it. Rejection would give great encouragement to proliferators. Rejection would also expose a fundamental divergence within NATO."

13. US Nuclear Arsenal

The New York Times (Eric Schmitt, "EXPERTS SAY TEST BAN COULD IMPAIR NUCLEAR-ARMS SAFETY," Washington, 10/08/99) reported that the directors of the three US nuclear weapons laboratories testified Thursday that they might not be able to maintain the reliability of the US nuclear weapons arsenal without nuclear tests. C. Paul Robinson, director of Sandia National Laboratories, told the Senate Armed Services Committee, "Whether on balance the effect of a test ban to retard proliferation and further development of nuclear weapons is worth a similar penalty on the U.S. nuclear arsenal is the real crux of the dilemma." He added, "If the United States scrupulously restricts itself to zero-yield while other nations may conduct experiments up to the threshold of international detectability, we will be at an intolerable disadvantage." John C. Browne, director of Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, stated, "We are confident in the stockpile today. The issue is whether we will have the people, the capabilities, and the national commitment to maintain this confidence in the future when we expect to see more significant changes in the weapons." C. Bruce Tarter, director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, warned, "Before long our nuclear-test veterans will be gone. Events over the past year are making it more difficult to recruit and retain top notch talent."

14. US Nuclear Safety Agency

The Washington Post (Walter Pincus, "CLINTON STYMIES GOP NUCLEAR PLAN," 10/08/99, 27) reported that US President Bill Clinton has ordered Energy Secretary Bill Richardson to take over the duties of director of the newly authorized National Nuclear Security Administration. Clinton announced in a statement that he would withhold appointing a new undersecretary for nuclear security within the Energy Department until Congress changes the plan's "deficiencies." Clinton told Richardson to assign existing Energy staff officers to similar offices within the new weapons agency "to the extent permissible by law."

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK-PRC Relations

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "OLD ALLIES NORTH KOREA, CHINA MOVING FAST TO RESTORE FRIENDLY TIES, EXPERTS SAY," Seoul, 10/08/99) and JoongAng Ilbo ("CHINA AND N.KOREA CELEBRATE TIES," Seoul, 10/07/99) reported that ROK diplomatic watchers said on Thursday that the DPRK and the PRC are moving fast to restore friendly relations in time for the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two Communist neighbors. Top leaders of the PRC and the DPRK on Tuesday exchanged messages congratulating each other on the

anniversary, vowing to strengthen bilateral ties. The Rodong Shinmun, the DPRK Workers' Party paper, also expressed hopes for further improvement of relations between the two nations in its editorial. PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan and his DPRK counterpart Paek Nam-sun reportedly discussed various pending issues, including security on the Korean Peninsula. ROK experts said that the DPRK had feared that its leverage in handling security problems on the Korean Peninsula would weaken in the wake of PRC's improved ties with the ROK. The DPRK had also been under pressure from the PRC to open up to the outside world and adopt a PRC-style limited free market economic policy, they said. The efforts by the PRC and the DPRK to improve relations sparked speculation that the two countries may hold summit talks between PRC President Jiang Zemin and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il in the near future. "The two sides may feel the need for a summit if their relations are put on a normal track," said Professor Park Doo-bok of the Institute for Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), an ROK government think tank. Park added that PRC Foreign Minister Tang might convey the PRC's hopes for a visit by Kim Jong-il to Beijing during his talks with top DPRK officials.

2. ROK-US Joint Exercise

The Korea Herald ("SOUTH KOREA, U.S. TO HOLD MAJOR TRAINING EXERCISE," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that the ROK-US Combined Force Command said on Thursday that ROK troops will take part in an annual 11-day joint military exercise with US soldiers later this month. The exercise, code-named Foal Eagle, is designed to test rear area protection operations, and major command, control and communications systems, the Seoul-based combined force said in a news release. This year's exercise, scheduled to last from October 26 to November 5, will involve about 500,000 ROK and more than 30,000 US troops, which include those stationed both inside and outside of the ROK, the command said. It added that the exercise will provide hands-on field experience for the forces of the two allies. As in the past, most exercise training sites will be located far south of the Demilitarized Zone, the command said.

3. Inter-Korean Travel

The Korea Herald ("KIM HOPES TO SEE FREE S-N TRAVEL WITHIN HIS TERM OF OFFICE," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung said on Thursday that one of the goals of his DPRK policy is to ensure free civilian travel between the ROK and the DPRK within his term of office. "I see that North Korea will change step by step," Kim said, adding that he believed the DPRK would eventually agree to direct talks with the ROK. "It might be impossible to achieve reunification within my tenure. But we should be able to end the 54-year-old Cold War (on the peninsula) and the people should be able to travel to North Korea as freely as they do to Pusan." Kim said that in addition to the Hyundai Group, more ROK firms want to do business with the DPRK, and the ROK government encourages such moves.

4. Mt. Kumgang Tour

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "MT. KUMGANG TOUR SHIPS LIKELY TO GET OVERSEAS-SHIP LICENSE," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that a top ROK government official said on Thursday that the ROK government is considering upgrading the business permits for Hyundai Group's cruise ships traveling to the DPRK's Mt. Kumgang to "ocean-going" from the current "domestic" classification when foreigners join the tour program this month. If Hyundai is given the overseas service licenses, the ROK conglomerate will operate casino facilities and duty-free stores aboard the vessels, sharply improving the profitability of the inter-Korean tour business. "If there are some changes in the Mt. Kumgang tour, such as the participation by foreign tourists as announced by the Hyundai Group, it

would be desirable to sharply increase foreign currency income by allowing them to operate these businesses given to ocean-liners," ROK Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Chung Sang-chun told reporters.

5. Six Party Talks

The Korea Herald ("GOVERNMENT DENIES REPORTS ON PROPOSED SIX-NATION MEETING," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Hong Soon-young on Thursday denied a report that the government plans to propose a meeting of foreign ministers from six countries during the upcoming ROK-Japan ministerial meeting on Cheju Island October 23. "Nothing has been decided in connection with the issue," ministry spokesman Chang Chul-kyoon quoted Minister Hong as saying. Another ministry official also said that the ROK and Japan have yet to discuss the issue because the ROK government is just studying the idea.

6. DPRK Spies in ROK

Chosun Ilbo (Choi Weon-kyu, "NIS APPREHEND TWENTY NDRP MEMBERS," Seoul, 10/07/99) reported that the Office of the State Prosecutor (SPO) and the National Intelligence Service (NIS) announced on Thursday that they have uncovered the identities of nearly twenty people involved in the "National Democratic Revolutionary Party" (NDRP), which was discovered thanks to documents found on a DPRK submarine. Six are identified as having been part of the Yongnam region branch of the organization, "four or five" are said to have surrendered themselves to the authorities, and an additional ten persons' status is not being released to the public. The two agencies also said on Thursday that Kim Young-hwan, author of "Kangcheol Seoshin," a book popular among many student groups who follow the "national liberation" school of thought, was ordered in a directive to support certain candidates in the last general election, and gave W10 million each to two ROK National Assembly candidates from the Seoul area and Yongnam region, as well as W5 million to each of three candidates in the June 27 regional elections this year. These candidates all ran unaffiliated with any political party, and only one was elected. He served as the head of a "gu" or city district, and has been arrested.

7. DPRK Defectors in ROK

The Korea Times ("NK DEFECTORS ARRIVE IN SEOUL," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that the ROK National Intelligence Service said on Thursday that it is questioning two DPRK defectors who arrived in Seoul on Wednesday. One of the two defectors, a 25-year-old native of Pyongyang, using the alias Yoon Song-hyon, graduated from a university in the DPRK's capital and stayed in a third nation after escaping the DPRK in July, the intelligence agency said. Yoon was quoted as telling the NIS that he is the elder brother of a DPRK citizen who defected to the ROK on July 19. Another defector, 20, arrived at the southwestern port of Yosu on Wednesday aboard a Panama-registered freighter.

8. DPRK Submarines

The Korea Times ("MOST KEY PRODUCTS COMPRISING NK SUBS JAPANESE MADE," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that most of the key elements comprising the DPRK submarines and speedboats which intruded into ROK waters last year were Japanese products, according to a report submitted to the ROK National Assembly by the Defense Ministry. The report said that radars, sonar and other key communication appliances in a DPRK Yugo-class sub that ran aground off the eastern coastal

city of Sokcho on June 22 last year were made by Japanese companies. Announcing the report, the ROK Defense Ministry revealed the names of Japanese companies that manufactured the military hardware and other details about the products.

9. Korean War Massacre

The Korea Times ("TASK FORCE TOURS MASSACRE SITE," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that an inter-ministerial task force on Thursday launched an on-site survey in Yongdong, Chungchong-do to probe the reported massacre of civilian refugees by US troops during the 1950-53 Korean War. The seven-member survey team was headed by Park Cheol-gon, director general for national security, foreign affairs and state council at the Ministry for Government Policy Coordination. Officials from the Foreign Affairs-Trade, Defense, Justice, Government Administration-Home Affairs Ministries and Chong Wa Dae also joined the survey. The survey team toured the incident site and met representatives from a group of victims and residents of the town. While collecting statements from the residents, the survey team explained them that it would take quite some time to shed light on the incident, an ROK government official said.

10. ROK-Japan Economic Cooperation

The Korea Times ("KOREA, JAPAN TO CREATE MAMMOTH SEA FARMING CENTER ON CHEJU-DO," Seoul, 10/08/99) reported that an ROK government official said on Thursday that the ROK and Japan are set to create a mammoth sea farming center on the southern island of Cheju-do to maximize the use of maritime resources. The two countries are expected to reach an agreement on the creation of the maritime resources center at the forthcoming ROK- Japan ministerial meeting, scheduled for October 23-24 on Cheju-do. It is the first major project of its kind in the ROK. There are many similar centers in Japan, which is advanced in sea farming. The center will be responsible for the farming and stocking the water zone between the two countries with newly hatched fish. The private level organization comprised of the fishing industries of both countries will supervise the activities of the center. The two countries are to spend the same amount of money to create the center. According to the ROK Maritime-Fisheries Ministry, the ROK and Japan are expected to invest about 120 billion won and about 10 billion yen to the project respectively. The center will produce about 80 million fry every year and will release 50 million to the water. The remaining 30 million will be distributed to sea farms.

III. Announcements

1. Job Opportunity

Asian Assets On-Line, an Internet news service published by VertiNews.Com, is seeking a business reporter to contribute daily news and analysis from Seoul. Successful applicant will receive competitive freelance rates and opportunity for stock options in VertiNews.com, an Internet company founded by former executives of the Wall Street Journal, AP-Dow Jones, and America Online. Candidates should have demonstrated experience in covering Asian economic and financial institutions for credible news organizations, excellent writing and reporting skills, ability to use the internet for research and communications, and good contacts and sources in the local business community, the government and organizations seeking to influence the process of corporate restructuring (i.e. labor unions, NGOs). Bilingual candidates will be given special consideration. To apply, e-mail resume, a range of financial and economic clips and cover letter to: Tim Shorrock,

Managing Editor, Asian Assets On-Line, Trox51@aol.com. For more information about the position or VertiNews.com, call (301) 585-4245.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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International Policy Studies Institute Seoul, Republic of Korea
[The Center for Global Communications](#), Tokyo, Japan
Center for American Studies,
[Fudan University](#), Shanghai, People's Republic of China
[Asian Institute](#),
[Monash University](#), Clayton, Australia

Timothy L. Savage: napsnet@nautilus.org
Berkeley, California, United States

Kim Hee-sun: khs688@hotmail.com
Seoul, Republic of Korea

Hiroyasu Akutsu: akutsu@glocomnet.or.jp
Tokyo, Japan

Peter Razvin: icipu@glas.apc.org
Moscow, Russian Federation

Chunsi Wu: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Dingli Shen: dlshen@fudan.ac.cn
Shanghai, People's Republic of China

Leanne Paton: anjlcake@webtime.com.au
Clayton, Australia

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