NAPSNet Daily Report 09 November, 1999

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 09 November, 1999", NAPSNet Daily Report, November 09, 1999, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-09-november-1999/

CONTENTS

I. United States

1. DPRK Famine
2. US Ambassador to PRC
3. PRC Entry into WTO
4. Spratly Islands Dispute

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Military
2. DPRK View of US Missile Defense
3. ROK-US-Japan Talks
4. Japanese Participation in US-DPRK Talks
5. DPRK-Japan Cultural Property Dispute
6. DPRK Deforestation
7. DPRK's View of ROK Defense Industry

I. United States

1. DPRK Famine

Agence France Presse, ("NORTH KOREA TRAPPED IN VICIOUS CIRCLE OF POOR NUTRITION: FAO," Rome, 11/09/99) reported that the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) published a report on Tuesday on the DPRK food crisis. The report stated, "Given the scale of the problem and its root causes, future food supply prospects are almost entirely contingent on international food and rehabilitation assistance." It added that the DPRK's nutritional situation remained "fragile" in spite of the DRPK's efforts to redress chronic food shortages. The agencies said that "economic growth and the ability of the country to integrate itself into the global economy" were further prerequisites before any improvement was likely and that the

"food availability and health and nutritional standards will continue to fall markedly." According to the two agencies, living standards in the DPRK have significantly declined in the last four years. The report also said, "Widespread starvation has only been averted by concerted national efforts and the unprecedented volume of humanitarian food assistance provided by the international community." The two agencies expected food supply to remain "precarious over the next 12 months" but said that some improvement had been made in rice production this year due mainly to the increased use of fertilizers, adequate irrigation and the absence of serious pest and disease attacks. Based on population figures provided by the DRPK, grain demand for food and other uses for 1999-2000 is said to be 4.76 million tons. This leaves a deficit of about 1.29 million tons, of which the government is expected to import 300,000 tons. A further 370,000 tons is covered by expected food aid, leaving 623,000 tons of grain that will need to come through assistance programs. The report also said that there were signs that economic sanctions may be further relaxed, which could lead to recovery in the DPRK economy and rehabilitation of agriculture.

2. US Ambassador to PRC

The New York Times (Elizabeth Becker, "SENATOR DELAYS VOTE TO CONFIRM ADMIRAL AS ENVOY TO CHINA," Washington, 11/09/99) reported that US Senator Robert C. Smith on November 4 put a hold on a full Senate vote on the confirmation of Admiral Joseph W. Prueher to be the next ambassador to the PRC until the US Defense Department releases official documents detailing his relations with the PRC and Taiwan when he commanded the combined US forces in the Pacific. Smith stated, "I'm worried that he's been lax on planning for the defense of Taiwan. Number two, he's a bit naive on China at best, or at worst somewhat dangerous to the nation's national security." In a letter to US Secretary of Defense William Cohen, Smith and Senator James M. Inhofe asked for documents, including those detailing Prueher's plans for defending Taiwan, his objections to arms sales requests by Taiwan, and whether he received permission to allow PRC officers to tour a US nuclear attack submarine in California. A US Defense Department spokesman said they planned to deliver the documents to Smith on November 9. Smith said that if he is not satisfied with those documents, he may refuse to allow a vote.

3. PRC Entry into WTO

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS STILL OPTIMISTIC ON WTO ENTRY," Beijing, 11/09/99) reported that the International Business Daily quoted PRC Foreign Trade Minister Shi Guangsheng on Tuesday as saying that the PRC government remains optimistic about its prospect of entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Shi was quoted as telling head of the Swiss Federal Department of Public Economy Pascal Couchepin,, "The negotiations on China's entry into WTO have entered a critical stage. China's position and attitude on WTO entry are constant. Joining the WTO is needed for China's reform and opening up and is also needed for the development of international trade and the establishment of new international economic orders." US President Bill Clinton dispatched US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and Gene Sperling, who chairs the White House National Economic Council, to the PRC to hold talks in Beijing on November 10 and 11.

4. Spratly Islands Dispute

Agence France Presse ("PHILIPPINE RULES OUT QUICK PULL-OUT OF STRANDED SHIPS FROM SPRATLYS," Manila, 11/09/99) reported that Philippine Navy flag officer-in-command Vice Admiral Luisito Fernandez said on Tuesday that the Philippine Navy would not be able to perform a quick pull-out of stranded navy ships from two disputed Spratly Islands because of the lack of spare parts

and stormy weather. PRC Ambassador to Manila Fu Ying earlier requested Philippine Foreign Secretary Domingo Siazon to ask the armed forces to immediately tow away the ship from the outcrop, warning that not doing so could jeopardize efforts at forging a regional code of conduct in the Spratlys. Siazon said the PRC has raised the suspicion that the grounding of the Philippine ships was a deliberate part of the Philippine strategy to occupy the islets.

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Military

Chosun Ilbo (Yoo Young-won, "NK BOOSTS MILITARY STRENGTH: IISS," Seoul, 11/08/99) reported that the United Kingdom's International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) released a report on November 8 saying that the DPRK has increased its land strength by 27,000 men and 500 main battle tanks, while decreasing its naval force by 110 small craft. The report stated that the DPRK has 1.082 million servicemen, including 950,000 land forces, 3,500 T-59 and T62 tanks, and 10,300 artillery pieces--down from 10,600. The DPRK's navy has 309 vessels--including 103 torpedo boats--a reduction of 95, and its air force's Mig-29s are down to 16 from 30.

2. DPRK View of US Missile Defense

The Korea Herald ("N.K. ASSAILS U.S. MILITARY DEFENSE DRIVE," Seoul, 11/09/99) reported that the DPRK warned on November 8 that the US National Missile Defense (NMD) plan, put forth on November 5 by the US deputy defense minister, would drive the world into an arms race. The DPRK's official radio station reported, "The plan shows the United States is crazy about prompting a war and aggravating the region's political situation by pushing for the extremely dangerous missile defense system under the pretext of missile threats from us." The radio broadcast, while noting the PRC's repeated opposition to the US attempt to revise the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, said, "The United States is plotting to develop its missile defense systems while maintaining its strategic superiority."

3. ROK-US-Japan Talks

The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "THREE-WAY MEETING OPENS TO ADDRESS FUTURE US-NK TALKS," Seoul, 11/08/99) reported that the ROK, Japan and the US on November 7 opened a two-day meeting in the US to work out strategies prior to the forthcoming bilateral talks between the US and the DPRK. The meeting of the "Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG)" was attended by ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Jang Jai-ryong, counselor to the US State Department Wendy Sherman, and Director General for Policy Planning at the Japanese Foreign Ministry Yukio Takeuchi.

4. Japanese Participation in US-DPRK Talks

The Korea Times ("JAPAN UNLIKELY TO JOIN US-NK MISSILE TALKS," Seoul, 11/08/99) reported that the ROK on November 7 denied the possibility of Japan joining missile talks between the US and the DPRK. "We believe that a Japanese media organization has raised the issue that the Japanese people are interested. However, there is almost no possibility of Japan joining the talks," an ROK Foreign Affairs-Trade Ministry official said. The Japanese news agency Kyodo earlier cited US government sources as saying that the US is considering inviting Japan to the bilateral meeting and will send a high-level official to Tokyo to launch consultations over the matter. When the US special

envoy for Korean peace talks Charles Kartman and DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan meet in Germany on November 15, they are expected to set a date for the resumption of missile talks, designed to control the DPRK's production and exports of missiles.

5. DPRK-Japan Cultural Property Dispute

The Korea Herald ("PYONGYANG CLAIMS RIGHTS TO RETRIEVE CULTURAL PROPERTIES LOOTED BY JAPAN," Seoul, 11/09/99) and Joongang Ilbo (Bong Hwa-shik, "N.KOREA REQUESTS RETURN OF CULTURAL ASSESTS," Seoul, 11/08/99) reported that the DPRK's official Korea Central Broadcasting Station (KCBS) reported on Sunday that the DPRK has claimed its rights under international law to retrieve cultural assets taken away by Japan during its colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula from 1910 to 1945. The DPRK's ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Ri Thae-gyun was quoted as saying, "Japan must return our properties it looted and restore them in their original state." In his address at a UNESCO general meeting, Ri noted that the DPRK is a member of the international convention to protect cultural and natural assets in the world and has fully implemented measures proposed by it, KCBS said.

6. DPRK Deforestation

Joongang Ilbo ("PYONGYANG STUDIES DEFORESTATION," Seoul, 11/08/99) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il recently expressed the opinion that the capital of the ROK was a handsome city but had bad air. Pyongyang, with 2 million residents, has cleaner air largely because there is not enough money or gasoline for more vehicles. The key problem is deforestation. So many hills have been stripped of trees that Kim plans to plant millions more. The approach has met with mixed success. The DPRK has turned down ROK requests to cooperate on protection of coastlines and border flood control, despite deadly floods this summer. Nonetheless, an office of the United Nations Development Program in the DPRK is working with the DPRK on reforestation. This year, ROK activists sent seeds, fertilizer and greenhouse equipment for tree-planting after meeting DPRK officials. "They showed a feeling of urgency," said Dr. Yoo Jae-hyun of the Semin Foundation, a non-governmental organization based in Seoul. Recently, the DPRK's foreign news outlet, Korean Central News Agency, declared that the DPRK had embarked on "nature-remaking projects." "A brisk drive is now under way in the DPRK to plant thousands of willows and poplars and hundreds of thousands of flower trees in parks and recreation grounds," it said.

7. DPRK's View of ROK Defense Industry

Chosun Ilbo (Jung Kwon-hyun, "NK DEMANDS HYUNDAI QUITS DEFENCE PROJECTS," Seoul, 11/08/99) reported that, according to the ROK Ministry of Unification's (MoU) weekly report, the DPRK on November 8 demanded that ROK big businesses should stop participating in the defense industry. The report said that the statement originated from the Fatherland Peaceful Unification Committee (FPUC) and was aimed at Hyundai, which is about to join in a W1 trillion mid-sized submarine project. The MoU said that the statement is designed to strengthen the DPRK's negotiating position with regard to the planned west coast industrial complex. FPUC stated, "South Korea is strengthening its defense capability, urged on by the US military-industrial complex," adding, "entrepreneurs engaged in this were damaging the reconcilement and unification of the people." In related news, the DPRK party organ Rodong Shinmun demanded the full-scale scrapping of the ROK National Security Law. The MoU said that the DPRK has called for this 36 times since September.

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:
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

Gee Gee Wong: 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

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-09-november-1999/

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