NAPSNet Daily Report 1 December, 2010

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 1 December, 2010", NAPSNet Daily Report, December 01, 2010, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-1-december-2010/

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1. DPRK Internal Situation

Voice of America ("WIKILEAKS CABLE CITES N. KOREAN DEFECTIONS, SUCCESSION WOES", 2010/12/01 16:00:00 GMT+0) reported that a diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks discloses previously unreported defections by senior DPRK officials and cites problems with the DPRK succession plan early this year. The cable is dated January 14, 2010 and purportedly was sent to Washington by the U.S. ambassador in Seoul, Kathleen Stephens. In the cable, Stephens reports on a recent conversation between an embassy official and Yu Myung-hwan, who served as the ROK's foreign minister until September of this year. The cable says Yu confided that "an unspecified number of high-ranking North Korean officials working overseas had recently defected" to the ROK. It links the defections to an "increasingly chaotic" situation in the DPRK following an unpopular effort at currency reform. The cable quotes Yu saying the currency fiasco had caused "big problems" for the DPRK regime and that a planned transfer of power from supreme leader Kim Jong Il to his youngest son Kim Jong Un was "not going smoothly."

http://www.voanews.com/english/news/asia/Wikileaks-Cable-Cites-North-Korean-Defections-Successi

on-Woes-111109309.html

Korea Times ("NK RICE PRICE JUMPS 40-FOLD", Tokyo, 2010/12/01) reported that the price of rice in the DPRK has swelled by more than 40 times in the year since the communist state's botched currency reform, an online publication reported Tuesday. Citing sources in Pyongyang, the Daily NK said that a kilogram of rice in the capital currently costs some 900 won per kilogram, compared to 22 won last November, using the new currency system, a jump of nearly 4,100 percent. The inflation compounds food security problems in the impoverished state, whose economy is reeling from international sanctions and mismanagement. According to testimony from DPR Koreans visiting the PRC released by a Seoul activist group earlier this month, many of the country's wealthy stored up food ahead of the revaluation and began jacking up prices.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2010/11/113_77223.html

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

The New York Times ("SOUTH KOREA WARNS OF NEW ATTACK", Seoul, 2010/12/01) reported that as the United States and the ROK ended four days of joint naval exercises on Wednesday off the DPRK coast, the ROK's intelligence chief warned that the DPRK is likely to repeat a Nov. 23 artillery attack that left four South Koreans dead. "There is a high possibility that the North will make an additional attack," Won Sei-hoon, director of the National Intelligence Service, was quoted by Reuters as telling a parliamentary committee meeting. Defense Minister Kim Tae-young has also warned there was an "ample possibility" the DPRK might stage another provocation once the maritime maneuvers ended.

http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/02/world/asia/02korea.html

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3. PRC on DPRK Talks

Bloomberg (Michael Forsythe, "CHINA REPEATS CALL FOR KOREAN CALM AS U.S. CARRIER PATROLS SEA", 2010/12/01) reported that the PRC repeated its call for calm and restraint on the Korean peninsula as a U.S. aircraft carrier patrolled its coast and a DPRK official visited Beijing. "The parties concerned should keep calm and exercise restraint, and work to bring the situation back onto the track of dialogue and negotiation," the official Xinhua News Agency cited PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi as saying today at a forum in Beijing. The comments coincide with top DPRK official Choe Thae Bok's meeting in Beijing today with a member of the PRC's legislature.

http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-12-01/china-repeats-call-for-korean-calm-as-u-s-carrier-patrols-sea.html

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4. ROK-US Military Exercises

Voice of Russia ("ANOTHER US-SOUTH KOREA NAVAL EXERCISE SOON", 2010/12/01) reported that the ROK will hold another joint naval exercise with the United States in the Yellow Sea before the end of the year. Seoul will, besides, go on with its own manoeuvres. On December 6th the ROK Navy is due to hold a week-long exercise to fire live shells in the vicinity of the northern dividing line.

http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-12-01/japan-says-no-to-kyoto-extension-wants-world-treaty.html

Daily News and Analysis ("US NAVY TO SHIP JET FUEL FROM JAPAN TO SOUTH KOREA", 2010/12/01) reported that the US Navy is looking totransport jet fuel to the ROK from Japan, describing the shipment as routine even though shipping and energy brokers said such trade normally moves in the other direction. The navy entered the freight spot market this week tocharter an oil tanker to move at least 30,000 tonnes of jet fuel, used by the US military to power everything from tanks to fighter planes, between the two Asian countries. "This is a routine request for proposals by Military Sealift Command to move fuel on behalf of the Defense Energy Support Center (DESC), and is unrelated to current events on the Korean peninsula," Jeff Davis, a US Navy commander withthe 7th Fleet, said in a statement to Reuters. But traders said flows of jet fuel into the ROK were rare. "This is definitely unusual," said Nikhil Jain, a Delhi-based analyst with Drewry Shipping Consultants. "This has to do with the re-positioning of the US warships."

http://www.dnaindia.com/world/report_us-navy-to-ship-jet-fuel-from-japan-to-south-korea_1474957

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