NAPSNet Daily Report 16 October, 1997

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 16 October, 1997", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 16, 1997, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-16-october-1997/

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I. United States

1. DPRK Famine

United Press International ("HOPE ARISES IN N. KOREA FAMINE," United Nations, 10/16/97) reported that Fred Eckhard, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, announced that

Japan has pledged US$27 million and the US has pledged US$5 million in aid to the DPRK. The donations were made "within the framework of the consolidated interagency appeal" and the World Food Program (WFP), Eckhard said. He added, "The WFP is now reporting a substantial amount of food aid getting into North Korea just as the fall harvest is beginning and so they are sounding a bit more optimistic that massive famine will be averted for this year."

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2. ROK Presidential Elections

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA: CORRUPTION COMPLAINT FILED VS OPPOSITION CANDIDATE," Seoul, 10/16/97) and United Press International ("S.KOREA CANDIDATE FACING PROBE," Seoul, 10/16/97) reported that the ruling New Korea Party filed a legal complaint Thursday asking prosecutors to investigate opposition presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung on corruption charges. Prosecutors said they will study the complaint and decide whether to start a probe.

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3. Human Rights in ROK

Reuters ("AMNESTY STRESSES RIGHTS IN S.KOREAN ELECTION," Seoul, 10/16/97) and the AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S.KOREA PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS ASKED TO UPHOLD HUMAN RIGHTS," Seoul, 10/16/97) reported that Amnesty International Secretary General Pierre Sane on Thursday sent an open letter to candidates in the ROK's upcoming presidential elections asking them to commit to 18 measures which it said would advance human rights in the ROK. "Too many South Korean governments have used the threat from North Korea as an excuse to crack down on opponents. Respect for human rights ensures -- and does not undermine -- stability and security in the country," Amnesty said in a statement received in Seoul. The human rights group also called for the release of all prisoners of conscience and for a revision of the ROK's National Security Law to meet international standards. Amnesty also urged the next ROK president to set up an independent commission to investigate alleged human rights violations in the ROK and by ROK "entities" abroad.

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4. US-PRC Relations

The Washington Post carried an opinion article by Robert A. Manning, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, ("FALSE `CHOICE' ON CHINA," 10/16/97, A19) which argued that focusing on the human rights at the upcoming US-PRC summit "is wrongheaded policy, unintentionally providing a wonderful illustration of what is wrong with the views of both sides in the heated China policy debate." Manning stated, "if human rights were the only or paramount interest the United States had in regard to China, then it might be wise public policy to risk progress on the many other issues in a complex relationship to advance that goal. But the United States has a host of competing goals in what is one of the most important bilateral relationships shaping the world system in the 21st century." Manning argued that "the left-right coalition of critics of U.S. policy, whether focused on human rights or strategic concerns, presumes that China fits into the old Cold War template as a static, ideological and strategic global adversary." He also criticized "the flawed terms of debate set by the Clinton administration -- 'engagement or containment.'" Manning argued that "China is at once politically repressive yet, in many respects, relatively tolerant in areas of individual freedom outside politics." He concluded that "U.S. strategy should support the forces of change from within, aiding fledgling nongovernmental organizations and other elements of an emerging civil society and facilitating development of the rule of law."

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5. Global Land Mine Ban

The Associated Press ("JAPAN LEADER WANTS LAND MINE TREATY," Tokyo, 10/15/97) and the New York Times ("JAPAN HINTS IT WILL SIGN PACT TO BAN LAND MINES," Tokyo, 10/16/97) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi said Tuesday he wants Japan to sign an international treaty banning land mines during a December meeting in Canada. However, Japan's Kyodo News agency quoted unnamed Foreign Ministry officials as saying that the military is wary about trying to defend Japan's long coastline without land mines. Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto reportedly said that he has asked the Defense Agency to find alternatives to land mines.

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6. Japanese Nuclear Development

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("JAPAN: MORE NUCLEAR PLANTS NEEDED TO MEET EMISSIONS TARGET," 10/16/97) reported that Yutake Hayami, an official with Japan's Agency of Natural Resources and Energy, said on Thursday that Japan will need to build more nuclear power plants to attain its target for limiting emissions of gases that cause global warming. The Japanese government last week proposed what it called a "realistic" plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

by 2.5 percent from 1990 levels by 2012.

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II. Republic of Korea

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1. DPRK Military Buildup

Min Byong-kyun, a former DPRK trading official in Russia who defected to the ROK, said that the DPRK has recently banned contraception and encouraged women, even those aged over 45, to give birth in order to maintain the size of the DPRK army. The DPRK has faced a sharp decrease in its population since it launched a stringent birth-control campaign in the 1970s, but that has led to manpower shortages in its army, he added. Min also said that the financially-strapped country has been engaged in illegal drug trafficking abroad to earn foreign currency. (Korea Herald, "NORTH KOREA ENCOURAGES HIGH BIRTH RATES TO MAINTAIN ARMY," 10/16/97)

The ROK Defense Ministry reported to the National Assembly, "Recently, North Korea has been aggressively developing and introducing harmful terrorist tools, such as poisonous artillery, and infiltration equipment, such as a waterproof communicator." It added, "North Korea is enhancing the infiltration capacity of its spies by constructing submarine infiltration bases on the coast of Kosung-kun, Kangwon-do, which is only 5.5 km from the truce line." The Ministry also said, "North Korea is expanding its activity to international crimes such as drug dealing and counterfeit money laundry, and connecting with international terrorists and criminal organizations." The Ministry added that "there are also recent signs of infiltration into South Korea." (Joong Ang Ilbo, "NORTH ADDED 20,000 STRENGTH TO ITS SPECIAL FORCE," 10/16/97)

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2. Alleged DPRK Interference in ROK Elections

ROK opposition lawmaker Representative Chun Yong-taek, during a parliamentary review of the Agency for National Security Planning on Wednesday, claimed that the DPRK is trying to influence the result of the ROK presidential election slated for December 18. "North Korea has stationed

agents in Beijing, who are working to sway the outcome of the presidential election," said Chun. "According to the information we have, Kim Jong-il is most opposed to our party leader Kim Dae-jung," he told reporters. Lawmakers from the ruling New Korea Party dismissed Chun's claims as groundless. In addition, the opposition lawmaker claimed that Daewoo group Chairman Kim Woo-choong met directly with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il last month to discuss the possibility of an inter-Korean summit and reunions of separated families. (Korea Herald, Nam In-soo, "LAWMAKER CLAIMS NORTH INTERFERING IN ELECTION," 10/15/97)

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3. DPRK-Russian Relations

Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency reported that Russia and the DPRK signed agreements Wednesday covering agricultural cooperation and the settlement of the DPRK's debts to Russia. Yevgeny Levchenko, a senior official in the Russian ministry for foreign economic ties, said that the two sides had discussed methods for settling the DPRK's debts to the ROK, and that the agreement to resolve the debt problem was included as a separate point in the document on economic and technical cooperation. (Korea Times, "RUSSIA, N. KOREA SIGN ACCORDS ON AGRICULTURE," 10/16/97)

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4. ROK-Japan Fishing Pact

ROK officials said Wednesday that, in a meeting held in Tokyo October 8-10, the ROK and Japan agreed to seek a "provisional" agreement over fishing issues in accordance with the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea, which opens the way for the concerned parties to work out "a provisional arrangement of a practical nature" before reaching a comprehensive agreement. Seoul favors a "white zone approach" under which the body of water between provisional water zones could be designated as "high seas." Japan, however, wants to introduce a "gray zone approach" under which the controversial waters are put into joint control areas. (Korea Times, "SEOUL, TOKYO HAVE LONG WAY TO GO TO REVISE FISHING PACT," 10/16/97)

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