

NAPSNet Daily Report 16 October, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 16 October, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 16, 2007,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-16-october-2007/>

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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Kyodo ("US NUCLEAR EXPERTS LEAVE FOR N. KOREA'S YONGBYON COMPLEX", Pyongyang, 2007/10/15 20:00:00 GMT+0) reported that a group of US government officials and nuclear experts visiting the DPRK left Monday for the Yongbyon nuclear complex as part of efforts to finalize a plan for disabling facilities there. The group led by Sung Kim, director of the US State Department's Office of Korea Affairs, left a Pyongyang hotel in the morning for Yongbyon, about 90 kilometers north of the capital.

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2. Japan-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREAN, JAPANESE OFFICIALS MEET IN CHINA ", Beijing, 2007/10/14) reported that DPRK and Japanese officials met in northeast PRC for talks seen as aimed at normalising diplomatic ties, a diplomat and reports said. Japan's Kyodo News quoted an unnamed diplomat as saying talks had begun. An Asian diplomat in Beijing earlier confirmed talks between the two sides were scheduled to take place in Shenyang and likely to last just one day.

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE PM WANTS TO SOLVE ROW SOON WITH NKOREA", Tokyo, 2007/10/15) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said Monday he hoped to resolve an emotionally charged row over the DPRK's kidnappings of Japanese civilians "as soon as possible". "We have to resolve the issue as soon as possible," Fukuda said in parliament. "The abduction issue has to be solved through serious talks between Japan and North Korea." "Without solving problems with North Korea over abductions, its nuclear programme and missiles, we cannot achieve stability in this region. North Korea wouldn't be able to prosper either," Fukuda said.

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3. Northern Limit Line

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok and Ser Myo-ja , "DEFENSE BOSS SAYS HE WILL DEFEND LIMIT LINE", 2007/10/15) reported that an apparent rift between President Roh Moo-hyun and the military establishment over how to approach the Northern Limit Line that separates the two Koreas in the Yellow Sea seemed to widen as the defense minister has made it clear that he will fight any

challenge to the line, even if it costs him his job, high-ranking military sources said. Defense chiefs of the two Koreas are to meet in Pyongyang next month to discuss various military-related issues, including a plan to create a joint fishing zone in the Yellow Sea west of the Korean Peninsula.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Herald (Ko Kyoung-tae , "HAEJU IN N.K. SEEM PLAYING BIGGER ROLE ", 2007/10/15) reported that ROK experts yesterday called on the government to develop Haeju, a DPRK port which ROK and DPRK leaders recently agreed to develop as a special zone, into a business hub covering a wide array of industries, from fisheries to manufacturing. Jeong Hyung-gon, an economist at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, recommended in a seminar yesterday that the special zone of Haeju should be transformed into a comprehensive economic zone so as to expand inter-Korean economic ties. Jeong's speech implies that the DPRK should also substantially open Haeju to foreign investors, including ROK companies.

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5. DPRK Health

Yonhap ("MATERNAL MORTALITY RATE INCREASES SHARPLY IN N. KOREA", Washington, 2007/10/15) reported that the number of DPRK women who have died while giving birth rose drastically in 2005 from five years earlier due to worsening health care conditions in the DPRK, a report said. Maternal mortality rose to 370 per 100,000 births in 2005 from 67 in 2000, according to the report issued jointly by the United Nations Population Fund, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the World Bank.

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6. ROK Politics

Chosun Ilbo ("CHUNG DONG-YOUNG SWEEPS UNDP PROVINCIAL PRIMARY", 2007/10/15) reported that Chung Dong-young has consolidated his position as the United New Democratic Party frontrunner by winning most of the eight provinces and cities where primary elections were held on Sunday. The UNDP will hold a convention to nominate its presidential candidate at the Jangchung Gymnasium on Monday. But the tug-of-war in the ruling camp is set to continue, with Chung saying Sunday he will immediately launch negotiations to put up a single presidential candidate representing all progressive forces with other presidential contenders like the Democratic Party's Rhee In-je and independent Moon Kook-hyun, the former CEO of Yuhan Kimberly.

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7. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "GRAPPLING OVER TRADE CONTINUES WITH EU", 2007/10/15) reported that Seoul and European Union officials kicked off a fourth round of free trade negotiations

yesterday. They hope to sign a trade agreement by the end of the year. The sides are divided by tariffs, auto industry standards and goods made in the Kaesong Industrial Complex. The ROK's chief negotiator, Kim Han-soo, said yesterday's negotiation was "not entirely unsatisfactory," stressing that to strike a deal by the end of this year will be "very tough, but not impossible."

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8. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo ("NEW REFUELING LAW TO LIMIT JAPAN'S OPERATIONS, PERIOD ", Tokyo, 2007/10/15) reported that a new law being considered to enable Japan to continue supporting antiterrorism operations in and around Afghanistan would limit Japanese activities to supplying fuel and water to forces from the US and other countries engaged in maritime interdiction activities and would limit the period to one year, sources in the government and the ruling coalition said. Aircraft carriers and supply ships that could be involved in attacks against Iraq and Afghanistan will be denied refueling by Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force ships, although the bill for the new law does not carry provisions explicitly barring them from gaining access to fuel supplied by Japan, the sources said.

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9. Japan-US Missile Defense Cooperation

The Asahi Shimbun ("MINISTRY TO TEST SEA-BASED MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM", 2007/10/15) reported that the Defense Ministry will conduct a trial exercise with newly developed ballistic missile defense (BMD) technology in December ahead of plans the following month to deploy the nation's first sea-based system to defend against such strikes. Ministry officials said the guided missile destroyer Kongo will be based in waters off Hawaii in mid-December for the exercise to be conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Navy to intercept a ballistic missile using the advanced Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) system.

The Associated Press ("REPORT: MISSILE DEFENSE CONCERNS RUSSIA ", Tokyo, 2007/10/15) reported that Russia is concerned that a joint US-Japanese missile defense effort could be an effort to preserve military superiority, the country's foreign minister said in a news interview published Saturday. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow regarded the joint missile defense effort as an "object of concern," expressing wariness over what he called the possibility that the system could be directed against Russia and the PRC. "We oppose the construction of missile defense systems whose purpose is to ensure military superiority," Lavrov wrote.

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10. PRC Political Reform

The Financial Times (Mure Dickie , "HU PROMISES WIDER PARTY DEMOCRACY", Beijing, 2007/10/15) reported that Hu Jintao, the PRC's Communist party chief, vowed to introduce greater democracy to the world's largest political organisation but reminded members they must "always agree" with their leaders. In a speech to the five-yearly congress of the PRC's ruling party, Hu stressed the importance of expanding "intra-party democracy", increasing party transparency and strengthening limits on the authority of individual Communist cadres. The party would reform its

electoral system, systemize oversight of the politburo and widen the use of direct elections for grassroots leaders, said Hu.

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11. PRC Protest

The Associated Press (Audra Ang, "SOCIAL TENSIONS CONFRONT CHINA'S HARMONY", Xiamen, 2007/10/15) reported that it was a sight to behold: Thousands of protesters massed on the streets of one of the PRC's most prosperous cities, demanding that construction of a chemical plant close to their homes be stopped. The protest led the government to halt construction of the \$1.4 billion facility, at least for now, and became emblematic of the simmering discontent facing PRC leaders. As Communist Party leaders gathering in Beijing this week call for creating a "harmonious society," signs abound that the country is far from it. In the PRC's wrenching transformation from a poor, largely agricultural society to a prosperous industrial one, the party is wrestling with changes that have angered many Chinese.

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II. ROK Report

12. Northern Limit Line

Chosun Ilbo ("THE NLL, PRESIDENT ROH, AND THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE", Seoul, 2007/10/15 22:50:00 GMT+0) said in an editorial that Kim Jang-soo, the Minister of National Defense, recently told his staff that he would adhere to the Northern Limited Line (NLL) as before even during the ministers talk to be held in Pyongyang next month. He also said that he would be responsible for any problems concerning the NLL. What the Minister said shows his confidence toward his authority and consideration toward his staff, which is a very natural and constructive remark. However, the reason why the ROK people consider him as being weird is because of the effect of their president, namely Roh Moo-hyun, who always relies on his own interpretation of affairs. Roh's perspective on the NLL might cause diplomatic and economic dislocation to the ROK. Roh should stop his extreme obstinacy of solely depending on his own way of interpreting the world and should try to understand what common sense is.

Hankyoreh (Son won-je, "MINISTER KIM: 'REPORTS WERE EXAGGERATED'", Seoul, 2007/10/16) reported that Chosun Ilbo and Joonang Ilbo made exaggerated reports about the remarks by Kim Chang-soo, the Minister of National Defense, on the NLL problem. Kim Hyung-ki, the spokesman of the Ministry, said that Kim, who was appointed by President Roh, would not have been able to make remarks such as "I will adhere the NLL for the sake of my authority as a minister" and "I will be in charge of everything." An unnamed ministry official said that Minister Kim also said such reports are absurd. The Blue House spokesperson also said the reports are different from the truth and they also agree to adhere the NLL as written in the inter-Korean basic agreement.

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13. Korean Peninsula Peace Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Cheong Yong-hwan, "END OF THE WAR POSSIBLE WITHIN ROH'S TERM?", Seoul, 2007/10/15) reported that the possibility that the three-or-four party talks to be held within President Roh Moo-hyun's is decreasing. Despite the fact that the government officials inferred that the six-party talks are likely to be held in Beijing later this month or at least early next month, Song Min-soon, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade said on October 15 that there isn't any plan for the talks to be held within the presumed period. Cheon Sung-hun, an analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification, said that since one of the U.S. government's basic rules is that it is impossible to declare the end of the war or to sign the peace treaty before the DPRK denuclearizes itself, the U.S. is not really likely to be concerned about when to start the peace regime talks, which is politically crucial. However, one official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade inferred that the talks could be held by late next month or by early December if the denuclearization proceeds satisfactorily.

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14. West Sea Peace Zone

Hankyoreh (Kwon Hyuk-chul, "WEST SEA PEACE ZONE", Seoul, 2007/10/16) reported that the government is discussing whether to suggest to the DPRK an exclusive institution dealing with the West Sea peace cooperation special zone, which was agreed to in the 2007 summit. Kim Nam-shik, the spokesperson of the Ministry of Unification, said that even though there were several discussions on the "associated committee for the peace and cooperation of the West Sea" made by related departments, whether to form such an institution has not yet been confirmed as government policy.

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