

NAPSNet Daily Report 17 January, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 17 January, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, January 17, 2003,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-17-january-2003/>

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I. United States

1. DPRK Multilateral Nuclear Crisis

Associated Press (George Gedda, "NORTH KOREA SAYS TIME NOT ON US SIDE," Washington, 01/15/04) reported that DPRK officials told a US expert on Korea that they see no urgency in ending the impasse over its nuclear weapons programs because delays will give the country more time to expand its nuclear arsenal. Charles Pritchard, a former State Department official, met with the DPRK last week as part of a private visit that included a trip with American colleagues to the country's main nuclear site at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang. Pritchard said he was told by DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan: "Time is not on the US side. Lapses of time will result in quantitative and qualitative increases in our nuclear deterrent." He said Kim, during their nine-hour discussion, also denied that the DPRK is pursuing a uranium bomb, contradicting US intelligence and Pyongyang's own admissions to US officials - Pritchard included - in October 2002. The former official said the DPRK denial could pose a major problem for the Bush administration as it seeks the complete dismantling of the country's nuclear weapons programs. "I heard what I heard," said

Pritchard, alluding to the DPRK statements to a US delegation 15 months ago. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said, "They admitted it." Pritchard left the State Department last summer and is now a scholar at the Brookings Institution, where a large gathering turned out to hear about his visit to the DPRK. The former official, who had visited DPRK previously, said he found evidence of improved living conditions, including a sharp increase in vehicular traffic and increased availability of electricity and consumer goods. He debunked the notion among some that the country could collapse because of economic decline. "Don't wait," he said. "It's not going to happen." He declined to discuss what he saw at Yongbyon, contending that he played the role of "bystander," leaving the analysis of what he saw to US nuclear experts in the delegation.

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA DOES NOT WANT TO BE SEEN AS STALLING TALKS: EX-US OFFICIAL," Washington, 01/16/04) reported that a former US envoy who was last week shown DPRK's controversial nuclear complex said the US can still talk the regime out of building nuclear weapons. Jack Pritchard, a past negotiator with the DPRK, would not say whether he had seen material that could be used in making bombs. But he said: "There was some practical discussion that focused on forging a deal in six-nation talks, which include the US." "They don't want to be seen as the obstacle to six-party talks." Pritchard was part of an unofficial delegation that was shown an empty holding pond at the DPRK's Yongbyon plant that once contained 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods. But he would not say whether the DPRK had shown them nuclear bomb-making materials or what had happened to the rods. "The North Koreans said they had moved them for reprocessing" into plutonium, he said. Plutonium is needed for a nuclear weapon. "I continue to believe that they have a (highly enriched uranium) program," he said. Pritchard deferred to Siegfried Hecker, former director of the nuclear Los Alamos National Laboratory, who was also on the trip and who is to speak to Congress Tuesday. Pritchard said Hecker had briefed Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham

2. Russia-PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Associated Press (Hans Greimel, "RUSSIA, CHINA TRY TO BROKER NUCLEAR TALKS," Seoul, 01/16/04) reported that Russia and the PRC tried to broker new talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis Friday amid warnings from Pyongyang that every delay gives the DPRK more time to build a bigger and better atomic arsenal. The ROK, meanwhile, chose a new foreign minister, restoring stability to its diplomatic corps after an upheaval over how to balance relations with the DPRK and the US, Seoul's biggest ally. Ban Ki-moon, a 60-year-old former vice foreign minister, was named new top diplomat after Yoon Young-kwan rattled the nation Thursday by resigning. Yoon's departure was seen as bolstering the influence of presidential aides who preach greater independence from the US. Vowing not to "kowtow" to Washington, President Roh Moo-hyun took office last year promising greater openness to the DPRK. Ban, a 60-year-old career diplomat, served as vice foreign minister in the government of Roh's predecessor, former President Kim Dae-jung, who initiated the "sunshine" policy of seeking reconciliation with the DPRK. National Security Adviser Ra Jong-Yil said Thursday that Ban's appointment was "not going to affect our alliance" with the US, adding that "there is not going to be much difference" in the administration's foreign policy. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov returned from a two-day visit to Beijing on Friday and said the PRC and Russia were trying to encourage dialogue between the DPRK and the US.

3. Japan-PRC Naval "Water Fight"

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE SHIPS 'ATTACK' PRC BOATS WITH WATER CANNON NEAR DISPUTED ISLES," 01/16/04) reported that a festering dispute over an East China Sea island chain flared with PRC activists claiming 10 Japanese ships and a plane attacked two PRC fishing boats with high-powered water cannon. The PRC government condemned the Japanese move and called on

Tokyo to rein in its actions around the Diaoyu islands, claimed by Japan, China and Taiwan. "China has made representations with the Japanese side many times, and made clear the PRC stance on the issue of Diaoyu islands and requires the Japanese side not to take any actions that jeopardize the security of PRC personnel," the foreign ministry told AFP in a faxed statement. Citing an organizer of the trip, the Xinhua news agency said the PRC vessels, carrying 20 people to assert the PRC's ownership of the islands and inspect them for tourism purposes, were attacked under the cover of darkness Thursday evening. "Under attack by high-pressure water cannons, the glass of the control cabin of a boat burst into pieces, leaving the face and hand of one boatman injured by broken pieces of glass," said Li Nan, in charge of logistics for the trip. The boats had been flying banners reading "PRC territory: Japanese get out", and released items inscribed "PRC territory Diaoyu islands" into the sea near the archipelago, Li said. Contact with the two boats has since been lost. A Japan Coast Guard spokesman said only one Japanese vessel sprayed a boat after a passenger had hurled a rock. "A rock was thrown from the protest ship, so to prevent it, one coast guard ship sprayed them with water, aiming toward the middle of the ship," the spokesman said. Several coast guard vessels were in the area, but only one participated in the water-gunning, which the spokesman described as like a "shower." No planes were involved, he said. Li said that four Japanese ships and a plane appeared near the two PRC boats as they sailed in the direction of islands at about 3:00 pm Thursday. As they moved within 20 nautical miles of the islands, into what Japan considers territorial waters, the number of Japanese vessels increased to 10, including five in front of the PRC boats and another five behind, Li said. The interception occurred with the boats some 10 nautical miles offshore.

4. PRC-US Military Ties

Agence France-Presse ("US AND CHINA COMMIT TO BUILDING MILITARY TIES BUT TAIWAN A STICKING POINT," 01/15/04) reported that the US top military officer said consensus "on many issues" had been reached in talks with China's top leaders, but the Taiwan question remains a thorn in the side of warming bilateral ties. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers was accorded a red-carpet welcome in China during his two-day visit and the cordiality was extended to a meeting Thursday with military strongman Jiang Zemin. The general met Jiang, the former president who still wields considerable power as head of the Central Military Commission, at Zhongnanhai where China's top leaders reside, and was greeted warmly. "There are differences between China and the US but we consider that common interests exceed by far these differences," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. "Even more important, both sides are developing constructive cooperation that is beneficial for both peoples and also for the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and the world." Myers, who met his counterpart General Liang Guanglie, chief of general staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and other officials Wednesday, described his trip as "a great visit". He discussed with Jiang the DPRK and international terrorism and said they had "reached consensus on many issues." Taiwan however overshadowed the goodwill. "President (of the Central Military Commission) Jiang Zemin particularly pointed out that the Taiwan question is the most important and sensitive one in the Sino-US relations," Kong said. Jiang made clear the PRC will never tolerate Taiwan, which the PRC considers a renegade province awaiting reunification, seeking independence, Kong said. Myers reminded the PRC that the US would help defend the island if it was attacked, and cautioned about a "very large" PRC missile arsenal facing Taiwan."

5. WHO PRC SARS Investigation

Agence France-Presse ("WHO FINDS SARS VIRUS IN CIVET CAGES AT EATERY WHERE CHINA PATIENT WORKED," 01/16/04) reported that a World Health Organization (WHO) team said it had found the coronavirus which causes SARS in cages housing civet cats at a restaurant where one of China's suspected SARS patients worked. "The cages (where the civet cats are kept) were swabbed

and subjected to sophisticated testing," WHO team leader Robert Breiman told reporters at the end of a week-long investigation in SARS-hit southern Guangdong province. "Those tests did reveal in each of the cases the presence of coronavirus. Not in one cage actually, but on essentially all of them," Breiman said. The cages were at a restaurant in Guangzhou city where one of two people suspected to have Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Guangdong, a 20-year-old waitress, worked. Up until now there has been no direct link between civet cats and patients, although some of the earliest SARS victims from last year's outbreak, which killed 349 people from 5,237 infections in PRC, were wildlife dealers. This month scientists from the PRC and Hong Kong said the virus found in civet cats at wildlife markets was almost identical to the coronavirus found in a PRC man confirmed to have SARS. But the man reported having no contact with civets or other animals, except for a mouse. The findings nonetheless led to a government order to slaughter all civet cats being bred or sold in Guangdong. Breiman said, however, said the WHO's latest findings did not necessarily mean civet cats transmitted SARS to humans. "That doesn't necessarily prove anything, but it certainly fits in with the concept that civet cats were carriers," he said.

6. Japan Iraq Troop Preparation

Agence France-Presse ("ADVANCE PARTY OF JAPANESE TROOPS PREPARES FOR IRAQ MISSION," 01/16/04) reported that an advance party of Japanese troops was headed for the Gulf to prepare for the deployment of a force inside Iraq, launching Japan's most controversial overseas military mission since World War II. Prime Minister Junichiro's Koizumi's decision to contribute soldiers for the reconstruction of Iraq has met stiff public opposition, and the murder of two Japanese diplomats in Iraq in November added to jitters. The 30-strong team dressed in olive camouflaged fatigues were given a ceremonial send-off at the Defence Agency's headquarters before heading to the airport for the journey to Kuwait. "We will strive to stabilize and improve the living conditions of Iraqi people," said Colonel Masahisa Sato, who heads the detachment. As the advance party of the 600-strong force was due to leave on a commercial flight late Friday, police tightened security with officers patrolling Narita International airport and major railway stations. The detachment was due to arrive in Kuwait Saturday before traveling overland to the southern Iraqi city of Samawa later this month, according to Jiji Press and Kyodo news agencies. When the troops set foot on Iraqi soil, it will mark the first time since World War II that Japan's military has engaged in operations in a country where fighting is still going on. An advance team from the air force is already operating in Kuwait, where Japanese planes will be based to transport medical and other supplies to Iraqi airports. Shrugging off public disapproval, Koizumi said he hoped people would be convinced the deployment was the right thing to do. "I am sure that as time passes people will understand it was the right decision to send the Self-Defence Forces there and hope they will play an active part," he said.

7. ROK Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("S.KOREA NAMES NEW FM IN SWIFT MOVE TO ADDRESS US POLICY CONFLICTS," 01/16/04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun named his chief foreign policy aide and veteran diplomat Ban Ki-Moon as new foreign minister in a swift move to address conflicts on policy towards Washington. Ban, who replaces Yoon Young-Kwan who was sacked as foreign minister Thursday over the inter-agency policy conflicts, stressed "steadfast" US-ROK alliance. "The replacement will bring no change to the policy towards the US and other key allies," said Ban who had served as senior presidential adviser for foreign policy in the past 11 months. "The alliance with the US will continue to be steadfast in the future. Seoul and Washington have closely cooperated in major pending issues and they will do so in the future." The change of ROK foreign ministers came at a critical time in diplomatic moves to end the DPRK nuclear crisis with Washington and Seoul

preparing for a hoped-for resumption of talks with Pyongyang. Roh replaced Yoon after ministry officials reportedly said left-leaning advisers in the presidential Blue House were pro-DPRK and anti-US.

8. ROK US Embassy Corruption Charges

Agence France-Presse ("US DIPLOMAT PLEADS GUILTY OVER SOUTH KOREA VISA CHARGES," 01/16/04) reported that a US diplomat pleaded guilty to a charge of making false declarations for visas handed out by the US embassy in the ROK capital, authorities said. Alden Stallings, 56, faces a five-year jail term and a fine of 250,000 dollars when he is sentenced, the State and Justice departments said in separate statements. Stallings was deputy public affairs officer at the US Embassy in Seoul and had the authority to refer non-immigrant visa applications to the consular section. The State Department said he had admitted to one count of submitting visa referrals between April 1999 and February 2001 "in which the applicants had listed fictitious employment." The Justice Department said that count dealt with 54 separate referrals. "On each of the 54 referral forms, Stallings stated that he recommended the issuance of a non-immigrant visa to the applicant because the applicant was an 'important post contact' whom he had 'personally known' since a specified date," it said. "In fact, on each of the 54 occasions, Stallings knew that his statement on the referral form was false, and that he did not personally know the contact," said the department. Stallings, of Arlington, Virginia, resigned from the State Department as part of his plea agreement. He is to be sentenced on March 31.

9. PRC Espionage Suspects

Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA PUTS SUSPECTED SPIES BEFORE MEDIA," Guangzhou, 01/16/04) reported that the PRC fired a public relations blast Friday at rival Taiwan, displaying before reporters in four cities a group of suspected spies, some of whom expressed dismay at having served the rival government. Taiwan dismissed the event as a ploy to influence the island's upcoming presidential election. The extraordinary exhibit appeared to be aimed personally at Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian, long a target of Beijing's wrath. He is running for re-election in March and promoting a referendum on PRC missiles pointed at Taiwan, which the PRC claims as part of its territory. "Chen Shui-bian is really a bad guy," one detainee, Fu Hung-chang, told reporters at a detention center in Guangzhou, China's southern business capital near Hong Kong. "He used us and then abandoned us." The suspects appeared before selected Taiwanese, Hong Kong, foreign and mainland PRC journalists two days after Beijing announced the arrests of seven more suspected spies linked to Taiwan. Footage of the suspects was splashed across Taiwanese television as some broke down in tears and apologized. "We have reason to believe this is one way the authorities in communist China are trying to influence our domestic affairs and meddle with Taiwan's election," Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said in a statement. The PRC denied it was trying to sway public opinion. "These activities today were arranged not for the government's benefit, but to meet the requests of Taiwanese and Hong Kong journalists," said a spokesman for the Taiwan Affairs Office in Beijing.

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:

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