NAPSNet Daily Report 18 September, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 18 September, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, September 18, 2003, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-18-september-2003/

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I. United States

1. ROK on Iraq Troop Deployment

Reuters (Martin Nesirky, "SOUTH KOREA TO SURVEY IRAQ BEFORE TROOP DECISION," Seoul, 09/17/03) reported that the ROK will send a survey team to Iraq next week before deciding on a US request to deploy combat troops, the defense ministry said on Wednesday. The US asked the ROK this month to provide a Polish-style contingent to help the US-led operation in Iraq, a government official said on Monday. "It will be light infantry but its purpose will be maintaining security, not for fighting," Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan told reporters, referring to the US request. ROK media have reported anything up to 10,000 ROK soldiers could be sent, but officials say nothing has been decided. The Polish contingent in Iraq is 2,400 strong. The ROK already has 700 engineering and medical troops in Iraq. The defense ministry said a team would fly to Iraq next week to review conditions and visit the contingent already there. "The government will send a survey team of 10 to 12 experts," said defense ministry spokesman Hwang Yeoung-soo by telephone. "It is designed to assess the latest situation in Iraq." He could not confirm representatives from construction firms would be part of the survey team. The ministry decided to send the team after receiving the US request. The ROK's National Security Council, which reports to President Roh Moo-hyun, will meet

on Thursday to discuss the request for the first time, a spokeswoman for the presidential Blue House said by telephone.

2. DPRK Response to US Economic Sanctions

The Associated Press ("N KOREA REACTS ANGRILY TO US ECONOMIC SANCTIONS," Seoul, 09/18/03) reported that the DPRK on Thursday accused the US of trying to "stifle" it after Washington announced economic sanctions on the DPRK for alleged human trafficking. The US last week said it will impose the sanctions on the DPRK, Myanmar and Cuba for failing to take steps to stop human trafficking practices, such as forcing people to work or engage in sexual acts against their will. The DPRK's Rodong Sinmun wrote, "The US imperialists (want to) frighten the army and the people of the DPRK and isolate and stifle it by sanctions," the Rodong Sinmun said. "This is, however, a ridiculous dream." North Korea's official name is Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Tension on the Korean Peninsula remains high over North Korea's suspected development of nuclear weapons.

3. DPRK Market Economy

Reuters (John Ruwitch, "NORTH KOREA MARKETS BUSTLE, ECONOMY STILL BUST," Beijing, 09/17/03) carried an analytical article that reported second-hand bicycles, bustling open-air markets and roadside kiosks that peddle cigarettes, snacks and bottles of beer are hardly the stuff of revolution. But some recent visitors to the DPRK say they are unambiguous symbols of a shift from the grip of the command economy under which it has operated for 55 years. Grassroots market-oriented economic activity has taken off since the isolated, impoverished country launched a sweeping overhaul of its price and salary system 14 months ago to try to revive its moribund economy, they say. How the domestic reforms might affect the overall economy is hard to say because the DPRK's troubles run so deep. But aid workers and others who have spent time there say they see the economic changes altering how people think and live. "You see market activities wherever you go," said Kathi Zellweger of the Catholic charity Caritas, who was in Beijing this week after a month traveling around the DPRK. "I think now it would be difficult to turn the clock back and return to a full rationing system," said Zellweger. Since 1995 she has made dozens of visits to the DPRK, which has suffered drought and starvation in recent years and is now caught in a standoff with the US over its nuclear ambitions. Evidence is mounting that the economic lives of ordinary North Koreans are radically changing. Another aid worker who visits the DPRK frequently said he was impressed by the number of bicycles in cities on the poor, industrial east coast, most of them made in Japan. "There were bicycles everywhere. To me, that's an indicator of some kind of progress," he said. "Something is happening." Small-scale commercial activity had picked up and people were making economic choices for the first time in their lives. "Along the roadsides you would see these ladies with basins full of fruits and vegetables" for sale, he said. On previous trips they would scurry away when foreigners passed, but not this time, he said. "Clearly, this had some kind of official sanction," he said. He and others also noted a proliferation in cities and towns of roadside stands about the size of a small minibus selling biscuits, cigarettes, drinks and other items. Rural markets were also bustling on days other than the traditional weekly market day, and people were selling things other than farm produce, like furniture, he said. Farm managers Zellweger talked to said they had taken a 10-day course on accounting procedures last autumn. Some farms now decided what to plant for themselves, opting for fruit, sesame and tobacco rather than the traditional maize, she said. City families she talked to were still getting used to the new task of having to budget their incomes for rent, water, utilities and food. In Pyongyang, a new market where anybody could buy or sell almost anything was a hot topic of conversation, one resident said. Mobile phones, non-existent until recently, were now easy to spot in the capital. The changes may be visible

and meaningful to North Koreans but have yet to alter the still-dire macro-economic picture. Foreign trade, for example, is severely hobbled by sanctions. In the first half of 2003, North Korea did just $270 million in exports and $800 million in imports. Factories have closed or cut back operations. Unemployment and underemployment are rife, as is malnourishment.

4. Japan Domestic Politics

Agence France-Presse ("BUMPY POLITICAL ROAD AHEAD FOR JAPAN'S KOIZUMI AFTER EASY LDP VICTORY," 09/18/03) reported that backed by strong public support, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is set to win the leadership election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) this weekend but the expected easy victory is no guarantee of a smooth path ahead, analysts said. Saturday's election is crucial as the party's three-year-term presidency effectively confers the premiership, given the LDP's parliamentary majority. Opinion polls show Koizumi, 61, with an overwhelming lead among grass roots LDP members over his three rivals in the race, which is decided by votes from the 357 LDP lawmakers, and 300 votes allocated to party chapters representing 1.4 million members. The other contenders are; former LDP Policy Research Council Chairman Shizuka Kamei, 66, former transport minister Takao Fujii, 60, and former foreign minister Masahiko Komura, 61. The widely expected victory of Koizumi, who still lacks solid support within the parliamentary party, owes much to his high public approval rating, experts said. "No prime ministers but Koizumi were able to maintain strong public support for such a long time. In that sense, Koizumi is an unprecedented leader," said Tetsuro Kato, a professor of political science at Hitotsubashi University. The Koizumi cabinet, which took office in April 2001 with a whopping 80 percent public support, continues to enjoy a roughly 60 percent approval rating, historically a high level for a premier in office for more than two years. "Koizumi makes full use of the media to directly convey his message to voters. His words are short but crisp and he is smartly dressed, which all worked well to boost his popularity," said Junnosuke Masumi, an emeritus professor of political science at Tokyo Metropolitan University.

5. Japan on Troops in Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN READY TO SHOULDER 'DUE SHARE' OF IRAQI RECONSTRUCTION COST," 09/18/03) reported that Japan is ready to bear "a due share" in contributions to reconstruct Iraq, a top government official said, as a report claimed Tokyo was considering a one-billion dollar initial payout. "We intend to cooperate by considering a due share," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference. Fukuda did not specify how much of the bill Japan would foot, saying the government would make a decision after seeing "how the international community would move" on the matter. His comment came after a report that Japan had begun to consider contributing at least one billion dollars as an initial payout for the fiscal year from April. US Ambassador Howard Baker asked Japan to make a contribution to the Iraq reconstruction effort in a meeting Wednesday with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said. Baker also asked for Japan to approve an early dispatch of its Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops to the country, the paper said. Kawaguchi promised to consider the requests in earnest, the economic daily said. The foreign ministry believes donor nations are likely to discuss reconstruction costs for next year when they meet in Spain in October, it said. With the European Union expected to pledge one billion dollars, the foreign ministry plans to negotiate with the finance ministry to offer more, it said. Japan plans to have a framework for its financial contribution ready in time for US President George W. Bush's visit to Japan on October 17 for summit talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, it said.

6. Japan Aum Cult Member Death Sentence

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE COURT UPHOLDS DEATH SENTENCE FOR AUM CULT 'COMBATANT,'" 09/18/03) reported that a Japanese high court upheld a death sentence to a former Aum Supreme Truth sect member and martial arts expert for his part in 10 murders including victims of a 1994 nerve gas attack. Presiding judge Atsushi Semba turned down the appeal by Satoru Hashimoto, 36, at Tokyo High Court, rejecting the argument that his mind had been under control of Aum guru Shoko Asahara. Hashimoto played a big part in mixing and then releasing the Nazi-invented sarin gas in 1994 outside an apartment block in Matsumoto, central Japan. The fumes killed seven people and injured more than 100 others. It was a horrific curtain-raiser to the infamous March 1995 gassing of Tokyo's subway by the same cult, which killed 12 people and injured thousands of other rush-hour passengers.

7. Japan Kim Jong-Il Cartoon Book

Agence France-Presse ("KIM JONG-IL, UNLIKELY HERO OF HIT MANGA CARTOON BOOK IN JAPAN," 09/18/03) reported that a newly published comic book depicting the bizarre life of DPRK supreme leader Kim Jong-Il has proved a runaway success with Japanese devotees of manga cartoons. Tens of thousands of copies have been snapped up by Japanese eager to learn more about the reclusive dictator following the DPRK's drive to develop nuclear weapons and Pyongyang's confession to kidnapping Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. "We have already sold around 250,000 copies since the book went on sale on August 4," Yoshiaki Takahashi, a spokesman for the Asukashina manga publishing house. "At first it was mostly 30-40 year-olds who bought the manga but now we're seeing college students and high-school pupils are reading it too," he told AFP. 'Manga', literally "random sketches" is the term for the genre of narrative comic strips, often series, read by millions of Japanese. Titled "Introduction to Kim Jong-Il: the truth about the honorable DPRK shogun," the book is the Japanese version of a manga first published five years ago in the ROK by Lee U-Jong, a Japanese-born Korean, who now teaches manga animation in the ROK. The book was pulled from the shelves in the ROK shortly after the election of ROK President Kim Dae-Jung because it ran counter to his Sunshine Policy of engagement with the DPRK, according to the translator of the Japanese edition, Lee Young-Hwa. It has yet to reappear there. And with good reason. The DPRK dictator is portrayed in its 340-odd pages as a violent, bloodthirsty despot who commits numerous murders and has a weakness for women and the high-life. But the cartoon book also relates Kim's little-known childhood and relationship with his father, Kim Il-Sung, the founder of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its ruler until 1994. Intended to be educative, the book is as easy to read as any other manga, while also striving to serve as a work of reference, incorporating actual press cuttings and photographs. The manga should enable Japanese to "define more clearly Kim Jong-Il's personality so that Japan can work out the policy it should adopt," for dealing with the DPRK, said Lee Young-Hwa.

8. US Jet Anti-Missile System

The Associated Press (Leslie Miller, "US SEEKS ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEM FOR JETS," Washington, 09/18/03) reported that the Bush administration plans to spend about $100 million to develop an anti-missile system for commercial planes, more than originally discussed, reflecting concern that terrorists might try to use shoulder-fired rockets to shoot down an aircraft. The Homeland Security Department has told defense contractors it is seeking proposals, agency spokesman Brian Roehrkasse said Thursday. "This solicitation represents another important step in trying to determine if in fact there is a viable and effective technology that could be deployed on commercial aircraft," Roehrkasse said. Congressional budget negotiators on Wednesday agreed to give the

Homeland Security Department $60 million in 2004 to start developing the technology. The Bush administration has been criticized by some lawmakers who say it has not taken the missile threat seriously enough. Under pressure, the administration last spring said it would need about $60 million to develop anti-missile technology, but never specifically asked for the funds. The latest proposal calls for spending $100 million over two years. It does not seek new technologies, instead encouraging contractors to use existing defenses such as infrared jammers that redirect heat-seeking rockets away from aircraft engines. Such methods already are used on military planes and Air Force One.

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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