NAPSNet Daily Report 24 October, 2007

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 24 October, 2007", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 24, 2007, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-24-october-2007/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Energy Working Group

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "S. KOREA TO HOST 6-WAY TALKS NEXT WEEK ON ENERGY ASSISTANCE TO NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that the ROK will next week host a new round of working talks on energy and economic assistance for the DPRK as the nation moves toward disabling its key nuclear facilities under an aid-for-denuclearization accord signed earlier this year, the ROK Foreign Ministry said. Chun Yung-woo, the ROK's chief envoy in the six-nation talks on ending the DPRK's nuclear ambition, will chair the meeting scheduled for next Monday and Tuesday. The meeting is to be held on the ROK side of Panmunjom according to the ministry.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA AGREES TO FRIDAY PREP TALK FOR PM MEETING", 2007/10/23) reported that the DPRK has accepted the ROK's proposal to hold preliminary discussions on an inter-Korean prime ministers meeting expected to be held in November in Seoul. Vice Unification Minster Lee Kwan-sei will sit down with DPRK counterpart Jon Jong-su in the DPRK border city to lay the ground work for the upcoming meeting that stems from an agreement reached between the two Korean leaders in summit talks earlier this month.

Yonhap ("NUMBER OF CROSS-BORDER VISITORS SURGES ON INCREASED EXCHANGES: MINISTRY", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that the number of ROK and DPRK citizens who made cross-border visits during the first nine months of this year surged over 30 percent as economic, social, cultural and humanitarian exchanges between the Koreas expanded, a government report showed Saturday. According to the report released by the Unification Ministry, a total of 102,809 people from the two countries made cross-border visits during the January-to-September period, up 33.6 percent from the same period of the previous year.

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3. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "ROH URGES CONGLOMERATE LEADERS TO INVEST IN NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun said corporate investments in the DPRK would be profitable in the long term, urging ROK conglomerates to play a leading role in inter-Korean economic cooperation. "There are a lot of risks in doing business in North Korea. But

private enterprises should play a leading role in cross-border economic cooperation," Roh said. Roh urged the business leaders to view inter-Korean economic cooperation from the perspective of national prosperity and stability.

Yonhap (Lee Joon-seung, "INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX CORPORATION CONSIDERS SHIPBUILDING DISTRICT IN N. KOREA ", Kaesong, 2007/10/23) reported that a ROK state-run industrial complex operator is considering the construction of a shipbuilding district on the DPRK's east coast, the company's chief said. Korea Industrial Complex Corp. (KICOX) President Kim Chil-doo told reporters in the DPRK border city of Kaesong that KICOX is giving serious consideration to the development of a 660,000-square-meter complex in the DPRK port city of Anbyeon. Anbyeon and Nampo port on the DPRK's west coast were mentioned as future inter-Korean economic cooperative zones at the inter-Korean summit held earlier this month.

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4. DPRK Economy

Korea Times (Lee Hyo-sik, "KWON URGES IMF'S STEPS FOR NK'S ADMISSION", Washington, 2007/10/23) reported that the country's top economic policymaker called on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to increase support for the DPRK's integration into the global economy as geopolitical risks associated with the DPRK have eased significantly over the past year. In a keynote speech delivered to participants of the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank here on Monday, US local time, Finance and Economy Minister Kwon O-kyu urged the global financial community to take preliminary steps to engage the DPRK prior to its accession to the two international institutions.

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5. ROK Politics

Chosun Ilbo ("PRESSURE ON LEE MYUNG-BAK GROWING AS EXTRADITION NEARS", 2007/10/23) reported that Grand National Party presidential candidate Lee Myung-bak's campaign has hit a snag in the form of the impending extradition from the US of a former business partner at the heart of a financial scandal. A US lawyer for Lee on Sunday sought a second motion to delay the extradition of Kim Kyung-jun, ostensibly to question him in connection with a civil suit but, according to critics, more likely to delay the impact of Kim's return to the ROK on Lee's campaign. Even Lee aides are apparently complaining that the candidate is making things worse with such tactics.

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6. Japan-US Missile Defense Cooperation

Agence France-Presse (Harumi Ozawa, "JAPAN TELLS RUSSIA NO BACKING DOWN ON MISSILES", Tokyo, 2007/10/23) reported that Japan said it would not back down on building missile defences with the United States, rejecting Russia's charges that the shield aimed to weaken Moscow's influence in Asia. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, paying a one-day visit to Tokyo, also took aim at the missile defence system being built in Japan, saying its goal was "securing military superiority." But Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura said Tokyo only wanted to

protect itself with the shield project, which was launched in earnest after the DPRK fired a ballistic missile over Japan in 1998.

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7. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Agence France-Presse (Kyoko Hasegawa , "JAPAN'S PULLOUT OF AFGHAN MISSION 'UNTHINKABLE': PM", Tokyo, 2007/10/23) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda pleaded with parliament to extend Japan's support for the US-led "war on terror" but a fresh defence scandal provided new ammunition for the opposition. "Is it plausible for Japan to drop out of the refuelling mission when other countries are cooperating patiently in Afghanistan and even sacrificing lives?" Fukuda asked a parliamentary committee as it started debating a bill to extend the deployment. "That would be totally unthinkable to me from the standpoint of the national interest," he said.

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8. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT TO LAUNCH CONTROVERSIAL UN BID TORCH RELAY ", Taipei, 2007/10/23) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian will launch a torch relay as part of the island's bid for a referendum on joining the United Nations after resolving a row with the opposition over the controversial campaign. The round-the-island relay is due to kick off from the capital Taipei at 7:00 am Wednesday as part of Chen's push for the poll to be held alongside presidential elections on March 22. Taipei Mayor Hau Long-bin, of the leading opposition Kuomintang (KMT), had insisted it was a political event and vowed to act "according to the law".

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9. US-PRC Trade Relations

Reuters ("U.S. CALLS FOR CHINA TO DO MORE ON ANTI-DUMPING", Geneva, 2007/10/23) reported that the United States has called on the PRC to improve its compliance with World Trade Organization (WTO) anti-dumping rules, diplomats said on Tuesday. The call, at a meeting of the WTO's committee on anti-dumping practices, included an irritable exchange that was a further sign of tension between the two countries.

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10. PRC Leadership

The Los Angeles Times (Mark Magnier, "CHINA'S 'FIFTH GENERATION' OF LEADERS REFLECTS NATION'S SHIFTS", Beijing, 2007/10/23) reported that the PRC is used to dour Communist Party leaders with sanitized resumes, but the new team unveiled Monday has glamorous wives, exposure to Tiananmen-era student leaders and even a brush with divorce. That's not to suggest that the PRC's monopoly party is going tabloid. The tough crowd that forged modern PRC behind such mantras as "power stems from the barrel of a gun" remains secretive, heavy-handed and wary of any

challenge to its authority. But the party's long-standing instinct to airbrush away the personal histories of its leading lights behind the high walls of Zhongnanhai, the ruling compound in Beijing, is becoming more difficult in the Internet-driven world as the so-called fifth generation of leaders ascends to power.

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II. ROK Report

11. ROK Troops in Iraq

DongA Ilbo (Lee Sang-rok, "ROH EXTENDS THE TROOPS' MANDATE IN IRAQ", Seoul, 2007/10/24) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun stated on Tuesday that the government will extends the mandate for ROK troops in Iraq for another year, while reducing the number from 1200 at present to 600 by year's end. He emphasized that this is for the national interest, especially when it comes to DPRK's denuclearization, saying "Keeping the ROK-US alliance in a good condition is an important matter for the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula."

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12. Opposition to Troop Deployment

Pressian (Kim Ha-young, ""ROH, DO YOU MAKE MONEY BY SENDING TROOPS TO IRAQ?"", Seoul, 2007/10/24) reported that the Opposition to Dispatch People's Movement denounced the government for the extending the troops' mandate in Iraq. They asked, "Is only the peace of the Korean Peninsula important, not the slaughter and war in Iraq?" They added "President Roh frustrated people by conceding everything in the US's favor." They also criticized Roh severely for his economic approach to Iraq, saying, "it is immoral and inhuman that the government wants to get benefits at the cost of life in Iraq."

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13. Candidates Position on Troop Deployments

Pressian (Yoo Tea-gon, Song Hoo-kyun, "LEE TAKES ECONOMIC INTERESTS MORE THAN THE US-ROK ALLIANCE", Seoul, 2007/10/24) reported that Lee Myung-bak, presidential candidate of the Grand National Party, and Chung Dong-young, presidential candidate of the United New Democratic Party, have different points of view on the extension of the troops' mandate in Iraq. While Lee emphasizes the economic interest of keeping the troops there such as oil deposits, Chung advocates the theory of pushing the ROK's independence from the US to oppose the troop deployments.

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