NAPSNet Daily Report 26 September, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 26 September, 2003", NAPSNet Daily Report, September 26, 2003, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-26-september-2003/

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I. United States

1. US-ROK Military Alliance

Agence France-Presse ("US TO BOLSTER MILITARY ALLIANCE WITH SOUTH KOREA," 09/25/03) reported that the US plans to boost its military potential on the Korean Peninsula over the next four years -- and make a concerted effort to strengthen its security alliance with the ROK, said US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. He did not offer any specifics. But addressing the US-Korean Business Council, Rumsfeld on Tuesday expressed confidence that the present DPRK regime will eventually collapse, and the country will join the ranks of democratic societies. "While the situation in North Korea sometimes looks bleak, I'm convinced that one day freedom will come to the people

of the North and light up that oppressed land with hope and with promise," the defense secretary said. However, he stressed that in the interim, the US and the ROK must continue to build on their strong relationship and make efforts to strengthen regional security. "Over the next four years, the US has plans to make a substantial investment in the alliance, strengthening more than 150 of our various military capabilities," Rumsfeld said without elaborating. He added that the administration of President George W. Bush had been assured that the ROK "will compliment those investments with improved capabilities of their own."

2. US ROK Spy Planes

Agence France-Presse ("US TEST-LAUNCHES NEW UNMANNED SPY PLANES IN SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 09/26/03) reported that the US military successfully test-launched unmanned spy planes newly brought to the ROK to boost deterrence against the DPRK, officials said. The US 8th Army said its "Shadow-200" unmanned aerial vehicles were airborne for several hours after taking off from a US military base, 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Seoul. "The maiden flights ended in success," said a spokesman for the US 2nd Infantry Division, a frontline unit belonging to the 8th Army. The spokesman declined to give the exact number of the US remotely-controlled surveillance planes deployed in the ROK but said "several" were put into operation. The new spy plane, already operational during the US-led war in Iraq, is designed to fly for up to five hours, providing "real time, accurate and relevant intelligence of the battle field," he said. The deployment of the surveillance planes in the ROK is part of an 11 billion dollar US defense build-up plan against the DPRK.

3. DPRK-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PYONGYANG WARNS TOKYO ON TIES," Seoul, 09/26/03) reported that the DPRK said Friday that it was gradually heading for a clash with Japan as Tokyo refused to break with the US and soften its hard-line policy toward Pyongyang. The newspaper of Pyongyang's ruling Workers Party, Rodong Sinmun, said that agreement between the leaders of the DPRK and Japan made at summit talks last year was in jeopardy. The newspaper warned in a commentary that there could be an "unavoidable" war between the DPRK and Japan unless the tense situation is properly addressed, although it said Pyongyang sought to improve ties. "Japan's policy to stifle the DPRK is now getting more pronounced as the days go by," Rodong said. "Consequently, the relations between the DPRK and Japan are inching close to the phase of clash." Tensions between Pyongyang and Tokyo have grown since Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan and Kim Jong Il met for a landmark summit meeting a year ago in Pyongyang. Since then, Koizumi has suspended food aid and humanitarian assistance to the DPRK and joined the US in calls for an end to Pyongyang's nuclear weapons development. "Even the fate of the DPRK-Japan Pyongyang declaration is threatened by Japan's reckless hostile policy toward the DPRK," Rodong said. The DPRK newspaper urged Tokyo to "stop cooperating" with the US in the interests of its own security.

4. ROK DPRK Summit Scandal

The Associated Press (Vijay Joshi, "SIX S. KOREANS CONVICTED IN SUMMIT PROBE," Seoul, 09/26/03) reported that six prominent ROK officials were convicted Friday of secretly transferring money to the DPRK ahead of a historic 2000 summit, the first to be punished in a scandal that tarnished the image of a Nobel Peace prize-winning former president. The six, including two key figures in the administration of former President Kim Dae-jung, were given suspended prison terms immediately after the conviction by the Seoul District Criminal Court. The ruling means the officials

will not likely serve their sentences unless they are convicted of the same crime again. It is not clear if they will appeal. The court found them guilty of secretly paying $100 million in violation of the ROK's strict foreign currency regulations. The case has severely damaged Kim's reputation after an independent counsel concluded that his government funneled the money to the DPRK in exchange for hosting the 2000 summit with communist leader Kim Jong Il. The summit led to the dramatic easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula. As a result, Kim Dae-jung won the Nobel Peace Prize that year. Kim, who was not investigated or indicted, finished his five-year term in February. "The secret remittance to North Korea obviously has a close relationship with the inter-Korean summit talks," the verdict said. "However, all illegalities committed in the procedure of money transmission are subject to criminal punishment." The court sentenced Lee Ki-ho, a presidential economic adviser in the Kim government, to a three-year suspended term. Lim Dong-won, a former intelligence chief under Kim, received a suspended 18-month term. The court found them guilty of helping business conglomerate Hyundai take out loans from a state bank and remit the money to the DPRK through secret channels.

5. PRC-DPRK Relations

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS STILL A LONG WAY TO GO IN N.KOREA TALKS," Beijing, 09/26/03) reported that one of the PRC's top DPRK policy planners said on Friday a peaceful solution to the North's nuclear standoff with the US was still a long way off. "There's going to be a long way to go," Fu Ying, director general of the department for Asian affairs in the PRC Foreign Ministry, told reporters. "It's a very difficult issue. It has a long history and a very complicated background and intertwined interests. I think it's not going to be an easy path." The PRC hosted six-way talks in August with the two Koreas, the US, Japan and Russia aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the festering crisis. Fu said the parties had yet to discuss a date for another round of negotiations, despite media reports following the August talks that the countries would meet again in October or November. "We have not discussed a date," she told reporters. "I think it's a bit early to think about the date. We need to work on the substance first. As I said, we need to narrow the differences." But she added: "We have a feeling that all the parties are interested in continuing this process, so we are continuing our mediating efforts."

6. PRC WMD Proliferation

The Australian (Catherine Armitage, "CHINA URGED DOWN NEW WMD PATH," Australia, 09/26/03) reported that Australia wants the PRC to move beyond multilateral arrangements in the effort to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction, with Defense Minister Robert Hill warning the PRC that "traditional" non-proliferation agreements are "not foolproof". Senator Hill, in China on a five-day visit, issued the warning to China's new Defence Minister, Cao Gangchuan, as an apparent prelude to an invitation to the PRC to join the so-called Proliferation Security Initiative. The US-led group of 11 nations, including Australia, proposes going outside the United Nations to co-operate on intercepting aircraft, land vehicles and ships on the high seas suspected of carrying WMD. Australia has worked hard to win at least tacit approval from the PRC for the plan, and is likely to be seeking input from PRC intelligence sources. Senator Hill also acknowledged for the first time yesterday that the PRC might be invited to join. Asked whether the PRC's membership of the PSI would be sought, he said: "Hopefully there will be opportunities for expansion in the future." But talk of expansion was premature. The PRC's support is regarded as crucial because it shares land and sea borders with the DPRK, for whom the export of nuclear and other weapons is a crucial source of foreign currency. One of the PRC's main objections to the interdiction plan has been that it appears to target the DPRK and therefore risks upsetting the PRC's efforts to broker a peaceful solution to the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. "Believe it or not, (the PSI) is not specifically designed to address the

DPRK situation," Senator Hill repeated yesterday, adding that the next military exercises under the plan would be held in Europe, which "might help to reinforce that point."

7. PRC-Hong Kong Relations

Reuters ("BEIJING TURNS TO HK TYCOONS," Hong Kong, 09/26/03) reported that Hong Kong's super tycoons and their heirs apparent have headed for Beijing on an annual pilgrimage with added significance this year as PRC rulers try to prop up support for the city's unpopular leader. Asia's richest entrepreneur Li Ka-shing, Henry Fok and Gordon Wu are among more than 80 people in the delegation, the latest in a string of Hong Kong's movers and shakers who have been invited to the PRC's capital in recent weeks. PRC President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao are expected to receive the tycoons on Saturday, when they will be asked to throw their weight behind Tung and help preserve stability in Hong Kong. Massive public protests in July against Tung Chee-hwa's administration rocked Hong Kong's ruling elite and alarmed China's leaders. Beijing has been working for months to rebuild support for Tung among the territory's pro-PRC and pro-business leaders. "This time, the message will be to fully support Tung Chee-hwa in the next two to three years. Beijing will appeal to the tycoons to be patriotic to ensure stability for Tung's administration," said political commentator Sonny Lo.

8. PRC First Manned Spacecraft Launch

The Associated Press ("CHINA TO LAUNCH FIRST MANNED SPACECRAFT," Beijing, 09/26/03) reported that the PRC's first manned spacecraft could be launched "as early as next month" from a site in the remote northwest and will probably contain one crew member, the state-owned People's Daily reported today on its Web site. It gave no further details about a timetable for the craft, Shenzhou-5, which the government had said earlier would fly with a PRC crew aboard by next year. The flight will probably last 24 hours, the newspaper said. The mention of the timing in an article about China's dreams of manned spaceflight was the most specific signal yet that a launch was imminent. "China's first piloted space journey could occur as early as next month," the article said. "The Shenzhou-5 is set to soar." The PRC's leaders have invested significant resources in their secretive military-affiliated space program and have tried to stir nationalist sentiment about the project, as the US and the Soviet Union did in the 1960's. People's Daily said Shenzhou-5 would be carried into space by a Long March 2F rocket from the Jiuquan Space Launch Center in Gansu Province. It would probably land, as its predecessor did, on the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. "While the crew compartment can hold as many as three passengers, Shenzhou-5 is seemingly to be operated by a lone pilot," People's Daily said. It said Shenzhou-5 would have three modules: an orbital module with science equipment, the crew module and a service module holding equipment, solar panels and rocket engines.

9. PRC SARS Monitoring Network

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO PROPOSE REGIONAL MONITORING NETWORK FOR EPIDEMICS AT ASEAN MEET," 09/26/03) reported that the PRC Premier Wen Jiabao will use a regional meeting in Indonesia next month to suggest the establishment of an Asian monitoring network for epidemics, a ranking official said. Wen will make the proposal when he goes to a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the island of Bali from October 6 to 8, said Fu Ying, director general of the foreign ministry's Asian Affairs department. "Since we're adjacent to each other, there's a very heavy personnel flow," she told a briefing Friday. "So there is a need to have closer cooperation among these countries to monitor the spread of epidemics and regional diseases,"

she said. Fu said that the proposal is still only tentative, and will depend on how other participants at the meeting react. "We'll see the response," she said. "If other countries also think it's necessary, we can work out the further details." The proposal comes as the PRC and the region brace themselves for the possible reappearance of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome as the weather turns colder.

10. Japan Earthquake Status

Agence France-Presse ("MASSIVE 8.0 RICHTER QUAKE HITS NORTHERN JAPAN," Hiroo, 09/26/03) reported that two powerful earthquakes, one of them measuring 8.0 on the Richter scale, rocked northern Japan, injuring around 480 people and forcing thousands more to evacuate their homes, officials and news reports said. The bigger quake, the strongest to hit Japan in almost nine years, occurred at 4:50 am (1950 GMT Thursday). Its focus was located some 80 kilometers (50 miles) off the southeastern coast of Hokkaido island and 42 kilometers below sea-level, some 750 kilometers north of Tokyo, the Meteorological Agency said. In an accident indirectly related to the quake, a 61-year-old man was killed after being run over by a car as he cleaned up quake debris, Hokkaido prefectural police said. It said police were searching for the pair, who disappeared after leaving their cars at the mouth of a river, fearing they may have been washed into the water. At least 479 people were injured, mostly by falling furniture at home, public broadcaster NHK said. Some 41,000 people evacuated their homes, according to the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. A Hokkaido prefectural police spokesman said that 314 people had been definitely confirmed injured as of 5:00 pm (0800 GMT) but the total tally "may gradually reach the reported figure." Some 14,500 households lost power and traffic signals were dead in some areas. Ground Self Defense Force (army) vehicles loaded with fresh water were sent to supply four towns, a spokesman said. Air traffic control at Hokkaido's Kushiro airport was disabled after the ceilings of the control tower and the passenger lobby were damaged.

II. Japan

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1. Japan on September 11th

The Japan Times ("JAPAN PLEDGES TO CONTINUE FIGHTING TERRORISM," 09/12/03) reported that Japanese officials marked the second anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the US by pledging that the nation will continue to fight terrorism in cooperation with the international community. "Threats of international terrorism remain serious," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said. "There is a need to promote sustained efforts in a wide range of fields to root out terrorism, and Japan will continue to work to that end by strengthening cooperation with other countries." Claiming that a series of counterterrorism measures taken over the past two years have been bearing fruit, Senior Vice Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told a separate news conference that Japan is determined to promote steps to fight terrorism. US Ambassador Howard Baker said in a statement, "As we pause to remember the tragedy of two years ago, Americans find great consolation and strength in the sincere and unstinting support of our friends and partners in Japan."

2. Japan Iraq Troop Deployment

The Japan Times (Junko Takahashi, "IRAQ MISSION TO DETERMINE JAPANESE ASSISTANCE," 09/13/03) reported that Japan will send a fact-finding mission to Iraq as early as this week to

determine where Self-Defense Forces (SDF) can operate and what kind of humanitarian assistance Japan can offer, government officials said. The team, which will include officials of the Foreign Ministry and Defense Agency, will gather information in Iraq and neighboring countries. Officials have said the SDF's initial work will focus on humanitarian assistance, such as providing food, water and medical services, rather than providing logistic support for US troops in Iraq. But air transportation of materials for US troops stationed in Iraq from neighboring countries may be considered. The government had planned to dispatch SDF troops in October, but it has been delaying the timing due to worsening security conditions in Iraq. But with the US calling for a visible contribution, and a visit to Japan by US President George W. Bush planned for October, Japan has decided to send a mission to pave the way for an SDF dispatch. The actual dispatch will likely be early next year.

The Japan Times ("JAPAN MULLS BILLIONS IN IRAQ AID," 09/14/03) reported that Japan is considering pledging several billion dollars in reconstruction aid for projects in Iraq that are running behind schedule due in part to the worsening security situation there, government sources said. Despite its fiscal difficulties, Japan is prepared to make the pledge at an international conference of donors that is scheduled for late October in Madrid, the sources said. Japan's policy is to fully cooperate with the rebuilding of Iraq, part of a dual-pillar policy of financial contributions and dispatching the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to help with reconstruction work. To add to the pressure on Japan, US President George W. Bush is scheduled to visit Japan for talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in mid-October. Bush also named Japan among countries that "should contribute" to efforts to promote freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan through funding and other forms of involvement in the campaigns. A senior US official has estimated that between $50 billion and $75 billion is necessary for immediate reconstruction efforts in Iraq. "There is no question that the amount (for Iraq) will be far more than the $500 million (Japan) pledged during the donors meeting for reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan" in January last year, a senior official of the Foreign Ministry said. Some in Japan fear the government may be pressured to give around $10 billion, close to the $13 billion it contributed during the 1991 Gulf War, as it takes more time to dispatch the SDF, according to the sources.

3. US Bases in Japan

The Japan Times (Nao Shimoyachi, "YOKOSUKA NAVY BASE PLAYS KEY MISSILE ROLE, THINK TANK SAYS," Yokosuka, 09/13/03) reported that a disarmament think tank suggested that Yokosuka is a pivotal US base for Tomahawk cruise missiles, backing its claim with documents showing that a US destroyer received and transferred hundreds of the high-tech missiles here between 1991 and 1997. Peace Depot, a nongovernmental organization based in Yokohama, based its assertions on information it obtained from the US government showing the ammunition transactions by the destroyer Fife, which fired the largest number of Tomahawk missiles during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Yokosuka was Fife's home port between 1988 and 1998. The group checked Fife's deck logs and found that the destroyer received and transferred 595 Tomahawk missiles in and around the Yokosuka base. In all, the destroyer dealt with 628 Tomahawk missiles in the 70 months between 1991 and 1997. Hiromichi Umebayashi, the director of Peace Depot, said there are currently six ships equipped with Tomahawk launchers deployed at Yokosuka, all of which have more launchers than the Fife, meaning 1,000 Tomahawk missiles might be transferred each year around Yokosuka. Masashi Shimakawa, an expert on Japan-US security affairs who teaches at Rikkyo Jogakuin Junior College, said that the documents support what had been widely suspected. "The fact that many Tomahawk missiles are loaded in Yokosuka shows that the US forces are deployed in Japan not only for the security of Japan and stability in East Asia, as stipulated by the US-Japan security pact, but rather to support the global military strategy of the US," he said. "We are of course against North

Korea's missile programs," Umebayashi said. "But when there are a bunch of Tomahawk missiles, which have almost the same range as (the DPRK's) Nodong (ballistic) missiles, stored in Yokosuka, it would not make a fair argument just to talk about the missile threat from North Korea."

Kyodo ("SOFA CRIME TALKS MAY RESTART IN FALL," Washington, 09/14/03) reported that Japanese and US officials may resume talks on the handling of US military personnel suspected of committing serious crimes in Japan as early as this fall, a Defense Department source indicated. Japanese officials said the two countries are discussing restarting the talks in November. The previous round of talks ended without an agreement, despite a series of four meetings since July 2. The US wants Japan to guarantee that suspects' rights will be protected as some human rights groups have raised concerns about the Japanese criminal justice system. Japan has indicated that under certain conditions it would allow US law-enforcement officers to be present during the questioning of suspects or let the US select an interpreter. Details of these conditions are expected to be discussed in the next round of talks. The Pentagon source noted that nothing definite has been agreed upon as yet and there is no clear indication of what the next round of talks might produce.

Kyodo ("MAYOR WHO QUIT OVER MILITARY SITE WINS POLL," Yokosuka, 09/15/03) reported that former Zushi Mayor Kazuyoshi Nagashima was returned to office in an election made necessary when he quit last month to protest a plan to build more residential units in a US military site. Nagashima, 36, defeated one contender, medical doctor Teruko Ikegami, 64, who was also against the construction program but said he should be mayor because Nagashima had been at odds with most assembly members in the Kanagawa Prefecture city. The controversial expansion project involves a US military housing complex that lies in Yokohama and Zushi. Japan and the US agreed in July to build 800 additional housing units in the Yokohama part of the Ikego residential area. In exchange the US is to return to Japan four military sites in Yokohama. Nagashima has said the national government broke its promise to build no additional facilities in the area even if the houses will be constructed on the Yokohama side.

4. Japan Constitutional Revision

The Japan Times ("LDP CANDIDATES ALL FAVOR REVISIONS TO CONSTITUTION," 09/14/03) reported that the four candidates for the presidency of the governing Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) each appeared positive about the possibility of revising the war-renouncing Article 9 of Japan's Constitution. Speaking on a morning TV show, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who is seeking re-election as LDP leader in the Sept. 20 party poll, and the three challengers said Article 9 should be amended because it is too vague. The prime minister declined to comment on exactly when the government would start work on rewriting Article 9, but said the party is seeking to draft a proposal for the change in 2005, to mark the 50th anniversary of the party's establishment. Shizuka Kamei, the leading challenger in the race and a former chairman of the LDP's Policy Research Council, said the text of the article should be reworded so people can understand it more easily. Kamei pointed out that there are 23 interpretations of the article. Masahiko Komura, a former foreign minister and justice minister, and Takao Fujii, a former transport minister, said the roles of the Self-Defense Forces should be stipulated in a revised constitution. Kamei and Fujii also said a revised constitution should stipulate Japan's defense-only policy in an apparent bid to avoid misunderstandings with neighboring Asian countries, which suffered under Japanese aggression during World War II and might worry that Japan is returning to militarism.

5. Japan Nuclear Fuel Tax

The Japan Times ("LOCAL NUCLEAR FUEL TAXES TO WIN OK," 09/15/03) reported that the

Japanese government plans to approve proposals by two cities to tax spent nuclear fuel left by their local power plants, officials said. The decision by the Public Management, Home Affairs, Posts and Telecommunications Ministry will pave the way for Kashiwazaki, Niigata Prefecture, and Sendai, Kagoshima Prefecture, to impose the tax. In March, Kashiwazaki became the first local government to pass an ordinance to tax spent nuclear fuel and it plans to begin levying the tax in October. Four of the seven nuclear reactors at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant are located in Kashiwazaki. The municipal government plans to impose a tax of 480 yen per kilogram of fuel, which is projected to generate around 2.6 billion yen in tax revenues over the next five years. Sendai plans to impose a tax of 500 yen per 1 kg of spent nuclear fuel at a power plant run by Kyushu Electric Power Co.

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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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