NAPSNet Daily Report 30 October, 2001

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 30 October, 2001", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2001, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-30-october-2001/

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I. United States

1. Inter-Korean Talks

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "S.KOREA LIKELY TO AGREE ON TALKS SITE SLIDESHOWS," Seoul, 10/30/01) and Associated Press ("SOUTH ACCEPTS NORTH'S LOCATION FOR TALKS," Seoul, 10/30/01) reported that the ROK said Tuesday that it has reversed earlier opposition to the DPRK's proposed venue for inter-Korean ministerial talks and is moving to accept the DPRK's Mount Kumgang resort as the site. An ROK Unification Ministry official said, "After consulting with other ministries, probably at a meeting of the National Security Council, we will make a proposal to the North some time this week." ROK Unification Minister Hong Soon-young will then send a message later this week to the DPRK recommending talks at the remote mountain resort. Also on Tuesday, the DPRK's official Rodung Shinmun took a swipe at Bush and challenged the US military presence in the ROK, saying: "It is our will and independent mode of counteraction to respond to the U.S. hard line with a super hard line."

2. DPRK Committed to UN Treaty

The Associated Press ("N.KOREA SAID COMMITTED TO TERROR PACT," Beijing, 10/30/01) reported that according to Patrick Van Haute, leader of a European Union diplomats who visited the

country, the DPRK said it will ratify a UN treaty meant to block financing for terrorism. DPRK officials said ratification could come as early as next month. Van Haute, director of Belgium's Foreign Ministry, said, "It seems to indicate that they are very keenly aware of the importance ... and the need to be responsive" to the global fight against terrorism. So far only four countries have ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism, while 22 ratifications are required for it to take effect. Van Haute said the highest-ranking officials they met with during talks on October 29 were vice ministers in the trade and foreign affairs ministries. He said delegation members were satisfied with what they saw during visits to EU- sponsored aid projects on October 28. He added that they encouraged DPRK officials to expand the scope of such cooperation, but received no immediate response.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-PRC Relations

The Korea Herald (Hwang Jang-jin, "SEOUL PROTESTS BEIJING'S EXECUTION WITHOUT NOTIFICATION," Seoul, 10/30/01) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung expressed regret October 29 over the PRC's execution of an ROK citizen convicted of drug trafficking last month without giving prior notification to the ROK. The ROK Foreign Ministry summoned PRC envoys in Seoul and political parties reacted angrily over what they call the PRC's ignorance of standard diplomatic practice. Kim instructed officials to prevent ROK citizens from being involved in drug-related crimes in the PRC. Officials said the 41-year-old man, identified by his family name of Shin, was executed September 25 and one of his accomplices died of unknown illnesses in a PRC prison in November last year.

2. DPRK to Attend Security Form in US

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N.K. ATTENDS U.S. SECURITY FORUM," Seoul, 10/30/01) reported that ROK officials here said that the DPRK is participating in a three-day Asia-Pacific security forum in Washington D.C. that opened October 29. Cho Kil-hong, vice president of the Peace and Arms Reduction Research Institute affiliated with the DPRK's Foreign Ministry, leads the three- member delegation to the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). The non-governmental meeting will discuss security issues including the terrorist attacks' impact on the regional security, nuclear nonproliferation and preventative diplomacy in the region.

3. Inter-Korean Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT MT. KUMGANG AS VENUE FOR TALKS," Seoul, 10/30/01) reported that the ROK government made a sudden turnaround and disclosed that it would accept the DPRK's repeated proposal to hold the sixth round of inter-Korean Cabinet talks at Mount Kumgang. ROK Unification Minister Hong Soon-young said "We have decided to accommodate the North's proposal in order to ease tension between the two Koreas and to maintain inter-Korean dialogue." The article suggested that the ROK is likely to face severe criticism as its unexpected change of stance went directly against its previous pledge to consider the general world situation, the DPRK's future attitude and public opinion in dealing with the inter-Korean issues.

4. DPRK Reshuffles Foreign Affairs Dept.

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Hee-sung, "N.K. FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICERS UNDERGO GENERAL SHAKE-UP," Seoul, 10/29/01) reported that the DPRK has assigned Jon Hui-jong officer of External Affairs of Kumsusan Memorial Palace to replace Jang Myong-sun as DPRK ambassador to Egypt. Jon, the new ambassador in charge of Egyptian affairs was one of the high-ranking officials who received ROK President Kim Dae-jung in Sunan Airport last year during the landmark inter-Korean summit. The move was unexpected as Jang is regarded as an expert on Middle East affairs and was assigned his seat less than a year ago. More DPRK officers have been assigned to take double posts in various places. Another significant arrangement amid the general shake up was the appointment of a new ambassador in Germany

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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