NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, October 11, 2004

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, October 11, 2004", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 11, 2004, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-monday-october-11-2004-2/

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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("U.S. SAYS N.KOREA MISCALCULATING BY STALLING ON TALKS", 2004-10-12) reported that the US accused the DPRK Tuesday of miscalculation by refusing to resume talks on its nuclear programs before the US presidential election while the PRC renewed a diplomatic drive to end the stalemate. "Unfortunately, I don't have a good crystal ball regarding North Korea. But it appears that since we've only got 22 days I think until our election, that the North Koreans don't have much interest in holding talks before then," US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told reporters. "I think this is a miscalculation on their part," Armitage said.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA SAYS U.S. BLOCKING NEW NUCLEAR TALKS", 2004-10-12) reported that the DPRK blamed the US on Monday for blocking six-country talks on scrapping its nuclear programs, denying it had stalled the talks itself to await the outcome of the US presidential election. A commentary by the North's official KCNA news agency said the multi-party talks could resume only if Washington dropped its "hostile policy" toward the DPRK. The commentary also said any attempt by the US to refer the nuclear issue to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions could result in war.

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3. US - Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, US HOLD STRATEGY SESSION ON NORTH KOREA, IRAQ", 2004-10-12) reported that Japan and the US in a strategy session on world hotspots agreed that six-nation talks were the best way to resolve the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, a diplomat said. Visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi concurred that the DPRK "must return to the talks without conditions," a Japanese diplomat who attended the five-hour talks said. "We agreed that the six-way process was the most realistic way to peacefully solve this crisis," the diplomat said.

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4. Sino - DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA'S NO. 2 LEADER TO VISIT BEIJING", 2004-10-12) reported that the DPRK's No. 2 leader, Kim Yong Nam, will visit Beijing next week, a PRC government spokeswoman said Tuesday, but she would not say whether the two sides would discuss six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear program. Kim is to arrive in Beijing on Monday for a three-day visit, said Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue.

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5. DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("NK HAS 2 TO 9 NUCLEAR BOMBS, SAYS REPORT ", 2004-10-12) reported that there were approximately 3,700 tons of plutonium and highly concentrated uranium in the world at the end of 2003 and the DPRK had 15 to 38 tons of that plutonium, enough to make two to nine nuclear bombs, according to a recent report by the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) based in Washington DC. With the production of plutonium over the past 20 years, the DPRK is at a stage where it can now enrich uranium, disclosed the report. It went on to add that the plutonium inventory in the world increases 70 to 75 thousand tons per a year.

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6. DPRK on Missile Program

Voice of America ("NORTH KOREA DEFENDS MISSILE PROGRAM", 2004-10-12) reported that the DPRK says it has the right to test and deploy missiles in response to US threats. A DPRK commentary, monitored by the ROK's Yonhap news agency, says Pyongyang's test, production and deployment of missiles is self-defensive in nature and poses no threat to anyone.

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7. Japan, Switzerland on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Kyodo News ("KOIZUMI, SWISS PRESIDENT CALL FOR NONNUCLEAR N. KOREA, U.N. REFORM", 2004-10-12) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Swiss President Joseph Deiss agreed in their talks Tuesday to press the DPRK to completely scrap its nuclear programs, as well as to promote reform of the UN Security Council and boost mutual investment. The two countries call on the DPRK "to completely dismantle all its nuclear programs subject to international verification and to abide by the (Nuclear) Non-Proliferation Treaty and other related international agreements," the two leaders said in a statement issued after the talks.

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8. DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo News ("NAKAYAMA CALLS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2004-10-12) reported that Kyoko Nakayama, a former Cabinet Secretariat adviser on the DPRK abduction issue, said Tuesday that Japan should consider legislation like that in the US to impose sanctions against the DPRK if human rights abuses there fail to improve. "Japan should have such an idea," Nakayama said in a speech in Maebashi, Gunma Prefecture.

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9. Sino - DPRK Relations

Xinhua ("BEIJING RECEPTION MARKS 55TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHINA, DPRK DIPLOMATIC TIES ", 2004-10-12) reported that the PRC People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) gave a reception here Tuesday to mark the 55th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the DPRK. Wang noted that the PRC government "highly values" the growth of the Sino-DPRK relationship and will "enhance exchanges at all levels and in all fields to carry forward the traditional friendship."

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10. DPRK on ROK Contingency Planning

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH FLAILS SEOUL PLAN TO RUN THE PENINSULA ", 2004-10-12) reported that the DPRK condemned the ROK yesterday for preparing contingency plans to take over the DPRK and accommodate a mass outflow of refugees. The DPRK's Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland issued a statement through the country's state-run Korea Central News Agency. It demanded that Seoul scrap the plans and apologize to the DPRK.

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11. ROK Special Envoys to the DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("KIM, PARK PROPOSED AS ENVOYS TO NORTH ", 2004-10-12) reported that the leadership of the governing Uri Party and the Roh administration proposed yesterday that former President Kim Dae-jung and the Grand National Party leader Park Geun-hye visit Pyeongyang as "special envoys for peace." In a speech yesterday at the Kwanhun Club, a club for senior journalists, Uri Party's chairman, Lee Bu-young, said, "We will consult the president and promote such a plan." He said the envoys would go not only to the DPRK, but to four other countries, presumably the other members of the six-way nuclear talks with the DPRK.

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12. Inter - Korean Maritime Border Violation

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN PATROL BOAT INTRUDES INTO S. KOREAN WATERS", 2004-10-12) reported that a DPRK patrol boat briefly violated the UN-drawn western sea border with the ROK Tuesday, the office of the ROK's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. The DPRK boat intruded 0.8 mile into ROK waters at 12:15 p.m., while chasing away PRC fishing boats in the area, the office said in a news release.

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13. DPRK Christian Delegation

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN CHRISTIANS LEAVE FOR UNIFICATION FORUM IN TOKYO: REPORTS", 2004-10-12) reported that representatives of Christians in the DPRK left for Tokyo on Tuesday to participate in an international forum calling for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, the DPRK media reported. The delegation of the Christians Federation, an association of protestants in the DPRK that was established in 1946, departed from Pyongyang, the reports said, without giving

further information on the conference.

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14. ROK on the US Election

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREAN INDUSTRIES TO BENEFIT FROM U.S. ELECTION OUTCOME ", 2004-1--12) reported that it has been reported that if Bush wins the US presidential election in November, then the ROK steel and construction industries would also win and if Kerry is elected, then the textile, information technology and semiconductor industries would get the nod. From a ROK standpoint, Bush would be favorable for export and trade, while Kerry would be favorable for the DPRK problem and oil prices.

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15. ROK National Security Law

Yonhap ("RULING PARTY SUGGESTS ALTERNATIVES TO SCRAPPING NATIONAL SECURITY LAW", 2004-10-12) reported that the ruling Uri Party on Tuesday proposed a set of alternative legal measures to allay security concerns that may arise in the event the nation's controversial anti-communist law is abrogated. Established in 1948, shortly after the foundation of the ROK government, the National Security Law has long been a source of dispute because it served as a tool for past authoritarian governments to suppress political dissidents.

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16. ROK Terror Alert

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA ON GUARD AFTER INTERNET TERROR THREAT", 2004-1--12) reported that the ROK remains vigilant after an Islamic Web site warned that al-Qaida members will attack the country unless it withdraws troops from Iraq in two weeks, officials said Tuesday. The statement signed by "al-Qaida's network in South and East Asia" said the terror network's members have already infiltrated the ROK's capital. "We will also target you inside your land, for it is not far for us at all and we have already stationed ourselves inside Seoul itself, thank God, and are awaiting the zero hour," the message said.

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17. US Troop Realignment

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, U.S. AGREE TO SPEED UP MILITARY REALIGNMENT TALKS", 2004-10-12) reported that Japan and the US agreed Tuesday to speed up bilateral talks on the planned review of the US military deployment in Japan, a Japanese official said. The official declined go into details of the Takeuchi-Armitage talks related to the military realignment. Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura said last week there is a need for Japan and the US to see a path by the end of this year to reaching an agreement over the details about how to realign the US forces.

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18. Japan Whaling Trade

Reuters ("JAPAN LOSES BID TO LOOSEN TRADE IN WHALE PRODUCTS", 2004-10-12) reported that a UN meeting harpooned a Japanese bid Tuesday to ease curbs on trade in whale products, but a defiant Tokyo accused the West of "cultural imperialism" and vowed to press efforts to expand whaling. The vote against Japan at a meeting in Bangkok of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which regulates trade in wild flora and fauna was 67 against and 55 for, with 14 abstentions.

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19. Global Freight Tracking

The Age ("PROGRAM HUNTS DEADLY PAYLOADS", 2004-10-12) reported that Unisys will launch a program for tracking global freight next month, which is in part aimed at making international ports safer from terrorist attack. The Global Supply Chain Visibility initiative is part of a global roll-out that is making it easier to "see" what is in shipping containers down to each component, importantly, when it leaves port rather than when it arrives.

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20. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA LIKELY TO SPURN TAIWAN PEACE OVERTURE-ANALYSTS", 2004-10-12) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's peace overture may be a concession, but it may not be enough to lure a deeply distrustful Beijing back to the negotiating table. Beijing is expected to spurn Chen's call for peace talks in its initial response as it takes time to scrutinize every word in his National Day speech on Sunday, analysts said. "As far as China is concerned, Chen Shui-bian is either a hardline provocateur or a hypocritical liar," Tung said.

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21. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA URGES U.S. TO STOP SELLING ARMS TO TAIWAN", 2004-10-12) reported that the PRC Tuesday urged the US to halt all official contact with Taiwan and to stop selling arms to the island, but made no comment on Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's recent peace overtures. Beijing hoped Washington would "abide by its promise to oppose Taiwan independence, stop conducting any type of official contact with Taiwan (and) stop selling arms to Taiwan," PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue told a news conference. She urged the US not to have military contact with Taiwan and not to send wrong signals to the Taiwan authorities.

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22. PRC Arms Embargo

Reuters ("LIFTING OF CHINA ARMS EMBARGO FAILS AT EU", 2004-10-12) reported that the European Union failed to agree on Monday to lift an arms embargo against the PRC despite energetic French pressure, but ministers said a stronger code of conduct on arms exports could lead to a removal of the ban. "There was no consensus. It will require further discussion," German

Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer told reporters after the 25 ministers discussed the PRC embargo.

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23. Sino - French Relations

Reuters ("CHIRAC, IN BEIJING, SIGNS ACCORDS TO INCREASE FRENCH INVESTMENT", 2004-10-12) reported that President Jacques Chirac of France declared Saturday that France was a natural trade partner for the PRC and, during a flurry of air, rail and energy deals, he played down any threat from the PRC's economy, one of the fastest growing. At talks in the cavernous Great Hall of the People, President Hu Jintao hailed Mr. Chirac. "I believe your visit will surely achieve success and will also further push forward the development of the Sino-French strategic partnership," Mr. Hu told Mr. Chirac and his delegation across a long meeting table.

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24. Sino - US Relations

The Associated Press ("U.S. TEXTILE MAKERS PETITION ON CHINA", 2004-10-12) reported that the US textile industry petitioned the Bush administration on Tuesday for protection from what American companies fear will be a flood of PRC products coming into this country when worldwide quotas are removed on Jan. 1. The industry claimed that as many as 650,000 US jobs in the textile and apparel industries would be at risk unless the administration limits PRC imports of textiles and clothing in 10 different categories from trousers and knit shirts to cotton sheets and yarn.

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25. PRC Currency

Reuters ("CHINA: YUAN SPECULATION 'GROUNDLESS'", 2004-10-12) reported that the PRC poured cold water on Tuesday on speculation it will strengthen the yuan's value soon, saying such talk is "groundless" and that it will not resort to a one-off revaluation of the tightly held currency. The State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) said in a statement that the PRC would not revalue its currency in the near future -- rumors of which had moved markets from the Hong Kong dollar to Shanghai copper futures on Tuesday.

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26. PRC Health

The Associated Press ("CHINA WAISTLINES EXPANDING AS INCOMES RISE", 2004-10-12) reported that nearly 200 million PRC citizens are overweight, the Health Ministry said Tuesday in a report that reflected the swelling waistlines that have accompanied rising incomes. The new study found the proportion of overweight adults in the PRC has jumped by one-third to 23 percent since 1992, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

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27. PRC Hostages

Agence France-Presse ("PAKISTANI TRIBAL LEADER SPARES CHINESE HOSTAGES FROM

EXECUTION", 2004-10-12) reported that a Pakistani tribal leader linked to Al-Qaeda agreed to negotiate over the fate of two PRC hostages after allowing a deadline for a threatened execution to pass. Abdullah Mahsud, who is holding the two PRC engineers in a wild tribal region of Pakistan near the Afghan border, said he had ignored his own 1100 GMT deadline to kill one of the hostages because negotiations were under way. "The deadline has finished, but as the negotiations have started we are waiting a response from the government," Mahsud told reporters at an undisclosed location.

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