

NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, October 19, 2006

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, October 19, 2006", NAPSNet Daily Report, October 19, 2006, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-thursday-october-19-2006/>

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I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Relations and DPRK Sanctions

New York Times ("SOUTH KOREA SAYS IT WILL CONTINUE PROJECTS IN NORTH", 2006-10-19) reported that the ROK told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice today that it had no intention of

pulling out of the Kaesong and Kumgang projects, even though both put hard currency into the pocket of the Pyongyang regime. During a press conference with Ms. Rice, ROK foreign minister, Ban Ki-moon, said he explained "the positive aspects" of the industrial park at Kaesong, and also described how the tourism zone around Mount Kumgang was "a very symbolic project" for reconciliation between the two Koreas. If Secretary Rice was disappointed by the statement, her public comments instead emphasized the importance of the U.S.-ROK alliance. The goal, she said, is not to elevate tensions on the peninsula, but to implement sanctions under a Security Council resolution as a multinational effort to force the DPRK to return to 6-party talks. The US sees the ROK and PRC as holding the keys to the effectiveness of the sanctions, because they share the longest borders with the DPRK, and are by far its biggest economic partners. The ROK trade with the DPRK reached \$1.06 billion last year, more than double what it was in 2000.

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2. DPRK General on ABC Television

ABC News ("NORTH KOREAN GENERAL: 'WAR IS INEVITABLE'; RI CHAN BOK SAYS TALKS CAN CONTINUE IF SANCTIONS ARE LIFTED", 2006-10-19) reported that, in an interview with ABC anchor Diane Sawyer, reporting from Pyongyang, DPR Korean Gen. Ri Chan Bok said that if President Bush continues to ask the DPRK to "kneel," war "will be inevitable," and it would begin on the Korean Peninsula. The general is in charge of the DMZ. In the interview, Sawyer read Ri the US president's statement warning of grave consequences for the DPRK should the nation continue nuclear testing or transfer nuclear technologies to third-party countries. She asked whether the general had a reaction. Ri told Sawyer that he didn't tend to believe what Bush said. "Can the general guarantee or reassure the American people that this nuclear information will not be passed to terrorists?" Sawyer asked. The general said he could guarantee that these weapons were to defend the DPRK and not to earn money or be sent to third parties. He added that the DPRK did not have a relationship with terrorist organizations. When talking about the possibility of talks, the general said the country didn't care if the talks were bilateral or six-party, but that the sanctions must be lifted for progress to begin. He said if all this happened, then the DPRK would be ready to stand down on its nuclear program. The general also had a message for President Bush. "He keeps talking about North Korea as the 'axis of evil,' as an outpost of tyranny, as an unacceptable government that makes its own people hungry," he said. "We would ask him please to stop making these bad comments on our nation, and I'm speaking not just for myself but for all people in this country."

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3. DPRK Refugee-Defectors

New York Times ("WITH CASH, DEFECTORS FIND NORTH KOREA'S CRACKS", 2006-10-19) reported that state security is no longer the main obstacle to leaving the DPRK. According to refugee-defectors, DPRK brokers, ROK Christian missionaries and other experts, the main obstacle now is cash. Defectors with relatives outside the country are tapping into a sophisticated, underground network of human smugglers operating inside the Koreas, the PRC and Southeast Asia. Pieced together, these accounts provide glimpses of a government that is progressively losing the paramount role it used to enjoy in society. The effects of money and corruption appear to have grown sharply in recent years, as market liberalization has allowed ordinary people to run small businesses and has enabled people with connections to prosper in the booming trade with the PRC. "Money now trumps ideology for an increasing number of North Koreans, and that has allowed this underground railroad to flourish," said Peter M. Beck, the Northeast Asia project director in Seoul of

the International Crisis Group, which has extensively researched the subject in several Asian countries and is publishing a report. "The biggest barrier to leaving North Korea is just money. If you have enough money, you can get out quite easily. It speaks to the marketization of North Korea, especially since economic reforms were implemented in 2002. Anything can be bought in the North now. The state's control is weakening at the periphery," Mr. Beck said, explaining that most refugees came out of the rural areas but few from around Pyongyang, where the state's grip remained strong.

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4. Aid to DPRK

Christian Science Monitor ("NORTH KOREA HEADS TOWARD HUNGER", 2006-10-19) reported that the DPRK is facing a cold winter in which it is unlikely to be able to feed its people. The danger of widespread suffering raises the critical question of how the world can unite in a forceful response to the DPRK nuclear test and still assist those who go hungry. ROK officials oppose shutting off economic contacts, much less boarding and interdicting DPRK ships, but say they are in a quandary when it comes to donations of rice. "It's a kind of dilemma," says Kang Jong-suk, an official at the Unification Ministry, which had been avidly pursuing reconciliation. "South Korea wants to send some humanitarian aid, but there is a barrier because of the UN resolution." That inability to monitor has played a significant role in other donors' willingness to offer aid. "Those conditions are so onerous, it's very hard for donors," he adds. "It's not just specific restrictions. It's an overall atmosphere. It's a constant struggle to do our work in North Korea," says Mr. Banbury of the WFP. The US cut donations to the WFP this year after DPRK ordered the WFP to slash the size of its mission in Pyongyang from nearly 50 people to 10 people and shut its five regional offices, from which inspectors tried to monitor distribution. The ROK suspended food aid after the missile test. Banbury opposes giving up. "Walking away would stop assistance to millions of people and would stop an avenue of dialogue," he says. "It's better to stay engaged than to not stay engaged."

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5. US-ROK Security Alliance

Donga-Ilbo ("ROH THANKS U.S. FOR SECURITY ALLIANCE ", 2006-10-19) reported that it has been reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice requested that the ROK officially participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon answered that the government is considering strengthening its search operations against suspicious DPRK ships, along with participating in the PSI.

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6. US-ROK Trade Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("FTA SAFEGUARDS WILL BE SOUGHT", 2006-10-19) reported that the ROK plans to call on the US to accept its introduction of safeguards on agricultural products at upcoming free trade talks, a government official said. The fourth round of free trade talks between the two countries is scheduled Monday through Friday on the ROK's southernmost island of Jeju.

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7. US-Japan Joint Maritime Drills

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S., JAPANESE NAVIES TO CONDUCT MYSTERY JOINT EXERCISES ", 2006-10-19) reported that the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk is slated to take part in joint military drills with the Maritime Self-Defense Forces of Japan next month. The US and Japan are calling the exercises "regular" and part of normal operations, but the Japanese press reports that the drills seem to be geared towards intercepting and searching DPRK vessels on the high seas.

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8. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, US STEP UP WORK ON MISSILE SHIELD ", 2006-10-19) reported that Japan and the US agreed in top-level talks to strengthen their military alliance and step up work on missile defense due to the threat from nuclear neighbor the DPRK. "Japan will make an effort to strengthen the Japan-US alliance, including on missile defense," Abe told Rice, according to Abe's adviser Hiroshige Seko.

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9. Japan-Vietnam Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("VIETNAM, JAPAN TO START FREE TRADE TALKS NEXT YEAR ", 2006-1-19) reported that Vietnam and Japan agreed to start talks next year on a free-trade agreement that they hope will almost double their trade by 2010, with Hanoi pledging to improve its investment climate. Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung laid the groundwork for the negotiations during a visit to Tokyo, where he was the first foreign head of government to meet in Japan with new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

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