

NAPSNet Daily Report Tuesday, November 14, 2006

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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN NUCLEAR NEGOTIATOR SAYS 6-NATION TALKS OVER NORTH'S DISARMAMENT AT CROSSROADS", 2006-11-14) reported that Chun Yung-woo, ROK's top negotiator for the Six Party Talks, said the talks, set to resume in December, are at a crossroads. "If we do not make substantial progress, the future for the six-party talks will be very unclear. There should not be talks for the sake of talks," he said. Chun is to meet Wednesday on the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific summit with US nuclear envoy Christopher Hill — who accompanied the official on the flight from Seoul — and their Japanese counterpart. Hill said he likely will also meet with nuclear negotiators from the PRC and Russia. Intense diplomacy is expected in Hanoi this week, to seek ways to make progress in the talks.

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2. ROK on PSI, UN Sanctions

Wall Street Journal ("SOUTH KOREA IMPOSES MILD PENALTIES ON PYONGYANG ", 2006-11-14) reported that Seoul unveiled a package of mild penalties and largely symbolic actions that would allegedly comply with sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council. As part of the package of penalties, Seoul announced a halt to subsidies to promote tourist visits to Mt. Kumgang, These visits have amounted to about \$3 million to \$5 million in trade annually in recent years. South Korea had already cut rice and fertilizer shipments to North Korea following missile tests in July, though most planned shipments for the year had been completed before then. The new penalties will have little effect on the nearly \$1 billion in annual trade with the DPRK. The ROK will continue its involvement with the industrial park at Kaesong. But Seoul refused to fully join a U.S.-led effort to intercept DPRK ships for cargo inspections. A PSI country can only conduct searches in the waters of another participating country. In a statement yesterday, the ROK government said it "supports the purpose and principles of PSI and will adjust the scope of our participation at our discretion."

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3. Japan on UN Sanctions

Associated Press ("JAPAN ADOPTS LIST OF EMBARGOED GOODS TO NORTH KOREA", 2006-11-14) reported that Japan's Cabinet adopted a list of embargoed luxury items to the DPRK and approved a ban on materials related to weapons of mass destruction as part of sanctions against Pyongyang following its nuclear test. The ban was intended to hit at DPRK officials, and not the impoverished general public, said Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki said the list comprises 24 luxury items such as cigarettes, liquor, perfume and motorcycles, believed to be used by senior DPRK officials. He said the Cabinet also approved the ban on materials and equipment that could be used for WMD programs. In 2005, Japan's luxury item export to the DPRK was worth about 1.09 billion yen (US\$9.27 million; euro7.23 million), about 16 percent of the total export to the DPRK, Shiozaki said. Japan has banned all DPRK vessels from Japanese ports and all DPRK imports, along with severely limiting travel from the country since the test.

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4. Japan on Nuclear Weapons

Reuters ("JAPAN CAN HOLD NUCLEAR ARMS FOR SELF - DEFENSE: GOV'T", 2006-11-14)

reported that the Japanese government issued a statement which contends that its constitution allows it to possess nuclear weapons as long as they are kept to "a minimum level necessary for self-defense". Controversy over debate on nuclear arms erupted last month when Shoichi Nakagawa, the policy chief of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, said Japan needs to discuss if it should acquire nuclear weapons after the DPRK conducted a nuclear test -- an emotional issue in the only nation to have suffered nuclear attacks. Foreign Minister Taro Aso has also said debate should not be ruled out, prompting opposition lawmakers to call for his dismissal. Abe has said repeatedly that Japan would maintain its decades-old ban on nuclear weapons, denying that the government would even discuss the topic. Analysts say Japan is capable of producing nuclear weapons with its high technology and a stockpile of plutonium from its nuclear power plants, but they add that it is highly unlikely to do so, given opposition both at home and abroad. Japan's basic law on atomic energy limits research, development and use of such power to peaceful purposes, while the country is bound under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty not to receive or manufacture nuclear weapons.

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5. Japan Remilitarization

Washington Post ("ABE AIMS TO REDRAFT JAPAN'S CONSTITUTION", 2006-11-14) reported that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said he would push during his term to redraft Japan's pacifist constitution. In a wide-ranging interview with The Washington Post, Abe outlined a vision for a stronger Japan, and he vowed to fortify the US-Japan Security Alliance. Given new threats facing Japan -- most notably a nuclear DPRK -- he also suggested that his administration could take the interim step of reinterpreting the existing constitution to more rapidly pave the way for greater defensive capabilities.

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6. Japan NSC

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN CREATING ITS OWN 'NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL'", 2006-1-14) reported that Japan's government has announced a taskforce to build a version of the US National Security Council as part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's bid to increase his office's authority. Abe has called for a stronger premier's office to quicken response time in a potential crisis with the DPRK and to better coordinate with the US.

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7. ROK Iraq Contribution

Chosun Ilbo ("LAWMAKERS PUSH FOR TROOP WITHDRAWAL BILL", 2006-11-14) reported that some members of the Uri Party and the Democratic Labor Party are seeking to end the mandate of ROK troops in Iraq. Democratic Labor Party lawmaker Lee Young-soon said the group will hold a meeting Tuesday to submit a bill in the National Assembly calling for a troop pullout. Meanwhile, the administration is looking into a plan to reduce the contingent but still extend its deployment in Irbil, northern Iraq.

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8. US-PRC Military Cooperation

The Associated Press ("U.S. PACIFIC FLEET COMMANDER TOURS CHINA", 2006-11-14) reported that the commander of the US Pacific Fleet began a visit to the PRC in a trip aimed at strengthening ties between the two navies and gaining insight into the Asian power's military buildup. Adm. Gary Roughead was scheduled to meet with the PRC's military officials and help plan a Nov. 19 search-and-rescue exercise, the second half of a two-part operation that began in the US.

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9. Sino-Indian Relations

Agence France-Presse ("INDIA, CHINA IN SPAT OVER BORDER DISPUTE AHEAD OF HU VISIT ", 2006-11-14) reported that India and the PRC were engaged in a verbal spat over a strategic region that both claim as part of a decades-old border dispute, days ahead of a visit by PRC President Hu Jintao. The first salvo was fired by PRC Ambassador to New Delhi Sun Yuxi, who said in an interview broadcast that the far northeastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh was part of PRC territory. India's Foreign Minister Pranab Mukerjee was quick to reject the claim.

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10. Sino-Pakistani Trade Relations

Bloomberg News ("BRIEFING: CHINA AND PAKISTAN SET TO SIGN FREE-TRADE PACT", 2006-11-14) reported that the PRC and Pakistan plan to sign a free-trade agreement this month to help increase commerce between the two countries, Pakistan's commerce minister, Humayun Akhtar Khan, said. The agreement will be signed during a four-day visit to Pakistan by President Hu Jintao that is scheduled to start on Nov. 23, Khan told reporters in Islamabad.

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11. PRC Environment

The Associated Press ("U.N.: CHINA FACES POLLUTION CHALLENGES ", 2006-11-14) reported that the United Nations said that the PRC has made progress in increasing access to water for its citizens but still faces serious challenges in fighting pollution. "Pollution of water sources is widespread and increasingly serious in China. Meanwhile, more water is being used than is being replenished, which shows in falling groundwater tables and drying rivers," said Alessandra Tisot, senior deputy resident representative of the U.N. Development Program in the PRC.

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