NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, November 08, 2006

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, November 08, 2006", NAPSNet Daily Report, November 08, 2006, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-november-08-2006/

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1. US-PRC Summit on DPRK

Associated Press ("CHINA, US OPEN HIGH-LEVEL TALKS AMID KOREAN NUCLEAR TENSIONS", 2006-11-08) reported that PRC and US diplomats opened a round of high-level talks on their strategic relationship Wednesday amid diplomatic efforts to restart talks aimed at ending the DPRK's nuclear program. "Together, we have the responsibilities of world peace and global security," said US Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, who led the US delegation. The PRC side was led by Yang Jiechi, a deputy foreign minister. The talks are the third round in a US-PRC "strategic dialogue" begun last December. The two sides haven't released an agenda for this week's meetings.

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2. UK on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Times ("WORLD MUST FACE DOWN NORTH KOREA, SAYS BLAIR", 2006-11-08) reported that Tony Blair has called for the international community to present a united front against the DPRK's nuclear programme but predicted difficulties in successfully disarming the Pyongyang regime. Speaking by satellite link to a conference in Tokyo, Mr Blair said that, unlike Libya, which gave up its nuclear programme voluntarily in 2003, the DPRK showed no interest in rejoining the international community for the wellbeing of its people.

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3. Defector on DPRK Regime Change

JoongAng Ilbo ("DEFECTOR ADVOCATES REMOVAL OF KIM REGIME", 2006-11-08) reported that removing the Kim Jong-il regime should be the focus of resolving the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, Hwang Jang-yop, the most senior DPRK official ever to defect here, said yesterday at a rare public appearance. "Using military and economic sanctions can produce some effects, but it is impossible to completely resolve the situation through such means," Mr. Hwang said. "China commands the fate of the Kim Jong-il regime, so we should find a way to remove the North Korean regime through China." "If the United States and South Korea guarantee that China will not face capitalism and democracy at Abrok River [at the border with the North] after opening up and reforming the North, it is possible that Beijing will sever its alliance with Pyongyang."

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4. Former PM on Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("GOH, MDP DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM KIM DAE-JUNG", 2006-11-08) reported that former prime minister Goh Kun and the Millennium Democratic Party on Tuesday criticized former president Kim Dae-jung's Sunshine Policy toward the DPRK and his Saturday meeting with President Roh Moo-hyun. The criticism suggests a growing gap in relations among Kim, Goh and MDP chairman Hahn Hwa-kap, who all have their political support base in the Jeolla provinces. "Now that North Korea carried out a nuclear test, our engagement policy toward the North should

change," Goh said, contradicting Kim's assertion last week that engagement must continue despite the nuclear test.

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5. US Governor on DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("DEMOCRATIC HOUSE TO DEMAND U.S.-LED DIPLOMACY WITH NORTH KOREA: RICHARDSON", 2006-11-08) reported that the new Democrat-controlled US House is certain to demand that President George W. Bush take charge of diplomacy with the DPRK and engage in face-to-face negotiations, a former US envoy to Pyongyang said Wednesday. Bill Richardson, now governor of New Mexico, told Yonhap that US policy so far "has not been working."

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6. DPRK Aid

Yonhap ("CHINA KEEPING N. KOREA STOCKED UP ON DIESEL FUEL, MACHINE PARTS", 2006-11-08) reported that the PRC has sent 20,000 tons of diesel fuel and 40 million yuan (US$5 million) in machine parts and beans to the DPRK this year as part of a humanitarian aid program, a Chinese government document said Wednesday.

(return to top) Yonhap ("N. KOREA RESENTS S. KOREA'S SEVERED HUMANITARIAN AID: LAWMAKER", 2006-11-08) reported that the DPRK expressed "strong resentment" at the ROK's decision to sever humanitarian aid to the nation, a progressive party lawmaker who recently visited Pyongyang said Wednesday. "North Korea expressed its strong resentment at the aid stoppage for its missile test," Rep. Kwon Young-ghil of the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) told party members at this southeastern city. (return to top)

7. ROK on Kaesong Workers' Salaries

Bloomberg ("S. KOREA SAYS IT PAYS NORTH KOREA WORKERS, NOT KIM JONG IL", 2006-11-08) reported that ROK companies operating in the Gaeseong industrial area in the DPRK pay workers mostly in vouchers exchangeable for food and household goods, said the Unification Ministry in rejecting claims the salaries were funneled to the DPRK's government.

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8. ROK Reconnaissance Plane Purchase

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA PICKS BOEING FOR SURVEILLANCE PLANES", 2006-11-08) reported that the ROK picked US aerospace giant Boeing Co. to supply four early-warning surveillance planes for 1.6 trillion won ($1.71 billion) by 2012, the defence ministry in Seoul said on Wednesday. The introduction of the reconnaissance aircraft is aimed at boosting the ROK's response to changing strategic dynamics on the Korean peninsula, the ministry said.

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9. ROK-Africa Relations

Korea Times ("KOREA SEEKS BETTER AFRICA TIES", 2006-11-08) reported that the government

Wednesday confirmed its earlier pledge to triple its development aid to Africa by 2008 and invited 1,000 Africans for technical training. The confirmation was contained in the Seoul Declaration adopted at the end of the Korea-Africa Forum in Seoul, attended by leaders from the Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Ghana and Benin and 27 Cabinet-level officials from 25 African countries. ``Cooperation between Korea and Africa is very important in that it has boundless potentialities,'' Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki-moon, the next UN secretary-general, said in his opening speech at the forum.

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10. Japan on Nuclear Program

Associated Press ("JAPAN'S LEADER INSISTS IT WON'T DEVELOP NUCLEAR ARMS DESPITE COMMENTS BY SENIOR OFFICIALS", 2006-11-08) reported that Japan will not stray from its no-nuclear weapons policy, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe insisted Wednesday, as the country's main opposition party stepped up its attack on ruling party politicians who suggested the country should debate going nuclear.

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11. Japan on US Elections

Bloomberg ("U.S. ELECTION WON'T CHANGE JAPAN TIES, SHIOZAKI SAYS ", 2006-11-08) reported that Japan said the outcome of midterm elections in the US won't affect the relationship between the world's two biggest economies. ``The fundamentals of the U.S.-Japan alliance aren't going to change,'' Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki, Japan's top government spokesman, said at a regular press conference in Tokyo. ``On every level, relations are excellent.''

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12. Japan-US Beef Trade

Reuters ("JAPAN SAYS TO HALT IMPORTS FROM ONE U.S. BEEF PLANT", 2006-11-08) reported that Japan has decided to temporarily suspend beef imports from one US plant after a cargo from the plant arrived without the necessary documentation, Health Ministry officials told reporters on Wednesday. Japan lifted a ban on US beef imports on July 27. A Health Ministry official said the beef in question came from the privately held Swift & Company's Greeley Plant in Colorado.

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13. PRC Economy

Bloomberg ("CHINA'S OCTOBER TRADE SURPLUS SOARS TO $23.8 BILLION ", 2006-11-08) reported that the PRC's trade surplus surged to a record $23.8 billion in October as imports grew at the slowest pace in 15 months, raising the likelihood that the US and Europe will intensify demands for currency gains and more market access. The PRC's swelling surplus may strain trade relations as US Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez heads to Beijing on Nov. 12. European Union Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, visiting the PRC this week, accused the nation of keeping the yuan undervalued, ignoring copyrights and protecting local businesses.

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14. PRC-Africa Trade

Reuters ("CHINA-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP NEEDS A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD", 2006-11-08) reported that is a raw deal all Africa's going to get from its partnership with the PRC? Or is this a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the continent? Here's what some African newspapers think about the Sino-African Forum on Cooperation, held in Beijing last weekend. A new scramble for Africa has begun, announces Amos Safo, columnist for the same Ghanaian newspaper. Africa's ore, platinum, cotton and, most importantly, oil are all on the PRC's shopping list. Safo concludes: "...the new scrambler (China) for Africa has its good and bad sides, just as the previous scramblers (Europe) milked Africa dry and continue to do so. It is left with Africa to bargain properly...After the summit, both China and Africa should be winners." Uganda's New Vision has the same message: the terms of trade in this relationship mustn't "tilt heavily" against Africa. The PRC's economic growth pattern is more relevant to African countries than Western models, the paper believes, and loans and credit are more readily available when needed.

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15. Chinese WHO Leadership Appointment

Reuters ("CHINA'S CHAN NAMED TO BECOME WHO CHIEF", 2006-11-08) reported that the World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday nominated the PRC's Margaret Chan, its top official on bird flu, to lead the UN agency as it seeks to prevent a flu pandemic and fight global scourges such as AIDS. Chan, 59, will become the first person from the PRC to head a major UN body if her selection as director-general is approved on Thursday by the World Health Assembly, the 193-state WHO's top decision-taking body.

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