

NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, November 24, 2004

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, November 24, 2004", NAPSNet Daily Report, November 24, 2004, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-november-24-2004/>

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I. United States

- 1. [KEDO on DPRK Reactor Project](#)
- 2. [DPRK-ROK Relations](#)
- 3. [DPRK-ROK Relations](#)
- 4. [DPRK - ROK Relations](#)
- 5. [DPRK Human Rights](#)
- 6. [DPRK on US Human Rights Policy](#)
- 7. [ROK, US on DPRK Human Rights](#)
- 8. [ROK on DPRK](#)
- 9. [ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)
- 10. [ROK on DPRK-US Conflict Video Game](#)
- 11. [US on DPRK](#)
- 12. [US - DPRK Relations](#)
- 13. [US on ROK-DPRK Relations](#)
- 14. [US on DPRK Defector](#)
- 15. [US on DPRK Human Rights](#)
- 16. [US Poll on DPRK Threat](#)
- 17. [PRC on DPRK](#)
- 18. [U.N. on DPRK](#)
- 19. [ROK Report to UN](#)
- 20. [ROK Politics](#)
- 21. [ROK Spy Radar](#)

22. [UN Request for ROK Troops in Haiti](#)
23. [PRC on US, Iran](#)
24. [Russia-PRC Relations](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. United States

1. KEDO on DPRK Reactor Project

Chosun Ilbo ("KEDO TO DECIDE WHETHER TO EXTEND N.K. REACTOR PROJECT SUSPENSION", 2004-11-24) reported that the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) is to announce Wednesday whether to extend by another year the suspension on a project to build two light-water nuclear reactors in DPRK. Japan's Kyodo news agency said KEDO's executive board members -- ROK, the U.S., Japan, and the European Union -- have almost reached a consensus on freezing the project and that a decision will be announced as soon as the New York-based consortium receives approval from the U.S. government.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK-ROK Relations

Yonhap (" FOREIGN MINISTER RENEWS CALL ON NORTH KOREA TO RETURN TO DIALOGUE", 2004-11-24) reported that ROK urged DPRK Wednesday to open up to the international community by resolving the 25-month tension over its nuclear weapons program without any conditions attached. "It is important for North Korea not to miss an opportunity to realize reform and open up to the outside world," Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon told reporters. "The North should no longer lose time."

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. DPRK-ROK Relations

The Korea Times ("SEOUL TO BUY THAI RICE FOR NORTH KOREANS", 2004-11-24) reported that the ROK government has decided to buy 100,000 tons of Thai rice, the last batch of food aid to DPRK, the Unification Ministry said Wednesday. In June this year, Seoul pledged to offer Pyongyang 400,000 tons of rice, including 100,000 tons produced in ROK, as a long-term loan. "The government will sign the deal with its counterpart in Thailand this week," a ministry official said. "It's among the 300,000 tons which we decided to import from foreign countries."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. DPRK - ROK Relations

KCNA-Yonhap ("N. KOREA LAMBASTS S. KOREA FOR BLOCKING PRO-PYONGYANG WEB SITES ", 2004-11-24) reported that DPRK accused ROK Wednesday of blocking pro-Pyongyang Web sites, saying that such actions are aimed at "quelling the people's mind-set towards reunification." Earlier

this month, the ROK government blocked local access to 31 Internet sites either operated by DPRK or that praise the country's regime and communist ideology. The blocking is "an intolerable crime against the nation as it is aimed to quell the people's mind-set toward national reconciliation, unity and reunification," said Minju Joson, a DPRK government paper, in a commentary.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. DPRK Human Rights

International Herald Tribune ("N. KOREA IS SAID TO TEST POISONS", 2004-11-24) reported that a prominent human rights figure alleged Tuesday that DPRK had been testing chemical weapons on political prisoners as recently as 2002 and that the ROK government had been aware of the activities. The human rights worker, Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, said at a news conference that he had interviewed three DPRK defectors over two days about the situation.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. DPRK on US Human Rights Policy

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA CRITICIZES U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY", 2004-11-24) reported that DPRK lashed out at the United States on Wednesday, charging that its human rights policies are aimed at regime changes in countries that displease it. "Whenever an opportunity presented itself, the U.S. has found fault with human rights performance in other countries which incur its displeasure and threatened to put political, diplomatic and economic pressure upon them," Rodong Sinmun, the organ of the North Korean Workers' Party, said in a commentary.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. ROK, US on DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap ("U.S. AGREES TO CLOSELY CONSULT S. KOREA OVER N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS LAW ", 2004-11-24) reported that the United States has agreed to closely consult ROK in its implementation of a sensitive law aimed at improving human rights conditions in DPRK, an official said Wednesday. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell gave the assurance to his ROK counterpart, Ban Ki-moon, at a meeting in Chile on Friday, the Foreign Ministry official said under condition of anonymity.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. ROK on DPRK

Yonhap ("SEOUL OFFICIAL: NO SIGN OF UNREST IN N. KOREA ", 2004-11-24) reported that there are no signs of internal unrest in DPRK, despite reports of a shift in the level of a personality cult surrounding leader Kim Jong-il, a ROK official said in testimony to parliament on Wednesday. "There are no signs of abnormal changes," a senior official of the National Intelligence Service said during a parliamentary hearing.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Korea Herald ("ROH PROMOTES NUCLEAR SETTLEMENT, TRADE", 2004-11-24) reported that Roh enlisted international assistance to defuse tensions surrounding the nuclear issue when he met leaders attending the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum in Santiago on Nov. 20-21, and acquired a bridgehead to South America by agreeing on a series of economic cooperation measures during summit talks in Argentina, Brazil and Chile before the international gathering. Touted as his foremost achievement during the trip is that he created a better environment for speeding up multilateral negotiations on the DPRK nuclear issue.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. ROK on DPRK-US Conflict Video Game

Stars and Stripes ("S. KOREA SAYS 'NO' TO VIDEO GAME BASED ON A U.S.-N. KOREA CONFLICT ", 2004-11-24) reported that ROK's Media Rating Board has refused to approve a new video game that bases its action scenarios on a U.S. conflict with DPRK. As a result, the Korean company that was to distribute "Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon 2" has decided not to release the game here. The game, ratings board members decided, goes "way too far" in its scenario.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. US on DPRK

Yonhap ("N. KOREA THREATENED TO TEST NUCLEAR ARMS IN 2003: CIA REPORT ", 2004-11-24) reported that DPRK repeatedly threatened to test its nuclear weapons last year and tried to obtain materials for its uranium-based nuclear arms program, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) said in a report submitted to the U.S. Congress Tuesday. The intelligence report also claimed the North was preparing to test-fire a long-range ballistic missile that is "potentially capable of reaching parts of the United States with a nuclear-weapon-sized payload." The CIA report said the North had threatened to "transfer" or "demonstrate" its nuclear weapons during a private, three-way meeting between the United States, PRC and DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. US - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("BUSH URGED TO REPLACE DIPLOMATIC STAFF TO COPE WITH N.K. NUKES ", 2004-11-24) reported that a U.S. expert on Korean affairs has called on the Bush administration to replace the State Department's staff dealing with Korean Peninsula matters to better deal with DPRK's nuclear weapons program, one of the most serious security problems facing America. In an article contributed to the Weekly Standard, Nicholas Eberstadt, a researcher at the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI), warned that the United States will face a growing DPRK nuclear crisis unless and until there is a better class of dictator running DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. US on ROK-DPRK Relations

Joon Ang ("U.S. AIDE SAYS SOUTH MANAGES NORTH WELL", 2004-11-24) reported that a senior

expert on Korean affairs at the U.S. State Department said the U.S. government supports Seoul's efforts to harmonize relations with Pyongyang through such projects as the Gaeseong industrial complex in DPRK. The official told Korean correspondents in Washington that ROK's engagement policy aids efforts to restart the six-nation talks, which seek to end Pyongyang's nuclear arms program. He said the United States also supports bilateral talks between either PRC or Japan and DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. US on DPRK Defector

Yonhap ("U.S. COURT DENIES REFUGEE STATUS FOR N.K. DEFECTOR ", 2004-11-24) reported that a U.S. court on Tuesday rejected a request by a DPRK escapee for political asylum in the United States, ROK diplomats said. The Seattle Immigration Court refused to allow Im Chon-yong, 40, to live in exile in the United States, citing his long stay in ROK after defection from DPRK and lack of evidence of his political suppression in the North, said the diplomats based in Seattle.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. US on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. CONGRESS OFFERS US\$3 MILLION FOR N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS", 2004-11-24) reported that it was confirmed Tuesday that the U.S. Congress has allocated US\$3 million (W3.2 billion) from its budget for the coming fiscal year to tackle DPRK's human rights issue. As the first allotted fund by the U.S. Congress for this specific purpose, Congressional officials are saying it is significant in that it gives the U.S. the financial backing to involve itself in earnest in DPRK's human rights issues following the promulgation of the North Korea Human Rights Act (NKHRA) on October 18.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. US Poll on DPRK Threat

Yonhap ("MOST AMERICANS SEE NO IMMEDIATE THREAT FROM NORTH KOREA: US POLL ", 2004-11-24) reported that the majority of Americans think that DPRK poses no immediate threat to the United States, contrary to their government's stigmatization of the communist country as a terror sponsor, a survey showed Tuesday. The CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll found that 60 percent of the 1,015 people surveyed believe DPRK represents long-term, not immediate, threats to their country and 15 percent saw no threat at all.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. PRC on DPRK

BBC News ("CHINA STRESSES N KOREA 'STABLE' ", 2004-11-24) reported that senior PRC official Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei stressed the DPRK was politically "stable". His comments follow unconfirmed reports that some portraits of the North's leader Kim Jong-il were missing, and of PRC border troop movements. Analysts say that verifying the situation in the secretive North is very difficult, and PRC's priority is to see its neighbor remain stable.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. U.N. on DPRK

Reuters ("U.N.: N.KOREA SENDS POSITIVE MESSAGE ON NUKE TALKS", 2004-11-24) reported that DPRK gave a visiting U.N. official a "very positive message" about resuming stalled six-way talks on its nuclear programs, the ROK Unification Ministry said Wednesday. It also quoted Jean Ping, who is president of the U.N. General Assembly, as saying in a meeting with Unification Minister Chung Dong-young that DPRK asked him to tell Washington it wanted to co-exist with the United States. Ping, who is Gabon's foreign minister, visited Pyongyang and Beijing before coming to Seoul.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. ROK Report to UN

Reuters ("S.KOREA TO ESCAPE UN COUNCIL REPORT FOR ATOM WORK", 2004-11-24) reported that ROK will likely escape a report to the U.N. Security Council for its undeclared work with atom bomb-grade material when the U.N. nuclear watchdog meets to discuss the case this week, diplomats said on Wednesday. Earlier this month, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a report that ROK enriched a tiny amount of uranium in 2000 to a level close to what would be useable in an atomic weapon, contradicting previous denials by Seoul. Several diplomats on the IAEA's board of governors, which meets on Thursday to discuss the nuclear violations of ROK and Iran, said that the board would defer a decision on whether to report Seoul to the Security Council until March.

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. ROK Politics

Chosun Ilbo ("MORE INSTABILITY, BUT DOMESTIC DEMAND TO IMPROVE: THE ECONOMIST", 2004-11-24) reported that British current-events magazine the Economist predicted in its recently published "The World in 2005" edition that Korea would experience more strikes and greater political confusion in 2005, but in terms of the economy, domestic consumption would stage a recovery. The Economist said that in Korea's case, President Roh Moo-hyun managed to survive the 2004 impeachment crisis, but continued to describe him as a political neophyte, arguing that his poor judgment and taste for confrontational situations would inevitably lead to escalating political conflict.

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. ROK Spy Radar

The Korea Herald ("KOREA DEVELOPS SPY RADAR", 2004-11-24) reported that a ROK Defense Ministry research institute said yesterday it has developed a radar system that can take pictures of enemy terrain regardless of weather conditions. The Agency for Defense Development said KOMSAR, or the Korea Miniature Synthetic Aperture Radar, is able to detect enemy facilities concealed in hilly terrain within a range of 15 kilometers and make high-resolution pictures of objects. The EO radar that the military had been using could not operate properly at night and in rainy or foggy weather.

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. UN Request for ROK Troops in Haiti

Chosun Ilbo ("U.N. REQUESTS DISPATCH OF KOREAN TROOPS IN HAITI ", 2004-11-24) reported that the United Nations revealed Tuesday that it has requested Korea to send a contingent of engineering troops to Haiti, following Seoul's recent dispatchment of Zaytun Unit troops to Iraq and, earlier, its support with clean-up efforts in Afghanistan. The latest U.N. plea has thrown the local government into a dilemma. "Since the Ministry of National Defense has already sent large numbers of troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, we've heard the ministry is concerned (at this proposal)," said an officer at the Korean mission to the United Nations.

[\(return to top\)](#)

23. PRC on US, Iran

The Associated Press ("IRAN: CHINA SUPPORTS EFFORT TO AVOID U.N.", 2004-11-24) reported that an Iranian envoy on Wednesday said he had received PRC support in Tehran's diplomatic campaign to block Washington from having the dispute over Iran's nuclear program referred to the U.N. Security Council. Seyed Hossein Mussavian, Iran's envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency, visited Beijing on the eve of an IAEA board meeting that is to review an investigation of suspect Iranian activities. The United States contends that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons - an accusation that Tehran denies.

[\(return to top\)](#)

24. Russia-PRC Relations

Reuters ("RUSSIAN SCIENTIST JAILED FOR SPYING FOR CHINA", 2004-11-24) reported that a Russian scientist convicted of spying for PRC was sentenced on Wednesday to 14 years in jail, in a case rights groups fear was politically driven to stop scientists working with foreigners. Physicist Valentin Danilov was initially acquitted of selling state secrets to Russia's southern neighbor, but was retried after security services complained about the verdict.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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