

NAPSNET Week in Review 11 October 2002

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Republic of Korea

1. DPRK on SEZ Chief

The DPRK has worked out a compromise with the PRC to sack Chinese-born Dutch businessman Yang Bin from his post of governor of the DPRK's fledgling capitalist enclave. The deal was aimed at defusing a diplomatic row as DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il plans to visit Beijing this year for a summit with PRC President Jiang Zemin, newspapers in Seoul said Wednesday. Yonhap news agency quoted PRC sources as saying that the DPRK may have to select a new governor for its Sinuiju free-trade zone on the border with the PRC. The PRC confirmed Tuesday that Yang, appointed to head the zone, had been placed under house arrest but denied this indicated a rift with the DPRK. The two allies are currently discussing the next step but Yang could be expelled from the PRC, it said. "The Chinese government considered indicting him for trial, but is now thinking of deporting him in consideration of Sino-North Korea relations and the possible political ramifications indicting him would bring about," an unidentified source was quoted as saying.

"DPRK on SEZ Chief" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

"DPRK Capitalist Zone Chief Under House Arrest" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, Japan)

"Yang Bin's Arrest for Corruption" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, ROK)

2. DPRK Japanese Abduction Issue

After nearly a quarter century, five Japanese abducted by spies to the DPRK will be allowed to return home next week for a brief visit, but without their children, officials and relatives of the victims said Wednesday. They are the only ones known to be alive. The five - two men and three women now in their mid 40s - will be allowed to return next Tuesday for one or two weeks, but will not be allowed to bring their children, said Shoichi Nakagawa, head of a lawmakers' group supporting the families of the abductees. After being taken to the DPRK, the survivors married and are said to have children. Some survivors' families were angry the children would not be allowed to return.

"Japanese Abduction Homecoming" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

"DPRK Japanese Abduction Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, US)

"DPRK-Japan Abduction List" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

3. DPRK Asylum Seekers

Twenty DPRK who had sought asylum in the ROK's consulate in Beijing left the PRC on Friday and flew to Manila on their way to Seoul. "The 20 DPRK asylum-seekers departed this afternoon via a third country to the Republic of Korea," an ROK diplomat in Beijing said. Reporters in the Philippine capital later saw the group, which included 13 women and some teenagers, being taken to a transit lounge at Manila airport. The group was the latest in a steady flow of refugees who have sneaked into the PRC and sought passage to Seoul via diplomatic compounds. They bring to about 140 the number the PRC has allowed to leave. It was not immediately clear how or when they had entered the ROK diplomatic compound. "DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 11, US)

4. DPRK-US Relations

US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly who visited DPRK from Thursday to Saturday as President Bush's special envoy reportedly reiterated the US stance that DPRK is required to resolve the threats from their development and export of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear power and missiles. ROK government official said Sunday that in a briefing on all points of concern, including WMD, conventional arms and human rights improvement, Kelly said he delivered the measure to remove WMD threats in advance, and then gradually resolve conventional arms and other issues through dialogue. The official added he understood Kelly did not present a specific "reward" to DPRK. DPRK pointed out the Bush administration was not complying with the agreements made under the Clinton administration, reiterating its insistence upon the US withdrawal of its "anti-North Korea policy."

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, Japan)

"US-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, PRC)

"US, Japan and ROK Ties with DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, PRC)

5. DPRK on DPRK-US Talks

The DPRK said that US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly displayed a "high-handed and arrogant" attitude in demanding that it address global concerns about its nuclear and other weapons programs. In the DPRK's first comment Monday after the three-day visit by Kelly, the DPRK also said it would maintain a high military vigilance unless the US changes its hostile policy. Kelly traveled to the DPRK as a special envoy of US President George W. The DPRK accused Kelly of taking "a high-handed and arrogant attitude by claiming" that the DPRK's relations with Japan, the ROK and the US "would be smoothly settled only when (North Korea) first meets the US unilateral demand such as nuclear and missile and conventional armed forces and human rights issue." "After all, the special envoy's explanation made it clear that the Bush administration is pursuing not a policy of dialogue but a hardline policy of hostility to bring (North Korea) to its knees by force and high-handed practice," said a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman.

"DPRK on DPRK-US Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

6. ROK DPRK Secret Fund Allegations

The ROK's main opposition party urged President Kim Dae-jung on Tuesday to respond to allegations that his government secretly sent US\$400 million to the DPRK to spur diplomatic relations. The Grand National Party, after parliamentary testimony from a former banker, has alleged that Kim's government in effect "bought" his historic summit with the DPRK's leader in 2000. The presidential Blue House has denied diverting loans from a state-run bank to shipping firm Hyundai Merchant Marine just prior to the summit. Hyundai has also denied the allegations. "The president should face the public's suspicion and anger," Grand National Party leader Suh Chung-won said in a speech to the National Assembly. "President Kim, who held the summit, should tell the people the truth and investigate." It was the most prominent call for action yet in National Assembly hearings that have questioned the funding for more than two weeks. "How can the government think of getting the summit by giving money under the table?" Suh asked. "Aid to North Korea should be transparent." There was no immediate word from the Blue House on the demand.

"ROK DPRK Secret Fund Allegations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

7. ROK Intelligence Officer Dismissal

An ROK army intelligence commander has been sacked over his controversial revelation that the military ignored his warning of a deadly DPRK naval attack in June, authorities said. Major General Han Chol-Yong was dismissed Saturday as commander of the 5679 Unit in charge of intelligence gathering on DPRK military communications, the defense ministry said Sunday. "Han was dismissed for improper behavior," a ministry spokesman announced, adding he was put on a list of those waiting for retirement in November. The move followed Han's remarks in a parliamentary hearing Friday that former defense minister Kim Dong-Shin ordered the rewriting of an intelligence report forecasting an inter-Korean naval clash in the Yellow Sea in June. The ex-minister was dismissed in an ensuing cabinet revamp over accusations by opposition lawmakers that the military failed to warn of the June 29 skirmish. "ROK Intelligence Officer Dismissal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

8. UN reaction on DPRK-US Talks

The Associated Press ("ANNAN WELCOMES START OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN UNITED STATES," United Nations, 10/07/02) reported that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the US and the DPRK on Monday to build on the talks that a senior U.S. diplomat had with officials in the DPRK. "The secretary-general is hopeful that this important development is the beginning of more regular exchanges by both sides with a view to resolving their differences, however serious," Annan spokesman Fred Eckhard stated. A DPRK spokesman said Kelly's visit had made it clear that Bush had not changed his tough stance against the DPRK. Although the talks did not achieve much, Eckhard said Annan hoped it helped "both sides to better understand their respective positions and concerns."

"UN reaction on DPRK-US Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

9. ROK Domestic Political Economy

The ROK will not abandon economic reforms that have become a cornerstone of President Kim Dae-jung's policies, even after a new leader takes over next year, a senior official said Monday. "Korean citizens and the government recognize that continued reform is not a matter of choice but essential to survival amid fierce international competition," said Lee Ki-ho, one of the key economic aides to Kim. Kim's five-year term ends in February. Lee stressed that efforts to make the ROK the "center of business, logistics and tourism in Northeast Asia" would not fade away with Kim's exit. "The reform will be continued regardless of political matters, including the upcoming presidential election," Lee said in a speech to delegates at the annual East Asia Economic Summit, organized by the World Economic Forum. "We will make Korea one of the world's best countries for foreign investors to do business and live in." "ROK Domestic Political Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

10. DPRK Military Reduction

The DPRK is considering a plan to thin its military concentration along the inter-Korean border and cut back its conventional forces, the Japanese Kyodo News Agency reported Monday. "North Korea is considering easing its war readiness along the Demilitarized Zone at the 38th parallel and cutting its military forces by between 20,000 and 50,000 troops," the report said, quoting unidentified Russian government sources. "Pyongyang unofficially notified Moscow of its plan in September," Kyodo added. Although trimming 50,000 from the 1.2 million on active duty in its military forces is relatively insignificant, DPRK may insist that US reduce its forces stationed in ROK in return, the news report suggested. Before carrying out the plan, DPRK will study how its relations are developing with US and Japan, as well as other factors including ROK's presidential election in December, the report said. "DPRK Military Reduction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, ROK)

11. Inter-Korean Meeting on Separated Family

A working level meeting between Korean National Red Cross and DPRK National Red Cross organizations will be hold at Mount Kumkang on October 16 in order to discuss the establishment and operation of a 'meeting place' for separated families it was learned Monday. In addition the two sides will address issues concerning soldiers missing during the Korean War. An official said discussions will be regarding the list of mutual agreement created by the last 4th Red Cross Meeting at the meeting between the two. He continued the KNRC expressed a preference to hold the meeting before the eighth meeting of high-ranking officials scheduled in Pyongyang for October 19-22. The talks will address the specific date and place of construction work for a permanent meeting place in Mount Keumgang, having more family reunion events before the construction begins, confirmation of the death and the missing during the Korean War, and establishing more letter communications between displaced family members.

"Inter-Korean Meeting on Separated Family" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, ROK)

12. DPRK-ROK Railway Development

Inside the Demilitarized Zone, ROK soldiers are clearing some landmines with monolithic, German-made vehicles that shred explosives. The DPRK are doing it manually, detecting mines by poking the ground with metal rods. The riskier, slower DPRK method contrasts with the ability of the US-backed, ROK military to buy the latest technology. The mine-clearing is part of a joint project to relink a cross-border railway and promote peace, and the way the two nations are going about it says a lot about the gulf between them. Even though military planners of the two Koreas inform each other daily about their railroad work over a new hot line, ROK officials don't know exactly what the DPRK is doing on its side.

"DPRK-ROK Railway Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, US)

13. DPRK-Canada Relations

A junior Canadian foreign minister will make a groundbreaking visit to the DPRK later this month, the first such trip by a member of Prime Minister Jean Chretien's government, officials said on Thursday. David Kilgour, Canada's Secretary of State for Asia-Pacific, will be in the DPRK from October 22-26 to officially open a privately-operated Canadian aid project in the famine-struck Asian country. "It's meant to be a very low-key visit...it fits in the overall context of normalization (of ties) with North Korea," said one official. Kilgour would raise these topics and talk about nuclear nonproliferation if the chance arose to have discussions with DPRK political figures, the official said. "We assume they will make overtures to meet him but we don't have any (meetings) planned at this time," the official stated.

"DPRK-Canada Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

14. US Soldiers ROK Sensitivity Training

For the first time in half a century, the US military in the ROK ordered most of its 37,000 troops off-duty Thursday to promote better ties with its host ally. About 32,000 8th US Army soldiers spent the day attending lectures and watching videos about alcohol and drug abuse, road safety, and allegations of prostitution at bars frequented by US military personnel. An army spokeswoman said the stand-down, which followed a series of incidents that triggered ROK resentment toward the US military, did not affect the defense readiness of forces on the divided peninsula. "The peninsula is well-protected," Major Holly Pierce said. All but 10 percent of army soldiers attended the sessions and the remainder will do so on Friday, Pierce said. Navy and Air Force personnel did not take part, and US units at the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas remained on alert. The unprecedented stand-down came after the deaths of two ROK teenage girls who were run over by a US armored military vehicle in June. Since then, ROK complaints about the conduct of US soldiers have swelled. The army said the educational sessions, titled "New Horizons Day," was to promote better understanding and bolster the US-ROK alliance. The program will be held every January and July starting next year.

"US Soldiers ROK Sensitivity Training" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

15. ROK Fruits Export to US Forces

The ROK started exporting agricultural products such as apples and pears last month to the US military base in Guam. The exporter, Korea Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Co., shipped US\$9,740 worth of products to the base in September, and has another, slightly larger shipment scheduled for Tuesday. It had already been exporting about US\$20,000 worth of fruits and vegetables monthly to US military bases in Japan. The company is selling some 25 items to the Guam base, including apples, pears, cucumbers and mushrooms. The company expects the value of the monthly shipments to the Guam base, which also supplies US naval vessels calling at the island, to rise to \$50,000 per month.

"ROK Fruits Export to US Forces" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, Japan)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC-Germany DPRK Asylum Seekers

The PRC's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday it was negotiating with German diplomats on the fate of three DPRK asylum seekers who entered a German school in Beijing this week.

"Yesterday, three unidentified people intruded into the German school in Beijing. The case is still being dealt with now," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue told a news conference. The asylum attempt was the third by DPRK citizens in five weeks at the lightly guarded compound housing the school and apartments for German. Zhang said cases of DPRK citizens seeking asylum at foreign missions in the PRC would be dealt with according to international and domestic law and in a humanitarian spirit. The PRC has so far let some 120 DPRK defectors who entered foreign missions leave for the ROK despite an agreement with the DPRK to send back escapees.

"PRC-Germany DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

"DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, ROK)

2. Cross-Straits Relations

Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian again demanded the PRC remove "immediately" the 400 missiles it has targeted at Taiwan and renounce the use of force against his country. The renewed call Thursday comes ahead of the Sino-US summit on October 25 between PRC President Ziang Zemin and US President George W. Bush in Crawford, Texas. Last month, on the eve of September 11, Chen insisted the PRC remove the missiles which he said were "terrorizing 23 million people". In his National Day message, Chen also urged the PRC to reopen dialogue with Taiwan through joint negotiations to bring about an easing of tensions between the two long-time rivals. "Our government will continue efforts to push for a normalization of cross-strait ties based on our belief in friendly reconciliation, active cooperation and everlasting peace," Chen said in front of top Taiwanese military and government officials at the presidential office as part of the National Day celebrations.

"Cross-Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

3. PRC-US Relations

President Jiang Zemin will visit the US from October 22 to 25, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday, confirming the PRC leader's trip schedule. PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue, at a regular briefing, announced the dates but said she had no details about Jiang's itinerary. "This is a big event in China-US bilateral relations, and both sides are working hard to ensure the visit builds trust and understanding and advances constructive cooperative relations between the sides," Zhang said. Among other events, Jiang is expected to visit US President George W. Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas, during his time in the US. That would be the third meeting between the two men within the last 12 months, following a pair of visits to the PRC by Bush.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

4. PRC-US Defense Contracts

The PRC wants renewed defense contacts and better military coordination with the US, the PRC's defense minister said during a meeting Wednesday with the highest-ranking US military official to visit the country in 18 months. Chi Haotian said resumption of contacts would help stabilize the world and the region. Military contacts have lain dormant since the April 2001 collision between a US spy plane and a PRC fighter jet over the South China Sea. The PRC wants "military relations with the U. in the spirit of mutual respect, mutual reciprocity and equal consultation," Chi stated. That would "further strengthen the communications and cooperation and ... contribute to regional and world peace and stability." Chi's remarks came during talks with US Navy Vice Admiral Paul Gaffney II, president of the National Defense University in Washington, DC He is the highest-ranking US military officer known to have been in the PRC since the spy-plane incident. Gaffney, who arrived in Beijing on Tuesday, was quoted saying he hopes for steps to "promote friendly cooperative relations between the two countries and the two armed forces."

"PRC-US Defense Contracts" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, US)

5. Taiwan-US Military Intelligence

The US has agreed to "conditionally" share its military satellite data with Taiwan according to a news report. Once linked to the US satellite system codenamed "Defense Support Project" (DSP), Taiwan would be able to allow up to seven more minutes in advance while its Patriot anti-missile weaponry prepared to intercept any incoming missiles, the United Daily News said Monday. It said the Taiwan military plans to set up ground stations over the next five years to plug the island's Patriot systems to the US military satellite system. The defense ministry was tight-lipped on the reported military cooperative project, a move the PRC may interpret as a further step towards a military alliance between the United States and Taiwan. But Taiwan's defense minister Tang Yao-ming told the parliament Monday "it would be his pleasure to see the development," without providing details. The US remains Taiwan's leading arms supplier.

"Taiwan-US Military Intelligence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

6. PRC-Russia Relations

PRC President Jiang Zemin and Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed bilateral relations in a telephone conversation on October 7. It reported that the two leaders agreed that PRC and Russia should strengthen contact, coordination and cooperation. PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan held a phone conversation on September 30 with Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on the best way of resolving the question of arms inspections in Iraq, and they had an in-depth exchange of views on the Iraq issue. In the report Ivanov stated the Russian stance and said that the issue should be solved by political means on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, and in line with the norms of international law. The Russian side hopes to maintain close contact with PRC on the issue, Ivanov added.

"PRC-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, PRC)

7. PRC-US Relations

PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue objected on October 5 to a report by the US Congress Executive Committee on PRC human rights, saying it interfered in PRC's internal affairs. Zhang said the report is full of arrogance and prejudice, and attacks PRC and interferes in its internal affairs by misrepresenting the issues of human rights, religion and the Falun Gong cult without addressing its great achievements in human rights and legislation. According to Zhang in the report, PRC expressed strong displeasure and resolute opposition to the report and has made solemn representations to the US over the issue.

PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue made comments on October 4 in response to questions concerning the Authorization Act recently signed into law by US President George W. Bush. Zhang said in the report that PRC will never accept the US Foreign Relations Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2003, which contains several articles violating both the three Sino-US joint communiques and the one-China policy, policies to which the US has repeatedly claimed it adheres. Zhang added that the above-mentioned articles constitute wanton interference in PRC's internal affairs and that PRC will never accept them. "China lodged serious representations on repeated occasions to the US, however, the Act was still signed into law, "we are strongly dissatisfied with that," said Zhang.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, PRC)

8. Taiwan Domestic Politics

A senior opposition figure Thursday offered to meet with Taiwan president Chen Shui-bian to help resolve a prolonged stalemate with the PRC that, he said, had dragged down Taiwan's economy. President Chen Shui-bian has repeatedly offered to meet leaders of opposition parties in an attempt to end their boycott of government initiatives. But many have rejected the invitation. On Thursday, James Soong, president of the People First Party, said a meeting was necessary because the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's vague stance toward the PRC has dragged down Taiwan's economy. "Our nation is facing a major crisis," Soong told reporters. "We must have a good talk on the issue of national identity before we can find a way to boost the economy."

"Taiwan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 10, US)

9. PRC War Games

The PRC wrapped up its first-ever joint war games with a foreign country on Thursday, a two-day anti-terrorism exercise with Kyrgyzstan, involving helicopters and a dozen armored vehicles. The exercise, which was six months in the planning, simulated the entrapment and annihilation of terrorists operating along the two countries' remote mountainous border, according to government broadcaster China Central Television. Earlier reports from former Soviet republic said 80 to 100 soldiers from each country participated in the exercises, held in mountains about 3,000 meters (9,900 feet) above sea level near Irkeshtam in southern Kyrgyzstan.

"PRC War Games" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 11, US)

Japan

1. Japan Defense Minister on DPRK

Japan Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba called the DPRK a "fearful state" Friday ahead of normalization talks scheduled to begin at the end of the month. "The Japanese people have come to realize that North Korea is a fearful state," Defense Ministry spokesman Akihiro Kobe quoted Ishiba as saying in a meeting with US Ambassador Howard Baker. Baker cautioned Japan to proceed with care in the upcoming normalization talks with the DPRK, the official said. The talks are scheduled for October 29-30 in Kuala Lumpur, though Japan has said repeatedly that progress on normalization depends upon the resolution of the abduction issue. Japan and the DPRK have never had diplomatic ties.

"Japan Defense Minister on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 11, US)

2. Japan Domestic Economy

Fears are growing in Japan that the relentless slide in Tokyo's stock market might topple companies or major banks and further harm the already hobbled economy at a time when the government is finally getting serious about solving the nation's debt mess. The main index on the Tokyo Stock Exchange plunged again Thursday, closing at a new 19-year low for the third time this week. The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average fell 1.17 percent to 8,439.62 points, its lowest finish since April 8, 1983. "Japan is going to sink and turn into a nation of beggars," said Masaaki Takahashi, 58, whose land development business has been struggling to obtain bank loans. "It's a big mess." Like many Japanese, Takahashi was worried that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi seemed to have no plan to salvage the economy. The stock market has been lagging at 19-year lows for weeks. But the plummet took a turn for the worse shortly after Koizumi picked a new Cabinet on September 30 and placed economy minister Heizo Takenaka in charge of financial services. Takenaka promised to speed up the cleanup of bad debts at the banks in a "quicker, larger-scale and more understandable" way. The promise was supposed to reassure investors and analysts, who have complained that bad debts in the financial sector are a drag on Japan's economy. Instead, Takenaka's comments set off fears that corporate bankruptcies - even of major banks - may be inevitable. Investors have been fleeing in droves. The Nikkei Stock Average, which stood above 9,300 at the end of September, has shed about 10 percent in this month's eight trading sessions.

"Japan Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 11, US)

"Japan Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, US)

3. Japan Nobel Prize Winners

Japan won its third - and then its fourth - Nobel Prize in three years. On Tuesday, Masatoshi Koshihara, a 76-year-old professor emeritus at Japan's top university, had won the prize in physics for his work with neutrinos. Then on Wednesday, Koichi Tanaka, an engineer at precision equipment maker Shimadzu Corp., won the coveted honor in chemistry. Japan has now won a Nobel Prize for the third year in a row, and two in a year for the first time ever. Tanaka - the country's 12th Nobel winner - accepted his prize in stunned disbelief. "I still can't believe even now that I would win this kind of a prize," he said. "If I'd known, I would have liked to be better prepared, perhaps dressed in a suit and tie at least, so I apologize for my attire," he stated, smiling shyly.

"Japan Nobel Prize Winners" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 9, US)

4. Japan-US-ROK DPRK Summit

The US, Japan and ROK plan to hold a summit on the DPRK on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific leaders' forum in Mexico later this month, officials said. The leaders of the three allies are to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Los Cabos, October 26-27, the officials said Monday. The planned trilateral talks would focus on how to handle relations with the DPRK following US special envoy James Kelly's landmark visit to Pyongyang last week. "We are in consultation on holding the three-way summit during the APEC summit," an aide to President Kim Dae-Jung's office told AFP. "North Korea will top the agenda to be discussed by the three." He said the exact date for the summit between President Kim, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush had yet to be fixed, but Seoul's cable television news YTN expected it to be on October 27.

"Japan-US-ROK DPRK Summit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, US)

"US, Japan and ROK Ties with DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, PRC)

5. Japan-DPRK Relations

A Japanese senior official said on October 7 that Japan will push ahead with talks to normalize relations with DPRK, despite rising anger over the latter's admission it abducted more than a dozen Japanese decades ago. The report said that the two countries agreed to restart normalization talks last month, when Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi met DPRK leader Kim Jong-il for an unprecedented summit in Pyongyang. It reported that the chief spokesman for Koizumi's cabinet Yasuo Fukuda said Tokyo will move ahead with the talks, which are expected later this month. The report also said that the two countries have never had diplomatic ties and the most recent round of normalization talks broke down two years ago over the abduction issue.

"Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 8, PRC)

6. Aum Cult Death Sentence

A Japanese court sentenced the Aum Supreme Truth cult's former top bio-chemist to death for murder and other charges related to the deadly nerve gas attacks the group unleashed in the 1990s. After a seven-year trial, the Tokyo District Court sentenced to death by hanging Seiichi Endo, 42, a central figure in the cult's deadly sarin gas-producing group, in line with prosecutors's demands. He is the ninth Aum cult follower to get the death sentence. It was not immediately known whether he would appeal. Endo was also held responsible for two attempted murder cases and helping a wanted Aum follower hide from police.

"Aum Cult Death Sentence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 11, US)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Pakistan conducted two tests of its medium range surface-to-surface missile while India test fired Akash, its medium range surface-to-air missile. A Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman has stated that Pakistan has been "forced [by Indian actions] to carry out certain tests." A Daily Times editorial criticizes missile testing by the two countries and argues that "military preparedness by one or the other cannot resolve anything."

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

Afghanistan

1. Current News

A report in the daily Frontier Post describes US military operations in southeastern Afghanistan. The US army has reportedly uncovered large weapons and ammunition. Gunshots were reportedly fired at a small US base in a remote region of southeastern Afghanistan. Another report indicates that the blast that injured four people near the US embassy in Kabul came from a homemade explosive device. Afghan President Hamid Karzai believes that the Taliban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar is alive while Osama bin Laden is "probably dead."

"Current News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

2. Analysis

Author and journalist Ahmed Rashid writes that there are "mounting fears in Afghanistan that President George W. Bush's war against Iraq will seriously compromise further attempts by the US-led Western alliance to stabilize Afghanistan." Ashfak Bokhari's essay in the daily Dawn argues that Afghanistan "appears to be entering a dangerous phase of its troubled existence."

"Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

India-Pakistan

1. India-Pakistan News

"India gets radars to check infiltration"

"News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

2. India-Pakistan Analysis

Brahma Chellaney's essay in the daily Hindustan Times warns Pakistan "to heed the famous John Dryden saying: 'Beware of the fury of the patient man.'" J.N. Dixit (Indian Express) argues that "ultimately the solution to the Indo-Pakistani dimensions of the Kashmir issue will have to be on the basis of the LoC getting converted into the international border." H.M. Askari's essay in the daily Dawn (Pakistan) criticizes India for its "unwillingness" to sit "across the negotiating table" with Pakistan and "sort out all problems and differences with it."

"Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

3. Pre-emption and South Asia

India's former Foreign Minister and current Finance Minister Jaswant Singh has stated that "pre-emption is the right of any nation to prevent injury to itself." A daily Hindu editorial criticizes Jaswant Singh for minimizing "the ill-effects of a doctrine that has ominous portents irrespective of the circumstances and context in which it is to be applied." A daily Indian Express editorial urges the US to be cautious in applying the principle of preemption and notes that for "India, which has been the victim of cross-border terrorism for 18 years, terrorist camps, and sanctuaries would appear to be legitimate targets for pre-emptive attacks." According to a daily News (Pakistan) report, the Pakistani government is taking the possibility of an Indian pre-emptive strike "seriously".

"Pre-emption and South Asia" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

4. Pakistan Campaign Against Jihadis

Rauf Klasra (News, Pakistan) reports that Pakistani government is considering introducing a surveillance program modeled on the US terrorism information and prevention program (TIP). According to another report in the same newspaper, the Pakistani government has hired the services of experts from the private sector to assist in arrest and investigation of alleged terrorists. According to Interior Minister Lt- Gen Moinuddin Haider the US will extend a grant of \$124 million to Pakistan to "control terrorist activities" in the country. Tim Kennedy, a defense specialist, believes that it is unlikely that US law enforcement personnel based in Karachi will leave the city soon.

"Campaign Against Jihadis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

5. US-Pakistan Relations

According to a Jane's Defence Weekly report, Pakistan is looking to buy the RQ-1A Predator or other Unmanned Air Vehicles from the US. Finance Minister Shaukat Aziz has stated that Pakistan is seeking more "budgetary support, market access and security (internal) assistance" from the US. The US has reportedly agreed to help enhance Pakistan's conventional defense capability. A daily Dawn editorial believes that the "resumption of American military sales should .. serve to plug the gaps that have developed in Pakistan's defence systems." In his essay for the daily News, Farrukh Saleem argues that "democracy or a prosperous, progressive Pakistan is not the primary issue with the US. War on terrorism is." "US-Pakistan Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

6. Other Pakistan News

Nadeem Iqbal (Asia Times) reports that Pakistan is seeking to increase its arms export. President Musharraf has appointed Vice-Admiral Shahid Karimullah as the new Chief of the Naval Staff. Pakistan will undergo a detailed inspection of its five big industrial chemical plants for the first time since becoming a signatory state of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

"Other News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

7. India: Domestic Situation

The president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) criticized some recent statements by the leaders of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) as intolerant and extreme. VHP, however, reiterated that it is "an ardent supporter of the BJP" while, at the same time, adding that India needs a "leader like Ariel Sharon, George W Bush or Shivaji to combat terrorism." Five alleged militants were reportedly killed in an encounter with the police in Bangalore.

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

Kashmir

1. Elections

The fourth and final phase of elections to the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Assembly in Doda district ended with a reported 52 percent voter turnout amid fear of violence. The third round of voting was marked by widespread violence. Muzamil Jaleel report for Indian Express describes the environment of fear in J&K. Many incidents of violence were reported in the state. Some candidates, running as 'proxy' for pro- independence parties, have also alleged harassment and intimidation by police. Shabir Shah, leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, believes that the elections were a "golden opportunity [to] talk on all options, but the government of India did not encash it." Omar Abdullah, the chief of the ruling National Conference Party believes that India has to initiate discussions with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Anjna Modi (Hindu) believes that the election has "created possibilities. Not of peace and a lasting settlement, but of a new political leadership."

"Elections" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

2. India, Pakistan, US

Ajay Darshan Behera's two-part essay in the daily Hindu examines the positions of Tamil nationalist LTTE and the Kashmiri All-Party Hurriyat Conference, a conglomerate of separatist parties, to argue that "the LTTE has made a positive first move and rekindled hopes; the Hurriyat, if it still wishes to remain relevant, should start thinking of a non-secessionist right to self-determination.

"India, Pakistan, US" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

Regional News

1. Philippines

Luis Tedor argues that the use of force against rebellion and "those forms of banditry that rely on the poor for recruits as well as support is not enough to put an end to them." Rather, the Filipino government needs to negotiate with "armed social movements" and initiate economic and social reform. Security in Zamboanga city was tightened following a bomb explosion - allegedly conducted by the Abu-Sayyaf group - that killed an American. FBI agents have been dispatched to the area to help investigate the blast.

"Philippines" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

2. Nepal

Nepal's King Gyanendra has dismissed the Prime Minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and his Cabinet, and declared himself the interim executive head of the kingdom. Ousted Prime Minister Deuba termed his dismissal by the king as unconstitutional and undemocratic.

"Nepal" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #33)

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