

NAPSNET Week in Review 13 December, 2002

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNET Week in Review 13 December, 2002", NAPSNet Weekly Report, December 13, 2002, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-weekly/napsnet-week-in-review-13-december-2002/>

United States

1. Iraq Arms Declaration

In a surprise decision late Sunday, the Security Council agreed to give the US, Russia, France, the PRC, and Britain full access to Iraq's arms declaration, U.N. officials and diplomats said. The other 10 council members, will only see the declaration once it is translated, analyzed and gleaned of sensitive material - including possible instructions on bomb-making

"Iraq Arms Declaration" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, US)

2. US-Russia Relations

Russian President Vladimir Putin talked with US President George W. Bush through telephone on December 6, stressing the importance of Russia-US cooperation for the world peace. The two leaders also spoke highly of the recently held meeting, said the report.

"US-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK Nuclear Reactor

The DPRK said it would reactivate a mothballed nuclear program because of a US decision to cut off fuel aid. The DPRK move came as the US pondered possible military action against Iraq and a day after US concerns about the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs were highlighted by the seizure of a DPRK consignment of Scud missiles bound for Yemen. In a report carried by the Korean Central News Agency, the energy-starved state said it would scrap a 1994 agreement to freeze its plutonium-producing nuclear facilities because it needed extra power production.

The ROK said Thursday that it was dismayed by the DPRK's announcement that it will revive an old nuclear program, and urged its neighbor to reverse the decision and abide by international nuclear non-proliferation accords.

The US on Thursday described as regrettable the DPRK's decision to restart a nuclear power plant and said it would seek a peaceful resolution to the new challenge presented by the DPRK.

"DPRK Nuclear Reactor" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

"ROK Response to DPRK Nuclear Program" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

"US Response to DPRK Nuclear Reactor" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

2. DPRK's Trial Developing Nuclear

DPRK is seeking to buy from PRC companies a chemical that can be used in the process of producing nuclear weapons fuel, the Washington Times reported Monday, quoting unnamed intelligence sources. DPRK reportedly tried to buy tributyl phosphate, or TBP, from several PRC firms. The chemical has commercial uses, but the US intelligence community believes that DPRK wanted it to advance its uranium-based nuclear weapons program.

"DPRK's Trial Developing Nuclear" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, ROK)

3. ROK Presidential Election

With one week to go in the ROK's tight left-right race for president, the search and release of a DPRK freighter carrying Scud missiles may help the conservative candidate by reminding voters of the DPRK military threat, political analysts here say. In past elections, conservative candidates here have been helped by reminders of the security threat posed by the DPRK.

"ROK Presidential Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

4. US Releases DPRK Missile Ship

The US yesterday agreed to release a ship containing DPRK missiles bound for Yemen after strong protests by the Yemeni government suggested that Monday's seizure of the vessel by Spanish and US forces would affect Yemen's cooperation in the war on terrorism. The unflagged ship, carrying 15 Scud missiles along with conventional warheads and rocket propellant, had been tracked for weeks by the US before it was intercepted in the Arabian Sea 600 miles southeast of Yemen. The delivery appeared to violate a commitment made by Yemen in July of last year, before the Sept. 11 attacks, not to purchase any more DPRK missile equipment in exchange for avoiding sanctions for previous suspect deals with DPRK. But in a flurry of phone calls between Yemeni officials and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Vice President Cheney, Yemen successfully argued that the ship was carrying equipment that predated that commitment.

"US Releases DPRK Missile Ship" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

"DPRK Missile Shipment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

5. Responses to DPRK Weapons Proliferation

The DPRK was silent Wednesday about the interception of a ship allegedly carrying missiles from the DPRK, but said it had the right to develop weapons to defend itself. In a possible sign of US-ROK tension, the party of a leading presidential candidate in Seoul questioned the timing of the White House announcement Tuesday that a ship carrying a dozen Scud-type missiles was intercepted in the Arabian Sea with the help of US intelligence. The party of Roh Moo-hyun, a candidate in the December 19 election who says he wants a more "equal" relationship with the US, noted that some US and ROK news media reported earlier this month about an alleged DPRK ship bound for Yemen with missile parts.

The DPRK came under pressure from friends and enemies alike on Wednesday after the discovery of a DPRK ship carrying Scud missiles in the Arabian Sea. The Russian ambassador to Beijing, Igor Rogachev, said Russia and the PRC were putting heavy pressure on the DPRK not to develop nuclear arms and had talked to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il.

"Responses to DPRK Weapons Proliferation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

6. DPRK Asylum Seekers

A growing number of Bush administration officials, policy experts and lawmakers argue that the stream of refugees from the DPRK into the PRC could sharply increase, particularly if the PRC agreed not to send them back, and if the ROK and the US took in more escapees. In Congress, Senator Sam Brownback, the conservative Republican from Kansas, and Senator Edward Kennedy, the liberal Democrat from Massachusetts, have sponsored legislation that would remove a provision in immigration law that makes it difficult for DPRK citizens to seek asylum in the United States. House Republicans have also called on the administration to share the costs of resettling DPRK refugees with the ROK, the PRC, Russia and other Asian countries, much as it did with Vietnamese boat people in the 1970's

"DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

7. DPRK-ROK Maritime Relations

The DPRK on Wednesday accused the ROK of trying to incite a naval clash by sending warships into its territorial waters off the western coast. The ROK rejected the accusations. The DPRK' said two ROK warships and five fishing boats stayed in DPRK waters "for hours" Wednesday morning and another navy ship for about half an hour shortly after noon. "This provocation ... is a prearranged move of the South Korean military authorities to spark one more shocking incident in the west sea and shift the blame for it on the North side," said KCNA, monitored in Seoul.

"DPRK-ROK Maritime Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

8. UN DPRK Food Monitoring

The United Nations must push for humanitarian and food aid monitoring in the DPRK just as it has for weapons inspections in Iraq because the DPRK deliberately misuses the international donations, an activist urged Tuesday. German doctor Norbert Vollertsen said the DPRK diverts the food aid to military elite in the capital of Pyongyang or sells it in diplomatic stores for hard currency instead of delivering it to the impoverished people in the countryside. Vollertsen, speaking before Japanese Parliament's lower house Security Committee, volunteered his medical services to DPRK in 1999 and won a friendship medal from the government along with the privilege to visit areas off-limits to most outsiders. He was later expelled after criticizing the DPRK's government policies. He urged Japan, as one of the DPRK's biggest food aid donors, to pressure the United Nations to adopt a food monitoring program in the DPRK, and compared it to the body's resolution for weapons inspectors in Iraq.

"UN DPRK Food Monitoring" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, US)

9. DPRK-ROK Red Cross Talks

North Korea proposed to South Korea on Friday that the Red Cross of each country hold talks next week. The meeting would follow up on an earlier accord to set up a permanent reunion center for family members separated five decades ago. In September, the heads of the two Korean Red Cross Societies agreed to build a permanent reunion center for separated family members at the Diamond Mountain resort.

"DPRK-ROK Red Cross Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 6, US)

10. DPRK Winter Fuel Situation

The onset of winter may seem an inopportune time for the US to stop shipping sorely needed heavy oil the DPRK, where temperatures of 20 below zero Fahrenheit (-29 Celsius) are routine at this time of year. The halt was announced just days ahead of a revised administration food aid policy for the DPRK that could lead to cutbacks in 2003. These are among signs of broad international unhappiness with the DPRK lately. The country may be as isolated now as it has been at any time over the past three years. Peter Hayes, who follows the DPRK at the California-based Nautilus Institute, says the DPRK's home and workplace heating problems are such that the cutoff of US oil shipments after eight years won't make much of a difference. "The energy economy is one-tenth of what it used to be," Hayes said. "If you reduce it by 5 to 10 percent, you may get a 1 percent effect." Even if an oil shipment initially set for next week had gone ahead as scheduled, most of the country's buildings would have remained without heat anyway, he says. Hayes believes that the DPRK will be able to evade the devastating famine that struck the country in 1996-97. But, he says, the situation remains grim, with "highly concentrated pockets of extreme malnutrition and starvation" in some areas and "generalized hunger" elsewhere. As always, food supplies in Pyongyang will be adequate, he adds.

"DPRK Winter Fuel Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

11. ROK Anti-Americanism

Anti-Americanism was on the agenda here as US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage began the second leg of an Asian tour to drum up support for a possible US-led attack on Iraq. The DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons programme was also central to Armitage's round of talks with top South Korean officials. Some 40 demonstrators braved freezing temperature outside the US embassy in central Seoul to protest the Armitage visit. "The purpose of Deputy Secretary Armitage's visit is to discuss issues related to North Korea's nuclear weapons program and Iraq," a Foreign Ministry official said. "However, local anti-US sentiment will also be on agenda."

ROK President Kim Dae-Jung has called for calm and leading contenders for the December 19 presidential election joined efforts to defuse an alarming rise of anti-Americanism. With the 50-year-old alliance between the ROK and the US under strain, Kim, for the second time in three days, urged protestors to reign in their attacks on the US. Anti-US sentiment has been simmering since the acquittal last month of two US soldiers accused of causing the deaths of two local schoolgirls in a traffic accident. Thousands of people held a candlelight protest rally near the US embassy over the weekend and Henry Hyde, chairman of the US House of Representatives Committee on International Relations, scrapped a planned visit to the South Korean capital.

A group of 25 Roman Catholic priests has entered the fifth day of their hunger strike near the US embassy to protest the deaths of two schoolgirls hit by a US military vehicle in June. Nearby, a group of 20 Buddhists led by a monk carried out an elaborate ritual prayer for the souls of the two teenagers, bowing, kneeling, and touching the ground with their foreheads. The priests from the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice (CPAJ) were camped out at a street corner some 50 meters (yards) from the US embassy, protected by wire fences and lines of riot police.

"ROK Anti-Americanism" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, US)

"ROK Response to Anti-US Protests" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, US)

"ROK Anti-US Hunger Strike" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 6, US)

12. ROK US Soldier Conviction

The ROK's supreme court convicted a US soldier charged with hitting a Korean woman in a car accident and sentenced him to eight months in prison. The ruling Wednesday required the US military to hand Ronnie D. Kirby, 27, over to ROK authorities to have him serve the term in an ROK prison. The supreme court upheld a lower court ruling against Kirby. Charges filed against him included driving without insurance and violating a traffic signal and hitting a victim. The 61-year-old female victim, identified only by her last name "Chun," is in a coma from the accident. Kirby was driving in Osan, a city 44 miles south of Seoul, on July 1 last year when he ran a red light and hit the woman. He was off duty at that time. Under the Status of Forces Agreement, the ROK has jurisdiction over US soldiers involved in crimes committed while not on official duty. But even in such cases, soldiers can remain under US custody until all appeals under the Korean legal system have been exhausted.

"ROK US Soldier Conviction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

13. US-ROK Relations

Rallies were held in memory of the two dead school girls on December 7 in ROK. More than 10,000 citizens held their hands and had a candle light demonstration, asking for the invalidity of the US Army trial, trial of assaulter in the Korean court, direct apology by the US President George W. Bush, and total amendment of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), the report said.

A civic delegation from ROK left for US on December 2 to demand a direct apology from President George W. Bush over the acquittal of two US soldiers who killed two schoolgirls in a road accident. Under an accord between the US and the ROK, US troops here come under US jurisdiction for crimes committed while on duty. ROK civic groups and politicians have urged US to revise the accord. On December 2, 27 lawmakers from rival political parties signed a petition demanding Bush's direct apology. They also vowed to push for a parliamentary resolution demanding the ROK exercise greater jurisdiction on crimes committed by US soldiers, the report said.

US and ROK officials began talks Wednesday on modifying a treaty governing US troops in the country to defuse mounting anger over the deaths of two girls run over by a US army vehicle. The meeting in Seoul followed an apology by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage Tuesday for the accidental deaths of the teenagers and a commitment to work to improve the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

"ROK-US Troop Treaty Revisions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

"US-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

14. US DPRK Diplomacy

There is time for diplomacy to do its work in the effort to denuclearize the DPRK, Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said in Japan.

US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said Tuesday that the US would seek a "diplomatic solution" to the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. But the DPRK the same day reiterated its rejection of a UN watchdog's appeal to abandon its nuclear program and to accept foreign inspections. Armitage, who arrived in Seoul Tuesday, discussed the DPRK with President Kim Dae-jung, Foreign Minister Choi Sung-hong and Defense Minister Lee Jun. The DPRK and its allies are trying to pressure the North to give up its nuclear ambitions. Earlier Tuesday, North Korea's state-run news agency, KCNA, said the communist state rejects as "unilateral and biased" the International Atomic Energy Agency's resolution urging the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program and open its facilities to outside inspectors.

"US DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, US)

15. ROK President met US Senators

President Kim Dae-jung met with visiting US senators Monday and said the national uproar following the deaths of two schoolgirls during a US military training exercise should not compromise the spirit of the two countries' relationship. Kim asked Senator Daniel Inouye, Democrat of Hawaii, and Senator Ted Stevens, Republican of Alaska, for the cooperation of the US Congress in ensuring that the problem is resolved to the benefit of the two countries.

"ROK President met US Senators" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, ROK)

16. Kumgang Land Route Tourism Delayed

The opening of the Mount Kumgang land route tourism program via a temporary east coast highway, which was expected to take place from December 17, was postponed until after the 16th presidential election on December 19. ROK government official said Monday although the Hyundai Asan survey team will be going to DPRK this week, the date of the land route tour had not been agreed on. The tour was originally set to start December 11 and the official said the reasons for this delay were DPRK's request for tour fees of US\$10 million, which have not been paid for at the present and complications with military approval on tourist passage through the DMZ.

"Kumgang Land Route Tourism Delayed" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, ROK)

17. US-ROK Talks on SOFA

ROK government decided to press ahead with the issue of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) improvements at a "2+2 meeting" on December 11, which is to be attended by the Korean vice ministers of foreign affairs and trade, and national defense, and the US consul and the 8th Army commander. The government also plans to bring up the issue to the SOFA Korea-US Joint Committee criminal affairs sub-committee meeting on December 12. A comprehensive conference is also to be held during the December 10 visit of US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on the subject of the clandestine North Korean nuclear project and the subject of the two states' cooperation in case of an Iraqi attack. ROK Government officials also plan to talk to Deputy Secretary Armitage on easing Korean anti-Americanism. In relation to this the central government held a working level "SOFA improvement measures" meeting with related bureau directors.

"US-ROK Talks on SOFA" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, ROK)

18. ROK-Russia Railway Linking

Officials from ROK and Russia opened a two-day meeting in Seoul, Monday, to discuss the idea of connecting an inter-Korean rail link with the Trans-Siberian Railway. The Ministry of Construction and Transportation said key topics of concern include establishing a Russian railway representative office in ROK as well as activating the use of Russia's Trans-Siberian Railway. The Ministry adds the second ROK-Russia Transportation Cooperation Committee meeting will also serve to discuss the possibility of sharing information on DPRK's railway conditions.

"ROK-Russia Railway Linking" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, ROK)

19. US-Russia on DPRK

US President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke chiefly about the DPRK in a 14-minute phone conversation December 6, White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer told reporters. "President Putin has just returned from a trip he had taken to China, India and Kyrgyzstan. The two of them discussed the situation on the Korean Peninsula and the importance of the DPRK making certain that they comply with the international community in a denuclearized Korean Peninsula. And the two discussed the importance of continuing our joint efforts to make that the case," Fleischer said.

"US-Russia on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, US)

20. ROK-US Security Alliance

The US and ROK remain committed to furthering close cooperation on security issues on the Korean peninsula, according to a joint communique issued December 5 by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and his ROK counterpart, ROK Minister of National Defense Lee Jun. Meeting in Washington D.C., Rumsfeld and Lee "agreed on the need to continue to maintain a US presence in the Korean Peninsula and concurred that the alliance will serve to bolster peace and stability in Northeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole," the joint communiqué said.

"ROK-US Security Alliance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC-US on DPRK

US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said on Thursday that the PRC agreed that the DPRK should drop its nuclear weapons program and he was sure the PRC would help put pressure on the DPRK. Armitage also said he had good talks with "our Chinese friends" on Iraq before heading to Australia for the final leg of a tour that has already covered Japan and South Korea. Armitage's trip was designed to drum up support for US plans on Iraq as the US assesses Baghdad's weapons declaration and to coordinate efforts to rein in North Korea's nuclear weapons program. But the seizure of a DPRK ship carrying Scud missiles to Yemen threw an additional spotlight on the DPRK's weapons exports as Armitage arrived in Beijing from Seoul.

"PRC-US on DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

2. PRC-US Military Ties

The PRC expressed on Wednesday satisfaction with the first high-level defence talks with the US since President George W. Bush took office two years ago and hoped to continue the dialogue. In addition, both sides are determined to "maintain this very important channel of exchange", he said. After holding lengthy talks with Feith and then meeting Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz on Monday, Xiong met on Tuesday with National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice.

The PRC painted an optimistic picture of its resurgent military contacts with the US on Thursday, saying the sides were building good momentum with talks between high-level defense officials in the US this week. Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said the contacts demonstrated both sides' commitment to set aside differences and focus on security issues. People's Liberation Army Gen. Xiong Guangkai is meeting in Washington this week with Defense Department officials, the latest in a string of military contacts scheduled after President Jiang Zemin met with US President George W. Bush in Texas in October. Liu said Xiong also met National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, among others.

Senior military officials from the US and the PRC have held their first talks since the debut of the Bush administration and a damaging 2001 diplomatic crisis over a downed US spy plane. Teams led by senior People's Liberation Army General Xiong Guangkai and US Under Secretary of Defense Douglas Feith met for a strategic dialogue, ranging over Taiwan, terrorism, non-proliferation and the DPRK nuclear crisis. The US used the talks to broaden its push for the PRC to step up pressure on the DPRK. The two sides also discussed their common approach to terrorism, launched in the wake of the September 11 attacks, which has seen US officials praise PRC for sharing intelligence on suspected terror groups. But the talks appeared to make little headway on frequent areas of contention between the US and PRC.

"PRC-US Military Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 12, US)

"PRC-US Military Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

"PRC-US Military Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 10, US)

3. PRC-US on Iraq

A senior US official arrived in the PRC on Wednesday to discuss Iraq, but gave no indication whether he would bring up a seized shipment of missiles that was believed to be on its way to the DPRK. US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage said he wanted to discuss the UN Security Council resolution that requires Iraq to cooperate with efforts to determine whether it still has long-range missiles and other weapons of mass destruction. The PRC supported the Iraq resolution but has argued against US threats of military action, insisting that the UN respect Iraqi sovereignty and settle the matter promptly.

"PRC-US on Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 11, US)

4. Across Taiwan Straits Relations

Taiwan authorities gave final approval on December 4 for the indirect charter flights carrying Taiwan businessmen back to Taiwan during the Spring Festival. Only Taiwanese airlines can apply to operate the flights to pick up Taiwanese businessmen and their families living on the mainland. What's more, carriers are required to land either at Pudong or Hongqiao airports in Shanghai and at Chiang Kai-shek or Hsiaokang airports in Taiwan, said the report.

In Jiang Zemin's report to the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the mainland made one more good-will gesture by promulgating an amendment on regulations for Taiwan reporters on December 2, which made it more convenient for Taiwan reporters to do their job on the mainland. The revision of the 1996 Stipulations for Journalists' Mainland News Coverage from Taiwan, empowers local government departments to handle applications from the island's reporters for interviews and news coverage on the mainland.

Application procedures will be simplified and more Taiwanese reporters will visit the mainland, the report said. Such move will contribute to a better understanding and more trust, accelerating the process of peaceful reunification between the mainland and island.

However, the report said that Taiwan authorities have made no active response to mainland efforts to promote cross-Straits new media exchanges, while on the contrary, laying down numerous obstacles for mainland journalists to visit the island. But their acts have provoked strong opposition from journalists on both sides, who have urged Taiwan to take sincere and concrete measures to promote the healthy development of cross-Straits press exchanges.

The PRC called on Taiwan on Friday to authorize private groups to begin talks with PRC counterparts on indirect charter flights that would permit Taiwanese planes to land into the PRC for the first time in over 50 years. The talks should begin as soon as possible on technical details related to the flights, tentatively scheduled for next year's Lunar New Year holiday, said a spokesman for the Civil Aviation Administration of China who gave only his surname, Yang.

"Across Taiwan Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

"Cross-Straits Direct Links" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 6, US)

5. US-Cross Straits-Relations

PRC President Jiang Zemin suggested during his meeting with President Bush in October that the PRC could link its deployment of short-range missiles facing Taiwan to US arms sales to the Taiwanese military, a senior PRC official said. The proposal marked the first time the PRC has offered to link the missiles with arms sales and, the official said, "created new space for cooperation" between the US and the PRC. Bush administration officials, responding to a reporter's inquiries in Washington, seemed to have little interest in the PRC proposal, using words that suggested it was a non-starter as far as they were concerned.

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

6. PRC-US Relations on Taiwan Issue

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said at a regular press briefing on December 3 that PRC will not accept military co-operation or exchanges between US and Taiwan in any form, for such moves would be against the three Sino-US joint communiques. Liu was speaking after the US Congress passed a bill that includes Taiwan-related clauses demanding the US Government to report to the US Congress on the rationality and feasibility of a joint military drill between the US and Taiwan.

"PRC-US Relations on Taiwan Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

7. PRC Defense Policy

The PRC issued a major new defense policy document that called for maintaining peaceful conditions for economic growth and advocated an international security concept focused on "mutual" security. "A developing China needs a peaceful international environment and a favorable climate in its periphery," the State Council said in a defense white paper entitled "China's National Defense in 2002." The document, only the fourth such paper issued by the PRC, reflected the goal of building a "well-off" society which the PRC's top leaders set out at a key party congress last month. Much of the white paper urged that the world should balance the security needs of one country with the security of others.

"PRC Defense Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, US)

8. Taiwan on PRC Human Rights

Taiwan issued a human rights report Monday that warned the PRC that relations between the rivals won't progress significantly as long as PRC leaders stifle democracy and human rights.

"Taiwan on PRC Human Rights" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, US)

9. PRC-Russia Relations

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit was a complete success and has injected new vigor into Sino-Russian relations, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao at a press briefing held on December 3. Liu said PRC President Jiang Zemin and Putin had an overall review of a decade of relations and made strategic plans for the future.

The presidents of PRC and Russia pledged to crack down on all forms of terrorism on a bilateral and multilateral basis in a joint statement on December 3, after condemning Chechen and East Turkistan terrorists. The report said that the joint statement was signed on December 2 after Jiang and Putin had a "fruitful" discussion on international issues as well as bilateral ties. On the Korean Peninsula issue, the two leaders held that it is crucial to peace and security in Northeast Asia to maintain a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and a system for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. They emphasized that the US and the DPRK should abide by all agreements signed before, including especially the 1994 framework agreement, according to the report.

During a meeting of PRC president Jiang Zemin and Russian president Vladimir Putin on December 2, the two leaders expressed their confidence that ties will improve under a good-neighborly treaty signed last year. Jiang said the two countries should continue honoring the existing mechanism of the exchange of high-level visits and regular meetings, adding that the two will strengthen cooperation in military technology as well as military exchanges.

Meanwhile Putin said Russia will continue to give priority to its relations with PRC in its foreign policies.

"PRC-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

10. PRC's Attitude towards Korean Peninsula Peace

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said on December 5 that PRC hoped that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s resolution urging the DPRK to cooperate with an inspection of its nuclear facilities will help realize denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. PRC hopes that all countries concerned will continue to abide by the 1994 agreement on Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities reached in Geneva between US and DPRK, Liu said in the report.

"PRC's Attitude towards Korean Peninsula Peace" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

11. US-PRC Military Relations

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu said at a regular press briefing on December 5 that the People's Liberation Army General Staff Deputy Chief Xiong Guangkai will hold talks with US defense officials in Washington early next week. Liu said that the talks are taking place after an October agreement between Jiang and his US counterpart to resume military exchanges soon. In another development, Liu said the US State Department's envoy for democracy and human rights is due in Beijing later this month to reopen human rights dialogue.

"US-PRC Military Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

12. PRC DPRK Smuggling Trial

The PRC has put seven people, including an ROK citizen, on trial and arrested 11 more accused of smuggling 70 DPRK asylum-seekers across the border, state media and officials said on Friday. There was no immediate comment from the DPRK or ROK embassies about the two, whose names were likely to be spelt Choi Bong-il and Kim Kyong-lee in the Korean romanized script. The trial was underway at the Intermediate People's Court of Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture in the northeastern province of Jilin, which borders DPRK, court officials said. The police had arrested 11 other suspects, Xinhua said, giving no date of their trial.

"PRC DPRK Smuggling Trial" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 6, US)

13. PRC Economic Status

While backed by an economy four times the size of the PRC's, Japan still doles out foreign aid to its enormous - and thriving - neighbor. But to judge by the PRC's recent slights and snubs of Japan, a visitor might think that the PRC is already the economic power of Asia. One day, the PRC slapped emergency tariffs on steel imports from Japan. The next day, Nippon Steel Corporation obligingly announced a \$1 billion joint venture with the PRC's largest steel maker to build a state-of-the-art rolled-sheet steel factory in China. The PRC's leadership recently set an ambitious goal of quadrupling its \$1 trillion economy in 20 years. Japan's goals are much more modest: ending deflation and bringing bad bank loans under control by 2005.

"PRC Economic Status" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 6, US)

Japan

1. US-Japan Relations

US refused on December 5 to hand over to the Japanese authorities a US Marine suspected of trying to rape a woman in her car on Okinawa, home to most of the US military bases in Japan. Japan said on December 4 that it will send a destroyer with a high-tech Aegis missile detection system to the Indian Ocean later this month to back up US action in Afghanistan, a step that might cause a row at home.

"US-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 9, PRC)

2. Japan's Role in Iraq

Japan may step up its logistical support for the US if war breaks out with Iraq and is outlining plans to send troops and provide aid to help rebuild the country afterward, reports said Friday. Along with support similar to what it is now providing the US military in the Indian Ocean, Japan is mulling whether to dispatch personnel to help Washington rebuild Iraq if its leader, Saddam Hussein, is ousted, according to a report by the Kyodo news service. The Yomiuri newspaper report, based on anonymous government sources, said Japan is outlining plans for economic and humanitarian assistance, and for the funding of refugee-related operations after Saddam is overthrown.

"Japan's Role in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, December 6, US)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

In an interview with the daily Hindu, Russian President Vladimir Putin expressed his concern that Pakistan's nuclear weapons can fall into the hands of terrorists. Pakistan rejected Putin's concerns. A daily News editorial remarks that "such charges can best be applied to Russia as there have been 200 incidents of smuggling nuclear material in suitcases." India's Naval Chief Admiral Madhvendra Singh has stated that India "must have a nuclear triad with the strongest arm at sea, preferably underwater." The daily Indian Express reports that Russia has offered India an arms package that includes the sale of the aircraft carrier, Admiral Gorshkov, along with a three-year lease of a Akula II class nuclear submarine.

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

Afghanistan

1. Current News

The daily News reports that the planned formation of a 70,000-strong Afghan army, recently announced by President Karzai, will take several years and will not be possible without substantial foreign aid. According to President Karzai, Iran, Pakistan, China, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have agreed to meet with Afghan leaders in Kabul on December 22 to sign an accord aimed at fostering regional cooperation and security. Pakistan and Afghanistan have reportedly finalized an agreement to repatriate at least 1.2 million Afghan refugees over the next three years from camps along their common border.

"Current News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

India and Pakistan

1. SAARC

Pakistan has postponed the 12th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit, blaming India for disrupting the process. Editorials in the daily News (Pakistan) and the Hindu (India) hold India primarily responsible for the disruption of the summit. Nadeem Malik (News) believes that the postponement of the summit "would only further aggravate economic conditions in the region." Raja Mohan (Hindu) discusses the possibility of more active US role in SAARC.

"SAARC" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

2. Other News

Indian army chief General Padmanabhan has stated that "the infiltration of extremists across the border has come down considerably..." Indian security forces have reportedly begun procuring and deploying special surveillance equipment along the Line of Control to check infiltration. Brajesh Mishra, Vajpayee's principal secretary and India's national security adviser, believes that the "US and other governments" have failed to force Pakistan to "end infiltration of terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir..." The daily Hindustan Times believes that "if India- Pakistan relations have reached some kind of a stalemate, some of the responsibility has to be shared by the US." A Pakistan foreign office spokesman, commenting on a recently signed declaration between the Russian President and the Indian Prime Minister, has stated "that the Russian leadership has been taken in by the Indian propaganda"

"Other News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

3. Analysis

December 13 marked the one-year anniversary of the attack on the Indian Parliament that triggered the military standoff between India and Pakistan. Brahma Chellaney (Hindustan Times) suggests that December 13th "defined not India's resolve but its indefiniteness." K Shankar Bajpai, a former senior Indian diplomat, writes that India's "most effective answer to Pakistan's animosity is to make [itself] so strong economically and militarily that [Pakistan's] tactics are stultified by our sheer strength." Anjali Mody's three part report in the daily Hindu examines weaknesses in the prosecution's case against men charged with involvement in the attack on the Parliament.

"Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

4. Pakistan Domestic News

Pakistan's newly elected Prime Minister, Zafar Jamali, has stated that his government believes in "continuity of policies." There has been internal discord within the Prime Minister Jamali's Pakistan Muslim League (Q). The newly-elected members of the Sindh Assembly have called for the rejection of the constitutional amendments introduced over the past six months by President Musharraf. In an interview with the Daily Times, Vice-President of Jamaate Islami, Liaquat Baloch, stated that Muttahida Majilis-e-Amal is "not in a hurry to oust this government, or move a no-confidence motion against it or form a joint opposition." Masooda Bano (News) writes that "the current military run democratic set up [is] perpetuating all that is ugly about a political culture."

"Domestic News" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

5. US-Pakistan Relations

According to Pakistan's Information Minister Shaikh Rashid Ahmed, there are only "12 FBI/CIA and other personnel, and a few hundred foreign soldiers are based in Jaccobabad." The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) has again demanded an immediate halt to American commandos and FBI operations in tribal areas. Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Qazi Hussain Ahmed has also stated that the MMA would disrupt President Musharraf's government and assist Baghdad if Iraq is attacked by the US.

"US-Pakistan Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

6. India Domestic Situation

An unexpectedly high 63 per cent of the electorate voted in a mostly uneventful election to the Gujarat assembly. The result of the elections have not yet been announced, though it is widely believed that the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will win. The daily Indian Express' report from a village notes that the fear of violence by Hindu extremists kept almost all Muslim voters away from the polling station. Muzamil Jaleel reports that some Muslims feel that the Congress is unwilling to challenge the extremist anti-Muslim politics of the BJP in Gujarat.

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

7. India Foreign Relations

Raja Mohan (Hindu) argues that "New Delhi's interest lies in expanding bilateral relations with Washington, Moscow and Beijing rather than building alliance with one or two against the other." The daily Hindu writes that "the future of the India-Russia defence relationship should be assessed not by new agreements reached but by the progress made on those that are pending." Fasih Bokhari (Daily Times) examines the debate on whether or not India should accept Russia's offer to "gift" the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov to India and argues that India should move away from its "Pakistan-centric" defense policy and develop a global strategy.

"Foreign Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

8. Kashmir News and Analysis

The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) government has constituted a screening committee for the release of militants. J&K State Human Rights Commission chairman Justice A.Q. Parray has stated that his organization is "toothless and not in a position to implement anything." The daily Indian Express reports on efforts to revive tourism in Kashmir.

"News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

Regional News

1. Bangladesh

At least 17 people were killed in an almost simultaneous bomb attacks on four cinemas. Bangladesh's Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury has ruled out any al-Qaeda links with blasts. The Daily Star (Bangladesh) reports that Bengladeshi authorities do not have any leads on "the motives and the masterminds behind several powerful bomb explosions since 1999 that have claimed nearly 100 lives."

"Bangladesh" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #38)

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