

NAPSNET Week in Review 6 September, 2002

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United States

1. US Missile Defense

A Pentagon advisory board has recommended that the Bush administration narrow the focus of its missile defense program and concentrate development on two approaches to an anti-missile shield, US officials said on Tuesday. Pentagon officials stated that the Defense Science Board made the preliminary recommendation in a draft report in August, but stressed that the board had not completed an in-depth study of the ballistic missile defense program. They said the panel, following a summer meeting in California, had called for concentrating current efforts in the multibillion dollar program in two areas of maturing technology: -- Land-based interceptors aimed at hitting warheads as they speed through space in mid-course toward a target. -- Warship-based interceptors that would be targeted at missiles in their launch and ascent phases. The officials, who asked not to be identified, confirmed that the board had concluded that enough information was known about the two systems to narrow the choices and perhaps accelerate the overall architecture for a missile defense system.

"US Missile Defense" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

2. US Freedom of Information

As part of its "war on terrorism," the Bush administration has vastly expanded government secrecy, removing information from the public domain, limiting its disclosures to Congress and allowing law enforcement agencies to operate in the shadows. Its policies are beginning to stir growing criticism from the courts, Congress and even from some conservatives. "We can't have leaks of classified information. It's not in our nation's interest," Bush said last October. But the policy goes beyond classified information. A March 19 memorandum from White House Chief of Staff Andy Card urged government agencies to more aggressively protect "sensitive but unclassified" information. "This administration is the most secretive of our lifetime, even more secretive than the Nixon administration. They don't believe the American people or Congress have any right to information," said last week Larry Klayman, chairman of Judicial Watch, a conservative group that is suing the administration to force it to reveal the members of the energy task force.

"US Freedom of Information" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

3. Australia on US Iraq Pre-emptive Strike

Australian Prime Minister John Howard said he would have to be completely satisfied an attack on Iraq is in the national interests before committing troops. In remarks which appeared to soften the government's rhetoric on Iraq, he also said Wednesday if Iraq complied with UN weapons inspectors' requests he would be inclined to drop all talk of an attack on Baghdad. "If Iraq were to allow the inspectors in ... and if they were given unimpeded, uninterrupted access and then any requests about destruction of discovered material or weapons adhered to, then I believe the whole atmosphere of this thing would change overnight," he said. "I would hope that that might occur. I'm sure the Americans would be pleased to see that happen."

"Australia on US Iraq Pre-emptive Strike" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

4. US-Russia Nuclear Safety

The official in charge of US nuclear security matters met Wednesday with Russia's deputy foreign minister to discuss cooperation to reduce the threat of weapons of mass destruction, including a dtrs 20 billion Western effort to help Russia dispose of its arsenal of aging nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, the Foreign Ministry said. Deputy Foreign Minister Georgy Mamedov and Linton Brooks, the acting administrator of the US National Nuclear Security Administration, also discussed the secure storage and transport of nuclear materials, military conversion, surplus fissile materials and refitting reactors "to meet modern nonproliferation, ecological and economic needs," the Foreign Ministry said.

"US-Russia Nuclear Safety" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

5. US-Egypt Missile Sales

The Bush Administration said it planned to sell Egypt up to US\$315 million worth of anti-tank missiles and radar sets along with helicopters and aircraft that could be used to ferry top commanders. In notices to Congress dated Wednesday but released on Thursday, the Pentagon said the proposed sales would boost the security of a friendly country that continued to be "an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East." Egypt is seeking 459 Lockheed Martin Corp. Hellfire II air-to-ground anti-armor missiles plus high-mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicles valued at up to US\$122 million if all options are exercised, the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said.

"US-Egypt Missile Sales" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK-ROK Red Cross Talks

The ROK's Red Cross chief arrived in the DPRK on Friday for an unprecedented meeting with his DPRK counterpart to discuss building a permanent meeting place for reunions of families separated more than 50 years ago. Suh Young-hoon, accompanied by four negotiators, arrived at the Mount Kumgang resort where he was to hold talks with the DPRK's Red Cross chief Chang Jae On, officials said. "In these first-ever talks between South-North Red Cross chiefs, we will try to find a fundamental resolution to the separated family issue," Suh said before departing for the three-days of talks.

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

"Inter Korean Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, ROK)

"Inter Korean Family Reunion" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, ROK)

2. ROK Presidential Health

ROK President Kim Dae-jung brushed aside recent health concerns on Friday, vowing to devote the last six months of his presidency to economic reforms and his core project of improving long-blighted ties with the DPRK. "You can see I have no health problems at all," he said in a question-and-answer session after the meal. "This room is kind of hot. My room was kind of hot and I turned on my air conditioner and that's how I got my cold," he said, referring to his illness last month. He also had a spell in hospital with fatigue in May. "It developed into pneumonia. For an aged person like myself that could be quite risky. But my doctors were very good and based on their comments I am 100 percent healthy."

"ROK Presidential Health" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

3. ROK on DPRK-Japan Relations

ROK President Kim Dae-jung said Friday he believes that the upcoming visit to the DPRK by Japan's prime minister will spur a breakthrough in turbulent relations between the two countries. In a luncheon meeting with foreign reporters, Kim hinted that he had played a role in arranging Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's historic one-day visit to the DPRK on September 17. "I actively support Prime Minister Koizumi's visit and anticipate that it will make a breakthrough in diplomatic relations between the two countries," Kim said.

"ROK on DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

4. DPRK's Ship to Japan

Japanese navy ships were tracking a "suspicious boat" as it headed towards the DPRK after venturing near Japanese waters, less than two weeks before a historic summit between the two nations. "We are still on our guard," said Defense Agency spokesman Akinori Inoue Thursday. "I can't say from what distance, but we are continuing to keep tabs on its position." The ship was spotted in the Sea of Japan facing the Korean peninsula around 400 kilometres (250 miles) northwest of the Japanese coast by a maritime patrol aircraft, which proceeded to track the vessel. It was backed up by 15 coastguard patrol boats and the 3,550-tonne destroyer Amagiri armed with machineguns, cannons and missiles. As of 1:00 am (1600 GMT Wednesday), the latest data available, the vessel was about 490 kilometers northwest of Japan's Noto Peninsula and heading west, the coast guard said.

"DPRK's Ship to Japan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, ROK)

"Japan DPRK Ship Tracking" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US) "Japan DPRK Spy Ship Salvage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

5. ROK Food Aid to DPRK

The ROK government will hold special meeting on September 7 to finalize terms for food aid and other humanitarian exchanges with DPRK. The Inter-Korean Exchange Cooperation Promotion Committee meeting which will be presided by Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun will first conclude on 400,000 metric tons of food aid on loans and other following cost for transportation and monitoring process that adds up to 167.6 billion won. That added with cost for 100,000 metric tons of fertilizer (33 billion won) from Red Cross plus separate expenditures for transportation and personnel cost and other arrangements for the fifth family meeting (800 million won) slated for next Friday added up to around \$154 million. The PRC announced Thursday it would supply DPRK with 20,000 tons of diesel fuel for free.

"ROK Food Aid to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, ROK)

6. DPRK-Japan Relations

A basic outline for the DPRK-Japan joint declaration to be presented at the end of the summit meeting has emerged. The document will reportedly cover Japan's apology for its 36 year-long colonization of Korea based on the statement made in 1995 by former Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama; mutual dropping of claims on assets from colonial times by resolving them through economic cooperation; and DPRK's maintenance of missile moratorium. On issues of DPRK's alleged abduction of Japanese citizens, although the two countries agreed to tackle the matter in a humanitarian way, there is disagreement on the exact timetable for implementation.

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, ROK)

"DPRK-Japan Dialogue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

7. DPRK Direct Foreign Investment

DPRK has adopted a new policy allowing foreign investors to take more than a 50 percent stake in joint ventures in order to boost investment, an ROK trade promotion official said on Thursday. The new rule follows a DPRK move in June to adopt some market-oriented economic policies. "In the case of joint ventures, foreign companies could take only up to 50 percent of stake in the past, but now there is no problem if their stake goes above the level," the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said, quoting DPRK's vice trade minister Kim Yong-sul. Kim Yong-sul explained the economic changes in the DPRK at a seminar recently held in Tokyo where about 50 Japanese businessmen interested in doing business with the DPRK attended, KOTRA said in a statement.

"DPRK Direct Foreign Investment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US)

8. ROK Presidential Election

Riding on the surging popularity of soccer in the ROK following the World Cup, the nation's millionaire soccer chief, Chung Mong-joon, said Thursday he will run for president in elections in December. Chung, 50, an independent legislator with no political affiliation, has always been considered a possible contender. He made his candidacy official with a written statement on Thursday. His popularity surged following the ROK's successful run in this summer's World Cup, in which it became the first Asian nation to reach the semifinals. Chung heads the ROK Football Association and serves as a vice president FIFA, soccer's world governing body. He is the controlling shareholder in Hyundai Heavy Industries, the world's largest shipbuilder. Recent opinion polls showed Chung trailing slightly behind Lee Hoi-chang, the candidate of the main opposition Grand National Party but ahead of Roh Mu-hyun, the candidate of the pro-government Millennium Democratic Party.

"ROK Presidential Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US)

9. DPRK-US Relations

Referring to the earlier US criticism against DPRK's development and stockpiling of chemical and biological weapons, the DPRK's Radio Pyeongyang called the US on Friday a true rogue state that threatened others with those dangerous weapons. DPRK's official Central News Agency attacked John Bolton, a senior arms control official in Washington, for labeling DPRK a global threat armed with weapons of mass destruction. "No matter how fast relations with Japan and South Korea improve, the North knows it will never be free from the political burden of protecting its regime unless the U.S. administration eases its hostile policy toward Pyeongyang," an ROK government official said.

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, ROK)

10. ROK Storm Damage

Property losses caused by Typhoon Rusa that left more than 200 dead have surged to a record 1.75 billion dollars but ROK officials warned final figures would be far higher. Rusa, which plowed across the ROK last week, caused 2.13 trillion won (1.75 billion dollars) in property damage, a record high for a storm, the government's anti-disaster agency said Wednesday. "The amount of damage is an all time high. Yet the final figures will be far higher as we are still getting a flurry of new reports on losses," agency official Im Kyo-Yong stated. The National Disaster Prevention and Countermeasures Headquarters said 205 people were feared dead or missing, while Yonhap News Agency said 240 were dead or missing. Rusa flooded 17,046 houses and 114,592 hectares (286,480 acres) of farmland. It also washed away roads and bridges in 1,137 places.

"ROK Storm Damage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

"ROK Typhoon Catastrophe" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

11. ROK DPRK Ship Raising

The ROK will display the patrol boat that was riddled with bullet holes in its deadly gun battle with the DPRK in June to heighten sailors' vigilance, officials said Wednesday. The 150-ton "Chamsuri 357" will be displayed at the 2nd Naval Fleet Command in Pyongtaek on the west coast. The boat was salvaged last month, eight weeks after it sank in the June 29 clash that killed five ROK sailors. The DPRK acknowledged an unspecified number of casualties. With its hull pockmarked by hundreds of bullet holes and four soccer ball-sized shell holes, the boat proved irreparable, military engineers said. "We decided to display the ship to show our determination to guard the Northern Limit Line," a Navy official said. The official declined to be named.

"ROK DPRK Ship Raising" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

12. DPRK's Economic Reform

Daeseong Department Store is one of three shops in Pyongyang that accept foreign currency. The five story building was crowded with foreign customers and a few privileged DPRK citizens on Friday afternoon despite sultry heat on the street. The sales clerks were talking to customers in Japanese or Chinese and trying to sell as many goods as possible. Tourists from PRC and ROK were regretting that some items, including oriental medicine pills said to cure chest problems, were sold out. DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's new open-door policy is seen as a decision to attract foreign investment. The first step to that end is opening a special economic zone. Pyongyang began reviewing the option in the late 1990s; Sinuiju, Wonsan and Cheongjin were the candidates. The project for the special economic zone gained impetus when Pyongyang decided to carry out economic reform in July.

"DPRK's Economic Reform" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, ROK)

13. DPRK-Japan Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Oh Day-young, "JAPAN CONSIDERING LIASION OFFICE IN NORTH," Tokyo, 09/04/02) reported that the Japanese government is negotiating with DPRK to open a permanent liaison office in Pyongyang, the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun reported Tuesday. To prepare for the September 17 summit between the Japanese and DPRK leaders, a temporary contact point was established in Pyongyang on Tuesday, the newspaper said. Japan believes it needs a permanent liaison office, the daily said, because the two sides are expected to maintain frequent contacts once full-scale talks begin to normalize diplomatic ties. The principal goal of the first-ever Japan-DPRK summit is to open bilateral ties, but Japan sees the issue of Japanese nationals allegedly kidnapped by DPRK as a crucial matter. Fifty-three percent of 2,000 eligible Japanese voters polled by Asahi Shimbun on Tuesday indicated that they expected Japan's relations with DPRK to improve after the summit.

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, ROK)

14. DPRK-Japan Geographical conflict

Chosun ilbo (Kwon Dae-yul, "NK PROPOSES NEW NAMES FOR DISPUTED SEA," Tokyo, 09/04/02) reported that Tuesday that DPRK proposed the "disputed" sea previously referred to as the "Sea of Japan" should be called the "Korean Sea," "Joseon East Sea," or "East Sea" at the 8th UN Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names being held in Berlin, Germany, from August 27 to September 5. The daily quoted a DPRK diplomatic official in Berlin official as saying any of the names could be used and DPRK could take joint action with ROK if this was agreed to.

"DPRK-Japan Geographical conflict" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, ROK)

People's Republic of China

1. US-Taiwan Missile Sales

A US agency has approved the sale of 17.8 billion Taiwan dollars (US\$520 million) worth of weapons to Taiwan, a package that includes 631 missiles for helicopters and jets. The agency endorsed Taiwan's proposed purchase of the missiles and other equipment, saying the arms "will not affect the basic military balance in the region." But the agency added that the sale has not been completed. The agency said that the proposed package also included: _449 Hellfire II air-to-surface missiles for Super Cobra and OH-58D helicopters. The primary supplier of the missiles and related equipment - worth about 2.05 billion Taiwan dollars (US\$ 60 million) - would be Lockheed Martin Electronics and Missiles of Orlando, Florida.

"US-Taiwan Missile Sales" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

"US-Taiwan Military Sales" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US)

2. PRC Aids Crisis

The number of people in the PRC infected with the AIDS virus will soar to 1 million this year, but the rate of new infections seems to be falling, a Health Ministry official said Friday. The announcement was the highest estimate given yet by the PRC government, which activists and foreign health experts accuse of failing to do enough to combat the epidemic. The number of infected people in the PRC jumped 58 percent from 2000 to 2001, but the rate of increase this year dropped to 16.7 percent, said Qi Xiaoqiu, director general of the ministry's Department of Disease Control. Previous estimates put the PRC's population with the virus at 850,000 at the end of last year, though health officials say they have confirmed only 30,736 cases in the PRC's 1.3 billion people. Qi gave no explanation for the reported fall in the rate of new infections.

"PRC Aids Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

3. PRC DPRK Asylum Seekers

Thirty six DPRK defectors who sneaked into a German school and the ROK consulate in Beijing may get their wish to go to Seoul in the next few days once checks and paperwork are complete, diplomats said on Friday. PRC police are checking the records of 21 North Koreans asylum seekers holed up in Seoul's consulate, the final step before they were allowed to leave the country. The paperwork for the departure of a group of 15 DPRK citizens who scrambled over the wall of the German compound was being processed following a Sino-German agreement announced on Thursday on how to deal with them, a second diplomat said.

"PRC DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

"DPRK Defectors in PRC" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, ROK)

"PRC-Germany DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US)

"DPRK Defectors in PRC" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, ROK)

"PRC DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

"Asylum Seekers in PRC" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, ROK)

"PRC DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

4. PRC's Perspectives on DPRK Defectors

ROK presidential candidate Lee Hoi-chang said Wednesday in Beijing that PRC President Jiang Zemin told him the PRC will deal with the issue of DPRK defectors on humanitarian grounds. Lee and Jiang held a 35-minute meeting at PRC's National People's Congress in Beijing on Tuesday, during which the two leaders discussed, among other things, peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Grand National Party candidate began a four-day visit to Beijing on Monday for a series of talks with top Chinese government officials and politicians.

"PRC's Perspectives on North Korean Defectors" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, ROK)

5. Tension Between PRC and Activist

The recent flood of asylum bids by DPRK defectors in PRC is expected to further fuel confrontation between the PRC and the foreign activists who are seen to draw greater international attention to the country's human rights situation, analysts in Seoul said Wednesday. The analysts noted that there has been a succession of asylum cases involving DPRK defectors during the past week. The PRC government does not recognize DPRK escapees as refugees and claims they are illegal migrants. International activists and some lawmakers in both ROK and US have called on the PRC to grant refugee status to the DPRK defectors fleeing famine and alleged persecution in their home country.

"Tension Between PRC and Activist" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, ROK)

6. PRC Presidential Succession

PRC President Jiang Zemin appears poised to step down as Communist Party head at a congress in November, after some arguments during a summer leadership retreat, according to PRC-watchers. Despite a swell of recent rumors that Jiang plans to keep hold of the party general-secretary's job, he is likely to hand over power to Vice President Hu Jintao as earlier expected during the 16th Party Congress, which opens in Beijing on November 8. Hu's position will then be consolidated next March when Jiang also hands over the state presidency at the annual session of the PRC's parliament, the National People's Congress. The handover appears to have been thrashed out by top leaders during their summer meetings at the Beidaihe seaside resort near Beijing which ended last month.

"PRC Presidential Succession" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

"PRC Party Succession" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

7. IMF on PRC Economy

The International Monetary Fund said on Tuesday that the PRC's economic prospects remained favorable despite recent shocks, but that some reforms were still needed to offset potential risks. The IMF said that while the PRC emerged almost unscathed from the recent global slowdown and the Asian financial crisis of 1997, reforms in the fiscal and monetary fields were needed to brush away potential medium-term vulnerabilities. The PRC economy was expected to grow 7.5 percent this year, up from 7.3 percent in 2001, the fund said in its annual review of the PRC economy. Prices were seen dropping 0.4 percent after a mild 0.7 percent increase in 2001. Overall, the IMF said, the PRC's sound economic policies had helped the country weather two major economic crises in five years and embark on the road to becoming a market economy.

"IMF on PRC Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, US)

8. Cross-Straits Relations

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian yesterday said Taiwan's survival depends on its economic development and strong armed forces in the face of threats from the PRC. "Taiwan must stand up, depending on the democratic system, on economic development, and on strong national defense," Chen told the navy on board a frigate recently. Only when Taiwan is standing up can peace and stability be maintained in the Asia-Pacific region, contributing actively to the international community... We must not harbor any fantasies with the Chinese communists, we cannot dwarf ourselves to beg unrealistically for peace," he maintained. Dismissing perennial doubts about the military's allegiance, Chen asserted: "Whoever wants to invade Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu, whoever wants to eliminate the Republic of China, is the enemy. This does not allow any ambiguities and doubts."

"Cross-Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

9. Taiwan Missile Development

Taiwan is in the final stage of developing a cruise missile aimed at deterring a PRC naval invasion, a newspaper reported Sunday. The "Hsiung Feng 3," or Brave Wind 3, would have a range of 300 kilometers (180 miles) - making it able to reach the PRC's southern and eastern coasts, the Liberty Times quoted unidentified officials as saying. The missile would surpass in both range and speed the Russian-built Sunburn missiles that equip the Sovremenny-class destroyers acquired recently by the PRC, the report said. Taiwan's cruise missile is expected to be mass produced in about two years after more tests, the newspaper said.

"Taiwan Missile Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

10. PRC Commentary on Japan-DPRK Relations

A PRC commentary on the upcoming meeting between the top leaders of Japan and the DPRK said that this is the first-ever visit by a Japanese prime minister and must be seen as a breakthrough in the two countries' bilateral relations. The article commented that Koizumi's visit is part of Japan's overall diplomacy and could help Koizumi to win back some of lost domestic support, as the much-concerned issue of missing Japanese nationals is expected to be discussed. It is also in the DPRK's interests to seek rapprochement with neighboring countries and to obtain a peaceful environment and foreign capital. The article also said that the international community, including the PRC, Russia and the ROK, has expressed their approval of the Japan-DPRK reconciliation, although it may be too early to expect any breakthroughs.

"PRC Commentary on Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, PRC)

11. PRC-US Relations

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said on August 27 that the PRC appreciates the US decision to put the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) on its list of terrorist organizations. Kong said the US has officially informed the PRC about the decision, which visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage revealed on August 26. According to the report, there is evidence connecting East Turkistan organizations with international terrorist forces. PRC Vice-President Hu Jintao told US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on August 26 that President Jiang Zemin's upcoming visit to US is significant for the further development of constructive and co-operative Sino-US ties. The report said that Armitage was in Beijing to hold consultations with PRC Vice-Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. In talks with Armitage, Hu praised the co-operation between the two countries and said they share extensive common interests, despite differences.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, PRC)

Japan

1. US-Japan-ROK Security Talks

The US, Japan, and the ROK opened two days of talks in Seoul on Friday to coordinate their policies toward the DPRK. "The meeting is part of routine, periodic contacts between the three countries to discuss North Korea," said Shim Yun-jo, a director-general in charge of North American affairs at the ROK Foreign Ministry. Shim said the three allies planned to hold bilateral talks between themselves before meeting together on Saturday. The ROK, he said, planned to explain the recently revived inter-Korean dialogue. Japan, he said, was expected to explain a planned visit to the DPRK by its prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi. Attending the meeting were US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, Assistant ROK Foreign Minister Lee Tae-shik and Hitoshi Tanaka, the Japanese Foreign Ministry's chief of Asian affairs.

"US-Japan-ROK Security Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, US)

2. Japan's Economic Compensation to DPRK

The Japanese government decided to extend economic assistance to DPRK under the strict condition that the resources would not be diverted for military purposes, Japanese government sources said Friday. The sources added the decision is part of Japan's efforts to resolve bilateral issues as the DPRK-Japan summit meeting slated for Sept. 17 nears. Japan reportedly hopes the funds, provided as a form of contribution to DPRK's economy, make up some part of DPRK's demand for an apology for colonizing Korea in the first half of the 20th century and related compensations for the damage.

"Japan's Economic Compensation to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, ROK)

3. Japan Nuclear Industry Scandal

The scandal embroiling Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) likely involves up to 100 employees, including senior executives, according to sources close to public and in-house investigations. Thirty of about 100 TEPCO officials suspected of involvement had been questioned in an in-house company probe as of this weekend, sources said. They are believed to include former heads of the Fukushima No. 1 and No. 2 plants and the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant in Niigata, as well as senior officials of the nuclear power headquarters at head office. The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency, meanwhile, will start a three-day on-the-spot probe at TEPCO's three nuclear power plants in Fukushima and Niigata prefectures for evidence of false reports.

"Japan Nuclear Industry Scandal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, Japan)

4. Koizumi's Visit to the Earth Summit

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Monday pledged that Japan would help developing nations nurture human resources in their fight against poverty and the degradation of natural resources at a plenary session of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The plenary session of more than 100 heads of state and heads of governments started on Monday morning with an opening address by South African Prime Minister Thabo Mbeki, who is the president of the summit. "The key to achieving sustainable development is people," Koizumi said. "Although Japan is not rich with natural resources, the country attained its present status based on human resources," he said.

"Koizumi's Visit to the Earth Summit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 6, Japan)

5. Japan on DPRK-US Relations

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will propose a resumption of dialogue between the US and the DPRK when he visits Pyongyang later this month, according to media reports. Citing government sources, the Kyodo News agency said Thursday Koizumi will urge talks between the two countries at an early date to settle differences over the DPRK's suspected development of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons. During the historic visit on September 17, the prime minister is expected to call on the DPRK to agree to suspend missile development and accept inspections of its nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency, reported Kyodo.

"Japan on DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US)

6. Russia on Japan-DPRK Relations

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke to Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Thursday, praising his planned summit with DPRK leader Kim Jong Il this month and saying easing tense relations in Northeast Asia would boost the region's economies. In a telephone conversation, Putin - who met with Kim last month in the Russian Pacific port of Vladivostok - welcomed Koizumi's plans for a Sept. 17 visit to the DPRK, the Russian president's press service said in a statement. It said Koizumi asked Putin about his talks with Kim, who rarely travels abroad but was making his second trip to Russia in just over a year, and that they exchanged views on prospects for improving ties between the DPRK and the ROK.

"Russia on Japan-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, US)

7. Japan Military Emergency Legislation

The Japanese government plans to make key amendments to the wording of a bill that dictates how the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) will deal with a military attack in the hope that it will be enacted during the extraordinary Diet session expected to be held in the fall, informed sources said Saturday. According to the sources, the amendments would include changes to the definitions of when a military attack "can be anticipated" and when it "is imminent." As one example, the wording "when there is a clear danger (of military attack)" is being considered as a replacement for "imminent." Officials from the Defense Agency and the Cabinet Secretariat are also discussing the possibility of presenting clearer examples of attacks and clarifying the relationship between a military attack on Japan and a contingency in areas surrounding Japan.

"Japan Military Emergency Legislation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, Japan)

8. Koizumi's Visit to US

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will visit the US to observe the first anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said. Koizumi will also hold talks with President George W. Bush during his visit, which will run from September 9 through 14, Fukuda told a news conference. Koizumi will also give a speech at the UN general assembly on September 13, Fukuda added.

"Koizumi's Visit to US" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, Japan)

9. US Bases in Japan

The US Department of Defense hopes to ship over 3,000 tons of materials containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) stored at military bases in Japan to the US for recycling or disposal, officials at the US Embassy in Tokyo said. The department will release an environmental assessment of the shipping procedure finding "no significant impact," but recommending that the materials be transported to the US instead of stored indefinitely, the US officials said. The move is an effort to overcome a glut of PCB-containing materials stored at US bases in Japan since a US court ruled against the import of PCBs in 1997.

Contaminated materials are stored at at least 15 sites around Japan, but the bulk, or 357 tons, is located at the Sagami Depot administered by Camp Zama in Sagamihara, Kanagawa Prefecture. The majority of PCB-containing equipment, 1,234 tons, is still in use at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa.

"US Bases in Japan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, Japan)

10. Japan Coast Guard

The Japan Coast Guard plans to build 11 high-speed patrol vessels that authorities hope would give the force more muscle to hunt down unidentified ships operating off the nation's coasts, officials said. The coast guard is seeking around 10 billion yen from the fiscal 2003 budget to start building the vessels, which will take four years to complete. At the heart of the buildup program are three 1,800-ton-class, high-speed, high-performance patrol vessels that would be equipped with 40-mm canons that officials say can accurately hit moving targets.

"Japan Coast Guard" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, Japan)

11. Defense Agency's Budget Request

The Japan Defense Agency hopes to increase the capabilities of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to combat terrorism, guerrilla attacks and spy ships, and requested an allocation of 5.0043 trillion yen in the fiscal 2003 general account budget to achieve this -- an increase of 64.8 billion yen, or 1.3 percent, from the initial budget for the current fiscal year. Agency officials said the extra funds are not only to enhance the SDF but also to continue the five-year defense buildup program that started in 2001. The agency is seeking 19.3 billion yen for measures to counter a guerrilla attack, including the creation of a special 300-member Ground Self-Defense Force unit. "Defense Agency's Budget Request" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 4, Japan)

12. Northeast Asia Security Forum

Japan plans to propose creating a six-nation forum to discuss security issues in Northeast Asia when Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi meets with DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il this month. The forum would group Japan, DPRK, PRC, Russia, ROK and the US. It is not the first time for Japan to propose such a six-way forum: then prime minister Keizo Obuchi floated the idea when he met with ROK President Kim Dae-Jung in October 1998. At the time Japan obtained approval for the idea from all related countries except the DPRK. The idea was also brought up at talks held between senior Japanese and DPRK officials over the weekend to pave the way for the two nations' first-ever summit on September 17. It was still unclear whether the DPRK would accept the proposal this time.

"Northeast Asia Security Forum" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

13. Trilateral Consultation and Oversight Group Meeting

The US, Japan and the ROK will hold a high-level security consultative meeting in Seoul to discuss the DPRK, ROK officials said Tuesday. The two-day meeting, scheduled to begin on Friday, comes as the DPRK is moving anew to reach out to the rest of the world, including the US and Japan. It will be attended by US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, Assistant South Korean Foreign Minister Lee Tae-shik and Hitoshi Tanaka, the Japanese Foreign Ministry's chief of Asian affairs, said Kim Euy-taek, a spokesman for the ROK Foreign Ministry. Topics expected to be discussed at this week's talks in Seoul include a Japanese proposal to open a six-party meeting on the Korean peninsula, involving the US, the PRC, Japan, Russia and the two Koreas.

"Trilateral Consultation and Oversight Group Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

14. Japan Domestic Politics

Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's popularity got a much-needed boost by his announcement last week that he intends to make an unprecedented visit to the DPRK, a poll indicated Tuesday. A weekend survey conducted by the Asahi, a major newspaper, after the Friday announcement found support for Koizumi's Cabinet had jumped 8 points since a similar poll just a week earlier. The Asahi found 51 percent of those polled support the Koizumi administration. The number of those who don't fell 10 points to 32 percent, it said in its morning edition Tuesday. The poll also found hopes are high for Koizumi's visit to the DPRK, scheduled for September 17. Some 53 percent said they expect relations with the DPRK to warm "greatly" or "somewhat."

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, US)

15. Japan-US Relations

Japanese Vice-Foreign Minister Yukio Takeuchi and visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage agreed on August 28 to keep close contact over the US possible military strike against Iraq, reported by Japan's Kyodo News.

"Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 3, PRC)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Pakistan's Chashma nuclear power plant is scheduled to be shut down for refueling and cleaning.

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Afghan President Hamid Karzai survived an assassination attempt in Kandahar. Earlier, a car bomb killed over 30 people in Kabul. Four rockets were reportedly fired in an area where US soldiers were operating in southeastern Afghanistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former mujahideen prime minister of Afghanistan, has called for a jihad against US forces in Afghanistan. Syed Saleem Shahzad's essay in Asia Times examines connections between Hekmatyar and Taliban/al-Qaeda groups in Afghanistan.

"Current Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

Pakistan and India

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Pakistani paramilitary troops have launched a military operation after issuing an ultimatum to tribesmen living near the border with Afghanistan to hand over four "foreigners" or face an armed assault. Thousands of tribesmen reportedly staged a protest in support of Islamic guerrillas after troops began blowing up homes of villagers accused of harboring al-Qaeda militants. Iranian Interior Minister has called on Pakistan to do more to prevent fugitive al-Qaeda fighters from entering Iran. President Pervez Musharraf has stated that he has "no regrets, not at all," for joining the US-led war on terrorism. Muttahida Majlis- e-Amal - a coalition of six religious parties - has announced that, if victorious in October elections, they will remove all US bases in Pakistan.

"Pakistan: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

2. India: Domestic Situation

The Indian Supreme Court has declined to interfere with the Election Commission's (EC's) decision to hold elections in Gujarat in November or December. An editorial in the daily Indian Express calls for the imposition of President's Rule in Gujarat until the next election. Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has postponed, for the second time, initiating the controversial Gaurav Rath Yatra.

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

3. US-India Relations

J.N. Dixit (Indian Express) believes that the "emerging realism" in Indo-US relationship should be protected and built upon.

"US-India Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

Kashmir

1. Internal Situation

Ram Jethmalani - chairman of the Kashmir Committee (KC) engaged in dialogs with All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) - has criticized Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani for his refusal to meet with APHC leader Shabir Shah. Abdul Ghani Bhat, chairman APHC, has reiterated that his organization will not take into consideration any Indian offer for maximum autonomy to Kashmir. APHC has decided against expelling its estranged constituent, the Peoples Conference (PC). Some members of PC have decided to contest the upcoming elections in the state as 'proxy' candidate. The Indian government, according to the daily Hindu, is taking extra precautions to ensure the physical safety of these proxy candidates. 30,000 Indian paramilitary forces and police commandos have arrived in Jammu and Kashmir to provide security for the elections. Various newspapers, however, have reported more political violence.

"Internal Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

2. Opinions

Zubeida Mustafa (Jang) urges the Pakistani government to "make an honest attempt to determine the thinking of the Kashmiris themselves." Chinmaya R.Gharekhan (Hindu) believes that "if ever a solution is to emerge, it would have to be built around the Line of Control." Binoo Joshi (Telegraph) argues that "despite the non-participation of the separatists, the Kashmir elections may start off a healthy process of dialogue."

"Opinions" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

3. India, Pakistan, US

Mariana Baabar's report in the daily Jang indicates increased US involvement in efforts at resolving the Kashmir dispute. It has been rumored that President Pervez Musharraf would discuss a "Kashmir solution" - that will require a crucial shift in Pakistan's Kashmir policy - with President George Bush during his upcoming visit to Washington.

"India, Pakistan, US" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #30)

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