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United States

1. Smallpox Possession

US intelligence believes four nations other than the US - Iraq, the DPRK, Russia and France - probably possess hidden supplies of the smallpox virus, a US official said. Al-Qaida is also believed to have sought samples of smallpox to use as a weapon, but US officials don't believe the terror network is capable of mounting an attack with the virus. Evidence recovered in Afghanistan pointed to Osama bin Laden's interest in the disease, the US official said Monday, speaking on condition of anonymity. US officials worry that Iraq and the DPRK could develop potent biological weapons with their samples, which are believed to exist in small amounts. However, there is no evidence they are able to use the disease as a biological weapon. Officials also fear lax security in Russia could allow other nations to obtain the deadly disease for use as a weapon.

"Smallpox Possession" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK-US Nuclear Relations

DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman on November 2 rejected US's demand to scrap DPRK's nuclear weapons program, and stressed on reaching a non-aggression treaty between the two countries. The spokesman said that on October 25, DPRK proposed reaching a non-aggression treaty with US to solve the nuclear issue, a proposal that was turned down by the US, who instead asked DPRK to scrap the nuclear program in an "immediate and verifiable" way after consultations with ROK and Japan. Accusing US of intending to settle the issue to its own will, the spokesman said this will bring diplomatic pressure on DPRK thus would arise new conflicts between the two countries. "It is quite natural for the DPRK to produce various types of weapons by every possible means under the present situation when the DPRK and the United States are in the most hostile relationship," the spokesman said. "Is there any need for the DPRK to exert such tremendous efforts for increasing the defense capability and even making special weapons, despite its difficult economic condition, if such hostile relations do not exist between the DPRK and the United States?" the spokesman asked. The spokesman also said that the best way to eliminate the tension on Korean Peninsula is to sign a bilateral non-aggression treaty.

"DPRK on DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

"DPRK on US Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

2. DPRK-US Confrontation

The DPRK threatened to take strong military measures if US continues to ignore DPRK's proposal for a non-aggression treaty, DPRK media reported Saturday. Rodong Shinmun, a DPRK government newspaper, said in an editorial Saturday that unilateral coercive measures and pressure on DPRK would complicate the current nuclear crisis even further. After the revelation of its program last month, DPRK has been pushing hard for a non-aggression pact with US, but the Bush administration said it would talk with DPRK only after DPRK scraps its nuclear program in a verifiable manner. "Taking into account the hostile confrontation between Washington and Pyongyang, it is natural that we are producing weapons through all possible means to arm ourselves," a foreign ministry spokesman told the official Korean Central News Agency. "Everything will be negotiable," North Korean Ambassador to the United Nations, Han Song-ryol, was quoted as saying in the New York Times. "Our government will resolve all U.S. security concerns through the talks, if the [U.S.] government has a will to end its hostile policy." International disapproval of the North's nuclear program has intensified recently, with criticism coming even from Russia and PRC, DPRK's longtime allies.

"DPRK-US Confrontation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, ROK)

3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Situation

The ROK has urged the DPRK to soften its stance on its suspected nuclear weapons program, citing it as a stumbling block to economic exchanges. The demand was made by the ROK's chief delegate, Vice Finance and Economy Minister Yoon Jin-Shik, at the start of an inter-Korean economic cooperation committee meeting in Pyongyang. "It is necessary for the North's nuclear issue to be resolved at an early date in order to expand the ongoing inter-Korean economic cooperation," Yoon stated. It was not known immediately how the DPRK had responded to the demand. But ROK officials hinted they would avoid letting the talks, whose original agenda was inter-Korean projects including railway and road connections, be overshadowed by the nuclear issue.

"ROK on DPRK Nuclear Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

"DPRK Nuclear Problem" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, ROK)

4. US-ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

US Undersecretary of Defense Doug Feith met top ROK officials and US military field commanders Wednesday to discuss wide-ranging security issues, including the DPRK's recently disclosed nuclear weapons development program. Feith arrived in Seoul late Tuesday on an Asian trip that includes a stopover in Tokyo. The visit comes as the US is trying to muster international support for its campaign to pressure the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions. In Seoul on Wednesday, Feith met ROK Defense Minister Lee Jun and conferred with US and ROK military commanders who lead forces that are deployed as a deterrent against the DPRK. Commenting on Feith's trip, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said in Washington Monday that he "will confer on the full range of security issues affecting our respective countries, including the war on terrorism, the ongoing effort in Afghanistan and the threat posed by North Korea's weapons of mass destruction." The United States is reportedly prodding the ROK to expand its support for the war in Afghanistan by dispatching a military engineering unit. A small ROK military medical unit operates in the war-devastated country.

"US-ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"US Undersecretary's Visit to Seoul" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, ROK)

5. Inter-Korean Economic Talks

Negotiators will not be able to avoid the issue, unification ministry officials said. The North faces mounting US-led international pressure to drop the program which was disclosed by a US envoy who said the communist country had admitted to having run the nuclear program during his visit to Pyongyang. Washington has since accused Pyongyang of violating nuclear safeguard accords, and decided not to resume normalization talks for the time being. Seoul has urged Pyongyang to scrap its nuclear ambitions, but also calls for a peaceful solution to the issue and has been forging ahead with its policy of engaging the North.

"Inter-Korean Economic Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

"DPRK on ROK Delegation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

"DPRK-ROK Economic Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"ROK-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

6. DPRK on Ambassador Greg Visit

Korean Central News Agency ("AMERICANS VISIT DPRK," Pyongyang, 11/05/02) carried a story that read "Donald P. Greg, president of the board Korea Associated in US and ex-US Ambassador to South Korea, and his party visited the DPRK from November 2 to 5. During their visit, they met first vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju and other officials concerned and had a sincere and candid exchange of views on a number of issues of concern including the DPRK-US relations."

"DPRK on Ambassador Greg Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"DPRK Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, ROK)

"US Intermediary's Visit to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, ROK)

7. Australia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer demanded Thursday that the DPRK "verifiably and immediately" halt its nuclear weapons development program, saying it was a threat to global security. "Australia wants to work with Japan and other countries to reach a peaceful diplomatic solution on this issue," Downer told a forum of academic, political and business leaders in Tokyo. Downer, who arrived on Thursday, was in Japan to meet with Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi and other senior officials to discuss terrorism and regional security before flying home on Saturday.

"Australia on DPRK Nuclear Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

8. ROK-Japan-Russia Relations

The ROK's defense minister will visit Russia and Japan next week to discuss regional security, including the DPRK's recently disclosed nuclear weapons program, his ministry said Thursday. Lee Jun will meet with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov during his four-day trip to Moscow beginning Sunday. He will then visit Tokyo for three days and meet with Japan's Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba, the ministry said in a news release. Topics of the talks will include the DPRK's nuclear program and other regional security issues, it said. Japan, along with the US and ROK, demands that the DPRK abandon its nuclear program "in a prompt and verifiable manner." Russia has expressed its support for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula.

"ROK-Japan-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

9. ROK-Russia Relations

ROK ministry of Finance and Economy announced Wednesday that the two-day working level talks in Moscow on the redemption of the outstanding US\$1.95 billion economic cooperation loan from Russia ended without a final agreement. Despite this, ROK government will continue the "Fire Bear Project," importing a total of US\$534 million in Russian made weapons. After "purchasing" items on top of an offered list, including T-80 tanks and BMP-3 infantry armored vehicles, the remainder of the repayment will be decided later, a Ministry of National Defense official said. The government is planning to issue bonds next year to pay by proxy banks that provided the loan to Russia, and then collect money to be redeemed with the National Treasury according to the results of talks to be resumed early next year.

"ROK-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, ROK)

10. DPRK Oil Shipments

The Korea Energy Development Organization (KEDO), the multinational organization that administers a 1994 agreement between US and DPRK, is preparing to send a 46,000 ton-shipment of heavy oil, the November portion the US provides to DPRK, from Singapore, the New York Times reported Tuesday. As a member of the energy organization's executive board, the US would prefer to suspend the shipment, but so far has failed to persuade other membership countries such as ROK, Japan and the European Union to agree, said the New York Times, quoting an official who said "KEDO works on a consensus basis," and "The US alone can't make this decision." The official also mentioned that an executive board meeting is scheduled within two weeks. ROK government official said Tuesday that ROK, US and Japan would make a final decision whether to withhold November's share of the heavy oil at the Japan-US-ROK Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) meeting scheduled on November 8 and 9, as well as the KEDO executive board meeting.

"US-Japan-ROK Response to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, ROK)

"DPRK Oil Shipments" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"DPRK Oil Shipment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"Suspended Oil Supply to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, ROK)

11. DPRK Asylum Seekers

Fifteen DPRK asylum-seekers who had sought refuge at an ROK consulate in Beijing arrived in Seoul early Thursday. The DPRK defectors flew to Incheon International Airport west of Seoul after transiting in the Philippines overnight. The 12 females and three males were taken away for debriefing by government officials. "We're glad," said a woman defector, identified only by her surname, Kim. "We thank all who helped us out." The ROK Embassy in Beijing had declined to comment on when and how they gained access to the consulate. "DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

12. Powell ROK Trip Cancellation

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has canceled a trip to Seoul next week because of his preoccupation with U.N. Security Council deliberations on Iraq, a State Department official said on Wednesday. The State Department had said that Powell would attend the second ministerial meeting of the Community of Democracies, which takes place in Seoul from Nov. 10 to 12. Assistant Secretary of State Paula Dobriansky will head the delegation in his place, the official said. Powell was reluctant to go all the way to the ROK for such a short time, officials said. He had considered side trips to PRC and Japan but the PRC is holding a party congress and the Japanese will also have a delegation in Seoul, they added. "Powell ROK Trip Cancellation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

13. DPRK Forces Reduction

An ROK government official said that DPRK is planning to reduce its armed forces by about 10 percent to free up labor needed for its economic reform measures. About 100,000 members of the Second Economic Commission, a part of DPRK's armed forces assigned to logistics and civil engineering, will soon be discharged, the official said, quoting DPRK intelligence sources in Beijing. The economic commission was established in the early 1970s to manage military logistics. The National Defense Commission, headed by the DPRK leader Kim Jong-il oversees the economic unit, which is responsible for the production and supply of military equipment, weapons and ammunition. It also runs an income-earning agricultural production and export business on the side. The official said that details of the timing and exact scale of the reduction have not been confirmed. "DPRK Forces Reduction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, ROK)

14. DPRK Food Program

The UN World Food Program (WFP) warned on Tuesday that a serious funding shortfall meant it might again be forced to slash food distribution in the DPRK. The WFP, which has been feeding about a third of DPRK's 23 million people, began halting food aid to millions of hungry children, women and elderly people in September because of a slump in grain donations. By the end of the year, some three million people will be cut off and another 1.5 million may follow early next year. "We've had to cut our work in North Korea in half and I'm concerned we may have to cut it in half again ... I'm very troubled about how we're going to do our humanitarian work in North Korea going forward," said WFP Executive Director James Morris. "Japan has historically given us \$100 million a year to feed the people in North Korea. They've not been able to do that this year and that's a serious resource shortfall," he told Ottawa's National Press Club. "DPRK Food Program" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

15. Inter Korean Red Cross Talks Nullified

Red Cross talks between the ROK and the DPRK broke off Saturday after DPRK showed no enthusiasm for holding a temporary family reunion this winter and searching for South Koreans kidnapped to DPRK after the Korean War. The Red Cross talks began at Mount Kumgang on Thursday. The three-day talks at first went smoothly; the two sides discussed a plan to build a permanent meeting facility for separated families of the the ROK and the DPRK and visited Jopo, a small town that DPRK had proposed as a location for the meeting site. They reportedly reached an agreement to begin construction, possibly before the end of this year. But other issues scuttled the talks. ROK's delegates proposed holding another separated family reunion either in early December or next February, the sixth such gathering. DPRK, however, said that no more meetings could be held until the permanent facility was completed. ROK Red Cross officials also asked DPRK to confirm the whereabouts of ROK members missing since the Korean War; they also pressed DPRK to provide information about ROK citizens who were kidnapped to DPRK after the war.

"Inter Korean Red Cross Talks Nullified" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, ROK)

16. Gaeseong Industrial Complex

ROK and DPRK have agreed to begin building an industrial zone in Gaeseong, DPRK, next month. The target is to allow ROK firms to establish plants in the zone beginning in late 2003. The two Koreas are also reportedly near an agreement on tourism programs in the city northwest of Seoul across the Demilitarized Zone that could begin early next year. After three days of talks in Pyongyang, delegates from the ROK and the DPRK announced the agreement Saturday. Two ROK firms, Hyundai Asan Corp. and the state-run Korea Land Corp., will develop 3.3 million square meters of land by the end of next year in the first stage of a project to turn 66 million square meters of land into an industrial zone. DPRK said it will set up a new legal system for the zone, making it a special district with tax benefits and a minimum of interference in the use of the land, the operation of plants located there and funds flows.

"Gaeseong Industrial Complex" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, ROK)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC Domestic Politics

The PRC gave the first signals about its possible next leadership line-up with the appointment of likely heir apparent Hu Jintao as head organizer of the vital 16th Communist Party Congress. Hu will be secretary general of the Congress Presidium, a body which chairs the event beginning Friday morning, party spokesman Ji Bingxuan said, fuelling expectations that Hu will succeed President Jiang Zemin as party chief. But significantly, one of Hu's four deputy secretary-generals will be Zeng Qinghong, known as the closest ally of Jiang. Spokesman Ji also announced that the Congress will last for seven days until November 14. The wholesale leadership changes expected to be endorsed by the long-anticipated event are expected to be revealed the following day.

PRC's Communist Party chieftains faced calls for political reform and greater transparency from dissidents and top academics on Wednesday in the final countdown to a watershed congress this week. Nearly 200 PRC political activists signed an open letter urging the party to reverse its verdict on the 1989 pro-democracy protests at the 16th congress starting on Friday, when top leaders are due to retire, a human rights group said. Two of the nation's top economists, prominent members of the establishment, also made a bold appeal for clearer rules on how and when party leaders step down as speculation mounted that party chief Jiang Zemin would retire in name only.

"PRC Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

"PRC Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"PRC Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

2. PRC-US Relations

In signs of warming US-PRC relations, the PRC is welcoming a US Navy ship this month and the US will host nearly two dozen touring PRC generals next month, US officials said. Also, the admiral who commands all US forces in the Pacific will visit the PRC in December. In addition, the Pentagon announced that senior-level defense talks not held since November-December 2000 will resume December 9 in Washington. The decision to proceed with those talks was made during President Bush's meeting in Texas last month with PRC President Jiang Zemin, but no date had been set. The Pentagon delegation at the Washington talks will be led by Douglas Feith, the undersecretary of defense for policy. US officials said the PRC delegation will be led by Feith's counterpart, General Xiong Guang Kai.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

3. PRC-Japan Relations

PRC President Jiang Zemin met with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on October 27. Jiang recalled in the report that this year is the 30th anniversary of normalization of Sino-Japanese relations. The Chinese and Japanese peoples enjoy a long history of friendly exchanges, but there was a miserable part of history of aggression against PRC by Japanese militarists, which inflicted great sufferings on the Chinese people, Jiang said. PRC hopes that Japan could properly handle relevant issues in order that Sino-Japanese relations would remain friendly from generation to generation, Jiang added. According to the report, Koizumi said that on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of normalization of Japan-PRC relations, there were grand celebrations in both countries, indicating that there exists a firm basis for bilateral relations. All walks of life in Japan hope to further strengthen relations with PRC, he said. As for the war (of aggression against PRC), Koizumi said that the Japanese side will make a thorough introspection of it and holds that such a war should never recur, said the report.

A day after the PRC seized the initiative with a free trade zone plan in Southeast Asia, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi took the first steps Tuesday to include the world's number two economy in a regional trade deal. Japan has been left on the back foot by an agreement signed Monday by PRC and the 10 member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) that launches 10 years of negotiations toward what would be the biggest free trade zone in the world with a population of 1.7 billion people. The summit aims to promote economic integration, tackle terror and paper over cracks that perennially open up among 10 states that range from impoverished Laos to oil-rich Brunei and giant Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation. "We've entered a new age of partnership. We will walk together and advance together," said Koizumi as he signed the joint declaration on an economic partnership in the Cambodian capital.

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

4. Japanese Activist Deported

A Japanese activist, deported from the PRC Wednesday for allegedly helping DPRK escape their homeland, claimed he was physically abused during his weeklong detention by PRC authorities. "They put handcuffs on my right hand. The other was shackled to my seat. I was told to sleep like this - unable to move at all," said Hiroshi Kato, co-founder of Tokyo-based aid group Life Funds for North Korean Refugees. He said the PRC authorities also beat him and threatened to quietly turn him over to the DPRK government if he didn't confess to their allegations. "It was outrageous that they tried to make it look like I had done things that I really hadn't," he said after arriving at Kansai International Airport in western Japan. The PRC government expelled Kato, 57, claiming he had helped DPRK refugees dash into foreign embassies in the PRC to seek asylum. Kato has denied the charges.

"Japanese Activist Deported" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

5. PRC-DPRK Relations

People's Daily (Xu Hongzhi and Zhang Jinjiang, "JIANG MET DPRK PRESIDENT," Los Cabos, 10/29/02, P1) reported that Chinese President Jiang Zemin met DPRK president Kim Dae-Jung on October 27. It reported that Kim congratulated Jiang on his successful visit to the US and briefed Jiang of his views on the current situation in the Korean Peninsula. Jiang spoke highly of Kim's important contribution to the development of bilateral relations, especially the establishment of Sino-ROK cooperative partnership. According to the report, Jiang stressed that it is PRC's consistent position to safeguard peace and stability in the peninsula. The DPRK's nuclear weapons issue has recently drawn concerns across the world, Jiang said, adding that PRC supports a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and hopes the DPRK and the US could solve their issues concerned through dialogue, said the report.

"PRC-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

6. PRC-Russian Ties

People's Daily (Xu Hongzhi and Zhang Jinjiang, "JIANG MET RUSSIAN PRIME MINISTER," Los Cabos, 10/29/02, P1) reported that Chinese President Jiang Zemin met with Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mikhailovich Kasyanov on October 27 on the sidelines of the 10th annual Economic Leaders' Meeting of the APEC forum. During the meeting, Jiang once again condemned the recent hostage-taking event in Moscow by Chechen separatists, voicing firm support for the action of the Russian government to crack down on separatism in Chechnya. Jiang spoke highly of the development of Sino-Russian relations. With concerted efforts by both sides, the Sino-Russian treaty on good-neighborliness and friendship is being implemented while the political, economic and social basis for Sino-Russian relations is becoming more solid, he said. The Russian prime minister said that the relations of good-neighborliness and friendship between Russia and PRC have developed smoothly to a new level. On Iraq and other issues of common concern, the two sides agreed that PRC and Russia have identical or similar positions on many major international issues, the report said.

"PRC-Russian Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

7. PRC Democratic Activist

Reuters ("CHINESE DEMOCRACY ACTIVIST FANG JUE DETAINED, SISTER SAYS," Beijing, 11/05/02) reported that PRC police have detained government official-turned-democracy activist Fang Jue and confiscated his belongings days before a pivotal Communist Party congress, his sister said on Tuesday. More than 10 policemen showed up at Fang's residence in central Beijing on Monday evening and hauled off the frail but outspoken activist, threatening onlookers not to say anything, younger sister Liu Jing said. "He was taken away in the afternoon. His neighbours all saw it happen and they told me about it," she said. Police returned later and confiscated many of his personal effects, including his computer and telephone, she added. Police at a station near Fang's home declined to comment. "I can't answer your questions. I don't know," a duty officer said. In January 1998, the former researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences called for direct elections at all levels of government, freedom of the press and the right to form new political parties and independent labour unions. At the time he published the article, Fang said some 200 mid-ranking Communist Party cadres backed his radical proposals. That July, however, police detained him. Eleven months later they charged him with illegally selling oil import quotas and pocketing 145,000 yuan (\$17,500) when he was a government planner in the southern city of Fuzhou.

"PRC Democratic Activist" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

8. PRC on Iraq

The PRC said on Thursday the third US draft resolution on Iraq had eased concerns of some UN Security Council members, but declined to say if it would support the measure and added it favored a swift political solution. "On the whole, we believe the new US proposals have taken into account and considered the worries and concerns of some of us countries," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a news conference. "China will play a positive and constructive role and push for further consultations over the UN Security Council draft." The six-page draft gives UN arms inspectors far-reaching powers, including unrestricted rights to enter President Saddam Hussein's palace compounds. The resolution, the result of eight weeks of negotiations on scrapping any chemical, biological or nuclear weapons of mass destruction Iraq may have, was formally presented to council members on Wednesday and will be reviewed again on Thursday. It threatens Iraq with "serious consequences" for non-compliance which would constitute a "further material breach" of a 1991 Gulf War ceasefire resolution.

"PRC on Iraq Resolution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

"PRC on Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

9. PRC Human Rights

The PRC executed 46 people in just two days last week following calls to intensify the fight against crime ahead of a pivotal Communist Party Congress, Amnesty International said Wednesday. Twenty-nine people were executed in the southwest city of Chongqing and on southern island of Hainan last Wednesday while 17 were executed in the town of Pingdingshan in the central province of Henan two days later, Amnesty said in statement. No immediate comment was available from PRC officials.

"PRC Human Rights" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

10. PRC Response to DPRK-Japan Relations

The PRC welcomed the resumption of DPRK-Japan dialogue on October 29. The report said PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said in Beijing that both the DPRK and Japan are important close neighbors of PRC and PRC has always welcomed efforts made to improve Japan-DPRK ties and the eventual normalization of relations between the two countries.

"PRC Response to DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

11. PRC-Mongolian Relations

The PRC briefly closed parts of its border with Mongolia as Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, visited its northern neighbour, Mongolian officials said on Thursday. Road and rail links across the entire border were closed partially early on Tuesday morning but reopened on Wednesday afternoon, said Amarsaikhan Sainbuyan, a diplomat at the Mongolian embassy in Beijing. "We don't have any information from the Chinese side," he said. "Right now it's open." During the closure, Chinese officials prevented goods from moving across the border although international passenger and freight trains were allowed to cross after delays of several hours, the Mongolian diplomat said. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a news conference on Thursday several trains had stopped on the border, but denied there had been any closure.

"PRC-Mongolian Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

Japan

1. Japan-DPRK Talks

The DPRK threatened Tuesday to resume missile test-launches unless Japan stops making the North's nuclear weapons program and the fate of five Japanese abductees central to normalizing relations. Quoting a Foreign Ministry official, the DPRK's official Korea Central News Agency said Japan's stance on the abductees and its demands that the DPRK stop developing nuclear weapons "is now creating very serious issues as it is illogical." The date for the next round of talks has not been set. The five abductees are in Japan in their first homecoming, allowed by the DPRK but on the expectation it would last only a week or two. Japan now says it has no plans to return them to the DPRK. The DPRK Foreign Ministry official, who was not identified, said that if Japan is willing to break its promise on the abductees, the DPRK is not obliged to stick to the test-launch moratorium. "If any party ceases to implement its commitment, it is impossible for the other party to continue to fulfill its commitment," the official said. "Normalization of relations depends on North Korea's sincere achievement of its promises in the Pyongyang declaration...I would not accept any remarks that counter these conditions," Koizumi said Tuesday on the sidelines of a summit with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Phnom Penh.

"DPRK Missile Pledge" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, JAPAN)

"Japan-DPRK Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"DPRK on Missile Moratorium" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, US)

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, ROK)

2. DPRK-Japan Relations

China Daily ("NO OBVIOUS PROGRESS MADE IN TOKYO-PYONGYANG TALKS," Kuala Lumpur, 10/30/02, P1) reported that negotiators from Japan and DPRK ended their talks on October 29 in the Malaysian capital with no obvious progress. The report said that the talks came about as a result of a declaration signed at a September summit between Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang. Japanese delegation spokesman briefed the press that both sides discussed issues such as the abduction of Japanese citizens by the DPRK and the scrapping of the DPRK's nuclear-weapons program on the basis of the Pyongyang declaration. The spokesman said that while the DPRK showed willingness to discuss these issues, it requested negotiations on the normalization of diplomatic ties between the two countries and also asked for Japanese assistance as soon as possible. At the same time, DPRK chief negotiator told his Japanese counterpart at the opening of the talks that "there are differences over various views" and "there are issues which cannot be solved without co-operation". Earlier attempts to normalize formal bilateral relations broke down two years ago when DPRK denied its role in the abductions of Japanese citizens decades ago. DPRK is also pressing for the settlement of issues stemming from Japan's harsh 35-year colonial rule of the Korean peninsula that ended in 1945. Formal negotiations will resume on October 30, following working meetings attended by some delegates from both sides, as the report said.

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 06, PRC)

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

3. US-Japan-ROK DPRK Diplomacy

Top diplomats from Japan, the ROK, and the US will meet in Tokyo on Saturday to discuss the DPRK, Japan Foreign Ministry said Thursday. Lee Tae-sik, ROK deputy foreign minister, and US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly will be meeting with Hitoshi Tanaka, the head of the Asian bureau at Japan's Foreign Ministry. The three sides generally discuss topical issues on the DPRK at their meetings, which are held regularly. Japanese public broadcaster NHK said one agenda item this weekend will be whether the US ought to stop shipping oil to the DPRK. A decision on whether to cancel a shipment due to arrive in the DPRK later this month is in the hands of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, KEDO, which will meet Monday.

"US-Japan-ROK DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

4. Japan's Efforts to Validate KEDO

As officials from ROK, Japan and US prepare to meet for a three-way meeting, with DPRK high on the agenda later this week in Tokyo, Japanese officials reportedly plan to urge US to keep the 1994 Agreed Framework intact in light of security concerns on the Korean peninsula. In addition, Japan is voicing the need to maintain the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, or KEDO project, amid signs US may officially dissolve the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework signed between US and DPRK. DPRK's recent revelation of its enriched uranium program and its bold stance on the issue, has both US and EU reviewing their involvement in the project. Given these circumstances, Japan plans to call on US to keep the 1994 accord valid in line with efforts to seek a peaceful resolution based on dialogue with regard to DPRK's nuclear ambitions.

"Japan's Efforts to Validate KEDO" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, ROK)

5. DPRK Security Talks

The DPRK is refusing to set an agenda for talks with Japan on security issues later this month, sources said. In the second day of normalization talks in Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday, Japanese officials proposed separate negotiations on national security issues be held in November. Although DPRK agreed, it said it could not accept a fixed agenda beforehand. Japan wants to discuss DPRK's nuclear weapons and missile development programs, but the DPRK's refusal to agree to an agenda left Japanese officials puzzled. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi meantime told her US and ROK counterparts on Thursday she would continue to work closely with them to persuade DPRK to abandon its nuclear aspirations. Kawaguchi promised Japan would continue to take a strong stance on abductions and the nuclear issue.

"DPRK Security Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, JAPAN)

6. Japan-PRC Relations

PRC President Jiang Zemin raised the issue of the Yasukuni Shrine three times during a 45-minute meeting held on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. In requesting Koizumi to stop offending PRC in this way, Jiang called it an issue "that touches on the sentiments of 1.3 billion Chinese people." Koizumi tried to explain his two visits to Yasukuni stemmed from a belief "to show my determination not to repeat the experience of war by expressing my sympathy to the many people who died in battle." Koizumi said visiting Yasukuni does not constitute an act of worship, but Jiang was not mollified. "China has been drawing a sharp line between ordinary Japanese people who were victimized in the war and the militarists who started the invasion war," Jiang countered. "So it's better not to make visits to Yasukuni again, never again," PRC officials quoted Jiang as saying.

"Japan-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, JAPAN)

7. PRC-Japan Activist Deportation

The PRC denied a Japanese activist's claims of abuse during his weeklong detention and asserted Thursday that the man had confessed to helping DPRK refugees seek asylum in foreign missions in the PRC. Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said authorities had offered lenient treatment to Hiroshi Kato, co-founder of the Tokyo-based aid group Life Funds for North Korean Refugees. Kato disappeared on October 30 from a hotel in the northeastern city of Dalian. Kato claimed Wednesday after returning to Japan that PRC police beat him and threatened to hand him over to the DPRK government if he didn't confess to their allegations. He said he was forced to sleep shackled to a chair. Kato denied arranging asylum bids for DPRK asylum seekers. Calling Kato's claims a lie, Kong said Kato had been involved with smuggling refugees since at least June 2000, when he helped a group of 12 DPRK defectors reach Japan and the ROK via the PRC. He said Kato had been one of the organizers of a March 14, 2002, asylum bid by 25 DPRK asylum seekers who barged into the Spanish embassy in Beijing, pleading for asylum.

"PRC-Japan Activist Deportation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, US)

8. Japan-ASEAN Relations

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on Tuesday signed a joint declaration to negotiate a framework by the end of 2003 for a comprehensive economic partnership. Once the framework is in place, Japan and the 10 members of ASEAN will work toward realizing the partnership, which could include a free trade agreement, within the next decade. The joint declaration is along the lines of the "initiative for Japan-ASEAN comprehensive economic partnership" broached by Koizumi on his tour of Southeast Asia in January. Tuesday's joint declaration comes on the heels of an agreement reached Monday between the PRC and ASEAN members on a similar framework that will finalize a regional free trade agreement in 10 years. The Japan-ASEAN declaration, meanwhile, paves the way for bilateral ties with each of the ASEAN members as well as greater cooperation with Southeast Asia as a whole. According to the declaration, Japan and ASEAN will discuss cooperation on not only trade and investment but also financial services. Other areas of partnership could include IT and other science and technology fields, as well as training of personnel, tourism, transportation, energy and food security. The two sides plan to set up a working-level panel of senior officials to hammer out the areas of cooperation and report their recommendations to the Japan-ASEAN summit slated for 2003.

"Japan-ASEAN Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, JAPAN)

9. Japan on US Missile Defense

The Associated Press ("JAPAN'S DEFENSE CHIEF BACKS US MISSILE SHIELD," Tokyo, 11/05/002) reported that Japan's defense chief backed the country's right to participate in a potential US missile shield, saying it was in line with Japan's pacifist constitution, an official said Tuesday. "Japan is committed to an exclusively defensive security system. The (US-Japan) missile defense program is in accord with this commitment," Defense Agency spokesman Ichiro Imaizumi quoted Japan's top defense official, Shigeru Ishiba, as saying. Ishiba, speaking to a parliamentary security committee, referred to the proposed US\$48-billion program, which aims to put up a defensive shield to protect the US and its key allies against ballistic missiles. Japanese critics argue that the program could clash with constitutional restrictions on Japan's ability to aid allies under attack. Many in other countries say the program may prompt an arms race. Japan has so far kept a neutral stance on the issue, indicating it would make a decision by 2003 or 2004. But Ishiba - who replaced his predecessor just over a month ago - has been more vocal in leaning toward a commitment. "Japan on US Missile Defense" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

10. Japan-US Relations: Ehime Maru

The US Navy will pay about \$13 million in compensation to families of seven victims and 26 survivors of a collision in waters off Hawaii in February 2001 between Ehime Maru, a Japanese fisheries training ship, and Greenville, a US nuclear-powered submarine. The total, equal to about 1.62 billion yen, includes compensation for the fatalities in the sinking of the vessel and medical treatment for the survivors for posttraumatic stress disorder, they said. However, lawyers representing the families of two other victims are still discussing compensation with the navy. Captain Richard Evans, who is in charge of the US Navy's legal affairs, is expected to visit Japan to sign a document on the settlement in mid-November. "Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, JAPAN)

11. Japanese Disarmament Diplomacy

Japanese ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, Kuniko Inoguchi, has been elected to serve as chairwoman of a UN conference on the illegal trade of small arms and light weapons in July 2003, UN officials said. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects unanimously elected Inoguchi to head the interim conference in New York. The conference will review the implementation of an action plan adopted in 2001, the officials said.

"Japanese Disarmament Diplomacy"(NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, JAPAN)

12. Japanese Abduction Victims

The Associated Press ("POLICE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE REMAINS OF JAPANESE ABDUCTED BY NORTH KOREA," Tokyo, 11/05/02) reported that Japanese police were unable to identify the only set of human remains turned over by DPRK officials, who say the remains belong to one of eight Japanese who died after being abducted decades ago by DPRK spies. Experts' attempts to conduct DNA tests were frustrated because the remains appeared to have been "severely affected by heat," Cabinet spokesman Takashi Okada said Tuesday. He refused to comment on how the damage may have occurred. Local media had reported the remains were cremated twice, and had been dubious that the tests would yield a conclusive outcome. The graves of the seven other victims had been washed away in floods, the DPRK said. The test results cast further doubt on Pyongyang's reports to Japan on the fates of the eight allegedly dead abductees. Victims' families, faced with no verifiable evidence, have refused to believe the DPRK's accounts of the deaths.

"Japanese Abduction Victims" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, US)

13. Japan Domestic Politics

Liberal Democratic Party won five of the seven Diet by-elections amid extremely low voter turnout that apparently reflected sluggish public interest. The opposition Democratic Party of Japan won only one of the contested seats. The by-elections, seen as a major electoral contest for Koizumi as the nation remains mired in an economic slump, were marked by sluggish voter turnout -- up to 28 percentage points lower than in the general election held in June 2000. "We were able to win great achievements in the by-elections through the united efforts of the coalition parties," LDP Secretary General Taku Yamasaki said as he declared a victory for Sunday's elections.

Normal relations between Japan and DPRK will come at a cost, and the government now says the price is reduction of DPRK's military force. The new policy was spelled out by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe on Friday in an exclusive interview with The Asahi Shimbun. Abe has been Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's point man in negotiations with DPRK. On conditions Japan will set before providing economic assistance to DPRK, Abe said: "If they distributed the resources heavily toward the military, to the point that it contributed to maintenance of a million-member military, the issue (of negotiating economic assistance) would be far from settled." But he did not insist that a troop reduction is a precondition for economic assistance. "That is an issue that they have to think about," Abe said. Abe was cautiously optimistic about the prospect of establishing diplomatic ties. "If (North Korea) responds sincerely to the abduction issue and national security concerns, such as nuclear weapons and missile development, we could naturally normalize ties," Abe said. He suggested Japan might also decide to change its current policy against using food aid as a diplomatic tool. "We have said the assistance is humanitarian and not a (diplomatic) card," Abe said. "However, we have very few other diplomatic means available to us."

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 07, JAPAN)

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, November 05, JAPAN)

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