NAPSNet Daily Report 15 May, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 15 May, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 15, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-15-may-2008/

NAPSNet Daily Report 15 May, 2008

NAPSNet Daily Report 15 May, 2008

Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 3. US on DPRK Terror List Status
  - 4. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks
  - 5. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks
  - 6. US Food Aid to the DPRK
  - 7. ROK Aid to DPRK
  - 8. Japan-DPRK Relations
  - 9. Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group
  - 10. PRC Earthquake
  - 11. Japanese Relief Aid to PRC
  - 12. PRC Media
  - 13. PRC Viral Outbreak
- II. ROK Report

- 14. ROK Policy toward DPRK
- 15. Inter-Korea Relations

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA LIKELY TO SUBMIT NUKE DECLARATION WITHIN FEW DAYS: SEOUL", Seoul, 2008/05/14) reported that the DPRK is expected to submit a long-awaited declaration on its nuclear programme within a few days and six-party disarmament talks may resume early next month, the ROK's foreign ministry said. "North Korea is expected to present the nuclear declaration to China within a few days and China in turn will circulate it among other countries concerned," Moon told journalists. "If we calculate all the time needed for these procedures, we may expect the six-party talks to resume in early June," he said.

(return to top)

2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press (Anne Gearan, "NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR DOCUMENTS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH ", Washington, 2008/05/14) reported that the Bush administration put copies of DPRK nuclear logs on triumphant display Tuesday but conceded the documents are far from enough to dispel doubts about the secretive regime's nuclear weapons. Officials say they are still waiting for a full accounting of Pyongyang's atomic past, now nearly five months past due. What they have is a down payment, a cache of records that will be used to check the accuracy of a fuller report if it ever comes. The administration hopes the documents will help convince skeptics in Congress and elsewhere that a nuclear disarmament deal with the North is still worth having, despite delays, foot-dragging and revelations about the alleged sale of DPRK nuclear technology to Syria.

Washington Post (Glenn Kessler, "U.S. INCREASES ESTIMATE OF N. KOREAN PLUTONIUM", 2008/05/14) reported that U.S. intelligence analysts have prepared a fresh estimate of the size of the DPRK's stockpile of plutonium -- larger than previous assessments -- that will be compared with the information contained in 18,822 pages of reactor production records turned over by the DPRK last week, according to U.S. officials. DPRK officials have said about 30 kilograms of plutonium was produced at their five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon, at the low end of most private and government estimates. The new U.S. estimate is expected to be from 35 to 40 or 50 to 60 kilograms, though sources would not detail how much it had increased from the last government estimate. "It will be a little more than past estimates," said a senior U.S. official with access to the intelligence. "It solidifies it and presents a more solid assessment."

(return to top)

3. US on DPRK Terror List Status

Yonhap ("ABDUCTION NOT AN ISSUE FOR TERROR LIST REMOVAL: VERSHBOW ", Seoul, 2008/05/14) reported that the decades-long dispute over the DPRK's abduction of more than a dozen Japanese citizens will not affect any U.S. move to remove Pyongyang from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, the top U.S. envoy here said. U.S. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow reaffirmed that his country will take the steps long sought by the DPRK once it fully accounts for its nuclear stockpiles as agreed in last year's multilateral deal. "We have not seen that (the abduction issue) as a prerequisite to movement on the state sponsors of terrorism list," the ambassador said in an interview with the Hankyoreh daily.

Korea Herald ("U.S. LAWMAKERS CONSIDER PROVISION TO REQUIRE BUSH TO CERTIFY NORTH KOREA", 2008/05/14) reported that US lawmakers on Tuesday called for President George W. Bush to certify that the DPRK is not transferring nuclear technology to Iran and Syria before Pyongyang receives its coveted goal of being taken off a U.S. terrorism blacklist, AP reported. The measure, which was considered by the US House of Representatives, could hinder the Bush administration's push to settle a nuclear disarmament deal with the North. A vote on the measure was postponed. Under the legislation, Bush would also have to certify that the DPRK has provided a "complete and correct" and verifiable declaration of all its nuclear programs before removing the DPRK from the blacklist.

(return to top)

4. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("PROSPECTS OF RESUMING 6-PARTY TALKS UNCLEAR: MACHIMURA ", Tokyo, 2008/05/14) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said that prospects for resuming the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear activities remain unclear despite moves by top nuclear negotiators from Japan, the ROK and the US to hold a meeting possibly next week. Noting that analyzing nuclear documents handed over to the US by the DPRK last week ''may take quite a lot of time,'' the top government spokesman said, ''It's unclear at this moment when the six-party talks will be held.''

(return to top)

5. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("CHINA CALLS FOR TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF SECOND-PHASE ACTIONS OF SIX-PARTY TALKS", Beijing, 2008/05/14) reported that the PRC voiced the hope here that participants in the six-party talks would expand their mutual trust in an aim to comprehensively, and in a balanced way, carry out the second-phase actions at an early date. Qin said the six-party talks had progressed recently, and the parties had stepped up the implementation of the second-phase action plan. "The good momentum of talks process should be preserved," Qin said, calling on the parties to increase mutual trust and demonstrate their pragmatic will and flexibility in a bid to comprehensively carry out the second-phase actions plan in a balanced matter.

(return to top)

6. US Food Aid to the DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "FOOD AID TO NORTH MOVES ON FAST TRACK", 2008/05/15) reported that US officials said envoys who visited the DPRK earlier this month had "a very good conversation" and that Washington will soon announce plans to ship rice to the DPRK. During the latest visit to Pyongyang U.S. officials were able to "work through" how to improve monitoring, McCormack said. "So we're now taking a close look at what the needs are, what our capabilities to help fill that need might be. We'll probably have some announcements for you in the coming days."

(return to top)

7. ROK Aid to DPRK

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA WANTS TALKS WITH N. KOREA ON FOOD AID", Seoul, 2008/05/15) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said Thursday that his country is willing to talk with the DPRK to discuss ways of providing food aid. "Appraisals of North Korea's food situation are under way," he told reporters. "But statistics on North Korea's society are not accurate. The ROK is in consultations with related nations and international agencies on the assessment of the food situation." The minister's comments came hours after a key presidential confidant said Seoul will offer humanitarian aid to Pyongyang anytime "when the condition is created."

(return to top)

8. Japan-DPRK Relations

Korea Herald ("N.K. LEADER INSPECTS MONUMENT RETURNED FROM JAPAN: REPORT", 2008/05/14) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has inspected a centuries-old stone monument that was returned after being looted by Japan, Yonhap News Agency reported quoting the DPRK's state-run news agency. Kim made the inspection during his on-site guidance tour of North Hamgyong Province in the northeastern part of the DPRK, according to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). The monument was turned over to Seoul in October 2005 after then ROK President Roh Moo-hyun pressed for its return at his summit with then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in June that year. Seoul sent it to Pyongyang in 2006.

(return to top)

9. Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group

Mainichi Shimbun ("S.KOREA, US, JAPAN NUCLEAR ENVOYS PREPARING TO MEET IN WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK, SEOUL SAYS", Seoul, 2008/05/14) reported that the top nuclear envoys from the ROK, the US and Japan were preparing to meet next week to try resolving a deadlock in disarmament talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs, the ROK's Foreign Ministry said. The three negotiators were expected to meet in Washington to discuss the DPRK's declaration of its nuclear activities and the verification of those reports, ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young told reporters.

(return to top)

10. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press (Audra Ang, "CHINA SAYS TROOPS RUSH TO PLUG DANGEROUS CRACKS IN DAM ", Hanwang, 2008/05/14) reported that thousands of PRC soldiers rushed to repair a dam badly cracked by the country's massive earthquake, while rescuers arrived for the first time in the epicenter of the disaster. The PRC's top economic planning body said that the quake had damaged 391 mostly small dams. It left "extremely dangerous" cracks in the Zipingpu Dam upriver from the earthquake-hit city of Dujiangyan and some 2,000 soldiers were sent to repair the damage, the official Xinhua News Agency said. He Biao, the director of the Aba Disaster Relief headquarters in northern Sichuan province, said there were also concerns over dams closer to the epicenter.

Agence France-Presse (Francois Bougon, "OVER 40,000 DEAD, MISSING OR BURIED IN CHINA QUAKE ", Dujiangyan, 2008/05/14) reported that more than 40,000 people were dead, missing or buried under rubble in the PRC's southwest, officials said, as the full horror of its devastating earthquake began to emerge. Rescue teams who punched into the quake's stricken epicentre reported whole towns all but wiped off the map, spurring frantic efforts to bring emergency relief to the survivors. State media quoted Sichuan vice governor Li Chengyun saying that based on "incomplete" figures, 14,463 people were confirmed dead in the province as of mid-afternoon Wednesday. Nearly 26,000 were buried in rubble, he added, while Xinhua corrected its earlier report of more than 14,000 missing to just 1,400 -- although even that does not take into account new details emerging almost by the hour.

(return to top)

11. Japanese Relief Aid to PRC

Kyodo ("CHINA TO ALLOW JAPANESE RESCUE TEAM INTO QUAKE AREA", Beijing, 2008/05/15) reported that the PRC has agreed to allow a Japanese rescue team into the area hit by Monday's devastating earthquake, state media reported Thursday. The PRC said earlier this week that it would accept money and materials offered by other countries and international organizations to help the rescue effort, but that it did not yet need experts and foreign personnel to aid relief efforts.

(return to top)

12. PRC Media

The New York Times ("A RESCUE IN CHINA, UNCENSORED", Beijing, 2008/05/14) reported that since an earthquake flattened a swath of rural Sichuan Province on Monday, killing nearly 15,000 people, the government in Beijing has mounted an aggressive rescue effort, dispatching tens of thousands of troops and promptly sending Prime Minister Wen Jiabao to the disaster zone, accompanied by reporters. The official response since Monday stands in stark contrast not only to neighboring Myanmar’s, but also to the PRC’s abysmal performance during a major quake in 1976, when at least 240,000 people died in the eastern city of Tangshan.

(return to top)

13. PRC Viral Outbreak

Reuters ("FIRST BEIJING DEATH LINKED TO CHINA VIRUS OUTBREAK ", Beijing, 2008/05/14) reported that the PRC's capital has recorded its first death from an outbreak of hand, foot and mouth disease as authorities try to contain the spread of a potent virus just three months before the city hosts the Olympic Games. Beijing Health Bureau spokeswoman Deng Xiaohong said a 13-month-old boy from the city's northern Changping District died on the way to a hospital on Sunday. Hubei province to the south also confirmed the death of a toddler from hand foot and mouth, taking the nationwide toll to 42. More than 27,500 cases have been reported in the PRC as of last Friday, Xinhua said earlier, with the number of new cases in Anhui province starting to decline.

(return to top)

II. ROK Report

14. ROK Policy toward DPRK

The Peace Foundation (Yang Mun-Soo, "AGE WITHOUT DPRK POLICY", 2008/05/15) carried an article by a professor at the University of North Korean Studies, who wrote that DPRK policy has a characteristic of being relative. If the possibility of policy being realized is very low, that policy should not be chosen. Having more interest in the subject and organizing more research is the shortcut to making the proper policy. I am not asking for the new government to change its philosophy. Understanding the opponent's thought and behavior and agreeing to the opponent's thought and behavior are different levels. If the government truly desires to achieve the goal, it must ponder further on the issue.

(return to top)

15. Inter-Korea Relations

Yonhap News ("DIPLOMATIC EQUATION OF KOREAN PENINSULA ON FOOD SUPPLY TO DPRK", 2008/05/15) wrote that as the political situation in the Korean Peninsula delicately progresses along on nuclear issues, the problem of food supply to DPRK has become a core issue. Through this opportunity, the ROK government, which claims that food supply is possible once the DPRK asks for it was given an assignment to choose the diplomatic security direction toward the DPRK before the Bush administration is finished with its term of office. The issue of food supply to the DPRK can be connected to whether the deadlock in inter-Koreans relation since inauguration of Lee Myung-bak administration can be resolved or not.

(return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report--5-may-2008/

Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org