

NAPSNet Daily Report 16 May, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 16 May, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 16, 2008,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-16-may-2008/>

NAPSNet Daily Report 16 May, 2008

NAPSNet Daily Report 16 May, 2008

Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [2. DPRK-US Trade Relations](#)
 - [3. DPRK-ASEAN Relations](#)
 - [4. ROK Food Aid to the DPRK](#)
 - [5. Inter-Korean Relations](#)
 - [6. US-ROK Security Alliance](#)
 - [7. US-ROK Trade Relations](#)
 - [8. ROK Bird Flu](#)
 - [9. Japan Bird Flu Outbreak](#)
 - [10. Japan Comfort Women Issue](#)
 - [11. US Military in Japan](#)
 - [12. Japan Whaling Issue](#)
 - [13. Japan SDF Peacekeeping Role](#)
 - [14. Japan-Vietnam Nuclear Cooperation](#)

- [15. PRC Earthquake](#)
- [16. Cross Strait Relations](#)
- [17. PRC Viral Outbreak](#)
- II. ROK Report
 - [18. Inter-Korea Relations](#)
 - [19. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("NO PREDICTION POSSIBLE ON WHEN N. KOREA WILL DECLARE NUCLEAR HOLDINGS: OFFICIAL", Incheon, 2008/05/16) reported that the ROK's top nuclear envoy said it is difficult to determine when the DPRK will submit a declaration of its nuclear holdings. Kim Sook told reporters at Incheon International Airport that while it is hard to be specific on a date, the declaration could be made within days.

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA EXPECTS NUCLEAR TALKS TO RESUME", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that the ROK expects the six-party talks to resume next month, the country's chief negotiator Kim Sook said Friday. "If consultations proceed smoothly, I expect the six-party talks will resume in June," Kim told reporters during a briefing on the outcome of his trip to the PRC. "We're conducting consultations with the first half of June in mind."

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK-US Trade Relations

Korea Times (Michael Ha, "NK SEEKS TEXTILE EXPORTS TO WAL-MART", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that DPRK officials are reportedly interested in signing a deal to export textile products to Wal-Mart, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported Friday. Tony Namkung, senior advisor to New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, said the DPRK government has high hopes for the lifting of economic sanctions, the Trading with the Enemy Act and the terrorism-sponsoring list, according to the report. He also said North Korea officials made references to exporting magnesite and working with U.S. mining companies to develop mineral sites.

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. DPRK-ASEAN Relations

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA MULLING TO SIGN ASEAN'S NON-AGGRESSION TREATY AT JULY MEET ", Singapore, 2008/05/16) reported that the DPRK is considering signing ASEAN's non-aggression treaty in July this year, the Straits Times newspaper reported. It quoted Singapore Foreign Minister George Yeo as saying at the end of a visit to the DPRK this week that Pyongyang is considering signing the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia on the sidelines of the annual gathering of ASEAN foreign ministers in July.

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. ROK Food Aid to the DPRK

Agence France-Presse (Park Chan-Kyong, "SKOREA SEEKS DIRECT TALKS WITH NKOREA OVER FOOD AID: MINISTER ", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that the ROK said it wants direct talks with the DPRK to discuss providing badly needed food aid, apparently softening its position that the DPRK must first ask for help. "If we have a chance, we will talk directly to Pyongyang" on food aid, Foreign Minister Yu Myung-Hwan told reporters. "Many of our brothers are starving to death in North Korea," said Ahn Sang-Soo, parliamentary leader of Lee's Grand National Party. "The government should help those people by providing unconditional humanitarian aid to the North," Yonhap news agency quoted him as saying.

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee, "SEOUL CONSIDERS CORN AID FOR NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that the ROK government is reportedly considering sending 50,000 tons of corn to the DPRK. "We are reviewing the plan to provide 50,000 tons of corn directly to North Korea as one aspect of the many possibilities of humanitarian aid to the North," a high-rank government official said on condition of anonymity. "The delivery of 50,000 tons of corn was decided by the last government but was not able to be implemented due to outside factors. It is therefore one of the viable options that would not come with any heavy political burden," another source said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "GOV'T ALLOCATES BIG BUDGET TO SUPPORT NGOS HELPING N.K.", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that the Unification Ministry said it has earmarked a large amount of money to support non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helping the DPRK despite the recent chill in ties with the DPRK. A total of 10.2 billion won (US\$9.5 million) from a civilian-government fund to promote inter-Korean exchanges will be used to support dozens of NGOs this year, ministry officials said. The amount is slightly less than the 11.7 billion won spent for the groups last year under the liberal Roh Moo-hyun government, but it is still larger than expected.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. US-ROK Security Alliance

Yonhap ("U.S. OFFICIAL EXPECTS SEOUL TO REASSESS ITS GLOBAL ROLE", Washington, 2008/05/16) reported that the ROK will likely need time to think about expanding its global role and is expected to reassess what it needs to do in places like Afghanistan, a US official said. John Hill, principal director for East Asia at the Pentagon, emphasized the importance of trilateral security cooperation among the ROK, the U.S. and Japan and said the time might finally have come to set up the three-nation mechanism. Hill talked about "updating" the role and missions among the ROK, the US and Japan in the context of their intertwined alliance, and linked them to overseas deployments.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. US-ROK Trade Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "CLOCK TICKING DOWN ON KOREA-U.S. FREE TRADE", 2008/05/16) reported that Seoul faces an ever-diminishing prospect of having the ROK-US free trade agreement ratified before the end of the 17th National Assembly. The United Democratic Party, the biggest opposition party dominating the current National Assembly, threatened to veto the FTA as the clock continued to tick down towards the Assembly's May 29 closing. The National Assembly's Unification, Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee, which wrapped up a hearing on the free trade agreement yesterday morning, failed to send the trade bill to the assembly's Legislation and Judiciary Committee. That means the Assembly has only a week for a vote by a plenary session of the Assembly.

Korea Times (Kim Hyun-cheol, "US SAYS NO NEW BEEF DEAL", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Secretary of Commerce, in Seoul Friday ruled out the possibility of revising a bilateral pact lifting an import ban on American beef. "We don't believe the agreement needs to be negotiated depending on GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) or other international pacts," Gutierrez stated.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. ROK Bird Flu

Xinhua ("S KOREA TO BUILD BIRD FLU VACCINE PLANT ", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that the ROK plans to build a plant to produce avian influenza vaccine in a bid to prepare for the possibility of the deadly poultry disease spreading to humans, the ROK Health Ministry said. At a report to parliament, the plant will be built in Hwasun, around 340 km southwest of Seoul and can produce enough vaccine for around 20 million patients a year, the ministry said. The construction will be completed by the end of next year, it added.

Yonhap ("BIRD FLU VIRUS IN S. KOREA A TYPE THAT CAUSED NO HUMAN INFECTION: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/05/16) reported that the strain of avian influenza that broke out in the ROK this year is a type that has not caused any human infections worldwide, as opposed to the kind found in Southeast Asia, the quarantine service said Friday. The report also said that this year's outbreak was different from the strains that occurred in 2003 and 2006 in the ROK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. Japan Bird Flu Outbreak

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("SWANS INFECTED WITH SAME FLU VIRUS", 2008/05/16) reported that the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry announced that the deadly H5N1 bird influenza virus detected in six dead swans in Akita Prefecture and Hokkaido were all of the same type. Due to the specific toxic potency of the virus, the dead swans must have been infected in a specific place, the ministry said. The dead swans were found on the lakeside of Lake Towada in Akita Prefecture, and Notsuke Peninsula and Lake Saroma, both in eastern Hokkaido, in April and May.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. Japan Comfort Women Issue

Reuters (Robert Evans, "JAPAN URGED END DEATH PENALTY, AID "COMFORT WOMEN" ", Geneva, 2008/05/16) reported that Japan was urged by friends and critics in the United Nations Human Rights Council to abolish the death penalty and take concrete steps to settle the long-standing issue of wartime "comfort women." In a review of the Asian power's rights performance, it was also accused of mistreating minorities and failing to give equal treatment to women and urged to improve its handling of immigration and to set up a national human rights body. In response, Japan said it could not drop the death penalty because public opinion favored it for "extremely vicious crimes," while it had expressed apologies and remorse over "comfort women" and was "in good faith" on the issue.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. US Military in Japan

Associated Press (Tomoko A. Hosaka, "US MARINE GETS 4 YEARS ON SEX CHARGE", Tokyo, 2008/05/16) reported that U.S. Marine accused of raping a 14-year-old Japanese girl was convicted of a lesser charge Friday during a court martial and sentenced to four years in prison. Staff Sgt. Tyrone L. Hadnott, 38, was found guilty of abusive sexual conduct, said Master Sgt. Chuck Albrecht. He said four other charges — rape of a child under 16, making false official statements, adultery and "kidnapping through inveigling," or trickery — were dropped.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. Japan Whaling Issue

Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPANESE CREWMEMBERS STOLE WHALE MEAT: GREENPEACE", 2008/05/16) reported that crewmembers of a Japanese research whaling ship are accused by Greenpeace Japan of stealing a large amount of whale meat they caught off Antarctica. The environment group is poised to file accusations with law enforcers against 12 crewmembers of the Nisshin Maru, a Japanese whaling research ship, on suspicion of embezzlement in the conduct of business. Greenpeace Japan said it has seized one of the packages that the crewmembers were sending home via a delivery service upon returning to Japan. Members of the group found 23.5 kilograms of whale meat in the package, which is worth 100,000 yen to 300,000 yen.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. Japan SDF Peacekeeping Role

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO DISPATCH TEAM TO SUDAN TO STUDY POSSIBLE SDF PEACEKEEPING MISSION", 2008/05/16) reported that despite safety concerns, Japan plans to show it is actively engaged in addressing African problems by dispatching an investigative team to Sudan for a possible Self-Defense Forces' peacekeeping mission, sources said. The team will be sent as early as June to determine if the situation in southern Sudan meets the five principles allowing for SDF involvement in the U.N. operations, including consent of the African country.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. Japan-Vietnam Nuclear Cooperation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, VIETNAM SIGN AGREEMENT ON NUCLEAR COOPERATION", Tokyo, 2008/05/16) reported that Japan signed an agreement to provide assistance to Vietnam to build its first nuclear power plant, government officials said. Under the deal, Japan will help Vietnam lay the groundwork for the construction by working together mainly in the areas of safety regulations and human resources development. The Vietnamese government is trying to begin the construction by 2015 to operate its first nuclear power plant by 2020. The agreement is in part aimed at making it easier for Japanese companies to win orders for the construction in Vietnam, the officials said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press (William Foreman, "CHINA QUAKE DEATH TOLL COULD RISE TO 50,000 ", Luoshui Town, 2008/05/16) reported that the PRC warned the death toll from this week's earthquake could soar to 50,000, while the government issued a public appeal Thursday for rescue equipment as it struggled to cope with the disaster. More than 72 hours after the quake rattled central PRC, rescuers appeared to shift from poring through downed buildings for survivors to the grim duty of searching for bodies — with 10 million directly affected by Monday's temblor. At least 12,300 people remained buried and another 102,100 were injured in Sichuan province, where the quake was centered, the vice governor told reporters.

The Financial Times (Jamil Anderlini, Geoff Dyer, and Mure Dickie, "BEIJING REINS IN COVERAGE OF QUAKE ", Beijing, 2008/05/16) reported that in spite of wall-to-wall coverage of the earthquake in Sichuan province, the ruling Communist party has been working hard to shape the news. A meeting of the party's most powerful propaganda officials on Tuesday stressed the importance of "correct guidance of public opinion" and ordered a strengthening of political consciousness among journalists. All frontline coverage of the disaster should "uphold unity and encourage stability" while "giving precedence to positive propaganda", ordered Li Changchun, a member of the party's supreme Politburo standing committee, the People's Daily reported.

Associated Press (Audra Ang, "STRONG AFTERSHOCK HITS CHINA QUAKE EPICENTER", Beichuan, 2008/05/16) reported that a strong aftershock sparked landslides Friday near the

epicenter of this week's powerful earthquake. The first foreign rescue workers since Monday's magnitude 7.9 temblor were allowed to the scene, and helicopters dropped leaflets urging people to "unite together" and providing survival tips.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press (Peter Enav, "ACTIVISTS: CHINA PERSECUTING BUDDHIST MONKS IN TIBET TAIWAN LEADER: CHINA UNIFICATION UNLIKELY 'IN OUR LIFETIMES' ", Taipei , 2008/05/16) reported that Taiwan's new leader Ma Ying-jeou said that unification with longtime rival PRC is unlikely "in our lifetimes" because the Taiwanese oppose the mainland's authoritarian rule. Ma's comments came just five days before his inauguration. Throughout his campaign, he pledged to improve ties with Beijing after several rocky years, but cautioned that he would not seek to open negotiations about unification during his presidency.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. PRC Viral Outbreak

The New York Times (Andrew Jacobs, "CHINA: VIRUS KILLS 2 CHILDREN IN BEIJING", 2008/05/16) reported that in the first reported deaths in the capital, two children have died of an intestinal virus that has killed 42 children and infected almost 25,000 others, according to Xinhua, the official news agency. The number of those infected has more than doubled in the last week. The virus has been spreading beyond central Anhui Province, where the outbreak began in early March.

Associated Press ("CHINA CHILD VIRUS DEATH TOLL UP TO 43", Beijing, 2008/05/16) reported that the death toll rose to 43 from the hand, foot and mouth disease virus that has sickened tens of thousands of children across the PRC, a report said Friday. As of Wednesday, the hand, foot and mouth disease virus had sickened more than 24,934 children in seven Chinese provinces plus Beijing, Xinhua reported. The number was expected to continue rising after the state Health Ministry last week ordered health care providers to report cases within 24 hours.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. ROK Report

18. Inter-Korea Relations

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("HAVE TO SUGGEST FOOD SUPPORT TO NORTH WITHOUT CONDITIONS", 2008/05/16) wrote that there are indications of a change in the government's stance that insists on the DPRK's request as a precondition of food aid. This is the desirable way. Some are concerned that the DPRK will reject it when we suggest food aid. These people assert that in that situation South-North relationship will be worse. But that is needless anxiety.

Seoul Shinmun ("DON'T MISS THE CHANCE FOR FOOD AID TO NORTH", 2008/05/16) wrote that it is hard to expect DPRK leaders to ask for food aid from us first at this time, as they did not make any request during the past 10 years even though they took support. If so, isn't it a considerable grown-up counteroffer that we make our support position clear first and ask the DPRK boldly to have working- level communication for this?

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. DPRK Nuclear Program

Ohmynews ("US ELECTION AND BUSH'S LAME DUCK STATUS ARE NOT GREAT VARIABLES", 2008/05/16) reported that it seems to have low possibility that the US election will become a big variable for the six-party talks process. First the decision basis, that the DPRK would prefer to deal with the next administration, seems weak. Also the possibilities that the candidates would show a negative opinion to resolving the DPRK nuclear issue and improve the U.S.-DPRK relationship would be low, because resolving the DPRK nuclear problem within Bush's term of office includes reducing the burden of the next administration. On the other side, there is the possibility of Kim Jong-il and Bush to meet. This fantastic scenario would be supported by the active and creative role of the ROK. This is why Lee Myung-Bak government should have future-oriented vision and abandon its past thinking of 'First America, Later North Korea'.

[\(return to top\)](#)

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report--6-may-2008/>

Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org