NAPSNet Daily Report 20 May, 2009

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 20 May, 2009", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 20, 2009, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-20-may-2009/

NAPSNet Daily Report 20 May, 2009

Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. US on DPRK Missile Program
  - 2. US-DPRK Relations
  - 3. US on Detained Journalists
  - 4. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation
  - 6. DPRK Foreign Relations
  - 7. ROK Swine Flu Outbreak
  - 8. US-Japan Relations
  - 9. Japan Aid to Pakistan
  - 10. Japan Politics
  - 11. Japan Nuclear Power
  - 12. Japan Swine Flu Outbreak
  - 13. Cross Strait Relations
  - 14. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute
  - 15. PRC-Brazil Energy Cooperation
  - 16. PRC Security

- 17. PRC Environment and Public Health
- 18. PRC Swine Flu Outbreak
- 19. PRC Avian Flu Issue
- 20. PRC Climate Change

- II. PRC Report
  - 21. PRC Disaster Preparedness
- III. ROK Report
  - 22. Inter-Korea Relations
  - 23. DPRK Internal Situation
  - 24. ROK Views of Afghan Conflict
  - 25. ROK Climate Change Response
  - 26. ROK Nuclear Energy
  - 27. Nuclear Nonproliferation

Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap News ("INTERNAL POLITICAL INSTABILITY LED TO RECENT PROVOCATIONS BY N. KOREA: CIA CHIEF", Washington, 2009/05/19) reported that the DPRK's recent provocations have come from political instability following the alleged health problems of its leader Kim Jong-il late last year, a top U.S. intelligence official said. "There also are legitimate questions being raised about the internal stability of North Korea, given Kim Jong-Il's health problems, uncertainty about succession, the weak economy, and the persistent food shortages," Leon Panetta, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, told a forum in Los Angeles Monday. "The result is that North Korea remains one of the most difficult and unpredictable threats that we face in that part of the world."

(return to top)

2. US-DPRK Relations

United Press International ("CLINTON, N. KOREA'S PAK TO ATTEND MEETING", Bangkok, 2009/05/19) reported that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her DPRK counterpart will attend an Asian regional forum in Thailand, a Thai official said. The meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' Regional Forum is set for July with Thailand, the group's rotating chair this

year, playing the host. " North Korea recently confirmed that its Foreign Minister (Pak Ui-chun) will attend the ARF slated for July 17-23. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton also plans to attend it," Arthayudh Srisamoot at the Thai foreign ministry, told visiting journalists.

Xinhua News ("STATE MEDIA: U.S. SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO DPRK ", Pyongyang, 2009/03/18) reported that an official newspaper of the DPRK urged the United States to apologize for its infringement on the DRPK's autonomy. Rodong Simun said the Barack Obama administration was taking a both hard and placatory line toward the DPRK. They held an "olive branch" in one hand and an "arrow" in another hand, but the emphasis of the tactic was "arrow." The so-called "talks" alleged by the United States were only favorable conditions that Washington created for shooting the "arrow."

(return to top)

3. US on Detained Journalists

Agence France-Presse ("INTERNET CAN HELP PRESS NORTH KOREA ON US REPORTERS - CLINTON", Washington, 2009/05/19) reported that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged women students to use the Internet to campaign for the release of two American women journalists held in the DPRK. Clinton urged graduates of Barnard College, a women's university in New York City, to show their opposition to Pyongyang's detention of the two journalists. "We have two young women journalists right now imprisoned in North Korea and you can get busy on the Internet and let the North Koreans know that we find that absolutely unacceptable," Clinton said.

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA STANDS FIRM OVER DETAINED WORKER IN NKOREA", Seoul, 2009/05/19) reported that Seoul insisted that the DPRK discuss the fate of a detained ROK worker during talks about the future of a Seoul-funded industrial estate north of the border. The unification ministry said the government had no intention of separating the two issues. "There is no change to the government position," said spokeswoman Lee Jong-Joo.

(return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("TROUBLED INTER-KOREAN TIES LIKELY TO HIT S. KOREAN STATE FIRMS", 2009/05/18) reported that t wo ROK state firms may suffer huge losses from their businesses in DPRK due to cooling inter-Korean relations, government and company officials said. Following the DPRK's announcement, officials said Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO) is in danger of idling a 100,000-kw substation built in 2007 to provide power to the complex. Another state-owned firm, Korea Resources Corp. (KRC), has idled operations in the DPRK since the end of 2007. The company had developed a graphite mine in the southwestern part of the isolated state, but has not been able to bring the material into the ROK.

Korea Herald ("SEOUL FINE-TUNES APPROACH ON GAESEONG", 2009/05/19) reported that Seoul continued to consult politicians and businessmen as part of preparations for inter-Korean talks on the operation of the industrial park in Gaeseong. Vice Minister Hong Yang-ho met with businessmen running factories in Gaeseong on Monday, leaders of the opposition Democratic Labor Party, the Democratic Party and the Liberty Forward Party, and members of the parliamentary committee on foreign affairs, trade and unification yesterday.

(return to top)

6. DPRK Foreign Relations

Yonhap News ("NORTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER RETURNS HOME AFTER MONTH-LONG TRIP", Beijing, 2009/05/19) reported that the DPRK 's foreign minister took a flight home from Beijing on Tuesday, wrapping up a month-long trip to countries in Central and South America. Pak Ui-chun did not respond to reporters' questions as he came to Beijing Capital International Airport before boarding an Air Koryo plane bound for Pyongyang. Pak attended the ministerial meeting of the Coordination Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, a network of nations not aligned with major Western powers, in Cuba. He also visited Peru and Brazil.

(return to top)

7. ROK Swine Flu Outbreak

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA QUARANTINES JAPANESE TOURIST FOR POSSIBLE FLU INFECTION", Seoul, 2009/05/19) reported that a Japanese tourist has been quarantined at an international airport on the ROK's southern resort island of Jeju after showing symptoms of the new type-A influenza, health authorities said. The female tourist said to be in her 60s arrived at Jeju International Airport from Japan's Kansai Airport earlier in the day, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) said. The center said it is conducting detailed tests to see if she has been infected with the virus.

(return to top)

8. US-Japan Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("RECORD NUMBER OF AMERICANS CALL JAPAN RELIABLE", 2009/05/19) reported that eighty percent of Americans believe Japan is a reliable ally to the United States, the highest figure since the Foreign Ministry began polling in 1960, the ministry said. The latest figure marked a 13 percentage point jump from last year. Asked to choose the Asian country they believe to be the United States' most important partner, 46 percent of Americans and 44 percent of opinion leaders picked Japan. However, the PRC is nipping at Japan's heels, with 39 percent of Americans and 42 percent of U.S. opinion leaders choosing the PRC as the most important partner to the United States.

(return to top)

9. Japan Aid to Pakistan

Dow Jones ("JAPAN GIVES $20 MILLION NON-PROJECT AID TO PAKISTAN", 2009/05/19) reported that Japan has given non-project grant aid of about $20 million to Pakistan for this year, an official statement said late Monday. "We hope that this assistance will contribute a lot to the country's structural adjustment," said Farrakh Qayyum, secretary at Pakistan's Economic Affairs Division. A separate statement from the Japanese embassy said: "This aid will be utilized for importing commodities and machinery such as oil, medicine, fertilizer, tractors, which are necessary for carrying out economic and social activities."

(return to top)

10. Japan Politics

Bloomberg News (Sachiko Sakamaki, "JAPAN'S DPJ AIMS FOR ELECTION MAJORITY, HATOYAMA SAYS", 2009/05/19) reported that Japan's main opposition aims to win the most seats in the lower house of parliament in this year's election, new party president Yukio Hatoyama said. "Our goal is to gain a majority," Hatoyama said in his first regular press conference since becoming head of the Democratic Party of Japan. "At the very least, we must become the biggest party in the lower house, as we are in the upper house."

(return to top)

11. Japan Nuclear Power

Mainichi Shimbun ("GOV'T OFFICIAL RAPS MEDIA FOR LEAKING INFO ON MOX SHIPMENT", 2009/05/19) reported that a government official blasted the media for leaking information on the arrival of a shipment of French-manufactured plutonium-uranium mixed oxide (MOX) fuel. "From a security standpoint, it's a problem for the media to report nuclear material shipment information," said Economy, Trade and Industry Vice Minister Harufumi Mochizuki during a press briefing on Monday. "I would say it's a bit extreme."

(return to top)

12. Japan Swine Flu Outbreak

Washington Post ("JAPAN FEARS SPREAD OF SWINE FLU AS CASES RISE", Tokyo, 2009/05/19) reported that the swine flu has taken hold on Japan, with fast-increasing numbers of confirmed cases in western Japan. It is now inevitable, experts said, that the infection will spread to Tokyo, where about 35 million people live in the world's largest metropolis and where commuters pack cheek to jowl on a vast network of commuter trains. The government here reported 178 cases Tuesday. In Japan, illness caused by the virus has been relatively mild so far, and there have been no deaths. But, due to the spread of the virus, more than 4,000 schools in and around the cities of Osaka and Kobe have been closed for the rest of the week.

(return to top)

13. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWANESE OUTPOST REAPS BENEFITS OF WARMING CHINA TIES", Kinmen, 2009/05/19) reported that from the Taiwanese island of Kinmen , it is easy to see across the water to the PRC's industrial and trading city of Xiamen , just a few kilometres away on the mainland. For years, the mine-strewn island was a symbol of the tense relations between the PRC and Taiwan , which split at the end of their civil war in 1949. But now, a year after Beijing -friendly President Ma Ying-jeou took power in Taipei , things look very different. PRC visitors now routinely include Kinmen on their trips to Taiwan and work to clear the mines is well under way.

(return to top)

14. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Telegraph ("CHINA BLOCKS £2 BILLION IN AID TO INDIA ", 2009/05/19) reported that the PRC will not allow the release of the money for India's development plan because it includes £40 million for a water project in Arunachal Pradesh. The state in northern India, with a population of about one million, is formally claimed by the PRC as its own territory. The latest dispute in the corridors of the Asian Development Bank provides an object lesson in the PRC's growing strength. Meanwhile, India must seek American support in order to have any chance of breaking the deadlock.

(return to top)

15. PRC-Brazil Energy Cooperation

Bloomberg News (John Liu and Andres R. Martinez, "CHINA, BRAZIL AGREE TO $10 BILLION LOAN, EXPLORATION", 2009/05/19) reported that Petroleo Brasileiro SA, Brazil’s state-controlled oil company, received $10 billion of loans from the PRC as the company seeks financing to develop the largest crude discovery in the Americas in more than 30 years. China, the world’s second-biggest energy consumer, will provide the loan to the oil company known as Petrobras, which will supply 150,000 barrels of crude a day to the Asian nation this year and 200,000 barrels in 2010, Petrobras Chief Executive Officer Jose Sergio Gabrielli said today.

(return to top)

16. PRC Security

The Associated Press ("CHINA DEFENDS TIANANMEN CRACKDOWN, IGNORES MEMOIR", 2009/05/19) reported that the PRC's Foreign Ministry defended the brutal quelling of the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement, while ignoring questions about a new memoir by a former Communist Party leader ousted for opposing the crackdown. Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu reiterated the official view that the movement's crushing paved the way for the PRC's economic success in the two decades that followed what he called "the political incident." "Facts have proven that the socialist path with Chinese characteristics that we've pursued is in the fundamental interest of our people and it reflects the aspirations of the entire nation," Ma said.

(return to top)

17. PRC Environment and Public Health

Caijing Magazine ("NEW PROBE CONFIRMS GAS LEAK AT JILIN PLANT", 2009/05/17) reported that the PRC 's work safety regulator has confirmed that an accidental poison gas leak occurred last month at the Jilin Connell Chemical Industry Co., reversing the findings of state health investigators. Health officials earlier blamed "mass hysteria" for the sudden outbreak of numbness, headaches and other symptoms among more than 1,000 workers apparently downwind from the Connell plant in the northeastern city of Jilin. T he State Administration of Work Safety Supervision admitted the gas leak through a statement on its Web site May 18. The type of gas was not identified.

(return to top)

18. PRC Swine Flu Outbreak

DPA ("CHINA REPORTS FOURTH SWINE-FLU CASE; SUSPECTED CASE IN TIBET - SUMMARY", 2009/05/19) reported that the PRC confirmed a fourth infection with the new strain of the H1N1 influenza virus in a 59-year-old man and said initial tests suggested that an Italian woman traveling in Tibet was also infected. The man, identified only by the surname Yang, was treated at the No 8 People's Hospital in the southern city of Guangzhou after developing a fever during a train journey to Guangzhou from nearby Hong Kong, the health ministry said. In a separate report, the ministry said laboratory tests on the Italian tourist by the Tibetan regional Centre for Disease Control and Prevention were positive for H1N1.

Bloomberg News ("CHINA'S SWINE-FLU 'FEAR FACTOR' EXPOSES WEAK RURAL-HEALTH CARE", 2009/05/19) reported that Tan Zhengrui serves some 700 people in the PRC's rural Miyun county, making doctor's rounds on his motorcycle with a stethoscope, thermometer and blood-pressure gauge -- the sum total of his medical equipment. The 62-year-old doctor's plight reflects the PRC's neglect of its rural health-care system. Shortages of equipment, expertise and funding in the nation's vast countryside leave more than 700 million residents underserved and vulnerable to epidemics such as swine flu. "If diseases are able to get out into rural areas, and particularly if they can pass from animals to people and people back to animals in mutated forms, they'd be much harder to stamp out," says Chris Spohr, an economist at the Manila-based Asian Development Bank.

(return to top)

19. PRC Avian Flu Issue

Bloomberg News (Jason Gale, "AVIAN FLU KILLS WILD BIRDS IN CENTRAL CHINA, AUTHORITIES SAY ", 2009/05/18) reported that Avian flu killed wild birds on Genggahu Lake in central PRC, veterinary officials said, in an outbreak reminiscent of bird deaths in 2005 that heralded the virus's spread to Europe. Birds began dying in the province of Qinghai from the H5N1 avian influenza strain on May 8, Zhang Zhongqui, deputy director general of the PRC's Animal Disease Control Centre in Beijing, said in a May 17 report to the World Organization for Animal Health. Zhang said 121 birds died and 600 more are susceptible to the infection, the first recorded outbreak since June 2006.

(return to top)

20. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua News ("CHINA WORKING ON FURTHER NATIONAL PLAN TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE:OFFICIAL", 2009/05/19) reported that a senior PRC official told Xinhua Tuesday that the country is working on a national plan to further cope with the issue of climate change. "We are working on a further national plan based on a longer term in a bid to strengthen the enforcement of international treaties about the issue," Xie said. The plan is aimed to better tackle the climate change and boost economic growth in the meantime, Xie added.

(return to top)

II. PRC Report

21. PRC Disaster Preparedness

163.com ("CHINA STARTS NATIONWIDE REINFORCEMENT PROJECT FOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS", 2009/05/19) reported that the government has started a three-year nationwide project to reinforce all school buildings with comprehensive anti-disaster capacities, sources with the Ministry of Education said Sunday. The project will make all primary and secondary school buildings meet the criteria against earthquake, landslide, typhoon and other disasters, no matter what the buildings' nature is, public or private, rural or urban.

(return to top)

III. ROK Report

22. Inter-Korea Relations

Donga Ilbo ("KAESONG SHOULD NOT SURRENDER TO DPRK'S THREATS", 2009/05/20) writes that according to the North-South Agreement, the Kaesong Industrial Complex exists under the guarantee of safety of ROK workers. When this agreement is broken, then it is hard for ROK businessmen to maintain factories in Kaesong. If the Hyundai Asan employee is in any danger, the Kaesong Industrial Complex will have to be fundamentally reconsidered.

Ohmynews ("KAESONG ISSUE MUST BE SOLVED IN A BIG FRAMEWORK BY RESUMING SUPPLY OF RICE AND FERTILIZER", 2009/05/19) writes that at a discussion on "Kaesong at Risk, the Solution is?" held on 19 th by Kwon Yeongse of Grand National Party, Lim Eulchool, professor at Kyungnam University Institute for Far Eastern Studies, suggested that we should create atmosphere for the DPRK to withdraw its decision to reconsider all the preferences by resuming the supply of rice and fertilizer. For the DPRK, supplying rice and fertilizer is much more beneficial than increasing the pay of Kaesong workers and the rent. Therefore, resuming supply of rice and fertilizer could help modify the DPRK's demands on increasing labor costs.

Seoul Shinmun ("KAESONG NECESSARY FOR BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH", 2009/05/19) writes that the DPRK will face more damage when Kaesong Industrial Complex closes down. Therefore, it is outrageous for the DPRK to threaten ROK with Kaesong. If the DPRK were dissatisfied with the management conditions of Kaesong Industrial Complex, the DPRK should have agreed with the meeting suggested yesterday. According to the Kaesong Industrial Complex Business Association, the monthly labor costs for DPRK worker is around US$ 110~130 including benefits, which is not so low compared to China and Vietnam. The ROK and DPRK must carefully go over these details and reach a rational compromise.

(return to top)

23. DPRK Internal Situation

Goodfriends ("TRADE AND SMALL LAND FARMING PROHIBITED, CONTINUING BAD MOVES", 2009/05/19) writes that DPRK people shouted “we die without small plot farming” when the government declared its decision to withdraw all small plots. At the start of 2009, the DPRK began withdrawing small plots as it declared before. Rather than prohibiting everything because people’s survival methods are against “our-style socialism,” the DPRK must think over how the problem can be solved subjectively in the long run.

(return to top)

24. ROK Views of Afghan Conflict

PRESSian ("OPPOSITION AGAINST DISPATCHING ROK ARMY TO AFGHANISTAN", 2009/05/20) writes that 21 anti-war and peace organizations including Jinbo Korea and Beyond Boundaries held a press conference in front of the US embassy on the 19 th arguing, “the US must stop occupying Afghanistan.” According to these organizations, the US army attacked the west of Afghanistan in 2008 and killed around 90 civilians including about 60 children. Moreover, in 2008, 40% of all civilian deaths were because of mistake bombings by US led coalition forces.

(return to top)

25. ROK Climate Change Response

Donga Ilbo ("LARGEST CITIES NEED TO PLAY A BIG ROLE IN FACING CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE", 2009/05/19) writes that the opening ceremony of the third C40 Largest Cities Climate Summit was held in Seoul with 80 big city mayors and 500 experts participating. The Lee Myung-bak administration has declared the will to find new growth sources in green industry and to decrease the amount of greenhouse gas emissions since the beginning of his term. The ROK has enough potential to lead the world in facing the climate change challenge. This conference must be a turning point in increasing the ROK’s reputation as a leading country in facing the climate change challenge.

(return to top)

26. ROK Nuclear Energy

Hankook Economy ("DISCUSSIONS ON HIGH LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE MUST SPEED UP", 2009/05/20) writes that it seems government will publicize the high level nuclear waste issue. Since it makes no difference to delay the issue any longer, it is better to quickly discuss the matter and find a rational solution. It is possible that some political and social organizations against nuclear power plants might take this as an opportunity to start an anti-nuclear movement. But we cannot put the matter aside forever since without taking care of nuclear waste, the government's energy plan isn't meaningful. The government must approach the high-level nuclear waste matter according to clear and public steps as soon as possible.

(return to top)

27. Nuclear Nonproliferation

Peace Network (Jeong Wooksik, "OUTCOMES OF 2009 PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE", 2009/05/19) writes that Jeong Wooksik, representative of Peace Network who recently participated in the Preparatory Committee Meeting for Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, could feel strong expectations on the "Obama effect" from government officials and NGO workers who participated in the meeting. Although the delegates failed to come to an agreement, they agree that this meeting was successful and constructive. There are four variables for the 2010 NPT Review Conference to be successful. The first variable is Obama's nuclear policy. The second is Iran's future decision of their nuclear direction. The third is the decision of non-member countries that developed nuclear weapons such as India, Pakistan, and Israel. Lastly, if the DPRK returns to the agreement before 2010 conference or participates as an observer, the DPRK will change from being the main cause of the problem into the leading contributor in reestablishing the agreement.

(return to top)

View this online at: https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report--0-may-2009/

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