NAPSNet Daily Report 25 May, 2001

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 25 May, 2001", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 25, 2001, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-25-may-2001/

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Ed. Note: There will be no Daily Report issued on Monday, May 28 or Tuesday, May 29, due to the US holiday and a Nautilus staff retreat. The Daily Report will resume on Wednesday, May 30.

I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Inspections

The International Herald Tribune (Don Kirk, "NORTH KOREAN BOMB: DO THEY HAVE IT?" Seoul, 5/25/01) reported that a high-level team from the International Atomic Energy Agency has opened negotiations in Pyongyang for access to the nuclear weapons project that the DPRK agreed to abandon seven years ago. ROK experts said that at the heart of the demands is pressure to verify that the DPRK has fully complied with the Geneva agreement of 1994. Olli Heinonen, director of

safeguards for the atomic energy agency in Asia, is asking the DPRK for a detailed program guaranteeing scrutiny of every aspect of the facilities in which the DPRK is suspected of having produced and stored weapons-grade plutonium for one or two nuclear warheads. The negotiations began on May 23 and were to conclude Friday. The DPRK response may depend in part on the conclusions of the US review of policy toward the DPRK. Cheon Seong-whan, a specialist on DPRK nuclear policy at the Korea Institute of National Unification, said that if the US does not agree to serious talks with the DPRK, "there will be some hostile reaction." US and ROK analysts said that they believe that the DPRK's position is part of a cover-up to disguise its success in extracting the plutonium needed for nuclear warheads and possibly in building the weapons system. Most experts doubt, however, that DPRK objections to the US national missile defense program would play a crucial role. Cheon stated, "It's a separate issue. Probably North Korea does not want to link these issues closely." He predicted that the DPRK would use the threat of another test of one of its long-range missiles as "a strong bargaining card" to get the US to resume talks on an agreement for stopping the export of DPRK missiles to the Middle East and elsewhere. Kenneth Quinones, a former US State Department official, viewed such threats as "saber-rattling" and predicted that they would stop fairly soon after the US President George W. Bush administration focuses on talks with the DPRK. An unnamed specialist with the Korea Institute of Defense Analysis, an adjunct of ROK Defense Ministry, argued, "For North Korea to start the program again is very difficult. They cannot start secretly. There are many, many different ways to find out," ranging from U.S. spy satellites to increasing numbers of foreigners visiting the North who may pick up clues that the North once found easy to hide. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for May 25, 2001.]

2. US Spy Plane in the PRC

Reuters (Michael Battye, "CHINA-U.S. SPY PLANE WRANGLE TAKES NEW TWIST," Beijing, 5/25/01) reported that a US embassy spokesman said that talks were still underway with the PRC on how to take the EP-3 spy plane off Hainan island. The spokesman said, "Discussions continue. Our strong preference remains to repair and fly out our airplane. That is the fastest and most efficient way to recover the aircraft. We are prepared, if necessary, to disassemble and fly out the aircraft from China's Lingshui airfield. Technical discussions about the feasibility of that option are under way." James Kelly, US assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, said it was unlikely the plane would be returned by the time the US House of Representatives votes on normal trade relations with the PRC. US President George W. Bush has to notify the US Congress formally by June 3 of his intention to extend normal trade relations to the PRC for another year. Kelly said he was still optimistic the US House of Representatives would vote to maintain normal trade relations, but added that the delay in returning the plane "does not help the process at all."

3. Japanese History Textbook

Reuters ("JAPAN'S TANAKA WINS ASSURANCES FROM CHINA IN TALKS," Beijing, 5/25/01) reported that a Japanese official said Friday that Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka won assurances during bilateral talks with PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan that the PRC will not make "unreasonable demands" in disagreements over trade or war history. Tang called on Japan to abandon history textbooks that the PRC said whitewash Japan's wartime aggression and warned Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi not to visit a war shrine. However, he opened the talks by telling Tanaka that the PRC would not put Japan on the spot. Japanese officials took that to mean Tanaka would benefit from the PRC's gratitude to her late father, prime minister Kakuei Tanaka, who normalized ties with the PRC in 1972. The Japanese official said that Thursday's talks were "sentimental," but the two sides did not become "emotional." Tanaka said, "We all knew well each

other personally, and therefore I felt confident that we would be able to move our talks in a favorable direction."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-PRC Talks

The Korea Times (Hwang Jang-jin, "LI PENG REAFFIRMS SUPPORT FOR KOREAN PEACE PROCESS," Seoul, 05/25/01) reported that the PRC's legislative chief, Li Peng, on Thursday reaffirmed PRC support for the inter-Korean rapprochement in his meeting with Korean National Assembly Speaker Lee Man-sup. Li, the chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, arrived in Seoul Wednesday for a five-day visit at the invitation of his ROK counterpart. During the meeting, Lee urged the PRC to help ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula, aides said. "China will firmly support the improving of Seoul-Pyongyang relations through dialogue," Li was quoted as replying. "China will be firm in its support for the goal of independent and peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula," he added.

2. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("PRESIDENT CALLS ON KIM JONG IL TO PLAN VISIT," 05/24/01) reported that during a tea party with the foreign press corps Thursday, ROK President Kim Dae-jung said that he hoped DPRK leader Kim Jong-il would announce a detailed schedule for his promised return visit to Seoul on the occasion of the one-year anniversary of the June 15 inter-Korean joint statement that followed the summit in Pyongyang last year.

3. DPRK Nuclear

Joongang Ilbo (Don Kirk, "NORTH KOREAN BOMB: DO THEY HAVE IT?," Seoul, 05/25/01) reported that a high- level team from the International Atomic Energy Agency has opened negotiations in Pyongyang with fresh demands for access to the nuclear weapons project that the DPRK agreed to abandon seven years ago. At the heart of the demands, ROK experts said, is pressure to verify that the DPRK has fully complied with the Geneva agreement of 1994 under which it gave up the weapons project in return for the promise of twin nuclear reactors to fulfill its energy needs. John McLaughlin, the deputy CIA director, said in April that the DPRK "probably has one or two nuclear bombs," an assessment that jibes with estimates that intelligence experts have been sharing for nearly a decade. Han Yong-sup, a professor at the ROK National Defense University, who has done extensive research on the topic, said that he thought that the DPRK had accumulated 7 to 10 kilograms (15 to 22 pounds) of plutonium through past activities that they had not reported to the atomic energy agency. "We are still wondering whether they finished making a nuclear bomb with that type of plutonium," he said.

4. New US Ambassador to ROK

Joongang Ilbo (Choi Won-ki, "U.S. NOMINATES HUBBARD AS NEW AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH KOREA," Seoul, 05/25/01) reported that the US President George Bush officially nominated Thomas C. Hubbard as a new US ambassador to the ROK on Wednesday. The latest nomination was also well received in Seoul. Mr. Hubbard, as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Asian affairs during the mid-90s, served as one of the key members involved in establishing the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework. Mr.

Hubbard is also well known for his good connections. Back in Washington he is well acquainted with the incumbent Defense Minister Colin Powell, national security advisor Condoleeza Rice and former senior advisor of East Asia international security affairs Torkel Patterson. He is also known to be in good terms with Donald Gregg and James R. Lilley, both former U.S. ambassadors to Seoul. He also has his own experience in the DPRK having visited Pyongyang last October as one of the 40-membe--delegation headed by the then-US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. During his stay, he held series of negotiations with DPRK officials.

5. ROK-US Policy towards DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Choi Won-ki, "SEOUL AND WASHINGTON TO FOCUS ON NORTH'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Seoul, 05/25/01) reported that the US President George W. Bush administration, while retaining the key factors of engagement policy, nevertheless decided that the DPRK's nuclear missile issue is the most urgent matter to be tackled. The decision was made during the latest US deputy-secretarial level meeting attended by vice secretary of State Richard Armitage, vice-secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, and other officials in diplomatic and security departments. The issue of the DPRK's suspected nuclear program and missile mattes would be further discussed at the Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) meeting slated for May 26 US time. The ROK, the US and Japan will make a final review of their key policies on dealing with the DPRK. "Unlike the past Clinton administration that largely focused on the missile issue, the Bush administration would cover more than that. It is putting even more weight on resolving the past nuclear suspicion," said the government official in Seoul. Several key issues expected to highlight the trilateral security talks include replacing the light water reactor plant with a thermal power plant, dispatching an early US nuclear inspection team to the DPRK, and halting its missile production and export.

III. Japan

1. US View of Japan's Collective Self-Defense

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Gaku Shibata, "JAPANESE AMBASSADOR TO US SAYS US EXPECTATION ON JAPAN'S COLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE IS GROWING," 05/23/2001) reported that Japanese Ambassador to Washington Ryuji Yanai told reporters on May 22 that within the US President George W. Bush administration, expectation is mounting that Japan will change its constitutional interpretation on exercising its collective self-defense right. Yanai pointed out that the US has been encouraged by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Liberal Democratic Party Director General Taku Yamazaki's positive statements about exercising the right.

2. US Policy toward DPRK

The Japan Times ("DEALING WITH NORTH KOREA: BEGRUDGINGLY, BUSH ENDORSES DIALOGUE," Seoul, 05/22/2001) on May 22 carried an essay by Scott Snyder, the Asia Foundation representative in the ROK, arguing that while the process of engaging the DPRK may be frustrating, it has yielded tangible benefits to both sides and is the only way to make progress toward peaceful coexistence. The article said that the process will succeed only to the extent that there is bipartisan public support for institutionalizing it in both the ROK and the US. Snyder pointed out that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's meeting with ROK President Kim Dae-jung last week clearly signaled that the US will renew bilateral negotiations with the DPRK, affirming similar assurances given by Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly at his April 26 confirmation hearing on

Capitol Hill. He also argued that Armitage's public admission that dialogue will be maintained suggests continuity rather than a departure from the objectives of the former US President Bill Clinton administration and may help to achieve bipartisan consensus in Washington on how to deal with the DPRK. Snyder said that the likelihood of renewed US-DPRK dialogue is significant, particularly in light of the administration's professed skepticism toward the intentions of the DPRK leadership. Given the Bush team's emphasis on alliance cooperation, it is inevitable that any successful US policies toward the DPRK will be tied to and closely coordinated with those of the ROK government. Snyder also pointed out that in an important speech following Kim Dae-jung's March visit to Washington, House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry Hyde signaled the possibility of a "Bipartisan Accord on North Korea" if satisfactory verification arrangements can be achieved with the DPRK. Snyder added that the pause in dialogue allowed the DPRK to clearly signal the value it places on negotiations with the US and to affirm that it will maintain the moratorium on missile testing through 2003. However, the DPRK's decision to suspend inter-Korean dialogue pending the outcome of the Bush administration's policy review has strengthened the hand of US critics and will make major progress in US-DPRK negotiations more difficult, particularly since tangible progress in inter-Korean relations effectively undermines opposition to US dialogue with the DPRK, said Snyder. He also pointed out that the failures of the first Bush-Kim meeting last March were due primarily to a combination of the new administration's "anti-Clintonism" and the begrudging inability of ROK opposition members to give even limited credit to the government in one of the few areas where it has succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. Snyder suggested that just as Bush's position constitutes a tacit recognition that the Clinton administration was not completely wrong to negotiate with the DPRK, Kim should also seek to broaden domestic political support for continued dialogue. Snyder also suggested that the ROK opposition should support the resumption of dialogue initiated by last June's inter-Korean summit, recognizing that ROK public expectations will inevitably require the DPRK to show some reciprocity if the dialogue is to be sustained. The opposition leadership should also pledge to meet with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il during his return visit to the ROK. Snyder concluded that the dialogue process may be frustrating, but that it has yielded tangible benefits to both sides and that it is the only way to make progress toward peaceful coexistence. He adds that the success or failure of the current process will clearly depend on Kim Jong-il.

3. US View of Kim Jong-il's Diplomacy

The Japan Times (Robert Manning, "KIM JONG IL: TACTICAL GENIUS, STRATEGIC FOOL," 05/17/2001) on May 17 carried an essay by Robert Manning, a former US State Department adviser for policy from 1989-1993 and currently director of Asian Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, arguing that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's skillful use of the recent European Union mission to Pyongyang offers the latest piece in a growing body of evidence to suggest that Kim is a tactical genius and a strategic fool, qualities that may be a major obstacle to progress in both the ROK and US relations with the DPRK. All three elements of Kim's tactics were revealed in the discussions, as was Kim's pleasure at placing himself on the world stage. Regarding the missile issue, Kim's commitment to the missile moratorium signaled the DPRK's eagerness to pursue missile talks with the US, but the DPRK's proclaiming that it would continue exporting missiles was designed to bring a sense of urgency to restarting US-DPRK talks. Manning argued that instead of the US and the ROK constantly begging the DPRK to come to the table, it is Kim who is now eager to resume talks. This reverses the unhealthy diplomatic patterns created by the former US President Bill Clinton administration, which was always begging and bribing the DPRK just to attend meetings. Manning sees US President George W. Bush as now setting the terms of diplomacy rather than reacting to the DPRK's games. Indeed, Kim's behavior suggests that Bush's assessment of the situation -- and of US-ROK-Japan leverage -- is correct, Manning argued. Manning also pointed out that the massive

amounts of international aid that have poured into the DPRK have given Kim something to lose. This suggests new boundaries for DPRK behavior, and increased leverage for trilateral diplomacy by the US, Japan and the ROK. Manning argued, however, that unfortunately for the future of Korea, Kim's sense of strategy is as flawed as his tactics are clever. Manning also pointed out that those tactics are designed to insure regime survival at the lowest possible cost and lowest risk, but that the DPRK's economic system has failed and tinkering offers little respite. Opening up to foreign investment and reforming what has been described as the world's most distorted economy risks losing political control, but the experience of China and Vietnam suggests that reform can be managed to bring economic vitality and retain political control. Kim and some of his technocratic elite are aware of this, but still fear that it would destabilize the regime. The result has been a strategy that tries to manipulate outside actors to provide resources while Kim experiments at the margins with reform. Manning warns that without making a fundamental choice to embark on a new course, it is too little, too late. Manning also pointed out that after the surprise agreement to hold a DPRK-ROK Summit nearly one year ago, very little actual DPRK-ROK progress has occurred, and now the entire process has been frozen. Kim Dae-jung has provided the DPRK every opportunity to move forward on reconciliation, but Manning warns that unless there is rapid progress this year, he will become a lame duck as the ROK presidential campaign begins early next year. Manning concluded that it is unlikely that Kim Jong-il will find a more patient, generous and magnanimous partner in Seoul than Kim Dae-jung in the foreseeable future. Manning also concluded that in the end, for all his tactical genius, Kim Jong-il will remain a strategic fool in charge of a decomposing state and society unless he makes the difficult choices needed to move toward a soft landing and peaceful coexistence.

4. Lee Teng-Hui's Visa

The Daily Yomiuri ("TANAKA RULES OUT ANOTHER VISA FOR LEE," 05/20/2001) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka told her PRC counterpart on May 7 that Japan would not issue another visa to former Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui, government sources said on May 19. Tanaka told PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan during talks by telephone, "If Mr. Lee applies again for a visa, it will be difficult, almost impossible, to issue one." Tanaka's judgment is likely to cause controversy because the administration of former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori was sharply divided over whether to issue a visa to Lee at the time, the sources said. The May 7 talks were the first between the foreign ministers of Japan and the PRC since the launch of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's administration.

5. Japanese History Textbook

The Daily Yomiuri ("TANAKA RULES OUT ANOTHER VISA FOR LEE," 05/20/2001) reported that Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka on May 7 exchanged opinions with PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan on issues including the controversy over a history textbook written by members of the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform. The sources said Tanaka offered an "apology" to Tang over the textbook issue during the talks.

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Koichi Mochizuki, "TANG STILL WANTS TEXT REVISED, KOIZUMI TO RETHINK SHRINE," 05/25/2001) reported that during talks between Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka and PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan held at a Beijing hotel on May 24, Tang reiterated the PRC's demand that the school history textbook, recently approved by the Japanese government, be revised. Tanaka responded, "My heart truly aches."

6. Prime Minister's Visit to Yasukuni Shrine

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Koichi Mochizuki, "TANG STILL WANTS TEXT REVISED, KOIUZUI TO RETHINK SHRINE," 05/25/2001) reported that during the talks beteween Japanese Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka and PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan held at a Beijing hotel on May 24, Tang requested that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi rethink his plan to visit Yasukuni Shrine, which is dedicated to Japan's war dead. Tanaka responded by asserting Japan's traditional views on the issue, and sought the PRC's understanding.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

Produced by the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development in partnership with:
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