NAPSNet Daily Report 6 May, 2008

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 6 May, 2008", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 06, 2008, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-6-may-2008/

NAPSNet Daily Report 6 May, 2008

NAPSNet Daily Report 6 May, 2008

Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. Six Party Talks
  - 2. Japan, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue
  - 3. Inter-Korean Relations
  - 4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation
  - 5. ROK Aid to the DPRK
  - 6. DPRK Military
  - 7. DPRK Anti-Corruption Drive
  - 8. DPRK Bird Flu
  - 9. ROK on DPRK Abductees
  - 10. ROK, Japan, PRC Economic Cooperation
  - 11. Japan Politics
  - 12. Sino-Indian Military Exercise
  - 13. PRC Virus Outbreak
  - 14. PRC Protest

- II. ROK Report
  - 15. Inter-Korea Relations
  - 16. ROK Policy Toward DPRK
  - 17. DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 18. Northeast Asia Peace Process

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Reuters (Rhee So-eui, "N.KOREA SIX-PARTY TALKS COULD COME THIS MONTH: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/05/05) reported that a US State Department envoy's visit to Pyongyang this week could help set the stage for six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear programs later in May, the ROK's Yonhap news agency said. "Sung Kim plans to visit North Korea this week for detailed working-level talks on the nuclear declaration report," Yonhap quoted an unnamed government source as saying. Once the talks with the U.S. envoy are finalized, the DPRK is expected to submit the nuclear report to the PRC which then will distribute details to the countries involved in the six-nation talks, Yonhap said. "Unless an unexpected variable shows up, it is possible to hold a six-party meeting late this month," the source told Yonhap.

(return to top)

2. Japan, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Interfax ("JAPAN ASKS RUSSIA TO PRESS N. KOREA OVER ABDUCTIONS", Moscow, 2008/05/05) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda asked Russia to put pressure on the DPRK in complex issues such as that of Japanese nationals the DPRK has abducted, the Japanese Foreign Ministry's chief spokesman said. The spokesman, Kazuo Kodama, who was speaking at a briefing, was referring to talks between Fukuda and the Russian leadership during a current visit by the Japanese premier to Moscow. Kodama also raised the issue of six-nation negotiations on the DPRK nuclear program. He denied there exists a strict date for the DPRK and ROK, the US, Japan, PRC and Russia to resume their talks.

(return to top)

3. Inter-Korean Relations

Yohnap ("N.K. PAPER SLAMS LEE'S VISITS TO U.S., JAPAN ", 2008/05/05) reported that the DPRK

media over the weekend poured invective on ROK President Lee Myung-bak's trips to the US and Japan in late April, warning that his "sycophantic and treacherous" diplomacy would only heighten the chances of nuclear confrontation on the Korean Peninsula. In a signed commentary, the Minju Joson, organ of the DPRK Cabinet, branded Lee's trips to the US and Japan as "diplomacy aimed at draining resources" and trips that "offer tribute" under the signboard of "pragmatism."

Xinhua ("DPRK DENOUNCES SOUTH KOREA'S ARMS BUILDUP", Pyongyang, 2008/05/05) reported that the DPRK denounced the ROK's arms buildup as proof for its "preemptive attack" against the DPRK, the official news agency KCNA reported. The Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland of the DPRK accused the ROK of building up arms by intending to introduce 21 F-15K fighters and hundreds of the latest air-to-ground cruise missiles, according to the KCNA. The DPRK will strongly counter the arms buildup "with the building of a more powerful war deterrent," it added.

(return to top)

4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("MORE SOUTH KOREANS TOURED NORTH KOREA DESPITE CHILL IN TIES ", Seoul, 2008/05/04) reported that the number of ROK tourists heading to the DPRK's scenic Geumgang Mountain nearly doubled in the first four months of this year, industry sources said, despite strained inter-Korean relations following the launch in February of the conservative Lee Myung-bak government. As many as 100,300 South Koreans toured Mount Geumgang so far this year, up from 58,000 a year earlier, according to a spokesman for Hyundai Asan, Hyundai Group's arm dealing with business with the DPRK. A total of 40,090 South Koreans also visited the DPRK's medieval capital city of Kaesong during the first four months this year, Hyundai officials said, adding they recently increased the daily quota for ROK visitors to Kaesong to 500 from 300.

(return to top)

5. ROK Aid to the DPRK

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TO PROVIDE ANTI-MALARIA SUPPLIES TO NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2008/05/05) reported that the ROK plans to donate more than US$1 million (euro650,000) worth of anti-malaria supplies to the DPRK. The Unification Ministry said the donation will be made through the World Health Organization to buy medicine and diagnosis equipment. Yonhap news agency said the DPRK's malaria cases declined to about 7,500 last year from some 300,000 in 2001.

(return to top)

6. DPRK Military

The Times (Michael Sheridan and Uzi Mahnaimiin, "KIM JONG-IL BUILDS ‘THUNDERBIRDS’ RUNWAY FOR WAR IN NORTH KOREA", 2008/05/05) reported that DPRK military engineers are completing an underground runway beneath a mountain that can protect fighter aircraft from attack until they take off at high speed through the mouth of a tunnel. The 6,000ft runway is a few minutes’ flying time from the tense front line where the Korean People’s Army faces soldiers from the United

States and the ROK and captured on a satellite image by Google Earth, according to reports in the ROK press last week.. The project was identified by an air force defector from the DPRK It is one of three underground fighter bases among an elaborate subterranean military infrastructure built to withstand a “shock and awe” assault in the first moments of a war, the defector said.

(return to top)

7. DPRK Anti-Corruption Drive

Bloomberg (Hideko Takayama, "KIM'S BROTHER-IN-LAW HEADS NORTH KOREA ANTI-CORRUPTION CAMPAIGN ", 2008/05/02) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il put his brother-i--law, Jang Song Taek, in charge of a campaign against corruption, handing him more influence, intelligence officials and businessmen who requested anonymity said. Jang, 62, was sent to Beijing and the PRC city of Dandong near the border with the DPRK in February to root out corruption at DPRK corporations operating in the PRC, the businessmen and officials said. Jang's mission was to find and punish people who were diverting profits that were supposed to be repatriated to the DPRK capital, Pyongyang.

(return to top)

8. DPRK Bird Flu

Xinhua ("DPRK TAKES MEASURES TO PREVENT BIRD FLU ", Pyongyang, 2008/05/05) reported that the DPRK is taking measures to prevent avian flu from spreading to the country following an outbreak in neighboring ROK, the official news agency KCNA said. Central and provincial authorities concerned have set up more than 1,600 watch posts in the eastern and western coastal areas of the DPRK, which lie on the main routes taken by migratory birds, said Ri Kyong Gun, chief of the State Emergency Quarantine Committee's veterinary section, KCNA reported. He said that people were being allowed to raise poultry only in yards to prevent contact with migratory birds or their excrement, while dead birds were being tested for diseases.

(return to top)

9. ROK on DPRK Abductees

The Associated Press ("SKOREA TO GIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS OF ABDUCTION BY NORTH KOREA FOR FIRST TIME", Seoul, 2008/05/05) reported that the ROK approved its first financial assistance package to victims of abductions by the DPRK. A Unification Ministry statement said a government commission approved a total of about 1.1 billion won (US$1.1 million) in compensation to 31 families of abductees, and to one abductee who returned home after decades in the DPRK. Each of 30 families whose relatives are still kept in the DPRK will be given some 30 million won (US$30,000), while a returned abductee will receive a larger sum about 150 million won (US$150,000) to help him settle in the ROK, the commission said.

(return to top)

10. ROK, Japan, PRC Economic Cooperation

Kyodo ("JAPAN, CHINA, S. KOREA TO LAUNCH CONSULTATIVE BODY FOR FINANCIAL STABILITY ", Madrid, 2008/05/05) reported that finance ministers from Japan, the PRC and the ROK agreed Sunday in their meeting in Madrid to create a new framework by the end of the year to promote financial stability in Asia, recognizing the current financial market turbulence as a major risk to the regional economy. ''The current international financial market turbulence is one of the main risks to the economies,'' the finance chiefs said in a joint message issued after the trilateral talks. ''We are mindful of the necessity to enhance communication among authorities responsible for macroeconomic and financial stability.''

(return to top)

11. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("FUKUDA SUPPORT RATE HITS RECORD LOW 20%", 2008/05/05) reported that while gas prices rise, the support rate for Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's Cabinet continues to plunge, hitting a dismal 20 percent in the latest Asahi Shimbun survey. A majority of voters opposed his government's move Wednesday to exploit a rarely used constitutional stipulation to bypass opposition in the Upper House and revive the higher gasoline tax rate through a second vote in the Lower House. The support rate of 20 percent, down from 25 percent in the previous survey conducted on April 19 and 20, is the lowest since Fukuda took office last September. Fifty-nine percent said they did not support Fukuda's Cabinet.

(return to top)

12. Sino-Indian Military Exercise

Agence France-Presse ("INDIA, CHINA CONCLUDE MAIDEN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES", 2008/05/05) reported that the PRC and India wrapped up their first-ever joint military exercises on Tuesday with a drill in which they "wiped out" a group of supposed terrorists along their border, state press reported. In the mock scenario, 56 members of an unnamed international terrorist organisation had taken hostages after establishing a training base along the two nations' border, according to the *Xinhua* news agency. "The finale manoeuvre involved establishing a joint command post... before wiping out a group of 'terrorists' and rescuing 'hostages'," *Xinhua* said. The three-hour drill was the culmination of five days of exercises between about 100 troops from each of the two nations' militaries in southwest PRC's Yunnan province, which borders India.

(return to top)

13. PRC Virus Outbreak

Agence France-Presse (Dan Martin, "BEIJING LATEST VICTIM OF CHINA VIRUS OUTBREAK: STATE MEDIA ", Beijing, 2008/05/05) reported that a deadly viral outbreak that preys on children has appeared in Olympic host city Beijing, and the number of infections in the PRC has grown to more than 9,000, state media reported. The latest reported death occurred in eastern Zhejiang province, where a person died of hand, foot and mouth disease, the state-run Zhejiang Online news site said, without giving further details. Beijing city health officials on Monday said the number of cases in the capital had reached 1,482 as of the day before, jumping from 1,010 five days earlier, the Beijing Evening News reported.

(return to top)

14. PRC Protest

The Associated Press ("200 DEMONSTRATE IN SOUTHWEST CHINA AGAINST PETROCHEMICAL PLANT ", Beijing, 2008/05/05) reported that about 200 people demonstrated in southwestern PRC against the building of a petrochemical plant they say will pollute their city, state media reported Monday. The Beijing News said the protest march Sunday in Pengzhou, near the provincial capital of Chengdu in Sichuan province, lasted two hours and was peaceful. The protesters oppose plans to build an 800,000-ton-a-year ethylene plant and oil refinery because they believe it would seriously pollute Chengdu's air and water, it said. The refinery would process 10 million tons of crude a year, the newspaper said.

(return to top)

II. ROK Report

15. Inter-Korea Relations

Donga Ilbo ("DPRK CANNOT FEED THE PEOPLE WITH ANTI-LEE MYUNG-BAK MANEUVERS", 2008/05/06) wrote that having realized that the DPRK policy of the new administration is not a pushover like that of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, the DPRK is taking a pressure strategy toward the new ROK administration, encouraging interior conflict in the ROK to go back to the past. The DPRK must realize that their prediction of the ROK society collapsing from incitement and threat is only a fantasy, and that getting out from it is the only way to survive. To adjust to the DPRK policies of the Lee administration is the way to survive. Anti-Lee Myung-bak maneuvers cannot feed the people.

(return to top)

16. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Joongang-Ilbo (Ahn Hee-Chang, "IT IS TIME TO DRAW THE BIG PICTURE FOR DPRK POLICIES", 2008/05/06) wrote that recently, the ROK government shows little moves to slightly make a change in its original DPRK policy. Placatory comments like “Humanistic aid for DPRK shall be progressed without connection to the nuclear issues when DPRK asks for it,” or “It is most proper to respect 6.15, 10.4 declaration” are being discussed among government officials. However, it is very unlikely that the DPRK is going to change its attitude. It can be a burden for the ROK government. However, now is the time the ROK government should begin constructing big pictures and principles regarding DPRK policy.

(return to top)

17. DPRK Nuclear Program

Kukmin Ilbo ("GLEAM OF HOPE FOR DPRK NUCLEAR REPORT AND US-ROK, ROK-DPRK", 2008/05/04) wrote in an editorial that news of DPRK nuclear report reaching almost its completion, four months past its deadline, are continuously heard. However, if the DPRK makes its nuclear report and the US removes the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism, US-DPRK relations will improve and ROK-DPRK relations can relatively recede. Considering that, the ROK government should strengthen the pragmatic ROK-US alliance and make sure the ROK does not wander around unengaged on nuclear negotiation.

(return to top)

18. Northeast Asia Peace Process

Pressian ("'LEARN HELSINKI PROCESS FOR PEACE IN KOREAN PENINSULA' ", 2008/05/04) wrote that a new report highlights lessons that the Helsinki Process can give for peace in the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. In a symposium held by the Research Center for Peace Studies at Ewha Academy for Advanced Studies, Ewha Woman's University on May 2nd, the presenters claimed the Helsinki Process should be benchmarketed not only for the Northeastern Asian areas in which race for military budgets are intense, but also for improvement in ROK-DPRK relations.

(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