NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, May 22, 2006

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, May 22, 2006", NAPSNet Daily Report, May 22, 2006, https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-monday-may-22-2006/

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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Tests

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL TRIES TO DISSUADE NORTH FROM MISSILE LAUNCH", 2006-05-19) reported that US and ROK intelligence agencies have reportedly spotted preparations for the test launch of a Taepodong-type missile in the DPRK. Sources say the ROK government is making use of all channels to dissuade the DPRK from going ahead with the launch. A senior official in Seoul said US spy satellites have captured images of large trailers at missile platforms in the Hwadae-gun area of North Hamgyeong Province transporting large objects that are thought to be parts of a Taepodong-II missile.

(return to top) Bloomberg ("SOUTH KOREA TRIES TO VERIFY NORTH KOREAN MISSILE TEST REPORT", 2006-05-19) reported that the ROK's Defense Ministry said it is trying to verify a Japanese news report today that the DPRK may be preparing a Taepodong missile test. ``We are aware of the report and are trying to verify it,'' said Ministry of Defense spokesman Major Joo.. (return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. WARNS N.KOREA AGAINST MISSILE TESTS", 2006-05-21) reported that the US warned the DPRK not to think of test-firing any kind of missiles or the country's affairs will become the international community's concern. US State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters on Friday that Pyongyang's latest activity shows it is unwilling to yield to international concern over its nuclear weapons program. (return to top)

2. US DPRK Policy

Reuters ("SENATOR DRAFTS ROADMAP BILL FOR N.KOREA TALKS", 2006-05-19) reported that a leading Republican senator is preparing legislation that aims to jump-start stalled nuclear talks with the DPRK by putting the political weight of the US Congress behind specific elements of a deal. The draft written by Sen. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and obtained by Reuters, appears to go beyond what the Bush administration has laid out publicly in defining what Pyongyang must do to end the nuclear crisis and what it could expect in return. Critically, it offers a timeline under which such steps would occur.

(return to top) Reuters ("US PUTS CONDITION ON NORTH KOREA PEACE TREATY TALKS", 2006-05-18) reported that the US is open to discussions with the DPRK on a peace treaty at the same time as six-country talks on dismantling Pyongyang's nuclear programs, but it must first come back to the negotiating table, US officials said on Thursday. Commenting on a report in The New York Times, two officials said the concurrent efforts had been under way for months. They played down the Times' report that the Bush administration was considering a new approach. (return to top)

3. DPRK Defectors

Reuters ("TWO NORTH KOREAN SCIENTISTS DEFECT", 2006-05-19) reported that a senior DPRK scientist and a physician have defected from the DPRK and are seeking asylum in the ROK, a ROK activist was quoted as saying on Friday. Both may have valuable intelligence on the DPRK's military programs, the report by the ROK's Yonhap news agency said. The provincial head of the DPRK's federation of scientists escaped to the PRC in March the activist, Do Hee-youn, said. Do heads the

Seoul-based Citizens' Coalition for Human Rights of Abductees and North Korean Refugees. The physician was the head of a military hospital that had treated senior military officers. She defected in January.

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4. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL TO PREVENT DOUBLE DEFECTIONS BY N.KOREANS", 2006-05-22) reported that the ROK will try to prevent a recurrence of an incident last week when a group of DPRK refugees who had sought shelter in the ROK Consulate in Shenyang, PRC, changed their minds and forced their way into the US legation to seek asylum there instead. A government official on Monday said in view of Seoul’s relations with the PRC, it was “impossible” to transfer individuals who have already entered ROK government buildings abroad to the US mission there.

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5. Inter-Korean Tourism

JoongAng Ilbo ("HYUNDAI MAY EXPAND NORTH TOURS", 2006-05-20) reported that Hyundai Asan Corp., a ROK company spearheading inter-Korean economic projects, said yesterday it is pushing to expand its tour program for a scenic DPRK mountain resort open to RO Koreans. Before developing full-fledged tours to the inner side of the mountain, or Naegumgang, Hyundai Asan plans to hold an experimental tour to the area on May 27.

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6. Inter-Korean Rail Cooperation

Yonhap ("KOREAS HOLD TALKS ON HISTORIC OPENING OF CROSS-BORDER RAILWAYS", 2006-05-22) reported that DPRK and ROK officials met again in the DPRK’s border town of Kaesong Monday to finalize the details of the scheduled test-runs on the countries' cross-border railways this week, the Unification Ministry said. "The working-level contact is intended to fine-tune the sides' preparations for the upcoming event," a ministry official said.

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7. Kaesong Industrial Complex

Yonhap ("SMALL BUSINESSES CALL FOR EARLY COMPLETION OF KAESONG COMPLEX", 2006-05-19) reported that the ROK’s small and medium-sized businesses on Friday called on the government to complete the joint development of an industrial park in the DPRK’s border town Kaesong, saying the inter-Korean project is the only way forward for struggling businesses. "The Kaesong Industrial Complex is the only realistic solution for small and medium-sized businesses, which are forced to move to other countries, such as China and Southeast Asian countries, in search for cheap labor," the Korean Federation of Small and Medium Business said in a statement.

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8. ROK Unification Think Tank

JoongAng Ilbo ("SEOUL OPENS UNIFICATION STUDIES THINK-TANK ", 2006-05-20) reported that Seoul National University opened a new think-tank yesterday called the Unification Research Institute. University president Chung Un-chan said the institute will deal with Korean Peninsula affairs, inter-Korean relations and other issues associated with the US, the PRC, Russia and Japan. University sociology professor Park Myoung-kyu is its first head. "I want to redefine the definition of unification studies," Mr. Park said.

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9. DPRK Media Access

Chosun Ilbo ("AP SETS UP N.KOREA BUREAU", 2006-05-22) reported that the TV arm of the Associated Press news agency, AP Television News, has opened a permanent bureau in the DPRK. AP says it is the first Western news organization to be able to make daily dispatches from the reclusive country.

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10. DPRK-Malaysia Relations

Yonhap ("N. KOREA'S NO. 2 LEADER MEETS WITH MALAYSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER", 2006-0--19) reported that the DPRK's No. 2 leader met Friday with visiting Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the DPRK's state media reported. Kim Yong-nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, had a discussion with the Malaysian foreign minister, who is on a three-day trip to Pyongyang that started Wednesday, according to the KCNA.

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11. ROK-US Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA-U.S. DEFENSE TALKS TO FOCUS ON WARTIME COMMAND", 2006-05-22) reported that the forthcoming eighth Security Policy Initiative talks between the US and ROK starting this week will focus on the return of wartime operational control of its forces to the ROK and the environmental cleanup at US Forces Korea bases.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("COURT CONFIRMS KOREAN JURISDICTION FOR USFK CIVILIANS", 2006-05-22) reported that the ROK Supreme Court on Monday upheld a lower court ruling that civilian employees of the US Forces Korea fall under the ROK's criminal jurisdiction in peacetime. This is stipulated in the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) concerning the USFK, but it is the first time that the Supreme Court has issued a ruling on the matter. (return to top)

12. Japan Defense Spending

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN CONSIDERING FURTHER CUT IN FOREIGN AID, DEFENSE SPENDING: REPORT", 2006-05-21) reported that the Japanese government is considering whether to continue slashing foreign aid and defense spending through fiscal 2011, a news report has said. Japan has come under pressure from the international community to increase its aid budget, especially as the country's economy gains momentum. Meanwhile, defense spending fell to 4.81

trillion yen for fiscal 2006 -- the fourth straight decline.

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13. Japan on Iraq Role

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO HELP REBUILD IRAQ EVEN AFTER SDF PULLOUT: KOIZUMI", 2006-05-22) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Sunday that Japan will continue to help rebuild Iraq, even after it pulls out its Self-Defense Forces personnel engaged in humanitarian work in the war-battered country. Japan "will continue humanitarian support and reconstruction assistance," he added. "Even after the SDF leaves Samawah, there will be other things" Japan will do for Iraq.

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14. India-East Asia Security Relations

Agence France-Presse ("INDIA DEFENCE MINISTER TO VISIT JAPAN, CHINA TO DISCUSS MILITARY TIES", 2006-05-22) reported that India's defence minister will visit Japan and the PRC this week to forge closer links on military cooperation including anti-terrorism, a defence ministry official said. Issues likely to figure during talks would include "the need for close defence cooperation ... for promotion of peace and stability in Asia and at global level," the statement said.

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15. Russian Investment in PRC

The Vladivostok News ("FAR EAST TO INTRODUCE INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN CHINA", 2006-0--22) reported that about 500 companies from the Russian Far East are expected to introduce their projects at the 17th annual trade and economic fair which will open mid June in the PRC city of Harbin. The companies will introduce 93 investment projects at the exhibition, which is scheduled from June 15 to 19, a press statement from the presidential envoy in the Russian Far East reported.

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16. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("TAIWAN SETS SELF-DEFENSE OBJECTIVES", 2006-05-22) reported that Taiwan unveiled its first formal national security policy Saturday, pledging to increase defense spending by 20 percent and urging the PRC to cooperate in establishing a military buffer zone to lower tension in the Taiwan Strait. The 162-page document, issued after long delays and extensive debate among President Chen Shui-bian's advisers, was designed as a guideline for this and future governments in defending the self-ruled island against any attack from the PRC, officials said. Reflecting Chen's dream of full Taiwanese independence, it postulates that Taiwan's "overall strategic goal is to guarantee the country's sovereignty."

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17. US on Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US SAYS TAIWAN TIES 'SOUND AND HEALTHY' DESPITE SNUB OVER CHEN TRIP ", 2006-05-19) reported that ties between the US and Taiwan remain "sound and

healthy," despite Washington snubbing President Chen Shui-bian's request for a stopover on his recent Latin America trip, a US diplomat said. "The US-Taiwan relationship is fundamentally sound and fundamentally healthy... We need to work closely together to build on what have been accomplished in the past five decades," de facto US ambassador Stephen Young told a news conference.

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18. PRC-Nigeria Relations

Agence France-Presse ("NIGERIA AWARDS OIL EXPLORATION LICENSES TO CHINA", 2006-05-19) reported that Nigeria handed a state-owned PRC group licences to explore four oil blocks, underlining Beijing's increasing drive for energy resources. China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) won an auction in Lagos for four of 17 blocks on offer, two located in the northeastern Lake Chad Basin and two in the restive southern Niger Delta, the country's main oil-producing region.

(return to top) Reuters ("$1 BILLION CHINA LOAN FOR NIGERIA RAILWAYS ", 2006-05-22) reported that the PRC will give Nigeria a $1 billion loan to fix its dilapidated railways, the Xinhua press agency said Monday, in another sign of the PRC's growing economic sway across Africa. "Provision of infrastructure is critical for economic development," she told a meeting, Xinhua reported. (return to top)

19. PRC Three Gorges Project

The Associated Press ("CHINA COMPLETES DAM ACROSS YANGTZE RIVER ", 2006-05-20) reported that the PRC finished building the Three Gorges dam across the Yangtze River on Saturday, a key milestone for the world's largest hydroelectric project. The 1.4-mile-long dam was designed to stop deadly floods that regularly ravage the PRC's farming heartland, and eventually produce 22.4 million kilowatts of electricity.

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20. PRC Energy Supply

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO BUILD SIX MORE NUCLEAR REACTORS IN SOUTHEAST ", 2006-05-19) reported that the PRC is set to build six nuclear reactors in the southeastern province of Fujian, in the latest plank of the country's ambitious nuclear power program. State-run energy provider China National Nuclear Corporation and China Huadian Group, one of the PRC's top five power producers, has signed an agreement to build six reactors of 1,000-megawatt capacity, China Daily reported.

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II. CanKor

21. Report #249

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-05-19) UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says the nuclear issue should take priority over other DPRK-related issues, including human rights. He urges the six parties

to return to the talks "because it's only at the table where we are going to find a solution." US President Bush is coming under increasing pressure to shift to a broader approach in dealing with the DPRK. Top advisors' recommendations include negotiations for a peace treaty. "Focusing on regime change as the road to denuclearization confuses the issue," former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger writes in the Washington Post, "Periodic engagement at a higher level is needed." Unconfirmed Japanese media reports claim a North Korean missile was moved closer to a launch site in the northeast. The DPRK's trade volume with foreign countries, excluding the ROK, rose to 3 billion USD - its highest figure since 1991.

(return to top) CanKor ("FOCUS", 2006-05-19) The ROK promotes Korean inter-dependence as a strategy to reduce the costs of future unification as illustrated in this week's CanKor FOCUS: Paving the road to unification. The ROK pushes to unify industrial standards and insists goods made in the inter-Korean Kaesong industrial zone will be included in any Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States despite any opposition by Washington. A number of inter-Korean governmental talks are planned as well as a test-run of trains across the border railway link. Former President Kim Dae-jung will visit Pyongyang next month. Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok travels across the DMZ to inspect the Kaesong industrial park. (return to top) CanKor ("OPINION", 2006-05-19) Economic pressure is failing to make Pyongyang more flexible. In fact, the DPRK is skillfully exploiting both the US-Japan collaboration and tensions between Tokyo and Seoul, says Kenneth Quinones, Professor of Korean Studies at Japan's Akita International University in this week's CanKor OPINION. The author contributed the English version of this column directly to CanKor. The Japanese version is to appear in the Mainichi Shimbun. (return to top)

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