

# **NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, May 12, 2005**

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# I. United States

## 1. ROK on Spent Fuel Rods

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL SAYS NORTH KOREA BIDDING FOR LEVERAGE", 2005-05-12) reported that Seoul condemned the DPRK's claim to have extracted 8,000 spent fuel rods from its recently shut down Yongbyon nuclear reactor for reprocessing but said it was probably a bid for leverage in negotiations. Vice Unification Minister Rhee Bong-jo said that Pyongyang's announcement on Wednesday could be seen as a move "to aggravate the situation with negotiations in mind... We think it intends to strengthen its negotiating power."

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREA TO CALMLY RESPOND TO N.KOREA'S NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT", 2005-05-12) reported that the ROK's top diplomat has called for a calm response regarding the latest nuclear revelations from the DPRK. Seoul's Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Ban Ki-moon said the latest move by Pyongyang was predicted and that there won't be a shift in the ROK's position. Mr. Ban expressed serious concern over the latest move by Pyongyang but he stressed that there's no change in Seoul's strategy in dealing with the nuclear issue. [\(return to top\)](#) Joonang Daily ("EXPERTS CALL FUEL ROD CLAIM UNLIKELY ", None) reported that nuclear experts in Seoul say that the DPRK's claim to have removed 8,000 spent fuel rods from its Yongbyon nuclear reactor is theoretically possible but highly unlikely, raising the possibility that Pyongyang is bluffing. The DPRK's announcement Wednesday came just a month and a half after March 31, which is when signs were detected that the reactor had been shut down, enabling removal of the fuel rods. Nuclear experts had expected removal of all the rods to take at least two months. "Removing spent fuel rods from a reactor with a remote-control crane and reloading new ones is very delicate and time-consuming work," an expert with the ROK's Defense Ministry said. [\(return to top\)](#) Bloomberg Press ("N. KOREA'S FUEL ROD REMOVAL WILL HURT NUCLEAR TALKS, SOUTH SAYS", 2005-0-12) reported that the DPRK's announcement that it completed extracting spent fuel rods from a nuclear generator may negatively affect efforts to restart nuclear talks, ROK's vice unification minister said. "North Korea seems to have extracted the fuel rods as a means of gaining advantage in future talks," said Vice Minister of Unification Rhee Bong Jo. "Still, its actions may negatively affect efforts to restart six-nation talks." [\(return to top\)](#)

## 2. PRC on Spent Fuel Rods

Kyodo News ("CHINA TO 'REACT STRONGLY' TO N. KOREA NUKE TEST: LAWMAKER", 2005-0-12) reported that Wang Jiarui, head of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee's International Department, told a senior Japanese opposition lawmaker on Thursday that the PRC would "react strongly" to the DPRK's nuclear weapons test.

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## 3. Japan on Spent Fuel Rods

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA AN 'OUTRAGEOUS COUNTRY,' NAKAGAWA SAYS", None) reported that Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Shoichi Nakagawa on Thursday called the DPRK an "outrageous country," following reports that Pyongyang has finished extracting spent nuclear fuel

rods to expand its nuclear arsenal. Nakagawa also demanded at a session of the House of Councillors Committee on Economy and Industry that Japan impose economic sanctions against the DPRK, saying, "Many Japanese people and Diet members support sanctions and we have to respect their stance."

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## **4. Russia on Spent Fuel Rods**

Kyodo News ("RUSSIA ALSO VOICES CONCERN ABOUT N. KOREA'S NUCLEAR MOVE", 2005-0-12) reported that Russia is concerned about the DPRK's alleged action to finish extracting 8,000 spent fuel rods from a nuclear power plant, a possible step for producing plutonium for more nuclear weapons, a Russian Foreign Ministry source said Thursday. Interfax news agency quoted the source as saying that Russia is closely following developments and collecting data in connection with the DPRK's nuclear ambitions.

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## **5. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue, Six-party Talks**

MosNews ("SENIOR RUSSIAN LAWMAKER BLAMES NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR CRISIS ON U.S.", 2005-05-12) reported that the ongoing crisis in the settlement of the DPRK nuclear issue is largely brought about by the US's reluctance to compromise, the head of the foreign affairs committee in Russia's lower house of parliament, Konstantin Kosachyov, told a news conference in Moscow on Thursday. "Pyongyang considers that the ultimate goal is adhesion of the Korean peninsula to nuclear-free status," Kosachev was quoted as saying. However, "we were informed that without public official apologies by Washington in this regard there will be no reconsideration by Pyongyang of its position on six-party talks," Kosachev said.

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## **6. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue, Sanctions**

Korea Herald ("U.S. INEFFECTIVE IN PRESSURING N. KOREA TO DISMANTLE WEAPONS ", 2005-05-12) reported that the US has apparently been running out of effective cards to play in forcing the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, especially as it finds little cooperation from the PRC, analysts said. The PRC is reportedly unfazed by US appeals to apply economic or political sanctions on the DPRK. Though Washington has been discussing with the PRC and Russia about taking the DPRK's nuclear issue to the UNSC, it is unlikely to happen as PRC has indicated it would veto the attempt.

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## **7. Kim Dae-jung on US-DPRK Bi-lateral Talks**

Korea Times ("KIM DAE-JUNG CALLS FOR DIRECT NK-US TALKS", 2005-05-12) reported that Former President Kim Dae-jung on Thursday urged the DPRK and the US to engage in direct talks, saying the standoff over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs is entering a "very ominous" stage. "North Korea must completely abandon its nuclear programs and the United States must guarantee the security of North Korea and lift economic sanctions," said Kim.

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## **8. US on PRC Involvement in Six-party Talks**

Xinhua ("US COUNTING ON CHINA IN N. KOREA EFFORTS ", 2005-05-12) reported that the Bush administration is depending heavily on the PRC to rescue a faltering diplomatic effort to negotiate an end to the DPRK's nuclear weapons effort but has suggested no specific pressure tactics to Beijing, senior US officials said Wednesday. "The actual diplomacy for what the Chinese will do is going to be left to the Chinese," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

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## **9. US on Six-Party Talks**

Reuters ("WHITE HOUSE FOCUS ON N.KOREA RETURNING TO TALKS", 2005-05-11) reported that the US is focused on having the DPRK return to six-party talks to curb its nuclear ambitions and provocative actions only further isolate Pyongyang, the White House said on Wednesday. "All parties that are participants in the six-party talks are concerned about North Korea's behavior and that's why we want to get them back to the six-party talks. That's where our focus is, that's where our focus remains," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters.

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## **10. ROK-US Relations**

Yonhap News ("U.S. MOVING UNILATERALLY ON N. KOREA UNTHINKABLE, ENVOY SAYS", None) reported that ROK-US alliance is so strong that it is unthinkable for Washington to make a key decision on the DPRK without prior consultation with Seoul, ROK's top envoy to Washington said Wednesday. Ambassador Hong Seok-hyun made the remark in response to a question asking if he believes the US would consult with the ROK in advance when it considers military options to end the DPRK's nuclear arms drive.

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## **11. US on Possible DPRK Nuclear Attack**

Kyodo News ("INITIAL U.S. DEFENSE SYSTEM EYES 2-5 N. KOREAN MISSILES", None) reported that the US is aiming at intercepting two to five missiles coming from the DPRK with its current "rudimentary" defense system ready for use in case of emergencies, US Strategic Command Commander Gen. James Cartwright said Wednesday. In a Senate hearing, Cartwright also said the US would only have around seven minutes to deal with the DPRK's missiles headed for Alaska and Hawaii, and that it still faces the "challenging" issue of how to quickly make a decision to intercept them.

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## **12. US on DPRK Refugee-Defectors as Spies**

Korea Times ("US WORRIED OVER NK SPY INFILTRATION", 2005-05-12) reported that a US official has expressed concern over the possibility of DPRK spies infiltrating the country posing as defectors. Arthur E. Dewey, US assistant secretary for population, refugees and migration, said Washington is

seeking ways to allow some DPRK refugees to settle in the US but must consider national security issues first. "We are cognizant of press reports noting that criminals, spies and Chinese citizens of Korean ethnicity have posed as North Korean refugees and were resettled in South Korea," he said.

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## **13. DPRK Refugee-Defectors in ROK**

Associated Press ("N. KOREAN DEFECTIONERS SEEKING JOBS IN SOUTH", 2005-05-11) reported that new defectors often complain of problems after they arrive in the ROK, where their previous job qualifications and experience often aren't recognized and they can face discrimination as soon as they open their mouths and speak with a DPRK accent.

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## **14. US Journalists in DPRK**

Yonhap ("U.S. TV NETWORK JOURNALISTS VISIT NORTH KOREA ", None) reported that US television network ABC visited the DPRK to report the its efforts for its own market-based economic reforms, a government official said Thursday. However, the official, who asked not to be named, declined to comment on details about how they arrived in the DPRK or their itinerary.

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## **15. Inter-Korean Relations**

Yonhap News ("INTER-KOREAN TALKS PROPOSED ON RETURN OF MONUMENT FROM JAPAN", None) reported that the ROK proposed holding talks with the DPRK to discuss having Japan return an 18th-century Joseon Dynasty stone monument to the DPRK, the unification ministry said. The monument was left unattended at a Tokyo shrine after being stolen by Japanese intruders a century ago from what is now the DPRK.

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## **16. DPRK Foreign Trade**

Washington Post ("DESPITE U.S. ATTEMPTS, N. KOREA IS ANYTHING BUT ISOLATED", None) reported that ROK officials hope the growing economic development across the border will promote political and social reforms in the DPRK. Despite US efforts to persuade allies to limit economic ties with the DPRK, it is enjoying booming trade abroad. The ROK, the PRC and Russia have increased their trade with the DPRK, boosting its tattered economy. The DPRK's foreign trade increased 22 percent in two years, fuelled by imports of energy and manufactured goods, exports of minerals, seafood and agricultural products - the highest levels since 1991, according to KOTRA, an ROK government organization that monitors DPRK trade.

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## **17. DPRK Food Shortages**

Korea Times ("NK COULD FACE WORST FOOD SHORTAGE: RESEARCHER", None) reported that the DPRK could face its worst food shortage if its nuclear issue is not resolved soon, the head of the

Korean Peninsula Agro-fishery Policy Research Institute. "Without a quick resolution of the nuclear problem, the North could experience extreme food shortages as seen in 1997," said Kim Woon-keun.

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## **18. ROK-Uzbek, Russian Relations**

Yonhap News ("PRESIDENT ROH WINDS UP FIVE-DAY VISIT TO RUSSIA, UZBEKISTAN", 2005-0-12) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun returned Thursday from a five-day tour of Russia and Uzbekistan to discuss the DPRK nuclear issue, regional security and economic matters. While in Uzbekistan for three days from Tuesday, Roh held a summit meeting with Uzbek President Islam Karimov in which they agreed to cooperate closely to peacefully resolve the DPRK nuclear issue and increase cooperation in oil exploration and trade.

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## **19. ROK Economic Markets**

Reuters ("REGION, MARKETS CALM DESPITE N.KOREA NUCLEAR BOAST", None) reported that regional powers and financial markets reacted calmly on Thursday to the DPRK's declaration it had taken fuel from a nuclear reactor. "Unless something serious happens, the North Korean factor remains neutral to the market," said Shin Dong-jun, a fund manager and strategist at Samsung Investment Trust Management. The currency market in the ROK was stuck between the risks of the PRC's possible Yuan revaluation and the DPRK's nuclear crisis, and volume was small. The won remained range bound near 1,000 to the dollar.

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