

NAPSNet Daily Report Tuesday, April 05, 2005

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Tuesday, April 05, 2005", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 05, 2005,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-tuesday-april-05-2005/>

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I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREAN OFFICIAL DEFENDS NUCLEAR ARSENAL, BLAMES WASHINGTON FOR COLLAPSE OF TALKS", 2005-04-05) reported that a DPRK official told an international conference Tuesday that his country has built up a nuclear arsenal because of Washington's "extremely hostile" policy and the threat of a possible pre-emptive US nuclear strike. Choe Thae Bok, the speaker of the DPRK's legislature, said the DPRK is ready to return to stalled nuclear disarmament talks if the US apologizes for labeling it an "outpost of tyranny" and agrees to coexist peacefully.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA AGREES IN PRINCIPLE TO RESUME NUKE TALKS: REPORT", 2005-0-05) reported that the DPRK has agreed in principle to resume six-nation talks aimed at resolving the dispute over the country's nuclear programs, a ROK newspaper reported Tuesday. DPRK First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju arrived in the PRC on Saturday and discussed the restart of the six-party talks with PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, the Chosun Ilbo quoted a diplomatic source in Beijing as saying.

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3. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Itar-Tass ("CHINA DENIES REPORTS N KOREA READY TO RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS", 2005-0-05) reported that the PRC's Foreign Ministry has declined to confirm reports suggesting that DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Kang Sok Chu made known his country's readiness to resume the six-partite talks on settling the Korean nuclear problem. Qin Gang, an official spokesman for the ministry told a news briefing Tuesday Kang Sok Chu and the PRC's Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo had exchanged views on bilateral relations, the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula and other issues of mutual concern.

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4. ROK on Inter-Korean Relations

Donga Ilbo ("“THE SECOND BERLIN DECLARATION” MIGHT OCCUR DURING ROH'S VISIT TO GERMANY", 2005-04-05) reported that ahead of President Roh Moo-hyun's visit to Germany (from April 10 to April 14), it has been continuously stated that the ROK government will make a

significant suggestion, "The Second Berlin Declaration," towards the DPRK during his visit. As the ROK government made a breakthrough in relations between the two Koreas through the "The Berlin Declaration" in April 2000, in which former President Kim Dae-jung made a promise of offering large-scale social overhead capital to the DPRK that led to the "inter-Korean summit", there has been speculation that President Roh will make some exceptional suggestions to the DPRK as well.

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5. Libya on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Agence France Presse ("KADHAFI'S SON SAYS WORLD MUST GIVE N KOREA INCENTIVES TO REACH NUCLEAR DEAL", 2005-04-05) reported that the son of Libyan leader Moamer Kadhafi said Tuesday the international community must give the DPRK economic and political incentives before asking the DPRK to give up its nuclear weapons program. "It's not fair all the time just to press and push North Korea," Seif al-Islam Kadhafi, who holds no official position but is seen as a representative of his father, told a news conference. "You have to give them political and economic incentives," said Kadhafi.

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6. DPRK on KEDO LWR Project

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH SEEKS NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TALKS", 2005-04-05) reported that the Japanese Asahi Shimbun reported yesterday, quoting a senior US official, that the DPRK sent a document to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization office in New York at the end of last month, which stated that it could not guarantee the safety of 120 KEDO employees still in the DPRK. The DPRK also suggested a high-level meeting to further discuss the construction of a light water reactor, which was part of the 1994 Agreed Framework with the US.

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7. DPRK Economic Reforms

Korea Times ("N. KOREAN CURRENCY SUFFERS STEEP FALL IN VALUE", 2005-04-05) reported that the value of the DPRK's currency has plunged against the US dollar on the black market, taking the brunt of radical economic reforms that stoked hyper-inflation. "Since commodity prices have risen at a fast pace after the first-phase reform measures, North Koreans have tried to have safe financial assets, such as dollars or euros," said Park Suhk-sam, an official of a DPRK economic studies team at the Bank of Korea. "Hikes in commodity prices reflect the excess money supply by the North's authorities, and the future course of the North's exchange rate on the black market will be decided by the money supply," he added.

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8. DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

BBC News ("N KOREAN BIRD FLU 'DIFFERENT'", 2005-04-05) reported that a strain of bird flu infecting poultry in the DPRK is different from that which killed scores of people in other parts of Asia, a UN expert has said. Hans Wagner, an official for the Food and Agriculture Organization, said the birds were infected with the H7 strain. The strain that has decimated poultry stocks and caused recent human deaths in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam is the more virulent H5N1 strain.

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9. Humanitarian Organizations on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA FREEDOM WEEK' TO HIGHLIGHT HUMAN RIGHTS", 2005-04-05) reported that US humanitarian organizations for DPRK defectors have designated the last week of this month "North Korea Freedom Week 2005", when they will organize an exhibition on DPRK human rights abuses on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The Korean Church Coalition (KCC), an association of 1,000 Korean churches in North America, will hold a press conference on Capitol Hill on Thursday with Senator Sam Brown and Rep. Frank Wolf, a sponsor of the US' North Korea Act.

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10. UK on DPRK Human Rights

Agence France Presse ("BBC SHOWS FOOTAGE OF 'PUBLIC EXECUTIONS' IN NORTH KOREA", 2005-04-05) reported that the BBC has broadcast harrowing footage that purportedly shows people being publicly executed by firing squad in the DPRK for trying to flee the totalitarian regime. The pictures, filmed in secret just over a month ago in towns near the DPRK border with the PRC, were obtained by the British broadcaster and shown on television late Monday night. They add to a mountain of evidence of massive human rights abuses by Pyongyang, which the government consistently denies.

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11. DPRK Religious Freedom

The Independent ("IN NORTH KOREA, BEING CHRISTIAN IS A CRIME", 2005-04-05) reported that in the DPRK, there is only one religion - the official worship of the founder of the state, the late Kim Il Sung and his doctrine of self-reliance. Anyone who fails to show the necessary respect to the "Great Leader" and his son, Kim Jong-Il, the "Dear Leader", who currently rules the DPRK, risks being bundled off to labour camp.

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12. DPRK on US Human Rights

Yonhap news ("N. KOREA COUNTERS U.S. WITH RECORD OF ITS ALLEGED RIGHTS ABUSE", 2005-04-05) reported that the DPRK provided detailed allegations of human rights abuses in the US, urging the US to reflect on its own wrongdoing before criticizing Pyongyang. Rodong Shinmun, the newspaper of the DPRK's Workers' Party, said the US, which promotes itself as a defender of human rights and democracy, was throwing arrows to the DPRK. "Our socialist system was established on the base of people's opinion and demand," the newspaper said, "The US's distorted remarks of human rights or democracy are an unbearable humiliation to our people, an interference in our sovereignty and a wicked challenge to justice."

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13. DPRK World Cup Match

The Associated Press ("JAPANESE SOCCER OFFICIAL HOPEFUL FANS CAN TRAVEL TO

PYONGYANG", 2005-04-05) reported that a Japanese soccer official said Tuesday he hopes Japanese fans will be able to travel to Pyongyang for a June 8 World Cup qualifying match despite concerns over security. A World Cup qualifier between Iran and the DPRK in the capital of Pyongyang erupted into a melee last week when fans were enraged after the referee failed to call a penalty against one of the visiting players. Japan has urged the DPRK to tighten security when Japan's soccer team and fans travel to Pyongyang.

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14. ROK Nuclear Safety Seminar

Asia Pulse/Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO HOST INT'L SEMINAR ON NUCLEAR SAFETY", 2005-0-05) reported that about 150 experts from the US and 15 other countries will get together this week for an international seminar on nuclear safety standards, the government said Tuesday. The seminar, scheduled for Thursday through next Friday in the southeastern port city of Busan, will double as the annual conference of the International Electrotechnical Commission, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy said. The ROK will propose a new safety standard that calls for using multimedia data transmission technologies to ensure the safety of nuclear plant control systems, the ministry said.

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15. ROK-US Military Alliance

Korea Times ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS BIGGER USFK ROLE", 2005-04-05) reported that defense officials of the ROK left for Hawaii yesterday for talks with their US counterparts over the US move to expand the role of its troops in the ROK, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday. Their two-day meeting will focus on defining the concept of "strategic flexibility under which the US Forces Korea can freely come and go from the Korean Peninsula to conduct its military mission in Asian region." It is part of the US plan to transform its overseas military into a more agile one in the name of the Global Defense Posture Review.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL TRIMS PAYMENT TO U.S. FORCES BY 8.9% ", 2005-04-05) reported that for the first time in 15 years, the ROK's financial share in maintaining the US military in the country has been cut. "Korea's contribution will be 8.9 percent, or 60.9 billion won (\$60 million), lower than last year," Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung said yesterday. "If it becomes difficult to maintain U.S. troops in Korea because of a funding shortfall, the US government can renegotiate the amount two years from now," Mr. Yoon said. [\(return to top\)](#) Korea Herald ("MINISTER RULES OUT RENEGOTIATION ON USFK DEFENSE COST SHARING", 2005-04-05) reported that Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung yesterday ruled out a renegotiation of the ROK's financial contribution to US Forces Korea despite the US military's discontent over the tentatively agreed cost-sharing agreement. "The renegotiation won't be possible. If there are some additional requirements for combat readiness, then we can discuss the issue later in two years," Yoon told reporters at a luncheon meeting. [\(return to top\)](#)

16. ROK Foreign Policy

Korea Times ("POWER BALANCER' POLICY FACES CRITICISM ", 2005-04-05) reported that the government's vision of becoming a "power balancer" in Northeast Asia is a "dangerous idea" that will undermine national interests and eventually bring about the potential isolation of the country in the region, an opposition lawmaker said. Rep. Park Jin of the Grand National Party criticized the Roh

Moo-hyun administration for its recent move toward strengthening ties with the PRC, distancing itself from the US. "I'm deeply concerned about the concept of the nation becoming an 'anchor' in the region," said Park. "Any unilateral attempt to change the existing trilateral framework for regional security, including the US and Japan, will never serve national interests."

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17. Japanese Historical Revisionism

Reuters ("JAPAN APPROVES REVISED 'NATIONALIST' TEXTBOOK", 2005-04-05) reported that Japan approved a new edition of a textbook on Tuesday that critics say whitewashes Japan's militaristic past, drawing protests from the PRC and ROK and further fraying ties with the two Asian neighbors. The Ministry of Education first approved the book, written by nationalist scholars for junior high schools, in 2001 in the face of strong protests from Japan's two Asian neighbors.

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18. ROK-Japanese Relations

Korea Times ("SEOUL-TOKYO TIES TEETER ON EDGE", 2005-04-05) reported that Tokyo's endorsement of controversial textbooks on Tuesday placed the already strained relations between the ROK and Japan on the edge of a precipice as it defied Seoul's repeated calls for rectification. With the recent historical and territorial spats set to expand into a full-fledged diplomatic war over Japan's bid to join the U.N. Security Council (UNSC), even the foreign ministers talks slated for Thursday in Pakistan are not expected to find a breakthrough anytime soon, according to experts.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France Presse ("SOUTH KOREA CRITICIZES JAPAN OVER NATIONALIST HISTORY TEXTBOOKS", 2005-04-05) reported that the ROK criticized Japan for authorizing a new edition of a history textbook which Seoul says whitewashes over Tokyo's wartime atrocities as protestors burnt Japanese flags. "The government expresses regret that some of the authorized school textbooks... still include contents that justify and glorify Japan's past wrongdoing," foreign ministry spokesman Lee Kyu-hyung said in a statement. "The government again calls for Japan's efforts to correct this." [\(return to top\)](#)

19. Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SUMMONS JAPANESE AMBASSADOR OVER TEXTBOOK ROW", 2005-04-05) reported that the PRC's foreign ministry called in Japan's ambassador to Beijing to express its "indignation" at Tokyo's approval of nationalist school history textbooks, state press reported. "The Chinese government expresses its indignation that the Japanese government did not listen to the repeated representations of the Chinese side and approved the history textbooks that turn facts on their head," state television quoted foreign ministry official Qiao Zonghuai as saying.

[\(return to top\)](#) People's Daily Online ("JAPAN IS THE PRINCIPAL CAUSE FOR THE SINO-JAPANESE TENSION: SCHOLAR ", 2005-04-05) reported that Japan is the principal cause for the current Sino-Japanese tension, said Pang Zhongying, president of the Institute of International Relations of the Nankai University, the Hong Kong based Takungpao reported. Japan has adopted an intransigent attitude towards the PRC and been provocative in the territorial issue and the Taiwan issue, Pang pointed out. To gain the PRC's support Japan must change its stand at the historical issue. If so easing the tension with the PRC is still possible. [\(return to top\)](#)

20. PRC on Japan UNSC Bid

Washington Post ("CHINA FIGHTS ENLARGING SECURITY COUNCIL", 2005-04-05) reported that the PRC's U.N. ambassador on Monday challenged Secretary General Kofi Annan's proposal to enlarge the Security Council to 24 members by year's end, dealing a setback to the second major effort in a decade to expand the powerful 15-nation body. The PRC's top U.N. envoy, Wang Guangya, said more time is needed to reach agreement on the politically sensitive issue. Wang also insisted it is "essential" that an agreement on enlarging the council be reached by a unanimous vote in the 191-member General Assembly, a standard that would permit a single UN member to undercut any rival's candidacy.

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21. DPRK on Japan UNSC Bid

Yonhap news ("NK CRITICIZES JAPAN'S UN COUNCIL BID", 2005-04-05) reported that the DPRK strongly denounced Japan's campaign to attain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council on Tuesday, saying Japan is not even qualified to remain a member of the world body. In a signed commentary, Minju Chosun, a newspaper published by the DPRK's Cabinet, claimed Japan was trying to buy itself Security Council membership through large amounts of aid payments promised to 16 African countries, the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency reported, monitored here by Yonhap News Agency.

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22. DPRK-Vatican Relations

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK SENDS CONDOLENCE MESSAGE TO VATICAN", None) reported that Samuel Jang Jae-on, chairman of the Central Committee of the DPRK Catholics Association, sent a message of condolences to the Department of State of the Vatican over the demise of Pope John Paul II. The message says: Upon hearing the sudden sad news that His Holiness Pope John Paul II passed away, I express deep condolences.

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23. Sino-Vatican Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA'S STATE CATHOLIC CHURCH HONORS JOHN PAUL", 2005-04-05) reported that more than 300 PRC parishioners filled a downtown cathedral Monday morning to honor Pope John Paul II in a public Mass held by the Communist Party's state-controlled Catholic Church. The memorial Mass held at Southern Cathedral here captured the contradictions of Catholicism in China, where the church, officially known as the Catholic Patriotic Association, acknowledges the pope as a spiritual leader but rejects the authority of the Vatican over church affairs.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Associated Press ("BEIJING TELLS VATICAN NOT TO 'INTERFERE'", 2005-0-05) reported that the PRC on Tuesday demanded the Vatican stay out of its internal affairs and break off diplomatic relations with Taiwan, reiterating its long-standing conditions for establishing diplomatic relations severed more than 50 years ago. Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang rejected ties between the PRC's Catholics and the Vatican, an indication that Beijing hasn't budged on a key issue in their split despite expressing hope for better relations following the death of Pope John Paul

II. Beijing is concerned the pope's authority to appoint PRC bishops undermines its sovereignty. [\(return to top\)](#) The Associated Press ("BISHOP: VATICAN WANTS TO CUT TAIWAN TIES", 2005-0-05) reported that Hong Kong's bishop said the Vatican wants to cut formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan and recognize the island's rival the PRC, where millions of Roman Catholics risk arrest by worshipping in underground churches. An official at Taiwan's Embassy to the Holy See said Tuesday the report was false, and calls to the Vatican were not immediately returned. "The Vatican is planning to give up Taiwan. There's no other way," Hong Kong Bishop Joseph Zen, who heads the only Roman Catholic church on PRC soil, told reporters late Monday. "Even though this is a difficult thing to do, it has decided to go ahead." [\(return to top\)](#)

24. Sino-Pakistan Relations

Agence France Presse ("PAKISTAN, CHINA TO SIGN TRADE DEALS DURING WEN VISIT", 2005-0-05) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao has arrived for his first visit to Pakistan, during which the close allies would sign a raft of economic, trade and investment agreements, officials said. The PRC is Pakistan's strongest ally and provides its neighbour with both development funding and weapons. On the eve of Wen's visit, Islamabad said it would buy four PRC-built frigates for the Pakistani navy.

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