

NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, March 30, 2005

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Wednesday, March 30, 2005", NAPSNet Daily Report, March 30, 2005,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-wednesday-march-30-2005/>

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I. United States

1. ROK-PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Agence France Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN DEFENSE MINISTER HEADS TO BEIJING FOR NORTH KOREA TALKS", None) reported that ROK Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-Ung left here for Beijing Wednesday for talks focused on resolving the stand-off over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, the defense ministry said. Yoon is scheduled to meet with his PRC counterpart Cao Gangchuan later Wednesday and other ranking PRC military officials during his four-day stay, ministry officials said. "The two ministers will have talks focusing on ways to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully, to ease military tensions on the Korean peninsula and other issues of mutual concern," the ministry said in a press statement.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap news ("CHINA PLEDGES TO MAKE EFFORTS FOR RESOLUTION OF N. KOREA'S NUKE PROGRAM", None) reported that the PRC's defense minister on Wednesday vowed to continue to make efforts to resolve the international dispute over the DPRK's nuclear arms program. Cao Gangchuan, who also serves as a state councilor, said that a peaceful resolution of the nuclear row through dialogue is the right and only choice and voiced hope for the resumption of stalled six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear arms program.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("SEOUL: CHINA WORKING ON N.KOREA FOR NEW NUKE TALKS", None) reported that the ROK's defense minister went to the PRC Wednesday where analysts see efforts mounting to bring the DPRK back to talks on its nuclear weapons ambitions. "China and North Korea will have quite a bit of talking to do, and the North takes time to analyze what it has," a ROK official familiar with the talks said by telephone. There will likely be visible progress within two months, he added.

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4. Inter-Korean Talks

United Press International ("SECRET INTER-KOREAN MEETING AROUSE HOPES, SUSPICIONS", 2005-03-30) reported that a group of ROK officials met with DPRK counterparts in a secret meeting in the DPRK city of Kaesong, sparking hopes and suspicions over the purpose and nature of the meeting. The ROK delegation, headed by Um Jong-sik went to the DPRK border town to hold

discussions on inter-Korean economic projects. DPRK watchers here expressed high hopes that the meeting may open up a new dialogue channel with the DPRK amid the ongoing stalemate in six-party talks over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

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5. Russia on Possible Bush-Kim Meeting

RIA Novosti ("BUSH, KIM JONG-IL TO MEET IN MOSCOW?", 2005-03-30) reported that according to the Russian President's special envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District, DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is likely to arrive in Moscow to attend Victory Day celebrations. Moscow can become the venue of the historical meeting between the DPRK leader and US President George Bush. "Foreign leaders will be invited to celebrations. Therefore, it is possible that Kim Jong-il will accept the invitation to visit Moscow," the special envoy noted. The US has not commented on the possibility of George Bush- Kim Jong-il meeting.

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6. Gallucci on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("N.K. NUCLEAR EXPORTS WOULD BE LAST STRAW: EX-NEGOTIATOR", 2005-03-30) reported that former US undersecretary of state Robert Gallucci, a key figure in the Geneva Accords of 1994, said if the DPRK exported nuclear materials abroad, it could be the last straw prompting the US to attack the country. Gallucci in a press conference in Seoul stressed that the US and DPRK needed to get down to sincere negotiations fast. Criticizing Washington's current line, he repeatedly urged bilateral talks between the US and DPRK. He said the six-party talks were a useful tool to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue, but the format mustn't become a barrier to direct talks between the US and DPRK.

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7. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Itar-Tass ("NORTH KOREA CREATES NUCLEAR BOMB BY ITS OWN MEANS", None) reported that the DPRK has created a nuclear bomb only by its own means, an official at the Korean committee for peace in the Asia-Pacific region told KCNA on conditions of anonymity. "The program of the creation of nuclear weapons in North Korea is based on a powerful and independent national economy, and assumptions that we have created a nuclear bomb with foreign aid are totally false."

[\(return to top\)](#) Korean Central News Agency ("US CONGRESS RESEARCH REPORT", 2005-03-30) reported that the US-floated fiction about the DPRK's purchase of nuclear-related equipment with the fund from Hyundai is politically motivated. It is nothing but a version of the bankrupt nonsensical story invented by the US several years back to derail the inter-Korean economic cooperation and slander the historic Pyongyang meeting and the 15 June joint declaration. The US should stop such folly, clearly understanding that its lies and deception, plots and fabrication can not work on others in this world but will more saliently reveal its despicable colors as a cesspool of evils, a chieftain of tyranny. [\(return to top\)](#)

8. DPRK Counterfeiting

Kyodo News ("\$100 BILLS SUSPECTED TO BE BOGUS FOUND ON N. KOREAN SHIP", 2005-03-30)

reported that more than a hundred US \$100 bills suspected of being bogus were found on a DPRK cargo ship that made a port call at Sakaiminato port, Tottori Prefecture, earlier this month, sources familiar with the issue said Wednesday. The bills were among about 6,500 used US \$100 bills aboard the 181-ton Rimyongsu 7, a DPRK cargo vessel that arrived at the port in the city of Sakaiminato on March 23 and left Tuesday evening, the sources said.

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9. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Asia Pulse/Yonhap ("S KOREA'S PULMUONE EYEING DUMPLINGS MARKET IN N KOREA", 2005-03-30) reported that Pulmuone is eyeing the market for dumplings in the DPRK, with plans to build a plant in the city of Kaesong. Lee Kyu-suk, president of the nation's leading producer and dealer of organic agricultural products, said it will apply for an allotment at the Kaesong industrial complex. He said Pulmuone will focus on food made of beans, such as tofu.

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10. ROK on Aid to DPRK

Joong Ang Ilbo ("THE RICE IS NICE, BUT THE NORTH LIKES SACKS, TOO", None) reported that North Koreans appreciate the food aid that the ROK sends them, but they are also grateful for the durable polypropylene sacks that the rice arrives in. The sacks are used as window coverings and for insulation. In the DPRK, the sacks are used as window coverings and for insulation. Children have turned them into makeshift snow sleds.

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11. DPRK on Bird Flu

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH ORDERS SOLDIERS TO FIGHT BIRD FLU", 2005-03-30) reported that the DPRK has mobilized thousands of soldiers to combat an outbreak of bird flu that has infected poultry flocks around the capital Pyongyang, ROK officials said yesterday. "Thousands of soldiers from the Pyongyang Defense Command and 3d Army Corps are involved in the slaughter and burial of diseased fowl," a Unification Ministry official told the JoongAng Ilbo. No transmission of the disease to humans has been reported.

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12. UN on DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

The Associated Press ("UN AGRICULTURE EXPERT TRAVELS TO NORTH KOREA TO HELP TACKLE BIRD FLU OUTBREAK", 2005-03-30) reported that a UN veterinary expert has been sent to the DPRK to assess a bird flu outbreak there and offer assistance in trying to prevent the spread of the virus, the world body's agricultural agency said Wednesday. The agency said it has sent a veterinary expert along with diagnostic kits to the DPRK. It added two more bird flu experts from the PRC and Australia are expected to arrive in the coming days in the DPRK capital Pyongyang.

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13. DPRK World Cup Match

Agence France Presse ("ANGRY SCENES IN PYONGYANG AFTER WORLD CUP LOSS TO IRAN", 2005-03-30) reported that wild scenes erupted in Pyongyang on Wednesday after the DPRK lost their World Cup football qualifier to Iran, with angry fans throwing bottles and chairs at the referee and visiting team. A mob of thousands gathered outside the Kim Il-Sung stadium after the match and stopped the Iranian players from leaving as hundreds of policemen were deployed inside and outside the ground in an effort to restore order.

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14. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("S. KOREA 'DUCKING N. KOREAN EXECUTION VIDEO'", 2005-03-30) reported that the US daily Christian Science Monitor reported Tuesday a video tape of public executions in the DPRK in early March was broadcast all around the world but is being kept off the air in the ROK. The paper said this was due to indirect pressure from the ROK government and was raising fresh questions about Seoul's softly-softly approach to Pyongyang.

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15. ROK Foreign Policy

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT STRESSES COUNTRY'S BALANCING ROLE IN REGION", 2005-03-30) reported that the ROK President Roh Moo-hyun on Wednesday stressed the ROK's role as a "balancer" in the region, riven by long-running territorial disputes and the ongoing standoff over DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions. "We should take the role of a balancer to avoid recurrences of conflicts and clashes in the region and establish an order of peace and prosperity in Northeast Asia," Roh said at a policy meeting with Foreign Ministry officials.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("PRIME MINISTER SEEKS STRATEGIC INDEPENDENCE", 2005-03-30) reported that in a meeting with top Foreign Ministry officials yesterday, Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan said the time had come for the ROK to establish an independent geo-political policy that would move beyond old Cold-War prescriptions that sought to contain the PRC and DPRK. Mr. Lee's statement was endorsed by President Roh Moo-hyun. Mr. Lee told Foreign Ministry officials, "The ministry should get rid of the containment mindset against the continent." [\(return to top\)](#)

16. ROK on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Korea Times ("S. KOREA CONDEMNS JAPANESE MINISTER'S REMARK ON TOKTO", 2005-03-30) reported that Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki-moon on Wednesday expressed "deep regret" over Japanese Education Minister Nariyaki Nakayama's remark the previous day, which claimed sovereignty of the ROK-owned Tokto (Dokdo) islets, dismissing it as "anachronistic." "I cannot but doubt if he, as the minister in charge of authorizing textbooks, is concerned about the future of South Korea-Japan relations," Ban said during a weekly press briefing. "I think it deeply regrettable."

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17. Japan on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Choson Ilbo ("JAPAN REGRETS ROH'S BELATED REMARKS", 2005-03-30) reported that in a to and fro of regret between the two neighbors, Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura has criticized ROK President Roh Moo-hyun's March 25 "letter to the people" in which he declared diplomatic war on Japan. Machimura singled out a passage where Roh said Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine "spoils the sincerity of the reflection and apologies made by previous Japanese leaders." Machimura called it "extremely regretful that President Roh expressed himself in that manner after he said nothing when the two leaders exchanged frank discussions."

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18. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Kyodo News ("JAPAN MAY BEGIN EXPLORING GAS IN EAST CHINA SEA: MACHIMURA", 2005-0-30) reported that Japan may start exploring for natural gas in the East China Sea in a sign that Tokyo could suspend dialogue with the PRC on the latter's ongoing gas projects there, Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura suggested. "If the situation continues where it is only China that is conducting operations, we will have to act soon," Machimura told a session of the House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee. Machimura was apparently alluding to the possibility that the government will permit some business entities to explore gas in the sea areas in question.

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19. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("KMT LEADER IN BEIJING, AIMS TO EASE TAIWAN TENSION", 2005-03-30) reported that Beijing threw a banquet on Wednesday for a leader of Taiwan's opposition Nationalist Party, once the rulers of China, trying to soften the blow of a law sanctioning the use of force against the democratic island. Chiang Pin-kung, vice-chairman of the Nationalist Kuomintang (KMT), arrived in Beijing on the third leg of an official mainland visit. He said his aim was to ease tension created by the PRC's new anti-secession law.

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20. PRC on US Human Rights Report

Kyodo News ("CHINA SLAMS U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT AS IRRESPONSIBLE", 2005-03-30) reported that the PRC on Wednesday criticized an annual human rights report issued by the US, saying Washington should "stop using human rights as an excuse to interfere into other countries' problems." A statement issued by Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said the report issued by the US State Department on Monday "played the old tone of irresponsibly condemning the Chinese government and stigmatizing China's human rights record." "We firmly oppose it," said the statement posted on the ministry's website.

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21. EU on PRC Arms Ban

Agence France Presse ("EU ACCORD ON LIFTING ARMS EMBARGO AGAINST CHINA NOT POSSIBLE BY JUNE", 2005-03-30) reported that EU members will unlikely reach agreement on lifting their arms embargo against the PRC by the end of June as previously expected, a senior official said. "That was the goal but it is a goal that cannot be reached," said Luxembourg's junior foreign minister Nicolas Schmit. "I tell you frankly. I would not bet today that the lifting of the embargo will be decided on before the end of June," Schmit said before the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament.

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22. PRC on African Politics

Christian Science Monitor ("A RISING CHINA COUNTERS US CLOUT IN AFRICA", 2005-03-30) reported that the PRC economic juggernaut and its thirst for minerals and markets has increasingly brought it to Africa. But lately the PRC are digging on a different front, one that could complicate the Bush administration's efforts to promote democracy here: African politics. Last year, the PRC stymied US efforts to levy sanctions on Sudan, which supplies nearly 5 percent of the PRC's oil. And as Zimbabwe becomes more isolated from the West, the PRC has sent crates of T-shirts for ruling-party supporters who will vote in Thursday's parliamentary elections.

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23. PRC Dissent

Agence France Presse ("TOP CHINESE ACADEMIC FIRED FOR LEVELING CRITICISM AT GOVERNMENT", 2005-03-30) reported that a leading PRC academic said he has been sacked after writing a blistering attack on the communist party's powerful propaganda machine, which tightly controls the media industry. "I haven't seen the official letter yet, but it has already been delivered to our house," Jiao Guobiao, a journalism professor at Beijing University, told Radio Free Asia's Mandarin service. "It is being treated as a voluntary quitting of my post... It's not quite the same as being fired outright, but I don't really know what the difference is from an administrative point of view."

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24. PRC Environment

Agence France Presse ("CHINA FALLS SHORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SPENDING", 2005-03-30) reported that the PRC's spending on environmental protection will fall 30 percent short of targets for 2001-2005, state media said, despite growing problems sparked by 25 years of rapid economic growth. The PRC earmarked 700 billion yuan (85 billion dollars) to clean up badly contaminated land and water resources for the five-year period but the sum will not be met, government officials were quoted as saying by the China Daily.

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