

NAPSNET Week in Review 9 May, 2003

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNET Week in Review 9 May, 2003", NAPSNet Weekly Report, May 09, 2003,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-weekly/napsnet-week-in-review-9-may-2003/>

United States

1. US DPRK Nuclear Plant Surveillance

The US has given the ROK a satellite photograph showing smoke coming from a DPRK nuclear facility, a possible sign the communist nation has started reprocessing spent fuel rods, a ROK official said Thursday. Reprocessing the rods would be a key step toward producing nuclear weapons. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said other signs of nuclear activity, such as traces of chemicals used in reprocessing or heat signatures, had not been detected from the Yongbyon nuclear complex. He said the smoke was coming from radiation and chemical laboratories in the facility.

"US DPRK Nuclear Suspicions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"US DPRK Nuclear Satellite Photos?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"New Sign of DPRK Nuclear Activity" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, ROK)

"US DPRK Nuclear Plant Surveillance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

2. US Response to Alleged DPRK Policy Shift

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has denied the Bush administration is changing its policy on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, saying the focus remains the elimination of Pyongyang's weapons program. Powell's comments were prompted by a Monday New York Times report that says the US is shifting its DPRK policy away from blocking the production of nuclear materials to focusing on halting their export. Secretary Powell told reporters in Washington the US goal remains ending the DPRK's nuclear weapons program and other proliferation activities. He added that the US finds nuclear exports similarly unacceptable.

The US said it had not shifted its DPRK policy, discounting a report it was now more concerned with stopping Pyongyang exporting nuclear material than on halting its weapons programs. The New York Times reported that President George W. Bush discussed such an approach with Australian Prime Minister John Howard at weekend talks at his Crawford, Texas ranch. "The President said the central worry is not what they've got, but where it goes," an unnamed administration official was quoted as saying. "He's very pragmatic about it, and the reality is that we probably won't know the extent of what they are producing. So the whole focus is to keep the plutonium from going further." White House spokesman Scott McClellan stated, "Our position remains the same, that the US, as well as the international community, is concerned about North Korea possessing nuclear weapons and transferring nuclear material to others."

"Unchanged Goal on DPRK Unclear" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, ROK)

"US Response to Alleged DPRK Policy Shift" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

"US Changing Stance on DPRK Nuclear Nuke" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, ROK)

"US DPRK Nuclear Policy Shift?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

3. US DPRK Diplomatic Strategy

The Bush administration plans to adjust its policy toward the DPRK by adopting a two-track approach that would combine new talks with pressure on the DPRK by targeting its illegal drug and counterfeiting trade and possibly its missile sales, US and Asian officials said yesterday. The emerging consensus, which will be refined today at a meeting of President Bush's top foreign policy advisers, would bridge a gap that has emerged within the administration since the DPRK declared it possesses nuclear weapons at talks last month between US, DPRK and PRC representatives in the PRC. Administration officials have sought to resolve their policy differences, which pit those pushing for confrontation with the Pyongyang government against those advocating further talks, in advance of next week's visit to Washington by the ROK's new president, Roh Moo Hyun.

"US DPRK Diplomatic Strategy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

4. US PRC SARS Aid

Pursuant to President Bush's offer to President Hu to support the PRC in its fight against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), I am pleased to announce today additional assistance to the PRC to combat this outbreak. This builds on the scientific and epidemiological support we have been providing through Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) researchers working in the PRC and elsewhere since early March. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided this week \$500,000 in emergency funds to help the PRC bolster its strained public health system. The money is to be used by the Red Cross Society of the PRC to purchase protective gear and other medical consumables including thermometers and protective goggles, gowns and masks to protect against SARS. The US Embassy in Beijing will work with the PRC Red Cross Society to monitor the procurement of these supplies.

"US PRC SARS Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

5. US on Non-Proliferation Treaty Enforcement

A US representative to a preparatory meeting in advance of the 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference called on all nations to refocus on the growing need for oversight and control of nuclear material and technology. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Andrew Semmel said that although the NPT has proven durable despite enormous changes in the international security environment over the past three decades -- and has done much to forestall the spread of nuclear weapons -- in recent years "a small number of parties are abusing the Treaty by flagrantly or in some cases secretly, pursuing nuclear programs." Semmel noted that "North Korea's nuclear weapons program and the provocative actions it has taken present a grave threat to the region and a serious challenge to the global nuclear nonproliferation regime." Semmel said that the parties who have signed and adhered to the Treaty must realize what is at stake, and not be misled into thinking that the spread of nuclear weapons will be stopped by export controls, or by an inability on the part of those seeking such weapons to deal with the technological complexities of the development process.

The full transcript can be found:

"US on Non-Proliferation Treaty Enforcement" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

6. Fact Sheet on Moscow Non-Proliferation Treaty

The US Mission in Geneva has issued the following May 5 fact sheet on US policies and its actions in support of Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):

FACT SHEET

MOSCOW TREATY

-- Reductions under START Treaty {Strategic Arms Reductions) completed December 2001. Level went from 10,000 US strategic warheads to less than 6,000. -- Moscow Treaty reduces to 1,700-2,200 by December 31, 2012 -- the lowest level in decades. Senate approved March 6. -- US reductions have already begun. 50 Peacekeeper missiles to be deactivated in next two years. Two Trident missile submarines have been removed from strategic service; two more to follow. -- Warheads removed from operational service will be stored, disabled and not available for quick redeployment, or retired/dismantled. Spares are needed if a warhead is found to be unreliable/unsafe. -- Under START and Moscow Treaty, US will have eliminated or decommissioned more than three-quarters of its strategic nuclear warheads over two decades.

For the full fact sheet:

"Fact Sheet on Moscow Non-Proliferation Treaty" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

7. In Memoriam, Thomas McCarthy by Peter Hayes

Tom McCarthy died on May 8, 2003 of lung cancer. I knew Tom primarily in relation to his engagement in DPRK agriculture on the one hand, and his outrage at myopic US policy toward North Korea on the other. Tom applied his rigorous agricultural economics, his practical farming knowledge garnered from working for international agencies all over the world for decades, and his deep empathy for DPRK farmers, to bring about real change in agricultural practices and increases in food production in North Korea. He moved international agencies to innovate in North Korea. He held the DPRK strictly accountable for participating as agreed in the on-ground initiatives that he guided to fruition in more than a third of their farming cooperatives. And he challenged misguided US policies toward North Korea, often using humor to deflate idiotic bureaucracies on auto-pilot with regard to North Korea. As a result, he did more to feed hungry DPRK than any other individual on the planet. He was an almost unknown voice in public, but to insiders, he was a powerful voice and force dedicated to building peace in North Korea, one person, one farm, one step at a time. He did so as an American; but his good will, his commitment to international standards, and his basic even-handedness led DPRK to trust him in spite of the enmity between the US and North Korea. He will be missed greatly but also long remembered by everyone working for a peaceful resolution of the Korean conflict.

-- Peter Hayes, May 8, 2003

"In Memoriam, Thomas McCarthy by Peter Hayes" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Nuclear Bomb Admissions?

DPRK negotiator Li Gun admitted during three-way talks with the PRC and the US in Beijing last month that Pyongyang possessed two nuclear bombs, a Japanese newspaper reported, quoting unnamed US sources. "We already possess two nuclear bombs," Li was quoted Friday by the Sankei Shimbun as telling US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly on April 23, the first day of the three-day talks. "In order to construct further nuclear weapons, we have already begun nuclear fuel reprocessing to acquire the necessary plutonium," Li was quoted as saying. "Our country will use any means to show our nuclear weapons capability." The US officials interpreted "any means" to include transferring the bombs to third parties who would use them for terrorist ends, the paper said. It was the first time the DPRK was quoted as having specified the precise number of its nuclear weapons, the paper said.

"DPRK Nuclear Bomb Admissions?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

2. DPRK Nuclear Exportation Threats

The DPRK threatened to export its nuclear weapons, make more of them, or conduct tests during three-way talks last month in Beijing with the US, says a report. The threats were made by Pyongyang's negotiator Li Gun during an "aside session" with US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, officials familiar with the closed-door talks told the Washington Times. "This was clearly a threat," one official said.

"DPRK Nuclear Exportation Threats" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

3. DPRK Response to "Shift" in Bush DPRK Policy

The US newspaper the New York Times on April 29 carried an article criticizing the Bush administration's Korea policy. The article said that Bush's assertion about the DPRK's threat to the US is a sheer falsification of truth. It was none other than Bush who listed the DPRK as well as Iraq as part of an "axis of evil" without any clear ground and threatened the DPRK by invading Iraq in violation of international law, it noted, adding it is nothing surprising that North Korea deemed it necessary to have nukes not to threaten the US but to deter the US threat of attack. The world will be put in danger once again due to the cowboy's buffoonery of the Bush administration, it added.

"DPRK Response to "Shift" in Bush DPRK Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

When the DPRK met last month with the US over a nuclear crisis, the ROK's exclusion from the talks reminded many of the DPRK's once-favored bit of propaganda: that the ROK is a US colony. "I think Seoul is partly to blame (for its exclusion) as it had acted in the past like, in Pyongyang's words, a US colony," said 28-year-old Kim Yong-hyun, a graduate student at Seoul National University. "Pyongyang thinks Seoul will accept any deal it makes with Washington." Kim's remarks reflect widespread frustration here that crucial decisions on the Korean Peninsula have often been made by outsiders, mostly superpowers. The DPRK has exacerbated such feelings by insisting on dealing only with the US and regarding the ROK as a US puppet. ROK President Roh Moo-hyun has tried to dampen frustrations over the ROK's lack of representation in the Beijing talks. "Whether we participate or not is not important, but how our interests are realized and reflected is important," Roh said during a televised debate on the ROK's MBC TV.

"ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

5. ROK Response to DPRK Nuclear Movement

The ROK government first saw signs of increased movement at DPRK's Yeongbyeon nuclear complex at the end of April, but said that it has yet to see conclusive evidence that spent-fuel reprocessing has begun. Speaking in response to reports from the JoongAng Ilbo and The Washington Post, Yoon Tai-young, the Blue House spokesman said, "It is true that we have seen new movement, but there have been no signs of irregular activity." He added that ROK has been closely watching DPRK's nuclear plant, based on intelligence information shared with US. "The Yeongbyeon complex is known as a nuclear reprocessing facility, but there are other facilities there," said a senior Blue House official.

"ROK Response to DPRK Nuclear Movement" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, ROK)

"ROK on DPRK Nuclear Activity" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"ROK Stance on DPRK Nuclear Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

6. ROK-DPRK Diplomatic Relations

The ROK has urged the DPRK to make the first move in its stand-off with the US. ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan said that the DPRK could not expect the security guarantee and economic aid it wants from the US unless it gives up its nuclear weapons program first. "North Korea's policy makers should think whether it is acceptable to ask for compensation for violating international rules, especially after changes in the international situation following the September 11 terrorist attacks," Yoon said.

ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan said Wednesday that DPRK should think hard about its nuclear bluster. In a rare direct rebuke to DPRK, Yoon said DPRK continues to demand rewards from the international community after violating international commitments. He said DPRK's withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in particular was a challenge to "a value system" shared by 178 countries. Whether that behavior would be accepted in the changed security climate after the terror attacks on US in September 2001 is a question DPRK should ponder, he said. Speaking to the Kwanhun Club, an association of senior journalists, Yoon also repeated that ROK's participation in multilateral talks with DPRK is not as important as whether the talks make headway.

"ROK-DPRK Diplomatic Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

"ROK Stance on DPRK Unclear" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, ROK)

7. ROK-US DPRK Summit

ROK President Roh Moo-hyun will fly to the US this weekend to tackle two of his toughest hurdles: resolving the DPRK nuclear threat and reducing his country's decades-old reliance on the US military. Roh Moo-hyun's weeklong trip, which begins Sunday, comes amid heightened tensions over the DPRK's suspected development of nuclear weapons and rising calls for the US to cut its troops in the ROK. Defusing the DPRK nuclear crisis will be the key topic of the Wednesday, May 14th White House summit between President Bush and Roh. Ban Ki-moon, Roh's foreign affairs aide, said he expected a successful meeting, saying "the two leaders are of the same age and have the same pragmatic leadership style. The chemistry is right between the two."

"ROK-US DPRK Summit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

8. ROK Prime Minister's Visit to USFK

ROK Prime Minister Goh Kun and Defense Minister Cho Yung-kil will visit US 2nd Infantry Division on Friday, just days before President Roh Moo-hyun leaves for his visit to US. Goh will express ROK government's concern about the controversial plan to relocate the division, now centered in the Gyeonggi province city of Uijeongbu, south of the Han River. Goh is expected to request that discussions about the plan be postponed until the North Korean nuclear crisis is resolved. The prime minister's senior press officer, Kim Duk-bong, said Monday that Goh would meet high US military officials and convey ROK's stance that the relocation of the division should not yet be discussed.

"ROK Prime Minister's Visit to USFK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, ROK)

9. Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks

The 10th Inter-Korean Ministerial Meeting concluded in Pyongyang in the early hour of April 30 with a six-point statement. ROK and the DPRK pledged on April 30 to seek a peaceful solution of the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, according to a joint statement released by an inter-Korean meeting. "South Korea and the DPRK will discuss each other's position earnestly over the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula and continue to cooperate in resolving the nuclear standoff peacefully through a dialogue," the joint statement said. The two sides agreed to hold a unification festival around June 15 and to start building a reunion permanent center at an earlier date in Mount Geumgang according to the statement. Moreover the participation of a DPRK delegation and support group in the 2003 Summer Universiade, to be held in South Korean city of Daegu in August, will be further discussed in future, said the statement.

"Inter-Korean Ministerial Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

10. US Support of ROK's Policy toward DPRK

A senior Blue House official said Thursday that US President Bush will support ROK's reconciliation policies toward DPRK. He asked not to be quoted by name. Speaking of the joint statement to be issued after next week's meeting with President Roh Moo-hyun, the official said, "U.S. support, in some form, for our government's North Korea policy, including reconciliation with the North, will be included."

"US Support of ROK's Policy toward DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, ROK)

11. DPRK on Drug Trafficking

The DPRK has denied any involvement in a drug smuggling case in Australia. The DPRK's state news agency KCNA said the government was consistently opposed to drug smuggling and that the case was "orchestrated to do harm to [North Korea]." It was the the DPRK's first comment on the case since an official from the DPRK's ruling party was found on board a ship accused of bringing A\$80m (US\$50m) worth of heroin into Australia. Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer summoned the DPRK's ambassador to Australia and alleged that Pyongyang was involved in the incident. About 30 DPRK who were on board the ship are facing trial in Melbourne over the incident.

"DPRK on Drug Trafficking" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

12. USFK Extension of Stay in Seoul

US 8th Army has again extended the tours of duty of some soldiers in ROK, Major Holly Pierce of the Eighth US Army Public Affairs Office said Thursday. Under the order, more than 1,800 soldiers and one officer who were scheduled to leave ROK between June and August will be kept here for another three months. The first extension order was issued in February to 2,800 soldiers; those selected at that time will leave ROK this month.

"USFK Extension of Stay in Seoul" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, ROK)

13. ROK Long Term Military Plan

Cho Young-kil, minister of national defense, reported to President Roh Moo-hyun Tuesday about ROK's vision for self-defense. The plan, to be implemented over a long term, is intended to build up ROK military capabilities to replace the US troops' role. "We put our goal as beefing up military power and at the same time developing our alliance with the United States to complete the capability to deter the North Korean threat," said Gwon An-do, director of planning at the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "To take over USFK military capabilities, long-term procurement projects are necessary. We told the president that a budget increase is inevitable." The ministry reported that this year's defense budget, currently set at 2.8 percent of the gross domestic product, should be increased at least to 3 percent of the GDP, a ministry official said. The 2003 defense budget is 17.4 trillion won (\$14.5 billion). "ROK Long Term Military Plan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, ROK)

14. ROK-US Military Base Locations

ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun and his US counterpart George W. Bush will address the sensitive issue of realigning US troops in the country at next week's summit, officials said. The ROK is home to 37,000 US troops, a crucial part of the 50-year-old military alliance, to deter DPRK military threats. Ban Ki-Moon, foreign policy aide for Roh, said Friday that the ROK sought an early relocation of the main Yongsan US army base in Seoul while opposing any sudden change to 15,000 US troops with the 2nd Infantry Division near the frontline. "ROK-US Military Base Locations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

15. DPRK Asylum Seekers

Twelve DPRK who sought asylum at the ROK Embassy in Beijing arrived in Seoul on Friday, flying through Manila. The DPRK, all women aged 16 to 46, traveled through Xiamen, just opposite Taiwan on the PRC's southeastern coast, and made a brief stop in Manila before boarding a flight to the ROK. The defectors landed in Incheon airport just outside Seoul, all wearing masks to guard against SARS. They did not speak to journalists and were taken to a government facility for a debriefing. About 270 DPRK defected to the ROK in the first three months of the year, a 26 percent increase from the same period last year, according to the ROK.

"DPRK Asylum Seekers" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

16. DPRK SARS Response

Strict quarantines are imposed, flights and ferries are canceled, and aid is turned back. The DPRK is virtually sealing its borders in an effort to prevent the insidious SARS virus from seeping through and overwhelming a barely functioning health-care system. Government-run Air Koryo has told aid workers that it is suspending its twice-weekly flights between the capital, Pyongyang, and Beijing as of Tuesday. A strict quarantine has been imposed at land crossings with the PRC. And ferry service with Japan has been curtailed. The government is imposing a 10-day quarantine on visitors coming from any country that has had a single suspected case of severe acute respiratory syndrome. Diplomats and international employees are not exempt. The DPRK has yet to report a single case of SARS, and health specialists say its isolation might be one reason.

"DPRK SARS Response" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Situation

The PRC has urged further talks to help end the nuclear standoff between the US and the DPRK and Beijing is willing to work to settle the crisis, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Friday. "China is willing to promote the peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue at an early date with joint efforts of all sides," Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxin was quoted as telling Secretary of States Colin Powell in a telephone call on Friday. Li said the meeting in Beijing last month between North Korea and the US was a good start and said "the process should continue," Xinhua said.

"PRC on DPRK Nuclear Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

2. PRC-ROK Relations

PRC President Hu Jintao and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun discussed bilateral relations, and the nuclear issue of the DPRK in a phone conversation on April 30. Roh said that ROK is ready to make concerted efforts with Beijing to further enhance bilateral co-operation, according to PRC's foreign ministry. He expressed his appreciation of PRC's efforts to host the Beijing talks on the Korean nuclear issue late last month. "PRC-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

3. PRC's Stance on DPRK Nuke Issue

PRC Foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao on April 29 reaffirmed PRC's pledge to contribute to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, despite tensions over the nuclear issue. "China's goal is to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula," Liu told a regular media briefing in Beijing. The three sides agreed to keep in touch through diplomatic channels regarding the talks process. All the parties need time to study the others' positions on the issue, said Liu. Liu on April 29 said that, as far as he knows, Pyongyang has never admitted to having nuclear weapons. PRC has stressed that the Korean Peninsula should be free from nuclear weapons and that DPRK's security concerns should also be taken into consideration, said the report.

"PRC's Stance on DPRK Nuke Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

4. PRC-Japan Ties

PRC President Hu Jintao in Beijing on April 29 said that PRC and Japan should push forward their bilateral relations in a healthy and stable manner in the new century. Hu, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, made the comment in a meeting with Takako Doi, leader of the Social Democratic Party of Japan, at the Great Hall of the People.

"PRC-Japan Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

5. PRC Submarine Disaster

The PRC submarine accident that the government said killed 70 crew members occurred on April 16, 2003, more than two weeks before it was officially disclosed, a PRC naval officer has been reported as saying. The catastrophe may have resulted from a malfunction in the craft's diesel engines that sucked the oxygen from the interior during a descent, quickly killing those aboard, according to the officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity. The disaster was first disclosed to the public by state news media on Friday night with a brief announcement that 70 crew members had died aboard submarine No. 361, a non-nuclear vessel, because of a "mechanical failure" while it was on a training mission in the Yellow Sea.

PRC's leaders have taken the rare step of publicly consoling the families of those who died in a submarine accident last week. President Hu Jintao, and his predecessor and chief of the Central Military Commission, Jiang Zemin, were shown on state television in an emotional meeting with six relatives of the victims. Seventy submariners died off China's coast in the accident, which the country's official news agency initially attributed to "mechanical failure." But a state-owned newspaper said on Tuesday that the PRC military was investigating human error as a possible cause. It was the first fatal submarine accident that the PRC has publicly acknowledged, as well as one of its worst known military disasters.

"PRC Submarine Victims" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

"PRC Submarine Disaster" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

6. SARS Round-Up

The death rate from severe acute respiratory syndrome has increased sharply since the epidemic began, and the new lung infection is now killing about 15 percent of victims overall, the World Health Organization concluded yesterday. It remains unclear whether the death rate is increasing as the disease spreads, or whether the true death rate is simply emerging as more data become available. In either case, the relatively high death rate underscores the seriousness of the threat, WHO said.

The PRC's rural health care system is totally incapable of dealing with a major SARS outbreak in the countryside, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has acknowledged. In a frank assessment of the country's rural health care system, he said facilities are weak, technical capabilities inadequate and epidemic surveillance systems unsound. But the warning may have come too late. Wen is finally saying in public what many health care specialists have been saying in private for weeks. The SARS outbreak now engulfing Beijing is bad, but if it spreads to the PRC's vast and poor rural hinterland it will be much worse.

The PRC has punished more than 120 officials in the past month for covering up the extent of the SARS outbreak or failing to prevent the spread of the flu-like virus. Officials in 15 provinces and major cities were sacked, suspended, warned or demoted for deserting their work, delaying reporting or covering up the number of infections and deaths. The most senior officials were Health Minister Zhang Wenkang and Beijing Mayor Meng Xuenong.

PRC's State Council, has urged all government officials to minimize economic losses due to the outbreak of SARS, state media said. Senior leaders attending a meeting chaired by Premier Wen Jiabao Wednesday made the appeal to local level governments but added they should not slacken efforts to tackle the disease, the China Daily said Thursday. The council also put forward a package of measures to counter economic damage to the economy from SARS.

The United Nations' World Health Organization dispatched its first official delegation to Taiwan in more than 30 years. The two-person team of epidemiologists arrived in this capital Monday, as Taiwan was becoming the latest focus of worldwide concern about the spread of the disease. The island now has 120 cases of severe acute respiratory syndrome and has had 11 deaths. Health officials believe the disease has not yet reached its peak here, as it apparently has in Hong Kong and Vietnam.

Farmers and villagers in remote areas of China rioted and destroyed SARS quarantine centers in at least two parts of the country in an effort to prevent the disease from spreading to their areas, local officials said. More than 100 farmers on Saturday and Sunday attacked a government office in Yuhuan county, in eastern Zhejiang province, and beat up officials, enraged that a SARS quarantine center would be set up in their community, a local police official named Weng stated.

"SARS Death Rate Increase" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"SARS Officials Dismissal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"PRC SARS Economic Impact" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"SARS WHO Taiwan Recognition" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

"PRC SARS Struggle" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

"PRC SARS Quarantine" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, US)

"PRC SARS Status" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

"PRC WHO SARS Mission" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

"PRC SARS Riots" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

7. PRC's Security Policy

The PRC has reiterated its opposition to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction at the first review conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention being held in Hague.

Addressing the conference on April 28, PRC's permanent representative to the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons Zhu Zushou said that as a victim of chemical weapons in the past, PRC has always supported the objectives of the Convention. He also urged countries to co-operate more on the issue.

"PRC's Security Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

8. PRC G8 Summit Attendance

The PRC has said it will attend the G8 summit of leaders in France next month. French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin had invited PRC President Hu Jintao during a visit to Beijing in April. The French Government has said Hu would not attend the main meetings of the economic summit but would meet leaders of the club of the world's richest nations and Russia on the sidelines of the conference. "China supports France's initiative and is making active preparations to attend this meeting," said foreign ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue. "We believe this meeting is necessary at this moment and very important."

"PRC International Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

"PRC G8 Summit Attendance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

9. FBI PRC Espionage

A former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent has been indicted on charges of gross negligence and wire fraud for allegedly allowing his mistress access to secrets that she handed over to the PRC. A grand jury indictment returned in Los Angeles charges James Smith over his role in the case of alleged Chinese double agent Katrina Leung. The indictment against Smith charges him with two counts of negligence, alleging that he improperly removed two classified documents from FBI offices in Los Angeles and allowed Leung access to them. Four counts of wire fraud allege that he deprived the US of his honest services by failing to disclose an improper relationship with Leung, failing to describe the full extent of her contacts with the PRC, and mishandling classified information. The six counts in the indictment carry a maximum penalty of 40 years in prison.

"PRC-US Double Agent Case" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, US)

"FBI PRC Espionage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"PRC-US Espionage Love Case" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

Japan

1. PRC-Japan St. Petersburg Summit

The leaders of Japan and the PRC are aiming to hold a summit meeting in St. Petersburg at the end of this month, Japanese media said on Wednesday, flagging a move that could help improve relations between the Asian neighbors. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and PRC President Hu Jintao are likely to meet on the sidelines of festivities marking the 300th anniversary of the Russian city to be attended by world leaders, public broadcaster NHK said. Koizumi is due to be in the city on May 30 and 31.

"PRC-Japan St. Petersburg Summit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

"Japan-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

2. Japan's Role in Iraq War

The Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) indirectly fueled the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk during the Iraq war, a high-ranking US officer said Tuesday after the vessel returned here to its forward-deployed port. Rear Adm. Matthew Moffit, commander of the US Navy's Carrier Group 5, said the task force centered on the 83,960-ton Kitty Hawk received 3,000 kiloliters of fuel during its mission to the Persian Gulf during the war. If that is the case, the MSDF may have violated a law limiting refueling activities to vessels involved in the war against terrorism in the wake of the Sept. 11 attack on the US. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a regular afternoon news conference that the government would investigate whether the indirect fueling activities had indeed taken place, stating that there was a "strict promise with Japan" that naturally should have been kept. A senior Defense Agency official said, however, "Refueling operations are based on the antiterrorism law. We never provided fuel to ships participating in the war in Iraq."

"Japan's Role in Iraq War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, Japan)

3. Hiroshima Mayor on Iraq War

Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba denounced last Friday the use of depleted uranium weapons in Iraq by the US military and said the US government must prove the country was hiding weapons of mass destruction prior to its invasion. "People in Hiroshima and the world over have wished for an end to the military action (in Iraq), but it is deeply regretful that (the United States) used depleted uranium weapons and Iraqi citizens suffered greatly," Akiba said in a statement. "From here on, the US needs to fulfill its duty to reveal to the international community the existence of the weapons of mass destruction and dispose of them," he said. "The US attack on Iraq, ignoring the international community, cannot be tolerated."

"Hiroshima Mayor on Iraq War" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, JAPAN)

4. Japan on DPRK Diplomacy

The chief of Japan's Defense Agency called for a tougher approach to North the DPRK on Wednesday, vowing that his nation would not be "blackmailed" by the DPRK. The comments by Shigeru Ishiba drew enthusiastic applause from thousands of people at an annual rally for Japanese citizens abducted by the DPRK. "We won't be threatened by terrorism. We won't be blackmailed," Ishiba said. Ishiba has urged Japan to strengthen its defense, pointing to the DPRK's suspected nuclear weapons program and development of long-range missiles. Ishiba's remarks drew loud applause from the 5,500 people who packed a conference hall to hear him speak. It was the largest gathering since the annual rallies began in 1999, and thousands of people, who stood in line for hours, were turned away at the door, organizers said.

"Japan on DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

5. Japan's Missile Defense Debates

Japan's Defense Agency is to consider revising its plans and clear the way for a new missile defense system, as Japanese media reported on May 4. It reported that the nuclear issue of the DPRK has led officials to consider reworking the details of the plans. The agency aims to seek funds for a US-made missile defense system as part of its overall budget proposal for fiscal 2004, which starts next April. To do so, the agency hopes to revise its National Defense Program Outline as early as the end of this year, Kyodo quoted sources as saying.

Japanese Defense Agency may simplify the procedures under which the prime minister can order countermeasures in the event of a ballistic missile attack on Japan. Under the plan, the prime minister would be able to authorize countermeasures on the basis of Cabinet approval alone, sources said. The Diet would then be asked to endorse a given maneuver after it is carried out. The move is viewed as one potential modification of Japan's legal framework in preparation for the introduction of a missile defense system, observers said. Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba has stated it would probably take a Nodong missile launched from the DPRK seven or eight minutes to hit a Japanese target. It would thus be impossible for the prime minister to act quickly and effectively under the current legal framework, agency sources said.

"Japan Anti-Ballistic Missile Measures" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 6, JAPAN)

"Japan's Missile Defense Debates" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

6. Japan Constitution Revision

Japan should become a nation headed by the Emperor and armed with an army, navy and air force that can use force on an international stage, according to a report on a Constitution revising plan compiled by a ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) panel. The radical report, a copy of which was obtained by the Mainichi, also proposes to give the Japanese prime minister powers to invoke a national emergency order, which is reminiscent of martial law under the old Imperial Constitution. The report compiled by the LDP's Research Commission on the Constitution listed 47 proposals to revise Japan's war-renouncing Constitution. It states that the "protection of public properties" and the "defense of the nation" are duties of all Japanese people. Although advocating the reinstatement of the Emperor as the head of state, the report was at pains to emphasize that sovereign power resides with the people. The LDP Research Council on the Constitution intends to draw up a revision draft before the end of the year but the nationalistic elements of the proposal are certain to draw criticism from within the governing party.

"Japan Constitution Revision" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, JAPAN)

7. Japan Military Emergency Legislation

Two bills on military emergency proposed by the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) will be presented to a Lower House special committee on Tuesday. One bill is for a basic law to deal with emergencies, while the other is an amendment to a bill already proposed by the government to deal with a military attack on Japan. Although officials of the government have made clear their desire to win passage of their package of three bills dealing with emergency situations in the current Diet session, there remains doubt as to the extent to which the coalition will compromise on the proposals by the DPJ. The DPJ basic law proposal defines as emergencies not only military attacks and other war situations, but also natural disasters and terrorist attacks. Unlike the government proposal, the DPJ bill spells out provisions to protect the basic rights of citizens during such emergencies.

"Japan Military Emergency Legislation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, JAPAN)

8. Japan Personal Information Bill

The House of Representatives on Tuesday passed a package of controversial bills to protect personal information, amid criticism that the legislation could seriously hamper the freedom of the press. The bills were immediately sent to the House of Councilors, where a special committee is expected to be formed to deliberate the legislation. An earlier version of the legislation met with stiff opposition in the previous Diet session and was revised. The government-sponsored bills are designed to clamp down on the collection and use of private data held at government bodies and private-sector corporations. The restrictions would not apply to such entities as media companies in the "reporting" business, academic researchers, religious groups and political groups, as well as individual professional writers.

"Japan Personal Information Bill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, Japan)

9. Japan Domestic Economy

The Japanese government's top economic panel on Thursday began considering emergency measures to lift the stock market from near 20-year lows, including calls on the state postal authority and central bank to buy more shares. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's administration has been searching for ways to halt a protracted stock slide, which has left banks and life insurers - among the market's biggest investors - with heavy losses. The panel was examining raising the investment limit for a public stock-buying fund from 2 trillion yen (\$17.1 billion), and temporarily halting planned public sales of stakes in Japan Tobacco Inc. and Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corp. Other measures under consideration would encourage companies to buy back their own shares, lower corporate tax rates, delay a cap on banks' equity investments and revamp public pension fund rules.

On April 22nd, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) selected five regions in Japan that are making special efforts to attract foreign direct investment. As part of this effort, information on the investment conditions in these five areas will be publicized by the Japan External Trade Organization, better known as JETRO. This follows Prime Minister Koizumi's January 2003 speech where he outlined the government's determination to double the cumulative amount of foreign investment in Japan in five years. In March 2003, the Japan Investment Council, chaired by the prime minister, decided on specific measures to achieve this goal.

"Japan Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 8, US)

"Japan Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, US)

10. Japan-Russia Relations

The governments of Japan and Russia have agreed to start cleaning up 41 retired Russian nuclear submarines in the Russian far east this summer, a news report said on May 4. The two nations reached a basic agreement to begin dismantling nuclear elements from the subs, the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper said. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Russian President Vladimir Putin are expected to announce their agreement at the G8 summit in Evian, France. The joint efforts of the two nations to clean up retired Russian nuclear submarines date back to 1993, when spent nuclear fuel leaked from a deteriorated Russian submarine in the Sea of Japan.

"Japan-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 5, PRC)

11. Japan Left Extremist Return

Kozo Okamoto, one of three Japanese Red Army members who carried out a 1972 machinegun and grenade massacre at Tel Aviv's airport, has told Kyodo News that he now wants to return home from Lebanon, where he has asylum. "I want to return to Japan as soon as possible," the 55-year-old Okamoto said during interviews conducted in Beirut between March 21 and 23. "I want to know how my old friends are doing there and want to return to college again to study biology." The Japanese government continues to seek Okamoto's extradition. But Okamoto said, "I have finished my prison term in Israel, so it is not fair for the Japanese government to again put me on trial."

"Japan Left Extremist Return" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, Japan)

12. Koizumi Middle East Tour

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Wednesday he is planning to visit Egypt and Saudi Arabia later this month, after traveling to the US to meet with President George W. Bush. "Of course, we will discuss Iraqi reconstruction and bilateral relations," Koizumi told reporters when asked about the trip. "Diplomacy with the Arab world is important," he said.

"Koizumi Middle East Tour" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 9, Japan)

13. Japan Nuclear Reactor Restart

Tokyo's main power company has restarted one of its 17 nuclear reactors which were closed down last month for safety checks. Tokyo Electric Power Company's (Tepco) No 6 reactor at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant in Niigata prefecture will slowly raise its output over the next few days, company spokesman Hidenori Yatobo said. Niigata Governor, Ikuo Hirayama, who was involved in the decision to restart the reactor, said "the results of the checks revealed no major problems." Tepco was ordered to shut down its nuclear facilities for a full safety inspection after admitting last year it had covered up maintenance problems and obstructed government inspections.

"Japan Nuclear Reactor Restart" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 7, US)

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