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I. Napsnet

1. US-DPRK Relations

Korea Times (Kim Young-jin, "US CALLS ON NK TO HALT PROVOCATIONS", Washington, 2010/05/09) reported that the United States Friday urged the DPRK to curb its provocative behavior and live up to prior promises if it wants to resume the six-party talks on its denuclearization. U.S. State Department spokesman Phillip Crowley said, "If Kim Jong-il wants to create favorable conditions for six-party talks, he can do exactly what we have outlined for months and years ? meet its international obligations, pursue the commitments that it made in the joint communique in 2005, cease provocative actions that destabilize the region," Crowley told reporters. "We'll be guided by those actions."

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2. Sinking of ROK Naval Vessel

Associated Press (Sangwon Yoon, "SOUTH KOREA CONFIRMS RDX FOUND IN SHIP WRECKAGE", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that ROK Defense Minister Kim Tae-young confirmed Monday that traces of an explosive chemical substance used to make torpedoes were found in the wreckage of the Cheonan. "It's true that RDX, a chemical substance used in making torpedoes, has been detected," he told reporters. "The possibility of a torpedo (attack) has increased, but it's too early to say anything." The explosive material was detected on the ship's smokestack and in samples of sand from the site, said joint investigation team spokesman Rear Admiral Moon Byung-ok. "Mines use RDX as well as torpedoes so we need to investigate further to determine which was responsible," he said. The multinational investigation team is analyzing aluminum pieces salvaged from the wreckage to determine whether they are a part of the ship or a torpedo, Kim said. "It is not easy to tie the debris to weapons like torpedoes because information on other countries' weapons systems is not readily available," he said.

Korea Herald (Song Sang-ho, "'EXPLOSIVE FROM WRECKAGE USED IN SOCIALIST NATIONS'", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that ROK Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said Sunday that the explosive substance found from the wreckage of the Cheonan is used in socialist states. "Multiple socialist states, including the former Soviet Union, had used RDX since the World War II. It is currently commonly used in militaries and construction sites in all countries," Kim said. "Controversy sparked by groundless speculations could have a negative influence on our moves to deal with the incident after the investigation result comes out. This is a matter that should be approached based on objective facts," Kim said.

Hankyoreh ("INVESTIGATION TEAM FACES DILEMMA WITH EXPLOSIVE TRACES DISCOVERED ON CHEONAN", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that a military official said Sunday that the seas where the Cheonan went down are in the same direction of the Marine Corps firing ground on Baengnyeong Island. As a result, the possibility has been raised in some quarters that aluminum fragments and explosives that fell during Marine Corps artillery training could create confusion in the investigation team's analysis. In response, a military official said that because the RDX found on the Cheonan is not found in artillery shells, and the aluminum fuse used in shells falls intact in the size of a fist, the aluminum fragments discovered on the Cheonan are different. He added that the Cheonan sank 2km out from Baengnyeong Island, while artillery fired 10-20km out. Another difficulty in uncovering the cause is the technical limitation that makes it impossible to determine a torpedo's model or nation of origin from analysis of RDX elements alone. A military official said RDX was first created in Germany and produced full-scale by the U.S., but it is now used universally across the world, and it is limited in determining nation of manufacture.

Chosun Ilbo ("CHEONAN EVIDENCE 'POINTS TO N.KOREAN SPY AGENCY'", Seoul, 2010/05/07) reported that circumstantial evidence shows that the DPRK's Reconnaissance Bureau, the agency in charge of espionage operations against the ROK, masterminded the sinking of the Cheonan, government sources claimed Thursday. A government source on Thursday said, "South Korean and U.S. intelligence agencies have tried to gather circumstantial evidence by tracing back various kinds of information and intelligence about the possibility of North Korea's involvement. They've so far obtained about three decisive pieces of circumstantial evidence." The source said while the media have raised the possibility that the Reconnaissance Bureau was involved, "my understanding is that we've now found out which specific department of the North's bureau was involved."

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3. ROK Response to Naval Ship Sinking

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "SEOUL REVIEWING OPTIONS AGAINST N. KOREA", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that slashing inter-Korean trade and reviving anti-DPRK propaganda campaigns in the Demilitarized Zone appeared to be part of the ROK's measures for retaliating for the sinking of the Cheonan. In addition, the government also is reportedly considering banning DPRK Korean ships from passing through the Jeju Strait. These measures, however, fall short of military action and are being considered because they would impact the DPRK without causing too much trouble for Seoul.

Yonhap ("SEOUL PLANS TO BRIEF CHINA, RUSSIA ON CHEONAN", Seoul, 2010/05/08) reported that ROK government officials said Saturday that the government will provide a briefing to the PRC and Russia prior to making a public announcement on the outcome of the investigation into the sinking of the Cheonan. To persuade the PRC, the ROK plans to provide "scientific and objective evidence" to the PRC and Russian sides.

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4. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo (Yoo Jee-ho, Kang Chan-ho, "SEOUL CONSIDERS REDUCING IMPORTS FROM PYONGYANG", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that an ROK Unification Ministry official said Sunday

that if the investigation identifies the DPRK as the culprit behind the Cheonan disaster, Seoul will consider reducing the volume of inter-Korean trade. "We will in particular target goods whose export may feed the North Korean military," the official said on the condition of anonymity.

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5. Sino-ROK Relations

JoongAng Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, Seo Seung-wook, "BLUE HOUSE DENIES RIFT WITH BEIJING", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that Kim Sung-hwan, senior presidential secretary for foreign affairs and national security, said that the PRC briefed the ROK Friday morning on the visit of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. "The Chinese government gave a brief about Kim's trip to the South Korean government around 8 a.m., Beijing time," said Kim. "China has done so because it highly values its relationship with South Korea." According to a Blue House source, the PRC gave the briefing to ROK Ambassador Yu Woo-ik.

Korea Times ("NK TOLD CHINA IT HAS NO RELATION WITH CHEONAN", Seoul, 2010/05/08) reported that during Kim Jong-il's visit to the PRC, the DPRK said it has no relation to the sinking of the Cheonan, JoongAng Ilbo said Saturday, citing a ranking government official. The remark was part of the debriefing the PRC made to ROK Ambassador Yu woo-ik Friday morning, it said. The official added: "The Chinese side, however, didn't explain to us whether the statement was made directly from Kim Jong-il or from another North Korean official."

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6. Sino-DPRK Economic Relations

Hankyoreh ("N.KOREA AND CHINA AGREE TO STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC TIES", Seoul, 2010/05/08) reported that during a meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il on Thursday, PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao said, "China will support North Korea's economic development and improvement in its public welfare in the future, and we hope to share with North Korea China's experience with reform, openness and construction." Wen also said, "There is great potential for Chinese-North Korean economic cooperation, and I hope that through joint effort and cooperation, both parties work actively at collaborative projects and enrich the livelihoods of the people of both countries by speeding up construction of infrastructure in the border region to find new areas and methods for collaboration." In response to this, Kim said, "North Korea and China's continuous strengthening of cooperation in areas such as economic trade, agriculture, science and technology has great significance for the development of friendly relations between the two countries."

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7. DPRK Leadership

Korea Times ("KIM'S 'FIRST LADY' ACCOMPANIED CHINA VISIT", Seoul, 2010/05/08) reported that a woman believed to be DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's wife Kim Ok accompanied Kim's trip to the PRC, Hankook Ilbo newspaper said Saturday, citing PRC state television CCTV's footage of Kim's visit. The woman, the Chinese media didn't name, yet clearly made her visible by participating in a banquet on Wednesday night, hosted by PRC President Hu Jintao, Kim's later meeting with Premier Wen Jiabao,

and was also present during Kim's inspection of a high-tech research center in Beijing, it said.

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8. ROK Security

Dong-A Ilbo ("COMMISSION FOR NAT'L SECURITY REVIEW FORMED", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak set up a Commission for National Security Review on Sunday. The ad hoc task force is led by Lee Sang-woo, chairman of a defense reform committee, and will operate for two to three months. Presidential spokeswoman Kim Eun-hye said, "Taking the opportunity of the Cheonan sinking, the government will review our sense of national security, overhaul national security preparedness, and present solutions through a reexamination of the practicability of Defense Reform 2020." The commission will also reassess an "existing threat," referring to the DPRK, rearrange plans to reinforce military capabilities, and review revival of the concept of the DPRK as the country's "main enemy."

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9. ROK Politics

JoongAng Ilbo (Kim Mi-ju, Lee Chul-jae, "PROBE INTO ROH AIDE'S REMARK ON CHEONAN", Seoul, 2010/05/08) reported that Seoul's Central District Prosecutors' Office on Friday launched a probe into Park Sun-won, former President Roh Moo-hyun's secretary for national security, on charges of spreading false information about the Cheonan. The investigation follows a complaint filed with the prosecution by Defense Minister Kim Tae-young, who accused Park of defaming the Defense Ministry by spreading lies. In an interview with MBC radio's current affairs program last month, Park asserted that the Lee Myung-bak administration was concealing information about the sinking. "It's hard to say that the U.S. government has some information [about the Cheonan] that the Korean government doesn't have, but one sure thing is that the Korean government has information that wasn't shared with the public, and the U.S. government has it," Park said in the radio interview.

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10. US-ROK Military Alliance

Korea Herald (Shin Hae-in, "ALLIES EXPECTED TO REAFFIRM CURRENT U.S. TROOP LEVELS", Seoul, 2010/05/09) reported that the ROK and the United States are considering putting in writing their commitment to maintain the current level of U.S. soldiers in the ROK, a Seoul official said Saturday. "The two governments plan to write down on their defense guidelines that the current level of troops will be maintained to fight off the ongoing concerns," a high-ranking Seoul official said. The guidelines will likely be adopted at the annual Security Consultative Meeting, a gathering of top defense officials from the two longstanding allies, slated for October in Washington, the official added.

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11. ROK-Japan Historical Disputes

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun, "KOREA, JAPAN INTELLECTUALS DECLARE TOKYO'S 1910 ANNEXATION PACT INVALID", Seoul, 2010/05/10) reported that a hundred intellectuals each from the ROK and Japan called the 1910 annexation treaty that put Korea under Japan's colonial rule null and void, urging for a similar joint statement by Seoul and Tokyo. "The annexation of Korea was literally an imperialist conduct that took place by militarily suppressing the protests of everyone from the emperor of the Greater Korean Empire to ordinary Koreans," the three-page statement read. "It was an unjust and wrongful act."

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12. USFJ Base Relocation

Asahi Shimbun ("THOUSANDS RALLY IN KAGOSHIMA", Kagoshima, 2010/05/10) reported that about 4,000 people on Saturday protested a government plan to relocate some U.S. troops and helicopters from the Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to Tokunoshima island in Kagoshima Prefecture. Kagoshima Governor Yuichiro Ito and mayors of three towns on Tokunoshima took part in the protest rally. "The prefectural government will maintain its strong opposition to the relocation plan," Ito told the crowd.

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "JAPAN PM MEETS CABINET TO DISCUSS US MARINE BASE", Tokyo, 2010/05/10) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has approved a draft proposal on the relocation of Futenma, reports said Monday. Hatoyama met with his top advisers to discuss the draft ahead of working-level talks with the US on the relocation that are scheduled to be held Wednesday in Washington.

Kyodo ("HATOYAMA GIVES UP ON SETTLING FUTEMNA ISSUE BY MAY 31: SOURCES", Tokyo, 2010/05/10) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has likely given up on settling the issue of the relocation of a U.S. Marine base in Okinawa Prefecture by his self-imposed May 31 deadline amid fierce opposition from local residents, government sources said Monday. He will instead focus on negotiations with the United States to make a breakthrough on the issue, the sources said.

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13. Japanese Politics

Yomiuri Shimbun ("LDP MEMBERS MAY HAVE FALLEN BELOW 1 MILLION AT END OF 2009", Tokyo, 2010/05/08) reported that membership in the Liberal Democratic Party as of the end of 2009 most likely dropped below 1 million for the first time since 1977, when membership records were first computerized, LDP sources said. The LDP recognizes people who pay membership fees at the end of the year as its party members. In 1991, membership numbers reached 5.47 million, before falling to the 2 million-3 million level for a number of years.

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14. Japanese Nuclear Power

Asahi Shimbun ("MONJU REACTOR REACHES CRITICALITY", Tsuruga, 2010/05/10) reported that the Monju fast-breeder reactor reached criticality on Saturday. The Japan Atomic Energy Agency plans to operate the reactor at low-level output for about 10 weeks while monitoring control rods and changes in temperature in the reactor core. Electricity generation is to begin next spring. Between Thursday night and Friday morning, malfunctions caused problems with radioactivity leakage detectors. However, the agency did not announce the glitches until around noon Friday.

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15. Sino-US Relations

Salt Lake Tribune ("HUNTSMAN LOOKS FOR REBOUND IN U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS", 2010/05/08) reported that US Ambassador to the PRC Jon Huntsman Jr. said he sees the relationship turning and expects marked improvement in the coming months. There have always been "peaks and valleys" in the relationship, Huntsman said, and "we have seen some rough patches" in recent months because of an unexpected and unprecedented confluence of issues. "We trampled on a couple of China's core interests," he said. Having all of them arrive on your doorstep within such a close sequence of one another, it provides for a difficult operating environment, and China responded a little more vociferously than they would have otherwise," Huntsman said.

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16. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post (Howard Schneider, "TAIWAN'S MA YING-JEOU SAYS MEETING WITH CHINESE PRESIDENT WOULD BE 'PREMATURE'", Taipei, 2010/05/08) reported that Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou said Friday it is "premature" to consider a meeting between the leaders of Taiwan and the PRC. "There's a long way to go before the two sides can find something in common politically," said Ma. Ma said that while he did not "exclude the possibility" of meeting the head of China's government in the future, the focus should be on maintaining the progress being made on trade, travel and government-to-government cooperation. The two sides, he said, have reached a workable "status quo," with the PRC setting aside vocal demands for unification, Taiwan dampening assertions of independence and each looking to keep the peace.

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17. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S NEW XINJIANG BOSS VOWS CRACKDOWN", Beijing, 2010/05/10) reported that Zhang Chunxian, the new head of Xinjiang, has pledged a renewed crackdown on separatist elements. "We must clearly recognise the serious and extremely complex nature of the struggle between separatism and anti-separatism," the Xinjiang Daily quoted Zhang as saying in remarks to the region's armed police on Saturday. "Maintaining stability must come before all else ... we must strike hard at all the separatist and destructive activities brought on by the three forces of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism ."

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18. PRC Human Rights

Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "2 CHINA RIGHTS LAWYERS SLAPPED WITH LIFETIME BAN", Beijing, 2010/05/08) reported that two Chinese lawyers who represented a member of the Falun Gong have been banned for life from practicing law. Tang Jitian and Liu Wei said during separate telephone interviews that Beijing judicial authorities informed them Friday that they had lost their credentials. The ruling is permanent, but both plan to appeal. "There are some judicial authorities who are very conservative and quite obstinate," Tang said. "Perhaps in making this ruling, they are trying to send a warning to other lawyers to make them afraid of also ending up like this."

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