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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. US, Japan on DPRK Rocket Launch

Yomiuri Shimbun (Satoshi Ogawa, "JAPAN, U.S. OUT OF STEP ON DPRK", Washington, 2009/05/08) reported that Masahisa Sato, a House of Councillors member of the Liberal Democratic Party, conveyed to a U.S. Defense Department official in charge of East Asian affairs a sense of unease prevalent among Japanese about U.S. policies regarding the DPRK missile program during his visit to Washington on April 24. "Soon after North Korea launched a ballistic missile, voters [in my constituency] would often tell me they doubted the United States really would protect us," he said. "Officials [of the two nations] recognize we have close cooperation and communication," Sato told the U.S. official. "But it's impossible to promote [bilateral] policies without first gaining the understanding of the public."

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2. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S.KOREA, IAEA TO DISCUSS N.KOREA, OTHER PENDING ISSUES", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that Olli Heinonen, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s deputy director general for safeguards, will meet Vice Foreign Minister Shin Kak-soo, top nuclear negotiator Wi Sung-lac, and Oh Joon, deputy foreign minister for international organizations, global issues and treaties later this week to discuss pending issues including the DPRK nuclear crisis, the ROK foreign ministry said Monday.

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3. DPRK Nuclear Program

Joongang Ilbo ("TALKS WITH NORTH REMAIN POSSIBLE: U.S. ANALYST", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that Washington has grown more disillusioned about the viability of the six-party nuclear disarmament talks but is still willing to negotiate with the DPRK over its nuclear issues, said Bruce Klingner of the Heritage Foundation. “There is a growing acknowledgement and acceptance that the six-party talks won’t work,” Klingner said in an interview Thursday. “There were unrealistically high expectations in January [in the United States]. I think there are dashed hopes.”

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4. US-DPRK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH BLASTS U.S. FOR 'HOSTILE' POLICY, REJECTS TALKS", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that the DPRK said Friday it is not interested in talking to the “hostile” United States and that it will continue to strengthen its nuclear deterrent. “The study of the policy pursued by the [Barack] Obama administration for the past 100 days since its emergence made it clear that the hostile U.S. policy toward the DPRK remains unchanged,” an unnamed DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Korean Central News Agency. “There is nothing to be gained by sitting down together with a party that continues to view us with hostility,” the spokesman added. “The DPRK will bolster its nuclear deterrent as it has already clarified.” He said that the DPRK is not seeking attention but was engaged in trying to “defend the security of the country and the sovereignty of the nation.”

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5. ROK on US-DPRK Relations

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "US EVALUATION OF NK POLICY PROPOSED", 2009/05/08) reported that Rep. Park Geun-hye, former chairwoman of the governing Grand National Party (GNP), called on US President Barack Obama to make an interim evaluation of previous approaches to the DPRK by U.S. governments in order to determine what went wrong and learn any lessons. "The North's nuclear program must be completely eliminated and under no circumstances should we recognize North Korea as a nuclear state,'' she emphasized.

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6. DPRK Military Maneuvers

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "N. KOREA INCREASES MILITARY TRAININGS ON WESTERN BORDER", Seoul, 2009/05/08) reported that the DPRK has bolstered its live artillery fire exercises and fighter jet training near the western sea border with the ROK since it declared an ``all-out confrontational posture'' against the ROK in January, a report said Friday. ``The North appears to have doubled its live-fire artillery training exercise near the North Korean western coastline from the same period a year earlier,'' a Marine official was quoted by Yonhap News agency as saying, adding that gun positions have frequently been seen. The DPRK army is deploying about eight 27-kilometer-range 130mm guns and eight other 76.2mm artillery units with a range of 12 kilometers on islands located just north of the NLL, according to Marine officials.

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7. DPRK Internal Situation

The National (Sunny Lee, "POVERTY DRIVES NORTH KOREAN WOMEN TO THE STREETS", Beijing, 2009/05/10) reported that the testimonials of DPRK defectors confirm that the dire state of the country’s economy is driving more women into prostitution, most of them young girls from poor families or widows. When a husband dies, the widow receives only between 40 per cent and 60 per cent of the state-rationed food she would have received when her husband was alive. This, among other reasons, leads some to seek other means of livelihood, including prostitution.

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8. DPRK Food Security

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA'S KIM URGES 'TURNING POINT' ON FOOD", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has called for a "decisive turning-point" this year in ending the country's long-running food shortage , the Rodong Sinmun said Monday. The article described solving the problem as the nation's most pressing task. Kim demanded an all-out campaign this year "to bring about a renovation in cereal production and to make a decisive turning-point in solving the food problem," it said.

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9. DPRK Leadership

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN LEADER VISITS INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES", Seoul, 2009/05/10) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il paid a visit to industrial facilities in the country's northwest, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Saturday. Kim was accompanied by Workers' Party officials, including Jang Song-thaek, a department director of the party and his brother-in-law. The facilities, Huichon Precision Machinery Plant and Hichon General Machine-tool Plant, lie in the city of Huichon, Jagang Province, bordering the PRC.

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10. DPRK Refugees

Yonhap ("U.N. OFFICIAL TO VISIT RESETTLEMENT CENTER", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that Erika Feller, U.N. assistant high commissioner for refugees, visited the Hanawon resettlement center for DPRK defectors Monday as part of her research into ROK programs for the newcomers, Lee Jong-joo, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Unification, said. Feller arrived in Seoul on Sunday to gather information about the ROK's defector policy and seek ways for the ROK and the U.N. to cooperate, she said. She was also set to meet with officials of the foreign affairs and justice ministries before flying to Japan on Tuesday.

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11. Inter-Korea Relations

Associated Press ("N.KOREA SAYS DIALOGUE WITH S.KOREA OUT OF QUESTION", Seoul, 2009/05/09) reported that the DPRK said Saturday that it would not even consider talking with the ROK. The DPRK's committee for South Korean affairs in a statement accused the ROK of trying to sully its reputation by calling attention to the DPRK's "nonexistent" human rights abuses . The statement pointed to an ROK human rights envoy 's suggestion that his government establish refugee camps to house fleeing DPRK citizens. ROK Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyeon said he still believes the DPRK will agree to a meeting about the Kaesong Industrial park because it would address Pyongyang's demand that the ROK pay more for using its workers and the land at the zone. But Kim said the DPRK could try to limit the talks only to issues related to its demand while refusing to discuss the fate of the detained worker or other broader issues about improving their relations.

Korea Times ("SOUTH EXPECTS DIALOGUE WITH N. KOREA", Seoul, 2009/05/10) reported that a Seoul government official predicted the DPRK will agree to a second meeting in Gaeseong. "The Gaeseong meeting is considered an economic issue, unlike previous inter-Korean talks. I expect the second meeting to be held because it comes at the North's own proposal,'' he said.

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12. ROK National Security Law

Joongang Ilbo ("ACTIVISTS DETAINED FURTHER OVER NORTH", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that Seoul Central District Court issued a warrant Sunday to detain Lee Gyu-jae, the head of the Pan-Korean Alliance for Reunification, and two other executives. The National Police Agency and the National Intelligence Service are investigating an allegation that the detained group leaders exchanged information with DPRK officials in Beijing and produced pro-DPRK materials. Separately, the North Chungcheong Provincial Police Agency said it has detained three other executives operating in the organization’s regional office in Cheongju, North Chungcheong, on Saturday on charges of uploading Internet posts in favor of the DPRK regime.

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13. ROK Military

Arirang News ("GOV'T DEFERS DEFENSE OVERHAUL", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry is deferring some of its major overhaul plans due to cuts in the budget. The Navy

will start building nine 3-ton submarines from 2020, two years later than initially planned, while the Air Force is delaying development of unmanned aerial surveillance planes by four years to 2015.

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14. US-ROK Alliance

Yonhap ("PARK GEUN-HYE ENVISIONS US-KOREA ALLIANCE", 2009/05/11) reported that Park Geun-hye, former head of the ROK's ruling Grand National Party, said Saturday that the ROK-U.S. alliance should focus on enhancing global peace and development and resolving such issues as the DPRK nuclear threat and terrorism. "The U.S. is a very important country. Thus far, South Korea-U.S. relations have been maintained to preserve basic principles, like freedom and democracy. From now on, the alliance should be redirected to help promote the prosperity of mankind and the establishment of global peace," said Park. "Mankind should join forces to address a long list of pending issues, such as the North Korean nuclear problem, the elimination of poverty, climate change, (economic) polarization and terrorism. We should also work together to establish principled capitalism," she said.

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15. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Yonhap ("KOREA, EU CLOSER TO TRADE DEAL: MINISTER", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that the ROK and the European Union are close to clinching a free trade deal, ROK Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon said Monday. "The negotiations are in a final stage, and both sides will be able to resolve the remaining issues," Kim said. But he added it is unclear whether both sides will reach an agreement on the remaining issues at a summit in Seoul on May 23.

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16. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "KOREANS IN US SLAM JAPAN'S CLAIM TO DOKDO", Seoul, 2009/05/08) reported that an association of ROK parents in New York pledged Thursday that it would push for a campaign to obtain signatures from local representatives over the usage of the Korean name of Dokdo in history textbooks of New York public schools. The association said it planned to send the list of signatures, along with an official letter calling for using both the Korean name and Japanese one of Takeshima to President Barack Obama, the U.S. education minister and a local education affairs chief, among others. The move came after it had been belatedly found that Japan's consulate general in New York sent a letter in February to a local superintendent of educational affairs, opposing the dual use of the name for the islets, according to Seoul's Yonhap News agency.

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17. Japanese Politics

Yomiuri Shimbun ("71% SAY 'NO' TO OZAWA KEEPING POST", Tokyo, 2009/05/11) reported that just over 70 percent of voters do not approve of Ichiro Ozawa continuing as the president of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, according to the latest nationwide survey by The Yomiuri Shimbun. Even among DPJ supporters responding, 56 percent said they did not approve of Ozawa staying on as leader, the first time a majority of DPJ supporters have come out against him. Those who approved of Ozawa keeping his post fell from 25 percent last time to 22 percent. Asked who was the most suitable candidate for prime minister between Aso or Ozawa, 40 percent chose Aso and 25 percent picked Ozawa.

Asahi Shimbun ("LDP RELIES HEAVILY ON INHERITED DISTRICTS", Tokyo, 2009/05/11) reported that fifteen percent of prospective candidates for the next Lower House election will run in electoral districts formerly represented by a relative, an Asahi Shimbun survey has found. This trend was especially noticeable among candidates planning to run under the Liberal Democratic Party banner, with 33 percent of candidates seeking seats once held by a relative. In contrast, only 8 percent of candidates of opposition Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) will seek to run in a district once represented by a relative. Among incumbent Lower House members, 119 of the 478, or 25 percent, were elected from districts once represented by a relative.

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18. Japan Swine Flu Outbreak

Associated Press (Yuri Kageyawa, "JAPAN, AUSTRALIA CONFIRM FIRST CASES OF SWINE FLU", Tokyo, 2009/05/09) reported that Japanese authorities scrambled Saturday to track travelers who arrived on the same flight as three people diagnosed with the country's first confirmed cases of swine flu. Authorities in Tokyo quarantined a high school teacher and two of his teenage students who returned Friday from a school trip to Canada on a flight from the U.S. after they tested positive at the airport. A lab at the National Institute of Infectious Diseases later confirmed they had the virus.

Kyodo ("ANOTHER MALE CONFIRMED TO BE INFECTED WITH NEW FLU, 4TH CASE IN JAPAN", Tokyo, 2009/05/10) reported that another male student who arrived at Narita airport from the United States on Friday was confirmed to be infected with the new flu strain, the health ministry said Sunday. The student, 16, was on board the same flight as a teacher and two other students who were confirmed Saturday to be Japan's first cases of the new strain of the H1N1 influenza A virus. He has been isolated at a different hospital in Chiba Prefecture from the three other patients.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVERNMENT PUSHING DOMESTIC FLU MEASURES", Tokyo, 2009/05/11) reported that the Japanese government is expediting efforts to set up a system based on the premise that the flu will spread nationwide. Prime Minister Taro Aso's administration has been seeking opinions from its external committee of experts. If an outbreak is confirmed, the government plans to take effective but nonrestrictive measures after discussions with local governments and boards of education in areas where the infection is observed. Speaking in Kashiwa, Chiba Prefecture, on Saturday evening, Aso said, "The government's measures at the border level have proved effective, so I'm not considering raising the [alert] level at this stage."

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19. Japanese Nuclear Power

Yomiuri Shimbun ("NIIGATA GOVERNOR OK'S RESTART OF REACTOR SHUT DOWN AFTER QUAKE", Niigata, 2009/05/09) reported that Niigata Gov. Hirohiko Izumida on Friday told Tokyo Electric Power Co. President Masataka Shimizu he would allow the utility firm to resume operations at the No. 7 reactor of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant. After the meeting, Shimizu told reporters that TEPCO, which is expected to conduct a start-up test Saturday, would resume full-scale operation of the reactor. In the start-up test, TEPCO plans to increase output gradually, bringing the reactor fully online in 40 to 50 days, the company said.

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20. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press (Debby Wu, "HOSPITAL: TAIWAN'S JAILED EX-PRESIDENT DEHYDRATED", Taipei, 2009/05/09) reported that former Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian was hospitalized for dehydration Saturday, a hospital official said, after he went on a two-day hunger strike to protest his detention over graft charges. The hospital's Deputy Superintendent Yang Chang-bin told reporters that Chen was suffering from "slight dehydration" but was conscious and had cooperated with medical staff.

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21. PRC Swine Flu

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CONFIRMS FIRST CASE OF SWINE FLU ON MAINLAND", Beijing, 2009/05/11) reported that the PRC on Monday confirmed its first case of swine flu on the mainland in a Chinese man who recently travelled back from the United States, the Xinhua news agency reported. The 30-year-old man surnamed Bao was hospitalised with a fever after arriving in the city of Chengdu in southwestern China from the United States via Tokyo on Saturday afternoon, Xinhua said, citing the Ministry of Health . The man was transferred to an infectious disease hospital in Chengdu, and people who came into close contact with him during his medical examination had been placed under observation, Xinhua said. More than 130 of the 150 passengers aboard the same Northwest flight have also been tracked down and put into quarantine.

Agence France-Presse ("14 MEXICANS REMAIN QUARANTINED IN CHINA", Beijing, 2009/05/11) reported that fourteen Mexican nationals remain quarantined in the PRC and one in Singapore due to fears created by the swine flu epidemic, the Mexican Foreign Ministry announced. According to a ministry statement, 10 of those are held in hospitals in Shanghai, three in Guangzhou, and one in Beijing . The ministry added that all those quarantined knew of the Chinese measure "in advance of the trip."

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22. PRC Civil Society

Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "GOVERNMENT BLUNTS ACTIVISM SET OFF BY CHINA QUAKE", Chengdu, 2009/05/09) reported that the earthquake last May 12 set off an unprecedented surge of volunteerism in the PRC. But the government has since sought to restrain it — with considerable success. "From the government's point of view, they're worried. They're afraid we'll do something," said community organizer Zhang Guoyuan. "Really all we're trying to do is make society better."

Christian Science Monitor (Peter Ford, "CHINA QUAKE: FROM RUBBLE, CIVIL SOCIETY BUILDS", Mianzhu, 2009/05/10) reported that last year's earthquake in the PRC has proved to be the catalyst for deeper social changes. "It has strengthened a sense of civil society," says Han Junkui, who has studied activity by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Sichuan over the past year. "Society's enthusiasm for earthquake-hit areas has changed from a passionate attitude to a rational one... The level of enthusiasm does not compare with a year ago, but it definitely still exists." Han points to "the unprecedented scale of donations, the fact that NGOs have become much more professional, and the way they are working with the government and with each other" as signs of how individuals and civic groups, independent of the ruling Communist Party, are expanding their influence.

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23. PRC Environment

Xinhua (Lucy-Claire Saunders, "THE GREEN DAWN IN U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS", United Nations, 2009/05/08) reported that recent legislation like the 2005 Renewable Energy Law has contributed to the PRC's rapid success in emerging renewable energy markets, Christopher Flavin, president of World Watch Institute said. The Chinese National Development and Reform Commission said in early December that about 40 percent of the PRC's 586-billion-U.S.-dollar stimulus package is allocated to "green" themes such as biological conservation, environmental protection, and transportation infrastructure, including rail and power grids. "China has seen the light," said Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). "China has a much better understanding of how climate change will have an impact than it did 10 years ago."

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II. PRC Report

24. PRC Public Health

Orient Net ("6,000 TO DONATE ORGANS IN SHENZHEN", 2009/05/07) reported that more than 6,000 people have registered to donate organs in Shenzhen. The overwhelming support is contrary to a traditionally held belief among many Chinese that the body should remain untouched after death. The residents registered with the Red Cross Society of China after the closure of the city's organ donation center in 2004. But a new donation center will open today following a deal between the Red Cross and Shenzhen University.

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25. PRC Earthquake

Sina.com ("5,335 STUDENTS DEAD OR MISSING FROM SICHUAN QUAKE", 2009/05/05) reported that a total of 5,335 students in Sichuan were dead or missing from the May 12 earthquake, said Tu Wentao, head of the education department of the province at a press conference Thursday morning. Another 546 students were handicapped. Statistics showed that 3,340 schools needed to be rebuilt after the earthquake. Sichuan Province has pledged to have 95 percent of the students back in school buildings, rather than tents or prefabricated structures, before the end of this year.

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26. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua Net ("TIBET CHALLENGED BY GLOBAL WARMING", 2009/05/05) reported that Tibet has felt some of the largest impact of global warming, China Meteorological Administration (CMA) chief Zheng Guoguang said Wednesday. “In Tibet, the mercury has climbed an average 0.32 degrees Celsius every decade since records began in 1961,”Zheng said. The impact of global warming has accelerated glacial shrinkage and the melting glaciers have swollen Tibet's lakes. If the warming continues, millions of people in western China would face floods in the short term and drought in the long run.

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III. ROK Report

27. U.S. Policy toward DPRK

Ohmynews (Baek Haksoon, "KIM JONGIL NOT IN CONDITION TO START SUCCESSION PLAN”, “OBAMA ADMINISTRATION NOT YET ESTABLISHED ‘POLITICAL LEADERSHIP’ ON DPRK’S NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2009/05/11) writes that according to Baek Haksoon, chief researcher at Sejong Institute, “The US government has not yet established political leadership on DPRK issues and thus is in deep stress and confusion because of DPRK’s continuous provocations.” He emphasized that the DPRK’s nuclear issue is not a security and scientific technology matter to get rid of the nuclear materials, but rather an issue with historical background and political characteristics of the armistice and confrontation between the US and DPRK. Regarding the DPRK’s long-range rocket launch, he analyzed that “right now, DPRK is not in situation for Kim Jongil to start a succession plan.” Externally, the DPRK is fighting the US over the nuclear issue, and internally, is fighting the side effects from opening to the market by restrictively introducing market economy factors. He expects that the succession plan will finally start when DPRK believes that the two struggles have come to an end.

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28. ROK-US Policy toward DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("US, ROK MUST PREPARE STRATEGIES FOR THE DEADLOCK WITH DPRK AND AFTER", 2009/05/11) writes that ROK and the US must cooperate to prepare strategies on how to manage the deadlock with DPRK and when and under what circumstances the situation would move on. The ROK should also play an important diplomatic role so that other countries in the six-party talks could cooperate in the process. Now is the time for US and ROK to renew the fundamental blueprint of DPRK policies.

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29. ROK Resource Diplomacy

Financial News ("EXPECTATIONS ON PRESIDENT LEE'S RESOURCE DIPLOMACY TOUR", 2009/05/11) writes that President Lee is on tour to two countries in Central Asia for five days. Considering examples from the past, resource diplomacy should focus on practical matters rather than a ceremony. It also shouldn't make big announcements that could antagonize Japan and China. The expression "resource diplomacy" could also be changed to something that stresses a symbiotic relationship. We need to emphasize that we could provide ROK's highly competitive IT, electronics, industrial, and architectural technologies in exchange for the resources.

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