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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US Policy Toward the DPRK

Korea Hearld ("U.S. TO WAIT FOR N.K. RESPONSE TO OVERTURES", 2009/05/11) reported that t he U.S. administration of President Barack Obama does not intend to send a high-level envoy to the DPRK or take any other steps to revive the six-way talks on the communist nation's nuclear program, a senior ROK government official said. The U.S. believes that it has done enough to convey its willingness to engage in both bilateral and multilateral talks with the defiant DPRK and that it is time for Pyongyang to give an answer, according to the official. "There can be progress in dialogue only when a partner responds (to proposals for talks) and shows interest," the official said.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("U.S. NOT EYEING TALKS WITH N. KOREA OUTSIDE 6-PARTY FRAMEWORK ", Tokyo, 2009/05/11) reported that t he US assured Japan that it has no plans to hold bilateral talks with the DPRK outside a framework of the six-nation process on denuclearizing Pyongyang, senior Japanese officials said. Stephen Bosworth, the US special representative for DPRK policy who is traveling around Asia for consultations on the DPRK issue, referred to the plan during separate meetings in Tokyo with Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka and Akitaka Saiki, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau.

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3. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("RUSSIA'S PUTIN WARNS AGAINST ARMS RACE OVER N.KOREA", Moscow, 2009/05/11) reported that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin called for calm over the DPRK in an interview published on Sunday and warned of the danger of an arms race developing in Asia after Pyongyang launched a long-range rocket. Putin called for a return to six-country talks on the DPRK. "It would be absolutely wrong if we increased the emotional temperature around what is happening today and used this to destabilize the region or to start some sort of arms race. I think this would be a big mistake," Putin said.

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4. DPRK on Relations with the US

The Associated Press ("PRO-NKOREA PAPER ACCUSES OBAMA OF HOSTILITY", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that President Barack Obama 's administration should abandon its "hostile" policy toward the DPRK if it wants to have a dialogue, a pro-Pyongyang newspaper said Monday. "The Obama government is now sending the wrong signal to North Korea," the Japan-based Choson Sinbo newspaper said. The Choson Sinbo said new dialogue would be possible only after Washington relinquishes its "outdated, confrontational relations" with the DPRK.

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5. DPRK Leadership

Yonhap News ("KIM'S HEIR APPARENT INCREASINGLY VISIBLE IN N. KOREA: SOURCES", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that t he third and youngest son of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has been increasingly visible on official occasions and masterminded the country's major publicity stunts, such as a recent fireworks extravaganza, in an apparent bid to burnish his image as a successor, sources said. Kim Jong-un, who is believed to have been tapped in January as the isolated state's next leader, has been seen making efforts to elevate his reputation by organizing the April 15 fireworks show and initiating an economic reconstruction drive, called the "150-day campaign," the sources privy to DPRK internal affairs said on condition of anonymity.

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6. DPRK Military

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA MILITARY IN CONTROL OF STATE SPY BODY: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that the DPRK's military now controls a state intelligence body involved in illicit operations to generate funds through money counterfeiting and weapons exports, a report said. In a recent shakeup, the ruling communist party put a key organisation responsible for overseas espionage under the purview of the military, Yonhap news agency said. It also expressed concern that North Korea's military may step up espionage operations against the ROK because the shakeup came amid frosty inter-Korean relations.

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7. DPRK Economy

Agence France-Presse ("ANGER GROWS AS NKOREA CLAMPS DOWN ON FREE MARKETS", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that public discontent is simmering in the DPRK after the regime imposed tighter restrictions on market trading in an attempt to reassert its control over the state, observers say. The latest crackdown began after elections on March 8 for a new parliament, according to Good Friends, a Seoul-based research group with extensive contacts in the DPRK. Officials ordered markets to open for only five hours a day from 1:00pm and to sell only certain farm products excluding rice, the group said in its latest newsletter. "Curbs are now tighter than several months ago," said Lee Seung-Yong, director of Good Friends.

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8. ROK Disaster Relief Operations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN EMERGENCY WORKERS ON REGIONAL DRILL FACE REAL-LIFE DISASTER", Seoul, 2009/05/11) reported that a regional anti-disaster drill turned into a real-life operation for a ROK team of emergency workers and officers when they provided medical services last week for about 1,500 locals hit by a typhoon in the Philippines, the Air Force said. Typhoon Kujira, packing winds of up to 130 kilometers, swept across the Philippines earlier this month, killing over two dozen people and leaving at least 54,000 displaced. The ROK had sent a C-130 transport aircraft with a crew of seven medical officers and a team of 10 civilian rescue workers to the country that was hosting a May 4-8 anti-disaster exercise. "The drill turned into a real-life situation with the arrival of Typhoon Kujira," the Air Force said in a release.

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9. ROK Politics

JoongAng Ilbo ("PARK TOUGHENS STANCE OVER GNP FACTIONAL DIVIDE", 2009/05/11) reported that t he rift within the Grand National Party widened yesterday after its former chairwoman, Park Geun-hye, publicly attacked the leadership of the country's largest political party for blaming her loyalists for its plummeting popularity. "What were the examples in which the so-called pro-Park factionists hindered party affairs?" Park asked. "Do you think it makes sense that the party suffered the by-election defeat because of pro-Park politicians?" Her comments mark the first time that Park, the daughter of the late President Park Chung Hee, publicly spoke about the factional power struggle inside the GNP since the party's crushing defeat in the April 29 by-elections.

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10. ROK Energy Supply

Bloomberg News (Shinhye Kang, "SOUTH KOREA, UZBEKISTAN TO EXPLORE 5 FIELDS", 2009/05/11) reported that the ROK , which imports 97 percent of its energy and minerals needs, agreed with Uzbekistan to jointly explore five oil fields in the Central Asian country as part of efforts to strengthen economic ties. State-run Korea National Oil Corp. and national oil company

Uzbekneftegaz signed a preliminary accord during President Lee Myung Bak's visit to Tashkent today, the presidential office in Seoul said in a statement. President Lee and his Uzbek counterpart Islam Karimov also agreed to proceed with the countries' joint gas project, according to the presidential office's statement today.

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11. Japan Energy Supply

The Asahi Shimbun ("ENERGY: JAPAN'S ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PLANS IGNORE WIND POWER", 2009/05/11) reported that encouraged by the relatively low cost of generating large amounts of power, other countries are turning to wind power as their top alternative energy choice. But in Japan, a lack of coordination between power companies and differences in opinion over its efficacy have slowed its spread here. The wind power networks operate independently of Japan's nine electric power companies, which also run each of their grids. Interconnection lines between the grids are held in reserve primarily for delivering power in natural disasters or other emergencies. Few moves have been made to feed in alternative power sources, such as wind power, to the main power grids on a regular basis.

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12. Japan Politics

Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "JAPAN OPPOSITION LEADER QUITS AHEAD OF ELECTION", 2009/05/11) reported that Democratic Party of Japan leader Ichiro Ozawa resigned Monday to try to save his party from losing an election that must be held by September. "I have decided to sacrifice myself and resign as party leader to strengthen our party unity for a clear victory in the next election," Ozawa told a news conference. "To me, whether I become prime minister is not an issue at all," he added. "We just simply must change this long, rotten government."

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13. Russo-Japanese Nuclear Cooperation

Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN BLOCKED RUSSIAN BID TO BUY NUCLEAR REACTOR MANUFACTURER", 2009/05/11) reported that Japan blocked a Russian company's bid to buy a Japanese manufacturer that is the world's sole possessor of a technology to produce nuclear reactors by adopting defense measures in the public and private sectors, it has been learned, as conclusion of a nuclear power treaty between Japan and Russia draws near. Prime Minister Taro Aso is set to sign a nuclear power agreement with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who is due to arrive in Japan on Monday. Conclusion of the agreement signifies a settlement following the two countries' offensive and defensive measures over nuclear power.

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14. Cross Strait Relations

DPA ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT VOWS NO UNIFICATION TALKS WITH CHINA", 2009/05/11) reported that President Ma Ying-jeou reiterated Monday he will not discuss unification with the PRC during his term. "When I took office on May 20, 2008, I announced that Taiwan would maintain its policy of not seeking independence or unification," Ma said in an interview with the China Television Co. "Hereby, I repeat that during my term, either four years or eight years, we will not discuss unification with China." Ma also said he currently has no plan to visit the PRC or meet with PRC leaders.

USA Today ("TAIWAN TO CONSIDER SETTING UP OFFICE IN CHINA", 2009/05/11) reported that Taiwan and the PRC should consider establishing offices on each side to handle increasing bilateral exchanges, Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou said. According to a presidential office statement, Ma told a group of senior Taiwanese negotiators that he thinks now is a good time to consider Taipei and Beijing representation on each side due to increasing coordination required to push forward bilateral relations.

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15. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Xinhua News ("CHINESE AMBASSADOR: CHINA-RUSSIA OIL PIPELINE SERVES STRATEGIC GOALS OF BOTH SIDES", 2009/05/11) reported that t he construction of the PRC-Russia oil pipeline conforms with the strategic goals of the PRC and Russia to diversify the former's energy imports and latter's energy exports, PRC Ambassador to Russia Liu Guchang has said. The move reflects the two countries' confidence and determination to tide over together the current global economic downturn, Liu said. Trade of crude via the pipeline will help stabilize and enhance the growth in bilateral trade, the diplomat added.

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16. PRC Energy Supply

Bloomberg News ("SINOPEC, KUWAIT TO BUILD $9 BILLION PLANT IN CHINA", 2009/05/10) reported that China Petroleum & Chemical Corp., Kuwait Petroleum Corp. and an overseas oil producer plan to build a $9 billion refining and petrochemical plant in southern the PRC's Guangdong province, according to the head of the PRC's energy authority. The third company is either BP Plc or Royal Dutch Shell Plc, Zhang Guobao, head of China's National Energy Administration said in Beijing. Zhang spoke to reporters in Beijing after the PRC and Kuwaiti governments signed trade accords. The project will include an oil refinery and an ethylene plant, Zhang said.

The New York Times ("CHINA OUTPACES U.S. IN CLEANER COAL-FIRED PLANTS", 2009/05/11) reported that the PRC's frenetic construction of coal-fired power plants has raised worries around the world about the effect on climate change. The PRC now uses more coal than the United States,

Europe and Japan combined, making it the world's largest emitter of gases that are warming the planet. But largely missing in the hand-wringing is this: the PRC has emerged in the past two years as the world's leading builder of more efficient, less polluting coal power plants, mastering the technology and driving down the cost.

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17. PRC Infrastructure

Xinhua News ("HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY TO LINK CHINA'S WEST WITH BIGGEST CITIES ", 2009/05/11) reported that the PRC began to lay tracks for the first high-speed passenger line in its western region, which will ultimately shorten trips between the ancient capital of Xi'an and Beijing to four hours from the current 11. The 500-km line linking Xi'an in northwestern Shaanxi Province with Zhengzhou in central Henan will run at up to 350 km per hour. "When it becomes operational at the end of this year, a ride between the two cities will take less than two hours compared with the present six," said Li Hengman, deputy manager of the Zhengzhou-Xi'an Railway Company, operator of the 10.3-billion-U.S.dollar project.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Environment

Beijing News ("SOUTH-TO-NORTH WATER DIVERSION IS PROPOSED FOR 5 YEARS TO BEIJING", 2009/05/10) reported that South-to-North Water Diversion plan is proposed for 5 years to enter in Beijing, said Chengjing, director of Beijing Water Bureau. This will make the water shortage situation of Beijing more serious in the years to come.

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19. PRC Gender Equity

China Daily ("WOMEN IN LIAONING GET BETTER PROTECTION", 2009/05/11) reported that women in northeast China's Liaoning province will soon have better protection against sexual harassment. New rules taking effect next month ban provocative hints of sex in any form, ranging from "dirty" mobile phone messages to physical contact in public places, including offices, in the latest attempt by provincial legislatures to stop sexual harassment.

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20. PRC Civil Society

People's Daily online (Li Dejin, "CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY UNDER EMERGENCY

DISASTERS FORUM HELD IN BEIJING", 2009/05/11) reported that on the occasion of 5.12 Wenchuan Earthquake Anniversary, Youth Business China and China Poverty Alleviation Foundation jointly held a Corporate Social Responsibility Under Emergency Disasters Forum in Beijing. The Forum will review and conclude what social responsibilities the Chinese entrepreneurs have taken in the last year, and how to face emergency disasters such as earthquake and financial crisis in the future.

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III. ROK Report

21. ROK-U.S Alliance

Donga Ilbo ("US AND ROK GOV'T MUST DISCUSS WARTIME OPERATIONAL CONTROL TRANSFER POLICY", 2009/05/12) writes that the reasons for delaying the plan to transfer wartime operational control in April, 2012 are increasing. This is because DPRK's military threats, the most important factor in deciding transfer of wartime command, is increasing. The top officials of both countries are to have a talk at Washington in June and will be discussing the future strategic alliance. President Lee must clearly explain the problems of transferring wartime operational control to the US with a strong will to fix the mistakes of the previous administration.

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22. ROK Military

Kukmin Ilbo ("DEFENSE REFORM COULD WEAKEN NATIONAL DEFENSE POWER", 2009/05/12) writes that the blueprint of the revised "Defense Reform 2020" is out. It's not right to cut budget originally planned for reinforcing high-tech military forces in order to reduce the entire budget. If cutting defense reform budgets is inevitable because of economic crisis, then reducing forces of arms and the timing for transfer of wartime command must also be reexamined. Moreover, we must reduce budgets from areas other than for reinforcing high-tech military forces, so that we can prepare an alternative for cutting budgets and delaying reinforcement of high-tech military forces.

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