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Contents in this Issue:

- I. Napsnet
  - 1. Sinking of ROK Naval Vessel
  - 2. ROK Response to Naval Ship Sinking
  - 3. Japan, PRC on Sinking of ROK Naval Vessel
  - 4. Sino-DPRK Relations
  - 5. Inter-Korean Naval Clashes
  - 6. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation
  - 7. Inter-Korea Relations
  - 8. DPRK Special Forces
  - 9. DPRK Arms Shipments
  - 10. DPRK Leadership
  - 11. DPRK Nuclear Energy
  - 12. DPRK-Zimbabwe Relations
  - 13. US-ROK Military Alliance
  - 14. ROK Military Procurements
  - 15. ROK Civil Rights
  - 16. USFJ Base Relocation

- 17. Japanese Whaling
- 18. Japanese Textbook Controversy
- 19. Japanese Foreign Relations
- 20. Japan on PRC Nuclear Program
- 21. Hong Kong Government
- 22. PRC Renewable Energy
- 23. PRC Energy Security

Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. Sinking of ROK Naval Vessel

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. EXPERTS 'BELIEVE N.KOREA SANK THE CHEONAN'", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that U.S. experts taking part in the investigation into the sinking of the ROK Navy corvette Cheonan have done all they can and expect no new discoveries, an ROK government source said Sunday. "So far we've been able to verify based on many pieces of evidence that the weapon used to sink the Cheonan was a torpedo, but we still have no conclusive evidence linking it to North Korea," the source said. "But the U.S. experts feel the results so far are enough to confirm that the culprit was North Korea and are satisfied with the better-than-expected results of the probe." The investigative team apparently concluded that traces of explosives and aluminum debris found in the funnel and split section of the Cheonan are highly likely the same type used by former Eastern-bloc countries as well as the DPRK in manufacturing torpedoes, and that the DPRK is the only likely culprit given circumstantial evidence such as the movements of submarines around the time of the sinking.

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, Ser Myo-ja, "CHEONAN PROBE DETECTS TNT TYPE", Seoul, 2010/05/14) reported that traces of explosives used in the former communist bloc, including the DPRK, were found on the wreckage of the Cheonan, a senior military official told the JoongAng Ilbo. According to the source, traces of RDX and TNT were discovered on the sheared section of the ship and metal debris from the site. “While RDX’s composition is similar worldwide, TNT mixtures differ from those used in the United States and England and others used in the former communist bloc,” he said. “By analyzing the mixtures of TNT, a crucial ingredient of a torpedo, we can conclude the builder,” he said. Meanwhile, the National Defense Ministry has asked the National Assembly to replace a civilian member of the Cheonan probe for having caused the public to mistrust the investigation. “Shin Sang-cheol, who joined the investigation at the recommendation of the Democratic Party, has rarely participated in the probe,” said Won. “He also made public his personal opinions, bringing about distrust of the investigation team.”

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun, "SEOUL TO NAME N.K. AS ATTACKER OF CHEONAN", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the ROK military is expected to issue a statement later this week accusing the DPRK of a torpedo attack on the Cheonan. “The joint investigation team has found evidence to conclude that the Cheonan was torpedoed and that it was a North Korean torpedo,” a senior government official said. “I cannot say whether the statement would use direct expressions such as the North’s ‘military provocation’ or ‘military attack’ as the investigation results are yet to be announced,” the official said. “But such statement is usually targeted at someone, so its premises would include those (accusations).”

(return to top)

2. ROK Response to Naval Ship Sinking

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "'SEOUL TO SEND LETTER TO UNSC OVER CHEONAN'", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the ROK plans to send a letter to the president of the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) soon regarding the sinking of the Cheonan. Kim Young-sun, a spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, declined to confirm the move, saying detailed countermeasures would be made public after the final announcement. "We plan to explain the results of the investigation to related countries before a final announcement, but consultations are under way over which nations it will be and when the briefings will be made,'' Kim told reporters. Separately, the Ministry of National Defense will invite military attaches from related countries, such as the United States, Japan, the PRC, and Russia, to brief them, the spokesman said.

Joongang Ilbo ("CHEONAN PROBE RESULT OUT THURSDAY", Seoul, 2010/05/15) reported that the ROK Ministry of Defense will announce the outcome of the investigation into the sinking of the Cheonan next Thursday, a senior government official said Friday. “After the probe outcome is announced Thursday, President Lee will address the nation later this month,” the official said.

(return to top)

3. Japan, PRC on Sinking of ROK Naval Vessel

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN, CHINA DIFFER OVER CHEONAN SINKING", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the foreign ministers of the ROK, the PRC and Japan met Saturday and Sunday in Gyeongju to discuss the sinking of the Cheonan. Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada "again expressed condolences over the Cheonan sinking and support for the government's efforts to investigate it objectively despite the difficult conditions," said ROK Foreign Ministry spokesman Kim Young-sun. While expressing condolences for the ROK sailors who died, PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi merely reaffirmed Beijing's stance that "a scientific and objective investigation is important."

(return to top)

4. Sino-DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("'DISAPPOINTED' KIM JONG-IL CUT SHORT CHINA VISIT", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il cut short his visit to the PRC early this month by one day, the Asahi Shimbun reported on Sunday quoting an ROK government source. "It's uncertain why Kim cut short his schedule, but the South Korean government speculates that his meeting with the Chinese

leader may have ended in disagreement," the daily said. "When it briefed South Korea, the U.S., and Japan on the outcome of the Kim-Hu summit, the Chinese government did not specify any details or amounts of economic assistance to the North," the paper said. "This contrasts with China's announcement in October last year of a US$30 million grant-in-aid to the North for various projects including the construction of a bridge in the border area which Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao promised when he was in Pyongyang at that time."

Joongang Ilbo ("BEIJING'S REBUFF MADE KIM CUT CHINA TRIP SHORT", Beijing, 2010/05/17) reported that the PRC told DPRK leader Kim Jong-il during his recent visit that it will respect international sanctions imposed on Pyongyang and refused to provide extraordinary economic assistance, an informed source here told the JoongAng Ilbo. "At the luncheon between Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Kim on May 6, the Chinese government informed the North that China will not provide aid outside the framework of the United Nations Security Council sanctions against Pyongyang," the source said. "After Beijing's position was explained, Kim shortened his schedule in China."

(return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Naval Clashes

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "NKOREAN NAVY BOATS VIOLATE SEA BORDER AMID TENSIONS", Seoul, 2010/05/16) reported that a DPRK patrol boat sailed about 1.6 miles (2.8 kilometers) into ROK-controlled waters Saturday night but quickly retreated after an ROK navy ship broadcast warnings in radio communication, according to Seoul 's Joint Chiefs of Staff. In less than an hour, another DPRK patrol boat intruded across the border but returned to its waters after another transmission and two warning shots from the ROK vessel, a Joint Chiefs of Staff officer said.

(return to top)

6. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA THREATENS TO SHUT OFF TRAFFIC TO KAESONG", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the DPRK on Sunday warned it will restrict or stop overland travel to the Kaesong Industrial Complex if ROK activists send propaganda leaflets to the DPRK. The head of a DPRK delegation to inter-Korean defense talks sent a letter to the ROK which read, "Despite our repeated requests, the South Korean government goaded and tacitly permitted activists to send propaganda leaflets that castigate our ideology and regime, small radios, US$1 bills and DVDs [via helium balloons] from May 1." An ROK government official said, "It seems to be a preemptive action as we are reviewing sanctions against the North."

Chosun Ilbo ("KAESONG FIRMS LOOK AT DIM PROSPECTS", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that there are 121 manufacturers at the Kaesong Industrial complex whose production in February reached US$22.21 million, up 20.4 percent over the same month last year thanks to the recovering ROK economy. But orders have dropped sharply since the Cheonan sinking, according to ROK firms at the complex. Some 42,000 DPRK workers are employed there. "Because of that, North Korea won't find it easy to call for a closure of the industrial complex," said Lee Im-dong of the ROK businesses association at the complex. "But we're concerned that tightly controlled access to the complex could hamper production."

(return to top)

7. Inter-Korea Relations

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun, "TENSION ESCALATES ON KOREAN PENINSULA", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the ROK Unification Ministry said Sunday it requested other related government ministries last week to hold all projects involving the DPRK. “We have officially requested about 10 ministries, including the Finance and Welfare ministries and the National Forest Service on Friday to temporarily defer projects involving North Korea,” Unification Ministry spokesman Chun Hae-sung said in a press briefing. “This measure was made in consideration of the latest situations such as seizure of real estate assets in the Mount Geumgang.” The ministry has also advised ROK companies engaging in trade with the DPRK to refrain from additional production or new contracts earlier last week.

(return to top)

8. DPRK Special Forces

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN COMMANDOS 'STEPPED UP UNDERWATER TRAINING LAST YEAR'", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that DPRK commandos increased underwater training exercises last year and bought underwater communications equipment from the PRC and Russia, Japan's Kyodo News reported Sunday. Citing diplomatic sources in the U.S. and the ROK, Kyodo said DPRK commandos "quadrupled the number of underwater training drills last year."

(return to top)

9. DPRK Arms Shipments

Associated Press ("NKOREA DENIES INVOLVEMENT IN SPREAD OF WMD", Seoul, 2010/05/15) reported that the DPRK is denying an Israeli allegation that Pyongyang is spreading weapons of mass destruction . The DPRK Foreign Ministry said Saturday the DPRK "has nothing to do with any spread of WMDs." It also said it would never pardon Israel for "daring slander the dignified DPRK by faking up sheer lies."

(return to top)

10. DPRK Leadership

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA'S FIRING OF SENIOR OFFICER SPARKS SPECULATION ", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the DPRK has relieved Vice Marshal Kim Il-chol of all his official positions, it said Friday. The Korean Central News Agency said, "In accordance with a National Defense Commission decision, Kim Il-chol has been relieved of his positions as a NDC member and first vice minister of the People's Armed Forces because of his advanced age." Kim is 80. Ryu Dong-ryeol, a researcher at the ROK's Police Science Institute, said, "This may be a signal for a generational shift or regime restructuring." He suggested that senior members of the military, party and government will likely be replaced as Kim Jong-il consolidates his succession by his son Jong-un.

(return to top)

11. DPRK Nuclear Energy

Korea Times (Sunny Lee, "NK REITERATES ITS CLAIM FOR NUCLEAR FUSION SUCCESS", Beijing, 2010/05/15) reported that the DPRK Saturday once again claimed nuclear fusion success. The Rodong Sinmun claimed: "Despite the fact that our country is under the pressure of extreme [U.N.] sanctions and pressure, we proudly succeeded in nuclear fusion through our 'unique' methods," Yonhap News Agency said. The newspaper said the project was a "very difficult and arduous research" that involved maintaining "a high temperature of tens and thousands of Celsius degrees" and took "astronomical financial investment.

(return to top)

12. DPRK-Zimbabwe Relations

BBC ("CONCERNS OVER ZIMBABWE'S 'NOAH'S ARK GIFT' TO N.KOREA", Harare, 2010/05/14) reported that wild animals reportedly caught in Zimbabwe and intended as a gift to the DPRK may not survive there, conservationists say. Johny Rodrigues, chairman of the Zimbabwe Conservation Task Force, said he believed that wild animals - such as baby elephants, giraffes, rhinos and zebras - were being secretly caught in pairs in the past two months in the Hwange National Park, western Zimbabwe. He said his organisation was alerted by one of the wardens in the park, who was concerned about the operation.

(return to top)

13. US-ROK Military Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("CHEONAN SINKING WON'T AFFECT HANDOVER OF TROOP CONTROL", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that the ROK government has decided it will not use the sinking of the Cheonan as an argument to delay the handover of full operational control over ROK troops from the U.S. Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Yong-joon touched on the issue last Friday after consultations with U.S. officials over preparations for "two plus two" meetings of foreign and defense ministers. "There has been no change in the basic positions of the two governments over the transfer of full operational control," he said. At the moment, "the matter is not an issue pending between the two countries, nor did we discuss it this time." Another senior government official, who was also on a visit to Washington, said, "There has been no discussion of delaying the transfer between senior government officials of the two countries. On the contrary, at the Strategic Policy Initiative meeting last week, top defense officials agreed that the transfer process is going smoothly."

(return to top)

14. ROK Military Procurements

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "LEE DIRECTS W3 TRIL. RISE IN ARMS BUYING", Seoul, 2010/05/16) reported that President Lee Myung-bak has directed a 3 trillion won (US$2.6 billion) increase in expenditure for weapons systems to cope with the DPRK's asymmetrical and irregular warfare, a

government source said Sunday. The President made the decision during the first meeting of a newly established presidential task force for revamping national security and defense plans last Thursday, he said. "Upon the President's direction, defense authorities are expected to review current arms acquisition plans and readjust their priorities," the source told The Korea Times. "The focus will be on how to thwart the North's asymmetrical and irregular operations."

(return to top)

15. ROK Civil Rights

Korea Herald (Adam Walsh, "KOREA URGED TO IMPROVE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION", Seoul, 2010/05/17) reported that U.N. official Special Rapporteur Frank La Rue on Sunday expressed concern that there has been a regression in freedom of expression in the ROK. “I would like to express my concern that since the candle light vigils (of 2008), the full respect for human rights and in particular the right to freedom of opinion and expression has been diminishing,” La Rue said. Regarding freedom of expression on the Internet, La Rue mentioned concerns over rulings on the prohibition of false information, the arbitrary procedures for the deletion of information on the Internet, and the real name identification system. La Rue urged the government to remove defamation from the country’s criminal code, saying that “the threat of harsh criminal sanctions, especially imprisonment, exerts a chilling effect on freedom of expression.”

Korea Times (Park Si-soo, "UN ENVOY ALLEGEDLY FOLLOWED BY AGENTS", Seoul, 2010/05/16) reported that UN special envoy Frank La Rue filed a complaint with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade alleging that he was being followed by agents from the National Intelligence Service (NIS), ministry officials said Sunday. La Rue claimed that intelligence agents followed him, and videotaped him in a car on May 4 in front of the hotel he was staying. The UN official secured photos of the car and persons inside as evidence. The car was reportedly registered to the NIS.

(return to top)

16. USFJ Base Relocation

Asahi Shimbun ("'HUMAN CHAIN' AROUND FUTENMA BASE", Ginowan, 2010/05/17) reported that a 13-kilometer "human chain" surrounded the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma on Sunday, as protesters called for the unconditional return of the base. According to organizers, 17,000 citizens braved rainy weather to complete the chain. It was the fifth time such a chain had been formed around the Futenma air station since May 2005.

Asahi Shimbun ("76% IN OKINAWA AGAINST HATOYAMA PLAN", Tokyo, 2010/05/15)

reported that an Asahi Shimbun survey on Okinawa Prefecture residents found that 76 percent of respondents oppose the latest relocation plan proposed by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama. Only 13 percent of respondents said they support the plan. Fifty-three percent of respondents said they support moving a U.S. base from Okinawa Prefecture to another part of Japan, up from 38 percent in an Asahi Shimbun survey in 2009. Thirty-six percent said they oppose such a move, down from 46 percent in 2009.

Asahi Shimbun ("HATOYAMA PICKING UP PIECES WITH A VAGUE DEAL", Tokyo, 2010/05/15) reported that having all but admitted Thursday that resolving the Futenma airfield issue by the end of May is impossible, Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama is now seeking to show that progress is at least being made toward an eventual resolution. "The element with the most possibility is an agreement in principle with the United States. If we can reach an agreement with the United States, Okinawa and the coalition partners will come around," said a government source close to Hatoyama.

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "REPORTS: HATOYAMA, CLINTON TO DISCUSS US BASE", Tokyo, 2010/05/17) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama vowed Monday to do all he can to resolve an impasse over the future of the Futenma base by the end of the month. "I knew from the start the situation would be tough," Hatoyama told reporters Monday. "I will do all I can by the end of the month." Hatoyama will meet with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Tokyo on Friday to discuss the issue, according to reports over the weekend in several Japanese newspapers .

Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN, U.S. TO MEET OVER FUTENMA", Tokyo, 2010/05/17) reported that the Japanese government has decided to set up separate meetings between the Japanese and U.S. foreign and defense ministers later this month, in an effort to obtain U.S. understanding on its relocation plan for the Futenma Air Station. The government hopes to obtain U.S. assent at the foreign and defense ministerial meetings so it can receive Cabinet approval by the end of this month.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT MAY ASK U.S. TO MOVE SOME OKINAWA DRILLS", Tokyo, 2010/05/16) reported that the Japanese government is considering asking the U.S. government to relocate live firing exercises and other drills conducted by U.S. Marine Corps ground troops at Camp Hansen and other military bases in Okinawa Prefecture to other prefectures, it was learned Saturday. According to sources, one possible relocation site for the drills currently conducted at bases including Camp Hansen, which straddles Kincho and three other Okinawan cities, is the Ground Self-Defense Force's training field at Hijudai, Oita Prefecture. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama plans to ask governors of prefectures where the possible relocation sites are located to accept the plan at a May 27 National Governors' Association meeting, the sources said.

Kyodo ("U.S. REJECTS JAPAN PROPOSED NEW FUTENMA RELOCATION SITE", Tokyo, 2010/05/17) reported that the United States has rejected the Japanese government's latest proposal for the relocation of Futenma base, sources close to Japan-U.S. relations said Monday. During working-level talks last Wednesday at the Pentagon, U.S. officials said they would not accept Japan's proposals to move some U.S. military functions outside of Okinawa Prefecture if Tokyo does not build a replacement facility within the area of the 2006 accord that has already been subject to nearly three years of environment assessment, according to the sources.

(return to top)

17. Japanese Whaling

New York Times (Martin Fackler, "UNCERTAINTY BUFFETS JAPAN'S WHALING FLEET", Ayukawahama, 2010/05/15)

reported that local residents in this whaling village are breaking long-held taboos to speak out

against the government-run Antarctic hunts, which they say invite international criticism that threatens the much more limited coastal hunts by people in this traditional whaling town. “The research whaling in the Antarctic is not about protecting culture,” said Ichio Ishimori, a city councilman in Ishinomaki, of which Ayukawahama is a part. The Japanese government is facing renewed pressures at home and abroad to drastically scale back its so-called research whaling. Yet, Tokyo seems paralyzed by the same combination of nationalist passions and entrenched bureaucratic interests that have previously blocked any action to limit the three-decade-old whaling program. “We’re entering a new period on the whaling issue, but we don’t know what it means yet,” said Shohei Yonemoto, a professor of environmental policy at the University of Tokyo.

(return to top)

18. Japanese Textbook Controversy

Dong-A Ilbo ("JAPANESE TEACHERS' UNION BOYCOTTS RIGHT-WING TEXTBOOK", 2010/05/17) reported that the Yokohama branch of the Japan Teachers’ Union has reportedly boycotted middle school history textbooks adopted by the city office of education, and created its own material for teachers. The teacher`s union branch said the textbooks made by right-wing groups contain many inaccuracies, including the Japanese government’s attempt to legitimize the country’s past aggression in Asia. Japanese nationalists are protesting the branch’s move, calling the action an attempt to use schools as venue for ideological struggle.

(return to top)

19. Japanese Foreign Relations

Asahi Shimbun (Yoshihiro Makino, Yukie Yamao and Daisuke Nishimura, "MISTRUST BREWS IN S. KOREA, CHINA TIES", Gyeongju, 2010/05/17) reported that Japan faced an atmosphere of wariness and distrust when Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada met with his counterparts from the PRC and the ROK over the weekend. While Okada and his ROK counterpart Yu Myung-hwan agreed to cooperate closely on the Cheonan sinking, history, territory and other thorny problems cast a shadow over bilateral ties. Japan's ties to the PRC are no less strained as seen in the discussion of recent incidents close to Japan's territorial waters.

(return to top)

20. Japan on PRC Nuclear Program

Asahi Shimbun ("OKADA ASKS CHINA TO CUT NUKES", Gyeongju, 2010/05/17) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada requested the PRC to reduce its nuclear weapons arsenal or at least cap it at current levels at a meeting Saturday with his PRC counterpart Yang Jiechi. "China is the only country among the five nuclear powers that is increasing its nuclear arsenal," Okada said. Yang told Okada that the PRC possesses the minimum level of nuclear weapons necessary for its national security, according to Foreign Ministry officials.

(return to top)

21. Hong Kong Government

Agence France-Presse (Peter Brieger, "HK GOVT: POLLS SHOW LOW SUPPORT FOR RADICAL DEMOCRATS", Hong Kong, 2010/05/17) reported that Hong Kong's government on Monday said record low voter turnout for weekend by-elections designed to speed up political reform in the city showed lacklustre support for campaigners' tactics. The ballot came after five pro-democracy lawmakers from the Legislative Council quit in January to force what they said was a de facto referendum on the issue. However, the outcome of the vote was seen as academic since all pro-Beijing political parties boycotted the process with the government repeatedly dismissing it as a waste of taxpayers' money. About 17 percent of Hong Kong 's 3.4 million registered voters cast a vote but Chief Executive Donald Tsang and his senior ministers refused to vote.

(return to top)

22. PRC Renewable Energy

Washington Post (Andrew Higgins, "WITH SOLAR VALLEY PROJECT, CHINA EMBARKS ON BOLD GREEN TECHNOLOGY MISSION", Dezhou, 2010/05/17) reported that among the PRC's efforts to promote, and profit from, green technology is Solar Valley, a massive exercise in social, economic and ecological engineering. As part of the project, tens of thousands of farmers have been moved into concrete apartment blocks and their land is being converted into what planners hope will be the PRC's clean-technology answer to California's Silicon Valley. The $740 million plan has attracted about 100 companies and spawned factories, a research center and wide boulevards illuminated by solar-powered lights.

(return to top)

23. PRC Energy Security

BBC ("NIGERIA AND CHINA SIGN $23BN DEAL FOR THREE REFINERIES", 2010/05/14) reported that Nigeria's state-run oil firm NNPC and China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) have signed a $23 billion deal. The two will jointly seek financing and credits from PRC authorities and banks to build three refineries and a fuel complex in Nigeria. The project would add 750,000 barrels per day of extra refining capacity.

(return to top)

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