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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong and Lee Chi-dong, "LEE, OBAMA DISCUSS SHIP SINKING, RESPONSE", Seoul/Washington, 2010/05/18) reported that U.S. President Barack Obama expressed full support Tuesday for the ROK's response to the March sinking of the Cheonan in his telephone conversation with ROK President Lee Myung-bak, Cheong Wa Dae said. In Washington, a White House statement said the two leaders "emphasized the importance of obtaining a full accounting of the event and committed to follow the facts of the investigation wherever they lead." It also said U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will visit the ROK next week to discuss the ship sinking.

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2. DPRK on ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA DENIED ROLE IN S. KOREAN SHIP SINKING: CHINESE ENVOY", 2010/05/17) reported that the DPRK denied involvement in the deadly sinking of a ROK warship when its leader Kim Jong-il visited the PRC earlier this month, an opposition lawmaker said Monday, citing remarks by Beijing's chief envoy to Seoul. In a meeting with Democratic Party leaders, new PRC Amb. Zhang Xinsen said the DPRK denied any involvement in the March 26 sinking, Rep. Choi Moon-soon said. The PRC envoy called for a "scientific and objective" investigation, saying that facts made public so far do not provide hard evidence as to who is responsible, party spokeswoman Kim Yu-jung said.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA TO SUFFER DEARLY FROM HALT IN INTER-KOREAN TRADE: CIVIC GROUP", 2010/05/17) reported that the DPRK economy is projected to lose about US$370 million a year and about 80,000 jobs if inter-Korean trade is entirely suspended, the South-North Forum, which specializes in inter-Korean economic cooperation, said. "If inter-Korean trade is fully halted,

North Korea will lose $230 million a year in trade of agricultural goods," the civic group said in a statement. There would be also a loss of $49 million for the DPRK if the Kaesong complex is shut down, the group said.

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4. DPRK Internal Situation

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N.KOREA UNEXPECTEDLY CALLS RUBBER STAMP PARLIAMENT INTO SESSION", Seoul, 2010/05/18) reported that the DPRK's official media reported Tuesday that the Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) will convene on June 7. The last session convened on April 9. The 687-member assembly has not opened twice in one year since 2003. Even then, each session was held by a separate group of representatives, an ROK Unification Ministry official here said. "The government will closely monitor the upcoming session," the official said, asking not to be named. "This should be seen as an extraordinary session at an extraordinary time," Paik Hak-soon, a DPRK researcher at the Sejong Institute, said. "[DPRK leader] Kim [Jong-il] will likely be present to oversee it."

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5. DPRK Economy

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA OPENS INT'L TRADE FAIR, 260 COMPANIES ATTENDING", 2010/05/17) reported that the DPRK opened a four-day international trade fair in Pyongyang on Monday, bringing together about 60 domestic firms and 200 companies from abroad. Participants were seen looking at medical products, foodstuffs and electronic products, and holding business talks at the site. Computer-controlled numerical machine tools that the DPRK manufactured for the first time last year drew particular attention.

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6. DPRK Environment

Eurekalert ("NASA, GOOGLE DATA SHOW NORTH KOREA LOGGING IN PROTECTED AREA", 2010/05/17) reported that using NASA satellite data and Google Earth, a Purdue University researcher has reported finding evidence that the DPRK has been logging in what is designated as a protected United Nations forest preserve. Guofan Shao, professor of geo-eco-informatics, studies the Mount Paekdu Biosphere Reserve, a 326,000-acre forest preserve in the DPRK. "This mountain is significant in terms of biological conservation," he said. Google Earth images show that extensive logging has taken place in the DPRK biosphere. Shao estimated that as much as 75 percent of the forest in the core area had been removed in large strips.

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7. Tumen Area Environment

Xinhua News ("CHINA RELEASES 400,000 SALMON FRY INTO RIVER BORDERING DPRK,

RUSSIA", 2010/05/17) reported that PRC fishery authorities have released 400,000 salmon fry into Tumen River, which forms the border between the PRC, DPRK, and Russia, to conserve the region's natural ecology. It was the second such move since 2008 when 100,000 salmon fry were released into the Tumen River in northeast PRC. "Our goal is mainly to help enrich the aquatic life and preserve the ecological environment in the river, and also, to help increase fishermen's income," said Wang Zhaojun, director of the Jilin Provincial Fishery Bureau.

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8. US-ROK Trade Relations

The Associated Press ("US-SKOREA TRADE DEAL A VICTIM OF US POLITICS", 2010/05/17) reported that leading senators and a group of former officials are pushing the Obama administration to send a stalled US-ROK free trade deal to Congress. But with November elections looming, the accord may already be dead this year. Unemployment is high in this country and few politicians are willing to support trade pacts that many voters believe rob Americans of jobs. Two senior senators, Democrat John Kerry of Massachusetts and Republican Richard Lugar of Indiana, urged President Barack Obama in a letter this month to press ahead with an accord they said would help the US create jobs and strengthen the countries' alliance.

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9. SDF Public Health Deployment

Kyodo News ("GOV'T TO SEND MORE SDF MEMBERS TO TACKLE FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE ", 2010/05/17) reported that t he government decided Monday to dispatch more Self-Defense Forces members to Miyazaki to help tackle the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the southwestern Japan prefecture.

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10. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("LDP RETURNS TO ITS CONSERVATIVE ROOTS WITH MANIFESTO", 2010/05/17) reported that the main opposition Liberal Democratic Party is returning to its conservative roots, according to a draft of its campaign manifesto unveiled for this summer's Upper House election. The draft calls for the establishment of a new Constitution and a new law that would allow for the expeditious overseas dispatch of Self-Defense Force personnel. The manifesto opposes allowing permanent foreign residents to vote in local elections or allowing married couples to use separate surnames, both of which are being pushed by the ruling Democratic Party of Japan.

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11. Japanese Constitutional Revision

Kyodo ("LAW ON REFERENDUM FOR REVISING CONSTITUTION TAKES EFFECT", Tokyo, 2010/05/18) reported that a law on a referendum for revising the Japanese Constitution came into

effect on Tuesday, three years after its enactment. The National Referendum Law stipulates procedures for constitutional revisions and allows revision proposals to be submitted to the Diet at any time. But the deliberative councils on the Constitution in both houses of the Diet, where draft revision proposals are to be deliberated, have so far been dormant.

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12. Japan Space Program

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN ROCKET TO BLAST OFF WITH VENUS PROBE AND 'SPACE YACHT'", 2010/05/17) reported that Japan was set to launch its first Venus probe, using a rocket that will deploy an experimental "space yacht" propelled by solar particles bouncing off its kite-shaped sail. The H-IIA rocket was positioned at the Tanegashima space centre in southern Japan in fair weather Monday for its lift-off the next day at 6:44 am (2144 GMT Monday), said the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). It will blast off with the "space yacht" Ikaros -- an acronym for Interplanetary Kite-craft Accelerated by Radiation of the Sun -- which moves thanks to the pressure of sunlight particles hitting its square sail.

Kyodo ("LAUNCH OF VENUS PROBE AKATSUKI POSTPONED DUE TO BAD WEATHER", Tokyo, 2010/05/18) reported that the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency decided Tuesday to postpone the launch of its new planetary probe Akatsuk due to bad weather conditions, it said. The new launch date will be set for Friday or after as liquid fuel injected into the rocket has to be drained and two days are needed before the rocket can be refueled, JAXA said.

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13. Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA BALKS AT JAPAN'S NUKE-CUTS REQUEST", 2010/05/17) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said in a statement that Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi repudiated Japanese Foreign Minister Tatsuya Okada's call on the PRC to reduce its nuclear arsenal. "Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi refuted the irresponsible remarks by Japan on the spot," Ma said in the statement. "He pointed out that China's nuclear strategy and nuclear policy is transparent. China's nuclear disarmament proposals and efforts are obvious. China's position is legitimate, transparent, and above reproach."

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14. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Central Chronicle ("'INDIA, CHINA SHOULD RESOLVE BORDER DISPUTE'", 2010/05/17) reported that Cheng Ruisheng, a former PRC Ambassador to India, said the two countries should resolve the border dispute under a framework of compromise and spirit of mutual respect and understanding. "The final settlement of the China-India boundary question will be the most important key to greatly enhancing mutual trust between the two countries," Cheng said. "Judging from the present situation of the relations, it seems conditions are already mature for the final settlement," he said.

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15. US and Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("U.S., TAIWAN RESEARCHING NEW ARMS SALES DESPITE CHINA", 2010/05/14) reported that Taiwan and the United States are studying new systems in addition to a $6.4 billion package announced earlier in the year, President Ma Ying-jeou told the Central News Agency . "Otherwise, facing 1,000 missiles, it's hard to go negotiate with mainland China, and the mainland understands that," Ma was quoted saying.

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16. Cross-Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN'S EX-SECURITY CHIEF CONFIRMS SECRET CHINA TALKS", 2010/05/17) reported that Taiwan 's former security chief has confirmed for the first time that Taipei and Beijing used secret communications channels from 2008 as they worked to thaw glacial ties, it was reported. Su Chi, who was chief of the National Security Council until earlier this year, said in an interview with the Taipei-based United Daily News that the sensitive channels helped build trust between the longtime foes. He said the National Security Council did not talk directly to authorities on the mainland, but declined to provide details of the secret channels.

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN INAUGURATES 'STEALTH' MISSILE BOAT SQUADRON", Tsuoying, 2010/05/18) reported that Taiwan on Tuesday put into service a squadron of 10 guided-missile boats. "Its combat capabilities are much superior to the 50-tonne Seagull-class missile boats," the navy said in a statement. "The new home-made weapons system is expected to greatly enhance the navy's defence capabilities, thus ensuring the security of Taiwan." The vessel, called "Kuang Hua No 6", is equipped with "stealth technologies ," enabling it to reduce the risk of radar detection, the navy said.

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II. PRC Report

17. PRC Civil Society and HIV/AIDS

International Online ("INTERNATIONAL AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL HELD IN BEIJING", 2010/05/17) reported that International AIDS Candlelight Memorial was held in May 16 in Beijing. In the PRC, this activity was sponsored by China Red Cross Foundation, in memory of people died from AIDS and expressing care of families affected by AIDS.

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18. PRC Civil Society and Mental Health

Sina.com ("CARE FOR AUTISTIC CHILD HELD IN BEIJING", 2010/05/17) reported that Jinxian

Rehabilitation Training Center for Special Children held the ?€œHand in Hand, Share the Sunshine?€? activity in Beijing on May 15. The activity aims at letting more people know about autism, making more autistic children get early detection and receive rehabilitation training.

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19. PRC Civil Society and Social Welfare

Xinhua News ("HALF THE SKY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS WELFARE HOMES IN CHANGCHUN", 2010/05/17) reported that Half The Sky Foundation signed four project agreements with Changchun Municipal Welfare Home for Children on May 16 in Changchun city of Jilin province. Changchun Welfare Home will introduce good projects from Half the Sky, in order to learn more scientific experience in caring for children in welfare home.

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