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I. Napsnet

1. US Food Aid for DPRK

BBC News ("US RESUMES NORTH KOREA FOOD AID", Washington, 2008/05/16) reported that the US has announced a resumption for the first time in three years of food aid to the DPRK. The US government's development arm, USAID, said over the next year it will provide half a million tonnes of food. "The two sides have agreed on terms for a substantial improvement in monitoring and access in order to allow for confirmation of receipt by the intended recipients," a USAID statement said on Friday.

Chosun Ilbo ("PYONGYANG REACTS PROMPTLY TO US FOOD AID OFFER", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that the DPRK on Saturday said through its official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), "The food aid of the U.S. government will help settle the food shortage in the DPRK to a certain extent and contribute to promoting the understanding and confidence between the peoples of the two countries." On Sunday, the DPRK also reported on the U.S. offer of food aid through the Korean Central Broadcasting Station and Radio Pyongyang. Kim Yong-hyun, a professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University, said, "Such an announcement by North Korean authorities is aimed at achieving multi-purposes, including preventing North Korean residents, who are suffering from food shortage, from growing restless by giving them 'hope' that food will be delivered soon, and letting them know about progress in the improvement of the Pyongyang-Washington ties."

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2. ROK Aid to DPRK

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA CONSIDERS FOOD AID TO NORTH", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that the ROK was considering providing food aid to the DPRK without a request from Pyongyang if the food shortage becomes severe, ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said Monday. Yu reiterated Seoul's stance that under current conditions the DPRK must still ask for food aid, and said there would only be a change if things worsen. Yu said the WFP plans to send experts to the DPRK soon to assess the food situation and to hold consultations with DPRK officials.

Yonhap ("PYONGYANG WILL NOT ASK SEOUL FOR FOOD AID: SOURCES", Seoul, 2008/05/18)

reported that the DPRK is unlikely to request food aid from the ROK , sources here said Sunday. "If South Korea provides food, North Korea has no reason not to accept it. But North Korea will never ask for it first," said a source who recently visited Pyongyang and met with DPRK officials.

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3. Inter-Korea Relations

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "LEE URGES N.KOREA TO MOVE TOWARD OPENNESS", Seoul, 2008/05/18) reported that President Lee Myung-bak said on Sunday that the ROK is willing to help the DPRK go down the path of openness and transformation in order to bring new opportunities to improve bilateral ties."There should be opportunities and changes in inter-Korean relations. North Korea, too, has to change and now is a golden opportunity for it to change," said Lee in an address marking the 28th anniversary of the 1980 Gwangju Democratization Movement. "Many socialist nations have adopted a market economy and openness and are all successful and better off now. South Korea is ready to assist North Korea in change and openness. We have to move from confrontation to co-existence and from hostility to reconciliation. We're always open-minded towards the North," Lee said at the ceremony held in Gwangju.

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4. DPRK Refugees

Chosun Ilbo ("NHRC TO INVESTIGATE CONDITIONS ON N.KOREA ESCAPE ROUTE", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that the National Human Rights Commission on Sunday said it will dispatch a fact-finding team to investigate the human rights conditions of DPRK refugees fleeing their country along the Southeast Asia "escape route." An NHRC official said a fact-finding mission led by a vice minister will go to Southeast Asian nations including Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Burma sometime in June or July.

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5. ROK Abductees in DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("IDENTITIES OF ABDUCTED FISHERMEN IN N.KOREA CONFIRMED", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that the identities of nearly two dozen fishermen abducted by the DPRK 30 to 40 years ago have been confirmed through a photo taken 23 years ago. The Chosun Ilbo confirmed the identities of 22 of the abductees by showing the photo to other ROK fishermen who were abducted to the DPRK but escaped, and families of the abductees.

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6. US-ROK Trade Relations

Korea Times (Michael Ha, "KOREA TO GET QUARANTINE SOVEREIGNTY OVER US BEEF", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that ROK negotiators have won a new concession from U.S. officials regarding the American beef import agreement, with the new clause giving Seoul "quarantine and inspection

sovereignty," government sources said Monday. The new clause, which will allow the administration to halt all imports if new cases of mad cow disease or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) are reported, will be written as a specific provision of the bilateral agreement, they said.

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "LEE, OPPOSITION LEADER TO DISCUSS US FTA", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that President Lee Myung-bak will meet with Sohn Hak-kyu, co-chairman of the main opposition United Democratic Party (UDP), Tuesday to discuss pending issues especially the U.S. beef deal, a party spokesperson said Monday. The party would be willing to support parliamentary approval of the FTA with the U.S., if the Lee administration positively responds to its call for renegotiating the beef deal, party sources said.

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7. ROK Korean War Atrocities

Associated Press (Charles Hanley and Jae-Soon Chang, "THOUSANDS KILLED IN 1950 BY US'S KOREAN ALLY", Daejeon, 2008/05/19) reported that during the early days of the Korean War, with U.S. military officers sometimes present, ROK army and police emptied prisons, lined up detainees and shot them in the head, dumping the bodies into hastily dug trenches. Others were thrown into abandoned mines or into the sea. Women and children were among those killed. They were "the most tragic and brutal chapter of the Korean War," said historian Kim Dong-choon, a member of a 2-year-old government commission investigating the killings. Hundreds of sets of remains have been uncovered so far, but researchers say they are only a tiny fraction of the deaths. The commission estimates at least 100,000 people were executed.

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8. Japan-ROK Territorial Dispute

Yomiuri Shimbun ("EDUCATION MINISTRY: TAKESHIMA JAPANESE SOIL", Tokyo, 2008/05/18) reported that the Japanese Education, Science and Technology Ministry will incorporate a description of the Takeshima/Tokdo islets as "Japanese territory" in its handbook on the revised curriculum guideline for social studies classes at middle schools, The Yomiuri Shimbun learned Saturday. The previous curriculum guidelines and handbooks have only referred to the territorial dispute between Japan and Russia over the Kunashiri, Etorofu, Shikotan and Habomai islands, known as the northern territories in Japan.

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "SEOUL SLAMS TOKYO OVER DOKDO", Seoul, 2008/05/19) reported that the ROK expressed strong regret Monday over Tokyo's alleged plan to describe the islets of Dokdo/Takeshima as part of its territory. ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Yu Myung-hwan called in Japanese Ambassador to Seoul Toshinori Shigeie to deliver a message of protest. The Japanese envoy said Tokyo has not made an official decision on the plan and he will report Seoul's position to his government, ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said.

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9. War Criminals from World War II

Asahi Shimbun (Akira Nikano, "PLANNED BILL AIMS TO REDRESS ", Tokyo, 2008/05/19) reported that a group of Japanese lawmakers plans to submit a bill to the Diet mandating government financial compensation for Korean and Taiwanese former Class B and Class C war criminals and their surviving families. At the Allied Forces war trials, 321 Koreans and Taiwanese were convicted as "Japanese" of war crimes. The group included 23 Koreans and 26 Taiwanese who were executed. The lawmakers' group will propose the government pay 3 million yen in compensation to each former Class-B and C war criminal, in "a humanitarian spirit."

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10. Unexploded Ordnance from World War II

Associated Press ("US WWII BOMB DEFUSED IN TOKYO", Tokyo, 2008/05/18) reported that a Japanese fire official said more than 16,000 people were evacuated from a Tokyo suburb while an unexploded 1-ton bomb believed was defused. The bomb was believed to have been dropped by the U.S. military during World War II. The bomb, believed to have been dropped by a B-29 bomber, was found by construction workers in March.

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11. Japanese Aid for Quake Victims

Asahi Shimbun ("JAPANESE RESCUE TEAM SUSPENDS OPERATIONS IN CHINA OVER SAFETY CONCERNS", Beichuan, 2008/05/19) reported that a Japanese emergency relief team searching for survivors of the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan province suspended operations Monday due to safety concerns, the team said. Team leader Takashi Koizumi cited an analysis by Chinese experts that showed the danger of "natural dams" formed by landslides collapsing upstream of towns where the Japanese are working.

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12. US Aid to PRC Quake Victims

Associated Press ("US MILITARY PLANES CARRY AID TO CHINA QUAKE VICTIMS", Chengdu, 2008/05/18) reported that two U.S. military planes brought food, tents and lanterns to quake-ravaged central PRC on Sunday, the first assistance from a foreign military since the earthquake. "The current suffering of the people of China as a result of this terrible tragedy is in the thoughts and prayers of the American people," Brig. Gen. Charles Hooper, defense attache at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing who accompanied the shipment, told AP Television News.

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13. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN'S KMT LEADER TO VISIT CHINA", Taipei, 2008/05/17) reported that the chairman of Taiwan's incoming ruling Kuomintang (KMT) is planning to visit the PRC on an invitation from PRC President Hu Jintao, the party said Saturday. "Chairman Wu Poh-hsiung will give condolences on behalf of the KMT and Taiwan over the devastating earthquake in China. He also hopes to build mutual trust ... to help resume negotiations for the interests of people on both sides," said KMT secretary general Wu Den-yi.

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14. PRC Missiles

FAS Security Blog (Hans Kristensen, "EXTENSIVE NUCLEAR MISSILE DEPLOYMENT AREA DISCOVERED IN CENTRAL CHINA", 2008/05/15) reported that analysis of new commercial satellite photos has identified an extensive deployment area with nearly 60 launch pads for medium-range nuclear ballistic missiles in Central PRC near Delingha and Da Qaidam. The new analysis reveals a significantly larger deployment area than previously known, different types of launch pads, command and control facilities, and missile deployment equipment at a large facility in downtown Delingha.

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II. ROK Report

15. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("WHAT TO DO WITH DPRK POLICIES", 2008/05/19) wrote that the DPRK will attempt to have a leading role in Korea Peninsula by keeping a distance from the ROK through a close relationship with the US, and will likely make ROK a competitor to rehabilitate the economy and achieve a political unification at the same time. We must not unconditionally follow nationalism based on blood that DPRK political leaders say to ROK—"the people are one"—but make sure that all the cooperation is connected to the realization of universal value of rights for DPRK citizens to live a human life.

Kookmin Ilbo (Kim Myung-Ho, "ABILITY TO CONTROL SITUATION IN KOREAN PENINSULA", 2008/05/18) wrote that the ROK's DPRK policy is lost now. Although the US and DPRK have discussed the DPRK food crisis since last year, the ROK is in a strange position. US policies dealing with Korea Peninsula keep on evolving according to US national benefit. The ROK's DPRK policy seems to have lost its direction, trapped in the frame of the past that has to be the opposite of the Sunshine Policy of the Kim Dae-Jung and Roh Moo-hyun administration. As President Lee Myung-bak emphasized, national benefit prioritizes the US alliance. The fundamental spirit of alliance is to share values, even if there are difference in national benefits. How prepared is our government's ability to control the situations on the Korean Peninsula?

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16. DPRK Internal Situation

Good Friends ("ROK GOVERNMENT SHOULD QUICKLY BEGIN ITS AID", 2008/05/16) wrote that DPRK citizens, out of food, are fainting as they sustain their lives with porridge. Child thieves thrive, and the number of people committing suicide is skyrocketing to the degree of people not being able to find a coffin to bury the bodies. Even now is not too late. The ROK government should quickly begin its aid to the DPRK. Coming up with a strategy using people's heart—won from the support—that will lead to the denuclearization, opening stage seems to fit the goals of the ROK government.

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