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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Washington Times (Nicholas Kralev, "N. KOREA TO GIVE NUKE FILES TO U.S.", 2008/05/01) reported that the DPRK has tentatively agreed to give the US thousands of records from its Yongbyon nuclear reactor dating back to 1990 to complement an expected declaration of its nuclear programs, administration and congressional officials said. The United States is seeking access to those records, as well as samples from toxic waste and the destruction of the "cooling tower" at the DPRK's main nuclear complex in response to criticism that it is lowering the bar in negotiations with Pyongyang, the officials said. The tentative agreement was reached last week in Pyongyang between Kim Kye-gwan, the chief DPRK negotiator, and Sung Kim, director of the Korea office at the State Department, officials said.

Korea Herald ("FINAL NUKE LIST 'IN TWO WEEKS'", Seoul, 2008/05/02) reported that the DPRK could submit its final nuclear programs declaration within a fortnight as differences over a plutonium program to be included in the list have been narrowed, sources said. "At the latest discussion, North Korea was extremely enthusiastic, asking what they needed to do to get off the list of states sponsoring terrorism," an official said on condition of anonymity. "When the six-party talks resume, the members will be discussing ways to verify and monitor the contents of the submitted declaration," the official said.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES EASIER ARMS SALES, N.K. FUNDING", Washington, 2008/05/01) reported that the US House Foreign Affairs Committee passed legislation that allows

the U.S. Department of Energy to directly finance the DPRK's denuclearization. The legislation waives the Energy Department's budgetary restrictions under what is known as the Glenn Amendment, which applies to countries that have conducted nuclear tests. The legislation gives the president the authority to waive the Glenn Amendment in order to "provide material, direct, and necessary assistance" for the DPRK's denuclearization. The U.S. estimates it would need an additional $50 million for fiscal year 2008 and another $360 million the following year to continue the DPRK's nuclear disablement.

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3. US on DPRK Terror List Status

The Financial Times (Demetri Sevastopulo and Daniel Dombey, "HOUSE DRAWS LINE ON NORTH KOREA", Washington, 2008/05/01) reported that a key congressional committee approved legislation that could complicate US efforts to reach a denuclearisation deal with the DPRK. The House foreign affairs committee unanimously approved a bill that would place conditions on any move by the Bush administration to remove the DPRK from the list of state sponsors of terrorism. If approved by Congress, the measure would require the White House to certify that the DPRK has provided a “complete and correct declaration” of all its nuclear programmes before lifting sanctions.

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. LIKELY TO STRIKE N.KOREA FROM TERROR LIST NEXT MONTH", Washington, 2008/05/02) reported that it seems likely that the DPRK will finally be struck from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism next month if it gives an accurate and full account of its nuclear programs. According to diplomatic sources in Washington, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Monetary Fund will very likely begin discussions on development of and support for DPRK once it is struck from the terrorism list.

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4. Japan on DPRK Terror List Status

Kyodo News ("U.S. UNCHANGED IN MULLING JAPAN STANCE ON DELISTING N. KOREA", Tokyo, 2008/05/01) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said the US has not changed its position of taking into consideration Japan's stance on the DPRK's abduction of its nationals, as the US continues to deliberate on whether to remove Pyongyang from its list of states sponsoring terrorism. "We (Japan) remain unchanged in our basic thinking that the abduction, nuclear and missile issues must all be resolved, and I believe the U.S.-North Korea talks are being conducted with that in mind as well," the Japanese leader told reporters at his office. "The United States knows well the situation involving the abduction issue, and it will deal with the matter based on this (premise). The situation has not changed," Fukuda said.

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5. US on DPRK Human Rights

Agence France-Presse ("US STEPS UP PRESSURE ON NKOREA ON RIGHTS ABUSES", Washington, 2008/03/01) reported that the US stepped up pressure on the DPRK to improve its human rights record even as it pursued talks to end its nuclear weapons drive. President George W. Bush said in a

statement he was "deeply concerned" about the grave human rights conditions in the DPRK, while a key panel of the US House of Representatives passed a bill requiring the appointment of a full-time envoy to work on human rights issues in the DPRK. "I am deeply concerned by the stories of divided families, harsh conditions, and suffering," Bush said, as he marked "North Korea Freedom Week" devoted to promoting freedom and human rights for North Koreans and to focus the world's attention on their suffering.

Korea Times ("SENATOR TIES ENVOY APPOINTMENT TO NK HUMAN RIGHTS", Washington, 2008/05/02) reported that Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) said Thursday he will continue to oppose Kathleen Stephens nomination to be the next ambassador to Seoul until the Bush administration addresses the DPRK human rights issues. Brownback said he would withhold his support "until we can get some human rights movement taking place in the six-party talks, or some clear commitments to deal with the human rights issues which are not being addressed."

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap ("GOV'T APPROVES SOUTH-NORTH KOREAN EVENT MARKING JUNE 2000 SUMMIT", Seoul, 2008/05/01) reported that the government has approved the hosting of a joint ROK-DPRK event to mark the eighth anniversary of the historic June 2000 summit in Seoul, a local civic group said. The Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation (KCRC) said Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong agreed that the gathering should take place in the ROK capital, as agreed upon in November.

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "S. KOREA READY TO ACCEPT N.K. OFFER FOR DIALOGUE", Seoul, 2008/05/02) reported that the ROK is ready to accept any DPRK offer for dialogue, following the ROK President Lee Myung-bak's proposal to stablish liaison offices in both countries, a high-level government official said Friday. "We're ready to hold dialogue anytime if North Korea reacts positively to the proposal and offers a way to discuss the matter," the government official told reporters, asking to remain anonymous. Seoul wants to discuss all pending issues between the two Koreas "in an open and straightforward manner," including how to implement various inter-Korean accords that have so far been made, once dialogue is resumed, he stressed.

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7. Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, S. KOREA EYE 3-WAY TOP NUKE DELEGATES' TALKS WITH U.S. SOON ", Tokyo, 2008/05/01) reported that Japanese and the ROK representatives to the six-party talks on the DPRK's denuclearization agreed to hold a trilateral dialogue among the top negotiators from Japan, the ROK and the United States soon to press DPRK for a full account of its nuclear arms and development programs. Akitaka Saiki, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, said Seoul's deputy chief delegate Hwang Jun Guk expressed understanding at talks in Tokyo of Japan's opposition to removing the DPRK from the U.S. blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism prior to progress on resolving past abductions.

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8. DPRK Military

Korea Herald ("KIM JONG-IL INCREASES MILITARY TOURS TO TOUGHEN CONTROL: LAWMAKER", 2008/05/01) reported that quoting an unnamed intelligence source, a ROK lawmaker said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has recently stepped up his visits to army bases to toughen his grip on the military growingly discontented with the new conservative government in Seoul, reported Yonhap News Agency. "I have been hearing Kim has recently bolstered his visits," Jung Hyung-keun said in a telephone interview. Jung said Kim has increasingly empowered his military subordinates as he needed their support to push forward inter-Korean economic cooperation projects forged with the previous Roh Moo-hyun government.

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9. Sino-DPRK Trade Relations

People's Daily Online ("HANGZHOU GAME SERVICE OUTSOURCING BASE TO MAKE UP 80 PCT OF DOMESTIC ANIMATION PRODUCTION", 2008/05/01) reported that Hangzhou national animation game public service platform of Zhejiang Province in east PRC, and the city governments of Dandong and Kuandian county in Liaoning Province, northeast PRC, signed a cooperation agreement concerning the PRC-DPRK animation game service outsourcing base. The main reason to select Dandong city as the PRC-DPRK animation game service outsourcing base is aimed to draw the DPRK's animation game talents to Dandong. Xu Aiqiao, chairwoman of the Hangzhou national animation game public service platform limited, said that the DPRK has become the global animation industry processing "plant".

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10. DPRK Food Supply

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA'S FOOD CRISIS BRINGING STARVATION: AID GROUP ", Seoul, 2008/05/01) reported that the DPRK's food crisis has already seen some people starve to death amid fears of another famine, according to an aid group which works in the DPRK. People in remote rural towns in the province of South Pyongan are dying of starvation, the ROK's Good Friends organisation said in a newsletter. It said local government officials fear hunger may cause massive deaths by starvation in the province and elsewhere unless the government takes urgent action and resumes suspended food rations.

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11. ROK Aid to DPRK

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "SEOUL WILL SEND HUMANITARIAN AID IF NORTH KOREA WANTS", Seoul, 2008/05/02) reported that the ROK government will consider sending humanitarian aid to Pyongyang if it is asked for, a top government official said Friday. "Conjecture has been made on a North Korean food crisis based on decreased crop yield and crop price hikes,'' the official, asking to remain anonymous, told reporters. "The South Korean government will provide humanitarian assistance to the North without any conditions if Pyongyang calls for it.'' He added

that the humanitarian aid will be given regardless of progress on the nuclear issue.

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12. ROK-PRC Relations

Korea Herald ("CHINESE CONSULATE SUSPECTED OF MOBILIZING STUDENTS FOR TORCH RELAY", Seoul, 2008/05/02) reported that on or around April 20, a Busan-based PRC consul in charge of education affairs, surnamed Zhang, requested that Silla University in Busan offer transportation for its Chinese students to take part in the Olympic torch relay in Seoul, according to the Busan Metropolitan Agency and school officials. "Following requests from both the consulate and an association of Chinese students here, we sponsored them with transportation for the sake of their safety," said an official at Silla University. A newspaper reported yesterday that embassy officials provided more than 900,000 won ($900) to a Chinese students' group in Busan and provided uniforms and flags.

Korea Times (Kim Tae-jong, "CHINESE EMBASSY DENIES MOBILIZING STUDENTS", Seoul, 2008/05/02) reported that the PRC Embassy denied Friday that it mobilized students studying in the ROK to support the Olympic torch relay in Seoul last Sunday. "Who said so? I think such reports soil Korean journalism,'' Zhao Dengyu, second secretary and consul for the embassy told reporters. "I think they have only dealt with the bad aspects without introducing the 99 percent of good things." His statement came as he accompanied a Chinese student accused of assaulting a Korean man to a court hearing.

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13. US-ROK Trade Relations

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "LEE SEEKS TO QUELL MAD-COW SCAREMONGERS", Seoul, 2008/05/02) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak expressed concern Friday that the U.S. beef safety issue was being politicized by the opposition parties and progressive civic groups amid whirling rumors among the public about the dangers of mad cow disease. Lee directed his Cabinet ministers to come up with comprehensive measures to publicize the truth and myths about the safety of American beef, presidential spokesman Lee Dong-kwan said.

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14. Japan SDF Role

Kyodo News ("RULING FINDING ASDF DISPATCH TO IRAQ UNCONSTITUTIONAL FINALIZED", Nagoya, 2008/05/02) reported that a Nagoya High Court ruling that found Japan's dispatch of the Air Self-Defense Force to Iraq unconstitutional was finalized at midnight Thursday as plaintiffs did not appeal. The finalization of the April 17 ruling means the government will continue to dispatch the ASDF despite the judicial judgment that the ASDF's airlift mission to Baghdad violates the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution. The state could not appeal as it won the suit. The plaintiffs did not appeal because they believe they have effectively won the suit given the court's finding that the dispatch was unconstitutional.

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15. Sino-Japanese Relations

Kyodo ("FUKUDA WILLING TO ATTEND BEIJING OLYMPICS OPENING CEREMONY", Tokyo, 2008/05/02) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda expressed willingness Friday to attend the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics on Aug. 8. ''I hope I can go...But I haven't yet decided,'' Fukuda told reporters. If Fukuda does go, it will be the first time in 20 years that a Japanese prime minister attends the ceremony. In 1988, then Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita attended the opening ceremony of the Seoul Olympics.

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16. Sino-US Military Relations

The Associated Press (Pamela Hess, "CIA DIRECTOR: CHINA, TERRORISM, POPULATION SHAPE SECURITY", Washington, 2008/05/01) reported that the PRC is likely to be a political and economic competitor by the middle of the century but should not be treated as an "inevitable enemy" of the US, CIA Director Michael Hayden said. He warned, however, that the PRC would likely be viewed as an adversary if Beijing uses its growing global influence in support of its own narrow interests at the cost of peace and economic stability. "If Beijing begins to accept greater responsibility for the health of the international system — as all global powers should — we will remain on a constructive, even if competitive, path. If not, the rise of China begins to look more adversarial," he said.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse (P. Parameswaran, "US AIR FORCE PLANNED NUCLEAR STRIKE ON CHINA OVER TAIWAN: REPORT", Washington, 2008/05/01) reported that the US Air Force had considered a plan to drop nuclear bombs on the PRC during a confrontation over Taiwan in 1958 but it was overruled, declassified documents showed. When he learned about it, President Dwight Eisenhower instead required the Air Force to initially use conventional bombs against PRC forces if the crisis escalated, according to previously secret US Air Force history. The president's instructions seemingly astounded the Air Force top brass but the author of one of the studies released said US policymakers recognized that atomic strikes had "inherent disadvantages" because of the fall-out danger in the region as well as the risk of nuclear escalation.

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18. PRC Unrest

The New York Times (Andrew Jacobs, "FIRST TIBETAN DEATH IN UNREST REPORTED BY CHINA", Beijing, 2008/05/01) reported that a gun battle in a rural area of northwest PRC this week left a police officer and a Tibetan dead, according to state-run news media. It was the PRC’s first official admission that security forces have killed any Tibetans in the antigovernment unrest that began in mid-March. According to the official Xinhua News Agency, the gunfight occurred in Qinghai

Province after the police tried to arrest a man who they said had led a group of herders seeking to incite a riot a week after the March 14 disturbances that shook Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

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19. PRC Development

The New York Times (Fred A. Bernstein, "IN INNER MONGOLIA, PUSHING ARCHITECTURE'S OUTER LIMITS", Ordos, 2008/05/01) reported that on April 12, Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample were in the PRC, presenting a concept for a 10,700-square-foot villa to a client, thanks to a booming economy in this resource-rich desert region of Inner Mongolia. Mr. Meredith and Ms. Sample were part of a large group of mostly up-and-coming design teams from 27 countries that descended on Ordos for five days in April at the behest of a local tycoon. Cai Jiang, who made his money in coal and dairy and has lately turned to real estate, had commissioned 100 firms to design individual houses, each large enough to include amenities like servants' quarters and indoor pools, as part of a billion-dollar "cultural district" he is building here.

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II. ROK Report

20. DPRK Food Crisis

Hankuk Ilbo ("ARE WE REALLY JUST GOING TO WATCH MASS DEATH BY STARVATION AMONG DPRK CITIZENS?", 2008/05/02) wrote that warnings of serious food crisis in DPRK are being continually reported. As the fatigue of DPRK aid increases, food aid from the global society has abruptly decreased. Although the ROK is the last reserve for the DPRK to depend on, the DPRK insists that it cannot succumb to the Lee Myung-bak administration asking for food for itself. The ROK government has no choice but to make the decision first. If the ROK insists upon the position of reconsidering only if the DPRK asks—treating humanitarian aid separate from the deadlock in inter-Korean relations—it will face the consequence of allowing mass death by starvation among DPRK citizens.

Goodfriend ("FOOD AID TO DPRK CAN NO LONGER BE POSTPONED", 2008/05/02) wrote that since the arduous march, Goodfriends realized the gravity of food crisis and has asked the ROK government for government-level food aid without conditions to the DPRK. However, in reality, the food aid to DPRK was too late, letting three million victims starve to death. In the DPRK society, a phenomenon very similar to that of ten years ago is happening. However, in this condition, ROK society is still repeating the familiar discussion for ten years. We must never forget that the best human rights policy is a right to life protection policy that gives life to dying people.

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21. U.S. Policy Toward DPRK

Saegae Ilbo (Kook Ki-Yeon, "TIME HAS COME FOR BUSH'S DECISION ON BUILDING TOWARD DPRK", 2008/05/02) wrote that as the US remains willing to continue the negotiations with the DPRK despite the disclosure of the DPRK-Syria nuclear connection, those who stay strict on the DPRK in the US are showing strong opposition. The time has come for the Bush administration to decide whether it will end the negotiations in an incomplete compromise partially solving the problem or stick to its principles for a complete solution by handing the problem over to the next administration.

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