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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("U.S. ENVOY STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF N.K. NUCLEAR VERIFICATION ", Washington, 2008/05/21) reported that the top US nuclear envoy said Thursday that the DPRK's nuclear disclosure has to be verified rigorously, calling it the "hallmark" of denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula. "I want to emphasize it's verification that is the hallmark of this entire process," said Christopher Hill at a forum.

Reuters (Arshad Mohammed, "HILL TO MEET N.KOREAN OFFICIAL NEXT WEEK: SOURCE", Washington, 2008/05/20) reported that US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill is expected to meet a senior DPRK official in Beijing next week to discuss efforts to get Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear programs, a diplomatic source said. The talks between Hill and Kim Kye-gwan, the DPRK's top nuclear negotiator, would occur as Washington appears upbeat about the chances Pyongyang will produce an overdue declaration of its nuclear programs as required under a multilateral deal.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("U.S. SENATE OKS ECONOMIC, DISABLEMENT FUND FOR N.K.", Washington, 2008/05/22) reported that the Senate passed the fiscal year 2008 war supplemental legislation that includes US\$15 million in economic support funds (ESF) for the DPRK and lifts restrictions on financing Pyongyang's nuclear dismantlement. Out of \$1.13 billion approved for ESF, the bill gives

\$15 million to the DPRK to fund "critical health, economic and security needs." The amount is much higher than the \$2 million initially sought by the State Department. The department had spent \$25 million on ESF for the DPRK in fiscal year 2007.

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3. US, ROK, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

RIA Novosti ("NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE TO BE DISCUSSED IN MOSCOW NEXT WEEK", Moscow, 2008/05/22) reported that Russia, the US and the ROK will continue talks on the denuclearization of DPRK in Moscow next week, a Russian Foreign Ministry source said. Kim Sook, Seoul's top negotiator at six-nation talks, and US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill are expected to arrive in Moscow next week. They will hold negotiations with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin, the new head of the Russian delegation to six-nation talks.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

IFES NK Brief ("SOUTH KOREA TO EASE REGULATIONS ON DPRK VENTURES", 2008/05/22) reported that earlier this month, the ROK government announced that it would seek to relax regulations concerning cooperative ventures and exchanges with the DPRK. On May 8, the Ministry of Unification announced plans to abolish the system granting (or denying) permission to individuals involved in these ventures, and to maintain only the system through which it grants authority to carry out specific projects. The new plan includes measures for these import and export regulations to be loosened so that it is only the goods that need review, not the people involved in the trade. In addition, trucks and other equipment used to carry goods across the border will be certified for a period of five years, more than twice as long as the current two-year licensing system.

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5. Inter-Korean Maritime Border

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH'S VIOLATIONS OF SEA LIMIT LINE ON THE RISE", 2008/05/22) reported that the DPRK has violated the western inter-Korean sea border three times this year, Defense Ministry officials said yesterday, amid worsening ties between the ROK and the DPRK after the launch of the hard-line Lee Myung-bak administration. The violations, however, are "nothing new" and should not be seen as an attempt to escalate tensions at the border where two naval clashes have left dozens of troops killed or injured on both sides, they said. Nonetheless, the DPRK's repeated violations of the Northern Limit Line have put the ROK Navy on alert, an official said.

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6. ROK on DPRK Food Shortage

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "SOUTH KOREA SAYS MASSIVE FAMINE UNLIKELY IN NORTH", Seoul, 2008/05/23) reported that the DPRK's food shortages are unlikely to lead to a

massive famine like the one that killed up to 2 million people in the 1990s, an ROK National Intelligence Service intelligence agency official said Friday. The official told the National Assembly that the DPRK faces a shortfall of about 1.2 million tons of food this year but international aid is expected to address some of the shortage.

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7. ROK Food Aid to the DPRK

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee , "NEARLY HALF LINK FOOD AID WITH NUKE TALKS: POLL", 2008/05/22) reported that nearly half of South Koreans believe that food and fertilizer aid to DPRK should be provided according to progress in the denuclearization talks, a Unification Ministry survey showed. Of the 1,000 adults surveyed by Media Research on May 19, 45.6 percent said the aid should be offered when there are developments in the nuclear talks, the ministry said. Another 14.1 percent said the aid should be provided "unconditionally," while 29.3 percent said the DPRK must request it first. Almost 9 percent said the Seoul government should not assist the DPRK at all.

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8. US-ROK Trade Relations

Korea Times (Kim Yon-se, "COURT MAY REVIEW CONSTITUTIONALITY OF US BEEF DEAL", Seoul, 2008/05/23) reported that some lawyers say the scheduled notification of the government's decision to allow U.S. beef imports without the approval of the National Assembly could be unconstitutional. Citing paragraph 1 of Article 60 of the Constitution, they regard the "agreed minutes" on the ROK's full-opening of the beef market to U.S. products as a "treaty" which requires yes-or-no votes from lawmakers.

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9. ROK, Japan Bird Flu Outbreaks

Chosun Ilbo ("LOCAL BIRD FLU VIRUS MATCHES STRAIN FOUND IN JAPAN", 2008/05/22) reported that researchers have found that strains of bird flu found in the ROK and Japan this year are almost genetically the same. The National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service said that the genetic makeup of a strain of bird flu sampled from chickens in Gimje, South Jeolla Province was 99.7 percent identical to a sample from swans found in Japan's Akita prefecture. The finding gives grounds to analysis that the latest outbreak of avian influenza may have originated from migratory birds.

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10. Japan Defense

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("DEFENSE MINISTRY FLOATS INTERNAL REFORMS", 2008/05/22) reported that the Defense Ministry has produced a set of proposals aimed at internal reform that would allow its operations to be managed by mixed units of personnel drawn from both civilian and uniformed

staff. The plans said a series of scandals involving the ministry and Self-Defense Forces, including confidential information leaks and bribery, stemmed from "organizational problems." Based on this, the ministry proposes that functions of administrative bureaus staffed by civilians, Ground Staff Office, Maritime Staff Office and Air Staff Office be split into three parts, which would be jointly managed by the ministry's civilian and uniformed personnel.

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11. Japan Foreign Policy

Kyodo News ("FUKUDA VOWS GREATER COMMITMENT TO ASIA IN KEY FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH ", Tokyo, 2008/05/22) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda vowed in a key foreign policy speech that Japan will take initiatives to promote further growth in the Asia-Pacific region by collaborating with Southeast Asian economies and pledging efforts at "peace building." Calling the Association of Southeast Asian Nations a partner that shares a future vision with Japan, Fukuda proposed increased economic cooperation with the regional grouping as well as an initiative to build a network with other Asia-Pacific nations to better prepare for disasters and pandemics such as bird flu.

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12. Japan-India Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, INDIA MINISTERS AGREE TO FURTHER TIES ON CLIMATE, TRADE", Tokyo, 2008/05/21) reported that Japan and India agreed to continue cooperation on climate change and seek a free trade agreement, with Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura telling his counterpart over the phone that strengthening relations with India is among the most important tasks in Japanese foreign policy. On climate change, Komura told Mukherjee that Japan plans to send Mutsuyoshi Nishimura, special advisor to the Cabinet, to India for talks over Japan's proposal to halve global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and to calculate potential emission reductions on a sector-by-sector basis.

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13. PRC Earthquake

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "MORE THAN 80,000 DEAD OR MISSING IN CHINA QUAKE ", Yingxiu, 2008/05/22) reported that more than 80,000 people are dead or missing from the PRC's worst earthquake in decades, the government said on Thursday, as concerns rose that disease, the rainy season and aftershocks could bring yet more pain. Ten days after the magnitude 7.9 quake rocked the mountainous southwest of the country, relief efforts focused on the 5 million homeless and the millions of others facing disease and possible "secondary disasters." The government implored the international community to provide more relief aid, saying they needed more than 3 million tents and that just 400,000 had so far reached the disaster zone.

The Associated Press (William Foreman and Anita Chang, "CHINA LEADERS GRAPPLE WITH POLITICAL AFTERSHOCKS", Xinhua, 2008/05/22) reported that PRC leaders moved to contain the political aftershocks of last week's deadly earthquake, promising a big rebuilding fund, reining in the

recently aggressive media and trying to keep despair from turning to anger in the disaster zone. Although Beijing has mounted an energetic military mobilization in response to a quake that has left an estimated 50,000 dead and 5 million homeless across Sichuan province, the immense challenge means help is not arriving fast enough. Mindful of the problem and the growing discontent, Premier Wen Jiabao announced a \$10 billion reconstruction fund and ordered all agencies to cut spending by 5 percent to free up already budgeted money, state media reported. Wen also called a halt to new state building projects.

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14. Cross Strait Relations

BBC News ("CHINA LOOKS TO CLOSER TAIWAN TIES", 2008/05/22) reported that the PRC and Taiwan are working to resume dialogue and have a rare opportunity to improve relations, a senior PRC official has said. In a speech, Beijing's top official for Taiwan, Chen Yunlin, said there had been "major positive changes" in the situation in Taiwan. In a speech reported by Xinhua news agency, the PRC official said both sides were working to restart dialogue. The PRC respected the "desire of Taiwan compatriots to be masters of their own destiny", he said, but would continue to oppose "splittist activities". The two sides should "establish mutual trust, set aside disputes and differences and create a win-win", he added.

BBC News ("TAIWAN SAYS CHINA TALKS TO RESUME", Taipei, 2008/05/23) reported that Taiwan and Beijing will resume direct talks next month for the first time in a decade, Lai Shin-yuan, chairwoman of the island's Mainland Affairs Council, says. Lai told reporters, "You will see very soon in June the beginning of institutional negotiations between the two sides." She said she was cautiously optimistic that direct transport links between the two sides, which were halted in 1949, could resume by July.

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15. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

PTI ("BOUNDARY TALKS WITH INDIA IN PROGRESS: CHINA", 2008/05/22) reported that the PRC today said its talks with India on the long-festering boundary problem were "making progress" but "it takes time" to resolve such issues as it insisted on maintaining border tranquility to ensure that there were "no minor clashes." The Special Representatives of both countries were "working very efficiently" and making progress but "it takes time and strenuous efforts to reach the final agreement," PRC Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs He Yafei told a delegation of journalists from SAARC nations.

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16. PRC, Russia on US MD

Associated Press ("CHINA, RUSSIA CONDEMN US MISSILE DEFENSE", Beijing, 2008/05/23) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Friday condemned a U.S. plan for a global missile defense system. The two said in a joint statement that the plan "does not help to maintain strategic balance and stability or strengthen international efforts

to control nonproliferation." Medvedev arrived Friday in Beijing on his first overseas trip since his inauguration this month.

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17. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA, CHINA CLOSE TO DEAL ON ESPO OIL PIPELINE BRANCH", Moscow, 2008/05/22) reported that state-owned Russian oil firm Rosneft and the PRC's CNPC are in the final stages of talks to build an oil pipeline branch from Russia's Far East to the PRC, Russia's president said. "We have a basic agreement on this [branch]... We hope that all the main provisions, the main parameters for future cooperation will be agreed," Dmitry Medvedev said in an interview with PRC journalists ahead of his visit to the PRC.

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18. Sino-Russian Trade Relations

RIA Novosti ("CHINA-RUSSIA BILATERAL TRADE HITS \$48 BLN IN 2007", Beijing, 2008/05/22) reported that bilateral trade between Russia and the PRC reached \$48.2 billion in 2007, with PRC exports to Russia doubling over the last four years as Russian exports fell slightly, Russia's trade mission in Beijing said. Speaking on the eve of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's May 23-24 visit to the PRC, Sergei Tsyplakov said that Russian exports to the PRC were dominated by raw materials, while the share of Russian machinery and technological products, including military hardware, was declining.

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II. PRC Report

19. Civil Society and the 512 Earthquake

Public Welfare Times ("GREENPEACE HELPED SCREEN CHEMICAL HIDDEN DANGER IN EARTHQUAKE AREAS", 2008/05/21) reported that fire, gas leak, water pollution.....all these dangers could happen in any moment after the earthquake. After the 512 Earthquake occurred, Greenpeace delivered staffs immediately to the disaster areas to monitor and assess the possible secondary environmental disaster. Greenpeace staffs visited more than 10 chemical plants and found that most of them had stopped production complied with relevant regulation, but there were still some small factories secretly started, causing great environmental and security risks. Such situation was notified quickly to the Government by Greenpeace, and it also suggested an immediate and more thorough investigation to eliminate those risks.

LoveKnowAction Instisute ("LOVEKNOWACTION LAUNCHED A FUNDRAISING PROPOSAL FOR HAEMOPHILIACS AND DISABLED PERSONS IN THE DISASTER AREAS", 2008/05/21) reported that among that hundreds of thousands of earthquake victims, there are some haemophiliacs (people

who suffer from hemophilia) and disabled persons. They are more vulnerable, because in addition to the basic supplies such as clean water, food, mosquito nets, haemophiliacs also need ice packs, crutches and Coagulation Factor 8. Victims who are disabled persons also face more difficulties, such as lack of crutches, wheelchairs, special drugs, familiar communication rooms and so on. LoveKnowAction Institute, a NGO who has a long-term concern about the rights of vulnerable groups, urges everybody to actively contribute and support us in carrying out more active and effective work for haemophiliacs and disabled persons in the disaster areas. Our raised fund will be mainly used for the purchase of coagulation factor, crutches and other mobility aids, wheelchairs, and the provision of the relevant volunteer rescue work.

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20. PRC Trade Associations

ChinaNPO website, <http://www.chinanpo.gov.cn> ("EVALUATION OF TRADE ASSOCIATIONS FORUM HELD IN BEIJING", 2008/05/22) reported that on May 20-21, Evaluation of Trade Associations Forum was held in Beijing. More than 20 representatives of relevant directors, experts, and audit staffs from accounting firms had attended the Forum, including China Furniture Association, China Construction Enterprise Management Association, China Cotton Association, China Chamber of Commerce for External Contracted Projects, China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing, China Welfare Fund for the Handicapped, China Legal Aid Foundation, etc. Participants agreed that, at present, the evaluation of trade associations will promote greatly on the action regulation, development guidance, influence strengthen and image improvement of the trade associations.

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III. ROK Report

21. DPRK Internal Situation

Goodfriends ("DEMAND 2 HUNDRED THOUSAND TON URGENT FOOD SUPPORTING OF KOREA GOVERNMENT", 2008/05/22) wrote that an ROK government official stated that this year's food shortages in the DPRK are not such a serious situation, and even though they have difficulty, it is not much as during the "Arduous March." We have to find out on what basis the official is making this judgment. News from around the DPRK in May is quite similar with the "arduous march" period. The ROK government should start providing support to the DPRK quickly.

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:
nautilus@nautilus.org