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I. Napsnet

1. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press (George Jahn, "DIPLOMATS: CHINA IS MIDDLEMAN BETWEEN NKOREA, IAEA", Vienna, 2008/05/26) reported that the U.S. has agreed to share documents on the DPRK's nuclear program with the International Atomic Energy Agency and is ready to enlist the PRC as the middleman in the delicate process, diplomats said. They said that Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill agreed to the plan with PRC officials and IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei in the past two weeks. One of the diplomats said the U.S. considered the use of IAEA resources and personnel helpful in cross-checking the information provided to Washington by the DPRK. He added that both Washington and the IAEA hoped that getting the agency involved would be the start of the process that would ultimately result in Pyongyang returning to the Nonproliferation Treaty.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "TWO KOREAS' NUCLEAR ENVOYS MAY MEET IN BEIJING", Seoul, 2008/05/26) reported that ROK chief nuclear negotiator Kim Sook is open to meeting with his DPRK counterpart Kim Kye-gwan in Beijing later this week, a senior official Foreign Ministry said Monday. Kim Sook is scheduled to travel to Russia and he may stop in Beijing, added the official. "It would be best if they could meet each other before the resumption of the six-way talks," he said, asking not to be named. "We don't have a reason to avoid such a meeting, if the North wants one."

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3. Japanese Abductees Issue

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "US, N. KOREA TO ADDRESS JAPANESE ABDUCTION", Seoul, 2008/05/25) reported that chief nuclear negotiators from the United States and the DPRK are likely to discuss the fate of Japanese citizens allegedly abducted by Pyongyang during the Cold War era when they meet in Beijing this week, an ROK diplomatic source said Sunday. The move is part of

U.S. efforts to soothe the concerns of Japan before starting the process of removing Pyongyang from a list of countries that sponsor terrorism in return for the communist state's forthcoming nuclear declaration, the source said. The source added that the DPRK may make a surprise announcement on the kidnapping issue after the Beijing meeting.

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4. DPRK Political Succession

Donga Ilbo ("GROUP LEADERSHIP LIKELY TO LEAD N. KOREA: EXPERTS", Seoul, 2008/05/26) reported that a recent report showed that more than half of the 22 Ph.D. researchers at the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis expect a form of group leadership will take place in the DPRK after Kim Jong-il dies. The majority of them said Kim's second son Kim Jong-chul, 27 is the leader's favorite, but first son Kim Jong-nam, 37, and brother-in-law Chang Song-taek, 62, are thought to have a stronger power base for succession. The U.S. government reportedly posted the report on North Korea's succession on the Open Source Center on May 14. This report is an English translation of "The characteristics of Kim Jong Il's successive regime in North Korea and the forecast of the U.S. policy adjustment," written by Baek Seung-joo, leader of pending defense issues team at the institute upon Washington's request.

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5. Sino-ROK Relations

Yonhap ("S. KOREA-CHINA SUMMIT EXPECTED TO ADVANCE STALLED HOTLINE TALKS", Seoul, 2008/05/25) reported that this week's summit between the leaders of the ROK and the PRC is expected to provide momentum to stalled efforts to set up military hotlines, ROK defense officials said Sunday. The defense ministers of the two countries agreed last year to establish the hotlines between their navies and air forces to avoid accidental clashes and cooperate in rescue operations. They initially planned to set up the hotlines at their operational commands but the PRC later proposed the establishment at a lower-level of command. "The Chinese military seems to have made the proposal in consideration of its relations with the North Korean military," an ROK military official said. "But there will be some progress as China is well aware of the need to set up hotlines."

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6. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("S. KOREA TO DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW U.S. BEEF IMPORT PACT", Seoul, 2008/05/26) reported that the ROK will delay the implementation of a new beef import pact for a few days to better reflect domestic concerns over quarantine inspections, the government said Monday. Agriculture ministry spokesman Kim Hyeong-soo said there will be no official posting of the sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) standards later in the day or on Tuesday, as originally anticipated. "The posting of the SPS will be made within the week, but more time is required to talk with cattle farmers and other government ministries," he said.

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7. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA TO FACE OFF WITH JAPAN OVER MARITIME PLACE-NAMES", Seoul, 2008/05/26) reported that the ROK Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs said Sunday it decided to demand modification of names of undersea sites near the Dokdo Islets. From as early as next year, the decision making process of the International Hydrographic Organization's Sub-Committee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN) will be changed from consensus to majority vote. Until now, the ROK government abstained from such a move, fearing that it would be rejected because of the single Japanese member on the 12-member committee.

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8. US Military in Japan

Associated Press (Yuri Kageyawa, "JAPANESE FILE APPEAL AGAINST US AIRCRAFT CARRIER", Tokyo, 2008/05/26) reported that Japanese seeking to block a nuclear-powered U.S. warship from being permanently based in Japan took their lawsuit to a higher court Monday. The latest move by the 248 plaintiffs follows the May 12 rejection by a district court of their lawsuit demanding a halt to harbor work to accommodate the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, which is scheduled to be based at Yokosuka starting August.

Asahi Shimbun ("FIRE MAY DELAY NUKE-POWERED FLATTOP", Yokosuka, 2008/05/26) reported that the Aug. 19 deployment of USS the George Washington in Japan could be delayed after a fire aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, U.S. Naval Forces Japan Commander Rear Adm. James Kelly said Saturday. The Navy said Thursday's fire, extinguished within a few hours, did not affect the safety of the nuclear reactors.

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9. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN RULING PARTY CHIEF IN CHINA FOR LANDMARK MEETING", Beijing, 2008/05/26) reported that the head of Taiwan's ruling party arrived in the PRC on Monday for the highest-level contact with the communist mainland's leadership in 60 years. Kuomintang chairman Wu Poh-hsiung landed in the eastern city of Nanjing, with his arrival broadcast on national television. "We hope that through our continuous mutual efforts we can put aside our differences, work on our common interests and create a win-win situation," Wu said in remarks delivered at a welcoming ceremony on the airport tarmac. "Inviting us to visit in the midst of such a large earthquake disaster shows that cross-strait ties are extremely important."

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10. Sino-Russian Relations

Associated Press (Vladimir Isachenkov, "RUSSIAN LEADER MEDVEDEV DEFENDS RUSSIA-CHINA TIES", Beijing, 2008/05/24) reported that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday praised

recent close ties between Moscow and Beijing as a key to global stability and said he wants to strengthen their strategic partnership. "Some don't like such strategic cooperation between our countries, but we understand that this cooperation serves the interests of our people, and we will strengthen it, regardless of whether others like it or not," the Russian leader said.

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11. PRC Earthquake

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA AFTERSHOCK DESTROYS 71,000 HOMES; 1 KILLED", Chengdu, 2008/05/26) reported that a powerful aftershock destroyed tens of thousands of homes in central PRC on Sunday, killing two people and straining recovery efforts from the country's worst earthquake in three decades. The China National Seismic Network said the 6.0 aftershock was the strongest of dozens in the nearly two weeks after the disaster.

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12. PRC Earthquake

Associated Press ("DEATH TOLL FROM QUAKE RISES TO 62,664", Beijing, 2008/05/25) reported that PRC cabinet spokesman Guo Weimin said Sunday that the death toll has risen to 62,664 from the massive earthquake in Sichuan Province. He added that 23,775 people are still missing.

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II. PRC Report

13. PRC Civil Society and the 512 Earthquake

NPO Information Center, <http://www.npo.com.cn/> ("3 FOUNDATIONS JOINTLY PROPOSED AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF RELIEF OPERATIONS INFORMATION FROM NGOS", 2008/05/22) reported that the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, China Youth Development Foundation and the Amity Foundation joint together to make solemn commitments regarding the distribution of earthquake relief as follows: 1. We will strictly comply with relevant laws and related regulations, rules for funds and materials to the collection, and timely post the information on our respective official websites. 2. We will respect the wishes of donors to the use of donated funds and materials. 3. We will establish a tracking and monitoring system to ensure that all donated funds and materials to be effectively used in the disaster areas, directly sent to victims. 4. We will establish a public feedback platform and accept the public's views and suggestions for the use of donated funds and materials, answer public inquiries, take up complaints and allow supervision by the public.

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14. PRC Environment

China Ecological and Environment Forum, <http://forum.eedu.org.cn/index.html> ("NOTICE OF THE FOURTH CHINA ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT FORUM", 2008/05/23) reported that, with the approval of the PRC Department of Environmental Protection, the Fourth China Environment and Development Forum will be held on 18-19 October, 2008, in Beijing Asia Hotel. It is a high-end brand forum hosted by the Department of Environmental Protection and China Environmental Protection Federation. It has been successfully held for three terms, and has a wide range of influence in the field of environmental protection home and abroad. The forum brings together domestic and foreign politicians, academics, business leaders, the media and experts from ENGOs. They study hot environmental issues and provide strategic advice and theory. Nearly 100 domestic and foreign mainstream media reported on it from different perspectives.

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III. ROK Report

15. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap news ("ELEVATION IN ROK-CHINA RELATIONS, REINFORCEMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION", 2008/05/26) wrote that President Lee Myung-bak's visit to the PRC emphasizes the importance of the PRC as having no less influence than that of the US in solution of the DPRK nuclear issue. There are analyses that the possibilities of President Lee asking Chairman Hu for a certain kind of role in improvement of inter-Korean relations cannot be neglected. Now that the inter-Korean conversation is stopped in reality, a possibility of re-establishing a relationship with the DPRK through the PRC with greater influence over the DPRK is being proposed.

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16. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy ("GOVERNMENT NOT BEING ABLE TO FIND THE WAY OUT FOR INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS, RICE AID NECESSARY", 2008/05/23) wrote that the ROK government must accept the 6.15 and 10.4 declaration and begin its rice aid to the DPRK. It is impossible to conclude that the DPRK's political basis has become "open to the US, isolate the ROK," and it will be a double pressure for the ROK's denuclearization, opening, 3000 policy. The lack of the Ministry of National Unification's role in the current administration and absence of subject of DPRK policy are serious problems. The government should manifest its willingness to accept the 6.15 and 10.4 declaration, and begin unconditional rice aid to the DPRK.

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