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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press (Burt Herman, "US, NKOREA DISCUSS NUCLEAR DECLARATION ", Beijing, 2008/05/27) reported that the US and DPRK began talks on the DPRK's delayed nuclear declaration and the US political concessions it will receive in return, including Pyongyang's long-sought goal of being removed from a U.S. terrorism blacklist. US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said he met with his DPRK counterpart, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, to lay out the agenda for more detailed negotiations in the PRC capital.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("CHINA TO MEET DPRK, U.S., ROK, JAPAN IN BEIJING FOR NUCLEAR TALKS PROGRESS", Beijing, 2008/05/27) reported that PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei will hold talks respectively with chief delegates to the six-party talks from the DPRK, the US, the ROK and Japan, said a Foreign ministry spokesman. The five parties, which are expected to exchange views on how to promote the six-party talks process, are working on specific arrangements, said PRC Foreign spokesman Qin Gang at a regular press conference. "We hope other parties involved maintain sufficient and effective two-way communications so as to comprehensively carry out the second-phase actions plan in a balanced matter as soon as possible", he added.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Herald ("NORTH KOREA REFUSES AID FROM S. KOREAN REGION, GOVERNOR SAYS", 2008/05/27) reported that the DPRK is refusing offers of increased humanitarian aid from the ROK's Gyeonggi province, its governor said, after the United Nations warned that the country faces a humanitarian crisis because of food shortages. "We still have about 14.9 billion won ($14.4 million) remaining in funds that we have created specifically for humanitarian aid to North Korea and we want to spend more, but North Korean officials keep saying they don't need aid," Kim Moon Soo said at a briefing in Seoul today.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("KAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX COULD HELP CHANGE N. KOREA: GOV'T OFFICIAL ", Seoul, 2008/05/27) reported that the Kaesong industrial district has the potential to transform the DPRK and help local workers better understand capitalism, a government official said Tuesday. Kim Yeong-tak, head of the Unification Ministry's Kaesong complex project, said in a gathering hosted by an inter-Korean cooperation forum that the 27,000 workers at the industrial park have started realize the importance of corporate profit. He added that North Koreans are also gradually accepting capitalistic work ethics as they come into daily contact with South Koreans.

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5. ROK, DPRK Malaria Outbreak

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "NORTH KOREA FIGHTS OFF MALARIA AS DISEASE HEADS SOUTH ", Seoul, 2008/05/27) reported that the DPRK has greatly reduced malaria infections at home but mosquitoes carrying the disease are crossing the heavily armed border and infecting hundreds each year in the ROK, a provincial governor said. Kim Moon-soo, governor of Gyeonggi province said there were about 60,000 civilian infections in the DPRK in 2003 while in 2007 the number was reduced to an estimated 7,430. In his province, 677 people were infected last year with malaria by mosquitoes that had crossed the no-man's land Demilitarized Zone buffer dividing the two countries.

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6. DPRK Food Supply

Yonhap ("N.K. STOPS DRILLS, SENDS TROOPS TO HELP FARMS: SOURCE", Seoul, 2008/05/27) reported that the DPRK's 1.1-million strong military has halted its regular military exercises amid reports of that the country's food situation is worsening, a source here said Wednesday. The DPRK's armed services usually hold large-scale inspections and scattered exercises around this time of year ahead of a massive regular summer exercise beginning in August, the source said. However, they appear to have abandoned their primary role for now to help raise crops, according to the source, who asked not to be identified.

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7. DPRK Abductee Issue

Mainichi Shimbun ("SEVERAL JAPANESE ALIVE IN NORTH KOREA, READY TO BE SENT HOME, PYONGYANG TELLS U.S.", 2008/05/27) reported that the DPRK has given the US information about several Japanese believed to be abductees, saying there are still a number of them in the DPRK, and hinted at its willingness to send them home, Japanese government sources said. The people mentioned by the DPRK are believed to be separate from the group of 12 Japanese that Tokyo recognizes as abduction victims. It is believed that by suggesting the return of the abductees, the DPRK hopes to bolster the image that it is making progress with the abduction issue, and encourage the US to remove the DPRK from a list of state sponsors of terrorism. It is also believed that the move is intended to sway Japan.

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8. US on DPRK Human Rights

Joongang Ilbo (Kang Chan-ho and Jung Ha-won, "AMBASSADOR'S CONFIRMATION STALLED", Washington, 2008/05/27) reported that key Republican senators are trying to torpedo the appointment of Kathleen Stephens as the new United States ambassador to the ROK. The senators are concerned with Stephens' reluctance to address human rights issues in the DPRK during her confirmation hearing. In a phone interview with Yonhap News, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) said he would withhold support "until we can get some human rights movement taking place in the six-party talks, or some clear commitment to deal with the human rights issues."

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9. Sino-ROK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("SOUTH KOREA AND CHINA CREATE NEW STRATEGIC TIES ", 2008/05/27) reported that in his first visit to the PRC as president, Lee Myung-bak met with his PRC counterpart Hu Jintao at the Great Hall of the People in the PRC capital and agreed to enhance the bilateral relationship by changing the status of their partnership from a "comprehensive and cooperative partnership" to a "strategic and cooperative partnership." Aside from the ROK, the only two countries that hold such strategic partnership status with the PRC are Russia and India. Although the two countries will not seek a military alliance yet, they can now cooperate in almost any field including diplomacy, security, economy, culture and global issues.

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10. Japan Africa Diplomacy

The Financial Times (David Pilling and Barney Jopson, "JAPAN SEEKS TIES WITH AFRICA", 2008/05/27) reported that Yasuo Fukuda will hold 17 hours of bilateral talks with 45 African heads of state, prime ministers and vice-presidents during the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (Ticad IV). Mr Fukuda, who last week promised to double Japan’s annual aid to Africa to $1.8bn (€1.1bn, £900m), is seeking to spread the message that Japan can be a valuable partner in Africa. Japan also hopes to court African leaders for their votes at the United Nations,

important if it is to realise its long-held ambition of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Not least, it wants to maintain or increase access to the minerals, rare metals and oil that are growing scarcer – and more expensive – as rivals, particularly the PRC and India, compete for the resources they need to industrialise.

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11. Sino-Russian Relations

RIA Novosti ("MEDVEDEV PLEDGES TO BUILD STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH CHINA ", 2008/05/27) reported that President Dmitry Medvedev said that Russia and the PRC will continue to develop their strategic partnership despite any objections from third countries. The Russian leader signed a joint declaration with his PRC counterpart Hu Jintao, condemning U.S. moves to establish a global missile defense system, and saying the plans threaten the global strategic balance. He also said new spheres of cooperation should be developed through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), particularly the sphere of energy.

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12. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

IANS ("INDIA SURVEYS SIKKIM BORDER AREA AFTER CHINA LAYS CLAIM", New Delhi, 2008/05/27) reported that seeking to reaffirm its position over a tract of border area in Sikkim, referred to as 'Finger Area' and on which the PRC has laid claim, India said it was conducting a survey in the region. Chief of Army Staff General Deepak Kapoor confirmed that the Indian Army, along with civil authorities, has undertaken a survey on its side in the region. "We are carrying out such exercises in other places as well. But there is no problem between us and the other side," Kapoor told reporters here, downplaying PRC claims on the territory.

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13. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN PARTY CHIEF MEETS TOP CHINESE LEADER", Beijing, 2008/05/27) reported that the leader of Taiwan's new ruling party met with a senior Communist Party official in Beijing, who called for the rivals to peacefully develop their ties through dialogue. The chairman of Taiwan's Nationalist Party arrived Tuesday in Beijing for discussions with Jia Qinglin, the fourth-most-powerful person in the Communist Party. The two sides should peacefully develop relations by shelving their differences and seeking common views, Jia was cited as saying by the PRC's official Xinhua News Agency. Jia also expressed his support for two of Ma's proposals, which called for direct weekend flights between the mainland and Taiwan and expanding the number of mainland tourists allowed to the island.

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14. Sino-US Relations

Washington Post (Edward Cody, "U.S. RESUMES HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE WITH CHINA", 2008/05/27) reported that renewing the U.S.-PRC human rights dialogue after a six-year cutoff, a senior U.S. official urged the PRC government Tuesday to improve its rights record as a way to sweeten the atmosphere for the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing. David J. Kramer, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, said resumption of the formal government-to-government dialogue that was suspended in 2002 should be seen as a first step in that direction. Another round of talks has been scheduled before the end of the year, he said at a news conference.

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15. PRC Earthquake

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "CHINA RUSHES TO EVACUATE 150,000 PEOPLE", Shanghai, 2008/05/27) reported that the PRC authorities are evacuating 150,000 people threatened by possible flooding from a lake in southwest China formed by landslides following this month's earthquake, and military engineers struggled Tuesday to dig sluiceways to drain the water safely. The landslides dammed a major river in Tangjiashan, just north of Beichuan. Relief officials have ordered the immediate evacuation of those in the region whose towns would be swept away if the dam burst. Parts of western Sichuan Province have seen heavy rains in recent days, causing water levels to rise fast on the dammed river.

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16. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA LAUNCHES SECOND OLYMPIC SATELLITE ", Beijing, 2008/05/27) reported that the PRC launched a weather forecasting satellite Tuesday to help predict weather for the Summer Olympics and earthquake recovery work. The Fengyun-3 was launched on a Long March-4C rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi province, the PRC Meteorological Administration said. The satellite entered its preset orbit 20 minutes later, the administration said in a notice on its Web site. It will help the PRC prevent natural disasters and respond to climate change, the notice said.

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17. PRC Nuclear Power

Reuters (Emma Graham-Harrison, "CHINA'S DOMESTIC NUCLEAR PLANS DAMP EXPORT DREAMS", Beijing, 2008/05/27) reported that the PRC's nuclear power firms aim to join its auto and electronic companies as export powerhouses, analysts say, but massive domestic expansion plans may not leave them the capacity to make an overseas push for over a decade. A $1 billion deal signed last week with Russia to build and supply a uranium enrichment plant in the PRC was another step towards civilian nuclear independence, less than two decades after its first nuclear generator came on line. Countries like Vietnam and Indonesia are keen to build plants to convey a sense of modernity and to cut their fuel bills, and see Beijing as the answer to financial and political problems.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Development

Morning Post ("FIRST “CHINA URBAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT” RELEASED", 2008/05/25) reported that the first conference of "China Urban Development Report" was held in Shanghai yesterday, it was noted that the PRC cities have an inadequate storage capacity of freshwater resources, more than 400 cities lack water and the problem is very serious for 110 cities, which accounted for 1/6 of the total city number. The report also showed that only 19% of the land in the PRC was suitable for human habitation. Traffic capacity problems were highlighted. More than 600 cities had roads less than 200,000 km, but they held 50% of the mobility and supported 70% of the socio-economic operation.

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19. PRC Civil Society and the 512 Earthquake

China News Agency (Li Yiqing, Li Ruidan, "LI KA SHING FOUNDATION ASSISTED PEOPLE MAIMED BY EARTHQUAKE", 2008/05/23) reported that the Li Ka Shing Foundation has announced the third round of plans recently to assist earthquake victims, with the cooperative support of China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF). The maimed people of disaster areas (especially the amputees) will be provided with prostheses assembly services and wheelchairs free and quickly. Since the 1980s, Li Ka Shing Foundation has cooperated with CDPF. 14.8 million people with disabilities in the mainland have benefited from it. During their cooperation, 180 prostheses assembly points have been set up with more than 1,000 trained technicians. These technicians will mobilize to the disaster areas to support the operation.

CCTV, http://www.cctv.com/ ("CHILDREN FOUNDATION RECRUITED "TEMPORARY HOME" TO COMFORT CHILDREN IN DISASTER AREA", 2008/05/23) reported that in order to help orphans or children with disabilities in earthquake disaster areas, recently, the Chinese Children Foundation released an initiative to the society to recruit "Temporary Family". The temporary family should have the following conditions: Foster family members must be in good mental health; Have a stable income, a fixed, clean household; The main care member should age between 25-60, with experience and common sense to care for children and provision of psychological comfort and age education.

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III. ROK Report

20. DPRK Nuclear Program

Munhwa Ilbo ("SUDDENLY IMPROVED ROK-CHINA RELATIONS MUST LEAD TO REAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS", 2008/05/28) reported that the PRC government, which hesitated on

improving its relationship with the ROK because of the blood pledge with the DPRK has suggested promotion of ROK-China relations since last January. However, whether this can lead to a real solution of problems two nations have in common is another question. Especially, reinforcing ROK-PRC relations should not cause any damage to the ROK's relationship with the US, which has been elevated to another level. An extraordinary amount of diplomatic power is needed to take advantage of the influence of the PRC solve the DPRK nuclear issue and prevent the DPRK's "open to the US, isolate the ROK" strategy.

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21. DPRK Internal Situation

Goodfriends ("'GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OBSESSED WITH HIDING ALL THE PROBLEMS' ", 2008/05/28) reported that a DPRK citizen living in Pyeongsung criticized government officials concerning the food crisis. He said that the officials "find a cause for the problems as natural disaster or United States economic sanctions, arousing animosity to increase its military budget, which hinders the improvement of quality of life of the public."

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22. Inter-Korea Relations

The Tongil Shinmun ("WILL THE INTER-KOREAN JOINT EVENT BE THE SOLUTION TO THE DEADLOCK?", 2008/05/28) wrote that the commemoration event that celebrates the 8 th anniversary of the 6.15 inter-Korean joint declaration is predicted to be held at Geumgang Mountain in June 15 th . This was from a judgment that there is with more advantage for the ROK to hold the event in coming up with a solution for inter-Korean relations, which are now at a deadlock. Whether the government representatives will participate in the commemoration event or not is also a topic of interest. As the participation of government representatives can be a momentum for continuing the conversation between the nations, many are paying attention to the decisions of ROK and DPRK governments.

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