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I. Napsnet

1. Sino-DPRK Relations

BBC News ("NORTH KOREA'S KIM 'VISITS CHINA'", 2010/05/03) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il may be making a visit to the PRC, reports from the PRC and the ROK suggest. His personal train was said to have crossed into the PRC at the border city of Dandong early on Monday, reportedly bound for Dalian. The ROK government said it could not confirm the reports.

Korea Herald ("KIM EXPECTED TO REQUEST AID FROM CHINA", Seoul, 2010/05/03) reported that most analysts believe that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il will request economic assistance during his visit to the PRC, possibly in return for coming back to the six-party talks. Some, however, predicted that Kim may be seeking to talk things over with the PRC over growing suspicion that the DPRK masterminded the sinking of an ROK warship. "It would be politically and diplomatically difficult to get into a discussion on the Cheonan, both for the North and China," said Baek Seung-joo, a DPRK specialist at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses.

Asahi Shimbun (Atsushi Okudera, Tatsuo Kotoyori, and Tetsu Kobayashi, "BEIJING'S POLITICAL AMBITION ON SHOW IN SHANGHAI", Shanghai, 2010/05/03) reported that the DPRK has a pavilion at the Shanghai expo. According to DPRK sources, Pyongyang signaled to Beijing its intention to participate as early as September 2007. An official at the pavilion acknowledged that the exhibit "was made possible through assistance from China." The theme for the pavilion is prosperity in Pyongyang, and visitors are repeatedly shown video images showing students studying in a classroom under a portrait of leader Kim Jong Il.

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2. Sinking of ROK Naval Vessel

Chosun Ilbo ("HOPE FOR CLUES FROM CHEONAN CCTV FILES", Seoul, 2010/05/03) reported that a civilian-military team investigating the sinking of the Cheonan has retrieved a file of CCTV tapes and is trying to restore the footage. "CCTV cameras were installed at five or six major locations of the ship, such as hallways, ammunition storage, and rear wheelhouse," a defense ministry spokesman said. "If the images are restored, it'll be possible to find important clues to what was going on in the ship when the explosion occurred." A ministry official said, "CCTV cameras have an automatic recording function and store a month's worth of images in a compressed file, so they may still retain images of scenes that had happened right before the explosion. I don't think they still show what happened after the explosion because the internal power was cut off."

Yonhap ("ORIGIN OF METAL FRAGMENTS FROM SHIP SINKING UNDETERMINED", Seoul, 2010/05/01) reported that the origin of aluminum fragments taken from the site where the Cheonan sank cannot be determined at present, a senior government official said Saturday. The official said that one of the four small aluminum pieces and one piece of plastic material may have come from the ship. "At present, it is too early to say if the pieces were from a torpedo or other type of explosive device," he said. The official said the warship's hull was made of steel, but its superstructure above deck was made from lighter aluminum to reduce top-heaviness.

Chosun Ilbo ("SCIENTISTS SAY DIRECT HEAVY TORPEDO SANK CHEONAN", Seoul, 2010/04/30) reported that Bae Myung-jin, a professor at the Sound Engineering Research Lab of Soongsil University, on Thursday said his team analyzed data about the seismic waves generated at the time of explosion of the Cheonan, which were provided by the Korea Meteorological Administration and the Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources. "As a result, we presume that the torpedo ran at the Cheonan at the speed of 65.7 km/h and exploded underwater 2.3 m from the ship with power equivalent to 206 kg of TNT." The team concluded that the ship was probably hit by a PRC-made 206 kg-class Yu-3 heavy torpedo.

Chosun Ilbo ("TORPEDO ATTACK 'COULD BE PROVED BY STATE OF WRECK ALONE'", Seoul, 2010/04/30) reported that ROK government officials say the wrecked hull of the Cheonan could in itself provide powerful evidence what kind of external explosion sank the ship. "We'd better not jump to any conclusion until the final outcome of the investigation, but the salvaged hull itself can constitute evidence," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kim Young-sun said Thursday. A senior government official asked, "Is there decisive evidence other than the salvaged hull? It's important to find shrapnel of an explosive device, but that would be nothing but corroborating evidence." The official added, "Even if we find shrapnel, North Korea will deny that it was from its weaponry. So if we conduct a precision analysis of the hull and determine that it was hit by a torpedo, we'll have secured more than 90 percent of the evidence."

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3. ROK Response to Naval Sinking

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "LEE TO CHAIR MEETING OF TOP MILITARY BRASS", Seoul, 2010/05/02) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak will preside over a meeting with commanding officers from the Army, Navy and Air Force Tuesday. Presidential spokesman Park Sun-kyoo told reporters Sunday that it will be the first time for a sitting president to host a meeting with all commanding officers of the military. "During the meeting, Lee will note what lessons the nation has learned from the sinking of the naval vessel Cheonan and reveal his position as commander-in-chief," said the spokesman.

BBC News ("SOUTH KOREA VOWS TO RETALIATE OVER WARSHIP SINKING", Seoul, 2010/05/02) reported that ROK Defense Minister Kim Tae-young said those responsible for the deaths of 46 sailors on board the Cheonan must "pay a price". Kim promised "punitive action" against "the perpetrators who killed our soldiers." He did not specify what form this could take. "I believe that, by thoroughly and completely getting to the bottom of the incident to the maximum extent possible, we should deal some kind of blow against those forces which made our officers and men sacrifice their lives for their country," the defence minister said on KBS television.

Korea Times (Kim Se-jeong, "MINISTRY DOWNPLAYS VOW TO REVENGE FOR CHEONAN SINKING", Seoul, 2010/04/30) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Defense tried Friday to downplay the remarks made by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Kim Sung-chan, who said Thursday, ``We vow to take revenge on whoever attacked the frigate Cheonan." Ministry spokesman Won Tae-jae said in response that the media's interpretation was blown out of proportion. "The admiral's comments were to reassure families of victims and citizens that the military will prevent similar incidents from recurring. It would be too extreme if his comments were interpreted as if the military would react with force," Won said.

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4. US on ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "US HINTS AT NORTH KOREAN TORPEDO ATTACK", Seoul, 2010/05/02) reported that the U.S. government believes a DPRK torpedo attack was the most likely cause of the sinking of the Cheonan, a foreign diplomatic source in Seoul said Sunday. "Almost all circumstantial evidence points to a torpedo attack though there is still ambiguity that should be dealt with," the source said on condition of anonymity. "The question is who is it, but there are few candidates." If there is a "strong pointer" toward 99 percent certain, the remaining 1 percent of doubt will not so be meaningful, the diplomat said. U.S. Forces Korea Commander General Walter Sharp will soon get a briefing on the interim results of the ongoing probe from a team of U.S. experts taking part in the investigation, said the source. "To refer the Cheonan case to the UNSC, the issue should be proved to be related to the security of the world community. I believe the first question has already been passed," said the diplomat. "Then the support of the UNSC members is crucial."

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5. PRC on Sinking of ROK Ship

Korea Times (Lee Tae-hoon, "CHINESE PRESIDENT OFFERS CONDOLENCES", Shanghai, 2010/04/30) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao expressed his condolences to the bereaved families of 46 ROK sailors killed in the sinking of the Navy ship Cheonan in his summit with ROK President Lee Myung-bak. ``The two leaders had serious discussions on the Cheonan incident," Lee Dong-kwan, senior presidential secretary for public relations, said during a briefing. Senior Secretary Lee also said that closer cooperation is expected between the ROK and the PRC in May when PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Premier Wen Jiabao visit Seoul.

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6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Herald ("S. KOREAN WORKERS LEAVE N.K. RESORT", Seoul, 2010/05/03) reported that ROK staff left the Mt. Kumgang resort Monday. Twenty-four South Koreans -- 18 employees of Hyundai Asan Corp. and six of its partner firms such as Emerson Pacific -- returned home following 36 Chinese employees who left the resort on Sunday.

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7. DPRK Missile Program

Asahi Shimbun (Yoshihiro Makino, "PYONGYANG READY FOR MISSILE LAUNCHES IN SEA OF JAPAN AS EARLY AS MAY", Seoul, 2010/05/01) reported that the DPRK appears to be gearing up for Nodong ballistic missile launches in the Sea of Japan, perhaps as early as May, military sources in the ROK said Thursday. The U.S. and ROK governments, among others, concluded that satellite coverage shows DPRK preparations are well under way.

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8. ROK Politics

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "LATE ROH, FALLEN SAILORS TO SWING POLLS", Seoul, 2010/05/02) reported that campaign watchers point to two voter groups ? supporters of the late President Roh Moo-hyun, and those concerned with national security ? as campaign factors in the local elections slated for June 2. Depending on which voters turn out more on the day, winners of three particular battle grounds ? Seoul, Incheon and Gyeonggi Province ? will be determined.

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9. US-Japan Missile Defense

Kyodo ("PLANNED MISSILE DEFENSE SEEN UNABLE TO DESTROY U.S.-BOUND N. KOREAN MISSILES ", Tokyo, 2010/05/03) reported that a next-generation missile interceptor being co-developed by Japan and the United States would not be able to take out U.S.-bound DPRK long-range ballistic missiles flying over Japan, senior Defense Ministry officials said Sunday. This is because the range of the interceptor, dubbed the Standard Missile 3 Block 2A, would not allow an Aegis-equipped ship deployed off Japan to target high-flying missiles, the officials said. The officials said it might still be able to knock out ballistic missiles bound for Hawaii if activated in seas near there state just before the missiles reenter the atmosphere.

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10. USFJ Base Relocation

Yomiuri Shimbun ("TOKUNOSHIMA MAYORS WANT TO MEET HATOYAMA", Tokyo, 2010/05/02) reported that all three town mayors from Tokunoshima island and other local officials decided Saturday to demand a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama to oppose the government's plan to relocate helicopter squadrons from the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station to their island. The decision was made during a board meeting of an association comprising the three mayors and about 60 local commerce and other organizations on the island. "We judged we should take preemptive steps to oppose the plan before the central government makes a final decision [about the relocation]," Mayor Akira Okubo of Isencho said.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("INOUE CONCERNED OVER FUTENMA", Washington, 2010/05/02) reported that U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, in a meeting with Land, Infrastructure, Transport and

Tourism Minister Seiji Maehara in Washington on Friday, expressed concern over the current gridlock in the Futenma Air Station relocation dispute. Though it should have been a minor issue, the Futenma controversy has become a major thorn in the side of current Japan-U.S. relations, Inouye told Maehara. Unless the Futenma issue is resolved, it is hard to start forward-looking discussions on Japan-U.S. relations, Inouye said.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT OPTS FOR PIER RUNWAY AT HENOKO", Tokyo, 2010/05/02) reported that the Japanese government will propose a runway be built in the U.S. Marine Corps' Camp Schwab in Okinawa Prefecture as an alternative to the 2006 plan to relocate Futenma Air Station in the prefecture, it was learned Friday. The 1,800-meter runway would be built in almost the same location as the planned site of two runways built in a V shape officially agreed in 2006 between the Japanese and U.S. governments, government sources said. In the 2006 plan, a large part of the runways was to be built on land reclaimed in coastal areas off Camp Schwab in the Henoko district of Nago. The plan now being studied relies on the relatively environmentally friendly quick installation platform method, the sources said.

Asahi Shimbun ("PACIFIC ISLE WILLING TO HOST FUTENMA", Tokyo, 2010/04/30) reported that the Senate of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. territory, in mid-April adopted a resolution to promote Tinian as the "best location" for the Futenma airfield. A resolution from the commonwealth's House of Representatives is to follow soon. But a senior U.S. State Department official says there are too many problems in considering Tinian as a relocation site, citing negative effects on the reorganization plan for U.S. forces and the island's poor infrastructure. Among the premises of the planned realignment of U.S. forces is a continued deployment of Marines to Okinawa Prefecture. Thus, Tinian's proposal would require too drastic a review.

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11. Japanese Politics

Yomiuri Shimbun ("NET POLL FINDS DEEP DROP IN DPJ SUPPORT", Tokyo, 2010/05/03) reported that only 28 percent of respondents who voted for the Democratic Party of Japan in the proportional representation segment in last year's House of Representatives election said they would vote for the party again in the upcoming House of Councillors election, the Yomiuri Shimbun's first Web survey on the upcoming poll has shown. 27 percent said they would vote for other parties--13 percent for Your Party and 4 percent each for the Liberal Democratic Party and the Shinto Kaikaku party (new party for reform). The Yomiuri surveyed 1,000 eligible voters from April 23 to April 27, with 95 percent responding. 44 percent said they have yet to decide which parties they would cast ballots for in the next election. Meanwhile, 45 percent of respondents who voted for the LDP said they would vote again for the LDP. Thirty-one percent said they have not decided while 9 percent said they plan to vote for Your Party.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("FUTENMA RELOCATION PLAN PUTS SDP LEADER IN A NO-WIN SITUATION", Tokyo, 2010/05/01) reported that to prevent a breakup of her already tiny party, Social Democratic Party leader Mizuho Fukushima must hold her ground and oppose Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's latest plan to build an airstrip in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, as part of the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. But the weapon used to back her demand--threatening to bolt from the ruling coalition--has been silenced due to changing numbers in the Diet. Besides, some SDP members have suggested that being part of the ruling team may be the only way people

will listen to their opinions on the issue.

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12. Sino-Japanese Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("NO HINOMARU FLAG AT JAPAN PAVILION", Shanghai, 2010/05/02) reported that Japan decided not to display its Hinomaru national flag Saturday, the first day of the Shanghai World Expo, apparently concerned about anti-Japanese feelings harbored by many Chinese. "There've been past exhibitions where we also didn't put up the national flag," a staffer at the Japan Pavilion said. Another staff member said, "We've been careful to ensure our exhibits are not tied to political issues."

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13. PRC Human Rights

BBC ("CHINA DISSIDENT LAWYER GAO ZHISHENG 'MISSING AGAIN'", Beijing, 2010/04/30) reported that PRC human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, who returned home earlier this month after disappearing for more than a year, has again gone missing, his family says. Li Heping, a fellow lawyer, told the South China Morning Post Gao had gone to visit his father-in-law in Urumqi in early April but was arrested after one night and taken away by police and reportedly put on a plane to Beijing. "After he got off the plane no one knows where he went," Li said. "A lot of his friends and colleagues fear that he could have been taken back into police custody."

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II. PRC Report

14. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua News ("CHINA-EU MOVE POSITIVE SIGN FOR CANCUN SUMMIT", 2010/04/30) reported that a ministerial-level dialogue mechanism on climate change has been set up between China and the European Union. The two sides will hold talks regularly to strengthen collaboration and deepen understanding, according to a joint statement issued after China's climate change envoy Xie Zhenhua held talks with Connie Hedegaard, the EU commissioner for climate action on Thursday in Beijing.

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15. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction

China Daily ("RECONSTRUCTION WORK TO START IN 2 VILLAGES", 2010/04/30) reported that post-earthquake reconstruction in Qinghai province will start in two pilot villages in Yushu next Tuesday. Before a comprehensive reconstruction plan is released, pilot reconstruction will start in

the villages of Trangu and Ganda near the epicenter of Gyegu town, rescue and relief headquarters said on Tuesday. The headquarters also set a target of May 14, a month after the 7.1 magnitude earthquake, to clear the ruins of major buildings such as government offices, schools and hospitals.

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