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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. Six Party Talks](#)
 - [2. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [4. US on DPRK Abductee Issue](#)
 - [5. US Sanctions on DPRK](#)
 - [6. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
 - [7. DPRK Military](#)
 - [8. DPRK Military Technology Exports](#)
 - [9. US-DPRK Military Balance](#)
 - [10. DPRK Food Supply](#)
 - [11. DPRK Human Rights](#)
 - [12. Inter-Korea Relations](#)
 - [13. ROK on DPRK Internal Situation](#)
 - [14. US Military in ROK](#)

- [15. ROK on PSI Role](#)
- [16. ROK-US Trade Relations](#)
- [17. Japan Politics](#)
- [18. Japan on Cluster Bomb Ban](#)
- [19. Japan Food Aid to Africa](#)
- [20. Sino-Japanese Relations](#)
- [21. Sino-Indian Relations](#)
- [22. Sino-Russian Nuclear Cooperation](#)
- [23. Cross Strait Relations](#)
- [24. PRC Earthquake](#)
- II. PRC Report
 - [25. PRC Environment](#)
 - [26. PRC Earthquake](#)
 - [27. Sino-Russian Energy Trade](#)
- III. ROK Report
 - [28. ROK Policy Toward DPRK](#)
 - [29. Korean Peninsula Security](#)
 - [30. ROK Diplomatic Policy](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "RESUMPTION OF SIX-WAY TALKS TO BE DELAYED FURTHER: S. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/05/29) reported that backing away from a position that the resumption of the six-way talks aimed at terminating the DPRK's nuclear program is imminent, the ROK said that the Beijing-based negotiations are unlikely to be held before the middle of next month. "There is a chance for the timing to be delayed a little bit further," Foreign Ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young told a press briefing. His comments came in response to media reports that the chief DPRK and US nuclear negotiators did not reach a compromise in two days of meetings in Beijing on Pyongyang's promised declaration of its plutonium-based program.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK Nuclear Program

McClatchy Newspapers (Warren P. Strobel, "NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR DOCUMENTS CHALLENGE CIA ASSERTIONS", Washington, 2008/05/29) reported that thousands of pages of nuclear documents submitted by the DPRK earlier this month cast doubt on a US intelligence estimate of how much weapons-grade plutonium the DPRK has been able to amass, U.S. officials and a leading private analyst said. An initial review of the documents, they said, provides no evidence that the DPRK covertly extracted plutonium, which can be used to make nuclear weapons, from its reactor complex at Yongbyon before 1992. Some CIA officials have alleged that the DPRK had done so, meaning that it could have more plutonium, and thus the capacity to make more nuclear weapons, than it's admitted. A US official acknowledged that the records don't show a pre-1992 DPRK program to produce plutonium. However, he added: "Bear in mind that these are North Korean records, and that they might not always be entirely accurate."

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Herald ("BUSH AIDE SAYS N.K. MUST ABANDON ATOMIC WEAPONS, PROLIFERATION", 2008/05/29) reported that the DPRK must abandon all means of producing nuclear weapons and end proliferation activities, a senior George W. Bush administration official said as he addressed an international forum aimed at stopping the transfer of weapons of mass destruction. "North Korea must fulfill its other obligations -- including a full declaration of its nuclear programs that is complete, correct and verifiable, dismantlement of its plutonium production infrastructure, abandonment of any alternate route for producing nuclear weapons material, and an end to all proliferation activity," he said.

Kyodo News ("6-WAY CHIEFS' MEETING MAY BE HELD BEFORE DECLARATION: U.S. ENVOY ", Beijing, 2008/05/29) reported that top US nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill said that Pyongyang's accounting of its nuclear programs, the source of a stall in the six-party denuclearization talks, may be submitted only after a meeting of the negotiation's chief delegates. But his Japanese counterpart said separately that the declaration list should come before such a meeting, in a sign that any jump-starting of the multilateral negotiations will require more consultations.

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. US on DPRK Abductee Issue

Korea Herald ("ABDUCTION-TERRORISM LINK WAS TEST FOR N.K.: ARMITAGE", 2008/05/29) reported that the US initially linked the Japanese abduction issue with designating the DPRK a state-sponsor of terrorism to "test" Pyongyang on whether it will live up to its agreements, former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. In a presentation to a Pacific Forum in March, Armitage said it was he and James Kelly, DPRK policy coordinator at the time, who decided to make the link. "It was done with a feeling that this would be an excellent way to test North Korea," Armitage said. "And the test case was whether or not North Korea could be expected to accord the basic consideration to human rights, and I would say abductees' families deserve a basic consideration of human rights."

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. US Sanctions on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. 'WANTS TO BE SURE ABOUT N.KOREA'S NUKES'", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that in a recent interview with the Weekly Standard, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the United States has made it clear it will reserve its decision whether to remove the DPRK from its list of terrorist countries until it is satisfied that it fully understands the DPRK's nuclear programs. "What we're doing is we want to look at -- take a look at the totality of the nuclear (question). So, I'm not going to make any judgments until we ... know where we are on these issues," Rice said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("CHINA URGES RELEVANT SIDES TO KEEP CONTACTS TO PROMOTE SIX-PARTY TALKS", Beijing, 2008/05/29) reported that the PRC hopes concerned parties would keep active contacts, promote the six-party talks process and endeavor for the goal of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. The ministry's spokesman Qin Gang told a regular press conference he hoped all sides would continue the six-party process and work toward the long-term goal of peace and stability in the region.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. DPRK Military

IFES NK Brief ("RECRUITING DIFFICULTIES LEAD DPRK TO DISCARD CONSCRIPTION STANDARDS", 2008/05/29) reported that it has come to light that the DPRK has lowered, and in some cases abolished, medical requirements for new recruits conscripted in this year's spring military draft. A source inside the DPRK told the "Daily NK" on May 26th, "Originally, men had to be over 148cm tall and over 43 kg in order to enter the military, but this year conscripts under 148cm and less than 43kg are also required to enter military service provided they suffer from no diseases." The source went on to say that since fall of last year, authorities from the military mobilization bureau in charge of carrying out medical checks have been working on orders that the only thing to prevent conscription is disease.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. DPRK Military Technology Exports

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA 'LOOKING TO EXPORT GPS JAMMER TO MID EAST'", 2008/05/29) reported that ROK intelligence authorities have reportedly learned that the DPRK has developed a device capable of jamming the GPS signals used by state-of-the-art guided missiles and precision bombs, and has been attempting to export the device to Middle East countries including Iran and Syria. A ROK government source said that the DPRK has been promoting the GPS jammer to several Middle Eastern countries by offering a better price than the Russian device.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. US-DPRK Military Balance

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "US READY TO HIT N. KOREAN TARGETS", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that outgoing U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) commander General B. B. Bellaid Friday that forward-deployed U.S. bombers and fighter jets from air bases in Guam, Japan and the ROK are ready to deliver lethal hits to DPRK targets within 24 hours in the case of a conflict. Bell said that advanced U.S. jets and bombers, called "theater security packages (TSPs)," have been deployed to the Asia-Pacific region on a rotation basis since 2004, particularly during DPRK's military trainings cycles, to deter DPRK aggression.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. DPRK Food Supply

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "N. KOREA DENIES ALLEGED STARVATION DEATHS: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that the DPRK admitted that the country is experiencing a dire shortfall in its food supply, but denied claims by aid groups that massive deaths from starvation have begun in the country, the pro-Pyongyang Choson Sinbo in Japan said Friday. The paper said that the DPRK launched an all-out campaign to solve food shortage. The DPRK's agricultural ministry officials went to rural areas to help farmers transplant rice, the report said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. DPRK Human Rights

Joongang Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, "RIGHTS GROUP PAINTS BLEAK PICTURE OF LIFE IN NORTH", 2008/05/29) reported that Amnesty International said the DPRK continued to suffer under the Kim Jong-il regime's rights violations and living conditions worsened by last year's floods. Those floods in August "affected over 960,000 people, displaced tens of thousands and at least 450 people were reportedly missing, presumed dead," the 2008 report said. Even before the floods, the DPRK's rice production was down some 20 percent, according to the report. The report expressed concern about DPRK refugees in the PRC and defectors in the ROK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. Inter-Korea Relations

Associated Press ("NORTH, SOUTH KOREA NUCLEAR ENVOYS MEET IN BEIJING", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that ROK Foreign Ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said that DPRK chief nuclear envoy Kim Kye-gwan and his ROK counterpart Kim Sook met for about an hour on Friday in Beijing. The spokesman said he does not have information on the talks' outcome.

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "N. KOREA WARNS S. KOREA OVER PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that the DPRK military warned Friday that tensions between the two

Koreas could become "catastrophic" if the ROK keeps sending propaganda leaflets. If they do not want the present inter-Korean relations to lead to a catastrophic phase, they should take immediate steps to stop all forms of reckless scattering of leaflets at once," the official Korean Central News Agency said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. ROK on DPRK Internal Situation

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL SEEKS SOURCE OF UNFOUNDED KIM JONG-IL RUMORS", Seoul, 2008/05/30) authorities are trying to discover the source of Internet rumors that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is dead. Quoting a source with "an information network inside the North Korean military", a report posted on an ROK Internet portal on Wednesday afternoon claimed that Kim was assassinated in an attack on the road between Pyongyang and Anak County, Hwanghae Province around 7 to 8 p.m. on Monday. Intelligence authorities and the Ministry of Unification officially denied the rumors as groundless, and they were proved false when the Korean Central Broadcasting Station reported on Monday night that Kim had inspected a military unit.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. US Military in ROK

Korea Herald ("GEN. BELL HINTS AT MORE TROOP PULLOUTS", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that General Burwell B. Bell, commander of the United States Forces Korea, indicated Friday that more of the U.S. forces the ROK may be deployed to overseas combat zones. He also requested further ROK assistance in the U.S. war against terrorism in areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan where Seoul has sent peacekeeping troops. Bell's comments come amid growing speculation that Washington will be deploying a battalion of U.S. Apache helicopters from the ROK to Afghanistan.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. ROK on PSI Role

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA MAINTAINS VAGUE STANCE ON U.S.-LED PSI ", Seoul, 2008/05/29) reported that the ROK said that it was still reviewing whether to expand its role in the US-led anti-proliferation campaign which is harshly criticized by the DPRK. The US has called for its key ally the ROK to formally take part in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) intended to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and related delivery equipment. The DPRK, which allegedly exports missiles and other WMD, is a prime target. The Foreign Ministry said Seoul's position on the PSI remains unchanged. "The US government has demanded our participation since the inception of the PSI. We understand the purpose and effect of the PSI," ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said. But the ROK will review its future role, he added.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. ROK-US Trade Relations

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "SKOREAN PARTIES FILE SUITS TO STOP BEEF", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that the ROK political opposition asked the Constitutional Court on Friday to block U.S. beef from entering the country after the government announced it would resume imports within days. Three main opposition parties filed lawsuits Friday asking the Constitutional Court to rule that the government's move violates the people's right to health, and to issue an injunction against a resumption of imports until it issues a verdict.

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. AMBASSADOR SEES HOPE FOR KOREA-U.S. FTA", Seoul, 2008/05/30) reported that according to U.S. Ambassador to Korea Alexander Vershbow, the U.S. government still hopes to get Congressional ratification of the Korea-U.S. free trade agreement by the end of this year, amid growing support from Democrat lawmakers and local business communities. In a forum organized by the Korea Institute for Future Strategies, Vershbow also urged the Korean public to trust the judgment of the World Organization for Animal Health as the country fully resumes imports of U.S. beef, stressing that many of the claims made here about the safety of U.S. beef are "unscientific" and "sensational."

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. Japan Politics

The Financial Times (David Pilling and Lionel Barber, "JAPAN'S LDP LOOKS TO PUT OFF ELECTION", Tokyo, 2008/05/29) reported that Japan's Liberal Democratic party is likely to delay an election as long as possible for fear of being thrown out of power for only the second time since the second world war, one of the ruling party's most prominent politicians has told the Financial Times. Yuriko Koike, former defence minister, who is considered an outside candidate to succeed Yasuo Fukuda as prime minister, said the opposition Democratic Party of Japan had a "high chance" of winning power if a general election were called soon. However, Ms Koike's remarks, confirmed by another leading member of the ruling party, suggest the LDP may push the election closer to September 2009, when it is obliged to dissolve parliament.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. Japan on Cluster Bomb Ban

Kyodo ("JAPAN JOINS INT'L ACCORD TO DISPOSE OF CLUSTER BOMBS", Tokyo, 2008/05/30) reported that Japan on Friday approved a draft international convention banning cluster bombs totally and immediately in principle. The policy shift, made at the initiative of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, is expected to lead to the disposal of cluster bombs currently possessed by the Self-Defense Forces. "Cluster bombs are said to be a weapon that can cause humanitarian problems. And there are also security problems...We had various discussions within the government and reached this conclusion," Fukuda told reporters in the evening.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. Japan Food Aid to Africa

The Asahi Shimbun (Hiroshi Matsubara and Taro Karasaki, "AID GROUPS CALL FOR FUNDS TO HELP AFRICAN FARMERS", Yokohama, 2008/05/29) reported that African leaders and aid

organizations urged Japan and other donor nations to allocate more funds for agriculture to provide seeds and fertilizers to African farmers and produce a long-lasting solution to the food crisis. Such aid, including low-interest loans, is desperately needed to alleviate the current food shortages caused by rising prices, they said on the second day of the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) here. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said Japan is prepared to provide additional emergency aid and technical assistance to help Africa increase agricultural production over the next two years.

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. Sino-Japanese Relations

BBC News ("JAPAN SHELVES MILITARY AID FLIGHT", Tokyo, 2008/05/30) reported that Japan has decided not to use a military plane to deliver relief supplies to the PRC for earthquake victims. It will instead use a chartered plane to send the materials to the disaster zone, a government spokesman said. He said that some PRC officials had been concerned about letting a military plane in.

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. Sino-Indian Relations

Agence France-Presse ("INDIAN FM TO VISIT CHINA FOR TALKS ON TRADE, BORDER ROW ", New Delhi, 2008/05/29) reported that Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee flies to the PRC next month for talks on boosting trade and to review an unresolved border row that took the countries to war in 1962, officials said. The foreign ministry in New Delhi said during his four-day trip beginning June 4 Mukherjee will hold talks with his PRC counterpart Yang Jiechi and other PRC leaders. "He will have discussions... on bilateral relations and regional and international issues of mutual interest" with Yang, the ministry said in a statement.

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. Sino-Russian Nuclear Cooperation

RIA Novosti ("MORE RUSSIAN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY IN CHINA", Moscow, 2008/05/29) reported that among seven agreements signed in Beijing by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, the most impressive and sensitive is no doubt the nuclear agreement. According to Sergei Kiriyyenko, head of Russia's Federal Nuclear Power Agency, or Rosatom, "the total worth of nuclear contracts signed in Beijing is more than \$1.5 billion." Under the new Beijing arrangements, Russia is to provide uranium enrichment services and help the PRC build the fourth stage of its gas centrifuge plant (three are already in operation). With the additional capacities, the PRC will be able to increase their output of enriched uranium required for making nuclear reactor fuel rods. This will cut fuel prices and make the country less dependent on outside enrichment services.

[\(return to top\)](#)

23. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press (Anita Chang, "TAIWAN PUSHES FOR GREATER GLOBAL ROLE ", Beijing, 2008/05/29) reported that the leader of Taiwan's new ruling party told PRC President Hu Jintao that the self-governed island needs to have an international presence, but acknowledged there would be no quick solution to long-standing disputes. "The Taiwanese people need a sense of security, respect and a place in the international community," Wu said he told Hu during the talks. He did not elaborate, but said many disputes between Taiwan and the PRC were unlikely to be resolved soon. An upbeat Wu told reporters after the meeting that he had stressed the first priority was launching weekend charter flights and opening up Taiwan to mainland tourists.

Agence France-Presse (Karl Malakunas, "CHINA, TAIWAN AGREE TO RESUME TALKS WITHIN TWO WEEKS ", Beijing, 2008/05/29) reported that the PRC and Taiwan announced they would quickly resume talks that have been suspended for more than a decade, in the latest sign of a dramatic thaw in tensions between the rivals. The PRC on Thursday sent an official letter of invitation to sit down for the talks from June 11 to 14, with the focus to be on establishing direct flights between the two sides and allowing mainland tourists to travel to Taiwan. "We hope the talks will make progress on the two issues to meet the expectations of people from both sides of the strait," said the invitation letter from China's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait.

[\(return to top\)](#)

24. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHEMICAL FIRE, RAIN HAMPER CHINA QUAKE RECOVERY ", Chengdu, 2008/05/29) reported that heavy rain and a chemical fire hampered urgent recovery efforts in an earthquake-shattered area threatened by a rising lake. State television reported that a stockpile of bleach used to disinfect quake ruins ignited in a storage building in the town of Leigu, in devastated Beichuan county. Several of the troops spraying the building were gasping for air and being treated by medics. The official Xinhua News Agency reported that more than 800 people were evacuated to avoid a cloud of dense chlorine gas caused by the blaze.

The Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "CITIZENS' GROUPS STEP UP IN CHINA", Yingxiu, 2008/05/29) reported that grass-roots organizations and informal networks of private citizens are playing a vital role in getting supplies to rescue workers and survivors of this month's devastating earthquake in the PRC. The government, in a notable shift, appears content to let them do so. Officially, nongovernmental organizations in the PRC must register with the government; the larger groups are as rigid and controlled as their official sponsors. Authorities remain deeply suspicious of smaller, independent groups. Now, however, aided by the proliferation of online bulletin boards, blogs and on-the-ground coordination centers, unregistered grass-roots organizations are essentially functioning as legitimate earthquake-relief NGOs, operating for the first time without having to look over their shoulders and helping to manage a crisis whose death toll could surpass 80,000.

Associated Press (William Foreman, "CHINA WARNS EVACUATION POSSIBLE WITH FLOOD THREAT", Chengdu, 2008/05/30) reported that more than 1 million people may have to evacuate dozens of villages in a Sichuan province valley if an earthquake-spawned lake threatens to burst and flood the region, an emergency official warned Friday. Authorities were preparing to run a drill starting Saturday to ensure 1.3 million people in the Mianyang region can get out quickly if the lake breaks through the wall of debris clogging a river. "People will only be evacuated in case of actual collapsing of the whole bank," the official with the surname Chen told The Associated Press.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. PRC Report

25. PRC Environment

Xinhua Net, <http://www.xinhuanet.com/> ("BEIJING PUT 200,000 FISH IN CHAOBAI RIVER TO CLEAN OLYMPIC WATER ENVIRONMENT", 2008/05/28) reported that on May 26, 200,000 fish including three main categories of color carp, silver carp and bighead carp were put into the Chaobai River near the Olympic Water Sports Park. Fishery experts said this would significantly improve the water quality in Chaobai River and the ecological environment of Olympic venues.

[\(return to top\)](#)

26. PRC Earthquake

The Beijing News (Ma Li, "ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT OF BEICHAUN TOWN TOOK SIX RADIOACTIVE SOURCES AWAY", 2008/05/26) reported that following an intensive investigation of the possible pollution and radioactive impacts in earthquake affected areas, the Environmental Protection Department of Beichuan Town had took six radioactive sources away and stored them safely. The Department will continue to check other enterprises and the dangerous chemical materials of those enterprises whose elevation was under 100 m would be ordered to be transferred.

[\(return to top\)](#)

27. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Beijing Morning Post ("CHINA-RUSSIA OIL PIPELINE NEGOTIATION IS GOING TO END, DAILY DELIVERY OF THE EXTENSION LINE IS 1.6 MILLION BARRELS", 2008/05/26) reported that the cost of the "China Extension Line" to the Russian oil pipeline must be inevitable expensive, but it means a steady supply of 1.6 million barrels of oil a day. According to Russian sources, the energy trade in 2007 between the two amounted to 6.7 billion U.S. dollars, and the "China Extension Line" of East Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline negotiations is nearing completion.

[\(return to top\)](#)

III. ROK Report

28. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

PRESSian ("MB SHOUTING 'OPEN DPRK' ALONE IN CHINA", 2008/05/29) reported that the core message that ROK President Lee Myung-bak has emphasized during his visit to the PRC was change

and opening. The formation of an intimate relationship and the reinforcement of economic exchanges with the PRC can act as pressure for opening the DPRK, and can provide the DPRK with an opportunity to bring forth a change by itself. Emphasis on the necessity of denuclearization regarding the DPRK nuclear issue or a message from the six-party talk that exceeds solving nuclear issues were not mentioned. Meanwhile, the possibility of food aid to the the DPRK was also mentioned.

[\(return to top\)](#)

29. Korean Peninsula Security

Samsung Economic Research Institute ("RESULT FROM KPSI RESEARCH IN SECOND QUARTER OF YEAR 2008", 2008/05/29) reported that according to the result from KPSI research for the second quarter of year 2008, the security environment of the Korean Peninsula is still stable, but it is in a similar state as it was three months ago. The expectations for the possibility of a peaceful solution of the DPRK nuclear problem and improved US-DPRK relations are reflected. On the other hand, the Tibet incident and earthquake in Sichuan inside the PRC, and Chinese uneasiness about the ROK's diplomatic inclination toward the US and Japan are also reflected both in a direct and indirect way. While expecting slight acceleration in ROK-US relations, specialists predict that the negative factors in DPRK variables will be quite improved. It is a unanimous interpretation that inter-Korean relations will be improved.

[\(return to top\)](#)

30. ROK Diplomatic Policy

Tongilnews ("LEE MYUNG-BAK ADMINISTRATION, JOINING PSI IS A CLEAR ANACHRONISM", 2008/05/29) wrote that civil society organizations strongly oppose the Lee Myung-bak administration officially dispatching government representatives to the fifth anniversary conference of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) organization. Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea claimed that although PSI is supposed to prevent proliferation of WMD, it is merely strategy used by the US to gain military supremacy. It also claimed that PSI is exhaustively against the national benefit of the ROK—peace and reunification—lacks any international legal basis and violates the international law of the sea.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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