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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on US-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SAYS OBAMA NO DIFFERENT FROM BUSH", 2009/05/02) reported that the DPRK blasted US President Barack Obama as no different from his predecessor in trying to "stifle" countries that are uncooperative with the US. "All the facts go to clearly prove that although the present US administration plays tricks, talking about 'change' and 'multilateral cooperation diplomacy' it is nothing different from the preceding administration which frantically worked to stifle by force other countries which incurred its displeasure," the unidentified spokesman said. "The DPRK is firmly convinced that it was entirely just when it opted for bolstering the nuclear deterrent to protect the sovereignty and the right to existence of the country and the nation," he said.

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2. DPRK on Six Party Talks

Reuters (Louis Charbonneau, "NORTH KOREA COOL TO RESUMING NUCLEAR TALKS", 2009/05/04) reported that the DPRK's U.N. envoy dismissed a U.N. appeal that Pyongyang return to six-nation talks aimed at ending its nuclear program but did not fully rule out resuming negotiations some time. The DPRK's Deputy U.N. Ambassador Pak Tok Hun told Reuters in an interview, "We will never return to the six-party talks ". "As long as they are trying to infringe on our sovereignty, we don't see any need, any necessity to participate in the six-party talks," he said. Pak in subsequent answers was less specific and seemed not to rule out resuming contacts if certain conditions were met.

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3. US on Economic Aid to the DPRK

JoongAng Daily ("U.S. TALKS TOUGH OVER AID TO NORTH", 2009/05/02) reported that the US has no plans to provide the DPRK with economic aid until it stops threatening to conduct further nuclear and missile tests and returns to the six-party talks, said U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. “We have absolutely no interest and no willingness on the part of this administration to give them any economic aid at all,” Clinton said at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “We are very

serious about trying to make it clear to the North Koreans that their recent behavior is absolutely unacceptable.”

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4. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("ASO TOLD OBAMA JAPAN TO TOLERATE DIRECT U.S.-N. KOREA DIALOGUE", Tokyo, 2009/05/04) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso told US President Barack Obama last month that Japan would be open to a direct dialogue between the US and the DPRK on condition that Washington urge Pyongyang to return to the stalled six-party talks on ending the DPRK's nuclear program, according to Japanese-US sources. Aso made the remark during a telephone conversation April 24, indicating he has apparently concluded that such a dialogue is inevitable if the talks are to resume given that the DPRK has declared it will pull out of the framework and has threatened to carry out nuclear tests.

Reuters ("JAPANESE PM URGES RESUMPTION OF NORTH KOREA TALKS", Prague, 2009/03/04) reported that six-party talks on the DPRK 's nuclear program should start again as soon as possible, Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso said. "We decided the six-party talks are the most practical framework for solving the questions around North Korea and that the most important thing is to open these talks again as soon as possible," he told a news conference .

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("UNIFICATION MINISTRY TO CLOSE HUMANITARIAN AID UNIT ON NORTH KOREA ", Seoul, 2009/05/04) reported that the ROK's Unification Ministry is set to close its bureau on humanitarian aid to the DPRK as part of its restructuring, officials said Monday, a move that mirrors frozen political relations. The restructuring plan, when approved by a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, will shut down the Humanitarian Cooperation Bureau established in late 1996, ministry officials said.

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6. EU on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("EU PRESIDENCY: NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR PLANS 'EXTREMELY DANGEROUS'", Prague, 2009/05/04) reported that Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek, whose country holds the European Union presidency, said the DPRK's nuclear plans were " extremely dangerous" and urged a renewal of six-nation disarmament talks. "We consider North Korea's nuclear programme extremely dangerous," Topolanek said. "The pressure for a renewal of the six-nation talks must continue," he added.

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7. ROK Role in Afghanistan

JoongAng Ilbo (Seo Seung-wook, Ser Myo-ja, "WASHINGTON ASKS SEOUL FOR MONEY FOR AFGHANISTAN", 2009/05/04) reported that t he US has asked the ROK for financial assistance to rebuild Afghanistan while at the same time acknowledging the public relations problems the Blue House would face if it deploys more troops to the war-torn country, a senior Lee Myung-bak administration official told the Joong-Ang Ilbo. “Washington has made a request for a large amount of cash for Afghanistan if it proves too controversial to send troops,” the source said. A senior Blue House official confirmed the request. “We will take into account the US-Korea alliance and public sentiment before we make a final decision.”

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8. Tumen River Area Development Program

Chosun Ilbo ("ECONOMIC REVIVAL COMES TO THE TUMEN RIVER", 2009/05/04) reported that the Tumen River Area Development Program is showing signs of coming back to life 17 years after it was conceived. The PRC is keen to develop this backward area as part of economic stimulus measures, and Russia is doing the same, with Vladivostok set to host the APEC meet in 2012. The PRC is the most aggressive in terms of developing the region, forming a Tumen River development task force and producing a blueprint in November. At the crux of the 200-page report is securing a route to the East Sea by using DPRK and Russian ports as launch pads to attract businesses in the ROK, Japan, Hong Kong and other countries.

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9. US-Japan Security Alliance

Mainichi Shimbun ("JAPAN, U.S. DEFENSE HEADS AGREE TO REINFORCE BILATERAL RELATIONS", Washington, 2009/05/02) reported that Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates agreed in a meeting at the Pentagon on Friday to strengthen the two countries' alliance as they review their defense policies. The defense leaders also agreed to strengthen collaboration on missile defense, following the DPRK's recent launch of a ballistic rocket. Speaking on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa to the Camp Schwab coastal section, Hamada indicated that he would continue to make efforts to lessen the burden on Okinawa.

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10. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Kyodo News ("MSDF HELICOPTER APPARENTLY AIDS SHIP UNRELATED TO JAPAN OFF SOMALIA", 2009/05/01) reported that a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force helicopter engaged in an antipiracy mission in waters off Somalia apparently helped a commercial ship repel suspicious vessels, the Defense Ministry said. It is the fourth time that the MSDF has come to the aid of a commercial vessel that it is not supposed to protect under a provision in the Self-Defense Forces

Law. The ministry says the latest action represented a humanitarian act based on the seamen's law and was therefore perfectly legal even though the ship in question had no Japanese connections.

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11. EU-Japan on Climate Change

Agence France-Presse ("EU, JAPAN TEAM UP TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE", Prague, 2009/05/04) reported that the European Union and Japan decided to join forces in the battle against climate change and invited large countries to follow suit at a summit meeting in Prague on Monday. "Japan and the EU are aiming at building a low-carbon society. We believe that it is necessary for the United States, China, Russia to participate in a responsible manner," Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso told reporters. They also urged developing countries to "develop or update their national action plans towards low carbon development... in a measurable, reportable and verifiable manner."

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12. Sino-US Relations

Reuters ("CHINA MILITARY BUILD-UP SEEMS U.S.-FOCUSED: MULLEN", Washington , 2009/05/04) reported that the PRC 's build-up of sea and air military power funded by a strong economy appears aimed at the United States, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff said on Monday. Admiral Michael Mullen said the PRC had the right to meet its security needs, but the build-up would require the US to work with its Pacific allies to respond to increasing PRC military capabilities . "They are developing capabilities that are very maritime focused, maritime and air focused, and in many ways, very much focused on us," he told a conference of the Navy League .

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13. Cross Strait Relations

Xinkuai News ("CHINA'S CABINET DECIDES TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC ZONE TO BOOST MAINLAND-TAIWAN CO-OP", 2009/05/04) reported that the State Council, the PRC's cabinet, passed a plan to support the development of the economic zone on the western side of the Taiwan Straits. The plan adopted at an executive meeting of the State Council is aimed to boost development in a region led by Fujian Province and promote cooperation between the region and Taiwan. The State Council said the economic zone would face the Taiwan Island across the Straits, and would be connected with the Pearl River Delta and the Yangtze River Delta, two economic powerhouses on the mainland.

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14. Sino-UK Environmental Cooperation

The Guardian ("BRITAIN TO HELP CHINA ON CARBON CAPTURE", 2009/05/04) reported that Britain will share the benefits of its investment in carbon capture and storage technology with the PRC and other developing countries, the energy secretary, Ed Miliband, said today. The move may

help Britain to belatedly meet its Kyoto protocol promise to pass on low-carbon technology to help poorer countries reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, questions may arise over how much should be given away for free and how much the UK should exploit the business opportunities of being a potential leader in the industry.

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15. Sino-Indian Trade Relations

Calcutta News.Net ("DISMAL START TO NATHU LA BORDER TRADE BETWEEN INDIA, CHINA", 2009/05/04) reported that the fourth season of the border trade between India and the PRC through the fabled Silk Road resumed Monday, although bureaucratic red tape from the Indian side led to traders failing to reach the other side of the border. The inability of the district collectorate's office to provide the 62-odd Indian traders with 'travel passes' resulted in a deadlock forcing all of them to cancel visiting the trade mart on the PRC side. However, 60 PRC traders arrived here in 10 trucks, although they too were disappointed when Indian customs officials refused entry of their items as those goods were not in conformity to the list of tradable items agreed upon by the two countries.

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16. PRC Leadership

Straits Times (Peh Shing Huei, "CHINA'S RISING STARS ", 2009/05/04) reported that it may still be early days, but the PRC caught a glimpse this month of the young Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders slated to take over the reins of the country in 2022. Eyebrows were raised when five CCP young turks were prominently featured by a magazine published by the party mouthpiece. Global Personalities (Huanqiu Renwu), a bi-monthly by the People's Daily, splashed on its cover five leaders in their 40s. It was a sign, said analysts, that they are likely to form the core of the PRC's 'Sixth Generation' leadership as the CCP moves to institutionalise power transfer. A key difference between them and the Fifth Generation leaders is that they have a better education.

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17. PRC on Food Security

Xinhua News ("CHINA TO JOIN UN TO ADDRESS FOOD SHORTAGE IN ASIA-PACIFIC", Beijing, 2009/05/05) reported that the PRC will sponsor a UN program to promote its self-developed hybridized rice planting in countries facing food shortages, the United Nations Asian and Pacific Center for Agricultural Engineering and Machinery (UNAPCAEM) said at a conference on Food Security in the Asia Pacific. "The program, supported by the Chinese government, will play a positive role in lifting the grain production capacity and easing food shortage in developing countries of Asia and the Pacific," said Ai Yuxin, senior expert at UNAPCAEM.

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18. PRC Energy Supply

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TRIPLES WIND POWER CAPACITY GOAL: REPORT", Beijing, 2009/05/04) reported that the PRC has more than tripled its target for wind power capacity to 100 gigawatts by 2020, likely making it the world's fastest growing market for wind energy technology, state press said. The PRC is aiming for an annual wind power growth rate of 20 percent for the foreseeable future , Feng Junshi, an official with the National Energy Administration, told a Beijing conference, according to the China Daily . The new target for 2020 is up from a goal of 30 gigawatts announced by the government 18 months ago, the report said.

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19. PRC Economy

Christian Science Monitor ("FOR CHINA, A REVERSE BRAIN DRAIN IN SCIENCE?", 2009/05/04) reported that the PRC has hung a “Help Wanted” sign for scientists and engineers, dangling big-bucks salaries and sparkling new labs to lure expatriates back from the United States. They’re offering relocation allowances of $146,000 plus salaries reportedly as high as $250,000 a year to do it. The PRC’s effort is the latest wrinkle in what some experts see as a decade-long loss for the US of foreign nationals – mainly from Asia – who are taking their strong, US-honed science and technology skills and heading home.

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