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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press ("U.S. EXPECTS MORE TIME BEFORE N. KOREA GIVES NUKE ACCOUNT", Washington, 2008/05/05) reported that the State Department said it expects more time will be needed before the DPRK can give a satisfactory account of its nuclear activities as required under a multilateral deal. Department spokesman Tom Casey made the remarks to reporters when questioned about a reported trip to the DPRK by Sung Kim, director of the department's Office of Korean Affairs. "I assume if he goes back, whether that is this week or beyond that, that'll be for those purposes, but I wouldn't look for any kind of final declaration being provided as a result of that trip, at least not that I'm aware of," he said.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters ("U.S.' NEGROPONTE TO VISIT SEOUL, TOKYO, BEIJING ", Washington, 2008/05/06) reported that Deputy U.S. Secretary of State John Negroponte will travel to Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing this month, the State Department announced on Tuesday as the United States continues its push for a long-delayed declaration of the DPRK's nuclear activities. Negroponte will travel to the three Asian capitals May 7 to 12 "for discussions with his counterparts on a broad range of bilateral, regional and global issues," a State Department statement said. The statement said Negroponte would consult with the ROK, Japan and PRC on recent developments in the region and political and economic issues and strengthen ties and cooperation on regional and global issues.

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3. Food Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "U.S. PREPARES TO SEND FOOD TO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/05/06) reported that the ROK will continue close consultations with the US on food aid for the DPRK, the Foreign Ministry said, as Washington is reportedly preparing to send 500,000 tons of rice to Pyongyang. The ministry confirmed that a team of US government officials is visiting the DPRK to discuss the issue, amid growing worries that the impoverished nation is slipping back into the tragic situation of the 1990s. Moon said that the Seoul government will continue cooperating with the US on the matter. But he would not predict when the South will resume its rice supply to its communist neighbor. Moon said earlier that the ROK will begin a process to resume assistance only if the DPRK

formally asks for it.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK REJECTS NEW ROK PRESIDENT'S 'DENUCLEARIZE-OPEN-3000' PLAN", 2008/05/06) reported that on April 30, Pyongyang Broadcasting Station criticized the 'four fundamental rules of cooperation with the North'. These rules, laid out by ROK President Lee Myung-bak as part of his plan to raise the per-capita income to 3000 USD after the DPRK abandons its nuclear programs, are "like saying there will not be cooperation between North and South," according to the DPRK. During the fourth broadcast in a series called "The illegal system of the so-called pragmatic government," the broadcast station stressed that the four fundamental rules "are nothing more than an election speech designed to overturn all the results achieved between the North and South since June 15."

Joongang Ilbo ("TOUGH TALK ON NORTH IN RELEASE", 2008/05/06) reported that in a good reflection of the Lee Myung-bak administration's tougher policy toward the DPRK, the latest government publication on the DPRK downplays the past two liberal administrations' agreements with Pyongyang, while warning against hastily accepting the DPRK as a partner. The Education Center for Unification, an organ of the Unification Ministry, yesterday issued the updated version of its annual publication, "Understanding North Korea, 2008." Exchanges and cooperation between the two have increased since 2000, it says, but it does not mention the historic 2000 summit between the two Kims. The joint declaration adopted at that summit and the one from the October 2007 meeting between Kim Jong-il and Roh are both downplayed in the 2008 edition.

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5. Inter-Korean Athletics

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA MAY AGAIN BID TO RELOCATE WORLD CUP QUALIFIER: OFFICIAL", 2008/05/06) reported that the DPRK may be trying to relocate next month's inter-Korean World Cup qualifier out of Seoul, a senior ROK soccer official was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. The DPRK succeeded earlier this year in its bid to move the first of this year's inter-Korean World Cup qualifiers out of Pyongyang, after it refused to allow the ROK to play its national anthem and raise its flag in the DPRK capital. The world soccer governing body FIFA later compromised by changing the venue to Shanghai, PRC. "We have gained suspicions through unofficial channels that North Korea is pitching for the Seoul match to be moved to another country," Cho Jung-yeon, vice head of the ROK Football Association (KFA) said. "We have not budged from our stance that the next match be held in Seoul."

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6. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE TO HOLD HEARING ON KOREA-U.S. FTA", Seoul, 2008/05/06) reported that the ROK's parliamentary committee will hold a hearing next week on a free trade deal with Washington as public opinion appears to be turning against the trade pact,

which is closely linked to a controversial deal to open the country's market to U.S. beef. The beef agreement has been a key condition for securing U.S. legislative support for the free trade agreement (FTA) struck in June last year, even though it is not officially part of the FTA. Members of the National Assembly foreign affairs committee on Tuesday approved a motion to hold a hearing on the FTA May 13-14. The hearing will question up to 30 government officials including Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan and Agriculture Minister Chung Woon-chun.

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7. ROK Bird Flu Outbreak

Joongang Ilbo ("OFFICIALS TOLD BIRD FLU HAS SPREAD TO THE SEOUL AREA", 2008/05/06) reported that despite nonstop efforts to halt the worst outbreak of bird flu ever to hit the country, a new case has hit the ROK's capital city, prompting the slaughter of more than 300 poultry and the quarantining of the bird areas in nearby parks, a government body said. Initial tests on two chickens raised in an aviary located in the Gwangjin District Office in eastern Seoul showed that they were infected with the H5 N1 strain of the avian influenza virus, according to officials of the Seoul Metropolitan Government. The tests were conducted by the National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service.

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8. Japan Population

The Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "JAPAN STEADILY BECOMING A LAND OF FEW CHILDREN", Tokyo, 2008/05/06) reported that Japan celebrated a national holiday on Monday in honor of its children. But Children's Day might just as easily have been a national day of mourning. For this is the land of disappearing children and a slow-motion demographic catastrophe that is without precedent in the developed world. The number of children has declined for 27 consecutive years, a government report said over the weekend. Japan now has fewer children who are 14 or younger than at any time since 1908.

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9. Sino-Japanese Relations

Reuters (Linda Sieg, "CHINA'S HU URGES CLOSE JAPAN TIES, OFFERS TWO PANDAS ", Tokyo, 2008/05/06) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao lauded closer cooperation with Japan -- and offered a pair of pandas as a friendly gesture -- after arriving on Tuesday for a state visit intended to nurture trust between the wary Asian powers. The state visit, the second ever by a top PRC leader, comes as the PRC seeks to soothe international concern over Tibetan unrest, which has threatened to mar Beijing's Olympic Games in August. "Relations between the two countries now have new opportunities for further development," Hu said in a written statement upon arrival in Tokyo. "I hope through this visit to increase mutual trust and strengthen friendship."

The Asahi Shimbun ("HU, FUKUDA SET TO INK DEAL ON CO2 CAPTURE AND STORAGE", 2008/05/06) reported that Tokyo and Beijing are set to agree Wednesday to work jointly to contain the PRC's growing volume of carbon dioxide emissions, a source of alarm around the world. In their

first summit meeting Wednesday in Tokyo, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and PRC President Hu Jintao will agree on cutting-edge carbon dioxide capture and storage (CCS) technology designed to lessen the impact of the PRC's headlong rush into modernization.

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "JAPAN, CHINA MADE PROGRESS ON GAS FEUD AT SUMMIT", Tokyo, 2008/05/07) reported that Japan and the PRC announced progress towards settling a feud over gas in the East China Sea at their summit meeting on Wednesday. Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda also urged visiting PRC President Hu Jintao to continue talks with representatives of the Dalai Lama. "We both believe relations between China and Japan are at a new starting point," Hu Jintao told the news conference. Fukuda said his country was praying for the success of the Beijing Olympics but that he had not decided whether to attend the opening ceremony. "If the situation permits, I will consider it positively," he said.

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10. US-Japan Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("POLL: AMERICANS SAY JAPAN STILL TOPS IN ASIA, BUT FALLING", 2008/05/06) reported that a large majority of Americans still consider Japan a trustworthy nation, but the importance of the bilateral relationship continues to fall, a recent poll conducted in the United States for the Foreign Ministry showed. In the survey, undertaken by the Gallup Organization in February and March, 67 percent of the respondents said they view Japan as a country that is dependable, down 7 percentage points from a similar survey last year. Asked what country in Asia they see as the United States' most important partner, 43 percent picked Japan, down 5 points from a year earlier. At 34 percent, the PRC followed Japan, the second year in a row it has ranked second in the survey.

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11. PRC Viral Outbreak

The Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "NEW DISEASE OUTBREAKS IN CHINA; 12K CHILDREN INFECTED ", Beijing, 2008/05/06) reported that new outbreaks reported Tuesday in three PRC provinces and Beijing put the number of children infected with hand, foot and mouth disease above 12,000 and the death toll has risen to at least 26 across the country. The official Xinhua News Agency said outbreaks in southwest Yunnan, the northeastern province of Jilin and the tropical island of Hainan, putting the total number of infections at 12,164. Two kindergartens in Beijing were temporarily shut down Tuesday after children there showed symptoms of the disease, Xinhua said. There have been 1,482 cases in Beijing, most in kindergartens, it said.

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12. Tibet Unrest

Agence France-Presse (Marianne Barriaux, "CHINA LAYS OUT GROUND RULES FOR TIBET TALKS ", Beijing, 2008/05/06) reported that the PRC laid out ground rules for further talks with the Dalai

Lama, saying he must first stop pushing for Tibetan independence and provoking deadly unrest in his Himalayan homeland. The PRC government has made similar demands many times and appeared to throw up a hurdle to continuing dialogue between the two sides, as the Tibetan spiritual leader has repeatedly denied such actions.

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13. US-Russia Nuclear Cooperation

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA, U.S. SIGN NUCLEAR COOPERATION PACT", Moscow, 2008/05/06) reported that Russia and the US signed an agreement on civilian nuclear cooperation. The agreement, signed by Rosatom state nuclear corporation head Sergei Kiriyenko and US Ambassador to Russia William Burns, establishes the main principles of bilateral cooperation in civilian nuclear power usage. Kiriyenko said the agreement opens vast opportunities for nuclear cooperation, also tightening the nuclear nonproliferation regime. He added that Russia has not imported and will not import nuclear waste from other countries.

White House Press Release ("PRESIDENT BUSH PLEASED BY SIGNING OF U.S.-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT FOR COOPERATION", 2008/05/06) reported that the President is pleased that the U.S.-Russian Agreement for Cooperation in the field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy (also known as a 123 Agreement) was signed today in Moscow, Russia. It will pave the way for further cooperation under both bilateral and multinational programs and initiatives on nuclear energy and nonproliferation, such as the July 2007 U.S.-Russia Declaration on Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation and the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP).

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II. ROK Report

14. Inter-Korea Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Seo Jae-Jin, "DPRK'S ENDLESS CRITICISMS TOWARD ROK AND NAGGING FOR SCOOP-AND-GIVES", 2008/05/07) carried an article by the chief researcher on DPRK at Korea Institute for National Unification, who wrote that it cannot be said that just because dialogue between ROK and DPRK is maintained that inter-Korean relations are okay. Especially if the dialogue continues without nuclear abandonment,the DPRK's attitude toward the ROK will be even more difficult to predict. If people regard this turning point of the DPRK talking to the US but not with the ROK as "open to US, isolate ROK," the ROK government has no other choice but to step up for inter-Korean relations just as it did in the past.

Kyunghyang Shinmun (Yang Mu-jin, "ROK AND DPRK BOTH IN MISUNDERSTANDING", 2008/05/06) carried an article by a professor at the University of North Korean Studies who wrote that recently, the ROK and DPRK are gradually feeling the necessity for conversation. The problem is that the ROK and DPRK are each having serious misunderstandings toward the other. The ROK and DPRK are seriously in misunderstanding concerning who is going to suggest the conversation first. Both countries need introspection. If the president's proposal for permanent contact office

were true, there would be no reason for the ROK to propose an unconditional conversation for normalization of inter-Korean relations.

Pressian ("IS DPRK'S 'OPEN TO US, ISOLATE ROK' WHAT MAKES INTER-KOREAN CONVERSATION IMPOSSIBLE?", 2008/05/06) wrote that Baek Hak-sun, chief researcher at Saejong Institute, who explained that the DPRK displaying "open to the US, isolate ROK" strategy in nuclear negotiation is not something new and that the DPRK's basis for dealing with the ROK itself did not change and also that it cannot change. Lee Jong-suk, chief researcher, on the other hand, noted that the solution of the DPRK nuclear problem, accomplishment of peace structure, and overcoming animosity and conflict among Northeast Asian countries are the responsibilities of the ROK, and emphasized "These assignments cannot be successfully done with the ROK-US alliance only. Organic employment of ROK-US alliance and multilateral security cooperation is the alternative."

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