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I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters (Sue Fleming, "NORTH KOREA HANDS OVER SOME NUCLEAR DOCUMENTS: U.S.", Washington, 2008/05/08) reported that the DPRK has handed over thousands of pages of nuclear weapons documents to a US diplomat visiting Pyongyang that will help verify the DPRK's plutonium holdings, a senior U.S. official said. The official said the documents were another step toward the goal of getting a full declaration of the DPRK's nuclear activities. They provide detailed logs of how much plutonium was produced. "This documentation, consisting of thousands of pages, will be essential to verifying North Korea's plutonium holdings," added the official.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Itar-Tass ("NKOREA HAS TEN PLUTONIUM WAR CHARGES - SKOREAN OFFICIAL", Tokyo, 2008/05/08) reported that the DPRK has up to ten plutonium war charges in its nuclear arsenal. These data were given by former ROK foreign minister and delegation head at the six-party talks on denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula Lee Soo-hyuck in his book, published in Seoul. The 59-year-old veteran of the ROK diplomatic service noted, "North Korea has 8-10 war charges, made of plutonium". It is supposed that DPRK "produced up to 35-42 kilos of arms-grade plutonium". Lee Soo-hyuck noted that North Korean military specialists "are capable of manufacturing one nuclear charge out of four kilos of plutonium by improving technology of production".

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua ("DPRK ACCUSES SOUTH KOREA OF INTRUDING WEST TERRITORIAL WATERS", Pyongyang, 2008/05/08 20:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the ROK's intrusion into the west territorial waters of the DPRK has raised tensions in the region, the official news agency KCNA said. The ROK navy had deployed more warships in the DPRK territorial waters to show its will to protect the Northern Limit Line (NLL), said a commentary carried by the KCNA. The commentary said the ROK's intrusion would put the inter-Korean relations into a more dangerous situation and hinder the process of resolving the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula.

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4. DPRK-Japan Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA, JAPAN AGREE TO PUSH IMPROVEMENT OF JAPAN-DPRK TIES ", Tokyo, 2008/05/08) reported that the PRC and Japan agreed in a joint press communique issued here on Wednesday to strengthen cooperation in improving Japan's ties with the DPRK. The joint press communique was issued during the PRC President Hu Jintao's ongoing state visit to Japan. In the communique, Japan expressed its readiness to solve the outstanding problems in Japan-DPRK relations, including nuclear and humanitarian issues, and settle the problems left over by history and normalize their bilateral ties in line with the Pyongyang Declaration signed with the DPRK in 2002.

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5. Japanese Abductees Issue

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT EYES ROK HELP IN ABDUCTION CASE", Tokyo, 2008/05/09) reported that the Japanese government recently asked the ROK to mediate over its request to the DPRK that the parents of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted by Pyongyang agents in the 1970s, be allowed to meet her husband and daughter somewhere in the ROK. The government has indicated that it will return the bone fragments, which Pyongyang has claimed were those of Yokota, but which Japan said were not after forensic tests, to the DPRK in exchange for a successful meeting, according to diplomatic sources. According to the sources, Kyoko Nakayama, the prime minister's special adviser on the abduction issue, made the request to an ROK government official when she visited Seoul on April 25.

Kyodo ("JAPAN DENIES REPORT IT ASKED S. KOREA TO MEDIATE ABDUCTEES KIN MEETING", Tokyo, 2008/05/09) reported that Japanese government officials denied on Friday a report in the Yomiuri Shimbun that Japan had asked the ROK to mediate the arrangement of a meeting between the parents of Megumi Yokota, a Japanese victim of abduction by the DPRK, and their granddaughter. "The media report is not based on facts," Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said at a press conference. "It's a very regrettable article when considering the feelings of the Yokotas."

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6. US Food Aid to the DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA SAYS FOOD TALKS WITH THE U.S. WENT SMOOTHLY", 2008/05/08) reported that the DPRK expressed satisfaction following negotiations with the US on food aid to help the DPRK cope with deepening shortages. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency said that a U.S. negotiation team visited the country this week and that the two sides "had in-depth and good negotiations." The US State Department has said the food delegation would discuss with Pyongyang how to guarantee that US food can be distributed to the North Koreans who need it most.

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA, US TO DISCUSS NKOREA FOOD AID AMID REPORTS OF DEATHS", Seoul, 2008/05/09) reported that the ROK and the United States will hold talks next week on the food crisis facing the DPRK, the foreign ministry said Friday. "The government is willing to respond actively should there be a request for humanitarian aid from the North," said spokesman Moon Tae-Young.

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7. DPRK Food Supply

Joongang Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, "NORTH KOREA IN TALKS TO STEM FOOD SHORTFALL ", 2008/05/08) reported that the World Food Program said it will send a team to Pyongyang next week to discuss plans to continue its relief work in the famine-threatened country. The DPRK's state-run media has issued a series of reports about skyrocketing international grain prices. "The prices of rice, wheat and corn have shot up," Korea Central Broadcasting said. "From January to March food prices globally are 20 percent higher than last year, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. Some 37 countries around the world face food shortages." The DPRK blamed the US and other Western countries for aggravating the situation by turning corn into biofuel.

Associated Press ("GROUP SAYS NORTH KOREA FACES MASSIVE FAMINE", Seoul, 2008/05/09) reported that people in the DPRK are dying because of food shortages in rural areas, and a massive famine is just a matter of time, Good Friends said Friday. The food situation was as bad as the famine that hit the country in the mid-1990s, Good Friends cited an unidentified DPRK official as saying. "So far, mass deaths have not occurred as people have become more used to (starvation) than in the 1990s, but famine is a matter of time," the official was quoted as saying. Good Friends also quoted Kim Ki-nam, 39, a resident of Sariwon, south of Pyongyang, as saying one or two deaths were happening every day in rural areas around the city.

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8. DPRK Envoy to the UN

Yonhap ("NEW N. KOREAN ENVOY STARTS WORK AT U.N. ", New York, 2008/05/08) reported that the DPRK's new envoy to the United Nations presented his credentials to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, along with envoys from several other nations, to officially begin his service, Ban's office said. Ambassador Sin Son-ho replaced Pak Gil-yon, who had been at his country's U.N. mission since 2001. He served as deputy chief of the mission from 2000 to 2003.

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9. Sino-ROK Relations

JoongAng Ilbo (Yoo Kwang-jong, "CHINA'S HU IS COMING TO KOREA", 2008/05/08) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao will visit the ROK in late June or early July, diplomatic sources in Beijing told the JoongAng Ilbo yesterday. "South Korea and China are discussing a plan for Hu to visit Korea around the time when he goes to Japan for the G8 summit, which will start on July 7," a source said. He also said the starting of free trade negotiations between the PRC and ROK will be the key issue for Hu's Seoul visit.

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10. US-ROK Trade Relations

Korea Times (Michael Ha, "US URGED TO RECONSIDER DEAL", Seoul, 2008/05/09) reported that Park Geun-hye, former chairwoman of the ruling Grand National Party (GNP), urged the United States to reconsider the U.S. beef import agreement. "There were no new cases of mad cow disease in the United States for the past few years. And the United States government is saying that U.S. beef is absolutely safe. So the solution is very simple. If there are new mad-cow cases, then the U.S. government should simply allow the South Korean government to stop all U.S. beef imports," Park said.

Yonhap (Shin Hae-in, "PARTIES BICKER OVER BEEF DEAL", Seoul, 2008/05/09) reported that ROK political parties escalated disputes Friday on the issue of renegotiating the agreement on U.S. beef imports. During a parliamentary interpellation session Friday, opposition legislators pressured the government to delay the May 15 resumption of beef imports and renegotiate with the U.S. on the terms that are deemed unfavorable to Seoul. The ruling Grand National Party lawmakers spurned the move as "politically-driven," vowing to resume imports under the schedule and also called for early ratification of a free trade agreement (FTA) with Washington.

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11. ROK Military Procurements

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "UNMANNED BORDER GUARD PLAN HITS SNAG", Seoul, 2008/05/08) reported that the military is reviewing whether or not to implement the establishment of an unmanned electronic border security system, an official of the Defense Acquisition Program Administration said Thursday. The move comes as a yearlong pilot run has shown that the systems are "unfit for combat," the official said, asking not to be named.

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12. ROK Bird Flu Outbreak

Chosun Ilbo ("CAUSE OF BIRD FLU OUTBREAK IN SEOUL STILL UNKNOWN", 2008/05/08)

reported that the cause of the virulent strain of bird flu which broke out at an aviary run by the Gwangjin District Office in eastern Seoul is still unknown. Officials from the Seoul city government and the Gwangjin District Office captured wild ducks living in the lake of Konkuk University campus, which is suspected as another possible source of the disease. If the ducks turn out to be the source of the disease, there is a high chance that other wild birds in the vicinity have already been infected. This will make it all the more difficult to trace the cause of the disease and prevent its spread.

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13. Japan SDF Iraq Role

Kyodo News ("JAPAN EYES SOFA WITH IRAQ FOR ASDF MISSION", 2008/05/09) reported that Japan is eyeing beginning negotiations with Iraq to conclude a status of forces agreement to stipulate the legal status of Air Self-Defense Force personnel conducting missions there, sources said. Japan has decided to seek the pact as U.N. Security Council Resolution 1790, which authorizes the current deployment of multinational forces in Iraq, will expire at the end of this year, the sources said. Because concluding a SOFA would not require any legal revisions or budget, the government believes it would be unnecessary to seek Diet approval.

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14. Japanese Space Weaponry

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN TO ALLOW MILITARY USE OF SPACE: LAWMAKER", Tokyo, 2008/05/09) reported that Japanese lawmakers voted Friday to allow the military use of space. A lower house committee voted to reverse a 1969 parliamentary resolution that limited Japan's use of space to non-military applications. The bill is certain to pass in parliament as both the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the main opposition Democratic Party, which controls the upper house, support it. "The bottom line of this bill is to stand on the principle of the peaceful use of space but for the government to use space technology to improve people's livelihoods," said a secretary to a ruling-party lawmaker who requested anonymity.

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15. Japan-Australia Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, AUSTRALIA EYE SERIES OF TALKS IN YEAR, SOLVE WHALING ROW ", Tokyo, 2008/05/08) reported that Tokyo and Canberra reached final arrangements for Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd to visit Japan in June, as their foreign ministers met Thursday, where they also agreed to work on a "diplomatic solution" to the dispute over Japan's whaling activities, a Foreign Ministry official said. Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura and his Australian counterpart Stephen Smith also agreed to arrange for Japan to host a trilateral strategic dialogue with the United States on the sidelines of the Group of Eight foreign ministers' meeting in late June, and for Australia to host bilateral talks among foreign and defense ministers in November.

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16. US Military in Japan

Associated Press ("MARINE GUILTY OF WRONGFUL SEXUAL CONTACT OF JAPANESE WOMAN", Tokyo, 2008/05/09) reported that a U.S. Marine accused in an alleged gang rape of a Japanese woman last year was sentenced to two years in prison Friday for "wrongful sexual contact and indecent acts" but cleared of rape, the U.S. military said. Lance Cpl. Larry A. Dean was also found guilty Thursday of "fraternization and violating military orders about liberty and alcohol" but cleared of rape and kidnapping charges, according to a statement by the Marine Corps Air Station in Iwakuni in southern Japan.

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17. Sino-Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT NOT THREAT TO JAPAN, HU SAYS", Tokyo, 2008/05/08) reported that the PRC and Japan should view each other not as rivals but as partners, PRC President Hu Jintao said, at a time when the Japanese public casts a wary eye on the fast-paced development of its giant neighbor. In a speech at Tokyo's Waseda University, Hu also made his most extensive remarks yet on Japan's wartime aggression since his visit here began Tuesday, calling history "a textbook" for all to learn from. In the speech, Hu also repeated that the PRC has a defensive military policy and does not aim at hegemony. The PRC "will not engage in an arms race and will not become a threat to any country," he said.

China Daily (Zhang Haizhou, "CHINESE VIEW JAPAN 'MORE POSITIVELY'", 2008/05/08) reported that PRC urbanites are changing their attitudes toward Japan and many of them are viewing their Asian neighbor more positively, a recent survey has shown. The Beijing-based Horizon Research Consultancy Group last June polled 3,181 residents in the country's 10 largest cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. The research group considered the frequent exchange visits of high-level officials, particularly those after former Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe's "ice-breaking" trip in the autumn of 2006, as the cause for the dramatic improvement in perception.

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18. Sino-Indian Relations

India Daily (Ravi Solanki, "A SECRET NUCLEAR ARMS RACE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA THAT CAN DWARF COLD WAR ", 2008/05/08) reported that the PRC and India are the two largest Asian economies ready to become superpowers by 2050. Each country has their strategic nuclear arms and delivery research wings that outclass many in the world. The PRC and India are engaged in a secret nuclear arms race that involves billions of dollars. The PRC missiles are targeted at Washington, New Delhi, Taiwan and Moscow. Indian deterrence is pointed mainly at Beijing and Islamabad. As Pakistan has become a no factor in recent days, India has fully engaged in competing with the PRC on the nuclear arsenal delivery systems. India is determined to have a strong and stable nuclear submarine force with nuclear missiles by 2010.

United Press International ("INDIA TO BUILD 61 ROADS BORDERING CHINA", New Delhi, 2008/05/08) reported that India's Border Road Organization said it will construct 61 roads in states

bordering PRC in order to provide easy access for armed forces. According to Lt. Gen. A.K. Nanda, given the strategic importance of a road network in states bordering the PRC, the BRO will build 61 roads covering over 3,800 kilometers by 2012. Indian Defense Minister A.K. Antony recently said road infrastructure in most states bordering the PRC was poor compared with the PRC side. "Better road network right up to the border gave China the ability to rush troops and logistical support in case of an emergency whereas India was handicapped on this count," Antony said.

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19. Tibet Unrest

Reuters (Abhishek Madhukar, "CHINA WILLING TO ENGAGE ON TIBET-DALAI LAMA ENVOY ", Dharamsala, 2008/05/08) reported that an envoy to the Dalai Lama said PRC negotiators had shown a willingness to engage with the Tibetan side during recent talks, despite major differences on important issues. "There were strong and divergent views on the nature as well as the causes of the recent tragic events in Tibet," the envoy Lodi Gyari, said in a statement issued in Dharamsala, home of the Tibetan government-in-exile. He said the Tibetan side had appealed for an end to "the current repression" throughout Tibet, the release of prisoners and proper medical treatment for those injured in the recent unrest.

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20. PRC Viral Outbreak

Xinhua ("DEATH TOLL FROM CHINA VIRAL OUTBREAK RISES TO 32, 24,934 INFECTED ", Beijing, 2008/05/08) reported that contagious hand-foot-mouth disease (HFMD) has left 32 children dead and sickened 24,934 in the PRC as of Thursday, according to Xinhua's tally based on confirmed death reports from provincial-level health bureaus. An eight-month girl died of the disease early Monday morning in Fanyu District of Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, despite emergency medical treatment, the provincial health administration said. So far, Guangdong has reported four deaths and a total of 7,103 infections in the outbreak of HFMD this year, including 34 cases of EV71 positive.

The Associated Press ("CHINA URGES PRECAUTIONS AGAINST DEADLY VIRUS", Beijing, 2008/05/08) reported that the PRC has made it mandatory for health care providers to report all cases of a viral illness that has sickened thousands of young children across the country, as the death toll rose Wednesday to 28. Under the mandate that took effect Tuesday, health care providers need to report cases to the ministry within 24 hours.

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II. ROK Report

21. DPRK Nuclear Program

Munhaw Ilbo ("DPRK THREATENING 'THE SECOND KOREAN WAR' WHILE HANDING OVER NUCLEAR INFORMATION", 2008/05/09) wrote that while displaying coherent sincerity toward the US regarding the nuclear issue, to people of the ROK—the biggest victim—the DPRK still arouses doubts on its sincerity of willingness for nuclear issue solution by calling for the overthrow of the Lee Myung-bak administration. The DPRK has violated the responsibility of nuclear report in complete and clear accordance with the 10.3 agreement from last year's six-party talks. The reason the ROK suddenly repeatedly emphasizes thorough verification is also because the DPRK has always tested the patience of global society.

Yonhap News ("DPRK NUCLEAR ISSUE FACING NEW STAGE", 2008/05/09) wrote that the DPRK nuclear issue has proved its possibility of moving from phase two reporting stage to phase three abandonment stage. However, because what the documents handed over include and how accurate they are have not been verified yet, it is impossible to guarantee whether the US will be able to specifically verify the usage, produced amount and holding amount of plutonium or not. It is predicted that the US, as the DPRK has handed over the document, will begin to fulfill the promised items from the six-party talks under principle of action for action. In the six-party talks, it is predicted that road-map for three-level fulfillment regarding the DPRK nuclear such as DPRK nuclear abandonment or normalization of US-DPRK relations, and detailed fulfillment will be discussed.

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22. DPRK Human Rights

The Peace Foundation (Yoon Yeo-Sang, "IS DPRK HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY STRATEGIC AMBIVALANCE?", 2008/05/06) carried an article by the director of the Database Center for N. Korean Human Rights, who wrote that the ambiguity of DPRK human rights policy must come out of its shade and maintain its principle of strategic accuracy that clarifies the essence. In order to do so, people capable of planning and executing on the basis of firm philosophy and conviction for improvement of DPRK human rights should take charge of the assigned government agency. It is worrisome that the current administration will take advantage of such situation's strategic ambiguity as strategic flexibility. However, DPRK citizens and DPRK human rights organizations do not wish to become the subject of strategic flexibility.

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