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I. NAPSNet

1. Introduction

("ROK Weekly Report: Presidential Elections", 2007-05-04) This week's report focuses on the heating up of the presidential campaign in South Korea, which has seen some twists of fortune lately. The main opposition Grand National Party (GNP), which has been leading in early polls, has suffered setbacks with the loss of two by-elections and feuding between its two leading presidential contenders, party leader Park Geun-hye and former Seoul Mayor Lee Myung-bak. Meanwhile, the ruling Woori Party saw its leading contender, Chung Un-chan, withdraw from the race, leaving it uncertain who would carry the party's banner into December's presidential contest. This report provides commentary on these developments from the Korean language press.

2. Lessons from the French Election

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("MESSAGE FROM THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION", 2007-05-04) writes that in the French presidential election, the two candidates cried out for people's support by showing certain pledges. The newspaper criticizes ROK politicians for not having a clear position on important issues such as FTA and non-standard workers.

3. Woori Party Needs to Look Outside

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("MESSAGE FROM CHUNG UNCHAN'S RESIGNATION OF THE CANDIDACY", 2007-04-30) states that they see Chung Unchan's dropping out as a wise decision, and that this incident should be taken as a moral to the entire ruling party, which conceals its maladministration. In order to make up for the low support rate, the Woori Party should try to bring a new person from outside the politics.

4. GNP Corruption

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("WHAT GRAND NATIONAL PARTY'S CRUSH IN THE BY-ELECTION TELLS US", 2007-04-25) writes that the by-election is a message from the people, showing their mistrust caused by corruption within the GNP, and that if GNP does not take this seriously and keep refusing to reform the party from within, the result of upcoming presidential election will be unpredictable.

5. Woori Party at Sea

PRESSian ("THE RULING PARTY WITHOUT CHUNG UNCHAN, ROADMAP 'AT SEA'", 2007-04-30) writes that after Chung Unchan's dropping out of the candidate list, the entire ruling party's roadmap of presidential election is "at sea." Their previous plan was drawn from Honam to Chungchun, and to the capital area, and had waited for the decision of people from outside, but now they must start moving from the inside.

6. GNP Candidates Must Show Solidarity

Chosun Ilbo ("THE OPPORTUNITY'S HERE FOR LEE MYUNGPAK AND PARK GEUNHYE", 2007-05-01) writes that even though the disappearance of Chung Unchan from the presidential election scene increases the possibility to win for Grand National Party, the two candidates from GNP are in danger. Lee Myungbak cannot give up the candidacy because he is currently getting the most support in his party, and Park Geun-hye cannot give up because she believes there is a hole in his high support rate. The reason Roh Moo-hyun became the president was because candidates from his party came together and unified the candidates. This is the opportunity for the two candidates to show their political capacity.

Donga Ilbo ("LEE AND PARK SHOULDN'T BE FIGHTING", 2007-05-04) writes that the two candidates of the Grand National Party, Lee and Park, have been fighting all along to grasp the party's support, but neither of them has come up with a pledge or plan to touch the hearts of people. Now they must stop the corruption and start developing policy contents and show some election pledges.

7. Sohn Hak-kyu Emerges

CBS News ("RULING PARTY WITHOUT CHUNG UNCHAN..., SUPPORT LEANS TOWARD SOHN HAKKYU", 2007-05-03) states that after Jung Unchan's dropping out of the candidacy list, the interest is on who's going to be the "post-Chung card", and that the support is gradually leaning toward Sohn Hak-kyu. According to CBS's survey, Sohn's support rate has increased by 3.2%, its highest in 3 weeks.

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