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I. NAPSNet

1. US, Japan on Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("US, JAPAN URGE N KOREA TO PROMPTLY RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS ", 2006-05-01) reported that the US and Japan urged the DPRK on Monday to return promptly to six-nation talks on its nuclear weapons program and to bring the program to a halt under international supervision. The statement was issued by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso and Japanese Defense Minister Fukushiro Nukaga after a meeting designed to strengthen military ties. Accusing the DPRK of illicit activities in spreading nuclear technology, the two nations lodged no threat in the statement. Rather, they underscored the importance of using diplomatic means to resolve regional disputes.

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2. US on DPRK Terrorism Funding

Yonhap ("U.S. REPORT RETAINS N.K. AS TERRORISM-SPONSORING STATE", 2006-04-29) reported that the US still classifies the DPRK as a state sponsor of terrorism even though it is not known to have committed terrorist acts since 1987, an annual report said Friday. The same report said the ROK is beginning to recognize terrorism as a problem beyond the DPRK, especially on alert against al-Qaida and other groups that oppose the country's military presence in Iraq.

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3. US Espionage in DPRK

Associated Press ("US SAID TO ESCALATE SPY FLIGHTS OVER NORTH KOREA ", 2006-04-30) reported that the DPRK has accused the US of stepping up aerial espionage activities over its territory during high-level inter-Korean talks in Pyongyang this month. The KCNA said Saturday that US spy planes, including U-2s, had flown an average of more than five missions a day over DPRK airspace during April, totalling 160 sorties for the month. "Tens of reconnaissance planes carried out their aerial espionage activities during the North-South Korean high-level talks from April 21-24," the KCNA said in a report.

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4. Kim Jong-nam Telephone Interceptions

Chosun Ilbo ("SPY INTERCEPT CASTS LIGHT ON POWER STRUGGLE IN N.KOREA ", 2006-05-01) reported that an East Asian intelligence agency has successfully tapped into frequent calls made by Kim Jong-il's oldest son Kim Jong-nam from Beijing to the DPRK leader's younger sister Kim Kyung-hee in Pyongyang, the Sankei Shimbun reported Monday. In the calls, Kim Jong-nam complains that he was detained in Japan because of then incompetence of public security officials in the DPRK, according to the Japanese daily. In May 2001, Kim Jong-nam attempted to enter Japan on a forged passport but was unmasked and detained and later deported. Kim Kyung-hee also complains about

the misrule of the Kim Jong-il regime, who ordered the demotion of her husband Chang Song-taek from his position as department head in the ruling Korean Workers Party.

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5. DPRK Abduction Issue

Associated Press ("BUSH CALLS NORTH KOREAN REGIME "HEARTLESS" AFTER EMOTIONAL MEETING", 2006-04-28) reported that US President George W. Bush called DPRK leader Kim Jong Il's regime "heartless," after an emotional meeting with families of Japanese nationals kidnapped by DPRK agents. "I have just had one of the most moving meetings since I've been the President here in the Oval Office," Bush said after the meeting, including with 70-year-old Sakie Yokota, whose daughter was abducted from Japan by DPRK agents at the age of 13 in 1977. Bush said that if the DPRK expected to be respected in the world, it "must respect human rights and human dignity and must allow this mother to hug her child again." The world, he said, "requires courage to confront people who do not respect human rights."

(return to top) Kyodo News ("RICE REAFFIRMS U.S. COMMITMENTS TO PRESS N. KOREA ON ABDUCTION ISSUE", 2006-05-01) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reaffirmed US commitments Monday to press the DPRK to return Japanese abductees and respect human rights, saying Washington will continue to place "deep" interests on the issues, a Japanese official said. Rice made the comments at a US-Japan top security meeting. (return to top) Kyodo News ("CHINA TO HELP RESOLVE JAPAN-NORTH KOREA ABDUCTION ISSUE - TANG", 2006-05-01) reported that PRC State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan said Monday the PRC will make efforts to help resolve the issue of abductions of Japanese nationals by the DPRK during a meeting with Tsutomu Takebe, secretary-general of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Previously, the PRC had said the abduction issue is a bilateral matter that should be dealt with between Japan and the DPRK. (return to top) Yonhap ("U.S. LEGISLATOR URGES G-8 SUMMIT TO ADDRESS N.K. ABDUCTION ISSUE ", 2006-04-28) reported that a US congressman urged G-8 leaders to more strongly condemn the DPRK's kidnapping of foreign nationals when they meet in Moscow in July. Rep. Christopher Smith (R-New Jersey), speaking at a House hearing with relatives of DPRK kidnapping victims, said the G-8 summit is "a golden opportunity" to give the issue a push. (return to top)

6. Japanese DPRK Sanctions Bill

Kyodo News ("JAPAN RULING PARTIES SUBMIT N. KOREA SANCTIONS BILL TO DIET", 2006-0--28) reported that Japan's ruling coalition on Friday submitted to the Diet a bill that requires the Japanese government to impose economic sanctions on the DPRK if it fails to make progress in addressing its human rights situation, notably the abduction of Japanese nationals. The bill, tabled to the House of Representatives, obligates the government to take "necessary measures" such as banning DPRK ships from making port calls in Japan and taking financial action under the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law, if no improvement is seen in the DPRK's human rights situation.

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7. Norwegian DPRK Human Rights Conference

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL TO MAKE FIRST SHOWING AT N.KOREA RIGHTS MEET", 2006-05-01) reported that Seoul will for the first time send senior officials to an international conference on DPRK human rights, the government said Monday. "Human Rights Ambassador Park Kyung-seo and Korean Ambassador to Norway Kim Young-seok will attend the seventh international conference on

North Korean human rights and refugees in Norway from May 9-11," a government official said. Park will explain the ROK's position on human rights in the DPRK in a 20-minute speech.

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8. Kaesong Industrial Complex

Korea Times ("KAESONG GOODS TO BE INCLUDED IN ASEAN FTA", 2006-04-30) reported that a diplomat of the Embassy of the Philippines, a key member of the 10-nation ASEAN, said on Sunday that the group's free trade agreement (FTA) with the ROK would recognize products made in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, the inter-Korean project, as ROK products.

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9. Inter-Korean Publishing Cooperation

Korea Times ("NK NOVELS DEPICT SHARED KOREAN HISTORY ", 2006-04-28) reported that two DPRK novels, recently published in the ROK by a company aiming to introduce a series of historic novels from the other half of the Korean Peninsula, may well serve as a timely reminder of the historical background to anti-Japanese sentiment that runs deep in both Koreas. The first of the historic novel series, ``Ahn Joong-keun Shoots Ito Hirobumi,'' is set in the early 20th century, during which time Japan's move to annex Korea gained momentum. The novel, which the DPRK claims was originally a revolutionary drama piece created by its founding father Kim Il-sung in 1928, is adapted by Lim Jong-sang, 73, an established writer in the DPRK.

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10. Inter-Korean Scientific Cooperation

Yonhap ("BIOTECH SECTOR RIPE FOR INTER-KOREAN COOPERATION: REPORT", 2006-05-01) reported that the ROK could capitalize on the DPRK's emerging prowess in the biotechnology sector to foster inter-Korean cooperation in this modern scientific field, a report by a state-run institute in Seoul said Monday. The DPRK, often viewed as stunted politically and economically, possesses considerable competitiveness in the field of biotechnology, the report by the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Information showed. This, it said, is partly due to the need to alleviate the country's chronic food shortages.

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11. Korean Unification Conference

Yonhap ("PRESIDENTIAL ADVISORS ON UNIFICATION TO HOLD MEETING IN SEOUL", 2006-0--01) reported that nearly 600 policy advisors to ROK President Roh Moo-hyun from the US and other nations are to hold a meeting in Seoul this week to review the country's policy on the DPRK and unification, meeting organizers said Monday. The annual conference of the National Unification Advisory Council (NUAC) is to be held at Seoul's Sheraton Walker Hill Hotel from Tuesday through Thursday, bringing together 565 delegates from the US, Canada and Latin American countries, Jeong Nam-soo, an official at the NUAC, said.

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12. US Asylum for DPRK National

Chosun Ilbo ("FIRST N.KOREAN SETTLED IN SOUTH GETS ASYLUM IN U.S. ", 2006-04-30) reported that for the first time a US court has granted asylum to a DPRK defector who had already acquired ROK citizenship. The Los Angeles Immigration Court on Thursday granted political asylum to a former DPRK military officer using the pseudonym Seo Jae-sok, who entered the US in 2004 with his wife and their two children. His lawyer Miriam Kang of the California-based non-profit organization Human Rights Project said Seo was considered a DPRK national and not a RO Korean.

(return to top) Yonhap ("N.K. REFUGEE GRANTED U.S. ASYLUM VOICES MIXED FEELINGS", 2006-04-30) reported that Seo Jae-sok, a DPRK defector who was granted political asylum by the Los Angeles Immigration Court on Thursday, called on RO Koreans to change their attitude towards defectors from the DPRK. In an interview with Yonhap News Agency, Seo spoke of his unpleasant experiences in the ROK after he successfully defected. (return to top)

13. DPRK-PRC Air Travel

Yonhap ("CHINESE AIRLINE BEGINS REGULAR FLIGHT SERVICE TO PYONGYANG", 2006-05-01) reported that the PRC's second-largest carrier China Southern Airlines Co. began a three-time--weekly flight service between Beijing and Pyongyang, Xinhua News Agency reported Monday.

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14. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Joongang Ilbo ("BILATERAL TALKS ON DOKDO SEE NO PROGRESS", 2006-05-01) reported that a fence-mending meeting yesterday between Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon and Japan's senior vice-minister of foreign affairs, Yasuhisa Shiozaki, only confirmed the gap between the two sides on the Dokdo Islets but they agreed to keep things civilized by cooperating on other issues in the region.

(return to top) Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE POLITICIAN HEADS TO SEOUL TO DISCUSS ISLAND SPAT", 2006-05-01) reported that a veteran Japanese politician and close aide of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi left for the ROK with hopes of calming a row over a cluster of disputed islets. Taku Yamasaki, a lower house lawmaker and former vice president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, plans to meet ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon and Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-Ung in Seoul. A spokesman for Yamasaki said the trip was his own initiative and not officially sanctioned by Koizumi. (return to top)

15. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("ROH STRESSES MUTUAL INTEREST IN ALLIANCE WITH U.S.", 2006-05-01) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun said the ROK-US alliance "can become healthier and grow further when the two allies pursue mutual interests and goals." Roh was quoted as making the remark in a meeting with Gen. Burwell Bell, the new commander of the US Forces Korea. Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Chung Tae-ho said Roh meant to emphasize the importance of the bilateral alliance to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and the contribution the US has made to the ROK's development.

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16. USFJ Troop Realignment

Kyodo ("JAPAN, U.S. ENTER NEW STAGE WITH TROOP REALIGNMENT BY 2014", 2006-05-01) reported that Japan and the US finalized Monday in ministerial talks an implementation plan to realign the US military presence in Japan by 2014 to bolster their security alliance. The final plan sees Japan more actively engaged in the alliance while Washington seeks a more compact and mobile forward deployment under a global transformation of US troops. The roadmap says Japan will shoulder all costs for the realignment unless otherwise stated but does not include a figure for the total expense.

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17. US-Japan Security Alliance

Kyodo ("JAPAN, U.S. AGREE ON NEED TO REVISE BILATERAL DEFENSE GUIDELINES", 2006-0--01) reported that Japan and the US have agreed on the need to review a set of guidelines on bilateral defense cooperation to address developments in the alliance amid new security challenges and the realignment of the US military presence in Japan, Defense Agency Director General Fukushiro Nukaga said. Nukaga said the review is necessary as the Self-Defense Forces' activities have in reality expanded further than was expected under the bilateral security treaty, which entered into force in 1960.

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18. Japan on UNSC Reform

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI CALLS FOR COOPERATION IN U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM", 2006-0--01) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi called for cooperation with African countries in their bids to win permanent seats in the UN Security Council during a speech delivered at the African Union headquarters in Ethiopia. "We must realize U.N. Security Council reform without delay...We would like to strengthen collaboration with our African colleagues," Koizumi said, apparently referring to Japan's bid to become a permanent member of the council and the African Union's campaign to win membership for two African countries.

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19. Japan-PRC Relations

Kyodo ("JAPAN, CHINA TO HOLD SUBCABINET-LEVEL TALKS AMID STRAINED TIES", 2006-0--01) reported that Japan and the PRC will hold a subcabinet-level dialogue from Sunday in the PRC in a bid to resume their top-level talks which were halted due to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's repeated visits to the war-related Yasukuni Shrine, a top Japanese Foreign Ministry official said Monday. According to Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi, the three-day dialogue will take place between him and PRC Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo in Beijing and Guiyang.

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20. PRC African Diplomacy

The New York Times ("CHINA'S LEADER SIGNS OIL DEALS WITH AFRICANS", 2006-05-01)

reported that President Hu Jintao returned to Beijing on Sunday after a diplomatic tour that began awkwardly in the US but ended with a swing through Africa that brought the PRC several trade and energy deals. Mr. Hu ended his five-nation tour in Kenya, where he signed an agreement on Saturday for licenses that would allow the state-owned China National Offshore Oil Corporation to explore for oil off the coast of Kenya. Earlier in the week, Mr. Hu signed a deal that bought the PRC energy company a substantial share of a major oil field in Nigeria.

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21. PRC Internet Censorship

Reuters ("CHINESE INTERNET ACTIVISTS CHALLENGE CENSORSHIP", 2006-05-01) reported that a coalition of PRC Web activists has launched a petition decrying censorship of the Internet and challenging the legality of government information controls on the PRC's more than 100 million net users. Hundreds of citizens signed the petition along with representatives of 13 local PRC Web sites recently closed or targeted by censors. It began circulating via email and overseas PRC-language Web sites unaffected by domestic censorship.

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22. PRC Environment

Agence-France Presse ("CHINA WARNS 10 MILLION THREATENED BY DROUGHT", 2006-05-01) reported that droughts in different parts of the PRC are threatening the supply of drinking water for 10 million people, the government warned. The situation has been worsening since mid-April and affected both areas in the north of the country and in Yunnan province in the southwest, the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters said.

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23. Australia on Solomon Islands

Agence-France Presse ("AUSTRALIA ASKS CHINA, TAIWAN TO STAY OUT OF SOLOMONS POLITICS ", 2006-05-01) reported that Australia has demanded the PRC and Taiwan keep out of Solomon Islands politics, ahead of next week's election for a new prime minister in the troubled South Pacific nation. "Inappropriate influences from other countries in the Solomon Islands are totally out of order," Australian Justice Minister Chris Ellison said Friday during a four-hour visit to the riot-battered capital Honiara.

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