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I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Frozen Funds

Washington Times ("N. KOREA CASH MAY END UP IN U.S. BANK", 2007-05-09) reported that the Bush administration said yesterday it would consider allowing the DPRK to transfer \$25 million from Macao to an account in a U.S. bank -- a move that would disregard Washington's own policy on

terrorism financing -- in the hope of nailing down an agreed deal for the DPRK to shut down its main nuclear reactor.

2. US on Korean Peace Regime

Yonhap ("WASHINGTON HOPES TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS ON KOREAN PEACE REGIME THIS YEAR: U.S. AMBASSADOR", 2007-05-10) reported that US Ambassador to Seoul Alexander Vershbow said in an interview with the Kyunghyang Shinmun, that the United States hopes to launch negotiations within the year to replace the armistice treaty that ended the Korean War with a permanent peace regime.

3. US on IAEA-DPRK Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("N. KOREA, IAEA 'STILL IN CONTACT,'" , 2007-05-10) reported that US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack confirmed the DPRK has been in contact with the International Atomic Energy Agency for discussions on Pyongyang's abandonment of its nuclear program. McCormack said this ongoing contact showed Pyongyang's intention to comply with the Feb. 13 agreement on denuclearization commitments. He said a little more time should be given for the settlement of the BDA issue.

4. Japan-ROK on Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA HOLD BILATERAL SECURITY TALKS IN TOKYO", 2007-05-10) reported that Japanese and ROK defense and foreign affairs officials met early Thursday for one-day talks on ways of speeding up DPRK disarmament. The ROK is optimistic a dispute over bank funds will be resolved soon, while Japan is frustrated with the slow pace of Pyongyang's disarmament, and is reportedly considering additional sanctions.

5. Inter-Korean Relations

UCANews ("CATHOLICS VISIT NORTH KOREA, CANNOT CELEBRATE MASS", 2007-05-10) reported that at an inter-faith ROK delegation visited Pyongyang pledging to continue exchanges to facilitate inter-Korean reconciliation. ROK representatives visited their counterparts' religious facilities. Protestants, led by Anglican Archbishop Francis Park Kyung-jo of Seoul, held a service at Chilgol Church, while Buddhists paid homage to Buddha at Kwangbopsa Temple. The entire delegation visited Jongbaek Monastery, the first Russian Orthodox church in the DPRK. Two DPRK priests ordained in Russia are now stationed at the church. The DPRK officially allows religious activities, however, no Catholic priests reside in the country. The ROK bishops advised priests were asked to refrain from saying Mass to avoid giving Communion to DPR Koreans who may not be Catholics. The nine-member Catholic delegation did celebrate a liturgy with 200 DPR Koreans on Sunday, at Changchung Church, the only Catholic church in the DPRK.

6. ROK on Japan Missile Defense

Kyodo ("S. KOREAN NAVY CAPTAIN AIRS CONCERN OVER JAPAN'S MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM", 2007-05-10) reported that a ROK Navy captain voiced concern Wednesday about Japan's ballistic missile defense initiative, saying it is "destabilizing" for Northeastern Asia. Chung Sam Man, a naval attache at the ROK Embassy in the US made the remark during a symposium on missile defense at the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank. If Japan fails to share with its neighbors information about "common threats" and "common interests" in promoting its missile defense project, he said, "It doesn't make sense...I think it's kind of destabilizing."

7. Japan on War Claims

The Associated Press ("JAPAN RULES AGAINST WAR CLAIMS", 2007-05-10) reported that Japan's Supreme Court rejected compensation claims by PRC victims of atrocities committed by Japan in the 1930s and 40s, which included the use of biological weapons and a massacre in the city of Nanjing, defense lawyers said Thursday. In two separate decisions made Wednesday, the top court upheld rulings by lower courts since 1999 that the current Japanese government was not liable for compensation demands from foreign citizens for wartime actions, according to defense lawyer Norio Minami.

8. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Agence France-Presse ("INDIA SEEKING 'FINAL SETTLEMENT' OF BORDER ROW WITH CHINA ", 2007-05-10) reported that India Thursday said it was seeking a "final settlement" with the PRC to a dragging border dispute. "India and China are exploring the framework of a final package settlement covering all sectors of the India-China boundary," Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee told parliament. He said the final package will be followed by the marking of boundaries.

9. US on PRC-ASEAN Military Cooperation

Reuters ("CHINA MILITARY TIES WITH ASEAN NO THREAT, U.S. SAYS", 2007-05-10) reported that the PRC's bid for closer military ties with Southeast Asia is a "positive overture" and does not pose a threat to US interests in the region, a top US military commander said. "Our reaction to it is, we are going to reach out to China and engage with them. If they want to exercise together, I'm prepared to exercise right now," said Lieutenant-General John Goodman, commander of U.S. Marine Corps Forces in the Pacific. Jane's Defense Weekly said the PRC proposal "signals that Washington can expect heightened competition for influence in Southeast Asia."

10. PRC Swine Epidemic

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA BLAMES PIG DEATHS ON BLUE-EARED DISEASE", 2007-05-10) reported that a mystery virus killing hundreds of pigs in south PRC has been identified, the agriculture ministry said, warning it could mutate and spread during the hot summer months. The virus was probably linked to a reproductive and respiratory condition known as blue-eared pig disease, the ministry said in a statement on its website. "This disease spreads especially fast during the summer," the ministry said, citing the hot and humid weather of the season. Experts say it cannot spread from animals to people.

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