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I. NAPSNet

1. US-ROK Forum on DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("APPROACH TO NORTH KOREA DEBATED", 2006-05-02) reported that Seoul is not making human rights for the DPRK an important issue, an official at a US-based civic group charged at a forum here. "The North Korean nuclear issue is a current issue, but to use an approach with the DPRK that neglects human rights is the wrong idea," said Jennifer L. Windsor, of Freedom House, at a forum Monday about outstanding issues between Seoul and Washington. Moon Jeong-in, a professor at Yonsei University who represented Seoul's side, warned that if Seoul chooses to pressure the DPRK on human rights, the DPRK would stop inter-Korean cooperation and could refuse food aid from the ROK, which would leave the DPRK's citizens at the short end.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("ACADEMIC CLAIMS N.KOREA HAS SEVEN NUKES ", 2006-05-02) reported that a US expert on inter-Korean relations says there is a high possibility that Pyongyang already has six to seven nuclear bombs. The remarks by Prof. Bruce Cummings of the University of Chicago came in a Seoul-Washington Forum that opened in the US capital on Monday. (return to top) Reuters ("FORMER U.S. NEGOTIATOR URGES NORTH KOREA CONTACTS", 2006-05-02) reported that the Bush administration's former chief negotiator with the DPRK challenged Washington on Monday to try to break the stalemate in six-party nuclear talks through more direct US contacts with Pyongyang. James Kelly, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs until about a year ago, lamented what he called "an unjust fear among some in Washington that we should avoid direct contact with North Korea." "No one should be satisfied with a stretched out non-solution in which North Korea becomes an unacknowledged nuclear power," said Kelly, now with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. (return to top)

2. Kofi Annan's ROK Visit

Chosun Ilbo ("UN SECRETARY-GENERAL TO VISIT KOREA THIS MONTH ", 2006-05-02) reported that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will visit the ROK in the middle of the month, it emerged Tuesday. It will be Annan's first visit to the country since 1998 and comes after the announcement of ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon's candidacy to succeed Annan at the head of the world body. Annan will meet with President Roh Moo-hyun to exchange ideas on UN reform and progress in stalled six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear programs.

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3. Korean Unification Conference

Yonhap ("MEETING OF UNIFICATION ADVISORS OPENS IN SEOUL", 2006-05-02) reported that an annual conference of policy advisors to ROK President Roh Moo-hyun from overseas on unification opened here Tuesday amid an apparent rift between Seoul and Washington over ways to approach the DPRK. Attending the meeting were some 540 members, or delegates, from the US, Canada and 12 South American countries, including Argentina, Brazil and Mexico. Headed by the president himself, the council offers advice and suggestions to the president and his government on the country's unification policy while it also closely monitors developments affecting inter-Korean relations.

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4. Kaesong Industrial Complex

Yonhap ("SEOUL VOWS TO CONTINUE KAESONG PROJECT DESPITE U.S. CRITICISM", 2006-0--02) reported that Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok said Tuesday his country will continue to expand and increase its economic cooperation with the DPRK despite recent criticism from the international community. "It provides actual help to North Korea's economy while also providing a chance for the North to learn the basics of a market economy," he added. "Our main objective is to do something that benefits both of us."

(return to top) Yonhap ("KAESONG, A 'LOGICALLY SOUND' CAPITALIST LESSON FOR N. KOREA: KAC PRESIDENT", 2006-05-02) reported that the inter-Korean project to develop an industrial complex for ROK firms in the DPRK border city of Kaesong is not only logically sound, but it will eventually help open the state to capitalism, the head of a Korean-American advocacy group said Tuesday. "As capitalism is introduced to North Korea through the Kaesong project, it will eventually provide a basis for the North to move closer to a market economy," Kim Chul-joo, head of the Korean-American Coalition (KAC), told Yonhap News Agency. (return to top)

5. DPRK Abduction Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("ABDUCTEE YOKOTA'S FATHER TO VISIT S. KOREA NEXT WEEK ", 2006-05-02) reported that the father of Japanese abductee Megumi Yokota, Shigeru Yokota, plans to make a three-day visit to the ROK from May 11 to meet the kin of a RO Korean abductee who is believed to be the husband of Megumi in the DPRK, sources familiar with the matter said Tuesday.

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6. DPRK in State Rankings

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA RANKS 14TH ON LIST OF FAILED STATES ", 2006-05-02) reported that the DPRK has been ranked 14th on a list of “failed states” compiled by the US global policy journal Foreign Policy together with the Fund for Peace. The two gave countries number grades in areas like government authority, legitimacy, public peace and basic public services.

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7. DPRK-Russia Athletic Cooperation

Reuters ("RUSSIAN CLUB SAMARA EYES NORTH KOREAN PLAYERS", 2005-05-02) reported that several players from the DPRK could soon join Krylya Sovietov Samara after representatives from the Russian premier league club visited the state last week. The two sides have signed an agreement, paving the way for DPR Koreans to show their skills in Russia's top flight.

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8. Taiwan-Pacific Rim Relations

The China Post ("PLANS FOR PRESIDENT'S U.S. TRANSIT TRIP HAVE NOT YET BEEN FINALIZED", 2006-05-02) reported that Vice Foreign Minister Chang Siao-yue said Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bianwill depart for Paraguay and Costa Rica on Wednesday but his planned US

stops are yet to be finalized. The delay is highly unusual. For years Washington has allowed Taiwanese leaders to transit through the US on their way to visit the island's allies in Central and South America.

(return to top) The China Post ("MOFA DENIES REPORT TIES WITH PARAGUAY, COSTA RICA ARE SHAKY", 2006-05-02) reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday denied a China Times report saying ties with Paraguay and Costa Rica were shaky and that Paraguay's Finance Minister Ernst Berger recently asked Taiwan for a US$400 million loan. (return to top)

9. Japan Iraq Deployment

The Asahi Shimbun ("NUKAGA: SDF WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ TO COINCIDE WITH BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN PULLOUT", 2006-05-02) reported that Japanese Defense Agency Director-General Fukushiro Nukaga told US officials that the GSDF will withdraw from southern Iraq when Britain and Australia pull their troops from the area. But Nukaga said Tokyo intends to continue the Air SDF's mission of transporting US troops and relief goods from Kuwait.

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10. Japan Constitution

The Asahi Shimbun ("GRASS-ROOTS DEFENDERS OF PACIFIST ARTICLE 9 INCREASING 'BEYOND EXPECTATIONS'", 2006-05-02) reported that the grass-roots movement to keep intact war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution has spread so rapidly that some current groups are being overwhelmed by the influx of new members.

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11. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

The China Post ("SOUTH KOREAN OFFICIAL VISITS ISLETS DISPUTED BY JAPAN", 2006-05-02) reported that the ROK's ruling party chairman made a surprise visit to a string of disputed islets and said the country must defend them at any cost, amid heightened tensions with Japan over rival claims to the territory.

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12. PRC Air Force

Xinhua ("CHINA'S AIR FORCE INTENSIFIES TRAINING", 2006-05-02) reported that the PRC air force has intensified training in an effort to enhance its combat strength, according to the People's Liberation Army Daily. The report said that the air force has largely improved its counter electromagnetic interference ability in preparation for a high-tech war.

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13. PRC Population

Xinhua ("CHINA PREPARES FOR FOURTH BABY BOOM BEFORE 2010", 2006-05-02) reported that PRC population experts are predicting a mini-baby boom before 2010 as a result of the country's family planning laws. However, Zhang Weiqing, Minister in charge of the National Population and

Family Planning Commission, stressed that family planning laws would remain to stabilize the low birth rate.

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14. PRC Energy

Xinhua ("CHINA'S 1ST SELF-DESIGNED NUCLEAR POWER STATION STARTS EXPANSION", 2006-04-28) reported that the PRC's first self-designed and self-made nuclear power station began another round of expansion. The PRC plans to increase its nuclear power generating capacity to 40 million kw by 2020, aiming to account for 4% of the country's total installed capacity at that time. Currently less than 2 percent of its electric power come from nuclear generation.

(return to top) Xinhua ("CHINA'S HALF-YEAR POWER CONSUMPTION TO INCREASE 11.5 PERCENT YEAR ON YEAR", 2006-05-02) reported that the China Electricity Council said total power consumption for the PRC during the first half of this year is expected to increase 11.5%. Wang Yongping, secretary-general of the council, said that the demand for power will moderate in the last three quarters of this year and that the shortage of power will total about 8 million kilowatts at peak hours of this summer in East and North PRC. (return to top)

15. PRC Finance

The International Herald Tribune ("BEIJING SETS FUND RULES", 2006-05-01) reported that the National Social Security Fund, a PRC state pension agency that controls $25 million in assets, has said foreign fund managers investing internationally on behalf of the fund must have at least $5 billion in capital and a credit rating of "A" for the past three years in order to qualify.

(return to top) The International Herald Tribune ("IMF URGES CHINA TO RESTRAIN LENDING", 2006-05-02) reported that the International Monetary Fund urged the PRC to tighten access to credit, saying that last week's modest interest rate increase was insufficient to stave off economic overheating. (return to top) The International Herald Tribune ("ASIAN OFFICIALS HOPEFUL ON BOLSTERING FINANCE NET", 2006-05-01) reported that Finance ministers from the ASEAN, along with those from the PRC, Japan and the ROK, are scheduled to meet in India to make incremental but concrete progress this week in preventing currency turmoil and developing their region's domestic bond markets and to address global imbalances by allowing more exchange rate flexibility. (return to top)

16. PRC-Vatican Relations

The China Post ("CHINA MAY ORDAIN SECOND BISHOP THIS WEEK", 2006-05-02) reported that the PRC's religious authorities may consecrate a second bishop this week, in a move likely to inflame already testy relations between the Vatican and Beijing. The PRC's communist authorities were planning to consecrate Liu Xinhong, a church administrator in central Anhui province, as a bishop possibly this week.

(return to top) The International Herald Tribune ("VATICAN ANGERED AS CHINA CONSECRATES BISHOP WITH TIES TO BEIJING", 2006-05-01) reported that despite objections from the Vatican and Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun of Hong Kong, the state-controlled Catholic church in the PRC installed as a bishop of Kunming Father Ma Yinglin, a senior official who has been involved in the government's political control of the church. (return to top)

II. CanKor

17. Report #246

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-04-28) It would take at least four months for the DPRK to restock its military fuel supply in the case of full-time combat, says analyst Peter Hayes of the Nautilus node at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Japan adds twenty DPR Korean companies and research institutions to its export control list, over concerns that items exported from Japan could be used in weapons of mass destruction. The DPRK claims "shocking evidence" that the CIA, among other "plot-breeding organizations", fabricates fake human rights abuse videos and manufactures counterfeit 100 dollar bills in US military bases in order to frame the DPRK.

(return to top) CanKor ("FOCUS", 2006-04-28) The 18th inter-Korean ministerial meeting in Pyongyang shows positive results. This week's CanKor FOCUS features the text of the agreement that includes a deal "to cooperate in trying to resolve realistically the issue of persons missing during the Korean War and after the war." ROK Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok uses a quote by the late DPRK leader Kim Il Sung to persuade DPRK delegates to re-open and test drive the inter-Korean railroad. The DPRK agrees to receive former ROK leader Kim Dae Jung on a visit planned for June. (return to top) CanKor ("OPINION", 2006-04-28) In this week's OPINION section, Financial Times columnist Victor Mallet claims it is time to admit publicly that the world has failed to persuade the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons. The long-term survival of the nuclear-armed DPRK regime, Mallet believes, depends on isolation and an artificial sense of a permanent war with the West. These will be diminished only by globalization and capitalism. By engaging the DPRK, the Chinese and RO Koreans are helping the DPRK to transform from a militarized state into a "more normal country" -- a precondition for the rational negotiations on which depends the solution to the nuclear crisis. A South Korean opinion survey reveals that 48% of the young people who will get their first voting rights in the 2007 presidential election believe the ROK should side with the DPRK if Washington attacks nuclear facilities without Seoul's consent. 40% say Seoul should stay neutral, while only 11.6% would side with Washington. (return to top)

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