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I. NAPSNet

1. Hill on DPRK Nuclear Program

Voice of America ("TOP US NUCLEAR NEGOTIATOR URGES NORTH KOREA TO END WEAPONS PROGRAMS", 2007-05-29) reported that Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill urged the DPRK to begin dismantling its nuclear weapons facilities since the technical problem in transferring funds to Pyongyang will be solved soon.

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2. ASEM on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("FOREIGN MINISTERS AT ASIA-EUROPE MEETING CALL ON N. KOREA TO DISARM", 2007-05-29) reported that foreign ministers from 43 Asian and European nations gathered for the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) urged the DPRK to implement without any further delay a six-nation agreement in which it promised to shut down and eventually disable its key nuclear reactor.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Hankyoreh ("S. KOREA URGES N. KOREA TO BUILD ON DETENTE AFTER TRAIN TEST", 2007-0-29) reported that the ROK called upon the DPRK to keep up the momentum of renewed reconciliation following the historic test run of trains across the inter-Korean border, in an effort to establish a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula. The Koreans started a new round of high-level talks, the 21st since the first-ever summit meeting between leaders of the two Koreas held in June 2000.

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4. US-ROK Trade Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("RENEGOTIATE FTA AND WIN, U.S. LAW FIRM TELLS KOREA", 2007-05-29) reported that the ROK government is apparently inclined to heed advice from an American law firm to accept a US request for re-negotiations of their bilateral free trade agreement and win more concessions. The US wants to renegotiate to reflect a new trade policy calling among other things for better labor and environmental protection. In return for taking US requests on labor and the environment on board, the ROK government is working on suggestions to set visa quotas for professionals and strengthening trade remedies.

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5. ROK-PRC History Dispute

Donga Ilbo ("CHINESE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, 'GOJOSEON AND GOGURYEO PART OF KOREAN HISTORY'", 2007-05-29) reported that the PRC Academy of Social Sciences is a renowned think tank which deals with domestic and foreign affairs. The Northeast Project of the PRC Academy of Social Science, one of the academy's research projects, concluded that Gojoseon, Goguryeo and Balhae are part of the history of the PRC. The project claims that any part of what is now the PRC is defined as having been part of that greater Chinese state. The project sparked public uproar among Koreans as an attempt to make a flawed and politically motivated rewriting of history.

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6. ROK Press Restrictions

Korea Times ("ROH THREATENS TO SHUT DOWN ALL PRESS ROOMS", 2007-05-29) reported that the presidential office threatened to shut down all press rooms, if the media continues a campaign against its plan for a "developed news supporting system." Under the scenario, journalists are supposed to leave ministry buildings shortly after news briefings by government officials. They will

be basically blocked from staying or writing articles in the buildings. In January, Roh said reporters were colluding over the content of articles at pressrooms.

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7. Japan Defense Policy

Kyodo ("DEFENSE MINISTRY TO SEEK PREPAREDNESS FOR SDF ACTIVITIES OVERSEAS", 2007-05-29) reported that Japan's Defense Ministry will call for reinforcing the Self-Defense Forces' preparedness for playing an active role in overseas activities in its 2007 white paper to be released in July, an outline of the annual paper showed. On international issues, the paper will express concerns about aggravation of the DPRK's nuclear and missile issues as well as the PRC's rapid military modernization and the lack of transparency in its military spending. It will also stress the need to accelerate the buildup of Japan's missile defense system, according to the outline.

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8. US on PRC Military

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA INTERESTED IN AIRCRAFT CARRIERS, US ADMIRAL SAYS ", 2007-05-29) reported that the head of the US Pacific Command said he believed PRC military leaders were intensely interested in acquiring aircraft carriers. The Washington Times reported Monday Admiral Timothy Keating picked up on their interest during a recent visit to the PRC, but said he had warned the PRC about the huge challenges involved in building and manning an aircraft carrier. A US defense official said Beijing seemed to be motivated by a desire to defend sea lanes used to transport oil for the nation's fast-growing economy, the paper said.

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9. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWA'S CHEN SEES INDEPENDENCE IN HIS LIFETIME", 2007-05-29) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said he believes the island can achieve official independence from the PRC during his lifetime, though not likely before he leaves office next year. "Perhaps this won't materialize during my term, however I believe in my lifetime this is a possibility," Chen told the National Press Club in Washington.

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10. PRC Nuclear Energy

Washington Post ("CHINA EMBRACES NUCLEAR FUTURE", 2007-05-29) reported that not far from the old Silk Road, PRC government scientists have begun boring holes deep into granite in the first steps toward building what could become the world's largest tomb for nuclear waste. As governments worldwide look at nuclear power as a possible answer to global warming, the PRC has embarked on a nuclear-plant construction binge. Under plans already announced, the PRC intends to spend \$50 billion to build 32 nuclear plants by 2020. Some analysts say the country will build 300 more by the middle of the century.

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11. PRC Investment

The New York Times ("IN CHINA, A STAKE IN BLACKSTONE STIRS UNCERTAINTY", 2007-05-29) reported that from Washington, the PRC government's purchase of a \$3 billion nonvoting stake in the Blackstone Group looks like a shrewd alliance. But in the PRC, opinion remains divided between those who see the deal as a way to buy a big stake in an important company and those who worry that the government is leaping into deals without a clear investment strategy. The deal could be particularly troublesome for the PRC if Blackstone uses proceeds from the sale of the stake or its coming initial public offering to buy assets in the PRC. That could undermine the PRC's effort to hold down the value of the yuan and could set off bureaucratic rivalries within the PRC government, people close to PRC policy makers said.

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org