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I. Napsnet

1. Six Party Talks

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "N. KOREA'S ROCKET LAUNCH WILL FURTHER DELAY 6-WAY TALKS: EXPERT", 2009/04/02) reported that the six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear disarmament are unlikely to resume any time soon, a US expert said. "Although the six party talks are not linked to the missile issue and the Obama administration has expressed interest in resuming the negotiations, it is unlikely there will be a resumption of the talks in the near term," said Bruce Klingner, senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation.

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2. DPRK Missile Launch

Reuters (David Morgan and Jon Herskovitz, "U.S. SAYS NORTH KOREA MISSILE LAUNCH COULD COME APRIL 4", Washington/Seoul, 2009/04/02) reported that the DPRK's missile preparations suggest Pyongyang could launch a satellite into space as early as Saturday, an American defense official said as the U.S. military monitored the situation. "They're doing everything consistent with the launch of a space vehicle on April 4," the U.S. defense official told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Yonhap (Kim Hyun, "CLOUDY SKIES, 'MODERATELY STRONG' WINDS OVER N. KOREAN LAUNCH SITE: WEATHER AGENCY", Seoul, 2009/04/03) reported that wind speed in Musudan-ri, where the DPRK has been preparing for its rocket launch, will be 6 to 10 meters per second this weekend, a range categorized as "moderately strong," said the Korea Meteorological Administration on Friday. Cloudy skies are likely also on Sunday, but the winds will start slowing down in the afternoon and blow 3 to 4 meters per second on Monday.

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3. US on DPRK Missile Launch

The Associated Press (Mark S. Smith, "OBAMA TAKES ON NORTH KOREA CONFLICT, ECONOMY", 2009/04/02) reported that juggling crises, President Barack Obama joined his ROK counterpart in calling for a "stern, united" world response if the DPRK goes ahead with a long-range rocket launch. Obama told PRC President Hu Jintao on Wednesday that the U.S. would consider the launch provocative and that the U.S. would seek punishment at the United Nations in response. The White House confirmed that Obama and Lee agreed on the need for "a unified response by the international community in the event that North Korea launches a long-range missile."

Agence France-Presse ("MCCAIN: CHINA MUST GET 'FAR MORE ENGAGED' ON N.KOREA", 2009/04/02) reported that on the eve of a week-long trip to Asia, US Senator John McCain warned that the DPRK is on "dangerous ground" with a planned rocket launch and urged the PRC to do more to rein in Pyongyang. "It argues for, again, increased sanctions on North Korea and increases the urgency of the Chinese becoming far more engaged in this issue," McCain told AFP.

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4. Russia on DPRK Missile Launch

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA URGES N.KOREA TO SHOW RESTRAINT IN ROCKET LAUNCH", Moscow, 2009/04/02) reported that Russia urges the DPRK to show restraint with its upcoming rocket launch and related activities, the Foreign Ministry's spokesman said on Friday. "Restraint in rocket activities would help allay the international community's concerns, and build trust in the context of the six-party talks on the Korean nuclear problem," Andrei Nesterenko said. He urged Pyongyang to avoid "fanning the flames" and escalating tensions in the region.

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5. PRC on DPRK Missile Launch

Xinhau News ("CHINA SAYS NATIONS OBLIGATED TO SECURE KOREAN PENINSULA PEACE, STABILITY", Beijing, 2009/04/02) reported that the PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang called on parties involved in the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue to safeguard peace and stability on the peninsula and northeast Asia. "All relevant countries are obligated to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and northeast Asia as well as to push forward the six-party talks,"

Qin said to reporters at a regular press briefing. "China has paid close attention to the development of the issue. Parties involved should stay cool-headed and show restraint at the current stage, and avoid any action that may further complicate the situation," he said.

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6. ROK on DPRK Missile Launch

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREA TO JOIN WMD INITIATIVE IF N.KOREA LAUNCHES ROCKET", 2009/04/02) reported that ROK will fully join the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative as soon as the DPRK launches a long-range rocket. "The government will inform the United States of its formal participation in the PSI the moment North Korea fires a rocket," a government official said. "The government has held off joining the PSI because of some quarters' fear that it would hurt inter-Korean relations," said another government official. "But it has decided to take part fully in the initiative to respond to North Korean's rocket launch and also because it's important for this country to join in the international community's efforts to block the proliferation of WMD."

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7. Japan on DPRK Missile Launch

The Associated Press (John Heilprin, "JAPAN VOWS UN EMERGENCY TALKS IF NKOREA LAUNCHES", 2009/04/02) reported that Japan's ambassador says his nation will request an emergency session of the U.N. Security Council if the DPRK launches a long-range rocket. Yukio Takasu says he raised the possibility during closed-door council talks Thursday. Takasu and other council diplomats say they anticipate a possible emergency session as early as this weekend.

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8. UN Sanctions on DPRK

Associated Press (Kelly Olsen, "NORTH KOREA LAUNCH A TEST FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW", Seoul, 2009/04/03) reported that the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think tank, notes the two U.N. resolutions "specifically refer to missile launches and missile programs." That coupled with the space treaty's wording might allow the PRC and Russia to vote against punishment of the DPRK. "Such an argument would be based on a long-standing rule of interpretation applicable in both international and domestic law that a pre-existing right can only be overturned or suspended in the clearest possible language," its report said.

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9. Inter Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SAYS DETAINED S. KOREAN WORKER IN GOOD HEALTH", Seoul, 2009/04/02) reported that the DPRK has notified Seoul that a ROK worker detained for allegedly denouncing its regime is in good health but still refused access to him for a fourth day, an official said. The Hyundai Asan Corp. worker, identified only by his family name Yu, was detained at a joint industrial complex in the DPRK border town of Kaesong for allegedly criticizing the DPRK's political system and urging a DPRK female employee to defect.

Yonhap (Kim Hyun, "HYUNDAI ASAN CHIEF VISITING N. KOREA OVER DETAINED WORKER", Seoul, 2009/04/03) reported that Cho Kun-shik, president of Hyundai Asan, traveled to Kaesong on Friday to discuss the early release of an employee detained for allegedly denouncing the DPRK regime, said Ministry of Unification spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo. "(Cho) is basically visiting North Korea to discuss the detained worker with the North Koreans, but neither his schedule nor whom he will be meeting with has been decided yet," Lee said.

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10. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, EU FAIL TO CONCLUDE FREE TRADE DEAL", London, 2009/04/02) reported that the ROK and the European Union (EU) failed to finalize their free trade deal, ROK officials said, adding they would seek a way to conclude the deal. ROK Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon and his EU counterpart Catherine Ashton met here to narrow differences on some remaining sticky issues, including a so-called duty drawback scheme and rules of origin. "Ministers focused their discussions on the remaining issues and made further progress," both sides said in a joint statement. "Ministers also had substantive discussions to evaluate all possible options for a compromise on the issue of duty drawback. Despite these efforts, the gaps on this issue could not be narrowed."

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11. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("DPJ TURNS DOWN LDP PROPOSAL TO HOLD PARTY LEADERS' DEBATE", Tokyo, 2009/04/02) reported that the Democratic Party of Japan turned down a Liberal Democratic Party proposal to hold a debate between their leaders -- Ichiro Ozawa and Prime Minister Taro Aso -- next Wednesday, party lawmakers said. Such a debate would be the first between the two during the current Diet session. Aso and Ozawa last held a parliamentary debate in November.

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12. Japan Constitutional Revision

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("52% SUPPORT REVISION OF CONSTITUTION", 2009/04/03) reported that constitutional revision is supported by 51.6 percent of people and opposed by 36.1 percent, a Yomiuri Shimbun survey found, marking a return to a previous trend in which the majority favors revision. In a previous survey conducted in March last year, 43.1 percent said the Constitution

should not be revised, slightly more than the 42.5 percent who said the nation's top law should be altered. The interview-based survey was conducted March 14-15 on 3,000 eligible voters, of whom 1,755, or 58.5 percent, gave valid answers.

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13. US-Japan Security Alliance

The Asahi Shimbun ("DEFENSE MINISTRY LEAVES ROOM FOR CHANGES IN U.S. HELIPORT RELOCATION PLAN", 2009/04/02) reported that the Defense Ministry left open the possibility of revising construction plans for a U.S. military heliport off Okinawa Prefecture, offering hope to local governments opposed to the current blueprint. In an environmental impact assessment, the ministry took into account six alternative plans to shift the heliport's airstrips between 50 and 350 meters further offshore. The ministry's assessment concluded that the current plan is ideal. But the conclusion did not rule out the possibility of using three of the alternative plans, which were described as less harmful to the environment in certain areas.

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14. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Kyodo ("JAPAN, DJIBOUTI TO SIGN STATUS DEAL FRI. FOR SDF ON ANTIPIRACY MISSION", Tokyo, 2009/04/03) reported that Japan was to sign a status of forces agreement Friday with Djibouti, where the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force will base its planes during its current antipiracy mission in waters off Somalia, Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone said. Nakasone was to ink the deal with visiting Djibouti Foreign Minister Mahamoud Ali Youssouf at talks Friday afternoon.

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15. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN, CHINA TO COLLABORATE IN ANTARCTIC RESEARCH", Taipei, 2009/04/02) reported that Taiwan and the PRC will cooperate on research in Antarctica for the first time, scientists said Thursday. Taiwanese researchers are expected to join the PRC's icebreaker and research vessel Xue Long when it sets off for Antarctica in late October or November, said Wang Wei-hsien, director of Taiwan's Museum of Marine Biology and Aquarium. "We hope to draw on China's experience in Antarctica to research topics such as the environmental impact of global warming and sustainable resources," Wang said.

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16. PRC-Myanmar Pipeline Project

Times of India ("CHINA SIGNS OIL-GAS PIPELINE DEAL WITH MYANMAR", Beijing, 2009/03/27) reported that energy hungry PRC has signed a deal with the military junta of Myanmar to build cross border oil and gas pipelines, a move that may have strategic and economic implications for India. Sources said the two countries are working on plans to lay 2,000 kms of pipeline passing through Ruili and Kunming in the PRC's provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou province besides the Chongqing municipality. The pipeline will prove a cheaper route compared to the existing oil cargo channel through the congested Malacca Strait besides opening up a new source of oil and gas in Myanmar for the PRC.

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17. US on PRC Military

Washington Post (Ann Scott Tyson, "CHINA'S DEFENSE TAB SHARPLY UP, U.S. SAYS", 2009/04/02) reported that the PRC's defense spending is far outpacing that of other nations in its region, and its aggressive development of ballistic and cruise missiles and attack submarines threatens to upset the balance of power in Asia and beyond, according to a Pentagon report. The PRC's official military budget grew nearly 18 percent in 2008 to $60 billion, although the Pentagon estimates spending at $105 billion to $150 billion. Its 2005 military budget was 10 times as high as the 1989 budget, and if current trends continue, the 2009 budget will nearly double the 2005 figure, according to the report, mandated annually by Congress. The report indicates that uncertainty over Beijing's intentions in modernizing its military is a source of concern.

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18. PRC Security

Agence France-Presse ("MAN DIES AFTER DETONATING BOMB IN CHINA: POLICE", Beijing, 2009/04/02) reported that a man died when he detonated a bomb in an office building in the PRC's Muslim-populated Xinjiang region, police said. Two office workers were also injured when the man, who was apparently owed money, detonated his explosives in the building in Urumqi, capital of the northwestern region, a police official told AFP. The incident did not appear to be related to ethnic unrest in Xinjiang, a vast desert area that is home to more than eight million Uighur Muslims. The suspect was believed to be Han Chinese, said the policewoman, who declined to be named.

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19. PRC Automotive Industry

The New York Times (Keith Bradsher, "CHINA VIES TO BE WORLD'S LEADER IN ELECTRIC CARS", Tianjin, 2009/04/02) reported that PRC leaders have adopted a plan aimed at turning the country into one of the leading producers of hybrid and all-electric vehicles within three years, and making it the world leader in electric cars and buses after that. The goal, which radiates from the

very top of the PRC government, suggests that Detroit's Big Three, already struggling to stay alive, will face even stiffer foreign competition on the next field of automotive technology than they do today. "China is well positioned to lead in this," said David Tulauskas, director of PRC government policy at General Motors.

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20. PRC Space Program

Caijing Magazine (Xu Chao, "LUNAR EXPLORATION: ACT II", 2009/04/02) reported that in the next two years, the PRC will launch a precursor to the second phase of its lunar exploration efforts, Chang'e-II, as well the country's first experimental space station, Tiangong-I. The unmanned Shenzhou-VIII that will dock with the space station and the manned Shenzhou IX marks the PRC's entrance into phase two of its lunar exploration efforts.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Civil Society and Poverty Alleviation

Xinhua News Agency (Yu Wenjing, "7.18 MILLION POOR PEOPLE BENEFIT FORM CHINA POVERTY ALLEVIATION FOUNDATION IN 20 YEARS", 2009/04/01) reported that learning from the 20th anniversary of China Poverty Alleviation Association, in 20 years, the materials and fund raised by the Association reaches a total of 2.39 billion RMB. An accumulative total of 200 projects have been implemented, and the number of benefited people reaches 7.18 million.

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22. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

China Environment News (Wu Haoliang, "CHINA FIRST WATER INNOVATION COMPETITION ENDS", 2009/04/01) reported that the results of the PRC First Water Innovation Competition came out recently. A group of citizens who walk along the rivers and investigate pollution situation at weekends have got a prize of 100,000 RMB. Last October, the Competition was launched in Beijing, with a basic fund of 500,000 RMB, to encourage university students and public welfare organizations. The Competition has collected a total of 7000 innovations and 7 won the final prize.

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23. PRC Media

Saidi Net ("CHINA RADIO ASSOCIATION FOUND", 2009/04/02) reported that China Radio Association was found in Beijing Yesterday. Vice Minister of Industry and Information Xi Guohu is appointed chief of the Association. It is understood that the management sector of the Association is Radio Administration Bureau of Ministry of Industry and Information, and is sponsored by six units. At present, there are 253 members in the Association, among which 127 are directors and 41 are executive directors. Its main responsibilities are to be a good assistant of the government, to be a bridge between government and the radio consumers, to set up a platform for the development of radio technology and application.

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24. PRC Internet Use

Legal News ("COURT OF CHAOYANG DISTRICT SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH INTERNET ASSOCIATION IN BEIJING", 2009/04/01) reported that from this day onward, the cases involved with internet dispute accepted by Chaoyang District People's Court can be relegated to Internet Association, if approved by the parties. The Internet Center takes responsibility to mediate the dispute. If the mediation agreement is reached, the court will confirm its legal effect in accordance with the law. This afternoon, the united mediation mechanism of intellectual property was formally established between People's Court of Chaoyang District of Beijing and China Internet Association, which is a comprehensive cooperation between the two in mediating disputes of professional fields.

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III. ROK Report

25. DPRK Missile

North Korea Focus (Ahn Jungshik, "DPRK, INTENSIFIED PRESSURE ON ROK, US, AND MOSTLY JAPAN, CURRENT HARD-LINE STATE TO CONTINUE FOR A WHILE", 2009/04/03) wrote that while the ROK, US, and Japan are leading discussions on countermeasures to the DPRK's long range rocket launch preparations, the DPRK is intensifying pressure on these three countries. Though most pressure and criticism are on Japan, it doesn't mean the degree of pressure is low for US and ROK. Perhaps the reason the DPRK is particularly pressuring Japan is because DPRK doesn't hold any "cards" to play with Japan. It doesn't seem easy to impose sanction on DPRK at the UN level even after the rocket launch due to Russia and China's indifference. DPRK seems to realize the situation, which is why I worry that the current hard-line state might continue for a while after the rocket launch.

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26. ROK Aid for DPRK

Tongil News ("GOVERNMENT PUTS BRAKE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL AID SUPPLIES TO DPRK", 2009/04/03) reported that on April 2 the ROK government announced it would block non-governmental organizations from sending aid to the DPRK. There are worries that the humanitarian aid supply is delayed indefinitely because the government didn't clarify when it would lift the restrictions. Because of the new policy the "Farmers Headquarters of ROK Committee for Implementation of 6.15 Joint Declaration" failed to deliver plastic sheeting for rice seedbeds, which already had a send-off ceremony and were expected to be sent off today. It is the first time humanitarian aid supplies, prepared by non-governmental organizations, were blocked by the government. An official at the Ministry of Unification explained through a phone call with Tongil News that "the government's policy isn't 'disapproval,' but is only 'a delay,' and that as soon as the situation gets better after April 8, we will try to make possible non-government organizations to send humanitarian aid supplies and visit DPRK."

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27. Inter-Korea Relations

Peacemaker (Jang Changjoon, "HOT ISSUES AND OUTLOOK OF US-DPRK RELATION AND NORTH-SOUTH RELATION AFTER THE SATELLITE LAUNCH, CONTINUED TALKS BETWEEN US-DPRK WHILE NORTH-SOUTH RELATION AGGRAVATES", 2009/04/03) Jang Changjoon, senior research member of foreign relations department at New Community Institute, wrote that all peace forces and progressive forces, including the Democratic Labor Party, must go through the following three steps in order to prevent military collision and normalize North-South relations. First, they must deter the Lee Myung-bak administration from participating in PSI. Second, they must stop the DPRK from controlling entrance from and to the Kaesong Industrial Complex, and proceed with establishing an optical communication network and dormitories so the Kaesong Industrial Complex doesn't completely close down. Third, they must strive to establish 6.15 Joint Celebration Day as the 10.4 Declaration states.

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28. ROK-U.S Relations

Hankyoreh ("US-ROK SUMMIT MEETING ENDS WITH AGREEMENT ON PRACTICAL COUNTERMEASURES TO DPRK", 2009/04/03) wrote that because of the DPRK's plans to launch 'a satellite,' the DPRK was the most pressing issue when President Lee Myung-bak and US President Barack Obama had a summit meeting. The reason the two presidents were able to agree with each other was because of Russia and China disagreeing with UN's sanctions, and because the US also hopes to solve the issue through dialogue. The problem is right after the satellite launch. It seems inevitable that there will be tension as the international society and related countries will apply a certain level of sanctions and the DPRK will resist it. However, all six countries agree on resuming the six party talks, and as ROK government agreed at this summit meeting on the big picture of "appropriate warnings and efforts to resume the talks," we hope that all the neighboring countries will cooperate to make sure six-party talk will resume as soon as possible.

Chosun Ilbo ("FOR OBAMA AND LEE'S 'STERN, UNIFIED RESPONSE" TO WORK ON DPRK", 2009/04/03) wrote that at their short summit meeting, both presidents showed strong and clear warnings to DPRK. However, to let DPRK realize that this is not an easy situation, they must succeed in adopting a UN Security Council resolution. If DPRK launches its missiles, both the ROK and the US must examine all means with no restrictions at all to pratically stop DPRK's provocation when discussing countermeasures.

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