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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Missile Launch

The Los Angeles Times (Julian E. Barnes and Greg Miller, "NORTH KOREA SHOWS PROGRESS IN MASTERING MISSILE TECHNOLOGY", 2009/04/06) reported that although a crucial third stage of a DPRK rocket apparently failed, U.S. military and intelligence officials and weapons experts said the test raises new concerns about advancements in Pyongyang's mastery of missile technology. "North Korea will still be looked upon as a supplier of reasonably good missiles, and the pariah state leader in technology on missiles," said David Albright, a nuclear weapons expert and president of the Institute for Science and International Security.

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2. DPRK on Missile Program

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREA HOPES TO LAUNCH MORE ROCKETS: REPORT", 2009/04/06) reported that Sunday's launch was the opening stage of a larger plan to send various practical satellites into orbit in the future, said Choson Sinbo on Monday. "North Korea is preparing to launch practical satellites for the purpose of communications, exploration of natural resources and weather forecasting, which are essential for the country's economic development," the Choson Sinbo said.

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3. US on DPRK Missile Launch

Kyodo News ("U.S. SEEKS 'STROG, COORDINATED' RESPONSE TO N. KOREA ROCKET LAUNCH", Washington, 2009/04/06) reported that the United States will seek a ''strong, coordinated and effective'' response to the DPRK's rocket launch at the U.N. Security Council, State Department spokesman Robert Wood said at a news briefing.

CNN ("ROCKET LAUNCH ISOLATES NORTH KOREA, U.S. SAYS", Washington, 2009/04/06) reported that the US State Department said Monday that the DPRK's launch of a long-range rocket on Sunday should not be seen as a victory for Pyongyang. "I would reject that characterization completely," department spokesman Robert Wood said at a news briefing. "It was not a win for North Korea. This kind of action only further isolates the North."

United Press International ("POLL: MOST FAVOR N. KOREA MILITARY ACTION", 2009/04/06) reported that about 57 percent of U.S. voters favor a military response to eliminate the DPRK's missile-launching capability, a poll released Monday indicates. The Rasmussen Reports poll, conducted April 3-4 in the two days immediately prior to Pyongyang's internationally condemned weekend test-firing of a three-stage rocket, found that support for a military response comes from 66 percent of Republicans, 52 percent of Democrats and 54 percent of unaffiliated voters.

4. ROK on DPRK Missile Launch

The Financial Times (Christian Oliver in Seoul, Demetri Sevastopulo, "N KOREA LAUNCH SPARKS ARMS RACE FEAR", Washington, 2009/04/06) reported that Han Seung-soo, the ROK’s prime minister, told parliament the government would reconsider its adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime. Dennis Wilder, an Asia expert at the Brookings Institution, said any move by the ROK to develop longer-range missiles, particularly rockets that could reach the PRC, could spark a new arms race in the region. Wilder said the ROK might have been sending a signal to the PRC, which has resisted calls at the United Nations Security Council to impose new sanctions on the DPRK.

Yonhap News ("ASSEMBLY PASSES RESOLUTION AGAINST N. KOREAN ROCKET LAUNCH", 2009/04/06) reported that the ROK's National Assembly adopted a resolution denouncing the DPRK's rocket launch. The resolution, which passed its plenary session by a vote of 167 to 2, criticized the rocket launch as a "serious provocation" that violates U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718 and urged the government to join in international efforts aimed at sanctioning the DPRK.

5. ROK on PSI Role

Yonhap News ("PARTIES AT ODDS OVER S. KOREA'S IMMINENT PARTICIPATION IN PSI", Seoul,

2009/04/06) reported ROK Prime Minister Han Seung-soo told lawmakers at an interpellation session on Monday that the government is determined to join the PSI and now gauging the most appropriate timing. Opposition lawmakers, however, called for a more discreet government deliberation in terms of making any kind of decision regarding the DPRK, urging abstention from any measures that would likely shatter inter-Korean ties.

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6. PRC on DPRK Missile Launch

Bloomberg News (Bill Varner, "CHINA MIGHT BACK UN MEASURE ON NORTH KOREA, ENVOYS IN TALKS SAY", 2009/04/06) reported that the PRC might support a draft resolution in the United Nations Security Council that affirms prior sanctions and measures to bar the DPRK from launching missiles, Mexican and Costa Rican ambassadors on the panel said. “Before the launch they were not ready to accept a resolution, but now they could do so,” Ambassador Jorge Urbina of Costa Rica said after discussions among governments on the Security Council about the DPRK’s weekend firing of a missile. “They are just concerned that the process of the six-party talks is not endangered. They might accept a weak resolution or a strong statement.”

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7. Sino-DPRK Trade

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA, N KOREA TRADE BOOMING DESPITE ROCKET TENSIONS", 2009/04/06) reported that trucks loaded with food, electronic goods, clothes and household items line up every day at the custom house here, awaiting final approval to cross the Friendship Bridge into the DPRK. Cross-border trade between PRC and DPRK is rising quickly in the frontier town of Dandong, despite the political and diplomatic problems that Pyongyang's erratic behavior has created for Beijing, a long-time ally. "Border trade has been really good. I make a run into North Korea every day now," said one driver surnamed Wang, who delivers goods for a Dandong trading company.

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8. UN on DPRK Missile Launch

Kyodo ("NO CONCENSUS ON DRAFT U.N. RESOLUTION ON N. KOREA: JAPAN ENVOY", New York, 2009/04/06) reported that the U.N. Security Council failed to reach a consensus Monday on the draft resolution on the DPRK's missile launch Japan and the United States circulated earlier, Japanese Ambassador Yukio Takasu said. ''There was, I think, broad understanding among all these people that the situation arising from the launch by the DPRK is a very serious one and the council requires clear and strong and also quick response,'' Takasu said. ''As to what is the most appropriate format and content, we have discussed quite extensively but still we have no convergence of view at

this stage,'' Takasu said.

Kyodo ("JAPAN STILL SEEKS U.N. RESOLUTION DESPITE CHINA, RUSSIA OPPOSITION", Tokyo, 2009/03/07) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone said Tuesday failure to send a strong message on the DPRK missile launch would hurt the UN Security Council's credibility. ''It is clear that the launch (of the rocket), which flew over Japan, is a violation of Resolution 1718,'' Nakasone said. ''For (Japan), the adoption of a resolution would be desirable,'' Nakasone said. He added, ''Both China and Russia, too, share the concerns in the region, but are rather cautious, especially in the case of China.'' Depending on the progress of the negotiations, Japan is considering dispatching a state secretary for foreign affairs and other senior officials to New York, Nakasone said.

9. Russia on DPRK Missile Launch

Reuters (Louis Charbonneau and Jon Herskovitz, "FOCUS ON N.KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS AFTER LAUNCH: RUSSIA", 2009/04/06) reported that Russia called on Monday for the focus to stay on nuclear talks with the DPRK after its weekend rocket launch. "The core element in this situation is the six-party talks," Russian U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin said. "The key thing is to make sure that we do not confine ourselves to an emotional knee-jerk reaction because what we do need is a common strategy and not losing sight of the goal -- and this is the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

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10. Japan on DPRK Missile Launch

Kyodo News ("JAPAN EYEING TOTAL BAN ON EXPORTS TO N. KOREA FOLLOWING MISSILE LAUNCH", Tokyo, 2009/04/06) reported that the government is considering imposing a total ban on exports to the DPRK, government officials said. Although the ban would have only a limited impact on bilateral trade, which has shrunk sharply since the DPRK's announcement of a nuclear test in 2006, it would have ''political meaning, representing a strong protest by Japan'' against the launch, a senior Foreign Ministry official said.

Agence-France-Presse ("JAPAN FIRM SAYS NUKE SHELTER SALES UP", Tokyo, 2009/04/06) reported that a retailer of nuclear fallout shelters in Japan said that sales soared in the lead-up to the DPRK's rocket launch as jittery residents took their safety into their own hands. Osaka-based Shelter Co said it received 12 orders in just two months ahead of Sunday's launch -- more than double the number it usually sells in an entire year. "This is a record in the 30 years I've been in this business," he told AFP, adding that he had also received about 150 enquiries.

Mainichi Shimbun ("ABDUCTEE GROUPS SEEK STRONG RESPONSE FOLLOWING NORTH KOREA MISSILE LAUNCH", 2009/04/06) reported that family members of Japanese abducted by the DPRK expressed outrage against the regime of Kim Jong Il over Sunday's rocket launch. "North Korea has abandoned common sense," said Sakie Yokota, the 73-year-old mother of abductee Megumi Yokota, at an abductee families' public rally held in Tokyo's Yurakucho area. Another member of the group

called the launch an "egregious act of barbarism." Group leader Shigeo Iizuka, 70, kept up the hard tone: "I hope the launch triggers a switch to more heavy-handed treatment of North Korea by the international community."

11. Iran on DPRK Missile Launch

Xinkuai News ("IRAN NOT RELATED TO DPRK'S MISSILE PROGRAM: FM SPOKESMAN", Tehran, 2009/04/06) reported that Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hassan Qashqavi said that Iran's missile program was not related to that of the DPRK, the local Press TV website reported. "There is absolutely no relation between the two countries. North Korea launched its space program several years ago and has fired rockets into space many times," said Qashqavi. However, he warned against any move that would provoke instability in a "sensitive region such as Eastern Asia," the report said.

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12. Inter-Korean Athletic Competition

RIA Novosti ("SOUTH KOREA RUBBISHES NORTH'S WORLD CUP POISONING CLAIMS", Moscow, 2009/04/06) reported that ROK soccer authorities have dismissed claims by the DPRK that its footballers suffered food poisoning after being given out-of-date food ahead of last week's vital World Cup qualifier in Seoul. "Allegations by the North Koreans are ungrounded. The North Korean side chose its hotel. Their doctor chose the food that the footballers then consumed," a ROK representative said. He was responding to a statement on the DPRK's official KCNA news agency that the alleged poisoning incident was part of the ROK President Lee Myung-bak's plans for "confrontation" with its neighbor.

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13. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK MARKET RESTRICTIONS VS MARKET REALITIES", 2009/04/06) reported that in October of last year, DPRK authorities issued a degree through local commerce management offices around the country ordering all permanent markets to open only once every ten days. This was followed by restrictions on goods allowed for sale as well as state-set prices for certain products. According to a survey of conditions in the DPRK’s major markets across the country in mid-March, 2009, however, not a single market was found in which all the restrictions were being enforced.

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14. Sino-ROK Relations

Xinhua News ("SENIOR CPC OFFICIAL: CHINA-ROK TIES SEE RAPID GROWTH", Seoul, 2009/04/06) reported that Li Changchun, a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC), said that the strategic and cooperative partnership between the PRC and the ROK has witnessed rapid growth thanks to concerted efforts made by both. Li, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks when meeting ROK President Lee Myung Bak.

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15. Japan Politics

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("POLL: 66% UNHAPPY WITH OZAWA'S DECISION TO STAY ON AS DPJ LEADER", 2009/04/06) reported that Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa is still under fire over his decision to remain in his post following the indictment of a top aide implicated in a political donation scandal, according to a new Yomiuri Shimbun opinion survey. The poll, conducted by telephone, found that 66 percent of eligible voters still wanted Ozawa's head, a slight drop from the 68 percent who expressed dissatisfaction with Ozawa's decision in a similar poll held on March 25 and 26. The new poll highlighted that public discontent with Ozawa's decision to continue at the helm of the DPJ has not translated into support for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Taro Aso.

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16. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN DESTROYERS ON ANTIPIRACY MISSION MAKE 1ST PORT CALL IN DJIBOUTI", Djibouti, 2009/04/06) reported that Japanese destroyers dispatched on an antipiracy mission off the coast of Somalia made their first port call in the Horn of Africa country of Djibouti. The 4,650-ton Sazanami and the 4,550-ton Samidare of the Maritime Self-Defense Force have been escorting Japan-linked commercial ships in the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden since late last month to protect them from pirate attacks.

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17. Japan-Venezuelan Energy Cooperation

Bloomberg News (Takashi Hirokawa and Shigeru Sato, "JAPAN, VENEZUELA TO COOPERATE ON OIL, GAS PROJECTS", 2009/04/06) reported that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and Japan's Prime Minister Taro Aso agreed to cooperate on oil and gas developments in the Latin American nation, Japan said. The governments will form a committee to study financing development and exploration in the Orinoco area, according to a Japanese government statement released today after

the leaders met in Tokyo. Chavez is touring to secure funds for energy projects after a 65 percent decline in oil prices forced him to cut government spending in March.

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18. Russo-Japanese Energy Trade

Reuters (Osamu Tsukimori, "SAKHALIN 2 LNG REACHES JAPAN", 2009/04/06) reported that Japan's first imported liquefied natural gas from Russia's Sakhalin II export project arrived at the Sodegaura terminal on Tokyo Bay on Monday, marking the start of Russia's entry into the world's LNG markets in Asia and North America. The Energy Frontier tanker, operated by Tokyo Gas Co and loaded with 67,000 tonnes (145,000 cubic metres) of LNG, left the Pacific island project on March 29. Tokyo Gas and Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO) will each lift half of the cargo and use the energy for power generation and supply of city gas to the greater Tokyo region.

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19. Japan Food Supply

Kyodo News (Takuya Karube, "YOUNG PEOPLE SEE FUTURE IN FARMING", 2009/04/06) reported that there are signs of budding interest in farming, especially among young people. And it isn't necessarily because a long economic winter appears to have set in. Farming has suffered from a negative image over much of the past half century, a period in which the economy grew mainly on the back of a successful manufacturing sector. A ministry study found that nearly 10,000 people 29 and younger started farming careers in 2007, of which about 2,200 were women. Whether these numbers are large enough or too small remains to be seen, but the future of farming does not appear to be all doom and gloom.

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20. Sino-UK Defense Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA VOWS TO STRENGTHEN MILITARY TIES WITH BRITAIN", 2009/04/06) reported that the PRC armed forces are ready to enhance the military exchanges and cooperation with Britain, PRC Defense Minister Liang Guanglie said in Beijing. Liang, also a state councilor, made the remarks when meeting with visiting Vice-Chief of the Defence Staff of the British Armed Forces, Timothy John Granville-Chapman. "China hopes to make joint efforts with Britain to strengthen the bilateral military exchanges and cooperation," he added.

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21. Sino-Ecuadorian Energy Cooperation

Reuters ("CHINA, ECUADOR MOVE TOWARD ENERGY DEAL", Quito, 2009/04/06) reported that the OPRC is close to inking a one-billion-dollar deal to receive Ecuadorian oil, President Rafael Correa said on Saturday. "China has offered us initial capital worth one billion dollars for infrastructure projects, we are going to pay little by little with our oil," Correa said during a weekly television address. Ecuador -- the smallest member of oil cartel OPEC -- will pay in the medium and long term with crude supplies.

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22. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhau News ("CHINESE PROVINCE CONSIDERS BUILDING THREE MORE NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS", Wuhan, 2009/04/06) reported that Central PRC's Hubei Province, which is preparing for the construction of the country's first inland nuclear power plant, is considering building three more such plants, a local official has said. The Xishui County, Yangxin County and Zhongxiang City would seat the three plants according to a plan, said Zhen Jianqiao, deputy director of the Hubei Provincial Development and Reform Commission. "We have submitted an application to the National Development and Reform Commission for the Xishui project," Zhen said.

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23. PRC Internet Censorship

The Financial Times (Kathrin Hille, "CHINA IN NEW CRACKDOWN ON INTERNET VIDEO AND AUDIO", Beijing , 2009/04/06) reported that in a notice published on its website earlier this week, the PRC State Administration for Radio, Film and Television published a long list of video and audio content which it declared illegal. In addition, it said that foreign films, television series, cartoons and other TV programmes could only be broadcast on the internet after the site operator obtains an individual licence for the respective programme.

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24. PRC Unrest

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA MOVES TO QUELL ANGER AFTER PROTEST MARCH", Beijing, 2009/04/06) reported that authorities in northern PRC moved Saturday to contain a dispute over factory job losses that sparked an unprecedented attempt by workers to mount a mass protest march on Beijing, state media said. More than 1,000 workers were prevented Friday from marching 140 kilometres (90 miles) to Beijing from the city of Baoding to protest the closure of their textile factory. But on Saturday the chairwoman of the Baoding Yimian Textile Ltd's board of directors was

suspended from the post and authorities launched an investigation into alleged malfeasance by the factory's Hong Kong-based owner, Xinhua news agency reported.

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25. PRC Health Care Reform

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA IN BOLD MOVE ON VOLATILE HEALTH CARE ISSUE", Beijing, 2009/04/06) reported that the PRC announced the outlines of a thorough reform of the health care system that pledges to provide improved services to all citizens by 2020, tackling a critical issue that has become a major source of public dissatisfaction. While many details of the plan remain unclear, the announcement underscored the PRC government's need to at least appear to be making progress on the issue. Public health care has been underfunded for years, and the high cost and poor availability of services are among the biggest complaints of the PRC public.

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