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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
  - 1. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks
  - 4. US-DPRK Relations
  - 5. G8 on DPRK Nuclear Program
  - 6. Sino-DPRK Economic Relations
  - 7. Inter-Korea Economic Relations
  - 8. Pirate Attacks on DPRK Vessels
  - 9. Inter-Korea Relations
  - 10. ROK Naval Ship Sinking
  - 11. ROK Defense
  - 12. USFJ Base Relocation
  - 13. UN on Japan Human Rights
  - 14. PRC on Nuclear Safety
  - 15. Sino-Indian Relations
  - 16. Cross-Strait Relations
  - 17. Hong Kong-Tawain Relations

- 18. PRC Defense
- 19. PRC Internet
- 20. PRC Human Rights
- 21. PRC Environment

- II. PRC Report
  - 22. PRC Environment
  - 23. PRC Civil Society

I. NAPSNet

1. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Program

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA NEEDS INDEPENDENT POLICY ON NORTH KOREA - EXPERTS", 2010/03/31) reported that the DPRK is unlikely to give up its nuclear program and Russia has to take this fact into account to adjust its policy towards the DPRK, Russian experts said. "Unless the current rules of the game change, we cannot expect a voluntary denuclearization of North Korea," Georgy Toloraya, the director of Korean programs at the Institute of Economy told an expert conference in Moscow. "The complete elimination of the existing nuclear capacity of North Korea is not an absolute priority for us which would dominate over all other goals as declared by the United States, South Korea and Japan," Toloraya said. We should be aware of the fact that "if this happens without a solid system of collective security in the region, the military risks may actually increase," he added.

(return to top)

2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("CLINTON DEPICTS N. KOREA AS NUKE WEAPONS STATE", 2010/03/31) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has acknowledged that the DPRK possesses nuclear weapons. "We recognize the new threats that are coming that are aimed at both of our countries, at Europe, at the Middle East and elsewhere from rogue regimes like North Korea that already has nuclear weapons, and regimes like that in Iran that are clearly seeking nuclear weapons," Clinton told reporters.

(return to top)

3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US HOPES KIM TRIP LEADS TO NUCLEAR TALKS", Washington,

2010/03/31) reported that the United States voiced hope that any visit by DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il to the PRC would help lead to a resumption of six-nation talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear program. "We hope it's an occasion, if he does in fact go there, that the Chinese can talk to him about the six-party (talks), the concerns that we have about their nuclear program and to urge that they return to talks," State Department spokesman Mark Toner said.

(return to top)

4. US-DPRK Relations

Arirang News ("U.S. REPORT: NO EVIDENCE N.KOREA SPONSORED TERRORISTS", 2010/03/31) reported that a 2008 report recently released by the U.S. State Department's Office of the Legal Advisor states there was no credible evidence to believe that the DPRK was sponsoring terrorist groups such as Hezbollah. The report was prepared in the weeks leading up to former President George W. Bush's decision to remove the DPRK from the government's blacklist of terrorist-sponsoring states. It also cites intelligence documents by several agencies which did not support previous allegations that Pyongyang was directly or indirectly involved in aiding Hezbollah, the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka or Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

Yonhap News ("N. KOREAN DEFECTOR IN U.S. TO DISCUSS NUKE, RIGHTS, OTHER ISSUES ", Washington, 2010/03/31) reported that the highest ranking DPRK official ever to defect to the ROK arrived here to discuss nuclear weapons, human rights and other issues related to the reclusive communist state, sources said. This is the second visit for Hwang Jang-yop, former secretary of DPRK's ruling Workers Party, who will meet with scholars, congressional leaders and human rights activists, according to the sources. Mark Toner, State Department spokesman, would not confirm Hwang's visit, saying, "I'm not aware of that."

(return to top)

5. G8 on DPRK Nuclear Program

Arirang News ("INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY URGES N. KOREA TO GIVE UP NUKES", 2010/03/31) reported that foreign ministers from Group of Eight nations discussed nuclear non-proliferation at a meeting in Ottawa, Canada where they agreed to encourage "strong steps" toward curbing nuclear ambitions in both the DPRK and Iran. Warning that both are rogue states whose actions contravene international nuclear obligations Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon said that the international community should join forces to combat the rising threats to global security. The top diplomats from the G8 countries also called on Pyeongyang to return to the six-party nuclear talks aimed at denuclearization on the Korean peninsula without preconditions and called for tougher sanctions for non-compliance with international rules.

(return to top)

6. Sino-DPRK Economic Relations

Voice of America ("CHINESE CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF N. KOREA QUESTIONED", 2010/03/31) reported that the PRC has long been a generous patron of Pyongyang, but at least one Beijing scholar warns in blunt terms that the PRC will not rescue the DPRK this time. At a forum devoted to the DPRK economy Wednesday in Seoul, regional political analysts warned the DPRK's economic policy blunders are pushing the totalitarian system to the brink of a collapse. Peking University Professor Zhu Feng, one of the forum participants, issued a frank warning to the DPRK not to expect any large handouts from the PRC. Zhu says Pyongyang needs to adjust its course, and unless it does, the PRC will not help. "Offering North Korea sizable aid, and keeping it [afloat], without any change to their very bizarre policy, is detrimental to the China national interest," said Zhu.

(return to top)

7. Inter-Korea Economic Relations

Xinhua News Agency ("SOUTH KOREA URGES DPRK TO SOLVE CROSS-BORDER TOURISM ISSUE THROUGH DIALOGUE ", 2010/03/31) reported that the ROK government on Wednesday urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to resolve cross-border tourism issues through dialogue, and asked it not to infringe upon property rights of ROK companies in the Mount Kumgang resort area. Referring to the DPRK's recent asset survey of ROK firms in the Mount Kumgang resort area, the ROK's unification ministry said in a statement that violating their property rights could make the resumption of Mount Kumgang tour projects difficult and that all pending issues could only be resolved through dialogue.

(return to top)

8. Pirate Attacks on DPRK Vessels

Agence France-Presse ("SOMALI PIRATES WOUND 9 NORTH KOREA SAILORS", Kuala Lumpur, 2010/03/31) reported that heavily armed Somali pirates shot and wounded nine seafarers during a bloody attempt to hijack a DPRK cargo ship off Kenya on Wednesday, a maritime watchdog said. "There was a very violent attack against a North Korean vessel by Somali pirates who used automatic rifles and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades)," Pottengal Mukundan, director of the London based International Maritime Bureau (IMB) told AFP. "Nine crew members have been seriously injured as a result of the attack," he added.

(return to top)

9. Inter-Korea Relations

Yonhap News ("VICE UNIFICATION MINISTER URGES N. KOREA TO ACT RATIONALLY", 2010/03/31) reported that the ROK's new vice unification minister Wednesday called on the DPRK to take a "rational" approach to handling inter-Korean relations and luring investment from abroad. "North Korea must show that it is rationally resolving current issues that are compounding problems in inter-Korean relations," Um said in his first speech at a public forum since taking office. Um did not make any direct mention of the inspection the DPRK has been conducting since last Thursday, but he argued that Pyongyang's economic troubles resulted from a variety of political issues, including the deterioration of inter-Korean relations over the past two years.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA SAYS IT WILL 'FREEZE' S. KOREAN GOV'T FACILITY: OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2010/04/01) reported that the DPRK told visiting ROK company officials that they plan to "freeze" a Seoul-run facility at its Mt. Kumgang resort, an ROK government official said Thursday. "We have learned from company officials who visited the resort that North Korean authorities plan to freeze the reunion center," used as a venue for the gathering of families separated by the Korean War, Unification Ministry spokesman Chun Hae-sung told reporters.

(return to top)

10. ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Agence France Presse ("S.KOREA MAINTAINS ALERT AFTER WARSHIP SINKING", 2010/03/31) reported that the ROK said Wednesday it has ordered all government officials to stay on emergency alert until the crisis sparked by the mysterious sinking of a warship is resolved. ROK officials have been told not to take leave and to stay alert even when off-duty in case of emergencies, the home ministry said, reiterating an instruction first issued Saturday. The 655,000-strong military and the police force were also ordered on heightened readiness.

(return to top)

11. ROK Defense

Donga Ilbo ("`NAVAL SHIP SOKCHO STOOD GUARD VS. N. KOREA` ", 2010/03/31) reported that the ROK naval patrol ship Sokcho did not head toward the site where the Cheonan sank Friday because the Sokcho was ordered to stand guard against the DPRK. The 1,200-ton Sokcho fired its 76-millimeter gun for five minutes at 10:57 p.m. Friday at an object that showed up on radar as a DPRK semi-submarine. A source from the ROK military said, "Though the Sokcho was in the vicinity of the Cheonan shortly after the latter sank, it did not head for the site of the incident since the Navy ordered it to stand guard against North Korea. At the Navy's instruction, the Sokcho performed its duty for 90 minutes and fired at an unidentified object heading north." The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the sinking of the Cheonan is not directly related with the Sokcho's firing, adding a flock of birds on

radar was mistaken as a target.

(return to top)

12. USFJ Base Relocation

Stars and Stripes ("JAPAN MISSES DEADLINE FOR SELECTING ALTERNATIVE FUTENMA PROPOSAL ", 2010/03/31) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama says it's "not a big deal" that he failed to meet his own deadline for selecting a new plan to replace Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. Hatoyama told reporters in Tokyo he was not ready to make public the alternate sites his government is considering. He had set a deadline of Wednesday to come up with an alternate site to begin the discussions between Okinawa and U.S. officials. He also pledged to reach an agreement on a replacement plan by the end of May. "It is not time yet to tell you what the ideas are," Hatoyama said, according to a transcript of the news conference. "Missing the target by a day or two is not a big deal. What is important is to come up with a solid and acceptable proposal."

Associated Press ("GATES SOUGHT NOD OF COALITION PARTNERS, LOCALS ON FUTEMMA ISSUE", 2010/03/31) reported that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates urged Japan to integrate its view and win local consent on the issue of where to relocate a U.S. Marine base in Okinawa during his talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada on Monday in Washington, diplomatic sources said Wednesday. Japan's coalition government is exploring an alternative to the current plan agreed on with Washington in 2006 and suggested its ideas to the U.S. side last week, but without winning consent from affected areas or coalition members.

Kyodo ("OKADA TELLS U.S. NEW BASE PROPOSAL'S FEASIBILITY WOULD BE HIGHER", New York, 2010/03/31) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said Wednesday he has told the United States that an undisclosed Japanese proposal for the relocation of a key U.S. Marines base in Okinawa Prefecture is more feasible than the current plan agreed in 2006 with the United States. Japan plans to hold discussions with the United States to see if the new proposal would be able to secure deterrence and allow the U.S. Marines to continue to operate effectively, Okada told reporters after attending a U.N. conference in New York on rebuilding Haiti. Okada said he requested U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates in their talks Monday in Washington to study the alternative proposal as it is difficult to implement the current plan.

(return to top)

13. UN on Japan Human Rights

Agence France Presse ("RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION COMMON IN JAPAN: UN ENVOY", Tokyo, 2010/03/31) reported that racism and discrimination remain common in Japan, a United Nations

envoy warned on Wednesday, urging greater efforts to protect the rights of foreign minorities. Jorge Bustamante, UN special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, issued the warning after interviewing government ministers and officials, migrants, lawyers, teachers, academics and civil society activists. Problem areas included immigrant detention centres, work programmes that exploit foreign industrial trainees, and a lack of educational services for many migrant children, Bustamante said.

(return to top)

14. PRC on Nuclear Safety

Associated Press (Anita Chang, "CHINA'S HU TO ATTEND NUCLEAR SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON", Beijing, 2010/04/01) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao will attend a summit on nuclear security in the United States this month, the Foreign Ministry said Thursday. Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said Hu would stop in Washington for the April 12-13 summit on his way to Brazil, Venezuela and Chile. "The nuclear security summit will mainly discuss the threat posed by nuclear terrorism and the corresponding measures of countries and the international community," Qin said. He called it an important multilateral meeting and said China hoped it would "yield positive results."

(return to top)

15. Sino-Indian Relations

Times of India ("INDIA, CHINA ON ROAD TO BETTER TIES", 2010/03/31) reported that after a period of sullen silence, India and the PRC are talking again. In January, the defence secretary went across for a defence dialogue, the first; in February commerce minister Anand Sharma restarted an economic dialogue after four years, where India pushed the PRC on market access. Foreign office consultations started in February after two and a half years and last week, the two sides sat down to sort out visa issues with each other. In April, experts from both sides will talk trans-border rivers. For India that's very big, given its concerns on the Chinese diverting the Brahmaputra. National security adviser Shivshankar Menon has been designated the special representative for boundary talks, and he will lead the next round in late summer.

(return to top)

16. Cross-Strait Relations

New Zealand Press Association ("TAIWAN TRADE DEAL WITH CHINA "INEVITABLE" ", 2010/04/01) reported that Taiwan will have to sign a trade agreement such as the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA) with the PRC if it wants to stay competitive in global markets, a former New Zealand trade official says. Signing the ECFA and negotiating trade with the mainland will bring Taiwan one step closer to the goal of free trade, Charles Finny said at a presentation organised by Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA), the China Post reports. Some

Taiwanese have described the proposed free trade deal as a "humiliating pact", especially as PRC reports suggest the mainland will get four times the benefit gained by Taiwan.

Agence France Presse ("PROTESTS IN TAIWAN AS TALKS START ON CHINA TRADE PACT", 2010/03/31) reported that Taiwan and the PRC began a fresh round of talks on a controversial trade pact Wednesday as protesters wary of closer ties with the giant mainland scuffled with police near the venue. A group of about 40 anti-PRC demonstrators gathered as the two sides met in a hotel in Taoyuan near the island's capital, but were kept back by a cordon of uniformed police. "We should protect Taiwan's sovereignty and Taiwan's own future," said Chang Jaw-liang, one of the protest organisers. "Taiwan should not lean towards China." The Taoyuan meeting is the second round of formal talks on the planned pact and will focus on drawing up a list of industries that will be entitled to preferential tariff treatment as soon as the agreement comes into force.

(return to top)

17. Hong Kong-Tawain Relations

Associated Press ("H.K. TO BUILD CLOSER ECONOMIC, CULTURAL TIES WITH TAIWAN", 2010/03/31) reported that Hong Kong will strengthen exchanges with Taiwan on nonpolitical fronts under the Hong Kong-Taiwan Economic and Cultural Cooperation and Promotion Council, a new organization set up on the backdrop of warmed up relations, the government said Wednesday. The council, to be established Thursday, will strengthen exchanges with Taiwan's counterpart organization, the Taiwan-Hong Kong Economic and Cultural Cooperation Council, on financial, health, taxation, logistics, services trade, tourism, sports and cultural issues. "(The Council) would be an enabling platform that we could make good use of to improve the relationship between Taiwan and Hong Kong, particularly on the commerce and cultural aspects," said Financial Secretary John Tsang, the council's honorary chairman.

(return to top)

18. PRC Defense

South China Morning Post ("SCIENTIST CALLED ON TO READY BEIJING FOR TERROR GAS ATTACK", 2010/03/31) reported that if a terrorist group released anthrax spores in Tiananmen Square, the mainland's most politically important landmark, what would be the best direction for tourists to choose as they ran for their lives? The central government has asked Professor Liu Shuhua, deputy director of the department of atmospheric sciences at Peking University, to find the answer. Conventional routes could be fatal, according to modelling by Liu and his team. With a southwesterly wind, for instance, most of the anthrax spores would be blown to the eastern boulevard and, following some counterintuitive principals of aerodynamics, stay there.

(return to top)

19. PRC Internet

Financial Times (Kathrin Hille and Joseph Menn , "CHINA, TAIWAN YAHOO USERS REPORT HACKING", 2010/03/31) reported that several scholars, rights activists and journalists working on PRC and Taiwan issues have reported that their Yahoo e-mail accounts have been hacked into. A number of Yahoo.com e-mail users on Wednesday said they could not access their accounts during the past week. Andrew Jacobs, a Beijing-based journalist, wrote in the New York Times that his Yahoo Plus account had been set without his knowledge to forward to another, unknown, account. There have been reports of e-mail hacking and other cyber attacks targeting people who work on issues seen as sensitive by the PRC government since last year.

(return to top)

20. PRC Human Rights

Epoch Times ("AMNESTY URGES CHINA TO DISCLOSE EXECUTION FIGURES ", 2010/03/31) reported that in its annual report on the use of the death penalty, Amnesty said some 714 people were known to have been executed in 18 countries in 2009. But the group said the true global figure could be much higher, as thousands of executions were thought to have been carried out in the PRC alone. Beijing says it executes fewer people now than it has in the past, but has always maintained that details of its executions are a state secret. However, Amnesty said that "evidence from previous years and a number of current sources indicates that the figure remains in the thousands".

(return to top)

21. PRC Environment

Agence France Presse ("HK-LISTED FIRMS 'SHOULD DISCLOSE CHINA POLLUTION VIOLATIONS'", 2010/03/31) reported that Hong Kong should force publicly listed companies to disclose environmental violations in their operations in the PRC, a report said Wednesday. About 15 percent of firms listed in the financial centre have violated pollution regulations in mainland PRC, including famed beermaker Tsingtao Brewery Co., according to Beijing-based non-governmental organisation the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs. Entitled "Hong Kong's role in Mending the Disclosure Gap", the report said many of the companies found to have broken environmental regulations, such as exceeding wastewater discharge, were "repeat offenders."

Global Times ("DISASTER PLAN OUTLINES ROLES OF RESPONDERS ", 2010/03/31) reported that government agencies and the weather bureau should be better prepared to handle and respond to major disasters under new guidelines, the chief of China Meteorological Administration (CMA) said.

Zheng Guoguang, chief of the administration, said the Regulations for Prevention of and Preparedness for Meteorological Disasters, which was approved by Premier Wen Jiabao in January, specifically defines the responsibilities of each department during a disaster.

(return to top)

II. PRC Report

22. PRC Environment

People's Daily ("WATER RESERVES TO BE USED UP IN YUNNAN", 2010/03/31) reported that if the rainy season still not come by middle of May, then the water reserves in Yunnan province will be used up and part of people have to be transferred, said Liuning, Secretary of The Office of State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters today at a press conference.

(return to top)

23. PRC Civil Society

China NPO ("LEADERS OF NON-PUBLIC RAISING FOUNDATIONS GET TRAININGS IN GUANGDONG", 2010/03/31) reported that a training class for leaders of Non-Governmental Foundations has been held in Guangzhou city of Guangdong province recently. Over 120 leaders from all types of non-governmental foundations around the country have participated in the class.

(return to top)

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