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Preceding NAPSNet Report

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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Missile Program

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA ROCKET 'FLEW FARTHER THAN PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT'", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that U.S. aviation and space science website Spaceflight Now on Sunday said the DPRK rocket temporarily left the atmosphere. Based on analysis of radar data and data from the U.S. Air Force's missile warning satellite, the website said the rocket actually flew 3,846 km, rather than the 3,058 km the U.S. and Japan had estimated. It said U.S. and Japanese military authorities earlier believed that the projectile had a problem with its second-stage booster rocket, but now feel the second-stage rocket worked as programmed. But the projectile failed to enter the normal orbit because the third-stage booster rocket did not separate properly.

Chosun Ilbo ("ITU DISMISSES N.KOREAN SATELLITE CLAIM", Seoul, 2009/04/10) reported that in an interview with Radio Free Asia on Tuesday, Sanjay Acharya, chief of media relations and public information at the International Telecommunication Union, said the organization has no information about a satellite put in orbit by the DPRK, adding that nobody else has probably been given any information about it either. Acharya said if the DPRK arbitrarily used the frequency at which it claims to be broadcasting, which the ITU has never allocated, it could interfere with the frequencies of other existing satellites, but added there were no reports or complaints from member states.

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2. UN on DPRK Missile Program

New York Times (Neil MacFarquhar, "U.N. COUNCIL MAY REBUKE NORTH KOREA", United Nations, 2009/04/11) reported that the United Nations Security Council may vote as soon as Monday on the US draft of a presidential statement condemning the DPRK rocket launch that would tighten existing sanctions by singling out specific DPRK organizations and expanding the list of banned goods. The five permanent members plus Japan agreed to the compromise. “What the Council can do, and we hope will do, through the adoption of this statement is to send a very clear message to North Korea that what they have done under the guise of a satellite launch is in fact a violation of their obligations and indeed that there are consequences for such actions,” said US ambassador Susan Rice.

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3. ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Joongang Ilbo ("PRESIDENT LEE LINKS MISSILE WITH WEAPONS PROLIFERATION", Bangkok, 2009/04/11) reported that in his interview with The Nation, a daily English-language newspaper in Thailand, ROK President Lee Myung-bak linked the DPRK launch of a long-range rocket with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. “North Korea’s rocket launch came amid its ongoing ambition to develop nuclear weapons, adding to disturbing concerns around the world. From the perspective of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the North’s launch is raising more fears across the globe,” Lee said.

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "SEOUL WELCOMES U.N. STATEMENT ON N.K.", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that the ROK government Sunday appeared to welcome a decision from the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council to issue a presidential statement condemning the DPRK rocket launch. "It is noteworthy because the U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718 outlines some very harsh sanctions against North Korea. That they will be re-activated is in itself a feat," said one Foreign Ministry official on the condition of anonymity.

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4. ROK, Japan, PRC on DPRK Missile Launch

Associated Press ("SKOREA, CHINA, JAPAN WANT STRONG MESSAGE FOR NORTH", Seoul, 2009/04/11) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao, and Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso agreed Saturday to send the DPRK "powerful message" over its rocket launch, ROK presidential spokeswoman Kim Eun-hye said in a statement. Wen and Aso were at odds during their meeting over whether the UN Security Council should adopt a resolution or a presidential statement, Kim said. "When push comes to shove, Japan will not insist on a particular format" if three requirements are met, Aso spokesman Osamu Sakashita said. He said the message must be "strong, unanimous and at an early date."

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5. DPRK-Europe Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA'S NO.2 LEADER IN SECRET EUROPE TRIP", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that Jang Song-taek, administrative director of the DPRK's Workers Party made a secret visit to France, Italy and Switzerland in March, according to reports on Sunday. A DPRK expert said it is unclear why Jang visited Europe. “But in view of how long he stayed and the countries he visited, we presume that he may have met with the French medical team who treated North Korean leader Kim Jong-il, or his visit may have had something to do with the purchase of luxury yachts for the Kim family." Japanese news agency Jiji Press on Apr. 5 reported European financial authorities confiscated millions of dollars in contract money for two Italian-made yachts worth US$20 million the DPRK had attempted to buy.

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6. DPRK Defectors

Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "N. KOREAN DEFECTORS BEWILDERED BY THE SOUTH", Anseong, 2009/04/12) reported that DPRK defectors who arrive in the ROK feel clueless, fearful and guilty. Teenagers are particularly bewildered. They arrive stunted from malnutrition and struggling to read. Defectors in the late 1990s were mostly young men without families. In recent years, though, about 80 percent of defectors have been middle-aged women, many with children in tow. Most of these women were traders -- and in many cases, cross-border smugglers -- for the private markets that have spread across the DPRK. Often, they bribed their way across the border.

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7. ROK Aid for DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("OVER W3.2 TRILLION FUNNELED INTO N.KOREA", Seoul, 2009/04/10) reported that the ROK gave an estimated W3.2 trillion to the DPRK in the decade since the Kim Dae-jung administration took power. Data from the ministries of unification and of strategy and finance on aid to the DPRK compiled and analyzed by the Chosun Ilbo on Wednesday show food and goods like building materials from the government and private sector amounted to W2.73 trillion. In addition, the money Hyundai Group paid the DPRK for the Mt. Kumgang tour program was US$475.28 million from 1999 to 2007, adding up to $3.22 billion. "During the Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun administrations, off-the-books money which government officials and civilians handed over to the North for their visits there amounted to approximately $1 billion," an ROK government official said.

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8. Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH REMOVES 'SYMBOLIC' AGENCY", Seoul, 2009/04/11) reported that following the DPRK's cabinet reshuffle at the first session of the Supreme People’s Assembly on Thursday, most ministers and heads of government agencies were retained during the opening session of the assembly. But the National Economic Cooperation Federation, in charge of inter-Korean relations, was not on the list of ministries and agencies. Kim Ho-nyoun, spokesman for the

ROK Unification Ministry, said the ROK “estimates” that the federation has been removed but added the DPRK made no specific mention of it. The post for the federation’s chairman had been vacant after its previous leader, Jong Woon-up, was not re-elected in March’s election.

Korea Herald ("SEOUL 'SERIOUS' OVER WORKER HELD IN NORTH", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that the ROK government Monday stepped up warnings against the DPRK for refusing contact with the ROK worker detained for allegedly criticizing the regime. "We see the prolonged questionings by the North as a serious situation and will take necessary measures if the current situation remains unchanged," said Lee Jong-joo, the Unification Ministry spokeswoman. She stressed not only does it violate an inter-Korean agreement on economic exchange, but also is "inhumane" and "unjust" to refuse basic rights to the Hyundai Asan employee for over two weeks.

Yonhap ("S. KOREA EASES CAP ON STAFF IN INTER-KOREAN COMPLEX", Seoul, 2009/04/12) reported that the ROK decided to lift the limit on the number of its citizens allowed to stay in the Kaesong industrial complex. Seoul reduced the number to a daily average of 700 from the previous 1,100 after the DPRK fired a rocket last Sunday. "The government will allow companies to determine the number of employees who visit and stay in the complex starting Monday," a government official said on condition of anonymity. "But it is a temporary move." The government could again impose the limit at any time, he said.

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9. ROK Role in PSI

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA CONSULTS WITH U.S. ON ITS PSI ROLE: MINISTRY", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that the ROK has formed the United States and some other allies of its plan to join the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), officials said Monday. "We consulted with allied countries including the U.S. on the issue," foreign ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said in his regular press briefing. "We notified them of our plan." "I don't want to go into details as I think you can guess (their responses)," he added.

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10. ROK Politics

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "SKOREAN PROSECUTORS QUIZ EX-PRESIDENT'S WIFE, SON", Seoul, 2009/04/12) reported that ROK prosecutors questioned the wife of former President Roh Moo-hyun on Saturday on suspicion of accepting $1 million from Park Yeon-cha, head of a local shoe manufacturer. On Sunday, prosecutors also summoned Roh's son — Roh Gun-ho — to investigate whether he used some of the $1 million for living expenses in the United States, spokesman Cho Eun-suk said.

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11. ROK Climate Change

Chosun Ilbo ("FOREST FIRES PRODUCING AS MUCH CO2 AS 200,000 CARS", Seoul, 2009/04/10)

reported that a research team led by Lee Byung-doo at the Korea Forest Research Institute said Thursday, "We traced back the quantity of CO?produced by forest fire between 2000 and 2007 based on the size of forest destroyed by fire and found that an annual average of 1.54 million CO?ton was emitted, a figure that approximately 192,000 cars produce a year." The team found that when a fire breaks out on a 10,000 sq. m pine tree forest, 54.1 CO?ton is produced, almost the same amount as that produced by 6.8 cars per year. It drew the final result by multiplying this figure by the size of forest destroyed by fire annually.

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12. ROK Energy

Chosun Ilbo ("OFF-PEAK ELECTRICITY USAGE FALLS FOR FIRST TIME SINCE 2000", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that the Korea Power Exchange said Sunday that usage of off-peak electricity dropped to 19,391 GWh last year, down 0.4 percent from 2007. The cheap price of off-peak electricity has led to an exponential increase in its usage since 2000, causing Korea Electric Power Corporation losses from operating gas power stations during the night. The use of off-peak electricity rose 107.5 percent on-year to 6.83 million GWh in 2000, and 75.9 percent the following year. As it increased three times from 2000 to 2007, the government has taken measures to reduce or limit demand for off-peak electricity, including a hike in the rate of the electricity.

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13. US-ROK FTA

Yonhap ("U.S. SEEN TO TURN POSITIVE ABOUT KORUS FTA: TRADE OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that ROK Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon official said Monday that the Barack Obama administration seems to be increasingly positive about a free trade accord with the ROK. "The U.S. has expressed dissatisfaction with the trade deal... but it did not mention renegotiation," Kim said adding that his ministry and the U.S. Trade Representative would start to work on it ahead of a planned summit in June.

Yonhap ("USTR WANTS KORUS FTA RATIFIED WITHOUT CHANGE: SOURCES", Seoul, 2009/04/12) reported that the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) wants a free trade pact with the ROK to be ratified without renegotiation, sources said. According to Seoul's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the office of Rep. Hong Jung-wook, a ruling party lawmaker, the U.S. trade journal "Inside U.S. Trade" reported Friday, "Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Danny Sepulveda had told business representatives that it is the intent of USTR to address outstanding issues on the pending free trade agreements with Panama, Colombia and South Korea without renegotiating their texts." However, there was no comment on the timetable for U.S. ratification, the ministry said.

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14. Sino-ROK Relations

Korea Herald (Kim Yoon-mi, "CHINA'S POWER POSES CHALLENGE FOR KOREA", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that the ROK needs to act preemptively to counter the PRC's growing

influence in the world, a report by the Ministry of Strategy and Finance said Monday. It said the PRC has been beefing up the "Beijing Consensus" through signing currency swap deals with Asian and Latin American nations, expanding assistance to developing countries in Africa and Southeast Asia, and increasing investment in natural resources in Latin America. "In response to the spreading Beijing Consensus, our country needs to implement pre-emptive external economic policy," the ministry said in the report.

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15. ROK-ASEAN Relations

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "KOREA TO UPGRADE TIES WITH SE ASIA", Seoul, 2009/04/10) reported that the ROK and Thailand agreed Friday to upgrade their relationship to a ``future-oriented'' one and strengthen ties in the development of clean energy sources and ``green growth'' technologies. At a summit between President Lee Myung-bak and Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva in Pattaya, Lee proposed joint projects between Seoul and Bangkok to expand bilateral trade and cultural exchanges. Lee asked Vejjajiva to play a bridging role between Seoul and the ASEAN economic block and help the ROK contribute to the region's economic development.

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16. ROK Role in South Asia

Yonhap ("KOREAN MINISTER TO ATTEND CONFERENCE ON PAKISTAN IN TOKYO", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan plans to visit Tokyo later this week to attend an international donors conference on Pakistan, the ministry announced Monday. During his three-day trip set to begin Thursday, Yu will also hold talks with his Japanese counterpart on bilateral issues. "They will discuss ways of stabilizing Pakistan and detailed assistance plans," ministry spokesman Moon Tae-youngMoon said. "We will express support for the efforts and announce our government's aid plan."

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17. ROK-Japan Historical Disputes

Korea Herald ("LEE REBUKES JAPAN FOR HISTORY BOOKS", Seoul, 2009/04/13) reported that the ROK government has stepped up warnings toward Japan on its history textbooks. President Lee Myung-bak said in a summit on Saturday with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso, "Relations between our two nations have suffered setbacks before due to problems stemming from how we recognize our history. Japan should realize this and take a more circumspect approach."

Agence France-Presse ("PROTESTS AS JAPAN APPROVES NATIONALIST TEXTBOOK", Tokyo, 2009/04/10) reported that Japanese liberal teachers and historians voiced concern Friday over the approval of a history text written by a group of nationalistic scholars. "The new book still has the same problems the 2005 book had," said Yoshifumi Tawara, head of the group Children and Textbooks Japan Network 21. "We need to strengthen our campaign against this textbook." The new book was still "glamorising and justifying Japan's past wars" and "describing the histories of South Korea and China in an insulting manner," the group of teachers, historians and ROK residents said in

a statement.

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18. Japanese Role in South Asia

Reuters ("JAPAN TO GIVE PAKISTAN $1 BLN IN AID: NIKKEI", Tokyo, 2009/04/11) reported that the Japanese government is finalizing plans to provide Pakistan with up to $1 billion in economic aid over the next two years, the Nikkei business daily reported Saturday. The assistance would consist of yen loans and grant aid, and is aimed at helping poverty-stricken areas that could become breeding grounds for extremists, as well as finance infrastructure, education and job training, the Nikkei said. Japan will announce the details on April 17 at a Pakistan donors conference in Tokyo that it is co-hosting with the World Bank, the paper said.

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19. Japanese Nuclear Power

Reuters ("NO RADIATION LEAK AFTER FIRE AT JAPAN'S TEPCO PLANT", Tokyo, 2009/04/12) reported that no radiation has leaked after a minor fire broke out late on Saturday at a warehouse located on the same grounds as the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear plant, Tokyo Electric Power Co. said on Sunday. TEPCO said it was investigating the cause of Saturday's fire, which NHK said was the ninth reported at the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa facility since it was closed after a powerful earthquake rocked northwest Japan on July 2007.

Reuters (Osamu Tsukimori, "JAPAN LOCAL GOVTS MAKE TEPCO WAIT ON NUCLEAR RESTART", Niigata, 2009/04/10) reported that local authorities on Friday put off a decision on whether to allow Tokyo Electric Power Co to begin restarting its quake-damaged nuclear plant. Two local mayors, from the village of Kariwa and Kashiwazaki City, on Friday gave their backing for the No.7 reactor's restart, but the governor of Niigata prefecture put off giving his final consent. "I would like to consult with the prefectural assembly before making a decision," Hirohiko Izumida told the two mayors at a meeting. "I think we need to build a consensus of the local community ... Some people think there is still a lack of explanation." "There is a limit to human wisdom, and nothing that is man-made is perfect," he told the mayors.

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20. Japanese Whaling

Reuters ("JAPAN KILLS 680 ANTARCTIC WHALES, BELOW TARGET", Tokyo, 2009/04/13) reported that Japan's whaling catch in its latest Antarctic hunt fell far short of its target, the Fisheries Agency said on Monday. Japan killed 679 minke whales despite plans to catch around 850. It caught just one fin whale compared with a target of 50 in the hunt that began in November. A Fisheries Agency official said ships could not carry out whaling for a total of 16 days because of bad weather and skirmishes with anti-whaling activists.

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21. Cross Strait Relations

Christian Science Monitor (Jonathan Adams, "AS ASIA BUILDS ECONOMIC TIES, TAIWAN SIDELINED BY CHINA", Kaohsiung, 2009/04/12) reported that Kaohsiung in Taiwan has fallen from number 3 to number 12 in the list of world's busiest ports. "In the last decade, several new ports have been established in the mainland, with annual growth rates of 40 percent," says Shieh Ming-hui, director-general of the Kaohsiung Harbor Bureau. "Our port's growth rate is about 4 percent per year. That's the main reason for this phenomenon." But it's not just that Taiwan can't compete head-on with the PRC in ports and other areas. Due to Beijing's political pressure, Taiwan is also the odd-man out amid the trend of Asian economic integration.

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22. PRC Military

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA SAYS DOMESTIC ARMAMENTS ARE WORLD-CLASS", Beijing, 2009/04/13) reported that a report by the PRC government's China Association for Science and Technology says many of the PRC's homemade weapons systems are world-classr. Steady advances have produced a solid foundation for Chinese-made armored fighting vehicles, missile systems and other weaponry, according to the report. "In some areas, Chinese weapons have either achieved or are very close to achieving international advanced standards," the report said, without giving details.

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23. PRC Human Rights

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "CHINA SETS HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA FOR SENSITIVE YEAR", Beijing, 2009/04/13) reported that the PRC promised its citizens stronger legal protection, improved incomes and expanded channels to complain as part of its first "human rights action plan" issued by Xinhua news agency on Monday. "China still confronts many challenges and has a long road ahead in its efforts to improve its human rights situation," states the plan. The PRC "gives priority to the protection of the people's rights to subsistence and development," it adds.

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24. PRC Demographics

New York Times (Sharon LaFraniere, "CHINESE BIAS FOR BABY BOYS CREATES A GAP OF 32 MILLION", Beijing, 2009/04/10) reported that a bias in favor of male offspring has left the PRC with 32 million more boys under the age of 20 than girls, creating “an imminent generation of excess men,” a study released Friday said. For the next 20 years, the PRC will have increasingly more men than women of reproductive age, according to the paper, which was published online by the British Medical Journal. “Nothing can be done now to prevent this,” the researchers said.

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II. PRC Report

25. PRC Civil Society and Migrant Labor

Nanhai Net (Liu Shoubo, Wang Chengcheng, "HOPE PROJECT CHILDREN OF MIGRANT WORKERS FUND SET UP IN HAINAN", 2009/04/10) reported that recently, Hainan Youth League Committee decided to firstly set up Hope Project Children of Migrant Workers Fund in Hainan province. The Fund will try for the support of Nanguo Urban Daily, to jointly carry out the investigation of status of migrant workers' children and the left-behind children, and help the children resolve practical problems.

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26. PRC Civil Society and the Economy

Xinhua Net (Zhou Huimin, "HAIKOU TO ESTABLISH 15 YOUTH BUSINESS TRAINING BASES", 2009/04/10) reported that in order to further do the work of helping youth start business and obtain employment, Youth League Committee of Haikou city will establish 15 business training bases, provide over 150 training positions, try to train 2000 people and offer loans of over 1.5 million yuan, to help youth increase employment technology and business ability.

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27. PRC Disaster Relief

Xinhua Net (Chenfei, "DISASTER RELIEF REGULATION COLLECTS SUGGESTIONS TO THE PUBLIC", 2009/04/10) reported that in view of the current problems of disaster relief work in out country, Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council issued People's Republic of China Disaster Relief Regulation (Opinion Soliciting Draft) on April 9th. Related director said that the management system, legal linkage system, preparation system and supervision system are four important parts that need to be improved.

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