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Preceding NAPSNet Report

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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Wall Street Journal (David Crawford and Evan Ramstad, "NORTH KOREA EXPELS NUCLEAR INSPECTORS AFTER LEAVING SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2009/04/14) reported that the DPRK ordered International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors out of the country. The decision ends international monitoring of a research reactor at Yongbyon and in theory could allow reprocessing of fuel rods to produce plutonium. In a statement an IAEA spokesman said the DPRK informed IAEA inspectors at Yongbyon that it will immediately cease cooperation with the IAEA and asked the IAEA to remove its containment and surveillance equipment. The DPRK announced a plan to reactivate all its nuclear facilities and resume reprocessing of nuclear fuel, the IAEA statement said.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press ("CLINTON SAYS NORTH KOREA REACTED UNNECESSARILY", 2009/04/14) reported that Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is criticizing the DPRK for its decision to restart its nuclear reactor and to boycott international disarmament talks. In brief remarks to reporters at the State Department, Clinton said the DPRK's reaction to a U.N. Security Council statement condemning the DPRK's recent missile launch was unnecessary. Clinton said the US hopes to discuss the matter with its allies and partners and eventually with the North Koreans.

Reuters ("WHITE HOUSE SAYS NORTH KOREA THREAT A "SERIOUS STEP"", 2009/04/14) reported that the White House said that the DPRK's threat to withdraw from six-party talks was a "serious step in the wrong direction " and urged Pyongyang to end its provocative threats and live up to its international obligations. "North Korea's announced threat to withdraw from the six-party talks and restart its nuclear program is a serious step in the wrong direction," White House spokesman Robert Gibbs said. "North Korea will not find acceptance by the international community unless it verifiably abandons its pursuit of nuclear weapons ."

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3. Russia on Six Party Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA'S LAVROV UPBEAT ON SIX-PARTY KOREA TALKS, REJECTS CHANGES", Moscow, 2009/04/14) reported that Russia's foreign minister said there was no need to change the format of discussions on the DPRK's nuclear program, adding the six-nation talks would resume soon despite current problems. "There is no need to establish a new international forum to address the situation on the Korean Peninsula," Sergei Lavrov told reporters. "Although emotions usually run high in such situations, the six-party talks will resume in the near future," Lavrov said.

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4. PRC on Six Party Talks

Xinhua News ("CHINA CALLS FOR CALM, RESTRAINT TO SAFEGUARD SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2009/04/14) reported that the PRC called for calm and restraint to safeguard the process of the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, saying it accords with the common interests of the countries in the region and the international community. "We hope that relevant parties would view the overall situation and long-term development, keep calm and show restraint," Jiang said, adding it accords with the common interests of the countries in the region and the international community. "China and the DPRK are friendly neighbors. We will continue the friendly and cooperative relationship with the DPRK," Jiang said.

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5. ROK on Six Party Talks

Xinhua News ("S. KOREA REGRETS DPRK QUITTING SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2009/04/14) reported that the ROK government expressed regret over the DPRK's declaration of not returning to the six-party talks. "The South Korean government is deeply concerned that the DPRK earlier in the day denunciated the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)'s presidential statement on the nation's rocket launch," Foreign Ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said. "The government is also worried that the DPRK insists on space exploration, plans to withdraw from the six-party talks, and pursues nuclear facility restoration," Moon said.

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA WILL NOT OVERREACT TO N. KOREAN BACKLASH: OFFICIAL ", Seoul, 2009/04/14) reported that the ROK said it will deal calmly with the DPRK's stronger-than-expected response to UN condemnation of its rocket launch. "North Korea's response is stronger than expected, considering such strong words as 'never' were used," a ROK foreign ministry official said. But he pointed out that the statement does not directly criticize the United States, possibly suggesting the DPRK hopes for direct talks with Washington. "The government will deal with North Korea's threats in a calm manner," he said.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL FEARS FOR MAN HELD INCOMMUNICADO IN N.KOREA", 2009/04/14) reported that the government is trying to deal with the detention of a 44-year-old employee of Hyundai Asan in the DPRK from a human rights perspective. "Just as the United States interviewed the two journalists detained by North Korea through the Swedish Embassy in Pyongyang, we are considering working out an interview with Yoo through the permanent mission of a country that's on friendly terms with North Korea," a government official said.

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7. DPRK on Relations with US, ROK

Xinhua News ("TOP DPRK LEGISLATOR WARNS OF PUNISHMENT AGAINST AMERICA, SOUTH KOREA", Pyongyang, 2009/04/14) reported that Kim Yong Nam, top legislator of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), warned on Tuesday that his country would mete out "unmerciful punishment" if the United States and ROK "start a war." He warned that if the United States and South Korea ignite a war, all the DPRK people would display the invincible spirit and powerful war deterrent for self-defense and mete out "merciless punishment."

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8. USFJ Base Realignment

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN LOWER HOUSE OKS US MARINES MOVE TO GUAM", Tokyo, 2009/04/14) reported that Japan's lower house approved a multi-billion-dollar plan to transfer 8,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa island to Guam by 2014, despite objections from opposition parties. Under the agreement, Japan would pay up to $2.8 billion for infrastructure and other work in relocating the Marines and their 9,000 dependents to the US Pacific territory.

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9. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Kyodo News (Daisuke Yamamoto, "DIET BEGINS MULLING ANTIPIRACY BILL AMID OPERATIONS OFF SOMALIA ", Tokyo, 2009/04/14) reported that the House of Representatives on Tuesday began deliberating an antipiracy bill that would expand the scope of escort missions carried out by Japan's Self-Defense Forces off the coast of Somalia. The bill, which is to be debated at the lower house's special committee on antipiracy and antiterrorism operations, is aimed at authorizing the SDF to escort any commercial ship, regardless of any connection to Japan. It would also authorize the SDF to fire at pirate vessels -- but not at the pirates themselves -- which, despite repeated warnings, close in on commercial ships.

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10. Japan-Jordan Energy Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SIGNS NUCLEAR ENERGY DEAL WITH JORDAN", 2009/04/14) reported that Japan agreed to provide Jordan with support for its nuclear energy programme as the Middle East state plans to launch its first atomic power plant in 2017, officials said. Under the deal, which can be extended for another five years, Japan would help Jordan draft a development programme for construction of nuclear power plants and help develop necessary infrastructure, the official said. Japan would also help Jordan train nuclear power plant workers and introduce safety measures and regulations, he said.

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11. Japan Nuclear Safety

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN ANGERED BY FIRES AT BIGGEST NUCLEAR PLANT", Tokyo, 2009/04/14) reported that Japan's government chastised the operator of the world's largest nuclear plant for a string of fires that has hit the facility since it closed after an earthquake almost two years ago. The Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant is scheduled to restart as early as this month but the nine blazes, the latest of which hit Saturday, have stoked fears about the safety of the seven-reactor plant. The minister for economy, trade and industry, Toshihiro Nikai, told reporters the latest incident was "very regrettable after we judged in February that there were no safety problems for resuming operations." He asked "all those concerned to reflect seriously" on the incident.

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12. Japan Climate Change

MarketWatch ("CLIMATE CHANGE TO COST JAPAN DEARLY IF UNCHECKED", 2009/04/14) reported that half of Japan's sand beaches could be wiped out by rising sea levels, and extensive flooding could inflict damages of 8.7 trillion yen ($87.4 billion) annually by the end of the century if little action is taken to counteract global warming, a Japanese government study warned. The findings from the National Institute for Environmental Studies, which are due to presented later Tuesday to a government advisory committee, were reported in the Tuesday evening edition of the Nikkei newspaper. Among its findings, the report said even if drastic measures are undertaken, flood damage in Japan will be severe and the impact upon beech forests will be widespread.

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13. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("OZAWA CONFIDENT DPJ WILL WIN GENERAL ELECTION ", Tokyo, 2009/04/14) reported that opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa expressed confidence that his Democratic Party of Japan will win the next lower house election and dethrone the Liberal Democratic Party. ''The Japanese people are hoping for a change of government and our party will be the leading party, at least,'' Ozawa was quoted by DPJ lawmaker Tenzo Okumura as saying in a meeting with former U.S.

Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale.

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14. Sino-Indian Relations

TNN ("CHINA SUGGESTS IT BLOCKED INDIA'S LOAN EFFORTS AT ADB DUE TO BORDER DISPUTE", 2009/04/14) reported that the PRC foreign ministry indicated it was motivated by the dispute over Arunachal Pradesh to block India's application for a loan from the Asian Development Bank . Part of the loan money is meant for development of Arunachal, which the PRC is claiming as its own territory. Jiang Yu, spokeswoman for the PRC foreign ministry, was asked at the ministry's regulator briefing on Tuesday to confirm reports that the PRC had vetoed India's loan application and if this was done because the money is going to be spent in Arunachal Pradesh. She did not give a direct reply but gave ample indications that the PRC was using the ADB meeting to deal with a bilateral issue between the two countries.

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15. PRC Unrest

Agence France-Presse ("PROTESTERS CLASH WITH POLICE IN CHINA DISPUTE", Beijing, 2009/04/14) reported that clashes between police and demonstrators erupted in south PRC after hundreds of people gathered to protest the handling of a housing dispute, locals and a rights group said. The clashes occurred late Monday in Shenzhen city after protesters gathered to demonstrate against the alleged detention of up to four people representing them in the housing dispute, locals said. The protesters were complaining that up to 1,600 families had been sold shoddy apartments in a housing complex that began to fall apart soon after they moved in, adding that it was not built up to standard.

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16. PRC Petitioners

The Associated Press ("CHINA ORDERS LOCAL GOV'TS TO LISTEN TO PETITIONERS", 2009/04/14) reported that the PRC's leadership ordered local officials to step up efforts to address public grievances in their areas amid a surge in complaints that have been brought to the central government in Beijing. Local governments must set aside a specific amount of time for petitioners and work to effectively deal with their complaints, the State Council, the PRC's Cabinet, said in a set of directives posted on the central government's Web site.

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17. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ORDERS GOVERNMENTS TO GO GREEN: STATE MEDIA", Beijing, 2009/04/14) reported that local governments in the PRC have been ordered to buy more energy

efficient products as part of the national drive to curb pollution and combat global warming, state press reported. The PRC's State Council, or cabinet, issued a statement Monday calling for all local governments to place a higher priority on eco-friendly products in their public purchases, the China Daily reported. Governments will be required to strictly follow a compulsory green procurement list, which was published in 2007 and includes nine types of items such as air conditioners and computers, it said.

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18. Taiwan Nuclear Power

Bloomberg News (Yu-huay Sun, "TAIWAN ENERGY TALKS PIT MA AGAINST NUCLEAR OPPONENTS", 2009/04/14) reported that Taiwan will debate ending an eight- year ban on new nuclear reactors to help curb emissions from electricity generation, potentially pitting President Ma Ying- jeou against critics who say atomic power is too dangerous. "How we're going to deal with nuclear energy is up for discussion," Yeh Huey-ching , head of Taiwan's energy bureau, said in an April 7 interview in Taipei. A two-day state conference on energy starting tomorrow will bring together 205 government officials, scholars, executives and environmentalists and resolutions will be adopted as government policy.

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II. PRC Report

19. PRC Disabled Access

Xinhua News Agency ("CHINA TO BUILD BARRIER-FREE ENVIRONMENT FOR DISABLED IN 100 CITIES", 2009/04/14) reported that the PRC will promote the construction of a barrier-free environment for the disabled in 100 cities by the year 2010, said the National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2009-2010) released Monday by the Information Office of the State Council. Assistance techniques or substitute technologies such as Braille, sign language, captions and special communication facilities are to be adopted to pave the way for the disabled to participate in social activities.

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20. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction

Xinhua News ("SICHUAN TO REBUILD SCHOOL ON ANNIVERSARY", 2009/04/14) reported that the reconstruction of Beichuan Middle School, one of the schools that sustained the most damage in last year's Sichuan earthquake, will start May 12, the first anniversary of the earthquake, officials said Wednesday. The new school will be built in Beichuan's new county seat, said Liu Qi, an official with the All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese (ACFROC), which was in charge of aiding the rebuilding. Officials will choose a design from submissions by leading universities including Tsinghua and Tongji as well as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Hong Kong

University.

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