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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on US Nuclear Arms

RIA Novosti ("N.KOREA BLOWS OFF RUSSIAN-U.S. STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY", 2010/04/14) reported that the DPRK shrugged off the importance to the new US-Russian arms reduction treaty signed in Prague in early April, the central DRPK Rodong Sinmun newspaper said. "The only thing that is noteworthy in the treaty is that it shows the possibility of a definite reduction in nuclear arms on conditions of mutual trust and not on conditions of adversary relations," Rodong Sinmun reported. "Even if Russia and the U.S. fulfill the terms of the treaty, they will still retain a great nuclear advantage over other countries that also have nuclear weapons," said Rodong Sinmun.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News (Kang Hyun-kyung, "NAVAL DISASTER HAMPERS EFFORTS TO REVIVE 6-WAY TALKS", 2010/04/15) reported that a ROK diplomatic source described the prospects for the resumption of six-party talks to end the DPRK nuclear program any time soon as dim. The source said on condition of anonymity that it was difficult to predict if the six-party talks would be resumed. The source hinted at the connection between the sinking of the naval vessel and the resumption of the six-party talks. Kurt Campbell, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific Affairs at the State Department, said that finding out what happened in the sinking of the ship needs to be done first. "At this juncture, we told our South Korean friends that our primary objective is to work with them on the recovery of the ship and at that point, we will be able to make some judgments about the way forward," he was quoted by the AFP.

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3. Sino-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("CHINESE AGENCIES SELL TOUR PROGRAMS TO N. KOREA'S MOUNT KUMGANG", 2010/04/15) reported that PRC travel agencies are selling tour programs to the DPRK's Mount Kumgang amid Pyongyang's announcement that it will find a new partner in retaliation for Seoul's reluctance to resume cross-border tours, tourism sources said. Two PRC agencies in the city of Tongcheng and the southern province of Guangdong are taking reservations for tour programs that include the scenic mountain and other sights, including Pyongyang, the ancient city of Kaesong and the border with the ROK.

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4. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("ASDF SCRAMBLES HIT 299 IN FY '09, 1ST AGAINST N. KOREAN PLANES IN DECADE", 2010/04/15) reported that Japanese Air Self-Defense Force fighter jets were scrambled against foreign airplanes flying near Japanese airspace 299 times in fiscal 2009 through March 31, up 62 from the previous year with the jets deployed against DPRK planes for the first time in a decade, the Self-Defense Forces said. ASDF jets were scrambled against planes suspected to have been dispatched by the DPRK eight times around the DPRK missile launch over Japan on April 5, 2009.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

KBS News ("COMPANIES URGE GOV'T TO PROTECT ASSETS IN GEUMGANG", 2010/04/15) reported that representatives of companies that invested in the Mount Geumgang resort urged the ROK government to protect their assets there. Six senior members of an association of the companies that invested in tourism facilities at Mount Geumgang made the request at a meeting with Unification Ministry officials. The ministry reportedly said it would actively consider ways to protect ROK real estate holdings in the resort.

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6. DPRK Security

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA'S POLICE ORGAN CHANGES NAME, AFFILIATION", 2010/04/15) reported that the DPRK's Ministry of People's Security, the country's police organization, has slightly changed its name, leading observers to believe that it may now fall under the command of the National Defense Commission instead of the Cabinet as before.

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7. DPRK Internal Stability

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL 'WARNED OFFICIALS TO PACIFY UNREST'", 2010/04/15) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has reportedly warned of unrest among North Koreans in the wake of a botched currency reform that wiped out many people's savings. In an unofficial meeting recently, he urged military and party leaders to pacify the people, according to Open Radio for the DPRK, a defector-run radio station in Seoul. Kim said, "If the most important thing is single-minded unity under current circumstances, public sentiment is the very basis of such a unity," the radio quoted a high-level DPRK source as saying. "If this problem is solved, it will not be as difficult to earn foreign exchange as now," he reportedly added.

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8. US-ROK Military Exercise

Stars and Stripes ("U.S. DOWNPLAYS LIVE-FIRE EXERCISE WITH S. KOREA ON N. KOREAN HOLIDAY", 2010/04/15) reported that the US and ROK militaries staged a large live-fire exercise 15 miles south of the Demilitarized Zone, but officials insisted the event was not meant as a warning to the DPRK. "There is not a message we are sending to any particular audience," said Col. Thomas C. Graves, commander of the 2nd Infantry Division's 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team. "The message that comes out of this is the strength of the [U.S.-ROK] alliance across the board. "We are doing an integration at the combined arms level — at the tactical level — that probably isn't seen anywhere else in the world. How the North reacts to this is certainly not something I can predict."

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9. ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "SKOREA SAYS EXTERNAL EXPLOSION LIKELY SANK SHIP", Seoul, 2010/04/16) reported that an external explosion most likely sank a the ROK navy ship Cheonan, chief ROK investigator Yoon Duk-yong told reporters Friday. He said further analysis and time are needed to determine the exact cause, after salvaging the ship's other wreckage and collecting debris. Yoon also said the explosion may have occurred near the ship or that something may have hit the ship. Lee Hyun-yup, a marine engineering expert at Chungnam National University , also said the ship was broken by an underwater explosion , which could be caused by either a torpedo or a floating mine.

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10. ROK-Russian Environmental Cooperation

RIA Novosti ("S.KOREA INVITES SAKHALIN TO JOIN INDUSTRIAL SAFETY GREEN PROJECT", 2010/04/15) reported that the ROK has proposed to Russia's Pacific Island of Sakhalin to join a large-scale project to enhance the environmental safety of industrial production, the regional governor's press office said. The proposal was made during a meeting between Sakhalin Region Governor Alexander Khoroshavin and ROK Vice-Minister of Knowledge Economy Kim Young Hak in Seoul. "One of the most promising South Korean undertakings within the framework of the Green Development project is the use of liquid or gaseous coal to considerably reduce carbon dioxide emissions," the press secretary of the Sakhalin Region governor, Alexei Bayandin, said.

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11. ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN RULING PARTY CHIEF SAYS JAPAN'S DOKDO CLAIM 'UNPARDONABLE'", 2010/04/15) reported that the head of the ROK's ruling party offered a blunt assessment of Japan's most recent claims to a set of ROK islets in the East Sea, calling them "simply incomprehensible." Chung Mong-joon, said it is an indisputable fact that Dokdo has belonged to the Korean Peninsula since ancient times. The lawmaker also voiced regret for Tokyo's recent approval of school textbooks defining Dokdo as being "illegally occupied" by the ROK. "Japan should now see its past history not in the perspective of nationalism and imperialism but that of peace and universal humanity," Chung said.

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12. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("U.S. SOUNDS OUT JAPAN ON MODIFIED FUTEMMA RELOCATION PLAN", 2010/04/15) reported that the US has sounded out Japan on the possibility of building a proposed airfield to replace the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa farther offshore from the coast of the southernmost prefecture than the location currently planned, sources close to bilateral ties said. The United States is also considering returning to Japan the bombing ranges on the islands of Kumejima and Torishima, and part of a water area east of Okinawa, both used by the US military, if Tokyo agrees to implement the current Futenma relocation plan or the modification sounded out, the sources said.

Agence France-Presse ("US LAWMAKER PLEADS JAPAN'S CASE ON BASE ", 2010/04/15) reported that a liberal US lawmaker appealed Wednesday for sensitivity to Japan over the relocation of a military base, saying the United States needed to bear in mind local opposition before going ahead. In a letter, Representative Dennis Kucinich highlighted concerns by residents of the southern island of Okinawa over crimes involving US troops, including alleged sexual assaults. Kucinich said that the relocation of the Futenma air base to the town of Nago could cause disruptive noise and threaten a fragile coral reef .

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13. US-Japan Nuclear Security Cooperation

NNSA ("NNSA SIGNS MEMORANDUM WITH JAPAN'S MEXT TO INCREASE COOPERATION ON NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS AND NONPROLIFERATION", 2010/04/15) reported that the US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation on nuclear safeguards and other nonproliferation topics with Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). The Memorandum covers four basic topics: collaboration to establish nuclear safeguards and security infrastructure in third countries, coordination of Support Programs to the International Atomic Energy Agency, training for safeguards inspectors, and development of technological approaches for physical protection of nuclear facilities.

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14. US on Whaling Issue

The New York Times ("U.S. LEADS NEW BID TO PHASE OUT WHALE HUNTING", 2010/04/15) reported that the US is leading an effort by a handful of antiwhaling nations to broker an agreement that would limit and ultimately end whale hunting by Japan, Norway and Iceland, according to people involved with the negotiations. The compromise deal, which has generated intense controversy within the 88-nation International Whaling Commission and among antiwhaling activists, would allow the three whaling countries to continue hunting whales for the next 10 years, although in reduced numbers. In exchange, the whaling nations would agree to stricter monitoring of their operations.

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15. Japan Space Program

DPA ("JAPAN TO DEVELOP NEW CARGO SPACESHIP TO SUPPLY SPACE STATION", 2010/04/15) reported that Japan is to develop a new multi-use, unmanned space freighter for shuttle services to the International Space Station (ISS), the Jiji Press news agency reported. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency said it plans to enable its unmanned HTV (H-II Transfer Vehicle) for return flights to Earth by 2015 or 2016.

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16. Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS WARSHIPS NEAR JAPAN ON ROUTINE EXERCISE", 2010/04/15) reported that a group of PRC warships spotted in the high seas near the southern Japanese island of Okinawa last week were just on a routine training exercise, the PRC's Defence Ministry said. "The training was carried out on the high sea according to the People's Liberation Army Navy's annual training plan," the official Xinhua news agency quoted a Defence Ministry statement as saying. "Other parties should not speculate (on) the flotilla's intentions since training in international waters (is) an international practice."

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17. Sino-ROK Trade Relations

Xinhua News ("S KOREA TO EXAMINE FEASIBILITY OF CHINA, S. KOREA FTA ", 2010/04/15) reported that the ROK will probe into the feasibility of the free trade agreement (FTA) with the PRC, examining how a pact may boost up the country's overall competitiveness, local media reported. According to Yonhap News Agency, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy at its weekly economic policy meeting decided to launch a research on a possible FTA. The research will deal with how a bilateral FTA may enhance the country's competitiveness among its global peers as well as ties with the PRC, the media report said.

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18. US on PRC Export Controls

The Washington Times ("CHINESE FIRMS BOOST NUCLEAR THREATS", 2010/04/15) reported that unchecked proliferation by PRC firms has undermined a global effort to keep nuclear and missile technology out of the hands of terrorists. A report by the CIA's Weapons Intelligence, Nonproliferation and Arms Control Center (WINPAC) this year linked PRC companies to nuclear and missile programs in Pakistan and missile programs in Iran. It said the PRC was a primary supplier of advanced conventional weapons to Pakistan, which it described as the PRC's most important partner in military technology cooperation.

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19. US on Climate Change in the PRC

Agence France-Presse ("OBAMA SAYS CHINA CAN'T 'WAIT' ON CLIMATE CHANGE", 2010/04/15) reported that US President Barack Obama said the PRC can't be allowed to wait until its standard of living improves before tackling climate change. Obama said the PRC knew the dangers of global warming but appeared to lack urgency about dealing with the problem. "Right now their understandable impulse is to say, 'Well let's let the developed countries, the Australias, and the Americas deal with this problem first and we'll get to it when we've caught up a little bit in terms of our standard of living,' he told public broadcaster ABC. "The point we've tried to make is we can't, we can't allow China to wait."

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20. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Central Chronicle ("INDIA, CHINA WORKING HARD TO RESOLVE BOUNDARY ISSUE", 2010/04/15) reported that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today said India and the PRC were working very hard to find a "practical" and "pragmatic" solution to the boundary question and its resolution would take time. Noting that both countries "recognise that it would take time", he said the two countries have agreed that pending the resolution of the border issues, peace and tranquillity should be maintained along the Line of Actual Control and by and large that situation prevails on the ground.

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21. Sino-Indian Relations

New Kerala ("INDIA, CHINA NOT COMPETITORS, BUT PARTNERS: PM", 2010/04/15) reported that as the year 2010 marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relationship between the two countries, the leaders described the year as momentous in the relations and pledged to strengthen the ties and grow them steadily. Official spokesman Vishnu Prakash said both the leaders expressed satisfaction that the strategic cooperation between the two countries was gaining in both content and substance.

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22. Cross-Strait Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINESE MAINLAND, TAIWAN TO EXCHANGE TOURISM OFFICES IN MAY ", 2010/04/15) reported that the PRC and Taiwan will open tourism representative offices on each other's side of the Taiwan Strait in May, a mainland spokeswoman said in Beijing. The PRC based Cross-Strait Tourism Exchange Association (CTEA) will set up its Taipei office on May 7, while the Taiwan-based Taiwan Strait Tourism Association will establish its Beijing office three days earlier on May 4, Fan Liqing, a spokeswoman for the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office told a press conference. The offices will provide convenient services for tourists from both sides of the Strait, with a focus on tourism consultation, advertising, coordination, and dispute resolution, Fan said.

Taipei Times ("CHINA DECLINES TAIWAN'S OFFER OF QUAKE RESCUE TEAM", 2010/04/15) reported that the PRC declined Taiwan's offer of assistance in the wake of a deadly earthquake that struck a mountainous area of Qinghai Province killing more than 600 people, saying sufficient rescue resources were in place to deal with the situation. The Straits Exchange Foundation (SEF) said in a statement that the Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS) had thanked Taiwan for its concern and support, but indicated that such assistance was not necessary at this time. As rescue work has already started, ARATS said it would contact the SEF immediately should the situation change.

Agence France-Presse ("HISTORIC CHINA TRADE DEAL POSSIBLE IN JUNE: TAIWAN PRESIDENT", 2010/04/15) reported that President Ma Ying-jeou said Taiwan could sign an historic trade deal with the PRC as early as June and that it would bring major benefits to the whole Asian region. Ma said the framework agreement was just a first step, but that he was confident it would lead to deeper trade agreements with the PRC and continue to lower tensions between the former enemies. "We do have some difficulties but we are trying our best to make that happen, hoping to get it done before June," said Ma.

Agence France-Presse (Phil Chetwynd and Peter Harmsen, "TAIWAN AND CHINA AT 'HISTORIC JUNCTURE': PRESIDENT MA", Taipei, 2010/04/16) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou said Taiwan and the PRC were at an "historic juncture" and that his engagement of Beijing through trade had put relations on their surest footing in over half a century. "If we can contribute to peace and prosperity across the Taiwan Straits, the accomplishments would be historic," said Ma, describing the present as the "most peaceful era in history". "It's very important that the tension has been greatly reduced. In this part of the world, as you can see, there are two flashpoints -- the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Straits," he said. "If we can take one out of the picture, I think everyone will be happy and this is exactly what we are doing now."

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II. PRC Report

23. PRC Environment

Xinhua News ("CHINA BUILDS CARBON EMISSION MONITORING FACILITY IN BEIJING", 2010/04/13) reported that the first carbon emission monitoring tower in downtown Beijing is being built in a greenbelt square south of Chang'an Avenue in Chongwen District, as part of a program to reduce the city's greenhouse gas emissions. The 50-meter-tall tower will help Beijing citizens know the area's real-time amount of carbon dioxide emissions through a screen on the tower, said Wang Xiaoping, director of the Beijing Forestry Carbon Administration.

Xinhua News ("LINGERING DROUGHT THREATENS ENDANGERED BIRD SPECIES IN CHINA", 2010/04/13) reported that the persistent drought in the PRC's southwest is eroding the habitat of the Hume's Bar-tailed Pheasant, one of the world's endangered bird species. In Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, 45 percent of the vegetation in the nature reserve boasting the world's largest population of the pheasant, as known as *Syrmaticus humiae*, has deteriorated as the dry weather continues.

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