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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Launch

CNN News (Mike Mount , "NORTH KOREA IS FUELING ROCKET, U.S. MILITARY SAYS", Washington, 2009/04/01) reported that the DPRK has begun fueling its long-range rocket, according to a senior U.S. military official. The fueling signals that the country could be in the final stages of what the DPRK has said will be the launch of a satellite into space as early as this weekend, the senior US military official said.

United Press International ("GROUP: DON'T OVERREACT TO N. KOREA LAUNCH", Brussels , 2009/04/01) reported that regional neighbors of the DPRK should avoid overreacting to a rocket launch planned by Pyongyang, a Brussels non-government research institute says. The International Crisis Group said in a report released Wednesday that "an overreaction to the test that prompts the North to abandon the six-party talks would strengthen hardliners in Pyongyang," Yonhap, the ROK news agency reported. "Rather than raising the level of alarm over a launch that is likely to go ahead, the other five members of the six-party talks should agree to a moderate set of measures that maintains their unity in the face of North Korea's provocation," it said.

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "ROCKET LAUNCH LIKELY TO COST N. KOREA US$500 MILLION: THINK TANK", Seoul, 2009/04/01) reported that the DPRK may have spent nearly US$500 million to build the long-range rocket it plans to launch within days, the head of a Seoul-based think tank said Wednesday, citing leader Kim Jong-il's remarks on a previous launch. Nam Sung-wook based his estimate on remarks made by Kim during his summit with then ROK President Kim Dae-jung in

2000. At that time, the DPRK leader said that Pyongyang had spent between $200 million and $300 million to launch what it called the "Kwangmyongsong-1" satellite in 1998, according to Nam.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA DEPLOYS FIGHTER JET TO GUARD ROCKET: OFFICIALS", Seoul, 2009/04/02) reported that the ROK has deployed a fleet of MiG-23 fighter jets to apparently guard against any foreign attempt to intercept its rocket, ROK officials said Thursday. "We are closely monitoring the movement of the jets," an ROK Air Force commander, who declined to be named, said by phone.

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2. US on DPRK Missile Program

Reuters ("U.S. SAYS TO TURN TO U.N. IF NORTH KOREA LAUNCHES MISSILE", London, 2009/04/01) reported that the United States will respond to any DPRK missile launch by raising the matter in the U.N. Security Council, a U.S. official said on Wednesday. The U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity on the sidelines of a G20 meeting in London, said Washington would react if the DPRK launched a missile. "The president made clear we are deeply concerned about the prospective missile launch by the North Koreans ... That this is provocative to the region and contrary to U.N. Security Council resolutions ... There will be a reaction to it."

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3. Japan on DPRK Missile Test

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO EXTEND SANCTIONS ON N KOREA BY 1 YEAR INSTEAD OF 6 MONTHS", 2009/04/01) reported that the Japanese government plans to extend its sanctions against the DPRK that are set to expire April 13 by a year instead of the current six months if Pyongyang launches a ballistic missile, government sources said. The doubling of the extension period will be formalized at a cabinet meeting Friday with the aim of sending a message of protest to the DPRK about its plan to launch a rocket carrying what it claims to be a satellite, according to the sources.

Agence France Presse (Park Chan-Kyong, "N.KOREA VOWS TO ATTACK JAPAN IF ROCKET INTERCEPTED", Seoul, 2009/04/02) reported that the DPRK military threatened on Thursday to attack "major targets" in Japan if Tokyo tries to shoot down its satellite. "If Japan recklessly 'intercepts' the DPRK 's satellite for peaceful purposes, the KPA will mercilessly deal deadly blows not only at the already deployed intercepting means but at major targets," said a statement from the Korean People's Army (KPA).

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4. Australia & ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "LEE, RUDD SAY NORTH KOREAN ROCKET A THREAT TO WORLD PEACE", London, 2009/04/01) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak and Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd called on the DPRK Wednesday to scrap its plan to launch a missile, saying it will seriously undermine world peace even if the launch is to put a satellite into orbit. "Noting North

Korea's firing of a long-range missile will be a threat to peace and stability in Northeast Asia, the two heads of state agreed to cooperate in drawing up countermeasures by the international community," ROK's presidential office said of a summit between the two leaders.

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5. DPRK Detention of Journalists

Agence French Presse ("JOURNOS 'FACE 10 YEARS' JAIL IN N KOREA'", Seoul, 2009/04/01) reported that an international media freedom group has urged the DPRK to drop plans to put two detained US reporters on trial, saying they face up to 10 years of forced labour if convicted. Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF, Reporters Without Borders) said on Wednesday it was "by no means clear" that the two women were on DPRK territory when they were detained by the DPRK's border guards on March 17. RSF said it had been told by "several sources" on the PRC side of the frontier that the DPRK's border guards probably crossed the river while Ling and Lee were filming on the PRC bank.

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6. DPRK Defectors

Associated Press ("REPORT: 3 NKOREANS IN CHINA DEFECT TO SKOREA", Seoul, 2009/04/02) reported that the ROK's Kyunghyang Sinmun said Thursday the wife of a top DPRK trade official in the PRC has defected to the ROK along with her children. The woman, identified only by her family name, Ri, and the two children sought asylum in the ROK Embassy in Singapore and arrived in Seoul about a month ago, it said, citing an unidentified ruling party official. The ROK's spy agency denied the reports, and the Foreign Ministry said it could not confirm them, citing security concerns.

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7. Inter-Korean Athletics

Bloomberg (Stuart Biggs, "SOUTH KOREA BEATS NORTH KOREA 1-0 IN SOCCER WORLD CUP QUALIFIER", Seoul, 2009/04/01) reported that the ROK beat the DPRK 1-0 today in a qualifying game for soccer's World Cup. Kim Chi Woo got the winner in the 87th minute at the Seoul World Cup Stadium as the ROK replaced its opponent at the top of Group 2 in Asia. It was the fourth qualifier in a year between neighbors separated by the most fortified border in the world as they compete for a place at next year's tournament in South Africa. The last three encounters ended in draws.

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8. ROK at the G20 Summit

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "S. KOREAN PRESIDENT SEEKS SUPPORT FOR OPEN TRADE, N. KOREAN POLICY", London, 2009/04/01) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak continued to seek support for an anti-protectionist accord Wednesday ahead of the G-20 economic summit while

also pushing for a unified front against the DPRK's suspected missile launch. The ROK president has scheduled bilateral summit talks, including Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso whom he met on Wednesday. He will have his first one-on-one meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama on Thursday, shortly before the start of the G-20 summit. The bilateral meetings, according to ROK officials accompanying the president here, will give Lee a chance to seek support for his call for a "stand-still" on trade policy.

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9. ROK Satellite Launch

Chosun Ilbo ("S. KOREA PREPARES ITS OWN SATELLITE LAUNCH", 2009/04/01) reported that the Korea Meteorological Administration is preparing to launch a meteorological satellite to improve its capacity to gather weather information. The KMA, which has often been criticized for the haphazardness of its forecasts, on Tuesday said the stationary communication, ocean and meteorological satellite (COMS) will be carried into orbit by an Ariane V Rocket from the European space center in French Guiana in November. If the satellite is successfully launched, the ROK will be the seventh country in the world that possesses a stationary meteorological satellite.

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10. ROK Nuclear Power

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL SEEKS TO EXPORT NUCLEAR REACTORS", 2009/04/01) reported that the ROK is seeking to export nuclear reactors developed by local companies through a joint venture with a leading British engineering firm, the government said yesterday. The joint venture between the state-run Korea Electric Power Corp., Korea Gas Corp., Korea Development Bank and Britain's AMEC engineering group will pave the way for ROK firms to win overseas power plant projects, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said. They will also be able to develop oil and gas deposits.

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11. ROK Military

Dong-A Ilbo ("F-16 FIGHTER JET CRASHES IN YELLOW SEA", 2009/04/01) reported that an ROK F-16 fighter jet crashed into the Yellow Sea about 40 kilometers west of Taean County, South Chungcheong Province at 12:20 p.m. yesterday on a routine training mission. The two pilots ejected safely. The Air Force suspended all flights of its aircraft after the accident. The plane took off from an airfield in Seosan, South Chungcheong Province, at 11:50 a.m. and crashed in the Yellow Sea, according to the Air Force.

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12. US-ROK Free Trade Agreement

Reuters ("OBAMA WANTS PROGRESS ON SOUTH KOREA FREE TRADE: OFFICIAL", London,

2009/04/02) reported that U.S. President Barack Obama told ROK President Lee Myung-bak on Thursday that he wants to make progress on a free trade deal between the two countries, a U.S. official said. "President Obama said that he understood there were difficulties on both sides on moving forward, but he said that he does want to make progress and staff should discuss how to move forward," the official said after the two leaders met on the sidelines of a G20 economic crisis summit in London. Obama also invited Lee to visit Washington for talks in mid-June, the official said.

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13. US-Japan Security Alliance

Kyodo News ("DEFENSE MINISTRY REPORT TO OKINAWA PREF. BACKS GOV'T PLAN ON U.S. BASE", Naha, 2009/04/01) reported that the Defense Ministry's regional bureau in Okinawa on Wednesday submitted to the prefectural government a preliminary environmental assessment report endorsing the central government's plan to build a U.S. military airfield in the coastal area of Nago in Japan's southernmost prefecture. Despite the Okinawa Defense Bureau's report, the prefectural government is expected to continue pressing for repositioning the airfield's runways further offshore to reduce the effects on local residents.

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14. Japan Politics

Mainichi Daily News ("ASO HINTS AT LOWER HOUSE DISSOLUTION IF DPJ OPPOSES SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET", 2009/04/01) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso hinted that he may dissolve the House of Representatives for a snap general election if the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) that controls the House of Councillors with other opposition parties opposes a supplementary budget draft for fiscal 2009 and relevant bills. "I wonder how the DPJ will respond to the supplementary budget. If it opposes the budget draft, I'll decide whether to wait for 60 days (legally required) before putting relevant bills to a second vote, or call an election," Aso told a news conference.

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15. Sino-US Relations

The Associated Press (Martin Crutsinger, "US SAYS IT WILL CUT FREQUENCY OF CHINA TALKS", 2009/04/01) reported that the Obama administration said Wednesday it will continue high-level talks with the PRC started under the Bush administration, but will only hold one per year while expanding the scope beyond economics to foreign policy. Announcing the change, Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the first meeting in the new administration will take place this summer in Washington.

Reuters ("CHINA, U.S. TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS", London, 2009/04/01) reported that the United States and PRC agreed in talks between presidents Barack Obama and Hu Jintao to resume discussions about human rights as soon as possible, the White House said on

Wednesday. In the course of the first meeting between the two men, Hu also stressed the PRC's commitment to strengthen macroeconomic control and expand domestic demand, the White House said in a statement. They also agreed to work together to renew world economic growth and strengthen the financial system.

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16. Sino-Japanese Environmental Cooperation

Xinhua News ("SENIOR CPC OFFICIAL CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING SINO-JAPANESE ENVIRONMENTAL CO-OP", Kawasaki, 2009/04/01) reported that Li Changchun, a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC), called on the PRC and Japan to enhance cooperation on environmental protection. Li, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, visited Kawasaki, a city in the south of Tokyo, and talked with several local entrepreneurs.

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17. PRC-Japan Civil Society Environmental Cooperation

Xinhua News ("CHINA, JAPAN LAUNCH FOREST PROJECT TO PROTECT NORTH CHINA'S COASTAL ENVIRONMENT", 2009/04/01) reported that Greening Foundations of the PRC and Japan launched a forest project aiming at protecting coastal environment in Tianjin Municipality, the biggest port city in north PRC, an official of China Greening Foundation said. The project is jointly launched by Japan's Greening Association and funded by Sino-Japan Greening Communication Fund (Obuchi Fund). It is the the PRC's third project of this kind financed by the Fund, the official said. A 200-meter-wide and 10 kilometer-long "green belt" will be built in the city, the official said. Some 50,000 trees will be planted in an area of 40 hectares in the first phase of the project, the official said.

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18. Sino-French Relations

Agence French Presse ("SARKOZY TO MEET HU AS FRANCE AND CHINA MEND FENCES", Paris, 2009/04/01) reported that France's President Nicolas Sarkozy is to meet his PRC counterpart Hu Jintao in London on the sidelines of the G20 summit , officials said Wednesday, as both powers moved to heal a rift over Tibet . A French diplomat initially said the meeting would take place on Wednesday as world leaders gathered in London, but government spokesman Luc Chatel later told reporters that the bilateral talks would more likely be held Thursday. Separately, both the French and PRC foreign ministries announced that Paris and Beijing had agreed to renew "high level contacts" and the countries' "strategic dialogue" at an appropriate time.

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19. PRC Military

Reuters ("CHINA GENERAL TELLS TROOPS PARTY TRUMPS STATE", Beijing, 2009/04/01) reported that the PRC's military must be loyal first and foremost to the ruling Communist Party rather than the state, a senior general wrote in a piece, stressing politics even as the armed forces seek to modernize. Li Jinai, a member of the powerful Central Military Commission and head of the People's Liberation Army's General Political Department, wrote in April's Party journal Seeking Truth that politics would not be sacrificed to modernization. "The Chinese Communist Party is the leadership core of the cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, and maintaining the Party's absolute leadership is our military's political priority," Li said.

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20. PRC Internet Censorship

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ORDERS TIGHTENED INTERNET CONTROLS", Beijing, 2009/03/02) reported that the PRC issued new rules on Thursday cracking down on the posting of "harmful" political or religious videos online. The rules ban online videos that harm national stability, "instigate hatred between ethnic groups " or "maliciously disparage" the nation's police or armed forces, a notice on the government's main website said.

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21. PRC Earthquake

BBC News ("CHINESE QUAKE ACTIVIST ARRESTED", Sichuan, PRC, 2009/04/01) reported that PRC police have arrested a man who was investigating whether poor construction caused schools to collapse during last year's massive earthquake. The detention of Tan Zuoren is part of a crackdown in Sichuan province just weeks ahead of the first anniversary of the quake, a human rights group said. The magnitude-8.0 earthquake left about 88,000 people dead or missing, and five million homeless. Tan Zuoren had asked internet users and people who lost their children in the quake to help to compile a detailed database of the victims.

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22. PRC Public Health

The Seattle Times ("GATES FOUNDATION LAUNCHES 3RD INITIATIVE IN CHINA", 2009/04/01) reported that the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is launching its third major initiative in the PRC, a $33 million partnership with the PRC government to fight an epidemic of tuberculosis and stem the spread of drug-resistant strains. The new program aims to show that with better diagnosis, streamlined treatment regimens and improved patient monitoring, the PRC can control a disease that currently afflicts 4.5 million of its people and kills more than 200,000 a year.

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III. ROK Report

23. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Tongilnews ("US-DPRK BILATERAL TALK AFTER THE SATELLITE LAUNCH, WILL PRESIDENT LEE CHANGE HIS POLICIES?", 2009/04/02) reported that at a “Last Minute Forum before DPRK’s Satellite Launch,” held yesterday by Lee Junghee of the Democratic Labor Party, experts worried that the Lee Myung-bak administration will eventually lead the way to problem solving through US-DPRK relations, while excluding ROK from the matter. Many point out that Lee administration’s true nature actually hasn’t changed at all because though President Lee declared his opposition ti military countermeasures to DPRK’s rocket launch, after this incident, he is instead trying to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). There are claims on one side that the ROK and Japan will have no other choice than to follow the relations change between the US and DPRK.

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24. U.S. Policy toward DPRK

Yonhap News ("PROSPECTS OF SUDDEN BETTERMENT IN US-DPRK RELATIONS AFTER THE ROCKET LAUNCH", 2009/04/02) reported that Han S. Park, professor at the University of Georgia, stated that “the DPRK is preparing to launch its satellite for domestic policy reasons, not because of relations with the ROK or the US.” He added that “there is possibility of sudden betterment in US-DPRK relation after the satellite launch.” Professor Park, who went to Pyongyang in late March, said that “the DPRK is prepared to have talks with the US for a betterment in US-DPRK relation after the satellite launch.” He assessed that US-DPRK relations will suddenly change followed by a visit to DPRK by Stephen Bosworth, US special representative for DPRK policy. He also predicted that the reporters held by DPRK will face trials then, and based on the improvement of US-DPRK relations, will be released.

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25. DPRK Missile

Ohmynews ("KIM JONGIL LOSES WEIGHT AFTER A HEALTHY DIET", 2009/04/02) wrote that while a recently released photo of Kim Jongil, the leader of DPRK, who has had a great weight loss, caused much discussion, Nam Sungwook, Chief at the Institute for National Security Strategy, a government-run research institute under National Intelligence Service, stated that the weight loss “seems to be a result of a healthy diet.” He also described that the relations between ROK and DPRK are “hitting the ground,” and predicted that they will get better after the US-DPRK relation improves. Regarding the DPRK’s report to prosecute the US reporters, Nam said that “DPRK would want Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, to come to DPRK and bring back the girls.”

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