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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "US TEAM TO VERIFY NK'S PLUTONIUM, NUCLEAR WARHEADS", Seoul, 2008/04/21) reported that the United States is asking the DPRK to disclose how much plutonium it has produced and how many nuclear warheads it has made, a diplomatic source here said Monday. Pyongyang accepted the request in principle, the source said on condition of anonymity. A team of U.S. officials and nuclear experts, led by Sung Kim, director of the Korean Affairs office at the U.S. State Department, is scheduled to visit Pyongyang Tuesday to discuss details of the declaration. The team arrived in Seoul Monday evening and is to make an overland trip by car to Pyongyang, a Foreign Ministry official said.

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2. US, ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

BBC News ("US AND S KOREA HOPEFUL ON N KOREA", Camp David, 2008/04/19) reported that US President George W Bush and ROK President Lee Myung-bak said Saturday they are still hopeful progress can be made in eliminating the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. "We need persistent patience, ladies and gentlemen," Lee said. "It's difficult to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons programs, but it is not impossible." Bush stated, "We've yet to come to the stage where he [DPRK leader Kim Jong-il] has made a full declaration. And so we'll wait and see what he says and then we'll make a decision about our obligations depending upon whether or not we're convinced that there is a solid and full declaration, and whether or not there is a way to verify whether or not he's going to do what he says he's going to do."

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3. DPRK Defectors

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS SEND LEAFLETS HOME", Ganghwa Island, 2008/04/19) reported that group of DPRK defectors sent helium balloons carrying some 60,000 leaflets condemning DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to their homeland from an ROK island on Saturday. The leaflets also contained Bible verses as well as \$1 bills in an apparent attempt to lure DPRK citizens into picking them up. "Our purpose is to urge North Koreans to bring down the dictatorship with their hands," said Park Sang-hak, the organizer of the campaign.

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4. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "US TROOP CUT FREEZE MAY BURDEN S. KOREAN TAXPAYERS",

Seoul, 2008/04/21) reported that the pause in the reduction of U.S. forces and high-tech weaponry is expected to bolster security on the Korean Peninsula, Seoul officials and defense experts said, Monday. "The decision on the pause in the reduction of U.S. forces in Korea (USFK) shows that Washington places higher emphasis on the USFK's role in the region than it did in 2004," a researcher of the state-funded Korea Institute for Defense Analyses said on condition of anonymity. But critics see a bigger financial burden and possible deployment of ROK forces to other parts of the world where the United States faces conflict.

Joongang Ilbo (Choi Sang-yeon, Jung Ha-won, "BUSH: US TROOPS TO STAY PUT", Camp David, 2008/04/21) reported that U.S. President George W. Bush said Sunday that Washington will halt its plan to cut the current U.S. military presence in the ROK by one-third and will instead keep the current level of 28,500. Bush also promised Seoul the same level of access to U.S. weapons as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

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5. US-ROK Free Trade Agreement

Korea Times (Kim Yon-se, "PRESIDENT EXPECTS US DEMOCRATS TO BACK FTA", Tokyo, 2008/04/21) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak said he believes that U.S. Democratic presidential hopefuls are opposing ratification of the free trade agreement (FTA) with the ROK due to the upcoming presidential election. "Obama and Clinton are opposing the FTA because of the presidential campaign and election," he said. "They will eventually support the FTA after the election in November." Lee also said that Max Baucus, the Democratic head of the Senate Finance Committee, will become a strong supporter as Seoul has accepted the beef sector demand.

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6. ROK-US Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, U.S. SIGN MOU ON VISA WAIVER", Washington, 2008/04/21) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding with U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on allowing ROK citizens visa-free travel to the U.S. "After the two countries finish legal procedures, Korean people will be able to travel to the U.S. without visas soon," Yu said at the event.

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7. ROK-Japan Relations

Reuters (Chisa Fujioka, "S.KOREA, JAPAN LOOK TO FUTURE, PLAN TO TALK TRADE", Tokyo, 2008/04/21) reported that President Lee Myung-bak said on Monday that history should not be an obstacle to improved ties with Japan. "It is a plus for the prosperity of both countries and for the peace and prosperity of North Asia for Japan and South Korea to walk together into the 21st century," he added. Lee and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda agreed at a summit in Tokyo to open working-level talks aimed at restarting stalled negotiations on a free trade deal and to cooperate closely in efforts to end the DPRK's nuclear arms program.

Korea Times (Kim Yon-se, "KOREA, JAPAN TO EXPAND YOUTH EXCHANGES", Tokyo, 2008/04/21) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda agreed Monday to expand youth exchanges. They shared the view that a "working holiday program" is playing a great role in strengthening mutual understanding and friendship among the younger generation. Each country will increase the number of participants in the program to 7,200 per year by 2009, and 10,000 by 2012, the leaders agreed.

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8. PRC-Japan Relations

Asahi Shimbun ("AGREEMENT ON GAS FIELDS NOT LIKELY IN TIME FOR HU'S VISIT", Tokyo, 2008/04/21) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi was not optimistic about the PRC and Japan reaching an agreement on joint development of gas fields in the East China Sea in time for President Hu Jintao's visit to Japan starting May 6. "Japan and China have agreed to continue discussions," Yang told The Asahi Shimbun in an interview in Tokyo on Saturday. "We want to make efforts to reach a resolution that will be beneficial to both sides as soon as possible." "It will be beneficial to both sides to announce in an appropriate manner the common understanding that has been achieved through the visits of the highest leaders of the two countries," Yang said. "If a specific common understanding is reached, then an announcement can be made at that time."

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9. Sino-Japanese Relations

Yomiuri (Hiroyuki Sugiyama, "TORCH PROTESTS COULD HURT JAPAN'S TIES WITH CHINA", Beijing, 2008/04/20) reported that if the Olympic torch relay is disrupted in Japan, anti-Japan sentiment might increase in the PRC, observers have said. "Reaction [in the PRC to protests in Japan] would be huge in comparison to the reaction against protests in France," an international issue expert said. A man in his 30s who runs a Web site said, "Chinese people won't forgive [Japan] if the Japanese do the same things as the Americans and Europeans, such as making distorted reports about the Tibet issue."

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10. US-Taiwan Relations

Associated Press (Debby Wu, "US MAY POST MARINES AT OFFICE IN TAIWAN", Taipei, 2008/04/19) reported that the United States may post Marines at the American Institute in Taiwan, its unofficial embassy. A State Department advertisement in the English-language Taipei Times newspaper called for contractors to construct quarters for Marine security guards at a new U.S. compound in Taipei. Political scientist Alexander Huang of Taipei's Tamkang University noted, "With the Marine guards in place, the U.S. would be treating its Taipei facility just like its other embassies and consulates despite the lack of diplomatic relations." The PRC is likely to protest the move, Huang said, as "Beijing is very sensitive to diplomatic issues."

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11. PRC Anti-Western Protests

Associated Press (Tini Tran, "CHINA URGES CALM AFTER ANTI-WESTERN DEMONSTRATIONS", Beijing, 2008/04/21) reported that anti-Western protests flared in several PRC cities Sunday as people vented anger over pro-Tibet demonstrations along the Olympic torch relay. A front-page editorial in the People's Daily newspaper, the official mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party, called for calm, urging people to cherish patriotism "while expressing it in a rational way." Barry Sautman, a political scientist at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said the government "want to wrap them up as soon as possible so they can go on to restore the image of China as welcoming to people around the world."

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II. Announcement

12. New Nautilus Briefing Book

("NAUTILUS LAUNCHES GLOBAL NUCLEAR FUTURES BRIEFING BOOK", Seoul, 2008/04/21) The Nautilus Institute is pleased to announce the publication of the Global Nuclear Futures Briefing Book. The Global Nuclear Futures Briefing Book aims to inform the debate over the future of nuclear power by providing expert analysis from a variety of perspectives, pro- and anti-nuclear, government and non-government. It covers a variety of technical and policy issues, as well as country-specific topics. The book currently includes information on Australia; Japan; uranium mining and enrichment; spent fuel and nuclear waste; the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP); and nuclear power and climate change. More countries and topics will be added every month. The Briefing Book can be found here:

<http://www.globalcollab.org/Nautilus/energy-security/nuclear-briefing-book/global-nuclear-futures-briefing-book>

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