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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA TORPEDOED SOUTH'S NAVY SHIP: REPORT", 2010/04/22) reported that the ROK's military believes a torpedo fired from a DPRK submarine sank its navy ship last month, based on intelligence gathered jointly with the United States, a news report said. The military's intelligence arm sent the report of "certain" DPRK involvement to the presidential Blue House soon after the incident, Yonhap quoted a high-ranking military source as saying. "North Korean submarines are all armed with heavy torpedoes with 200 kg (441 lb) warheads," the military source was quoted as saying by Yonhap. "It is the military intelligence 's assessment that the North attacked with a heavy torpedo."

The Associated Press ("REPORT: S. KOREA HAD BEEN WARNED OF N. KOREAN SUBMARINE ATTACK", 2010/04/22) reported that military intelligence officers warned earlier this year that the DPRK was preparing a suicide submarine attack on a ROK vessel in retaliation for an earlier defeat in a sea battle, a newspaper said. The Chosun Ilbo newspaper reported the Korea Defense Intelligence Command alerted the navy weeks ahead of the ship sinking that the DPRK was preparing underwater suicide teams in mini-submarines to attack the ROK. The attack preparations were aimed at retaliating against the South over its defeat in a naval skirmish in November, the paper said.

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2. DPRK Communications

CommsUpdate ("GOVT TO PRODUCE OWN HANDSETS AS DEMAND FOR MOBILE PHONES RISES", 2010/04/20) reported that Tokyo-based newspaper Chosun Sinbo has reported that mobile subscriptions in the DPRK are continuing to rise steadily and could reach 600,000 by the end of the

year. The pro-DPRK newspaper added that the number of cellular customers in the communist state currently stands at over 120,000, with wireless infrastructure reportedly present in more than half of the country's cities. Services were launched in December 2008 in the capital Pyongyang, but the network has since been expanded to include the main road running up to the northern city of Hyangsan, with the company currently working on expanding services nationwide.

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3. PRC on Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("CHINESE ENVOY IN SEOUL URGES TALKS BETWEEN TWO KOREAS", 2010/04/22) reported that the PRC's top envoy to the ROK called on both the ROK and DPRK to engage in dialogue as "brothers" for peace on the peninsula as suspicions grow in Seoul that the DPRK may be involved in the deadly sinking of a ROK warship. Describing the ship's sinking as an "unfortunate" incident, Amb. Zhang Xinsen stressed that maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula "will best serve the interest of every related country."

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4. PRC, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua News ("CHINA, RUSSIA DISCUSS RESUMPTION OF SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2010/04/22) reported that the PRC and Russia have agreed to work with all relevant parties for an early resumption of the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said. Russian envoy to the six-party talks, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin met with PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, Jiang said. Jiang said the two sides agreed that advancing the six-party talks was in the common interests of all parties concerned, noting the talks are conducive to peace and stability in Northeast Asia.

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5. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA URGES SWIFT RESUMPTION OF SIX-PARTY TALKS ON N.KOREA NUKE ISSUE", 2010/04/22) reported that Russia has called for a rapid resumption of six-party negotiations on the DPRK nuclear weapons program, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said. "We call for resuming the six-party talks on the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula on the basis which was agreed in September, 2005…We hope that other participants will look into the swift resumption of these negotiations," Lavrov said. Lavrov made the statement after the DPRK said it would not abandon its nuclear weapons program, but was ready to take part in non-proliferation efforts together "with other nuclear weapons states." Commenting on the DPRK statement, Lavrov said: "We should not be guided by statements which may have been made for this or another reason, but we should be guided by the agreement we have reached."

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6. DPRK-Iran Relations

Xinhua News ("DPRK, IRAN REAFFIRM FRIENDSHIP DURING GATHERING IN PYONGYANG", 2010/04/22) reported that Choe Thae Bok, chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly of the DPRK, attended a reception held at the Iranian embassy to the DPRK, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. In his speech at the reception, Iranian Vice Foreign Minister Mohammad Ali Fathollahi said friendship between the two countries has grown stronger in politics, economy and culture. The two sides on Thursday signed a 2010-2012 plan for cultural and scientific exchanges.

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7. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL 'HAMPERED ITS OWN ABILITY TO SPY ON N.KOREA' ", 2010/04/22) reported that Unification Minister Hyun In-taek admitted that the fiber optic cables the ROK provided have made it more difficult to spy on the DPRK. Hyun was answering a question from a lawmaker at a session of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Committee. "I understand that there is a problem or a loophole" in ROK's intelligence-gathering ability, he said. "I suspect that some of the 45 km-long fiber optic cables may have been diverted to lay a communications network between frontline Army units in the North," Grand National Party lawmaker Chung Jin-suk said.

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8. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Times ("SOKCHO SEES TRADE WITH N.KOREA CONTINUE DESPITE TENSIONS", 2010/04/22) reported that amidst escalating tensions between the two Koreas after the sinking of the Navy corvette Cheonan and the arrest of two DPRK would-be assassins, DPRK ships continue to frequent Sokcho Port on the east coast almost daily. Fishery products imported from the DPRK amount to a monthly average of 700 tons. Last year alone, 9,271 tons of fishery products worth W16.7 billion (US$1=W1,108) came into Sokcho from the DPRK. From January to March this year, it was 2,520 tons worth W5.3 billion. With the increase, DPRK ships arrive in Sokcho almost every day.

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREA SEIZES S.KOREAN ASSETS AT MOUNTAIN RESORT", Seoul, 2010/04/23) reported that the DPRK announced Friday it had seized ROK-owned buildings at Mt. Kumgang resort. "The situation has reached such extreme phase that it is at the crossroads of a war or peace, much less thinking of the resumption of the tour," a DPRK state agency in charge of tours said in a statement published by state media. "It is quite natural that we can no longer show generosity and tolerance to the south side under this situation," it said. "The puppet group went (to) the lengths of crying out for the total severance of the North-South relations and trumpeting about 'not ruling out a war' while deliberately linking the sinking of its warship to the DPRK ," it said. "The confiscated real estates will be put into the possession of the DPRK or handed over to new businessmen according to legal procedures ," it said.

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9. ROK Military Capability

Xinhua News ("S. KOREA TO BEEF UP MILITARY STRENGTH ALONG WEST COAST", 2010/04/22) reported that ROK military authorities plan to beef up military strength along the country's west coast, local media reported. Seoul's defense ministry spokesman Won Tae-jae said the ministry plans to seek measures to improve military presence in five islands along the west coast. The military authorities are considering deploying K-9 self- propelled howitzers and strengthening a surveillance radar system there, Won reportedly said.

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

Joongang Ilbo ("'WE DIDN'T ASK U.S. TO POSTPONE OPERATIONAL CONTROL TRANSFER'", 2010/04/22) reported that the government firmly denied yesterday that Seoul and Washington have agreed to postpone the transfer of wartime operational control. "Some media reported that President Lee Myung-bak and President Barack Obama of the United States discussed the wartime operational control during the recent Nuclear Summit in Washington, but the reports are not true," the Blue House said yesterday in a press release. "The two countries have never officially discussed the issue." Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan also denied the report before lawmakers yesterday. "The two presidents discussed the Cheonan's sinking, but the report about the delay in the wartime control transfer is not true," Yu said.

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11. ROK-Kazakstan Energy Cooperation

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, KAZAKHSTAN SEEK 'SUBSTANTIAL COOPERATION' ON NUCLEAR ENERGY", 2010/04/22) reported that leaders of the ROK and Kazakhstan agreed to work toward "substantial cooperation" for the development of nuclear energy, Seoul's presidential office said. President Lee Myung-bak and his Kazakh counterpart, Nursultan A. Nazarbayev, held a summit in Seoul and shared an understanding on "great potential for cooperation" in the atomic power sector between the two countries, Cheong Wa Dae said in a press release. They noted that Kazakhstan is the world's leading producer of uranium, which is used as fuel for atomic power generation, while the ROK is a main consumer.

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12. ROK Environment

Korea Times ("LEE CALLS FOR STEPS FOR 'WATER SECURITY'", 2010/04/22) reported that President Lee Myung-bak called on countries to take preemptive measures to address "water security,'' saying he expects more than 40 percent of nations to potentially suffer chronic water shortages in just two decades. Lee said the government's bold project to refurbish the country's four major rivers is the core of his Green New Deal that will spur economic growth and help protect the

environment at the same time. "We've launched the river refurbishment project to brace for the future,'' he said.

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13. ROK Space Program

Chosun Ilbo ("NEXT LAUNCH ATTEMPT FOR KOREAN SPACE ROCKET ON JUNE 9", 2010/04/22) reported that the ROK will attempt another launch of the Korea Space Launch Vehicle-1, named Naro, on June 9 after the first ended in failure last year. Kim Young-sik of the Ministry of Education, Science and Education said, "We've set the date for the second launch of Naro on June 9. If it's delayed due to the weather, we'll set another date between June 9 and 19."

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14. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("HATOYAMA SAYS HE WILL SEEK REPLACEMENT FACILITY FOR FUTEMMA", 2010/04/22) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama suggested that he will seek a replacement facility for the US Marines' Futemma Air Station in Okinawa , rather than just partially relocating a helicopter unit's exercises, to get the base site returned to the Japanese side. During a debate at the plenary session of the House of Representatives, Hatoyama said, "Realistically speaking, it's impossible to get (the Futemma base) returned without a replacement facility."

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15. Japan Politics

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S MOST POPULAR POLITICIAN BOLTS CONSERVATIVE PARTY", 2010/04/22) reported that a popular former Japanese health minister officially left his crippled conservative opposition party , with plans to lead another party ahead of upper house elections slated for July. Yoichi Masuzoe, 61, became the latest defector from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which lost its half-century grip on power in lower house elections last year to the centre-left Democratic Party of Japan . "Many things happened, but I want to look ahead to make Japanese politics better," said Masuzoe as he left the party headquarters.

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16. Japanese Whaling

Kyodo ("IWC PROPOSES ALLOWING JAPAN TO HUNT 120 WHALES A YEAR IN COSTAL [sic] WATERS ", London, 2010/04/23) reported that the chairman of the International Whaling Commission on Thursday proposed allowing Japan to hunt 120 minke whales a year in Japanese coastal waters for 10 years. The proposal also calls for cutting Japan's annual catch quota of minke whales in the Antarctic Ocean to 400 over the next five years, and gradually reducing the quota to 200 over the subsequent five years.

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17. Sino-Russian Economic Cooperation

Xinhua News ("CHINA, RUSSIA TO FURTHER ADVANCE ECONOMIC COOPERATION", 2010/04/22) reported that o fficials from the PRC and Russia agreed to fully tap the potential of bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries. In talks with PRC Ambassador to Russia Li Hui, Russian Industry and Trade Minister Viktor Khristenko said Russia and the PRC, as neighboring countries of strong economic complementarity and collectively tasked with economic restructuring and modernization, share a broad prospect for economic and trade cooperation. Russia is willing to adopt effective measures along with the PRC to further enhance bilateral economic cooperation, he said.

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18. PRC Nuclear Posture

Reuters ("CHINA MILITARY PAPER SPELLS OUT NUCLEAR ARMS STANCE", 2010/04/22) reported that the PRC must have a limited nuclear "second strike" force to deter foes from threatening it with atomic weapons, the nation's main military newspaper said, in a rare account of Beijing's nuclear strategy. The commentary in the official Liberation Army Daily comes during intensifying atomic diplomacy -- after a nuclear security summit hosted by U.S. President Barack Obama and before an international conference in May about the future of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Retired People's Liberation Army Major General Xu Guangyu said in the newspaper commentary that China wanted a minimal nuclear deterrent and would avoid any arms race.

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19. PRC Earthquake Response

Associated Press (Tini Tran, "CHINA SAYS MONKS ADVISED TO LEAVE QUAKE AREA", Beijing, 2010/04/23) reported that the PRC State Council said in a statement Friday that Buddhist monks had been advised to leave an earthquake zone in a Tibetan region because specialized personnel were needed for reconstruction work. "Now it's the phase for epidemic prevention and reconstruction and (it) requires specialized personnel to start their work," it said. "It would bring more difficulties to disaster relief work if lots of unprofessional personnel were at the scene." Though "we fully recognize contribution of monks who came to the disaster zone from other areas, in order to ensure the scientific effectiveness and order of rescue work, we advised them to return to their monasteries," the statement said.

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II. PRC Report

20. PRC Civil Society

China News Net ("CCTV DISASTER RELIEF PARTY RAISES 2.175 BLN RMB", 2010/04/22) reported that CCTV hold a disaster relief party on Tuesday night, and raised totally 2.175 billion RMB for Qinghai earthquake disaster, which exceeded the fund amount (1.514 billion RMB) raised in 2008 for Wenchan Earthquake.

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21. PRC Environment

Guangzhou Daily ("GUANGZHOU TO CHARGE LIGHT POLLUTION FEE", 2010/04/22) reported that Guangzhou city is planning to charge a light pollution fee. If this can be implemented, then it will become China's first city which adopts an economic lever to regulate urban light pollution.

Jinghua Times ("BEIJING TO REWARD RESIDENTS USING WATER UNDER MINIMUM STANDARD", 2010/04/22) reported that Beijing Water Conservation Measures (Revised Draft) started to seek for public opinions on Tuesday. The draft specifies for the first time that resident's water use will adopt a progressive increase system, and at the same time, residents who using water under the minimum standard will get reward.

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22. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction

Jinghua Times ("QINGHAI PLANS FIVE YEARS FOR RECONSTRUCTION", 2010/04/22) reported that according to Qinhai Yushu disaster relief headquater Qinghai government plans to use five years for post-disaster reconstruction, sources from a news conference held by Qinhai Yushu Disaster Relief Headquarters on Wednesday. Now the work plan has been drafted and will be submitted to the State Council soon.

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