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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA CLOSE TO MAKING NUKE DECLARATION: MINISTER ", Seoul, 2008/04/23) reported that the "last work" on securing the DPRK's declaration of its nuclear activities is under way and six-nation negotiations could resume next month, the ROK's foreign minister said. "North Korea's nuclear declaration has been long delayed but the US team is conducting the last work in Pyongyang," the minister said in a speech. "If work is done as scheduled, I expect six-party talks to be held again within May so that the momentum can be maintained." Yonhap news agency said the US team would present a detailed list of data and other materials which the DPRK needs to present for verification of its plutonium stockpile.

Associated Press (Burt Herman, "NKOREA SAYS PROGRESS MADE IN NUCLEAR TALKS WITH US", Seoul, 2008/04/24) reported that the DPRK expressed optimism Thursday over talks this week with a U.S. delegation on its nuclear program. "The negotiations proceeded in a sincere and constructive manner and progress was made there," the DPRK Foreign Ministry said in a statement after a US delegation left Pyongyang. US State Department Korea Desk chair Sung Kim stated on arrival in Seoul, "I would just tell you that we had a good visit. We had a very substantive discussion."

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2. Alledged DPRK-Syrian Nuclear Cooperation

The Los Angeles Times (Paul Richter and Greg Miller, "CIA TO DESCRIBE NORTH KOREA-SYRIA NUCLEAR TIES", Washington, 2008/04/23) reported that CIA officials will tell Congress that the DPRK had been helping Syria build a plutonium-based nuclear reactor, a US official said, a disclosure that could touch off new resistance to the administration's plan to ease sanctions on Pyongyang. The CIA officials will tell lawmakers that they believe the reactor would have been capable of producing plutonium for nuclear weapons but was destroyed before it could do so, the U.S. official said. The CIA officials also will say that though U.S. officials have had concerns for years

about ties between the DPRK and Syria, it was not until last year that new intelligence convinced them that the suspicious facility under construction in a remote area of Syria was a nuclear reactor, the official said.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "MILITARY TO REINFORCE WATCH AGAINST N. KOREAN SPIES ", Seoul, 2008/04/23) reported that the ROK's defense intelligence agency will strengthen its efforts to round up widespread DPRK agents in the country, a ranking military intelligence official said. The officials at the intelligence command said the number of arrests of North Korean spies has remained steady over the years, but said reports of such incidents have become rare because the command had been gagged under the former liberal administrations of Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, both of whom sought to improve ties with the DPRK.

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4. DPRK Food Supply

Yonhap ("N.K. FACING 1.66-MLN-TON GRAIN SHORTAGE: U.N. AGENCY ", Seoul, 2008/04/23) reported that a UN relief agency has appealed for more international food aid for the DPRK, saying the impoverished country is 1.66 million tons short of the minimum it needs until this year's fall harvest. "With this low 2007 production, the cereal deficit for the 2007/2008 marketing year (November/October) is estimated at 1.66 million tons," said the report titled "Crop Prospects and Food Situation." The FAO said the country may again have to depend on external aid "as its capacity to import commercially remains limited by poor economic performance and the recent increase in world food prices." "By comparison to early 2007, current prices for both rice and wheat flour have doubled, while maize prices have also risen substantially," it said.

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5. Sino-DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("CHINA MARKS BRISK FOOD, OIL EXPORTS TO N. KOREA IN JAN.-MARCH ", Beijing, 2008/04/23) reported that the PRC, the DPRK's major food and oil supplier, exported 85 percent more cereals and almost three times more crude oil in January-March than a year earlier, PRC customs figures showed Wednesday. The boost in exports comes after the DPRK suffered the worst cereal harvest in recent years in 2007 and continues to face a chronic energy shortage.

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6. DPRK Exports to the US

Yonhap ("N.K. LIQUOR IMPORT ARRIVES IN NEW YORK ", Washington, 2008/04/23) reported that the first shipment of DPRK-made liquor to the US has arrived in New York and will go on sale as soon as it clears customs, the importer said Wednesday. Tang Gap-jeung, head of Tang's Liquor

Wholesale, which is in charge of U.S. distribution, told Yonhap that 1,660 boxes of Pyongyang Soju arrived Tuesday. Each box has 24 bottles of liquor made from corn, rice and glutinous rice flour.

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7. DPRK Military

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA HAS NEW AIR FORCE CHIEF: REPORT", 2008/04/23) reported that the DPRK has named a new head of its Army Air Force, the DPRK's official media was quoted as saying by Yonhpa News Agency. Colonel General Ri Byong-chol left for Beijing leading a military delegation as head of the Air Force, said the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Experts in Seoul said that this is the first confirmed report that the DPRK has switched the top officer of its Air Force.

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8. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREA LIKELY TO SEND POLICE TO AFGHANISTAN", 2008/04/23) reported that Cheong Wa Dae has tentatively decided to send dozens of police personnel to Afghanistan to train Afghan police troops at the request of the US, it was learned on Tuesday. The ROK police officers will reportedly train students at the Afghan police academy, but not carry out policing activities there. A senior official with the office of the senior presidential secretary for foreign affairs and security said, "For the time being we are not going to consider dispatching military troops (to Afghanistan), except police training personnel. But we're seeking common ground on which we can agree with the U.S. as to what role Korea might play there."

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9. US-ROK Security Alliance

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Sang-il, "U.S. SHIFTS TROOP POLICY TO ALLOW FOR 3-YEAR STAYS", Washington, 2008/04/23) reported that the United States Department of Defense plans to extend the minimum deployment period of its ROK-based personnel to three years from the current one year, U.S. sources said yesterday. And in another key change, the department will allow military personnel to live with their families during their ROK assignment. "Defense Secretary Robert Gates will discuss the changes with his Korean counterpart, Lee Sang-hee, when the two meet in Seoul in June," said a member of the diplomatic corps. The two men are scheduled to discuss ways to manage the strategic alliance between the two countries that was hammered out during their recent presidential summit.

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10. Japan Population

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN: WARNING OVER DECLINING WORK FORCE", 2008/04/23) reported that Japan's work force of 66.5 million people is set to shrink by more than one-third, to 42 million, by 2050 if the country fails to reverse a declining birthrate, the government said in a report.

The white paper outlined potential measures to address the labor problem, including earmarking \$15 billion to \$23 billion to encourage women to resume working after having children by improving child-care centers and making maternity leave more flexible.

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11. Japan Nuclear Plant

The Asahi Shimbun ("OMA MOX PLANT GETS NOD FROM MINISTRY", 2008/04/24) reported that the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry gave the go-ahead to construct the world's first MOX-only nuclear power plant, in Oma, Aomori Prefecture. The new plant could play a key role in Japan's nuclear fuel recycling policy. Plans call for the plant eventually to use only mixed-oxide (MOX) fuel, a blend of reprocessed plutonium and uranium. That objective is important because the plant would consume fuel from Japan's growing stockpile of plutonium. Construction of the advanced boiling-water reactor (ABWR), capable of generating 1.38 million kilowatts of electricity, will begin in May. J-Power hopes to begin operations at the plant in March 2012.

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12. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("SUPPORT RATE FOR FUKUDA PLUMMETS TO 25%", 2008/04/23) reported that the support rate for Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's Cabinet plunged to 25 percent, the lowest since his administration started in September, as recent policies angered older voters, an Asahi Shimbun survey showed. According to the survey, the disapproval rate for the Cabinet rose to 60 percent from 53 percent in the previous survey conducted on March 29 and 30. The 25-percent support rate registered in the latest survey is the first drop below 30 percent since July last year, when the rate for Shinzo Abe's Cabinet dropped to 26 percent after the Upper House election.

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13. Tibet Unrest

Washington Post (Jill Drew, "CHINA CHANGES COURSE, ADVOCATING TEMPERED RESPONSE TO ITS CRITICS", Beijing, 2008/04/23) reported that after weeks of expressing outrage at Western protests over Tibet and the Olympics, officials here have begun tempering their rhetoric in recent days and telling Chinese people to be "rational" about their response. In state media, PRC officials had called the protests in the United States and Europe "vile" and "blasphemy." On Tuesday, however, the state-run China Daily said the PRC "should be ready for criticism." "As the country becomes the locomotive of the world economy and plays a bigger part in global affairs, it draws more attention from the rest of the world," the paper said in an editorial.

Reuters ("U.S. URGES CHINA STOP CURSING THE DALAI LAMA AND TALK ", Washington, 2008/04/23) reported that the US urged the PRC to stop vilifying the Dalai Lama and instead talk to the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader in order to achieve peace and stability in troubled, PRC-ruled Tibet. "The Chinese government should seize the opportunity to talk to those Tibetans, represented by the Dalai Lama, who oppose violence and do not seek independence for Tibet," Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte told a U.S. Senate hearing. "Public vilification of the Dalai Lama will not

help defuse the situation," he said of the PRC's angry tide of statements since protests erupted across Tibet in March.

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14. PRC African Diplomacy

The Financial Times (Richard McGregor and Alec Russell, "AFRICAN PROTESTS REPEL ARMS SHIP", 2008/04/23) reported that a PRC ship carrying a cargo of arms for Zimbabwe may have to return home, Beijing conceded on Tuesday, as diplomatic, political and judicial pressure mounted across southern Africa to stop the consignment from reaching its destination. Since the ship arrived off the coast of South Africa last week, with crates of mortar shells, rocket-propelled grenades and AK-47 rounds bound for President Robert Mugabe's armed forces, a coalition of human rights groups, trade unions and politicians have united to block its progress. The dispute has threatened to embarrass the PRC, which is keen to avoid a further controversy in the wake of criticism of its record in Tibet, in the countdown to the Beijing Olympics.

Bloomberg (Winnie Zhu, "ANGOLA OVERTAKES SAUDI ARABIA AS BIGGEST OIL SUPPLIER TO CHINA", 2008/04/22) reported that Angola was the top supplier of crude oil to the PRC in the first quarter, ahead of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Oman and Russia as the world's second-biggest energy user boosted purchases to ease a domestic shortage. Angola exported 8.48 million metric tons of crude to the PRC in the three months ended March 31, about 688,000 barrels a day and 55 percent more than a year earlier, the Beijing-based Customs General Administration said today. Saudi Arabia shipped 8.18 million tons, a 38 percent increase.

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15. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA'S SUPREME COURT ISSUES JUDICIAL INTERPRETATION TO EASE DOCUMENT DELIVERY HURDLE ACROSS STRAIT ", Beijing, 2008/04/23) reported that the Supreme People's Court (SPC) of the PRC on Tuesday issued a judicial interpretation aiming to solve the problem of sending litigation documents between the mainland and Taiwan. The regulations on delivering civil bills of indictment regarding Taiwan residents, released on Tuesday, would take effect the next day. The difficulty in delivering litigation documents has become a bottleneck faced by courts on both sides. It's estimated that almost 80 percent of civil suits handled by mainland courts concerning Taiwanese could not reach relevant parties on the island.

Kyodo ("TAIWAN'S KMT AUTHORIZES TALKS WITH CHINA ON TRANSPORT LINKS ", Taipei, 2008/04/23) reported that Taiwan's leading opposition Nationalist Party (KMT) instructed its Vice Chairman Chiang Pin-kun to initiate negotiations with the PRC on establishing direct, cross-strait tourism, air and shipping links, on the eve of Chiang's departure for the PRC on a four-day trip. The KMT issued the "instruction" in a report publicized Wednesday after a meeting of the party's Central Standing Committee, which formulates KMT policy.

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16. PRC Energy Supply

News.Com.Au ("CHINA DOWN TO 12 DAYS WORTH OF COAL - REPORT", 2008/04/23) reported that the PRC only has enough coal for 12 days of consumption, three days less than a month ago, state media reported, sounding the alarm bells over the nation's most important source of energy. In certain parts of the PRC, such as densely populated Hebei province in the north, reserves are down to less than a week, Xinhua news agency reported, citing the China Electricity Regulatory Commission. In the period since early March, coal reserves have slumped by 12 per cent to 46.7 million tonnes, according to the commission.

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II. ROK Report

17. ROK-U.S. Relations

The Peace Foundation (Jo Sung-ryul, "IN ORDER FOR ROK-US SUMMIT TALK TO BE FRUITFUL", 2008/04/23) carried an article by the head of the new security research office of the Institute for National Security Strategy, who wrote that in order for this ROK-US summit talk to develop into a strategic alliance with substance and permanency, firstly, the Bush administration has no need to hasten because his term in office is soon over. Secondly, if there is no other option but to publicize the declaration for a strategic alliance with the Bush administration, the ROK should prepare the measures adequate for the reactions of neighboring nations concerning the promotion of the ROK-US alliance. Thirdly, the ROK government should not fall into a trap of value diplomacy. Although the promotion of ROK-US relations to strategic relations is desirable, detailed agreement and measures should be decided from the "national benefit" point of view.

The Peace Foundation (Baek Seung-Joo, "KOREA'S STRATEGIC VALUE MUST BE REFLECTED ON NEW ALLIANCE DECLARATION", 2008/04/23) carried an article by a researcher of the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, who wrote that the ROK government plans to publish a new strategic declaration that fits to the 21st century at the ROK-US summit talks to take place in Seoul July this year. In the 21st century strategic alliance, the strategic value of the special situation in Korea Peninsula as well as that of the US must be considered. To establish a peace structure in Korea Peninsular and to overcome the divided situation are the ROK's strategic value. Furthermore, the declaration must include the ROK's will to take a leading role in accomplishing and maintaining peace among Northeast Asian nations that neighboring nations can trust.

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18. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Pressian ("DJ: 'ONLY SUNSHINE CHANGES CHINA, VIETNAM, AND DPRK'", 2008/04/23) reported that former ROK President Kim Dae-Jung claimed that the sunshine policy is a universal principle that induces change not only in the DPRK but in other socialist nations. Former President Kim's emphasis on the Sunshine Policy asserts that exchange and cooperation, instead of military forces

and sanction, is the solution for the problems on a global level as a consideration for such a political situation. Noting the cases of old Russia and former members of the Soviet Union, Vietnam and the PRC, Kim emphasized "it is not the cold wind of cold war that unclothed the communist cape but the warm sunshine" and "the effectiveness of sunshine was proved not only in Korea but also at a global level."

Tongil News ("JUNG SAE-HYUN COMMENTS: 'LEE MYUNG-BAK ADMINISTRATION CAN ALSO GO BACK TO SUNSHINE POLICY'", 2008/04/23) reported that the former minister of National Unification, Jung Sae-hyun, commented that the Lee Myung-bak administration, just as the Bush administration followed an "Anything But Clinton" policy in its early days, is doing exactly the same regarding the policy of Roh Moo-hyun. Jung also said "I believe that, sooner or later, the Lee Myung-bak administration can go back to Sunshine Policy." He harshly criticized the political basis of current administration's anti-Sunshine policy and demanded "the government should not fall into logic of adversarial relations, obsessed with internal political investigations. It must go back to the cold-hearted logic of policy." Former minister Jung has also commented that the joint declaration for denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula accomplished after the conclusion of the 1991 inter-Korean basic agreement was the US's demand.

Pressian (Jung Chang-hyun, "ROK GOVERNMENT LOSES INFLUENCE EVEN IN THE SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2008/04/23) carried an article by an adjunct professor of Kookmin University, who wrote that the Lee Myung-bak administration recognizes the inter-Korean conversation for the last 10 years as a "scoop-and-give" began "scoop-and-give to US," claiming the recovery of strategic alliance between the ROK and US. A full-scale fulfillment of the 10.4 summit declaration and the DPRK's attempt to have inter-people cooperation as the political basis for conversation with the ROK are too different. What makes people anxious is the fact that the Lee Myung-bak administration's political basis for the DPRK and the DPRK's political basis for ROK will not easily change. What he Lee Myung-bak administration can do at this point is to send the coherent "signals of conversation" to the DPRK while encouraging the inter-Korean civilian exchanges and to partially fulfill the agreed items of the inter-Korean summit talk as the fulfillment of six-party talk enters phase three.

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19. DPRK Internal Situation

Peacemaking (Lee Seung-Yong, "THE REALITIES OF THE 2008 FOOD CRISIS OF DPRK", 2008/04/20) carried an article by the secretary general of Goodfriends, who wrote that symptoms occurring in different contexts of DPRK society such as the skyrocketing of food prices are not promising. The conflict between the DPRK governments' attempt to reinforce social restraints through regulation and the people driven to the verge of starvation is growing. Unless a revolutionary change in the international political situation or a change in the DPRK government's position takes place, the people are expected to face mass starvation due to food shortages. It seems that DPRK citizens' sacrifice and resistance for survival are inevitable.

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