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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA'S LAVROV SAYS N. KOREA TALKS UNLIKELY TO RESTART SOON", Pyongyang, 2009/04/23) reported that Russia is not expecting the resumption of six-nation negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear program, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Thursday after talks with his DPRK counterpart. "We are not expecting a breakthrough yet. This is a complicated issue, and we should not give way to emotions, instead we should concentrate on what we have already achieved," said Lavrov. Russia's top diplomat urged all parties to honor earlier agreements: "If everybody takes such a stand, we will be able to get through the crisis," Lavrov said.

Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "NKOREA REITERATES BOYCOTT OF NUCLEAR TALKS", Seoul, 2009/04/24) reported that the DPRK noted Friday that Russia "paid attention" to its decision to boycott international nuclear talks when their top diplomats met. "The Russian side ... paid attention to the DPRK's stand that there is no need to hold the six-party talks any longer," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency .

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Bloomberg News (Heejin Koo, "CLINTON SAYS U.S. WON'T BEND TO NORTH KOREA'S UNPREDICTABILITY ", 2009/04/23) reported that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the U.S. won't give in to the DPRK's "unpredictable behavior" after Kim Jong Il 's regime said it quit nuclear disarmament talks. The US has made it clear it is prepared to resume the negotiations, also involving the PRC, Russia, Japan and the ROK, Clinton told the House Foreign Affairs Committee. "The North Koreans have not demonstrated any willingness to resume the six-party process," Clinton said. "I think we have to be strong, patient, persistent and not give in to the kind of back-and-forth, the unpredictable behavior of the North Korean regime."

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3. US, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo ("ASO, OBAMA TO COOPERATE ON RESUMPTION OF SIX-PARTY TALKS", Tokyo, 2009/05/24) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso and U.S. President Barack Obama affirmed in telephone talks Friday they would cooperate toward a resumption of six-party talks, Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said Friday. Aso and Obama agreed that their countries had worked together closely in response to the DPRK's firing of a rocket, the officials said.

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4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "FOREIGN MINISTER WARNS N. KOREA NOT TO WORSEN SITUATION", Seoul, 2009/04/23) reported that the ROK's foreign minister urged the DPRK to stop raising tension and rejoin the six-way talks on its nuclear program. "I can't help expressing serious concern that North Korea is rejecting the international community's agreement and further damaging all the accomplishments in the six-way talks," Yu said during his monthly press briefing. "North Korea should not exacerbate the situation any more, abide by the U.N. Security Council statement and push for denuclearization," the minister said, adding if the DPRK reactivates its plutonium reprocessing factory, the U.N. will seek additional punishment.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA THREATENS 'STRONGER MEASURES' AGAINST S. KOREANS IN KAESONG COMPLEX ", Seoul, 2009/04/23) reported that the DPRK warned it may take "stronger measures" against ROK firms operating in a joint industrial complex on its soil unless Seoul responds favorably to its latest demands to revise key operational contracts of the complex, according to the DPRK's document unveiled Thursday. The DPRK also said in the document that all preferential treatment offered to South Koreans in the joint industrial park could possibly be reconsidered as long as the ROK government's pro-U.S. "confrontational" policies continue to endanger the inter-Korean cooperation project.

Korea Herald ("'KOREAS TO MEET IN NEAR FUTURE'", 2009/04/23) reported that the ROK is likely to meet with the DPRK in the near future to discuss their joint industrial venture in Gaeseong,

but has not decided on a date yet, Seoul officials said. "North Korean delegates at the talks demanded we give them a date for the next round of talks on the Gaeseong project as soon as possible," a Cheong Wa Dae official said. The government will likely accept the DPRK's proposal for talks, which Seoul officials see as technically state-level dialogue since the ROK delegation was led by government officials.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young , "UN HELP SOUGHT FOR GAESEONG DETAINEE", 2009/04/23) reported that ROK has been seeking international cooperation for the release of a ROK worker detained in the DPRK for nearly a month, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Yu Myung-hwan said. The government is considering taking the issue of the detainee to the U.N. Human Rights Committee, Yu said. "Despite 24 days of detention, no explanation has yet to be given,'' he said. "It may be more rational for South and North Korea to solve this issue but I think that international efforts could also be helpful. We're carefully reviewing that possibility.''

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7. PRC on Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA BACKS INTER-KOREAN TALKS TO EASE PENINSULAR TENSION", Beijing, 2009/04/23) reported that the PRC said it supported inter-Korean dialogue on easing the tension over the Korean Peninsula. "We support the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in resolving issues and advance cooperation through talks," PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told a regular briefing.

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8. DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo News ("3-4 N. KOREAN ENTITIES MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO U.N. ASSET FREEZE", New York, 2009/04/23) reported that three or four DPRK entities, including a trade firm and a bank, might be designated by the United Nations for an asset freeze as part of U.N. sanctions against the country over its recent rocket launch, diplomatic sources at the world body said. The DPRK entities include Korea Mining Development Trading Corp. and Tanchon Commercial Bank, which are believed to have taken on an important role in the DPRK's nuclear and missile development. It would be the first time the United Nations has designated the freezing of assets of DPRK entities.

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9. DPRK Detention of Journalists

Associated Press (Jean H. Lee, "2 US JOURNALISTS TO BE TRIED IN NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2009/04/24) reported that Laura Ling and Euna Lee, two U.S. journalists accused by the DPRK of

crossing into the country illegally, will be tried on criminal charges, the DPRK announced Friday. A dispatch Friday said the investigation had concluded, and the journalists would stand trial "on the basis of the confirmed crimes." It did not say exactly what charges they face or when the trial would take place.

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10. ROK-Japan Security Relations

Korea Times ("S. KOREA, JAPAN SIGN DEFENSE PACT", 2009/04/23) reported that the ROK and Japan signed a letter of intent on bilateral defense cooperation, the first formal military pact between the two neighboring countries, the Ministry of National Defense said. Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee signed the letter with his Japanese counterpart Yasukazu Hamada during his visit to Japan, it said. The letter covers goodwill exchanges of top defense officials and military units from the two nations, exchanges between defense institutes, institutionalization of joint search-and-rescue operations, reciprocal visits by aircraft and naval ships, and joint international peacekeeping and humanitarian operations, according to the ministry.

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11. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Times ("US BASE RELOCATION SET FOR 2015", 2009/04/23) reported that the ROK and the US have agreed to complete the long delayed relocation of U.S. military bases to south of the Han River by 2015, a government source said. The agreement was made in a meeting of top defense officials from both sides held in Seoul to finalize the timeline and cost for relocating American military facilities to Pyeongtaek, about 70 kilometers south of the capital. "The two sides have practically agreed to complete the U.S. base relocation by 2015, though a few technical issues need to be further ironed out,'' the source told The Korea Times on condition of anonymity.

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12. Japan SDF Iraq Dispatch

Xinhua News ("JAPAN'S DISTRICT COURT TURNS DOWN LAWSUIT AGAINST SDF DEPLOYMENT IN IRAQ", 2009/04/23) reported that t he Okayama District Court rejected a lawsuit against Japan's deployment of Self-Defense Forces (SDF) units in Iraq, said reports from the southwestern Japanese city of Okayama. Presiding Judge Teruo Koga turned down the demand made by 200 plaintiffs that the SDF deployment be suspend, saying that they have no right of claim under the Civil Code over execution of the country's administrative power. The judge, however, gave no ruling on their claim that the deployment is unconstitutional.

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13. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S ANTI-PIRACY BILL PASSES LOWER HOUSE", Tokyo, 2009/04/23)

reported that Japan's lower house passed an anti-piracy bill that will allow the country's two destroyers off Somalia wider scope to use force and protect foreign-flagged ships. The new government-sponsored bill will widen their rules of engagement and allow them to fire at the hulls of pirate vessels -- but not at the pirates themselves -- after repeated warnings and as a last resort. If enacted, the new bill will also allow the Maritime Self-Defence Force to protect any commercial ships, not just those under a Japanese flag or carrying Japanese nationals or cargo.

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14. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("DPJ TO RESTRICT CANDIDACIES BY HEREDITARY CANDIDATES", Tokyo, 2009/04/23) reported that t he main opposition Democratic Party of Japan adopted a plan to restrict hereditary candidates from continuously filing their candidacies in the same constituencies, DPJ lawmakers said. The DPJ is apparently aiming to differentiate itself from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, which has many hereditary lawmakers and is facing difficulties in making such restrictions. DPJ Acting President Naoto Kan criticized the hereditary system involving the LDP, noting that two-thirds of the current Cabinet members are second-generation lawmakers, while the latest three prime ministers have been the sons or grandsons of former prime ministers.

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15. Japan Nuclear Power

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Daichi Nishiguchi , "N-WASTE SITE PLAN AT IMPASSE", 2009/04/23) reported that the long-pending issue of selecting candidate sites for constructing a national disposal site for high-level radioactive waste has again been thrown in the air after a mayor suddenly backed out of a plan to allow the disposal facility to be built in his town in Fukushima Prefecture. Since then, the mayor of the town, where Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima No. 2 Nuclear Power Station is situated, has refused to comment on the issue in public.

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16. Sino-Japanese Relations

Reuters (Chris Buckley , "CHINA SLAMS JAPAN PM OVER WAR SHRINE OFFERING", Beijing, 2009/04/23) reported that the PRC slammed Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso for his offering to the Yasukuni shrine for war dead, warning of damage to ties. PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu made no mention of calling off Aso's planned trip to Beijing next week, but she said his offering of a potted tree to the controversial Tokyo shrine strained relations between Asia's two biggest economies. "China has already used diplomatic channels to express its strong concern and dissatisfaction, and stressed the high sensitivity of historical issues," Jiang said in a statement read out on PRC state television news. "Any erroneous actions by Japan will have gravely negative consequences for bilateral relations."

Agence France-Presse ("PM'S WAR SHRINE GIFT WILL NOT AFFECT CHINA TIES - JAPAN", TOkyo, 2009/04/23) reported that Japan's foreign ministry said Thursday it believed the prime minister's offering to a war shrine wouldn't affect ties or his scheduled Beijing visit next week. A Japanese foreign ministry official in the PRC affairs section said after Beijing's comments that Tokyo believed Aso's offering of a plant to the shrine would have no impact on his planned visit to Beijing. "The national leaders have agreed to visit each other every year," said the official, who spoke on condition he not be named. "There were times when visits to the shrine affected the relationship with China, but making an offering is different from visiting the shrine."

Associated Press ("CHINA ANNOUNCES VISIT BY JAPANESE LEADER", Beijing, 2009/04/24) reported that a one-line statement from PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu Friday said Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso would visit next Wednesday and Thursday at the invitation of Premier Wen Jiabao.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Mainichi Shimbun ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT SAYS ECONOMY IMPORTANT IN CROSS-STRAIT TIES, SEEKS MISSILE REDUCTION", 2009/04/23) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou said that economic issues are a pressing subject in cross-strait relations, and indicated that development in relations centering on economic exchange would urge PRC President Hu Jintao's leadership to reduce or eliminate missiles pointed at Taiwan. Speaking on the ballistic missiles that the PRC has pointed at Taiwan, he said, "Issues related to the economy are what's pressing. Removing missiles and the structure of the mutual trust mechanism in military terms are not top priorities."

Associated Press (Debby Wu, "TAIWAN AND CHINA TO INCREASE ECONOMIC COOPERATION", Taipei, 2009/04/24) reported that Straits Exchange Foundation Chairman Chiang Pin-kung said Friday that Taiwan and the PRC will discuss a partial free trade agreement and sign pacts this weekend to increase economic cooperation. The pact, known as the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, would permit the free flow of many goods, services and capital between the island and the PRC. However, key items such as agricultural produce would be exempt.

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18. EU-PRC Relations

The Financial Times (Tony Barber , "GLOBAL INSIGHT: CHINA SEES EU AS MERE PAWN", 2009/04/23) reported that viewed from Brussels, the PRC’s importance to the world’s security and economic systems has never been greater. Viewed from Beijing, the European Union’s importance has rarely been smaller. As the European Council on Foreign Relations think-tank puts it in a new report on EU-China relations: “China has learned to exploit the divisions among EU member-states." Some policymakers in Brussels permitted themselves the hope, after an EU-China summit in Beijing in November 2007, that the PRC would deal with the EU on a more equal footing. Seventeen months later, European hopes of progress are disappearing. There have been disagreements over how often EU and PRC officials should meet, and the PRC has shown reluctance to bring its most senior

policymakers to the table.

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19. Sino-Indian Relations

Times of India ("CHINA HITS OUT AT INDIA'S DECISION ON NAVAL SYMPOSIUM", 2009/04/23) reported that India is suspicious of the PRC's economic growth, a new newspaper close to the Communist Party of China has said in an editorial. The paper, Global Times, made the comment while discussing New Delhi's reported decision to disallow the PRC from attending this year's Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. India's ministry of foreign affairs is simply afraid that the PRC might "intervene" in its sphere of influence in the Indian Ocean , it said. New Delhi's decision was also prompted by "India's suspicion of China's rise", it said.

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20. PRC Diplomacy

Washington Post (Ariana Eunjung Cha, "CHINA USES GLOBAL CRISIS TO ASSERT ITS INFLUENCE", 2009/04/23) reported that overseas aid and loans are just one way the PRC is asserting itself in its new role as a world financial leader. While polishing the PRC's own image, Premier Wen Jiabao and other top leaders have blamed the West for the global economic crisis. PRC officials increasingly are challenging the primacy of the dollar, warning other countries about the danger of keeping reserves in just one or two currencies, such as dollars and euros. And as the global economic crisis has eroded faith in U.S.-style capitalism, there's growing talk that a new "Beijing Consensus" will replace the long-dominant Washington Consensus on how developing countries should manage their economies.

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21. Alledged PRC Cyberattacks

The Associated Press ("CHINA DENIES IT HACKED INTO US JET PROGRAM", 2009/04/23) reported that the PRC denied media reports that hackers in the country breached a U.S. jet fighter program two years ago, calling the allegations Thursday "irresponsible" and "made up." Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said the PRC was resolutely opposed to and has cracked down on cyber crimes, including hacking. A senior U.S. defense official in Washington earlier this week confirmed that hackers nearly two years ago breached a high-tech F-35 jet fighter program developed for the Pentagon by Lockheed Martin Corp., but said it was unclear who did it and that classified information was not compromised.

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22. PRC Military

The Associated Press ("CHINA PUTS NAVAL POWER ON DISPLAY; PLEDGES PEACE", Qingdao,

2009/04/23) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao sought Thursday to reassure the international community over the PRC's rising military strength before presiding over a naval display highlighting Beijing's ambitions of becoming a major sea power. In remarks to U.S. and other foreign naval commanders, Hu repeated the PRC's standard position that it would never threaten other nations or seek regional dominance. The PRC's military, including the fast modernizing navy, "will always be a force for the preservation of world peace and advancement of common development," Hu said.

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23. PRC Climate Change

Reuters ("CHINA'S FORESTS HAVE ROLE IN SOAKING UP CO2 -STUDY", Oslo, 2009/04/23) reported that the PRC's forests and other vegetation absorbed around a third of its greenhouse gases in the late 20th century, but the rate may now be falling because of a surge in industrial emissions, scientists said. A study by Peking University said that increased summer rains, efforts to plant forests, an expansion of shrubland, shifts in crop use and higher bamboo mass soaked up between 28 and 37 percent of industrial emissions in the 1980s and 1990s. The study gave the first estimate of the impact of plants in offsetting carbon dioxide emissions in the PRC, which has recently overtaken the United States as top emitter.

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II. PRC Report

24. PRC Development

Xinhua Net ("NEW COUNTRYSIDE CONSTRUCTION AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY WORKSHOP HELD IN WUHAN", 2009/04/23) reported that New Countryside Construction and Scientific Development Strategy Workshop, sponsored by China Overseas Friendship Association and Hubei government, is held in Wuhan city of Hubei province on 22 nd . The Workshop aims at gathering wisdom of the Association members and people of all walks and promoting reform and development of new countryside. The Workshop also held signing ceremony of New Countryside Clinic Construction and other projects.

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25. PRC Environment

People's Daily ("EFFECT OF PLASTIC BAG RESTRICTIONS IN ONE YEAR", 2009/04/23) reported that over the one year of implementation of plastic bag restriction, paper bag and cloth bag have become the most common used shopping bags for Beijing citizens. According to survey by Environment Department of People's University, after the implementation of plastic bag restriction, 71% surveyed family use less plastic bags during shopping, among which 36% family have stopping using plastic bag, but there is still 26% surveyed family use the same number of plastic bags as before.

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26. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Ningxia Daily (Li Qing, "8 ORGANIZATIONS IN BEIJING PARTICIPATE IN SAND CONTROL OF NINGXIA", 2009/04/22) reported that Capital Greening Committee, China Overseas Students Development Foundation and Ningxia Autonomous Region Forestry Bureau jointly launched “More Trees in Ningxia, Less Sand in Beijing” activity recently. 8 social organizations in Beijing have participated in it. Since 1980s, Ningxia has stopped a total of over 38 million tons of sand entering in Beijing by way of sand control. So the ecology of Ningxia is important to the ecological security of the country.

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