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1. I. NAPSNet

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2. UN on DPRK Human Rights

Reuters ("U.N. SLAMS RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH KOREA", Geneva, 2010/03/25) reported that the U.N. Human Rights Council on Thursday slammed widespread abuses in the DPRK, among them torture and labor camps for political prisoners, and renewed the mandate of its investigator for the state for a year. Adopting a resolution submitted by the European Union, the Council also called on Pyongyang to ensure that food aid is distributed on the basis of need to its hungry population. The Council deplored "the grave, widespread and systematic human rights abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, in particular the use of torture and labor camps against political prisoners and repatriated citizens of DPRK." Choe Myong Nam, a DPRK diplomat in Geneva, rejected the resolution as "politically motivated" and "full of distortions and fabrications."

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3. US on DPRK Internal Situation

Korea Herald ("USFK COMMANDER WARNS OF POSSIBLE N.K. INSTABILITY ", 2010/03/25) reported that Gen. Walter Sharp, commander of U.S. forces in the ROK, warned of a need to be prepared for a possible collapse of the DPRK regime. "We would also be mindful of the potential for instability in North Korea," he said Wednesday during a testimony before a House Appropriations Committee hearing. "Combined with the country's disastrous centralized economy, dilapidated industrial sector, insufficient agricultural base, malnourished military and populace, and developing nuclear programs, the possibility of a sudden leadership change in the North could be destabilizing and unpredictable." He also warned of more provocative actions by the DPRK to divert the attention of its discontented people.

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NKOREA THREATENS 'NUCLEAR STRIKES' ON SKOREA, US", Seoul, 2010/03/26) reported that the DPRK military threatened the ROK and the United States on

Friday with "unprecedented nuclear strikes" over a report the two countries plan to prepare for possible instability in the DPRK. "Those who seek to bring down the system in the DPRK, whether they play a main role or a passive role, will fall victim to the unprecedented nuclear strikes of the invincible army," the military said in comments carried by the Korean Central News Agency.

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5. US on DPRK Leadership

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "KIM JONG-IL IS PUSHING SON AS HEIR APPARENT: GEN. SHARP", 2010/03/25) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has tried hard for the past year to establish his third and youngest son as heir apparent amid growing complaints over a worsening economy, a top U.S. military officer said Wednesday. Gen. Walter Sharp, commander of U.S. forces in the ROK, testified before a House Appropriations Committee hearing, "Over the past year, Kim has systematically introduced his third and youngest son, Kim Jong-un, as the heir apparent." Sharp is the first U.S. official to publicly acknowledge the power transition, although rumors have abounded that Kim Jong-il is grooming Jong-un, 27, to assume leadership.

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6. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SAYS IT COMPLETED DISTRIBUTING ANTI-FLU AID SENT FROM S. KOREA", 2010/03/25) reported that the DPRK has informed the ROK it completed nationwide distribution of anti-flu sanitizer it received from Seoul last month, an official here said Thursday. The ROK delivered 200,000 liters of hand sanitizer to the DPRK on Feb. 23 to help the impoverished communist neighbor fight the spread of type-A influenza The ROK Unification Ministry spokesman Chun Hae-sung said the DPRK's Red Cross sent a message Wednesday afternoon saying that the sanitizer was distributed to nine provinces and four cities.

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7. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

Agence France Presse ("S.KOREANS ATTEND FORCED TOURISM MEETING IN N.KOREA", 2010/03/25) reported that a group of 16 ROK officials and businessmen Thursday attended a special meeting at a DPRK tourist resort, bowing to Pyongyang's threat to seize their property there unless they showed up. It has also threatened to seek another business partner, rather than the ROK's Hyundai Asan, unless Seoul lifts its ban on tours soon. DPRK officials met the ROK officials and businessmen for 15 minutes and told them the survey of real estate assets would be carried out over

a week starting March 31, a statement from Hyundai Asan said

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8. Inter-Korea Relations

Korea Times ("SEOUL IRRITATED OVER NK'S PROBE OF PROPERTY IN MT. GEUMGANG", 2010/03/25) reported that the DPRK announced Thursday it would inspect the 13-story building in the DPRK built by the ROK for separated families to hold reunions. In a meeting with Hyundai Asan and ROK investors of the Mt. Geumgang tourism project, the DPRK unveiled a time schedule for inspections of properties of ROK businesses at the resort. Lee Jong-ju, spokeswoman for the Ministry of Unification, made it clear that the reunion building should not be an object of inspection. "There has been no change in our position that the building shouldn't be subject to an inspection as it has nothing to do with the Mt. Geumgang tourism project," she told reporters.

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9. USFK Base Relocation

Agence France Presse ("US TO FINISH BASE MOVE IN S.KOREA DONE BY 2016: GENERAL", 2010/03/25) reported that US forces in the ROK are expected to complete their move to major new bases by 2016, with the plan moving smoothly after years of delay, the top US military officer in the country said Thursday. "I'm very comfortable, let's say, within the next five or six years it will be complete," General Walter Sharp, commander of the US forces in the ROK, told a congressional panel. "But we will have moved a lot of ... soldiers down there well before that as the land and the construction is complete," Sharp said, saying troops would start shifting in 2012.

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10. ROK-Japan Historical Disputes

Yonhap ("JAPAN HANDS OVER LIST OF KOREANS FORCED INTO LABOR DURING COLONIAL PERIOD", Seoul, 2010/03/26) reported that Japan on Friday provided a list of 175,000 Koreans who were forced into labor during its colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula. The list, which also recorded 278 million yen (US$3 million) in unpaid wages, was handed over to the ROK embassy in Tokyo and will be used by Seoul to assess appropriate compensation for the former laborers, a foreign ministry official said.

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11. US on USFJ Base Relocation

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN BASE DEAL TOUGH ON GUAM: US COMMANDER", 2010/03/25) reported that a controversial base deal with Japan will impose a tough burden on Guam, which is ill-equipped to handle thousands of relocated troops, the commander of US forces in Asia said on Thursday. "The pressures on infrastructure in Guam will be challenging," Admiral Robert Willard, head of the US Pacific Command testified before the House Armed Services Committee. He said that Guam's port was "inadequately suited" to handle ships involved in construction. "I think it's acknowledged that Guam infrastructure is suffering from inadequacies now, given the population on Guam, and that any additions to the population are likely to pressurize its water systems, power systems, waste-disposal systems, sewage systems and the like," he said.

Reuters ("U.S. "OPTIMISTIC" ON JAPAN BASE DECISION: MILITARY", 2010/03/25) reported that a top U.S. military commander said Wednesday he was optimistic Japan would soon agree to the planned relocation of a U.S. airbase, a dispute that has strained U.S.-Japan ties. Admiral Robert Willard, head of U.S. Pacific Command, told lawmakers he believed Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama would stick to a 2006 accord that included shifting the Marines' Futenma airbase to a less crowded spot on Japan's Okinawa island. "We are optimistic that the government of Japan will fully reaffirm the 2006 (government of Japan)-U.S. agreement by May 2010," Willard said in testimony on Capitol Hill. Willard also said he thought the Japanese government understood the time pressure and would stick to the timetable.

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13. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN PLANS TO START FUTEMMA WORKING-LEVEL TALKS WITH U.S. IN APRIL ", 2010/03/25) reported that Japan intends to launch working-level consultations with the United States during the first half of April on where to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture government sources said Thursday. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada is expected to meet with U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos on Friday to make final arrangements for the consultations before visiting the United States this weekend, the sources said. At the same time, Okada will likely tell Roos that Tokyo is eyeing three locations as key candidate sites for the relocation, they said. The three are the inland part of the Marines' Camp Schwab in Nago, Okinawa, an area to be reclaimed off the coast of the U.S. Navy's White Beach facility in Uruma, also in Okinawa, and Tokunoshima Island in Kagoshima Prefecture.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("U.S. LIKELY TO NIX 2 FUTENMA ALTERNATIVES", 2010/03/25) reported that the United States likely will reject both of the two alternatives the Japanese government is planning to propose to Washington on relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station within Okinawa Prefecture, according to sources. The administration of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama officially will propose the two alternative sites in the prefecture to the U.S. and Okinawa prefectural governments Friday, the sources said. The Hatoyama administration's two alternatives are to relocate the air station from Ginowan to a land-based area of the marines' Camp Schwab spanning Nago and Ginozason, or to a reclaimed sea area off the U.S. Navy's White Beach facility in Uruma. Both plans have surfaced in past bilateral negotiations, but were turned down by the U.S. side.

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15. Japan Regional Security Cooperation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, ASEAN OFFICIALS DISCUSS SECURITY CHALLENGES, COOPERATION ", 2010/03/25) reported that senior defense officials from Japan and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations met Thursday in Tokyo to discuss common ''nontraditional'' security challenges such as disaster relief, antipiracy, international peacekeeping operations and regional cooperation. Japanese Vice Defense Minister Kimito Nakae chaired the one-day meeting, the second of its kind following the inaugural session in Tokyo in March last year.

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16. Sino-US Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SAYS WILLING TO TALK MORE WITH US", 2010/03/25) reported that the PRC said Thursday it was willing to boost contacts with the United States to resolve a host of issues that are dogging ties, including a long-standing dispute over the value of the yuan. US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said Wednesday it was "very important" for Beijing to make its currency flexible. PRC foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang said "We are willing to strengthen communication with the United States," noting that "dialogue and consultations on an equal footing" was the best way to put paid to bilateral tensions.

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17. Sino-Afghanistan Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA, AFGHANISTAN VOW TO FIGHT TERRORISM, DRUGS", 2010/03/25) reported that PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao pledged Thursday to extend aid and economic support for Afghanistan's reconstruction, while calling for both nations to jointly fight

terrorism and drug trafficking. In talks with visiting Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Wen said the two countries should work to strengthen relations by increasing cooperation in all fields, China Central Television said. "Terrorism and drug trafficking are common dangers facing Afghanistan and neighbouring countries that need the long-term, close and unending cooperation of each nation," state television quoted Wen as telling Karzai. "We should strive to unify the people, and to the utmost extent isolate the forces of terrorism, separatism and religious extremism and strike out at cross-border crime." Wen said China would continue to offer aid to Afghanistan and support the nation's plans for peaceful reconstruction.

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18. PRC on Iranian Sanctions

Agence France Presse ("CHINA URGES TALKS TO RESOLVE IRAN NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2010/03/25) reported that the PRC on Thursday called for continued dialogue to resolve the international standoff over Iran's nuclear programme, after it took part in six-way talks on possible new sanctions against Tehran. "China urges all sides to use diplomatic means to peacefully resolve the Iranian nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters. "This is the best choice and it conforms to the interests of all sides as well as peace and stability in the region." The spokesman said Beijing would remain in "close consultations" with all parties on the issue.

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19. PRC Public Welfare

Associated Press ("CHINA DRILLS WELLS, SEEDS CLOUDS AMID DROUGHT", 2010/03/25) reported that emergency wells were being drilled and cloud-seeding operations carried out in southern PRC, where the worst drought in decades has left millions of people without water and caused more than 1,000 schools to close, officials said Thursday. Provincial and national land resources bureau officials met in Kunming, capital of the hardest-hit province of Yunnan, to discuss details of deploying workers to dig wells and increase cloud seeding and other aid to people in need of drinking water, according to a director at the Yunnan Land Resources Bureau, surnamed Ma. "The situation here will get worse in the coming months before it gets any better, but hopefully with more wells and water being diverted to those in need, we can help ease the situation," said Ma.

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20. PRC Climate Change

Agence France Presse ("CHINA OVERTAKES US IN GREEN INVESTMENT: STUDY", 2010/03/25) reported that the PRC has surpassed the United States as the top investor in clean energy with the rising Asian power becoming a "powerhouse" in the emerging field, a study by environmentalists said. PRC investment in clean energy soared by more than 50 percent in 2009 to reach 34.6 billion dollars, far more than any other country in the Group of 20 major economies, the study led by the Pew Charitable Trusts said. Total US investment was about half that at 18.6 billion dollars, the first time in five years that the world's largest economy lost the top spot in clean energy, the study said.

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22. PRC Civil Society

China News Net (Cheng Menghua, "A SHENZEHN COMMUNITY GETS 5 MILLION CHARITABLE FUND", 2010/03/25) reported that Shenzhen Taoyuan community has received a charitable fund of 5 million RMB from the China Women's Development Foundation, the China Association for NGO Cooperation and and other two organizations to support its public services in community. The fund will be used to build the community volunteer organization, a community senior citizen school and more.

Xinhua News Agency (Li Fei, "CHINA CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION ALLOCATES 1.5 MLN FOR CHILDREN IN SOUTHWEST DROUGHT", 2010/03/25) reported that the China Children's Foundation urgently allocated 1.5 million RMB to help children in the drought-hit areas in Yunnan, Guangxi, and Guizhou to help resolve water problems. At the same time, the Foundation solicited donations for the disaster areas.

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24. PRC Climate Change

China Securities Net ("GREEN PROMISE PINAN CHINA PLAN LAUNCHED", 2010/03/25) reported

that China PingAn (one of the PRC's largest insurance companies) announced yesterday it will formally launch the Green Promise PingAn China Plan. The Plan will promote paperless insurance all around the country, timed shutdowns of 100,000 office computers and other low-carbon campaigns.

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