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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("NEXT TWO WEEKS CRITICAL IN NUCLEAR TALKS: U.S. ENVOY", Washington, 2008/03/25) reported that the next couple of weeks could be critical in the DPRK denuclearization talks, and recent contacts with the DPRK suggests that the contentions over Pyongyang's atomic weapons disclosure can be resolved, the top US nuclear envoy said. "We continue to have talks through the New York channel," Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said, referring to the diplomatic contact point between the two countries.

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2. PRC on Six Party Talks

Xinhua ("CHINESE FM CALLS FOR PATIENCE, WISDOM TO PROMOTE PROCESS OF SIX-PARTY TALKS", Beijing, 2008/03/20) reported that the PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi called on all parties concerned to keep patience and exert wisdom to promote the process of the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue. "China expects all parties concerned to continue to uphold sincerity, keep patience, exert wisdom and take active measures to promote the continuous progress of the six-party talks," said Yang. He said the PRC hoped that all relevant parties can jointly strive for the implementation of all reached agreements in a comprehensive and balanced way and the gradual realization of the goals of the Sept. 19 joint statement.

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3. US, ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("N.K. NUKES ON TOP OF AGENDA FOR SUMMIT: FM", Seoul, 2008/03/25) reported that Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said he will discuss various ways of resuming six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear issue when he meets with his U.S. counterpart Condoleezza Rice this week. "I plan to have consultations on various ways to resume the six-way talks at an early date, in consideration of both the U.S. domestic political situation such as the presidential election, and the geopolitical conditions in the region," Yu said in a brief meeting with reporters.

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4. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO QUESTION N.KOREANS", 2008/03/25) reported that the National Human Rights Commission will conduct a survey of 13,000 DPRK defectors living in the ROK on human rights in the DPRK. The survey is the NHRC's first project dealing with the DPRK's human rights violations since it picked the issue as one of six key tasks for this year. An NHRC official said the survey will focus on DPRK defectors who were caught by DPRK authorities while attempting to escape and will ask how they were treated after they were caught.

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5. DPRK Technology

Korea Herald ("NORTH KOREA SHOWS ZEAL FOR SCIENCE", 2008/03/25) reported that a DPRK team's recent winning of a berth in an international computer competition shows that the reclusive country, which heavily restricts Internet access, has an unusual zeal for science advancement, American scholars involved in the project were quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. Professor Stuart Thorson of Syracuse University, and Fredrick Carriere, vice president of the New York-based Korea Society, are helping DPRK students compete in the annual International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC), which holds finals next month in Banff, Canada. The Kim Chaek team performed well enough to win a spot in the world finals, becoming one of 100 groups to do so out of 6,700 teams from 1,821 countries.

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6. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("WOMEN AND POLICE CLASH IN DPRK MARKETS", 2008/03/22) reported that recently, the DPRK passed a measure prohibiting women younger then 49 from selling goods in markets, leading to clashes between police enforcing the rule and younger women wanting to work in markets. The March 19th newsletter from 'Good Friends', an organization providing aid for the DPRK, reported that on February 5th in Haeju, South Hwanghae Province, women who were not allowed to enter the local market and so were selling goods on a nearby corner physically clashed and police. This reportedly led to the arrest and detention of 9 people. According to Good Friends, "Just like other cities, Haeju City has received absolutely no food rations since March." The newsletter also reported, "On March 3, in Chungjin City, North Hamkyung Province, organized protests by women prevented from market activities by the new regulations broke out, and Chungjin City authorities are now allowing all women, with no exception, to sell goods in markets."

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7. ROK-PRC Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("KOREA-CHINA SUMMITS EYED FOR COMING YEAR", Beijing, 2008/03/25) reported that the presidents of the ROK and PRC plan to exchange visits to each other's capital in the coming months for a series of summits on ways to improve ties and to discuss the DPRK nuclear issue, Seoul's top diplomat said Saturday. "China has agreed in principle on the visit to South Korea

by President Hu Jintao," Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan told reporters. Hu's visit, the date of which has yet to be set, is to reciprocate for a trip by Lee planned for early May, Yu added.

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8. Japan SDF Role

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO EXAMINE TROOP DISPATCH CHANGES", 2008/03/25) reported that Japan's prime minister said Tuesday he plans to work with lawmakers on a proposal to allow Japanese troops to be dispatched overseas without the need for special legislative approval each time. Prime Minster Yasuo Fukuda told reporters that his office will work with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in drafting a bill creating a permanent troop dispatch law to be submitted before the Diet's session ends in mid-June. Fukuda met earlier with Taku Yamasaki, head of a party panel to push for a permanent law, and the two agreed upon the plan, he said.

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9. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press (Foster Klug, "TAIWAN ELECTION EASES US-CHINA PROBLEM ", Washington, 2008/03/25) reported that after eight years of often strained U.S.-Taiwan relations, the United States is welcoming with relief Taiwan voters' choice of a president committed to engage, not antagonize, the PRC. President-elect Ma Ying-jeou has promised to defuse tensions and expand trade with China. As always, the United States did not take sides in Saturday's vote. But President Bush said later in a statement that the election "provides a fresh opportunity" for Taiwan and the PRC to begin peacefully settling their differences.

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10. Tibet Unrest

The New York Times (David Barboza, "PRESSED OVER TIBET, CHINA BERATES FOREIGN MEDIA", Shanghai, 2008/03/25) reported that PRC officials have sharply criticized foreign reporters here over their coverage of the riots in Tibet, accusing them of biased reporting and preventing them from traveling to Tibet or neighboring provinces to report on the unrest. The government has also begun a propaganda campaign aimed at persuading the public that the Dalai Lama, the exiled Tibetan leader, instigated the violence in Tibet on March 14 and that the PRC was a victim of separatist terrorist activity. The PRC government’s effort is the clearest sign yet of its concern that the Tibet unrest, as well as antigovernment protests over Darfur, could disrupt the Olympic Games this summer in Beijing.

The Los Angeles Times (Mark Magnier, "ANALYSTS EXPECT CHINA SECURITY TO GET TIGHTER", 2008/03/25) reported that as it prepares to hold the Olympics in August, the PRC is on edge and isn't likely to take any chances. Two weeks of unrest in its ethnic Tibetan region has further shaken the confidence of a government already nervous about criticism over its human rights record. Analysts say they expect beefed-up surveillance in coming months of PRC groups deemed troublemakers, including democracy advocates, religious groups and those who petition the government for justice. They also expect more intense vetting of inbound tourists, more scrutiny of Chinese sports crowds,

more ID checks almost everywhere and heightened Internet and media controls as the Games approach. Tibetan unrest "is going to have a very significant impact," said Tai Ming Cheung, a professor at UC San Diego. "You can see from their reaction, they're already fairly paranoid about security, and they're basically going to cut back further on any type of risk."

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11. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua ("NUCLEAR FIRMS TAP CHINA'S MARKET POTENTIAL AT BEIJING EXHIBITION", 2008/03/25) reported that some of the world's leading nuclear energy companies have gathered in Beijing in the hope of reaping contracts from the PRC's planned expansion of its nuclear power industry. Almost 200 exhibitors from 14 countries are attending the 10th China International Nuclear Industry Exhibition opened in Beijing on Tuesday and runs until Friday.The PRC has 11 nuclear power plants with a combined installed capacity of 9.08 million kilowatts. Three use domestic technology, two are based on Russian technology, four use French technology and two are Canadian-designed. All use second generation nuclear technologies.

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12. US Export Controls

Los Angeles Times (Ben DuBose, "U.S. MISTAKENLY SHIPS MISSILE PARTS TO TAIWAN", Washington, 2008/03/25) reported that U.S. officials said today that non-nuclear parts for an intercontinental ballistic missile were mistakenly shipped to Taiwan in 2006 and that an investigation had been started. Air Force Secretary Michael Wynne said at a Pentagon news conference that the items sent to Taiwan were four electrical fuses for nose cone assemblies for ICBMs. Wynne said the fuses have been returned and are at a U.S. base. Officials in Taiwan notified the U.S. government of the error. "In an organization as large as the DOD, the largest and most complex in the world, there will be mistakes," he said.

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II. ROK Report

13. DPRK Internal Situation

The Peace Foundation (Dong Yong-Seung, "APPREHENSION FOR MASS DEATH FROM HUNGER IN DPRK", 2008/03/25) carried an article by the economic security research team leader at SERI who wrote that there are rumors that 1kg of rice is sold at 1700 DPRK won in the market as the food supplied to market in DPRK is on absolute shortage. Considering the past behavior of the DPRK which made a deal with the world concerning the food problem with DPRK people as the hostage, the previous method of food supply needs to be changed. Fertilizer shall be loaned after negotiation and the food will be given for free. As food supply is a matter of humanitarianism, having conditions for the supply changes the original meaning. However, a more intensive inspection can be asked. In addition, the ROK should take a leading role in organizing solidarity among neighboring

countries to prepare for possible food problems in the DPRK and together provide the humanitarian supplies. The supply method should follow the global rules.

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14. DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION IN Korea, PROPERLY TAKE CARE OF DPRK HUMAN RIGHTS FROM NOW ON AT LEAST", 2008/03/26) wrote that the National Human Rights Commission in Korea has announced that from April, it will investigate the internal human rights realities in DPRK by surveying 13000 DPRK refugees in ROK for the torture practiced in the DPRK. Constitutional law Article 3 stipulates that the DPRK is a territory of the ROK. It implies that DPRK citizens have the equal rights as ROK citizens do. That is the reason the ROK accepts refugees from the DPRK. The National Human Rights Commission in Korea must investigate the below-human level pain suffered and predicament of DPRK refugees in China and Southeast Asia are in, and let the world know about them.

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15. Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("PLANT-TREE MOVEMENT IN DPRK BENEFICIAL TO BOTH DPRK AND ROK", 2008/03/26) wrote that support projects for forestation in the DPRK are being promoted for real. Forestation is vital for economic recovery in the DPRK. The income from labor costs for forestation and exporting fruit by themselves are considerable. A support for fuel-revolution should also be enacted. For forestation people should keep in mind the situation years after national unification. In this aspect, this project can become an appropriate model for the symbiosis of both the ROK and DPRK.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org