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Contents in this Issue:

- I. Napsnet
 - [1. DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [4. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
 - [5. UN on DPRK Rocket Launch](#)
 - [6. Inter-Korean Relations](#)
 - [7. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation](#)
 - [8. DPRK Detention of Journalists](#)
 - [9. DPRK Leadership](#)
 - [10. DPRK Human Rights](#)
 - [11. ROK-Russian Energy Cooperation](#)
 - [12. US Military in ROK](#)
 - [13. ROK Military](#)
 - [14. ROK Renewable Energy](#)
 - [15. ROK Whaling](#)
 - [16. ROK Pandemic Response](#)

- [17. Japan Pandemic Response](#)
- [18. Japan on Climate Change](#)
- [19. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations](#)
- [20. Cross Strait Relations](#)
- [21. PRC Tibet Issue](#)
- [22. US PRC Detainees](#)
- II. PRC Report
 - [23. PRC Nuclear Power](#)
 - [24. PRC Social Welfare](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

New York Times ("NORTH KOREA SAYS IT HAS RESTARTED NUCLEAR WORK", Seoul, 2009/04/25) reported that the DPRK announced Saturday that it had begun reprocessing thousands of spent nuclear fuel rods. Reprocessing the rods "will contribute to bolstering the nuclear deterrence for self-defense in every way to cope with the increasing military threats from the hostile forces," an unidentified DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Korean Central News Agency.

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA 'CLEANING REPROCESSING PLANT'", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that an ROK official said there was "no evidence yet showing that North Korea has put the reprocessing facility into full operation again. We assume the North is cleaning it in preparation for operation because many personnel and vehicles are arriving at the reprocessing facility and removing something." A senior ROK government official said, "Saturday announcement came a few hours after the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee put three North Korean companies on a blacklist. We assume that the North will put the reprocessing facility into operation sooner or later in protest at the UN sanctions."

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Dong-A Ilbo ("S. KOREA TO RESPOND 'FLEXIBLY' TO LATEST NK PROVOCATION ", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that the ROK said Sunday that it will respond carefully and flexibly to the DPRK's move to reprocess spent fuel rods. An official at Seoul's presidential office said, "North

Korea took another step in turning its words into action, but we don't think a response is needed since it was expected."

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

BBC ("NORTH KOREA URGED BACK TO TALKS", Washington, 2009/04/25) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged the DPRK to return to its obligations to rid the Korean peninsula of nuclear weapons. "We hope that we'll be able to resume discussions with North Korea that will lead to their assuming responsibility for denuclearising the peninsula," she said. Megan Mattson, a US state department spokeswoman, said separately: "We will not accept North Korea as a nuclear-weapons state."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Voice of America ("RUSSIA: N.KOREA NOT TO RETURN TO TALKS", Seoul, 2009/04/25) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the DPRK does not yet intend to return to the six-party talks. He also warned that no country should use the DPRK's recent rocket launch to justify an arms race or building up missile defenses in the region. Lavrov added that Russia proposed during talks in Pyongyang that Russian territory could be used to launch future DPRK satellites.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. UN on DPRK Rocket Launch

Washington Post (Colum Lynch, "U.N. SANCTIONS 3 N. KOREAN FIRMS OVER MISSILE LAUNCH", United Nations, 2009/04/24) reported that the U.N. Security Council agreed Friday to impose financial sanctions on three DPRK firms, Korea Mining Development Trading Corp., Tanchon Commercial Bank and Korea Ryongbong General Corp., which have previously been sanctioned by the United States for trading missile technology with Iran, Yemen and Pakistan. The Security Council also agreed to reinforce a trade ban on items that the DPRK could potentially use in the development of missiles, including "the latest technology related to ballistic missile technology," according to Turkey's U.N. ambassador, Baki Ilkin, who chairs the council's DPRK sanctions committee.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. Inter-Korean Relations

Arirang News ("S.KOREA MAY RESTRICT VISITS TO NORTH", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that the ROK will place a limit on visits to the DPRK if an ROK who remains detained there is indicted. A Seoul government official said it is possible that the ROK could allow travel to the DPRK only after Pyongyang provides written safety guarantees for workers at the complex.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation

Hankyoreh ("FOREIGN COMPANIES GIVE A BREATH OF HOPE TO KAESONG COMPLEX", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that under a memorandum of understanding signed on Thursday, ROK's Samduk Tongsang Co. said that it will increase supply to Me & Friends, a German shoe retailer. Mun Chang-sub, president of Samduk Tongsang Co. and representative of an association of ROK firms in Kaesong, said, "Buyers at home and abroad recently felt irritated due to rising tensions over the Kaesong industrial complex project. The signed MOU will help ease such jitters and bring back hope." He added, "Some say that the Kaesong complex is in a crisis, but local workers do not feel it...The German buyer seemed to have confidence that it could increase orders after witnessing that workers from South Korea and North Korea are cooperating together to sustain the development of Kaesong."

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. DPRK Detention of Journalists

Voice of America ("U.S. RENEWS CALL ON PYONGYANG TO RELEASE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS ", Washington, 2009/04/25) reported that acting US State Department Spokesman Robert Wood said that the United States is continuing to work for the early release of two journalists detained in the DPRK. "We've seen these reports and we continue to call on the North Koreans to release the two Americans so they can be returned to their families. We'll continue to work this issue through diplomatic channels. As I've said, we're trying to work this quietly, and we're going to continue to work it, but I don't have much to say beyond that right now," he said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. DPRK Leadership

Associated Press ("SON IS SAID TO RISE IN NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2009/04/26) reported that Kim Jong-un, the youngest son of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, has reportedly been named to a low-level post at the National Defense Commission. Yonhap, citing unidentified sources it says are privy to DPRK affairs, said the appointment was seen as a step toward training Kim Jong-un as his father's successor.

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA'S KIM INCREASES TOURS DESPITE HEALTH DOUBTS", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has made 55 "field guidance" tours so far this year, three times as many as in the same period last year, the ROK unification ministry said. It said 21 of the visits were to economic projects compared to just five in the same period of 2008. In the latest reported trip, Kim visited an agricultural university in the east coast city of Wonsan to give field guidance regarding a new greenhouse, the Korean Central New Agency said Monday.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREA RESPONDS TO INT'L CRITICISM ON HUMAN RIGHTS: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that citing interviews with about 50 DPRK defectors who fled between 2007 and 2008, the Korea Institute for National Unification said in its "White Paper on Human Rights in North Korea 2009" that the DPRK appears to be mindful of criticism from the international community about its human rights condition and has responded with limited changes. Those interviewed said they had witnessed fewer public executions than before. The report also noted changes in the legal system in recent years in favor of human rights.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. ROK-Russian Energy Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, RUSSIA TO PUSH GAS PIPELINE", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak and visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday discussed the ROK importing Russian natural gas via gas pipelines running through the DPRK. Lee said the project could be of great help to DPRK as well, because it would earn it a huge amount of money.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. US Military in ROK

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "USFK TO HOLD CRIME PREVENTION TRAINING", Seoul, 2009/04/24) reported that U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) Commander Gen. Walter Sharp imposed a stricter one-day curfew on servicemembers Friday as part of a program to help combat an off-post increase in the number of crimes since the later weekend curfew began last August. The commander announced a 10 p.m. curfew and a four-hour "Stand Down for Standards" training session on behavior issues, USFK officials said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. ROK Military

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "S. KOREA TO BUILD NAVAL BASE ON RESORT ISLAND AMID OPPOSITION", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that the ROK said Monday it will construct a new naval base on Jeju by 2014. The 1.2-kilometer-wide base will be designed to accommodate both naval ships and cruise liners, the Ministry of National Defense said in a statement. "We will continue to work with the Jeju government to convince the local residents the base is in their interest," Lee Jin-won, who oversees the matter at the defense ministry, said in Seoul.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. ROK Renewable Energy

Korea Times (Kim Tong-hyung, "PLASTIC SOLAR CELLS GET NEEDED JOLT", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that Lee Kwang-hee, a professor of materials science at the Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology (GIST), said US and ROK scientists have engineered an approach that will lead to improved solar cells with power-conversion efficiencies of more than 6 percent. Lee claimed that the recent study, published in peer-review journal Nature Photonics, marks an advancement in efforts to make plastic cells commercially viable.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. ROK Whaling

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "SEOUL SEEKS RESUMPTION OF WHALING", Seoul, 2009/04/26) reported that the ROK plans to ask the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to allow it to resume whaling on a limited basis, a government official said Sunday. "Before the ban, South Korea had bigger whaling vessels than Japan did. But now, there is not a single whaler left," said an official at the Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. ``We are in a situation where we cannot completely ignore steady calls from fishermen in Ulsan and other southwestern regions." ``We share a whale fishing history with Japan. So, if Japan is allowed to resume whaling, there should be no reason to stop our request," the official added.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. ROK Pandemic Response

Arirang News ("KOREA INSPECTS TRAVELERS FOR SWINE FLU", Seoul, 2009/04/27) reported that ROK authorities say they are checking all passengers arriving from the U.S. to check for any flu symptoms. Anyone testing positive for the swine flu will be quarantined.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. Japan Pandemic Response

Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TAKES STEPS TO KEEP OUT SWINE FLU", Tokyo, 2009/04/27) reported that Japan on Sunday strengthened measures to prevent swine flu from entering the country following reports that an outbreak killed dozens of people in Mexico and had spread to the United States. Prime Minister Taro Aso told Tetsuro Ito, the Cabinet's crisis management officer, to increase information gathering on the disease and to keep the public informed. He also urged close cooperation with other countries.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. Japan on Climate Change

Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN'S DRAFT PRESSES CHINA, INDIA TO CURB CO2 EMISSIONS", Tokyo, 2009/04/27) reported that Japan presented its draft for a climate change protocol to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol from 2013 to the U.N. Secretariat for the Framework Convention on Climate Change on Friday. The proposal urges not only advanced nations, but also emerging economies, like

the PRC and India, and developing countries to curb their greenhouse gas emissions. "Setting up a comprehensive framework for all nations to take part is a straightforward tactic," said a senior official of the Foreign Ministry.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT TO PROVIDE 4 BIL. YEN FOR ANTIPIRACY EFFORTS", Tokyo, 2009/04/27) reported that the Japan government is likely to incorporate about 4 billion yen into the fiscal 2009 supplementary budget to fund antipiracy operations off the coast of Somalia. The additional funds include more than 2 billion yen to improve public safety and to provide humanitarian assistance in Somalia and more than 1 billion yen to be given to the International Maritime Organization, which is helping coordinate antipiracy measures in the region.

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. Cross Strait Relations

BBC ("CHINA AND TAIWAN INVESTMENT DEAL", 2009/04/26) reported that Chiang Pin-kung of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation signed agreements with Chen Yunlin of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits to allow investment across the Taiwan Strait. In a joint statement they pledged to "realise the normalisation of cross-strait economic ties". The two sides said that they faced a "rare and historic opportunity" and that they would "encourage and promote mainland businesses to... invest in Taiwan".

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France-Presse ("TIBETAN STUDENTS PROTEST IN CHINA", Beijing, 2009/04/26) reported that hundreds of students at a Tibetan school in Gansu province held a protest over education conditions, locals and an overseas Tibetan group said Saturday. The protest took place Friday morning among Tibetan students at the Xiahe middle school. "The students protested on Friday. There were no protests today," the proprietor of a local hotel said by telephone. "There were a few police, but no violence. Everything is quiet."

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. US PRC Detainees

Los Angeles Times (Julian E. Barnes, "U.S. PLANS TO ACCEPT SEVERAL CHINESE MUSLIMS FROM GUANTANAMO", Washington, 2009/04/24) reported that the Obama administration is preparing to admit into the United States as many as seven PRC Muslims who have been imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, according to current and former U.S. officials. The decision to release the Uighurs is not final and faces challenges from within the government, as well as likely public opposition. Among government agencies, the Homeland Security Department has registered

concerns about the plan. The move would also incense PRC officials, who want them handed over for investigation.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. PRC Report

23. PRC Nuclear Power

Xinhua Net ("INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON NUCLEAR ENERGY ISSUES PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT", 2009/04/25) reported that the International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century ended Wednesday with a statement stressing international cooperation. The international community should continue strengthening cooperation on research and development of advanced nuclear technologies and concerted efforts on non-proliferation, the statement said. Each country should take responsibility for the safe management of spent nuclear fuel, which for some countries included reprocessing and recycling, as well as the disposal of radioactive waste, it said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

24. PRC Social Welfare

Xinhua Net ("CHINA TO FURTHER DEVELOP RURAL SOCIAL SECURITY FRAMEWORK", 2009/04/25) reported that the PRC will further improve its rural social security framework, Minister of Civil Affairs Li Xueju said Wednesday. Li said a basic social security framework comprising the subsistence allowance, cooperative medical care, medical assistance and disaster relief systems had been set up in China's vast rural areas. But rural social security work still faced many problems, such as unbalanced regional development, backward system construction and weak management at the grassroots level. Li vowed to further support rural social security work in the years to come, increase investment and extend welfare to more farmers.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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