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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK on Six Party Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA THREATENS END TO 6-PARTY TALKS", Seoul, 2009/03/27) reported that a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said "even a word" by the UN Security Council about "the peaceful launch of a satellite" would constitute "violent hostility." The moment that the "spirit of mutual respect and equality" enshrined in the Sept. 19, 2005 statement of principles for scrapping the DPRK's nuclear program is denied, the six-party talks are over. Progress made thus far will also be reversed, and the DPRK will take "strong measures necessary to protect itself," the spokesman said.

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2. DPRK Missile Program

IFES NK Brief ("SATELLITES AND SALADS AS THE DPRK MOVES TOWARD CONSTRUCTION OF A STRONG AND POWERFUL NATION", Seoul, 2009/03/26) reported that the Choson Sinbo, the newspaper of the pro-Pyongyang 'General Association of Korean Residents in Japan', carried an article emphasizing that the launch of the satellite will be an important step in the construction of a 'Strong and Prosperous Nation' by the year 2012. The article, carrying the title, "Dream," stated that "those who are clamoring that a missile and a satellite are the same" were trying to "steal away even the right to space development." The paper went on to state that the children of the DPRK would not have their dream of freely traveling to space "snatched away," that the young would take delight in picking out the Kwangmyongsong 2 amongst the stars in the night sky, and that the next generation would further advance the DPRK's space exploration, "not as a dream, but as a reality".

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3. Japan on DPRK Missile Program

BBC ("JAPAN TO 'DESTROY' N. KOREA ROCKET", Tokyo, 2009/03/27) reported that Japan's Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada issued orders to mobilise Japan's missile defence shield after a meeting with Prime Minister Taro Aso and cabinet ministers. "We will do our best to handle any flying object from North Korea in order to assure the Japanese people's safety and security," said Hamada. "A satellite or a missile - we are displeased with anything that is going to fly over our land, and such an action must be stopped."

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4. US on DPRK Missile Program

Yomiuri Shimbun ("U.S. DESTROYERS DEPLOYED FOR DPRK ROCKET LAUNCH", Tokyo, 2009/03/27) reported that according to sources, the U.S. Navy has deployed at least five Aegis-guided destroyers, all of them believed to be equipped with the Standard Missile-3, which can intercept ballistic missiles in waters surrounding Japan. Three destroyers of the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet have entered Sasebo Port in Nagasaki since Monday. Two left the port Wednesday morning, and another destroyer moored at Aomori Port left Thursday afternoon. The three vessels are expected to operate somewhere in the Sea of Japan or the Pacific Ocean near Japan.

Yonhap ("U.S. TO BRING N. KOREA'S ROCKET LAUNCH TO U.N.: STATE DEPT.", Washington, 2009/03/27) reported that the United States Thursday reiterated that it will bring any launch of a rocket by the DPRK to the U.N. Security Council for possible sanctions. "I'm not going to preview what reaction might occur upon a possible launch by North Korea," State Department deputy spokesman Gordon Duguid said. "However, if we are talking about the facts of a launch, it would be in violation, in our view, of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Therefore, the place to pursue a reaction would be through the U.N. Security Council."

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5. ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young , "SEOUL TO RAISE ROCKET ISSUE WITH UN", Seoul, 2009/03/26) reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesman Moon Tae-young on Thursday told reporters that if the DPRK launches a rocket, the government will raise the issue with the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) after consultation with other countries. Moon said, ``Whether it's a satellite or a missile, the launch would apparently violate UNSC Resolution 1718 because the two are using the same launch pad.'' Defense Ministry spokesman Won Tae-jae agreed that the planned rocket launch will be a ``serious challenge and provocation'' to security in Northeast Asia as well as on the Korean Peninsula. ``We call on the North to halt the alleged rocket launch,'' he told reporters, claiming it would violate the resolution.

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun , "ALLIES AGONIZE OVER POST-LAUNCH STEPS", Seoul, 2009/03/27) reported that chief nuclear negotiator Wi Sung-lac will meet with his American and Japanese counterparts in Washington on Friday to discuss how to deal with the DPRK's plans for a rocket-launch next month. "The denuclearization plans for North Korea will be at the top of the agenda, along with the upcoming rocket-launch, but it seems that the focus of the discussions will shift to post-launch measures, as the North has made its intentions to push ahead with the launch pretty clear," said one high-ranking Foreign Ministry official. "China is basically in agreement that the launch would not be beneficial for the security of the Korean Peninsula or Northeast Asia, but we did see some differences over the level of post-launch sanctions," the official said.

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6. DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap ("U.N. COMMISSION ADOPTS RESOLUTION CONDEMNING N. KOREA'S RIGHTS SITUATION", 2009/03/27) reported that the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Thursday adopted a resolution condemning human rights abuses in the DPRK and demanding that the state allow entry of a U.N. special rapporteur. The resolution, co-sponsored by the European Union and the ROK, was approved by a vote of 26-6 with 15 abstentions at a commission meeting at the U.N. headquarters. Among the opposition were the PRC and Russia. The ROK Foreign Ministry said, "Human rights is a common value of the human being and should be separated from other issues and dealt with for itself."

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7. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("SATELLITES AND SALADS AS THE DPRK MOVES TOWARD CONSTRUCTION OF A STRONG AND POWERFUL NATION", Seoul, 2009/03/26) reported that the DPRK online magazine “Uriminjokkiri” announced on March 21 that renovations have been completed on eighteen restaurants in Pyongyang’s most famous dining district. The website stated, “The interiors and exteriors of eighteen restaurants have been renovated and vanguard operating equipment has been installed.” It reported that the work was expected to take 2-3 years, but all renovations and upgrades have been made in the dining areas, kitchens, and storefronts in only 12 months.

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8. ROK Role in Afghanistan

Yonhap ("S. KOREAN FM TO ATTEND MEETING ON AFGHANISTAN IN NETHERLANDS", Seoul, 2009/03/26) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan will reaffirm Seoul's support for reconstruction in Afghanistan during an international conference to be held in the Netherlands later this month. "In the upcoming conference, (related countries) will review a range of issues on Afghanistan's politics, security, and development," ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said. "Efficient measures for the country's sustainable security and stabilization as well as economic and social development will be discussed comprehensively."

Donga Ilbo ("KOREA TO REDEPLOY TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN: SOURCE", Seoul, 2009/03/27) reported that the ROK will reportedly send troops to Afghanistan, a high-ranking Korean government source said. “As 42 countries have dispatched troops to Afghanistan, Korea, a close ally of the United States and a country with both economic and military prowess, can no longer delay troop dispatch or turn a deaf ear to the U.S. request,” the official said. “Though we`ve yet to get an official request from Washington, it has asked for our help directly and indirectly. So the government has decided to send troops. Like the Zaytun unit, military engineers will comprise most of the unit`s members and the number will likely be under 1,000,” he added.

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9. ROK Anti-Terrorism

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "KOREAN ANTI-TERRORISM BILL WINS U.N. SUPPORT", Seoul, 2009/03/27) reported that Mike Smith, executive director of the U.N. Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, said Thursday the ROK's latest efforts to pass a bill for countering international terrorism would be a step in the right direction. "We found in our experience that the passage of such a legislation is extremely useful in providing the underpinning for whatever measures the government needs to take to address the terrorism problems. We're very encouraged to see the government is moving ahead with that bill," Smith said. "The ROK is a very globalist sort of country. You have interests all over the world. You have business interests all over the world, Koreans travel all over the world, and therefore inevitably there is always the possibility of being caught up in a terrorist attack," Smith said.

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10. Japanese Politics

Yomiuri Shimbun ("SURVEY: 68% OPPOSE OZAWA AS DPJ HEAD", Tokyo, 2009/03/27) reported that sixty-eight percent of eligible Japanese voters are dissatisfied with Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa's decision to stay on as party leader, according to a Yomiuri Shimbun opinion poll. 22 percent of respondents approved of the decision. When asked to choose who was best suited to run the country, Prime Minister Taro Aso or Ozawa, 32 percent picked Aso, while 23 percent Ozawa--reversing the results of a similar survey held March 6-8. Concerning the proportional representation ballot in the next House of Representatives election, 31 percent said they would vote for the DPJ, marking a fall of three percentage points from the previous survey. Another 31 percent--a rise of seven percentage points--said they would back the LDP.

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11. Japan in IAEA

BBC ("UN STRUGGLES TO REPLACE EL BARADEI", Vienna, 2009/03/26) reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has failed to elect a successor to director Mohammed ElBaradei. After three rounds of inconclusive voting in Vienna on the two candidates vying to succeed him, the 35-member board decided to begin again on Friday. Japan's Yukiya Amano led South Africa's Abdul Samad Minty but did not get the required two-thirds majority.

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12. Japanese Flag Controversy

New York Times (Hiroko Tabuchi, "JAPANESE COURT REJECT TEACHERS' SUIT OVER FLAG", Tokyo, 2009/03/26) reported that a court on Thursday rejected a lawsuit filed by teachers punished for refusing to sing the national anthem and salute Japan's flag. A group of 172 teachers and staff members said the Tokyo Board of Education breached the Japanese Constitution when it censured them for refusing to follow the directives, and they demanded damages of 550,000 yen, or nearly $5,600, each. Shigeru Nakanishi, the presiding judge of the Tokyo District Court, said the board's

directive “does not constitute an act of forcing students to follow a certain philosophy,” and it is “necessary for schools to require uniformity at group-oriented ceremonies.”

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13. PRC Tibet Issue

Reuters ("CHINA'S PANCHEN LAMA CRITICIZES 'UNSCRUPULOUS' FOES", Beijing, 2009/03/27) reported that Panchen Lama Gyaltsen Norbue said Tibet faces assaults on stability from an "unscrupulous" individual. "I want to sincerely thank the Communist Party for giving me a pair of clear eyes, so I can tell right from wrong," the Panchen Lama told a forum for Tibetan Serfs' Emancipation Day. "I can clearly recognize who truly loves and protects the Tibetan people, and who for personal motives unscrupulously wrecks Tibet's tranquility and stability," he added.

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14. PRC Public Health

Associated Press (Chi-Chi Zhang, "CHINA: HAND, FOOT AND MOUTH VIRUS KILLS 18 KIDS", Beijing, 2009/03/27) reported that PRC health officials said Friday that hand, foot and mouth disease has sickened 41,000 people across the country and killed 18 children so far this year. The outbreak appears more widespread than in recent years, based on previously released data, with around twice the number of people infected than during the same period last year. Li Xinwang, a doctor at Beijing's Ditan Hospital, said the peak season for the spread of the virus is usually May through July, but that this year's early spike in cases indicates the toll will likely be higher than average. He attributed the high number of cases early in the year to "dramatic temperature fluctuations" which helped spread the virus, particularly in rural areas where sanitation is poor and health care is substandard.

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II. PRC Report

15. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Jinan Times (Sun Zhenzhen, "JINAN CITY HOSTS CARING FOR AUTISTIC CHILDREN EVENT", 2009/03/24) reported that April 2nd is the second “World Autism Awareness Day”. Disabled Rehabilitation Center and Tomorrow Children Rehabilitation Center in Jinan city of Shandong province co-hose a Caring for Autistic Children Event today. The sponsors invite medical experts to diagnose the disease freely for autistic children, and hope to raise the awareness of autism and how it affects individuals and their families.

Evening News ("VOLUNTEERS DONATE TIME TO MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN", 2009/03/25) reported that over 40 young volunteers spent half a day’s time playing games with

mentally retarded children in Sunshine School in Huangpu District, Shanghai city. The sponsor, Huangpu Youth Federation, said they have carried out this event three times since 2006. Every March, they will organize volunteers to the Sunshine School, giving presents and playing games with the children.

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16. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Hebei Daily ("RURAL TREE PLANTING ASSOCIATION PLANT 50,000 TREES A YEAR", 2009/03/25) reported that by establishing the Tree Planting Association, villagers in Dacheng County, Hebei province has successfully planted 50,000 trees last year. The Association is a private public welfare organization, led by the Village Committee and joined by villagers voluntarily. The process from raising fund, planting, to management is put in the charge of special persons. As at now, there are 492 environmental protection volunteers in the Association.

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