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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK-Iran Nuclear Cooperation

Moscow Times ("NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR AFFAIR WITH IRAN ", 2010/04/27) reported that neither the New START nor the upcoming nonproliferation conference will have much impact on today's most perilous threat: the nuclear honeymoon between an Iran determined to acquire a nuclear weapons capacity and a DPRK willing to sell Iran much of that capacity for hard currency. When Israel attacked a nuclear facility in Syria in September 2007, it was revealed that DPRK nationals were involved in developing the site in cooperation with the Syria National Technical Research Center. In 2002, it was estimated that more than 120 DPRK nationals were working at more than 10 locations across Iran that were relevant to missile or nuclear development.

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2. DPRK Humanitarian Aid

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "NKOREA LAUNCHES TELEMEDICINE NETWORK WITH WHO HELP", 2010/04/27) reported that the DPRK formally launched a medical videoconference network Tuesday aimed at giving smaller, rural hospitals access to specialists in the capital Pyongyang with the help of the World Health Organization. WHO has been providing cameras, computers and other equipment to the DPRK to help the country connect a main hospital in Pyongyang with medical facilities in 10 provinces. The system is designed to allow doctors to talk to each other to provide additional services to rural patients. On Tuesday, DPRK health officials and visiting WHO Director-General Margaret Chan held the formal inaugural ceremony for the system at the Kim Man Yu hospital in Pyongyang, according to footage from broadcaster APTN.

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3. DPRK Defector Issue

Compass Direct News ("CHINA COMPLICIT IN SUFFERING OF NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES ", 2010/04/27) reported that refugees from the DPRK and activists are gathering in Seoul this week to highlight human rights violations in the nation. But their attention is also turning to the PRC, which they say is often complicit in DPRK refugees' suffering. Non-governmental organziations (NGOs) estimate anywhere from 30,000 to 250,000 refugees from the DPRK are living in the PRC, either in border areas or deeper inland. But the PRC remains impervious to the refugees' plight. "China fears being flooded by refugees if they show compassion," said Suzanne Scholte, co-chair of the North Korea Freedom Coalition. "But refugee flows aren't going to collapse the regime. If that was going to happen, it would have happened already during the famine, so their argument doesn't hold water."

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4. DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("DEFECTORS RECOUNT NIGHTMARE IN N.KOREAN CAMPS", 2010/04/27) reported that tales of unimaginable suffering were at the core of testimony from former inmates of the DPRK's political concentration camps at a press conference Monday. "I ate whatever I could put into my mouth, except stones," recalled an inmate at the Yodok camp between 2000 and 2002. "Grain stock was checked every day and we were kept away from grains, so you had this extreme pain of being unable to eat them even if they were within sight," he said. "As starving inmates surreptitiously ate seeds, security guards sprayed pesticides on the seeds, so many died from eating the poisoned seeds." The event was organized by activist group Democracy Network against North Korean Gulag at the Seoul Press Center.

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times ("LEE MAY MEET NK'S NO. 2 MAN IN SHANGHAI", 2010/04/27) reported that President Lee Myung-bak is expected to meet with the DPRK's No. 2 leader, Kim Yong-nam, in Shanghai Friday when they participate in the opening ceremony of the 2010 World Expo, diplomatic sources here said Tuesday. Lee and Kim are among the state guests who have been invited by PRC President Hu Jintao to the opening ceremony. After the ceremony, they will attend a reception hosted by the PRC leader for foreign guests. ``It appears very likely that Lee and Kim will meet briefly in Shanghai,'' a source said. ``Even if the meeting takes place, they won't have enough time to discuss the ongoing inter-Korean issues. It would have symbolic significance, though.''

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6. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA FREEZES MORE S. KOREAN ASSETS AT JOINT RESORT: OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2010/04/28) reported that the DPRK froze more ROK assets, including a hotel and a restaurant, at the Mt. Kumgang resort on Wednesday, an official said. Unification Ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo said assets frozen by the DPRK on Wednesday included a restaurant, a

beachside hotel and parts of an 18-hole golf course, among others. She said the DPRK move violates inter-Korean agreements and international trade norms, and that her government will monitor them closely before announcing its response. "At an appropriate time, the government will be able to announce proper countermeasures," she said in a briefing.

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7. ROK Naval Ship Sinking

JoongAng Daily ("NORTH BRAGGING ABOUT CHEONAN ATTACK", 2010/04/27) reported that a ruling party official has said its military has recently taken “great revenge” on the ROK, an online news outlet reported yesterday. Quoting its source in the DPRK, The Daily NK reported that a Workers’ Party official last Saturday visited party members working at a factory for a weekly seminar and told the audience: “The heroic People’s Army recently took great revenge on the enemies, and South Korea is now shaking with fear of our independent military force.” Another source told The Daily NK that “most” DPRK nationals thought their country’s navy sank the Cheonan and that their government wasn’t trying to mute rumors of its involvement.

Agence France-Presse ("'STRAY S.KOREAN MINE COULD NOT HAVE SUNK SHIP'", Seoul, 2010/04/28) reported that a stray ROK mine could not have sunk one of the country's warships, the defence ministry said Wednesday. "Its technically not possible," said spokesman Won Tae-Jae. The ROK laid around 100 mines near the Yellow Sea border in the 1970s before retrieving them in 2008. Won, citing information from a private explosives firm, said that even if one of the mines had been overlooked it could not have exploded now because additional wiring is needed to make them operational. And the ROK's mines were placed in a different area to where the Cheonan went down, he said.

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8. ROK Response to Naval Ship Sinking

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "SEOUL SEEKS SUPPORT OF CHINA, RUSSIA TO REFER WARSHIP SINKING TO U.N.", Seoul, 2010/04/28) reported that the ROK will engage in prior consultations with the PRC and Russia in referring last month's warship sinking to the United Nations, a ranking official said Wednesday. Seoul will also inform the two countries of the results of its investigation into the sinking of Cheonan and seek their support in actions against those responsible, the official said. "There is a need to adequately brief China and Russia (before taking the issue to the U.N. Security Council) because, unlike the United States, the countries are not directly involved in the investigation and may have different security interests," the official said.

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9. US on ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Agence France Presse ("US CAUTIOUS AFTER SKOREA SUGGESTS TORPEDO SUNK WARSHIP", 2010/04/27) reported that the United States reacted cautiously to remarks from a cabinet minister in Seoul suggesting a torpedo sunk a ROK warship near the disputed border with the DPRK. "I think it was a conditional statement" by the ROK’s defense minister, State Department spokesman Philip

Crowley told reporters. "I don't know that the investigation has arrived at that final judgment." He added: "When it does, we'll draw implications from it." White House spokesman Robert Gibbs meanwhile said that Washington had been cooperating with its ally ROK in the investigation into the corvette's sinking on March 26, but would not be drawn on a possible US response.

Korea Times ("US ASKS CHINA TO TAKE ROLE AFTER CHEONAN PROBE", 2010/04/27) reported that the United States is urging the PRC to take a constructive role when the probe into the sinking of the ROK Navy vessel Cheonan is concluded, a senior U.S. diplomat said. "We explained our role in taking recovery efforts and encouraged China to play a responsible role," Kurt Campbell said. "China expressed deep concerns for the loss of life and the tragedy. I think they are watching carefully in terms of how this process is playing out."

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10. ROK Military

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA UNLIKELY TO REACT MILITARILY TO SHIP SINKING: EXPERT", 2010/04/27) reported that the ROK will not likely take military action even if it confirms the DPRK's involvement in the sinking of a ROK warship on the disputed sea border last month, a scholar said Tuesday. "It appears the public is angry, but not angry enough to advocate military strikes against North Korea that could escalate into an unpredictable all-out conflict," Bruce Klingner, senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation, said. "At this point, it appears unlikely for Seoul to contemplate a military attack. There is repeated precedent for both South Korea and the US not responding militarily to previous North Korean attacks, even when they resulted in loss of life."

Chosun Ilbo ("EMERGENCY MEETING OF COMMANDING OFFICERS NEXT WEEK", 2010/04/27) reported that the ROK military will convene an emergency meeting of top commanding officers next week to discuss a response to the sinking of the Cheonan. "The meeting will discuss major problems in dealing with the sinking and ways to reinforce military readiness and discipline, plus other complementary measures," said Defense Ministry spokesman Won Tae-jae. After collecting commanders' views at the meeting, the military is expected to carry out a punitive personnel reshuffle, possibly in mid-May when an investigation of the shipwreck by the Board of Audit and Inspection is halfway through.

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11. ROK Defense

Yonhap News ("SHIP SINKING REVEALS HOLE IN S. KOREA'S NAVAL DEFENSE", 2010/04/27) reported that last month's deadly sinking of a naval ship should serve as a wake-up call to the ROK that its naval defense against the the DPRK is far from watertight and vulnerable especially to submarine infiltrations, experts said Tuesday. "North Korea's submarine capabilities are far greater than we estimate," a former senior ROK navy commander said. "They began deploying submarines 30 years earlier than we did. They have been designing and building submarines themselves for 20 years. It would take at least 10 more years for us to catch up with the North."

Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO BOLSTER SECURITY APPARATUS", 2010/04/27) reported that the

presidential office of Cheong Wa Dae appeared to be mulling over reviving the National Security Council secretariat and other measures for bolstering national security in the face of growing speculation that the DPRK may have masterminded the sinking of ROK warship last month. “Reviving the NSC may not be the only answer, but it’s clear that the presidential office is acutely aware that measures are in order to reinforce efficiency in national defense,” said Baek Seung-joo, a DPRK specialist at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses.

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12. ROK Anti-Piracy Operations

Stars and Stripes ("SOUTH KOREA TAKES TASK FORCE 151 HELM ", 2010/04/27) reported that the ROK navy has assumed command of Combined Task Force 151, the international group of military personnel conducting counterpiracy operations off the eastern coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, officials stated in a news release. Rear Adm. Boem-rim Lee took command Wednesday. He replaces Rear Adm. Bernard Miranda, of the Singapore navy, who commanded the task force since January, according to a Combined Maritime Forces news release.

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13. USFJ Base Relocation

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN FM SAYS 'PUZZLED' BY US ENVOY IN BASE ROW", 2010/04/27) reported that Japan on Tuesday dampened hopes of speedy progress in a long-simmering row over an unpopular American military airbase, following more upbeat comments from a senior US envoy headed to Tokyo. Kurt Campbell, the top US diplomat for East Asian and Pacific affairs, earlier told the Asahi Shimbun daily that Washington had received "serious proposals from the Japanese government that included promising elements". Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said he was "puzzled by the comments". "I don't think the remarks are appropriate," Okada said as he left open whether he would meet the US envoy before flying off to Tanzania on Wednesday.

Agence France Presse ("US ENVOY HEADS TO JAPAN FOR BASE ROW TALKS", 2010/04/27) reported that a top US envoy was heading to Japan Tuesday for talks on a long-simmering row over an unpopular American military airbase, as both sides signalled gradual progress toward a resolution. Kurt Campbell, US assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said Washington had now received "serious proposals from the Japanese government that included promising elements." Yet both sides declined to give away details of how they intend to end the dispute that has strained ties between the allies.

Kyodo News ("HATOYAMA WANTS TO PUT FINAL TOUCHES TO GOV'T PROPOSAL FOR FUTEMMA", 2010/04/27) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said Tuesday he wants to put the final touches soon to a government proposal on where to move the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture. But he denied that the Japanese government plans to present the proposal to Kurt Campbell, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, who is set to hold talks with Japanese Foreign Ministry officials in Tokyo on Wednesday. "There's no change in the current situation, in which we are seriously considering a government proposal," the prime minister told reporters in the morning. "We're at the stage where I hope to put the final touches to it."

Kyodo News ("OKINAWA MAYORS STAGE SIT-IN AT DIET TO SEEK U.S. BASE REMOVAL", 2010/04/27) reported that Okinawa mayors and citizens staged a sit-in in front of Diet members' buildings on Tuesday to call for the relocation of a U.S. Marine base out of the southernmost prefecture, as the government struggles to solve the issue by the self-imposed deadline of May 31. Mayor Yoichi Iha of Ginowan, the city hosting the Futemma facility, criticized the Japanese and U.S. governments for the lack of progress in implementing the agreed-on return of the land occupied by the U.S. facility.

Kyodo ("HATOYAMA TO VISIT OKINAWA ON MAY 4 TO DISCUSS FUTEMMA ", Tokyo, 2010/04/28) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama is set to visit Okinawa Prefecture on May 4 to hold talks with the local governor, government sources said Wednesday. Hatoyama is hoping to explain to Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima about a plan that is believed to add an environmental angle to the existing Japan-U.S. accord 2006 to relocate the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station within Okinawa. Governor Nakaima told reporters in Okinawa that he will meet with the prime minister if the government so desires, saying, ''Certainly I will accept (a request to meet). It would be rude not to meet the prime minister.''

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14. Japan-US Security Alliance

Kyodo News ("OKADA STRESSES U.S. MARINES' ROLE FOR JAPAN'S DEFENSE ", 2010/04/27) reported that Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada told representatives from Okinawa on Tuesday that U.S. Marines are ''necessary deterrence'' to defend the lives of Japanese and their property against threats from overseas, as Okinawa politicians and citizens called for the removal of a Marine base from the prefecture. Zenshin Takamine, chairman of the Okinawa prefectural assembly, quoted Okada as saying he does not think of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station abroad and that the Marines' presence is indispensable as the nation's Self-Defense Force alone cannot defend Japan.

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15. Japan Politics

Financial Times ("PANEL CALLS FOR OZAWA TO BE CHARGED", 2010/04/27) reported that a citizens' judicial review committee on Tuesday demanded the indictment of Ichiro Ozawa, widely seen as Japan's most influential politician, over a controversial land deal by his fundraising group. The decision by the panel legally requires prosecutors to review their February decision not to charge Mr Ozawa with political funding violations. It is likely to deal a heavy blow to the already slumping popularity of the ruling Democratic party and will revive pressure on Mr Ozawa to resign as its secretary-general ahead of a crucial summer election.

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16. Japan Nuclear Energy

Kyodo News ("PROTOTYPE NUKE REACTOR MONJU SUFFERS GLITCH IN COOLANT LEAK DETECTOR", 2010/04/27) reported that the Monju prototype nuclear power reactor, gearing up for a

restart soon, suffered a temporary glitch in a coolant leakage detector but it had no negative impact on the environment, the Japan Atomic Energy Agency said Tuesday. The government-affiliated agency said the sodium detector, housed in a reactor auxiliary building at the Monju center in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, came to a halt after a fan motor overheated, triggering an alarm at 11:59 p.m. Monday. The atomic energy agency said it is investigating the cause of overheating. But the nature of the cause could impact the Monju reactor's resumption, expected in early May at the earliest.

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17. Japan Climate Change

United Press International ("JAPAN AID PROGRAM EXPLAINED", 2010/04/27) reported that Japan's $15 billion climate aid to poor and vulnerable nations will depend on their support for the Copenhagen Accord, the environment minister said Tuesday. Speaking to reporters in Tokyo, Minister Sakihito Ozawa explained the requirements of the program, which runs through 2012. He said whether the recipient countries have endorsed the Copenhagen climate change accord -- reached at the U.N. conference in December -- would be an "important factor" when distributing aid to help tackle climate change issues, Kyodo News reported. The aid program can include major greenhouse gas emitters in addition to less developed African and vulnerable island nations, the report said.

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18. Sino-Japan Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA ENVOY BLAMES JAPAN FOR NAVAL FLY-BY", 2010/04/27) reported that Beijing's new ambassador to Tokyo on Tuesday rejected a protest over PRC military helicopters twice making fly-bys close to Japanese naval destroyers, blaming Japan for the row. The PRC envoy, Cheng Yonghua, also warned that the US-Japanese security alliance under which the United States operates dozens of bases in Japan, should not target the PRC, saying that "the Cold War structure is over". The PRC's ambassador blamed the tense incident on the Japanese destroyer and patrol aircraft that he said had followed the PRC flotilla "all the way into the Pacific". "That breaches the spirit of mutual understanding and mutual trust."

Kyodo News ("TOKYO SHOULD TALK TO BEIJING BEFORE SEABED EXPLORATION: STATE MEDIA", 2010/04/27) reported that an unilateral move by Tokyo to scour the seabed for resources near the disputed Diaoyu Islands in the East China Sea may likely "trigger a clash" with Beijing, state-run media quoted PRC analysts as saying Tuesday. The PRC will "definitely oppose the plan," Zhou Yongsheng, a professor of Japanese studies at the China Foreign Affairs University, was quoted as saying in a China Daily report. Tokyo should first talk to Beijing if it is proceeding with its exploration, Zhou said.

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19. PRC Communications Control

Associated Press ("CHINA WANTS TELECOM COMPANIES TO INFORM ON CLIENTS", 2010/04/27)

reported that the PRC is poised to strengthen a law to require telecommunications and Internet companies to inform on customers who discuss state secrets. A draft of amendments to the Law on Guarding State Secrets submitted to the PRC's top legislature for review will make more explicit the requirement that telecoms operators and Internet service providers help police and state security departments in investigations about leaks of state secrets, the state-run China Daily newspaper said. The new draft maintains a wide scope, defining state secrets as: "information that concerns state security and interests and, if leaked, would damage state security and interests in the areas of politics, economy and national defense, among others," Xinhua said.

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20. Cross-Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN'S MILITARY SIMULATES CHINESE AIR ATTACK", 2010/04/27) reported that Taiwan's military Tuesday lifted the veil on how it would respond to a massive PRC air attack, showing that the island still takes the risk of war very seriously despite improving ties. Journalists were invited for the first time to a drill simulating aerial assaults on Taiwan's major air bases and testing the military's ability to recover quickly from such a shock. The manoeuvres, staged at a military air base near Hualien city in eastern Taiwan, played out a scenario in which runways were bombed by waves of bombers or missiles from the mainland. "The drill is aimed to test our ability to repair runways as soon as possible so that fighter jets can take off should the air base be attacked," air force spokesman Lieutenant General Pan Kung-hsiao told reporters.

Associated Press ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT: CHINA TRADE PACT WILL HELP PEACE", 2010/04/27) reported that Taiwan's president said Tuesday that signing a partial free trade agreement with the PRC will help strengthen regional peace at a time when Beijing refuses to rule out the possibility of annexing Taiwan by force. The partial free trade agreement, or the Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement, is the centerpiece of his PRC engagement program. Speaking to reporters, Ma said he also envisioned the trade pact would help reduce tensions between Taiwan and the PRC -- which wants to unify with Taiwan using any possible means -- by allowing them to pursue common interests while disagreeing on sensitive political issues.

Taiwan News ("MILITARY: CHINA NAVY THREATENS EAST COAST OF TAIWAN: LIBERTY TIMES", 2010/04/27) reported that Chao Shih-chang, the Deputy Minister of National Defense, yesterday noted that the second ocean training of the PRC Navy might signify that the sea forces of the communist neighbor have had the capability to attack Taiwan east court, a strategic basis of the island, according to Liberty Times report. Lin Yu-fang, the ruling KMT Legislator, yesterday said that the East China Sea Fleet dispatched ten warships including two guided missile destroyers and three frigates to cruise in the Pacific Ocean in the middle of April. Chao admitted that the two naval exercises had indeed threatened the airports in Hualien and Taitung, two counties near the Pacific Ocean, and Taiwan's fleets posted along the east coast.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Public Health

China News Agency ("CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INVESTS 33 MLN RMB ON XIJIANG AIDS PROJECT", 2010/04/27) reported that the Yili AIDS Prevention Project was formally launched Monday in Yili county of Xijiang autonomous region. The project is financially supported by the central government, which will annually invest 11 million RMB for three years. As at the end of 2009, Yili county reported 9579 cases of AIDS infected persons.

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22. PRC Earthquake Reconstruction

Beijing Daily ("QINGHAI ESTABLISHES MONITORING GROUP FOR 8 BLN EARTHQUAKE FUND", 2010/04/27) reported that Yushu of Qinghai province has received earthquake relief funds and materials equivalent to about 8 billion RMB. In order to make better use of the charity fund, Qinghai government has established a monitoring group to follow up and oversee the use of funds.

Xinhua News Agency ("OVERSEAS TIBETANS DONATE FOR QUAKE-HIT YUSHU", 2010/04/27) reported that the U.S.-based China Overseas Tibetans Association has raised funds totaling 500,000 yuan for quake-hit Yushu of Qinghai Province. The donations will be channeled to the quake zone through relevant government agencies or philanthropic organizations in the PRC.

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