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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Ye Young-joon, "SIX-PARTY BREAKTHROUGH COULD HAPPEN", 2008/04/02) reported that months-long negotiations to nudge the DPRK to fully declare its nuclear programs may be nearing an end and a long-anticipated breakthrough may be days ahead, sources in the ROK government said. Sources said negotiations between the United States and the DPRK over the DPRK's nuclear program declaration "have reached a final phase," suggesting Christopher Hill, the U.S. envoy for the nuclear talks, may meet with his DPRK counterpart Kim Gye-gwan during Hill's tour this week to Asian countries, including Indonesia and East Timor. "If they meet again this time, the meeting will not be for another negotiation but for striking a deal," the source said.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, "SOUTH SAYS IT WON'T BACK DOWN IN LETTER", 2008/04/03) reported that refusing demands for an apology, the ROK yesterday instead expressed "deep regret" about the criticism it received recently from the DPRK. "It is inappropriate for you to subjectively interpret our official's comments and take issue with them," according to the Defense Ministry letter. "Your subjective criticism and tension-creating actions are not helping peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, so stop them immediately." The letter was delivered from Major General Kwon Oh-sung, the ROK's chief negotiator for inter-Korean military talks, to his DPRK counterpart, Maj. General Kim Yong-chol. The Defense Ministry made the letter public in a release.

Yonhap ("S. KOREAN CIVIC DELEGATION IN N. KOREA TO DISCUSS SUMMIT CELEBRATION ", Seoul, 2008/04/02) reported that a six-member civilian delegation from the ROK arrived in the DPRK hoping to discuss the annual joint celebration of the 2000 inter-Korean summit with Pyongyang officials, ROK organizers said. The delegation, led by Paik Nak-cheong, an honorary professor at Seoul National University, travelled via an overland route to Mount Geumgang "for a broad range of talks on the future path of the pro-reunification movement," according to the South's organizing committee for the annual event. "We hope the delegation will discuss ways to jointly celebrate the 8th anniversary of the June 15 summit declaration and the first year of the October 4 summit declaration with the North Korean side during the visit," a committee member said. "The two sides may exchange opinions on the fast changing situation on the Korean Peninsula," the official added.

The Associated Press (Donald Kirk , "AS NORTH UPS THREATS, SOME S. KOREANS REMAIN FRIENDLY ", Mokpo, 2008/04/02) reported that the legacy of the Sunshine policy of reconciliation with the DPRK endures in this thriving southwestern seaport that spawned the career of former president Kim Dae Jung. Attitudes in this city in the depths of the Cholla region contrast with the rest of the country. Nationwide, feelings about the longtime approach are mixed - especially as the DPRK has revved up its rhetoric against the ROK in recent days. Yet, as the central government adopts a tough line toward the DPRK, people here in the wellspring of Mr. Kim's support revere the former leader as a hero for developing North-South relations after more than a half-century of war

and crisis.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("US URGES NKOREA TO MOVE QUICKLY ON NUKE DEAL ", Seoul, 2008/04/02) reported that the chief US negotiator on the DPRK urged the DPRK to come clean soon about its nuclear programmes, saying he was waiting for a move in the next few days. Christopher Hill said differences over the DPRK's promised nuclear declaration have narrowed but time is pressing. "We are very concerned that we really needed this to wrap up by the end of March. Here it is already after the end of March," Hill told reporters. "So we'll have to see whether we can hear anything new from the DPRK on this, really in the next few days," Hill said.

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4. DPRK Missile Program

Kyodo ("N. KOREA STILL DEVELOPING NUCLEAR-CAPABLE ICBM: U.S. OFFICIAL ", Washington, 2008/04/01) reported that the DPRK is still developing an intercontinental ballistic missile with nuclear capability, the head of the U.S. Defense Department's Missile Defense Agency said Tuesday. "North Korea's ballistic missile development and export activities remain especially troubling," Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry Obering said at a congressional hearing. "Pyongyang continues to press forward with the development of a nuclear-capable ICBM."

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5. ROK Bird Flu Outbreak

Korea Times (Bae Ji-sook, "SUSPECTED BIRD FLU CASE FOUND", 2008/04/02) reported that a suspected case of avian influenza has been reported at a farm in Gimje, North Jeolla Province, the government said Wednesday. The Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries said the owner of the farm reported that 150,000 poultry died suddenly on Tuesday. The ministry has conducted a preliminary test and said it has a positive diagnosis for the virus. It will announce the results of further tests to discover the strain of the bird flu on Friday.

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6. ROK-Japan Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN SEES NEW ERA IN SEOUL-TOKYO TIES ", 2008/04/02) reported that the Japanese government expects a "new era" in ties with the ROK, according to the Diplomatic Blue Book 2008 released on Tuesday. The prediction is based on a pledge by Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and President Lee Myung-bak shortly after Lee took office in February. On Japan's relations with the DPRK, the blue book said, "There has been no concrete progress in pending issues, including the issue of abductions by North Korea." It promises to seek "a solution to the abduction issue through Tokyo-Pyongyang dialogue, while maintaining close cooperation with the

participating countries in the six-party nuclear talks."

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7. US-Japan Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun (Hiromu Namiki , "EXPERT URGES REVITALIZED JAPAN-U.S. ALLIANCE", 2008/04/02) reported that Japan and the US should revitalize their alliance and build international institutions to contain the rise of the PRC and promote peace in the Asia-Pacific region, Kenneth B. Pyle, professor emeritus at Washington University, said Sunday. Pyle later told The Daily Yomiuri that the institutions need not be especially grand, saying, "It should initially be a focused institution dealing with concrete issues such as resource sharing, environment and particular security issues, and gradually develop into a larger institution."

Agence France-Presse (Harumi Ozawa , "US NAVY IMPOSES CURFEW IN JAPAN OVER SLAIN TAXI DRIVER ", Tokyo, 2008/04/02) reported that the US military slapped a night-time curfew on its biggest naval base in Japan on Wednesday after a US sailor reportedly admitted to stabbing a 61-year-old Japanese taxi driver to death. Troops and their families will be ordered to stay on the base or in off-base residences between the hours of 10:00 pm and 6:00 am until at least Monday, except for travel to work and "essential errands," a military statement said. The move follows the killing of Masaaki Takahashi, who was found dead last month with a knife in his neck in his parked taxi on a road near the Yokosuka military hub at the mouth of Tokyo Bay.

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8. PRC Unrest

The Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "WEST CHINA, TIBET UNREST TESTS BEIJING ", Beijing, 2008/04/01) reported that new separatist unrest was reported Wednesday among a Muslim minority group in far western PRC, posing another headache for Beijing as it seeks to control fallout from earlier anti-government protests in Tibet. The government has sought to dismiss the protests in Xinjiang as opportunistic, but observers have suggested that linking the two restive areas is a way to delegitimize grievances in both regions. Disturbances were reported at a weekly Sunday bazaar in the city of Hotan, deep in the Uighur cultural heartland in far-western Xinjiang, according to a statement on a local government Web site. An official with Hotan's government information office, Fu Chao, blamed the protest on Uighur separatists seizing on the Tibet unrest to generate publicity for their cause. Fu said several dozen people were taken into custody but most were later released.

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "CHINA'S LEADER ORDERS POLICE TO ENSURE OLYMPIC SECURITY", Shanghai, 2008/04/02) reported that the PRC president, Hu Jintao, has ordered his nation's security forces to place a top priority on the Olympic Games in August, saying that the PRC's international reputation is at stake. The PRC has increased its accusations that Tibetans are planning violent attacks in their quest for increased autonomy, which the Tibetans deny. "Security must take priority," Mr. Hu was quoted as saying in the People's Armed Police News, published by China's paramilitary police force. "Without security guarantees there cannot be a successful Olympic Games, and without security guarantees the national image will be lost."

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9. Sino-Nigerian Relations

The Financial Times (Matthew Green and Richard McGregor , "CHINA OFFERS NIGERIA \$50BN CREDIT", 2008/04/02) reported that the PRC has offered export guarantee facilities worth up to \$50bn to encourage investment in Nigeria in a bold strategy to woo Africa's biggest oil producer. Sinosure, the PRC's export credit guarantee agency, made the offer when Umaru Yar'Adua, Nigeria's president, led a delegation of oil industry and business leaders to Beijing last month. Shamsuddeen Usman, Nigeria's finance minister, told the Financial Times that Sinosure had offered \$40bn-\$50bn of its facilities to help fund projects in Nigeria over the next three years. The details of specific schemes have yet to be decided.

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10. PRC Human Rights

BBC News ("OLYMPICS 'WORSENING CHINA RIGHTS'", 2008/04/02) reported that the PRC's human rights record is getting worse, not better, because of the Beijing Olympics, a rights group says. According to Amnesty International, the PRC is clamping down on dissent in a bid to portray a stable and harmonious image ahead of the Games in August. It urged the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and world leaders to speak out against abuses, including China's handling of protests in Tibet. "It is increasingly clear that much of the current wave of repression is occurring not in spite of the Olympics but actually because of the Olympics."

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II. ROK Report

11. Inter-Korean Relations

Seoul newspaper ("THREATENING BEHAVIORS OF DPRK ARE BURDEN TO BOTH ROK AND DPRK", 2008/04/03) wrote that the DPRK is repeatedly pouring out words of aggression toward the Lee Myung-bak administration. The DPRK must realize that further offense will only be a discouragement for economic cooperation and humanitarian aid to the DPRK. Although there is no need for the ROK to strongly react to such intentional tension-raising strategies, it should also not overlook them. In that sense, the Ministry of National Defense displaying disappointment toward the DPRK's criticism yet still appealing its willingness for conversation was mature and therefore fortunate.

Kyunghyang Newspaper ("QUESTIONS TO LEADERS OF ROK AND DPRK", 2008/04/03) reported that it seems as if the ROK and DPRK are putting more effort to magnify and reproduce the deadlock rather than to make a solution. It is very likely that current political situation was caused by insufficient conversation. The new administration, due to lack of preparation, does not have adequate action plans and the DPRK is tired of waiting. Now is the time to change. In order to make a change, either one of ROK and DPRK must reach out and propose a conversation. Governments of both Koreas are to be asked if they are actually willing for communication.

Hankyoreh ("INTER-KOREAN RELATION EXACERBATION, WHO BENEFITS?", 2008/04/03) wrote that the ROK government overlooking the continued attacks of the DPRK is inappropriate. The primary reason for the recent situation resides in the new administration's unyielding DPRK policies. First, in the short term, this can lead the DPRK to reject and eventually discourage it from completing its nuclear report. The fundamental framework of the six-party talk that should make progress in both economic cooperation and denuclearization simultaneously can also be dismantled if the economic cooperation project is affected by exacerbation of inter-Korean relations. The ROK must reconsider the unyielding DPRK policy basis and the DPRK must stop its provocation. There is not much time left.

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Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org