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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S., N.KOREA 'AGREE' ON NUKE DECLARATION", 2008/04/08) reported that the US and DPRK reached tentative agreement on the declaration of the DPRK's nuclear programs. The top nuclear negotiators of the two countries were meeting in Singapore. If the two governments approve the deal, six-nation nuclear talks, which have been suspended since October, will likely resume in early May. After the meeting, Hill said, "Depending on what we hear back from capitals by tomorrow, I think there will be some further announcements very soon." Kim said, "The meeting proceeded smoothly. We narrowed differences in views to a considerable extent." A diplomatic source said, "The wording in the declaration will probably persuade the US Congress."

Reuters ("NO BREAKTHROUGH IN NORTH KOREA TALKS, U.S. SAYS", Beijing, 2008/04/09) reported that the United States and the DPRK have made no breakthrough toward a final resolution for Pyongyang's declaration of its nuclear program, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said on Wednesday. Hill said he had "good discussions" with his PRC, Japanese and ROK counterparts, but said more work was needed despite "definite" progress toward a final resolution. "We haven't yet arranged for all the factors, or the elements, that have to be put together," Hill told reporters in Beijing.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("CHINA EXPECTS POSITIVE RESULTS FROM DPRK-U.S. TALKS OVER DENUCLEARIZATION ", Beijing, 2008/04/08) reported that the PRC said it hoped talks in Singapore between the DPRK and the United States over denuclearization would achieve positive results. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said at a regular press conference that PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei would meet U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill on Wednesday in Beijing to discuss the results of talks. Jiang said the PRC had always supported all parties in their efforts to enhance communication and consultation on the six-party talks and jointly push forward the negotiations as well as the Korean Peninsular denuclearization.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua ("DPRK MEDIA SLAMS "OPENING" POLICY PROPOSED BY S KOREAN PRESIDENT", Pyongyang, 2008/04/08) reported that the DPRK blasted the "north's opening" policy proposed by ROK President Lee Myung Bak, saying it was an insult and provocation to the country's system. "This is nothing but an intolerable insult and provocation to Korean-style socialism centered on the popular masses and its dignified system as well as an anti-reunification act and a move for

confrontation," said a signed commentary carried by the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper. The DPRK had "never kept its door closed to anyone," the commentary said, adding that it was the US and ROK that have persisted in the blockade against the DPRK.

Yonhap ("CRITICISM OF LEE NOT LINKED TO ELECTIONS: N.K. ", Seoul, 2008/04/08) reported that the DPRK denounced ROK media outlets for alleging that the DPRK's recent denunciation of the ROK's President Lee Myung-bak was aimed at influencing this week's general elections. The Minju Joson, organ of the DRPK Cabinet, said in a commentary that last week's Rodong Shinmun commentary fiercely criticizing the new president represented Pyongyang's position and was not linked to Wednesday's elections. "Why do we have to wait until the general elections are over to denote our principled position on their anti-reunification, anti-peace and anti-tribal confrontation policies?," the Minju Joson asked. "That kind of irrational insistence works on nobody."

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4. Inter-Korean Athletic Cooperation

Yonhap ("JOINT INTER-KOREAN OLYMPIC SQUADS IN LIMBO: OFFICIALS ", Beijing, 2008/04/08) reported that the two Koreas appear stalled in their efforts to field joint athletic and cheering squads for the Beijing Olympics amid a recent freeze in their relations, sporting officials said Tuesday. The ROK and DPRK agreed in principle during their second-ever summit in Pyongyang last year to seek a joint team of athletes ahead of the Summer Olympics set to begin in August this year.

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5. ROK Elections

Associated Press ("S.KOREA CONSERVATIVES WIN PARLIAMENT MAJORITY: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/04/09) reported that the party of ROK President Lee Myung-bak won a majority in Wednesday's parliamentary election, according to projections by KBS and MBC TV networks. The TV projection gave the party between 155-178 of the 299 seats at stake.

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6. US-ROK Trade Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA-U.S. FTA UNLIKELY TO PASS U.S. CONGRESS THIS YEAR", 2008/04/08) reported that the prospects of the ROK-US free trade are getting murkier, as a series of controversies on US FTAs have become an issue in the US Democratic presidential nomination process. Even before their staffers caused controversies over FTAs, Clinton and Obama were against all FTAs, including the Korea-U.S. FTA, mindful of the labor unions that support the Democratic Party. Now, the two presidential candidates are ratcheting up their rhetoric against FTAs all the more. Under these circumstances, it seems more likely that many Democratic congressmen will support them. The ROK government hopes that if the National Assembly ratifies the ROK-US FTA first right after the April 9 general election, it would be possible for the U.S. Congress to follow suit this year. But some observers point to the need to work out a new strategy in accordance with the changing environment in the US presidential campaign.

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7. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "KOREA, U.S. DISCUSS UPGRADING ALLIANCE", 2008/04/08) reported that the ROK and the US discussed key issues regarding their military alliance yesterday, including Seoul's increased role in international peacekeeping efforts and arms procurement procedures between the two countries. During the Security Policy Initiative talks in Seoul, the two sides also coordinated a security agenda for a summit next week between President Lee Myung-bak and U.S. President George W. Bush. Lee is scheduled to visit Camp David from April 18-19. Delegates focused on elevating Seoul's standing in the U.S. arms-exporting program and Seoul's plan to expand its peacekeeping operations overseas, the Defense Ministry said.

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8. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Yonhap ("A TAXING TIME FOR CHINA'S NON-PROFITSS. KOREA PROTESTS JAPAN'S CLAIM OVER DOKDO", Seoul, 2008/04/08) reported that the ROK has lodged a strong complaint over Japan's renewed campaign to lay claim to Dokdo, a cluster of islets in the East Sea, a government official said. In February, Japan's Foreign Ministry claimed on its Web site that Dokdo belongs to its territory both historically and legally. "We already filed a strong complaint through a diplomatic channel shortly after the message appeared on the Web site," a South Korean Foreign Ministry official said, asking not to be named. "But it has not been deleted yet. We will continue to cope sternly with such a claim." The government is considering more countermeasures, he added.

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9. Sino-Japanese Territorial Dispute

The Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN PLANTS CORAL ON DISPUTED ISLAND ", Tokyo, 2008/04/08) reported that Japan is mounting a \$7 million coral transplanting operation in the Pacific to bolster its claim in a territorial dispute with the PRC and cement Tokyo's right to exploit a wide expanse of ocean. Over the next year, scientists intend to plant more than 50,000 fast-growing Acropora coral fragments on Okinotorishima, two uninhabited rocky outcroppings about 1,060 miles southwest of Tokyo, project officials say. The aim is to protect the islets from further erosion and maintain Japan's claim that they are bona fide islands and can be used to map its exclusive economic zone in the Pacific.

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10. Japan Constitutional Revision

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN ENTHUSIASM FOR CONSTITUTION REWRITE FADES: POLL", Tokyo, 2008/04/08) reported that enthusiasm is fading in Japan for rewriting the post-World War II pacifist constitution, with more people opposing the idea than supporting it for the first time in 15 years, a poll showed. A poll by the best-selling Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper said that 43.1 percent of

Japanese supported keeping the 1947 constitution as is, against 42.5 percent who back revisions. An overwhelming 82 percent of Japanese support keeping the emblematic clause in the constitution's Article Nine that says the country forever renounces the right to use or even to threaten to use force, the poll said. The Yomiuri, which has taken surveys on the issue since 1981, said it was the first time since 1993 that a plurality of Japanese supported the pacifist constitution.

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11. Tibet Unrest

The Associated Press ("LHASA MARKET REOPENS FOLLOWING RIOT", Beijing, 2008/04/08) reported that the riot-damaged market in the Tibetan capital of Lhasa opened its doors Tuesday amid plans to allow foreign tourists to enter the restive region by the end of the month. About 80 percent of the market's 1,300 booths have reopened, the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing Nyi'ma Ngoizhub of the market's administration office. Authorities in recent days have sought to emphasize that normalcy is returning to Tibet following the most violent and sustained protests against PRC rule in two decades.

Agence France-Presse (P. Parameswaran, "GROWING ANTI-CHINA PROTESTS UNDERSCORE CLOUT OF TIBET LOBBY ", Washington, 2008/04/08) reported that spontaneous anti-PRC protests disrupting the Beijing Olympic torch relay underscore the growing clout of the Tibetan exile lobby, which has strategically galvanized support of civil society groups, experts say. The lobby has forged links at diverse levels, ranging from colleges, universities and monasteries to human rights and media groups to the real centers of power and the rich and famous in Hollywood. "It shows the power of international civil society groups, which China failed to take into account when it bid for the Olympics," said Asian expert Mohan Malik of the Hawaii-based Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.

The Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "CHINA ORDERS TIBETANS 'REEDUCATED' ABOUT DALAI LAMA", Beijing, 2008/04/08) reported that Buddhist monks, civil servants and public school students have been instructed to attend special classes in the virtues of PRC rule and the evils of their exiled leader, the Dalai Lama. In these classes, the Tibetans read and recite from texts that denounce the Dalai Lama as a "political reactionary" and a "betrayer of the motherland." But the campaign may be backfiring. Clashes that erupted last week in Sichuan province's Ganzi prefecture (known as Kardze to Tibetans) were reportedly triggered when the head of the Tongkor Monastery objected to Communist Party teaching materials that criticize the Dalai Lama.

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12. Sino-Indian Relations

Mail and Guardian (Siddhartha Kumar, "INDIA, CHINA PREPARE TO COMPETE IN AFRICA", New Delhi, 2008/04/08) reported that India has joined the race with the PRC for Africa's abundant hydrocarbons and natural resources while offering to empower the 53-nation continent through affordable technologies, the development of human capital and equal partnerships. Indian officials believe that these measures, along with attractive development funds for Africa, could help New Delhi compete with the PRC and counter the Asian giant's rising economic clout in the African world. The first-ever India-Africa summit, which began in New Delhi on Tuesday, confirmed the importance

of the continent on India's foreign-policy radar.

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13. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

VOA News ("CHINA CONFIRMS DECEMBER CASE OF HUMAN TO HUMAN BIRD FLU TRANSMISSION", 2008/04/08) reported that PRC health officials have confirmed earlier speculation that a father contracted bird flu from his son last December. Researchers from Beijing's Chinese Center for Disease Control said a 24-year-old man spread the disease to his 52-year-old father in the PRC's eastern province of Jiangsu. The son died, but the father survived. In a report released Tuesday, the researchers said tests showed the two men were infected with almost genetically identical strains of the H5N1 virus. Cases of human-to-human transmission of the virus are rare, but another case from December was confirmed in Pakistan last week.

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