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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK-US Relations

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO BOOST NUCLEAR ARSENAL ", 2006-04-13) reported that the DPRK said on Thursday it might boost its nuclear deterrent if six-country talks on ending its atomic programs remained deadlocked, but said it would return if Washington met a demand to unfreeze it assets. Pyongyang's top envoy to the stalled negotiations told a news conference in Tokyo the US must lift what the DPRK considers to be financial sanctions against it. "I told them the minute we have the funds or I have the funds in my hand I will be at the talks. But if they continue to come

with pressure and sanctions, we will respond with extremely strong measures," envoy Kim Kye-gwan said. "There is nothing wrong with delaying the resumption of the six-party talks. In the meantime we can make more deterrent. If the United States doesn't like that, they should create the condition for us to go back to the talks." In an official media report on Thursday, the DPRK reiterated it has been building a nuclear deterrent to counter what it views as Washington's hostile policy toward it.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("WHY N.KOREA INSISTS ON GETTING ITS US$24 MILLION BACK ", 2006-04-13) reported that the DPRK's chief delegate to six-way nuclear talks Kim Kye-gwan on Thursday demanded again that the US release some US$24 million Pyongyang has deposited in a Macau-based bank before it returns to the talks. The money is less than 1 percent of the DPRK's annual budget by the official exchange rate. The US chief delegate to the talks Christopher Hill on Thursday agreed it is difficult to understand why the DPRK is making an issue out of the amount, which he said was less than one week's worth of the energy offered to Pyongyang in the six-party negotiations. But in the DPRK's black market, $1 buys some 3,000 DPRK won, more than 20 times the official rate. That makes $24 million something nearer 20 percent of the DPRK's annual budget. (return to top)

2. DPRK Abduction Issue

Yonhap ("N. KOREA REJECTS JAPANESE DNA TEST RESULTS ON ABDUCTION ISSUE", 2006-0--13) reported that the DPRK on Thursday rejected the results of a Japanese DNA test concluding that the husband of a Japanese woman abducted by the DPRK decades ago is highly likely a ROK man who was apparently kidnapped by the DPRK, a Japanese news report said. "Japan's method so far has been to float suspicions and doubts to focus the attention of its people," Song Il-ho, the DPRK's ambassador to normalization talks with Japan, said in an interview in Pyongyang with Japanese journalists, according to the Kyodo News Service.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL COULD SEEK REPATRIATION OF 'ABDUCTED S.KOREAN' ", 2006-04-13) reported that the ROK will demand the repatriation of a man living in the DPRK if DNA analysis proves he really is Kim Young-nam, who was abducted from the ROK in 1978, Vice Unification Minister Shin Un-sang said Thursday. Tests carried out by Japan strongly suggest that the man, who Pyongyang says fathered a daughter with the famous Japanese abductee Megumi Yokota, is in fact Kim, who was snatched from his home when he was in high school. Asked whether Seoul will raise the matter at the next inter-Korean ministerial talks starting on April 21, Shin said, "We are now in the midst of an investigation of this issue after receiving the pertinent DNA materials from the Japanese government on Wednesday." (return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("KIM YOUNG-NAM'S ABDUCTOR NOW FREE IN S.KOREA", 2006-04-13) reported that the DPRK agent who kidnapped Kim Young-nam from the ROK in 1978 now lives in Seoul and has his own business, it was revealed Thursday. Kim was this week identified as the man the DPRK says was married to the famous Japanese abductee Megumi Yokota. Kim Gwang-hyun kidnapped Kim Young-nam, then a high school student who was on excursion to Sunyu Island in August 1978. The agent was arrested off the coast of Seosan, ROK on June 21, 1980 while spying on the ROK and settled here after his release. (return to top)

3. US, ROK Meeting on Kaesong

JoongAng Ilbo ("U.S., SOUTH KOREA OFFICIALS DISCUSS KAESONG COMPLEX", 2006-04-13) reported that top officials from the ROK and the US yesterday discussed the future of the inter-Korean industrial complex in Kaesong in the DPRK, according to Seoul's Foreign Ministry. Seoul views Kaesong as a perfect model for inter-Korean economic partnership, while officials in Washington express concern over its possible negative impact on the multilateral efforts to end the

DPRK's nuclear weapons program. "In meeting with visiting Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Hill, Vice Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan briefed him on the efficacy and significance of the Kaesong project," said a Foreign Ministry. He said that Mr. Yu stressed the need to further develop the project, adding it provides the DPRK with an opportunity to gain experience in working with the ROK's private sector. The official, who requested anonymity, said Mr. Hill expressed his understanding, but refused to divulge any other details of the US official's response.

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4. USFJ Realignment

Kyodo ("JAPAN OFFERS TOTAL OF $6 BIL. FOR U.S. MILITARY REALIGNMENT", 2006-04-13) reported that Japan has offered to supply $3 billion in fiscal funds, in addition to $3 billion in loans to be paid back by the US, in a bid to iron out differences between the two countries over Japan's share of the cost of relocating 8,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam, sources said.

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5. US-PRC Trade Relations

Reuters ("BUSH SAYS CHINA NEEDS MOVE TO FLEXIBLE CURRENCY", 2006-04-13) reported that President George W. Bush said on Thursday the PRC needs to move to a flexible, market-based currency as a way to address the trade imbalance between the two countries. Ratcheting up pressure on PRC President Hu Jintao ahead of their White House talks next week, Bush said: "We expect China to live up to its commitments."

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6. Cross Strait Relations

Kyodo ("EX-TAIWAN OPPOSITION LEADER ARRIVES IN BEIJING ", 2006-04-13) reported that Lien Chan, former chairman of Taiwan's main opposition Nationalist Party (KMT), and his wife arrive at Beijing International Airport on April 13 for talks with the PRC leadership on direct trade links.

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7. PRC Rural Unrest

The Associated Press ("VILLAGERS, POLICE CLASH IN SOUTH CHINA ", 2006-04-13) reported that thousands of villagers clashed with police in southern PRC over government plans to tear down sluice gates built for irrigation, leaving one woman dead and several people injured, newspapers and witnesses said. About 4,000 villagers gathered Wednesday to stop police from demolishing the pair of gates in Bomei, a village in Guangdong province, and were dispersed with tear gas and water cannons, according to Hong Kong's Ming Pao Daily.

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8. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA FAILS TO MEET NEARLY HALF OF ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS ", 2006-04-13) reported that PRC failed to meet nearly half of its environmental goals from 2000 to

2005 largely due to economic growth remaining a higher priority for policy makers, state media said. Among 20 environmental goals set for the five-year period, eight were not achieved, the State Environmental Protection Administration said according to the China Daily.

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9. PRC Hospital Blast

BBC News ("MAN HELD OVER DEADLY CHINA BLAST", 2006-04-13) reported that a man has turned himself in to police over a blast at a hospital in northern PRC which killed 31 people. The man was a hospital administrator for whom police issued a nationwide arrest warrant on Wednesday, Xinhua state news agency reported. The man previously operated private coal mines, the report said.

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