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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("COUNTRIES WAITING FOR NORTH KOREAN RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION OF FINANCIAL IMPASSE", 2007-04-12) reported that the world is waiting on a response from the DPRK now that the frozen funds have been returned. US negotiator Christopher Hill said he had yet to

hear a response from the DPRK to the release of US\$25 million (euro18.6 million) held in a Macau bank. RO Korean nuclear envoy Chun Young-woo called for patience and said other countries should wait "another few days" until the DPRK responds, noting it typically does not respond quickly. Hill said Thursday he would fly to Beijing on Friday to meet Chinese officials but that he had no plans to see North Korea's Kim.

2. US on Frozen DRPK Funds

New York Times ("NEW YORK TIMES: HOW U.S. TURNED NORTH KOREAN FUNDS INTO A BARGAINING CHIP", 2007-04-11) reported that for 18 months, the Bush administration has maintained that the freezing of \$25 million in an account in Macao was strictly a law enforcement action against money-laundering, not a bargaining chip in a diplomatic effort to persuade the DPRK to disarm its nuclear arsenal. Today, however, the administration has formally acknowledged that the \$25 million was indeed a bargaining chip. James R. Wilkinson, chief of staff to Treasury Secretary, who led an American delegation that returned last weekend after 13 days of negotiations in Beijing, said that although the money was being returned to its original owners, the administration had sent a strong signal of its power to crack down on arms proliferation, money-laundering and counterfeiting.

3. IAEA on DPRK Inspections

Yonhap ("IAEA FORMS TEAM FOR NUCLEAR INSPECTION IN N. KOREA: REPORT", 2007-04-12) reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency has formed a team to visit the DPRK to discuss details of a planned nuclear reactor inspection. The delegation, headed by Deputy Director General Olli Heinonen, hopes to discuss such details as inspection procedures and the schedule for the eventual dismantlement, an unidentified IAEA official said in an interview with the Voice of America (VOA). Heinonen led inspections at the Yongbyon facility in 1994 and 2002.

4. DPRK Premier Election

Stratfor ("NORTH KOREA: NEW PREMIER, CHANGING PRIORITIES", 2007-04-12) reported that Kim Yong-il was elected premier of the DPRK Cabinet. He appears to have used the military as his path upward, garnering his entrance into university and then building his career from the ground up in the ministry. In 1994 or 1995, Kim became maritime and land transport minister, a position he has held since. In recent years, he oversaw one of the DPRK's major economic projects -- the modernization of the Ryongnam Ship Repair Factory near Nampo. Kim's background suggests a new shift in the DPRK's economic focus. With Kim Yong Il in the navigator's seat, the DPRK could begin exploring an expansion of its exports. In addition to his oversight of the Ryongnam factory, Kim has also worked on maritime communications and transportation agreements with the PRC, Pakistan and Syria, traveling to Syria as head of an economic delegation in May 2005.

5. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("NO RENEGOTIATION OF SOUTH KOREA-U.S. FTA: FOREIGN MINISTER", 2007-04-12) reported that the ROK will not renegotiate with the US to revise their free trade agreement (FTA) struck this month, Foreign Minister Song Min-soon said. "We can't rule out the possibility that the US might propose a renegotiation in the labor and environment sectors following consultations between the US administration and Congress," Song told a parliamentary committee. "But we've already told the U.S. there won't be additional talks on the FTA."

6. ROK Iraq Role

Joongang-Ilbo ("IRAQ WANTS KOREA TO CO-DEVELOP OIL FIELDS", 2007-04-12) reported that ROK participation in the American-led military coalition operating in Iraq could eventually pay off in the form of access to Iraq's oil reserves and massive construction contracts in the devastated country - if the security situation improves. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal Al-Maliki yesterday asked for Korean support in rebuilding Iraq, while the two countries also signed a memorandum of understanding at a ministerial meeting to co-develop Iraq's oil fields, which are the third largest in the world in terms of established oil reserves.

7. Sino-Japanese Relations

The Associated Press ("WEN ADDRESSES JAPAN'S PARLIAMENT", 2007-04-12) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao urged Japan's parliament not to forget Tokyo's wartime aggression, even as the two powers mend strained ties and bolster thriving business relations. Wen — the PRC's first leader to address the parliament in 22 years — was on a three-day "ice-melting" trip to Japan as the two countries work to reverse a deterioration in ties caused partly by the two former World War II enemies' disagreements over the past.

The Associated Press ("JAPAN-CHINA AGREEMENT HIGHLIGHTS", 2007-04-12) reported that highlights of agreements between Japan and the PRC after a meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and PRC Premier Wen Jiabao. -Study ways to jointly develop disputed resources in the East China Sea. -Work together to promote energy-saving technologies and develop energy resources. -Work on a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on climate change. -Strengthen cooperation in defense policy, including reciprocal visits by warships. -Work toward a nuclear weapons-free Korean peninsula. -Speed up Japan's cleanup of chemical weapons left in China from the World War II era. -Face up to history, a veiled reference to disputes over Japan's wartime conduct. -Arrange frequent high-level government contacts. -Hold periodic government meetings to discuss economic, trade and finance issues. -Work together to promote intellectual property rights.

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Kyodo ("U.S. FORCES REALIGNMENT BILL TO BE PUT TO VOTE AT LOWER HOUSE PANEL", 2007-04-12) reported that Japan's ruling coalition parties are poised to take a vote at a House of Representatives committee on a bill aimed at promoting the realignment of US forces in Japan featuring subsidies to local governments in line with their degree of cooperation. Members of two of

the three opposition parties boycotted the day's deliberations in the morning at the Security Committee, demanding more discussions on the legislation be made at the Security Committee of the lower house.

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