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I. United States

- 1. DPRK on Northeast Asia Security Talks
2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue
3. ROK on Inter-Korean Summit
4. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks
5. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue
6. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks
7. Sino-DPRK Relations
8. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Issue
9. Scalapino on DPRK Nuclear Issue
10. ROK Hospital to be Built at Kaesong
11. ROK Defector
12. Abductee Issue
13. DPRK Holiday
14. DPRK Film Festival
15. DPRK Athletic Sponsorship
16. UN Treaty Against Nuclear Terrorism
17. ROK on Balancer Doctrine
18. ROK on UNSC Expansion
19. Japan on ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute
20. PRC on Japan UNSC Bid
21. Sino-Japanese East Sea Dispute
22. PRC on Human Rights

23. Cross Strait Relations
24. PRC Anti-Gambling Measures
25. PRC Unrest

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. DPRK on Northeast Asia Security Talks

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA: UNITED STATES, JAPAN SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM NORTHEAST ASIA SECURITY DISCUSSIONS", 2005-04-13) reported that the DPRK called for regional security talks among Northeast Asian nations, but said the US and Japan should be excluded. "Those countries interested in the issue of security in Northeast Asia and linked to the continent should meet to discuss the issue of security and strive hard to exclude the US and Japan from the discussion," the main Rodong Sinmun daily wrote. "As the US is across the ocean and Japan is away from the continent, they have no interest in the peace and security of Northeast Asia, nor can they own any responsibility for them," the commentary said.

(return to top)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("NO AID TO NORTH KOREA UNTIL NUCLEAR CRISIS ENDS: ROH", 2005-04-13) reported that the ROK is willing to begin paying for the cost of unification with the DPRK even before it occurs, but there will be no major aid until a nuclear crisis is resolved, the ROK's president has said in Germany. "We have a policy to support the North Korean economy and help it stand on its feet," President Roh Moo-hyun said during a visit to Germany on Tuesday. "But the North Korean nuclear problem must be resolved for substantive assistance to be possible," he told German leaders.

(return to top)

3. ROK on Inter-Korean Summit

Donga Ilbo ("ROH : “I WILL MEET WITH KIM JONG IL IF THE NORTH CHANGES ITS ATTITUDE” ", 2005-04-13) reported that it was reported that President Roh Moo-hyun stated, “We have every intention of meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il anytime, anywhere, if they show signs of change in dealing with their nuclear problem,”during his meeting with former Indonesia President Megawati Sukarnoputri, who visited the ROK.

(return to top)

4. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("LOSYUKOV DOESN'T SEE 6-WAY TALKS CAN SOLVE N. KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2005-04-13) reported that Russian Ambassador to Japan Alexander Losyukov voiced pessimism over the possibility of resolving the issue of the DPRK's nuclear arms program at the stalled six-party

talks, firmly believing Pyongyang will not return to the table. The envoy was quoted by Democratic Party of Japan lawmaker Yoshio Hachiro as suggesting the matter should be taken to the U.N. Security Council because there is no other choice than to tackle it under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

(return to top)

5. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Itar-Tass ("RUSSIA READY TO CLOSELY COOPERATE WITH N KOREA", 2005-04-13) reported that Russia is ready to closely cooperate with Pyongyang in order to solve the DPRK's nuclear problem, Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alexeyev said. The diplomat said the development of relations between Russia and the DPRK "was reflected in the 2000 treaty and in the agreements signed in Pyongyang and Vladivostok."

(return to top)

6. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("CHINA PRESIDENT PUTS OFF N. KOREA VISIT: REPORT", 2005-04-13) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao has postponed a scheduled visit to the DPRK due to the DPRK's failure to give a clear date to return to the stalled six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, a Seoul daily reported. Quoting a diplomatic source in Beijing, the JoongAng Ilbo reported a decision was made to postpone the visit after DPRK First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju failed to indicate during a visit to PRC last month whether the DPRK would return to the talks.

(return to top)

7. Sino-DPRK Relations

Xinhua ("SENIOR CPC OFFICIAL HAILS SINO-DPRK RELATIONS", 2005-04-13) reported that the PRC hopes to enhance bilateral cooperation in an all-round way with the DPRK, said a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Wang Jiarui, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks at a meeting with Kim Sok Bong, chief secretary of the Kangwon provincial committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. Wang spoke highly of the current Sino-DPRK relations. He said he hopes Sino-DPRK traditional friendly ties can be continuously strengthened.

(return to top)

8. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("NUKE WATCHDOG: N. KOREA IS TOP PROBLEM", 2005-04-13) reported that the head of the UN nuclear watchdog agency said that the DPRK is a more immediate problem for nuclear arms control officials than Iran. Mohammed ElBaradei, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said both the DPRK and Iranian issues could only be solved through diplomacy. "For us North Korea is a black hole," he said. He said unlike Iran, where negotiations were ongoing, in the DPRK "the parties are now dormant or in a frozen situation."

(return to top)

9. Scalapino on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap news ("NK NUKES COULD BE TAKEN TO UNSC: US SCHOLAR", 2005-04-13) reported that the US could lose patience with the DPRK and raise the issue of Pyongyang's nuclear arms program at the UN Security Council if no progress is made in ending the nuclear dispute, a US scholar said. "There is a possibility that if this matter is prolonged, and no resumption of talks takes place, that it will be taken to the UN. That's quite possible," Robert Scalapino, a professor at the University of California, said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency. He said there are divisions of opinion in the US over how to handle the DPRK nuclear crisis, but currently the "doves," or what he called moderates, have greater influence as the US explores diplomacy with its allies in defusing the row.

(return to top)

10. ROK Hospital to be Built at Kaesong

Korea Times ("DOCTORS TO BUILD GENERAL HOSPITAL IN KAESONG", 2005-04-13) reported that a civic group in the ROK said that it plans to build a 150-bed general hospital for ROK workers at an inter-Korean industrial complex in Kaesong, a border city above the Demilitarized Zone. The YMCA Green Doctors in Pusan, the ROK's southeastern port city, said it plans to finish administrative preparations for the construction by the end of this year and have scheduled to open it in 2007. The plan has yet to be approved by the ROK government.

(return to top)

11. ROK Defector

Joongang Ilbo ("FISHING BOAT TAKES OFF FOR NORTH KOREA", 2005-04-13) reported that a 3.9-ton ROK fishing boat crossed the Northern Limit Line in the East Sea yesterday and headed toward DPRK, the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff announced. The incident occurred just before 4 p.m. The fishing trawler sailed on despite warning shots fired by ROK Coast Guard from the shore. Officials with the Joint Chiefs identified the sole person on the boat as Han Hong-yeon, 48. Mr. Han's boat continued north despite the warning shots. Just after 4 p.m., a DPRK boat appeared to escort Mr. Han's, and the two vessels headed for a nearby DPRK port.

(return to top)

12. Abductee Issue

Kyodo ("N. KOREA DEMANDS JAPAN RETURN DISPUTED ASHES", 2005-04-13) reported that the DPRK demanded once again that Japan return to the DPRK cremated remains at the center of a bitter dispute between the two countries over whether they are from a Japanese citizen abducted by the DPRK in 1977. The DPRK Embassy in Beijing filed the request to the Japanese Embassy in the PRC capital, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency reported. A Japanese Embassy source confirmed the demand, saying it was sent by fax.

(return to top) The Yomiuri Shimbun ("FAMILY FILES SUIT OVER 'ABDUCTEE' ", 2005-04-13) reported that the family of a woman from Ichihara, Chiba Prefecture, who is suspected to have been abducted to the DPRK in 1973, filed a lawsuit against the government at the Tokyo District Court Wednesday, seeking to have her officially recognized as an abduction victim. According to the Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea, Noriko Furukawa has been missing since she left her home on the morning of July 7, 1973. Since it is believed she had

no motive to run away from home, and former DPRK agent An Myong Jin testified Furukawa looked like a woman he saw at a hospital in Pyongyang around 1991, the commission announced in January 2003 they suspected Furukawa was abducted. (return to top)

13. DPRK Holiday

Itar-Tass ("N KOREA GETS READY TO CELEBRATE KIM IL SUNG'S BIRTHDAY", 2005-04-13) reported that preparations are underway in the DPRK to celebrate the birthday of the first and "eternal" president Kim Il Sung, marked on April 15. This public holiday in the country is called the Day of the Sun. The international art festival April Spring is timed to mark the birth date of the first president.

(return to top)

14. DPRK Film Festival

Itar-Tass ("FILM FESTIVAL DEVOTED TO KIM IL SUNG CONTINUES IN NKOREA", 2005-04-13) reported that a major film festival of documentary and feature films continues in the DPRK. The ten-day film festival was opened to commemorate the Day of the Sun, the birth anniversary of President Kim Il Sung, the Korean Central News Agency reported.

(return to top)

15. DPRK Athletic Sponsorship

Agence France Presse ("AGAINST THE ODDS, NORTH KOREA BEGINS RACE FOR SPORTS SPONSORSHIP", 2005-04-13) reported that the DPRK's athletes have begun competing in an event they seem destined to lose under their current manager -- the race for international sponsorship. After being shut out for decades from the lucrative spin-offs of capitalist economics, officials in the DPRK say Kim Jong-Il is now urging sports chiefs to find major global brands to bankroll their national teams. "We want to do what all the countries around the world are doing. We want to find sponsors," the chief executive officer of the DPRK's Sports Marketing Group, Jon Chol-Ho, told an AFP journalist.

(return to top)

16. UN Treaty Against Nuclear Terrorism

Reuters ("U.N. APPROVES NEW TREATY AGAINST NUCLEAR TERRORISM", 2005-04-13) reported that the 191-member UN General Assembly approved a nuclear terrorism treaty that would oblige governments to punish those who illegally possess atomic devices or radioactive materials. The document, negotiated for seven years after Russia proposed the accord, is the 13th anti-terrorism convention. The accord, called the "International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism," is meant to stop clandestine networks from using or possessing nuclear weapons.

(return to top)

17. ROK on Balancer Doctrine

Joongang Ilbo ("SECURITY AIDE EXPLAINS VISION OF BALANCE ROLE", 2005-04-13) reported that attempting to explain the Roh administration's geopolitical strategy, Lee Jong-seok, a senior

official at the ROK National Security Council, said yesterday that the US has been told the ROK is seeking to play the role of a balancing force in Northeast Asia and that the PRC is supporting the initiative. "There is a need in this region for an effort to change continuous conflict into reconciliation and opposition into cooperation," said Mr. Lee. "There is a need for someone to play the role of a main driver facilitating peace and prosperity among the nations in this region. That is what the idea of 'balancer' in the East Asian region stands for."

(return to top)

18. ROK on UNSC Expansion

Korea Times ("SEOUL SUPPORTS BERLIN'S BID FOR UNSC", 2005-04-13) reported that the ROK supports Germany's bid to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, according to a senior Chong Wa Dae official. "Germany is fully qualified to become a member of the security council," National Security Advisor Kwon Jin-ho told reporters during a dinner between President Roh Moo-hyun and a group of German lawmakers. "But President Roh has not made any comment on Japan's bid to join the UNSC. He is restraining himself from addressing the issue while staying here," Kwon said.

(return to top)

19. Japan on ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Joongang Ilbo ("TOKYO UNBENDING ON DOKDO, TEXTS", 2005-04-13) reported that in a meeting with ROK lawmakers in Tokyo, Foreign Minster Nobutaka Machimura of Japan said his country has reflected on its historical behavior in Asia but that recently authorized Japanese textbooks would not be revised nor would Japan withdraw its claim to the Dokdo islands. "It is impossible to make individual corrections to textbooks that have been checked and authorized," Mr. Machimura said.

(return to top)

20. PRC on Japan UNSC Bid

Washington Post ("CHINESE STEP UP CRITICISM OF JAPAN", 2005-04-13) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao said that Japan would not be ready for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council until it admits its history of aggression in World War II and earns the trust of the people of Asia. Wen's remarks, made during an official visit to India and reported by news agencies there, followed a weekend of anti-Japanese demonstrations in Beijing and other PRC cities and represent the PRC government's strongest statement yet in opposition to Japan's bid for a Security Council seat.

(return to top)

21. Sino-Japanese East Sea Dispute

The Associated Press ("JAPAN APPROVES DRILLING IN DISPUTED SEA", 2005-04-13) reported that Japan began processing applications to let companies explore a disputed area of the East China Sea for natural gas - a decision PRC called a "provocation" in a disagreement that could imperil Tokyo's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi denied the move had anything to do with a feud between Tokyo and Beijing over Japan's World War II aggression. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said that Beijing had lodged a protest to Tokyo and

would "retain the right to make further reaction," Xinhua reported.

(return to top)

22. PRC on Human Rights

The Associated Press ("CHINA DEFENDS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD", 2005-04-13) reported that stung by complaints of religious and human rights abuses, the PRC declared in a report that its booming economy is improving the lives of ordinary citizens while changes in the courts and government promote respect for their rights. The government made "marked progress in its human rights protection efforts in the past year," said an annual report on the state of human rights in the PRC issued by the Cabinet's press office.

(return to top)

23. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA URGES TAIWAN TO REVERSE BAN ON JOURNALISTS", 2005-04-13) reported that the PRC urged Taiwan to reverse its "erroneous" decision to ban PRC journalists from covering news on the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own. Taiwan this month stopped allowing journalists from the PRC's official Xinhua news agency and People's Daily to report from the island, the first concrete retaliatory measure since the PRC passed a law in March mandating war or other "non-peaceful" means should Taiwan formally declare independence.

(return to top)

24. PRC Anti-Gambling Measures

Los Angeles Times ("BEIJING'S LOSING HAND", 2005-04-13) reported that embarrassed by recent scandals involving party officials who squandered public money in foreign casinos, Beijing kicked off a five-month anti-gambling campaign in January that officials describe as the biggest in PRC history. "We've declared war on gambling," Zhou Yongkang, head of the National Public Security Bureau, said in announcing the campaign. "We must stop the spread of this illegal activity." The government has closed thousands of underground betting parlors that were defying the long-standing official ban on gambling. It has pressured neighboring countries to shut down their casinos at the border. It set up 24-hour hotlines and websites to report gamblers and tightened rules for officials going overseas.

(return to top)

25. PRC Unrest

The New York Times ("THOUSANDS OF CHINESE VILLAGERS PROTEST FACTORY POLLUTION", 2005-04-13) reported that thousands of people rioted this week in a village in southeastern PRC, overturning police cars and driving away officers who had tried to stop elderly villagers protesting against pollution from nearby factories. "The villagers will not give up if there is no concrete action to move the factories away," said Mr. Lu, a villager who witnessed part of the confrontation and refused to give his full name. "The crowd is growing. There are at least 50,000 or 60,000 people." But the riot described in Huaxi Village is seen as a symptom of the widening social unrest in the PRC countryside that has become a serious concern for government leaders.

(return to top)

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