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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("NYE CALLS FOR COMBINING TACTICS TO CURB N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/02/12) reported that Harvard professor Joseph Nye on Tuesday proposed a "smart power" solution to contain the DPRK's nuclear threat by combining the PRC's economic influence and the ROK's moral dominance. "What will work essentially in the short run is the hard power of economic pressure," Nye said. "That requires China, particularly, to take the lead." "The solution to the problems of North Korea is not going to rest on attracting Kim Jong-il," he said. "In the long run, it's going to require a great deal of soft power to attract people to a better way of living and a better form of government."

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "'NK RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVING URANIUM ISSUE'", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that Chun Yung-woo, ROK chief representative to the six-party talks, said Wednesday that the DPRK not the United States is responsible for proving whether it has a uranium enrichment program (UEP) for nuclear weapons. "We demand North Korea gives a full account ? whether the account is about past equipment, materials, technology and purchasing activities related with UEP or about all suspicions that have been raised, or whether it is an activity that the North stopped doing or continues to do," he said. "The disablement process is not satisfactory but overall most goals in the disablement were realized," he continued. "It would take over one year to resume operations of the nuclear facilities if North Korea completes disabling of the facilities. But the declaration process is by nature very difficult because North Korea needs to change its position and make a political decision, and that's why the declaration process takes much more time than disablement," he added.

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "SEOUL MAY BE MESSAGE AWAY FROM NUCLEAR-FREE PENINSULA: EXPERT", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that Evans J. R. Revere, president of the Korea Society, said Wednesday that the incoming administration of Lee Myung-bak and the United States must work closely to send a coordinated message to the DPRK that its best option is to give up its nuclear weapons ambitions. "Further delay can only put this situation at risk. A delay will lead to suspicions about North Korea's intention to implement its commitment," he said at a forum organized by the Security Management Institute. "There is, however, considerable suspicions on the part of North Korea about the intention of the Bush administration, as well as Seoul. I can't speak for either of them, but I think it's very important that the DPRK understands the current U.S. administration is very serious about pursuing the current offer on the table," he said.

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2. US Sanctions on DPRK

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "US EASED SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA IN 2007", Seoul, 2008/02/12) reported that Voice of America (VOA) said Tuesday that U.S. President George W. Bush approved the lifting of some sanctions imposed on the DPRK under an act governing human trafficking in mid-October, 2007. Washington notified the DPRK of the decision. The easing allowed the US to provide assistance in educational and cultural exchanges to the extent that the aid doesn't damage its national interest. Though Washington wants to expand exchanges in various fields with Pyongyang, in reality, all the efforts are affected by the results of the six-party talks," a State Department official said on condition of anonymity. "The lifting of sanctions indicates the U.S. intention to open its doors for more exchanges and better relations with North Korea."

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3. US-DPRK Relations

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "EX-US OFFICIALS TO VISIT PYONGYANG BY LAND FEB. 26", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that Korea Society President Evans Revere, former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry and former U.S. Ambassador to Seoul Donald Gregg will visit Pyongyang via the truce village of Panmunjeom on Feb. 26. "We will go to Pyongyang through Panmumjeom by land on Feb. 26 and return to Seoul on Feb. 27," Revere was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency Wednesday. They will attend the inauguration ceremony of President Lee Myung-bak in Seoul on Feb. 25 and the New York Philharmonic performance on Feb. 26 in Pyongyang. Revere requested a meeting with Kim Kye-gwan, the top DPRK nuclear negotiator, the report said.

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4. ROK POWs in DPRK

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "NEXT GOV'T WANTS AID FOR POWS", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that the Lee Myung-bak government is considering offering economic incentives to the DPRK in return for agreeing to deal with the issue of ROK citizens abducted by the the DPRK and prisoners of war (POWs) still alive there. "Previous governments have failed to yield results regarding the issue of South Korean abductees and POWs," Yoo Jong-ha, a former foreign affairs minister and adviser to Lee said during a forum in Seoul. "Lee wants to solve this problem through other ways, offering aid for the of release of the South Koreans."

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5. Inter-Korean Sports Exchanges

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN DEMANDS LEAVE FOOTBALL MATCH IN LIMBO", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that Pyongyang is scheduled to host on March 26 a third regional preliminary between the two Koreas for the 2010 Football World Cup in South Africa. But the DPRK says it will not allow the visit of an ROK cheerleader team, the public display of the ROK's national flag and the playing of the

ROK national anthem. Instead the DPRK demands that the ROK replace its national anthem and flag with the traditional folk song “Arirang” and a flag representing the Korean Peninsula “for the sake of unity and harmony.”

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6. US Military in ROK

Joongang Ilbo ("A GENERAL WITH A FAMILIAR FACE TO REPLACE B.B. BELL", Washington, 2008/02/13) reported that Lieutenant General Walter L. Sharp, director of the U.S. Chiefs of Joint Staff, will be named chief commander of U.S. troops in the ROK replacing the retiring General Burwell B. Bell III. A Congressional hearing in Washington is expected next month, the sources said. If approved, Sharp is expected to arrive in Seoul in July.

Donga Ilbo ("EXTENDED ASSIGNMENT FOR US FORCES KOREA SOUGHT", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry and the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry will reportedly lobby the United States to extend the assignment period of U.S. soldiers in the ROK from one to two years. Defense sources confirmed yesterday that the two ministries recently told the presidential transition committee that they will ask the U.S. Defense Department and Congress for the extension by offering more military and diplomatic support. “When American soldiers stay here longer, they will improve their skills and combat readiness. Furthermore, they will understand Korea much better. They will contribute to the trans-Pacific alliance," said a senior Defense Ministry officlal.

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7. US-ROK Free Trade Agreement

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "FAILURE OF KOREA-U.S. FTA TO HAMPER TIES: U.S. EXPERT", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that the relationship between the ROK and the United States will be badly damaged if the free trade agreement (FTA) fails to be ratified by the legislatures of both countries, said Don Oberdorfer, chairman of the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. The possible failure "will be interpreted by some as a sign of disengagement from Asia," Oberdorfer said. "I think this is the last thing that we want to have at this time."

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8. ROK-Japan Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun (Masakazu Hamasuna, "LEE EYES SUMMIT TALKS ON DAY OF INAUGURATION", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that ROK President-elect Lee Myung Bak has expressed his intention to hold his first summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Feb. 25--the day of his inauguration ceremony. Lee made the suggestion at a meeting with a suprapartistan group of Diet members led by former Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Koichi Kato in Seoul on Monday.

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9. ROK Nuclear Exports

Yonhap ("KOREA EYES EXPORT OF NUCLEAR POWER KNOW-HOW", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that Sakong Il, who heads the national competitiveness panel of the transition team, said Wednesday the incoming Lee Myung-bak administration aims to transform the ROK's expertise on nuclear power generation into an export industry. "If nuclear reactors can be sold to countries like the Ukraine, it could bring in over 1 trillion won in earnings," the former finance minister said.

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10. Alleged PRC Espionage

Chicago Tribune (James Oliphant, "ENGINEER ACCUSED OF SPYING FOR CHINA", Washington, 2008/02/11) reported that Dongfan "Greg" Chung, a retired Boeing Co. engineer who was allegedly part of a 25-year scheme to steal classified secrets about the U.S. space shuttle program and send them to the PRC, was arrested Monday at his Southern California home. His case was one of two espionage cases involving the PRC made public by the government Monday. The other involves a Defense Department analyst who was indicted in Virginia for passing secrets to two accomplices and eventually to the PRC government.

Associated Press (Peter Enav, "TAIWAN SEEKS INFO ON SPY DAMAGE", Taipei, 2008/02/12) reported that Taiwanese officials scrambled Tuesday to determine the possible damage from a Pentagon analyst accused of passing to an agent for the PRC classified information about Taiwan's military weapons and technology purchases. A statement from the Ministry of Defense said it had set up a task force to investigate. "The Ministry of Defense is concerned about whether the U.S. has suffered from a leak of classified information, and it is taking measures to deal with the situation," the statement said.

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11. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo ("GOV'T DEPLORES ALLEGED RAPE, URGES U.S. TO PREVENT RECURRENCE", Tokyo, 2008/02/12) reported that Japan has officially lodged a protest with the United States over the alleged rape of a 14-year-old girl in Okinawa Prefecture by a U.S. Marine, saying it strongly deplores the incident and calling for thorough measures to prevent similar occurrences, Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said Tuesday. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda termed the incident as ''not something permissible'' during a parliamentary committee session the same day, while Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura expressed concerns over its impact on the agreed plan to realign the U.S. military presence in Japan. Joseph Donovan, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Japan, told reporters after a meeting with Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka ''I said that this is an extremely regrettable case and that we take this very, very seriously. I pledged our complete cooperation with the ongoing investigation of the Japanese authorities."

Kyodo ("U.S. MARINE SENT TO PROSECUTORS OVER ALLEGED RAPE IN OKINAWA", Naha, 2008/02/12) reported that Japanese police sent a U.S. Marine to prosecutors Tuesday for allegedly raping a 14-year-old girl in Okinawa Prefecture over the weekend. ''I feel strong indignation over the

crime and can never forgive it, considering the fact that the victim is a junior high school student,'' Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima told reporters after the suspect's arrest. Nakaima said the alleged incident ''will naturally have a detrimental effect on the sentiments of the people of Okinawa (toward the U.S. military).''

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12. US-Russian Relations

BBC News ("US 'INTERCEPTED RUSSIAN BOMBERS'", 2008/02/12) reported that US defense officials said that two Russian bombers approached the USS Nimitz in the western Pacific on Saturday and were intercepted by American fighter jets. It was the first time a Russian bomber had flown over a US aircraft carrier since July 2004.

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II. ROK Report

13. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("2.13 AGREEMENT AND THE BLOCKAGE IN ABANDONING PROCEDURE", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that one government official who is well-informed about the DPRK nuclear issue said that he is concerned about the ongoing procedures. He said since a year ago, when the 2.13 treaty was first agreed to, the states of affairs in the ROK, DPRK, and the US have changed radically into a totally opposite direction. Due to the ROK's change of the government, conflict between the DPRK and US around the UEP issue, etc., the nuclear issue is currently facing hardships. Specifically, due to the incoming ROK president Lee Myung-bak's deep conservative tincture, there is a high possibility for several policies to be regarded as problematic to the DPRK. Thus, the official emphasized that we not only should prepare solid countermeasures against the DPRK nuclear program, but also should form the related organizations as soon as possible.

Seoul Shinmun ("YEAR PASSED SINCE 2.13 DPRK NUCLEAR TREATY", Seoul, 2008/02/13) reported that one of the possible methods to deal with the DPRK nuclear program is to take an indirect strategy to the DPRK's uranium problem when the problem seems unable to be solved. American DPRK nuclear experts also suggest that they first solve the plutonium problem, which they are facing directly. They added that gradual approaches to the UEP and the DPRK's nuclear-proliferation suspicion matter are needed. This means that DPRK should be given proper compensation if they report their plutonium possession faithfully. One possible reward can be the removal of the DPRK from the terrorist-supporting nations list. The ROK and PRC government should take active actions to soften the DPRK-US relations.

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14. Alleged DPRK-Syria Cooperation

Yonhap News ("CHOSUN SHINBO, NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION SUSPICION SOLVED THROUGH 10.3 AGREEMENT", Seoul, 2008/02/12) reported that the DPRK's Chosun Shinbo said that the allegations of DPRK-Syria nuclear-collaboration is untrue. The report added that since the US continues to search for ways to devise a stratagem about the DPRK, they keep on trying to exaggerate the truth through the media. The article pointed out that even though the issue arose in the US media last September, it was not treated as problematic even during the six-party talks held right after the issue first appeared. They added that even Christopher Hill denied the issue to be true during an unofficial meeting held by the US Senate's diplomacy committee last December.

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15. DPRK Policy and EU

Pressian (Choi Jae-cheon, "EU'S INTERVENTION, NOT PRACTICAL, NOT STRATEGIC", Seoul, 2008/02/13) said in an op-ed written by Choi Jae-cheon, an assembly member of the United New Democratic Party, that inter-Korean relations and ROK-US relations are not a matter of choice, but a matter of priority. The incoming ROK government's assertion that nuclear programs should be abandoned pre-emptively, will make it seem that Kim Jong-il has been deprived of the power to control inter-Korean relations and the nuclear issues. Also, it is highly likely for the EU to refuse such a request if the incoming government asked them to persuade the DPRK. Even so, not only in terms of practicality, but also owing to possible disapproval from the US and Japan, it is impossible to invite EU, at least as an observer, in the six-party talks. EU's intervention, from the perspective of the DPRK, will be an opportunity for them to strengthen their power as a nuclear-possessing country.

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