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I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA HOPES TO SEE FULLY DENUCLEARIZED N. KOREA BY 2010: SOURCES", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that the ROK hopes to see the full denuclearization of the DPRK by 2010, a goal which will depend largely on the DPRK's will to break its isolation, diplomatic sources said. A roadmap to denuclearization, devised by the Foreign Ministry and reported to President-elect Lee Myung-bak's transition team, aims to end the second phase of the six-way disarmament deal no later than March, and draw up a concrete timetable for the dismantlement of the DPRK's nuclear programs within the first half of this year, added the sources privy to the ministry's recent report.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "PRESIDENT-ELECT VOWS RAPPROCHEMENT WITH N. KOREA WHILE ENHANCING MILITARY", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that President-elect Lee Myung-bak vowed to continue to engage the DPRK to dissuade it from its nuclear ambitions while enhancing the ROK's military strength to deter any threats from the DPRK. "(Korea) is the only divided nation on the face of the earth. We cannot but take defense and security seriously," Lee said while speaking to Defense Ministry officials, including Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo.

Yonhap ("MINISTRY SUGGESTS AID OFFER IF PYONGYANG RETURNS S. KOREAN POWS", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that the Unification Ministry has suggested that the incoming government consider providing aid to the DPRK in return for the repatriation of ROK prisoners of war and kidnapped South Koreans, a ministry official said. The ministry made the suggestion to the transition team of President-elect Lee Myung-bak during a briefing on Jan. 7 as one of the measures to resolve the thorny issue, the official said.

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3. DPRK Heavy Fuel Oil

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA TO SUPPLY 50,000 TONS OF FUEL OIL TO N.KOREA JAN. 20-21", Moscow, 2008/01/14) reported that Russia will supply 50,000 tons of fuel oil to the DPRK on January 20-21 in

line with a six-nation deal to resolve the country's nuclear problem, a deputy foreign minister said. "I think we will complete the delivery on January 20-21," Alexander Losyukov said after talks in Moscow with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill. Losyukov said: "North Korea cannot use this [the delivery of Russian fuel oil] as an excuse to drag its feet on denuclearization process any longer." Russia has also offered the DPRK a number of energy deals and the possibility of writing off part of Pyongyang's Soviet-era debt if it continues to fulfill its commitment to complete nuclear disarmament.

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4. DPRK Economy

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA'S SHRINKING OIL IMPORTS REFLECT ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that the DPRK's crude oil imports in 2006 amounted to merely 3.8 million barrels, a steep fall from about 18 million barrels in the early 1990s, a ROK government report disclosed on Sunday said, indicating the difficulties faced by the DPRK in reviving its economy amid a prolonged nuclear stalemate. According to the National Statistics Office's report, the 3.8 million barrel import marked the smallest amount of oil imported by the DPRK in a five-year span ending in 2006. The DPRK imported as many as 18 million barrels of crude oil in 1990, nearly five times its imports in 2006. Crude imports hit their lowest mark when the DPRK brought in 2.3 million barrels in 1999, signaling its deteriorating economic conditions.

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5. Sino-DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT CHINA THIS YEAR: CHINESE AMBASSADOR", Seoul, 2008/01/14) reported that the DPRK's foreign minister will visit Beijing this year for the first time since he took office in May last year, the PRC ambassador to Pyongyang said. Liu Xiaoming, PRC Ambassador to the DPRK, provided the information in a speech at a year-end dinner meeting with DPRK diplomats, according to the embassy's official Website.

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6. Japan Missile Defense Program

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN WORKING ON CENTRAL TOKYO MISSILE SHIELD: OFFICIAL", Tokyo, 2008/01/14) reported that Japan on Tuesday carried out studies to deploy a missile defence shield in central Tokyo, officials said Tuesday, amid concern that the capital is at risk from the DPRK. The defence ministry conducted investigations on Monday and Tuesday into two locations for US-developed Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) surface-to-air interceptors, a defence spokesman said. The sites looked at were Shinjuku Gyoen, a major park in central Tokyo, and the Ichigaya military post on the premises of the defence ministry headquarters, he said.

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7. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE DIVIDED OVER RETURN TO AFGHAN MISSION: POLL ", Tokyo, 2008/01/14) reported that Japanese people were divided over the nation's resumption of refuelling operations in the Indian Ocean in support of a US-led Afghanistan mission, an opinion poll showed on Saturday. The survey, conducted by Kyodo News, showed that 44.1 percent of respondents backed the bill with 43.9 percent opposed. For the approval of the bill, the government took the almost unprecedented move of overriding a rejection in the opposition-led upper house. The poll showed that 46.7 percent said they supported the government's decision to override the rejection while 41.6 percent said it was inappropriate.

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8. US-PRC Military Relations

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS MILITARY BUILDUP DOES NOT THREATEN U.S.", Beijing, 2008/01/14) reported that the PRC defended its growing military prowess on Monday, saying it did not threaten the United States, and again urged Washington not to sell weapons to Taiwan. "The distance between the Chinese and U.S. militaries is big. If you fear China's military buildup you don't have much courage," said Chen Bingde, chief of General Staff of the People's Liberation Army. "We don't have the ability to make you afraid of us," he told reporters in Beijing, before meeting Timothy Keating, head of the U.S. Pacific Command.

Kyodo ("U.S. COMMANDER SAYS WARSHIPS TO PASS TAIWAN STRAIT AS NEEDED", Beijing, 2008/01/14) reported that U.S. warships will cross the Taiwan Strait whenever they choose to, the head of the U.S. Pacific Command said, after the PRC's complaint about a U.S. aircraft carrier doing so on its way back to its home port in Japan late last year. Adm. Timothy Keating said the USS Kitty Hawk, which sailed through the area after the PRC's initial denial of permission to make a port call in Hong Kong, did so because of bad weather, adding that whether the two countries can discuss such developments as they arise is a measure of transparency.

Reuters (Lindsay Beck, "U.S. URGES CHINA TO OPEN UP ON DEFENSE BUILD-UP", Beijing, 2008/01/14) reported that the head of U.S. Pacific Command pushed the PRC to be more transparent about its defense build-up and suggested its growing military might was aimed at Taiwan. Admiral Timothy Keating, in his second visit since taking the helm of the Pacific Command last year, said he was concerned about the PRC's development of new military hardware, including long-range cruise missiles and anti-satellite technology. "Increased transparency can lead to greater trust that reduces the potential for misunderstanding. Misunderstanding can lead to conflict or crisis and that is very much not in our interest," Keating said.

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9. Hong Kong Government

The Financial Times (Tom Mitchell, "PROTEST AT HONG KONG POLL DELAY", Hong Kong, 2008/01/14) reported that democracy activists in Hong Kong held their second mass rally in less than a month to protest at Beijing's recent decision to delay direct elections for the territory's chief executive until at least 2017. Organisers said more than 20,000 people marched to Hong Kong government headquarters, while police put the number of participants at 7,000.

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10. Sino-Indian Relations

BBC News ("CHINA AND INDIA AGREE CLOSER TIES", 2008/01/14) reported that the PRC and India have pledged to increase economic and military ties following an official visit by Indian PM Manmohan Singh to Beijing. Mr Singh and PRC Premier Wen Jiabao signed a broad agreement to expand trade between their countries to \$60bn (£30bn) by 2010. The leaders also agreed to cooperate on further joint military exercises. But India stressed that the PRC would have to make concessions to address an increasing trading imbalance. Additionally, they pledged to renew efforts to resolve a border dispute dating back to a short but bloody war in 1962 over Himalayan territory.

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11. PRC Land Use

Washington Post (Edward Cody, "FARMERS RISE IN CHALLENGE TO CHINESE LAND POLICY", Changchunling, 2008/01/14) reported that about 1,000 farmers gathered in the village meeting hall here at 8 a.m. on Dec. 19 and proclaimed what amounted to a revolt against the PRC's communist land-ownership system. The broad, flat fields surrounding Changchunling belong to the farmers who work them, they declared, and not to the local government. The farmers then began dividing up the village's collective holdings, with the goal of making each family the owner of a private plot. The redistribution exercise at Changchunling was not an isolated incident. Rather, it marked what appears to be the start of a backlash against the PRC's system of collective land ownership in rural areas. Although much of the communist system has been jettisoned over the years, all of the PRC's rural land is still owned by the state. Ownership -- and the right to sell -- has remained in the hands of village-level leaders and party secretaries.

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12. PRC Migrant Workers

Agence France-Presse ("VERY FEW CHINESE MIGRANT WORKERS ARE HAPPY: REPORT", Beijing, 2008/01/14) reported that less than eight percent of the PRC's 200 million migrant workers are happy with life in the city, as most complain of discrimination, overwork and low salaries, state press said. Some 68 percent of 30,000 migrant workers in major PRC cities said they faced discrimination from urban residents who do not "fully accept" them, according to a survey by Shanghai's Fudan University, the China Daily said. Only 7.6 percent of the respondents said they were satisfied with their urban lives, partly because of a lack of time to study and improve job prospects, the paper said.

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II. ROK Report

13. President-Elect's DPRK Policy

Joongang Daily (Ye Young-joon, "'WILLING TO MEET KIM JONG-IL IF FOR DENUCLEARIZING'", Seoul, 2008/01/15) reported that the ROK's president-elect Lee Myung-bak has announced some of the main points of the new government's diplomatic-security policy. According to the report, Lee's new policy is based on practicality, which focuses more on the ROK's own benefit. The policy also pursues an actual development of the relationship between two Koreas along with the denuclearization of the DPRK. Lee stated that reinforcing the relationship with neighboring countries such as the U.S., Japan, China, and Russia is also something that needs to be worked on. He specifically emphasized the importance of the relationship with the U.S., which can function advantageously to the DPRK as well. Lee said that he is willing to meet Kim Jong-il any time if it can facilitate the denuclearization of the DPRK.

Yonhap News ("KCCI 'NEW GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE INTER-KOREAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION'", Seoul, 2008/01/15) reported that the ROK's Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), which is in charge of the two Koreas' nonofficial economic cooperation, said that they would be consistent on implementing several projects that had been decided on regardless of the change in government. Kim Young-kwa, the head director of the department of the economic cooperation in Ministry of Financial and Economy, stated they are going to put priority on the tasks that are profitable to the ROK's own economy, or are apt to contribute to long-term economic unity. He also emphasized that more detailed plans of the policy will be based on economic rationality.

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14. DPRK Economy

Yonhap News ("DPRK KIM CHOONG-RIN 'MORE ARTICLES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEEDED'", Pyongyang, 2008/01/15) said that the DPRK's Chosun Central news had reported that Kim Choong-rin, the secretary of the DPRK's Workers' Party, has insisted that all reporters and editors should create more articles that can encourage the DPRK people's creativity and great achievement. The motivation for his assertion was to build an economically strong nation.

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