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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Weapons

New York Times (David Sanger, "WE MAY MISS KIM JONG-IL (AND MAYBE MUSHARAFF)", Washington, 2008/09/13) reported that US officials say that there is little reason to worry about what will happen to the DPRK's nuclear weapons if Kim Jong-il dies as long as the military remains in charge. "It is very difficult for me to imagine someone arriving at a North Korean facility with guns blazing and emerging with a nuclear weapon," said Matthew Bunn, who teaches at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. "And the military understands that there is a big chance of retaliation if they ever sold anything to a terrorist — retaliation that would remove them and everyone they ever met from power." "The bad news about North Korea," said Jonathan Pollack, a DPRK expert at the Naval War College, "is that we don't know much about their nuclear control system. Or even if they have much of one."

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2. DPRK Leadership

Kyodo ("CHINESE DOCTORS PERFORMED SURGERY ON N. KOREAN LEADER AFTER STROKE", Beijing, 2008/09/14) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il collapsed from a stroke on Aug. 14 and underwent surgery performed with help from five military doctors dispatched by the PRC at the DPRK's request, according to multiple Chinese sources. The sources said that while Kim is recovering from the stroke, he is still experiencing problems in the functioning of his limbs, which is typical with stroke victims. While his affected limbs are expected to recover to almost the way there were before the stroke, that will require a long period of rest and rehabilitation, they said.

Associated Press (Kelly Olsen, "WORRIES SIMMER OVER ABSENT NORTH KOREAN STRONGMAN", Seoul, 2008/09/12) reported that some fear that the longer DPRK leader Kim Jong-il remains behind closed doors recuperating from an apparent stroke, the greater the risk of a political vacuum and implosion of the nuclear-armed state. "It appears that there is no leadership change" in North Korea, ROK Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee told lawmakers Thursday during a closed-door briefing, according to Jun Eun-hye, aide to a lawmaker from the ruling party. Paik Hak-soon, a DPRK expert at the Sejong Institute, says the calm proves Kim is still calling the shots, despite any illness, and should be taken as good news. "Kim Jong Il is the most reliable partner we can deal with," Paik said. "He is in control."

Korea Herald ("POST-KIM N.K. TO BE RULED BY COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP", Seoul, 2008/09/13) reported that the DPRK is inevitably headed toward a collective leadership as Kim Jong-il's poor health will prevent him from resuming full control over state affairs, Kang In-duk, a former unification minister under the Kim Dae-jung government and director of the Institute for East Asian Studies in Seoul stated. Kim's one-man rule is expected to be naturally replaced by a collective leadership centered around the country's National Defense Commission, according to Kang. Kang

based his assessment on the fact that the five most powerful decision making-bodies in Pyongyang pledged allegiance to Kim Jong-il on the eve of nation's 60th foundation anniversary on Sept. 9. This is indicative of a future collective leadership structure

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3. US, ROK on DPRK Leadership

Donga Ilbo ("S. KOREA, U.S. PREPARE FOR POST-KIM JONG IL ERA", Seoul, 2008/09/13) reported that the ROK and the United States are preparing for a DPRK without leader Kim Jong Il, whose poor health could cause great instability in the DPRK's power structure, a Seoul government source said Friday. A high-ranking security official from Seoul visited Washington last week for talks on security issues and OPLAN 5029, a military contingency plan in the event of a drastic change in the DPRK. Seoul's preparation is said to go beyond intelligence gathering, and include new action plans on preparation for reunification of the Korean Peninsula in the event of a dramatic event such as the the DPRK's collapse.

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4. DPRK Propaganda

Korea Times ("NK STRESSES UNITY AMID REPORT OF KIM JONG-IL'S ILLNESS", Seoul, 2008/09/14) reported that the DPRK emphasized Sunday the necessity of maintaining national unity and loyalty towards leader Kim Jong-il. In a lengthy commentary, Rodong Shinmun said, ``Our mightiest weapon ? the real missile ? is 'the missile of unity.' There are weapons that can destroy missiles, but there is not any weapon that can destroy a crystal made up of tens of millions of hearts." It added, "At the center of our unity is our leader. Our leader's greatness will enhance our unity."

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("PRODUCTION IN INTER-KOREAN BUSINESS TOWN TOPS \$400 MILLION", Seoul, 2008/09/15) reported that the total output by ROK factories operating in the DPRK has exceeded US\$400 million, Seoul's Unification Ministry said Monday. Companies at the Kaesong industrial complex produced goods worth a total of US\$410 million between January 2005, when the compound was opened, and July this year. One-fifth of all goods produced were exported, according to the ministry. The output in the first seven months of this year amounted to \$140 million, up 51 percent from the same period last year.

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6. Submarine Incursion in Japan

Agence France-Press ("JAPAN HUNTS MYSTERY SUBMARINE INTRUDER", Tokyo, 2008/09/14) reported that Japan's navy tracked a submarine that intruded into its waters for nearly two hours

Sunday and then lost track of it without identifying its nationality, a military official said. Naval vessel Atago spotted the submarine in Japanese waters at 6:56 am (2156 GMT Saturday) but the craft did not raise a national flag or surface, breaching international laws, a defence ministry spokesman said. "We will make a protest against the country through a diplomatic route" once Japan identifies the nationality of the submarine, Defence Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi said, according to Jiji Press.

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7. US Military in Japan

Associated Press ("JAPAN POLICE PROBE 2 EXPLOSIONS NEAR US NAVY BASE", Tokyo, 2008/09/13) reported that a U.S. naval base may have been the target of two explosions that rattled a nearby residential area just south of Tokyo, police said Saturday. No one was wounded in the late Friday blasts in a neighborhood about half a mile from the Yokosuka Naval Base, according to a statement by the Yokosuka Police Station. Investigators found evidence of two possibly rocket-propelled bombs at the site in Yokosuka, police said, without elaborating.

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8. Japanese Politics

Yomiuri ("POLL: ASO LDP PRESIDENCY ALMOST ASSURED", Tokyo, 2008/09/15) reported that Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Taro Aso is almost certain to win next Monday's LDP presidential election, a Yomiuri Shimbun survey revealed Sunday. Aso looks set to garner more than 300 votes, far exceeding an outright majority of the 527 votes allotted to LDP Diet members and party prefectural chapters, the results show.

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9. Sino-Japanese Trade Relations

Asahi Shimbun (Satsuki Fujita, "CONTAMINATED CHINESE RICE LABELED AS PRODUCT OF U.S.", Tokyo, 2008/09/15) reported that some of the pesticide-tainted Chinese rice sold by Mikasa Foods Co. was eventually labeled as U.S. rice as it went through a complicated distribution network that comprised nine brokers, sources said. The Kyoto city government has detected 0.02 parts per million of methamidophos, double the standard under the Food Sanitation Law, from rice stored at a nursing care facility for the elderly in the city, one of the 119 facilities.

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10. Sino-US Relations

Associated Press ("MCCAIN, OBAMA CALL FOR CLOSER US-CHINA COOPERATION", Beijing, 2008/09/14) reported that John McCain and Barack Obama call for closer U.S.-PRC cooperation on trade, the environment and nuclear proliferation in the upcoming issue of China Brief, the monthly magazine of the American Chamber of Commerce in China. Neither candidate proposes specific

initiatives, but both stress that the countries should work more closely to ease trade friction, combat global warming, improve military exchanges and block the spread of nuclear weapons.

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11. Cross Straits Diplomatic Rivalry

New York Times (Graham Bowley, "CASH HELPED CHINA WIN COSTA RICA'S RECOGNITION", 2008/09/12) reported that as part of an incentive package to persuade Costa Rica to shift its diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC last year, the PRC used the muscle of its enormous foreign exchange reserves, agreeing to buy \$300 million of Costa Rican bonds, documents released in Costa Rica this week revealed. The deal shows that the PRC is using its \$1.8 trillion in foreign exchange reserves, the world's largest such cache of foreign currency, to further its political goals, despite promises that it would not do so.

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12. PRC Landslide

Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "CHINA LANDSLIDE DEATH TOLL RISES TO 254", Beijing, 2008/09/14) reported that the death toll has risen to 254 in a landslide triggered by the collapse of an illegal mining dump, which engulfed a village in Shanxi province's Xiangfen county, a PRC government official said Sunday. The tally could rise as more than 1,000 rescue workers comb through 74 acres of sludge and mining waste covering the area, where hundreds more people could be buried. The landslide Monday in Shanxi province's Xiangfen county was triggered when the retaining wall of a mining dump containing tons of liquid iron-ore waste collapsed, inundating the village of 1,300 residents and an outdoor market with hundreds of patrons in a matter of minutes.

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13. PRC Social Unrest

Xinhua ("THINK TANK REPORT WARNS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC, GOV'T OFFICIALS", Beijing, 2008/09/13) reported that a report from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), the country's leading think tank, warned conflict between the public and government officials had become more obvious in recent years. Friday's China Youth Daily quoted the report as saying about 69.84 percent of those surveyed by CASS experts thought government officials benefited the most from economic development in the past decade. They were followed by the entertainment stars, entrepreneurs, managers of state-owned enterprises and professionals. On one hand, a government job with stable income and decent welfare showed its advantages in the heated competition of the employment market. On the other hand, corruption and malpractice harmed the public image of officials," the report said.

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org