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I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Herald (Kim Min-hee, "SPY CHIEF RESIGNS OVER N.K. VISIT LEAK", 2008/01/15) reported that the national intelligence chief resigned to take responsibility for a leaked report about his meeting prior to the presidential election with a top DPRK official. Kim Man-bok, director of the National Intelligence Service, admitted at a press conference at the NIS headquarters in Seoul yesterday that he had leaked the information to an unidentified executive with a vernacular daily on condition the report would not be made public. He further explained that the report had been written to dispel suspicions that the NIS tried to influence the presidential election. He said he had wanted to prove that the agency had remained strictly neutral in the election.

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2. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA PRESIDENT-ELECT TO AXE MINISTRY HANDLING NKOREA: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/01/15) reported that the ROK's next president plans to axe the Unification Ministry, which handles DPRK affairs, as part of proposals to streamline the government, the Yonhap news agency reported. It said president-elect Lee Myung-Bak's transition team had finalised plans to downsize the cabinet by closing or merging five agencies. Koh Yu-Hwan, an analyst on the DPRK and professor at Dongguk University in Seoul, warned the shake-up could damage policy coordination. "If the Seoul government does not have a North Korea-related agency as an independent cabinet ministry, it could have difficulty in coordinating relevant policies on North Korea," Koh said.

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3. ROK Nuclear Program

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "PARK SOUGHT TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS", 2008/01/16) reported that the late President Park Chung-hee sought to develop nuclear weapons until early 1976 when he dropped the plan due to strong opposition from the US, according to classified documents released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade Tuesday. On Jan. 17, 1975, then Korean Ambassador to Canada Kim Young-ju sent a letter to Park on the results of two years of negotiations with Canadian authorities over the introduction of a nuclear reactor. The letter included references to the development of nuclear weapons. Kim said in the letter that the ROK would be able to produce three to six nuclear weapons per year using the Canadian reactors. But he added that the production

would be impossible if the ROK were subject to international controls on uranium.

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4. ROK-US Relations

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "LEE LAUDS US SERVICEMEN IN KOREA", 2008/01/15) reported that President-elect Lee Myung-bak Tuesday stressed the importance in the role of U.S. troops stationed on the Korean Peninsula as a stabilizing force in Northeast Asia, as well as a deterrent against the DPRK. During his visit to the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC) headquarters in Seoul, Lee said the CFC was a symbolic structure of the alliance between Seoul and Washington, which he described boasts of one of the strongest combined defense readiness in the world. Lee and Bell discussed a range of issues to further improve the military alliance and combined defense position against the DPRK, the aides said.

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5. US-ROK Trade Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "LEGISLATORS SEEK FTA RATIFICATION BY NEXT MONTH", 2008/01/15) reported that the National Assembly should ratify the free trade agreement with the US by the end of next month, Ahn Sang-soo, the floor leader of the Grand National Party, said yesterday, as lawmakers on both sides of the aisle talked about passage of the deal. Sohn Hak-kyu, the new chairman of the liberal United Democratic New Party, said he would back the agreement as long as measures are passed to help people who will be hurt by it, mostly rural farmers. The hard part, now, may be convincing the United States Congress to approve the agreement amid a presidential election year there. Democratic leaders and some Republicans have criticized the free trade deal, saying it doesn't provide automakers with enough protection.

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6. ROK-PRC Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("PARK GEUN-HYE ATTENDS LEE MEETING WITH CHINA ENVOY", 2008/01/15) reported that President-elect Lee Myung-bak met with PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, a special envoy of PRC President Hu Jintao, in a meeting that was doubly notable for the attendance of his former party rival Park Geun-hye. Lee reassured Wang that the ROK "never neglects relations with China" and proposed strengthening bilateral ties and economic cooperation. Wang delivered congratulations on Lee's election from President Hu Jintao and an invitation to the PRC.

Yonhap ("LEE'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO VISIT BEIJING TO MEET CHINESE PRESIDENT", Seoul, 2008/01/16) reported that former leader of the Grand National Party, Park Geun-hye, will head to Beijing Wednesday to meet with PRC President Hu Jintao in her capacity as a special envoy of President-elect Lee Myung-bak, Lee's aides said. "During her visit to China, special envoy Park will meet with President Hu Jintao, State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, Wang Jiarui, head of the Communist Party's international department, and other Chinese leaders," Lee's transition team said in a press release. Park will explain the incoming administration's diplomatic and economic directions and discuss ways of promoting Seoul-Beijing ties, the team added.

Chosun Ilbo ("TRADE BETWEEN S.KOREA AND CHINA TOPS \$150 BIL.", 2008/01/15) reported that the total volume of bilateral trade between the ROK and PRC has topped US\$150 billion for the first time in history. The ROK Embassy in the PRC, citing trade statistics published by the PRC Customs General Administration, said that the trade volume between the two countries jumped 19.1 percent from 2006 to \$159.8 billion in 2007. The PRC's exports to the ROK grew 26.1 percent to \$56.1 billion and its imports increased 15.6 percent to \$103.7 billion. As a result, the PRC recorded a trade deficit of \$47.6 billion with the ROK in 2007, up 5 percent from \$45.2 billion in 2006.

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7. ROK-Japan Relations

Yonhap ("LEE'S ENVOY CONVEYS INCOMING GOV'T'S HOPE TO COOPERATE WITH JAPAN", Tokyo, 2008/01/15) reported that a special envoy of the ROK's President-elect Lee Myung-bak has conveyed to the Japanese government Lee's wish to strengthen cooperative ties between the two nations, especially in economic and DPRK issues, the envoy's accompanying lawmaker said. Rep. Lee Sang-deuk, a vice speaker of the ROK's National Assembly, came here for a four-day stay as one of four envoys the president-elect is sending to the four regional powers -- Japan, the US, the PRC and Russia -- to explain his diplomatic policy before his inauguration on Feb. 25.

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8. Japan Politics

The Financial Times (David Pilling, "FUKUDA REJECTS PRESSURE FOR SNAP ELECTION", Tokyo, 2008/01/15) reported that Yasuo Fukuda, Japan's prime minister, on Tuesday set the scene for a protracted battle with the opposition, insisting that he did not intend to dissolve parliament before he hosts the Group of Eight summit this July. In a battle of wills that could determine whether Japan returns to an earlier period of "revolving door" prime ministers, Mr Fukuda told reporters he would "not dissolve parliament easily". The DPJ is pressuring the prime minister to call a snap election, possibly as early as March or April, to resolve a legislative crisis caused by the fact that, for virtually the first time since the war, the ruling Liberal Democratic party does not control both houses of parliament.

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9. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Dow Jones ("JAPAN PM'S CABINET SUPPORT RATE UP AT 41.4% - KYODO NEWS POLL", Tokyo, 2008/01/15) reported that the support rate for the Cabinet of Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda stood at 41.4% Saturday in the latest Kyodo News survey, up 6.1 percentage points from the previous poll in December. But the survey also showed that 46.7% of respondents thought it was inappropriate that the ruling camp passed a bill for the resumption of Japan's anti-terrorism refueling mission in the Indian Ocean by a second vote in the House of Representatives, overriding its rejection by the opposition-dominated House of Councilors, Kyodo reported. [*editorial note: this article is included to correct an AFP article that appeared in the Jan 15 Daily Report which switched the poll results*] .

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10. Sino-Indian Nuclear Cooperation

Agence France-Presse (Dan Martin, "INDIAN PM PROPOSES NUCLEAR ENERGY COOPERATION WITH CHINA", Beijing, 2008/01/15) reported that with a controversial nuclear deal with the US now in limbo, India held out the possibility Tuesday of civilian nuclear cooperation with the PRC. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, on the last day of a visit to the PRC, said the world's two most populous nations should work together to develop their nuclear energy programs. "India seeks international cooperation in the field of civilian nuclear energy, including with China," Singh said, noting such cooperation could help the two countries meet their skyrocketing energy needs.

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11. US-PRC Military Relations

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "U.S. ADMIRAL, CHINESE DISCUSS PORT CALLS", Beijing, 2008/01/15) reported that in high-level meetings this week, PRC officials did not give the head of the U.S. Pacific Command, Adm. Timothy J. Keating, any reason for rejecting a routine port call in Hong Kong by a U.S. aircraft carrier in November. But Keating said Tuesday that a request for a visit in several weeks received "favorable consideration." In remarks to reporters, PRC Gen. Chen Bingde, chief of general staff, suggested that the Kitty Hawk had not followed the correct procedures. "China is a country with its own territory," Chen said. "If your ship wants to stop in Hong Kong, you have to follow the international rules and go through some procedures." Keating said the PRC had not made the same complaint privately and that the United States had followed all international rules. He said the two sides focused on future events and operations, including an invitation to the PRC to participate in a multilateral military exercise in Thailand in May.

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12. Cross Strait Relations

The New York Times (David Lague, "TAIWAN ELECTION MAY EASE TENSIONS WITH CHINA", Taipei, 2008/01/14) reported that the landslide victory for the opposition Kuomintang in Taiwan's parliamentary elections could sharply reduce the political influence of President Chen Shui-bian, who has antagonized the PRC and frustrated the United States with his efforts to forge a strong national identity for Taiwan. The Kuomintang, which once waged a fierce civil war against the Communists on the mainland, now advocates maintaining the status quo between the PRC and Taiwan without ruling out eventual reunification. In the meantime, it supports closer economic and cultural ties with its neighbor — a stance that political analysts here said was likely to reduce tensions across the Taiwan Strait should the party win in March.

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13. PRC Land Use

The Associated Press ("CHINA TO EDUCATE FARMERS ON PROPERTY ", Beijing, 2008/01/15)

reported that the PRC will step up efforts to educate farmers on their property rights and encourage them to resolve land disputes through legal means, officials said Tuesday, in a push to curb protests over illegal land grabs and inadequate compensation. The campaign will use the media, training classes and traditional propaganda methods such as village banners to make farmers aware of their rights, said Hu Jianfeng, deputy director general of the Ministry of Agriculture. "We will enhance publicity and raise the awareness of relevant laws and regulations so farmers will employ lawful channels to uphold their land rights," Hu told reporters.

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II. CanKor

14. Report #300

CanKor ("CONVERSATION WITH THE PATRIOT -- Part 1", 2008/01/15) For the sixth anniversary of the CanKor Report in August 2006, Editor-in-chief Erich Weingartner wrote a fictional profile entitled "Portrait of a Patriot". (Please see CanKor Report #257 at <http://www.globalcollab.org/Cankor>) The 300th edition of the CanKor Report revisits the "patriot" character. The interview published in this SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION is, of course, equally fictional, as is the name Pak Kim Li (a combination of the three most popular family names in Korea). The character is based on conversations during Weingartner's many visits to Korea since 1978, including his almost 3-year residence in Pyongyang as Head of the Food Aid Liaison Unit of the UN World Food Programme in Pyongyang from 1997 to 1999.

CanKor ("WHAT READERS SAID ABOUT 'PORTRAIT OF A PATRIOT'", 2008/01/15) "Just brilliant! You have hit the nail on the head!" David Morton, former United Nations Coordinator and Country Director of the UN World Food Programme in Pyongyang.

"Brilliant piece of hermeneutics. Bravo. Wholly believable." Aidan Foster-Carter, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Sociology & Modern Korea, Leeds University, UK.

"That story about Pak Kim Li is brilliant." Ruediger Frank, Professor of East Asian Political Economy, University of Vienna.

"Your piece of not so fictional fiction is brilliant!" Nigel Cowie, General Manager of Daedong Credit Bank, Pyongyang.

"I do think that you have really captured the inner life of that fictional 'patriot' very well. It is really a brilliant piece." Charles Burton, Associate Professor of Political Science, Brock University, Canada.

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