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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, N. KOREA TOP NUKE ENVOYS TO MEET IN SINGAPORE NEXT WEEK", Tokyo, 2008/07/15) reported that the Japanese and DPRK chief delegates to six-party talks on the DPRK's denuclearization are arranging to meet on the sidelines of a regional security ministerial meeting in Singapore next week, with Japan expected to press for the resumption of full-fledged bilateral talks, government sources said. The focus of attention will be whether Akitaka Saiki, head of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, can engage in concrete negotiations with DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan and draw out progress on the unresolved abductions of Japanese nationals by the DPRK's agents.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Kyodo News ("U.S. MILITARY BILLS N. KOREA 'POTENTIAL THREAT,' CALLS FOR MORE INFO ", Tokyo, 2008/07/15) reported that top US Forces Japan commander Lt. Gen. Edward Rice urged the DPRK to disclose more information about its military capabilities and purposes, describing the country as posing "a potential threat" to Northeast Asia. Rice, the chief of the U.S. military in Japan, said the DPRK continues to be a "regime that is not very transparent in terms of their capabilities and their intentions." Rice also said he recognizes that participants in the six-party talks on the DPRK's denuclearization are working hard to "diminish that threat to Japan and other countries in the region."

Korea Herald ("RICE DUE IN SINGAPORE FOR ARF AMID RUMORS OF MEETING WITH N. KOREAN MINISTER", 2008/07/15) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice will fly to Singapore next week to attend a regional security forum, her spokesman said, but he dismissed speculation she will meet with her DPRK counterpart there. "There's nothing on the schedule at this point," said Sean McCormack, the State Department spokesman.

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3. Mt. Kumgang Shooting

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "NORTH NO HELP IN PROBE OF WOMAN SHOT BY A SOLDIER", 2008/07/15) reported that Hyundai Asan President Yoon Man-joon returned from his two-day visit to the DPRK with little progress in the investigation into why a ROK housewife was shot dead by a DPRK soldier. Pyongyang refused to allow any investigators from the ROK into the country and said a CCTV camera that may have recorded the incident was not working. "The North remains unchanged on its stance that there is no need for a joint investigation … We had hoped there would be some visible progress, but we ended up with little," Yoon said.

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "CIVIC GROUPS DENOUNCE N.K.'S UNCOOPERATIVE ATTITUDE ON TOURIST'S DEATH", 2008/07/15) reported that a network of civic groups criticized the DPRK's "arrogant" response to the shooting death of a ROK tourist near a DPRK mountain resort last week and called on Pyongyang to cooperate with Seoul's probe of the incident. "North Korea has consistently maintained an 'arrogant' attitude, refusing to accept South Korea's demand for an on-site investigation," the group said in a statement. Activists from the 34 groups, including ones representing DPRK defectors who settled in the ROK, read the statement to reporters in front of the Central Government Complex in Seoul.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua ("S KOREAN PRESIDENT URGED TO REVISE DIPLOMATIC POLICY", Seoul, 2008/07/15) reported that ROK's main opposition party asked President Lee Myung-bak to revise his diplomatic policy. "Pragmatism is becoming another word for opportunism for the Lee Myung-bak government. Recent incidents show that it is time for the president to revise his pragmatism and pragmatic diplomacy which have been threatening the country's principles as well as its international status," said Won Hye-young, floor leader of themain opposition Democratic Party. "The issue of the North (DPRK)'s killing of the tourist must also be dealt with sternly, but the government must remember that restoring the inter-Korean dialogue channel is critical for proper investigation as well as peace on the Korean Peninsula," Won said.

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5. ROK Missile Defense

Reuters (Jim Wolf , "TENSIONS SEEN BOOSTING U.S. MISSILE DEFENSE EXPORTS", Farnborough, 2008/07/15) reported that overseas sales of the U.S. Army's core missile defense system appear set to boom, spurred by tensions surrounding Iran, the DPRK and other regional disputes. The company said Tuesday it had received more than $200 million in its latest wave of Patriot-related contracts, including deals involving the ROK.

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6. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "SOUTH KOREA BEEFS UP PATROLS NEAR DISPUTED ISLES ", Seoul, 2008/07/15) reported that the ROK's coastguard said on Tuesday it had stepped up patrols near islands at the centre of a territorial dispute with Japan, a day after Seoul recalled its ambassador in anger at new Japanese claims to the rocky outcrops. "We're beefing up security measures in relation to Japan's decision to describe Dokdo as its territory in its textbooks," a coastguard official said.

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "CHEONG WA DAE ACCUSES TOKYO OF SPREADING FALSE INFORMATION ON DOKDO ", Seoul, 2008/07/15) reported that the ROK's presidential office Cheong Wa Dae accused the Japanese government of spreading false information on President Lee Myung-bak's remarks on the easternmost ROK islets of Dokdo to the Japanese media in an apparent bid to cause a rift among South Koreans over the territorial issue. The unusual accusation came after Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun reported in its Internet edition Monday night that President Lee made an ambiguous remark on ROK sovereignty over Dokdo during his brief meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on the sidelines of an expanded G8 summit in Toyako.

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "JAPAN TO USE NEW DOKDO GUIDELINES FROM 2009", 2008/07/15) reported that the Japanese government stepped up its hard line stance on Dokdo, Tuesday, announcing a plan to educate students that the islets are part of its territory from next year, three years earlier than scheduled, local television news reported. Initially, Japan was to introduce the non-binding educational guidelines from 2012. However, it suddenly shifted to a tougher position a day after it announced the use of the guidelines describing Dokdo as belonging to Japan.

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7. Japan SDF

Kyodo ("PANEL PROPOSES REMOVING BUREAUCRATS' POWER OVER SDF OPERATIONS ", Tokyo, 2008/07/15) reported that a government panel on Defense Ministry reform endorsed a nonbinding report featuring proposals such as keeping bureaucrats away from the operation of the Self-Defense Forces so uniformed officers can manage SDF units more efficiently. The panel under Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura also proposed that an SDF officer lead a group of bureaucrats as chief of a division of the ministry while maintaining the current structure of the ministry involving both bureaucrats and SDF officers largely intact.

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8. US-Japan Security Alliance

Agence France-Presse ("US TROOPS IN JAPAN COMMIT LESS CRIMES THAN LOCALS: COMMANDER", Tokyo, 2008/07/15) reported that US forces in Japan commit half as many serious crimes on average as the general public, their commander said, lamenting a "misperception" about the behaviour of his troops. The US military is "absolutely convinced" that its measures are having an effect, although it is hard to document crimes that have been prevented, said the commander of US forces in Japan, Lieutenant General Edward Rice.

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9. PRC Environment

The Associated Press ("CHINA: OLYMPICS SAILING SITE IS ALGAE-FREE", Shanghai, 2008/07/15) reported that the site of the Olympic sailing competition is clear of the bright-green algae that until recently had covered the sea off the city of Qingdao, a PRC official said. The PRC government had set a goal of clearing the sailing site by Tuesday. "Now it's totally different from several days ago. It's hard to find the green algae, especially in the Olympics sailing site," Wang Haitao, vice president of the sailing committee for the PRC's games organizing committee, told the Associated Press.

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10. PRC Earthquake

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA QUAKE SENDS 1.4 MILLION BACK INTO POVERTY: REPORT ", Beijing, 2008/07/15) reported that to 1.4 million people in remote villages in southwest PRC have slipped back into absolute poverty after the May 12 earthquake flattened their homes, state press said. "In many counties, the hard-won anti-poverty achievements in the previous two decades disappeared within seconds," the China Daily quoted Fan Xiaojian, head of the central government's poverty alleviation office, as saying. "The damage is so massive and many farmers have reversed back into poverty again."

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11. Sino-Russian Territorial Dispute

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA'S LAVROV COULD DISCUSS BORDER ISLANDS' HANDOVER IN CHINA ", Seoul, 2008/07/15) reported that Russia's foreign minister could discuss the handover of two border river islands to the PRC during his official visit to the country on July 21-22, the PRC Foreign Ministry said. "I believe the parties will exchange opinions on the remaining territorial issues," ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said.

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12. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

The Times of India ("INDIA TO RAISE SIKKIM INCURSION WITH CHINA", New Delhi, 2008/07/15) reported that India will take up with the PRC the stepped up "incursions" by its troops across the Line of Actual Control (LAC) into Sikkim at both the military as well as diplomatic levels. Holding that India would not "yield an inch" of territory and "stand its ground" on Sikkim, minister of state for defence M M Pallam Raju said the incursions would be raised at the next border flag meeting between the Indian Army and the People's Liberation Army. "It will also be discussed at the appropriate highest level. If there is an issue, as two responsible neighbours, we will sort it out," he added.

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13. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua ("MAINLAND TRAVELERS TOUCHED BY TAIWAN HOSTS", Beijing, 2008/07/15) reported that more than 400 mainland tourists - part of the 750-member inaugural mainland tour group to Taiwan - ended their 10-day tour yesterday, marking a completely successful start for the historic tourism program. Local media said the first batch of mainland tourists spent at least 1.3 million U.S. dollars in Taiwan, a helpful contribution to the island's sagging economy. It is estimated that hosting 3,000 mainland visitors daily would bring in 60 billion Taiwan dollars (1.97 billion dollars) annually.

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN TO STAGE WAR GAME AGAINST CHINESE ATTACK", Taipei, 2008/07/15) reported that Taiwan will go ahead with its annual war games to prepare for a possible PRC attack, the military said, despite the recent warming in relations with Beijing. The military drill will feature live-fire air and navy interception and anti-landing maneuvers, the Defense Ministry announced. "Even if relations are warming, we will not relax in our war preparedness," Lt. Gen. Chiu Kuo-cheng told reporters.

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14. PRC Public Health

Caijing Magazine (Li Hujun, "CANCER'S DARK CLOAK SPREADS OVER CHINA", 2008/07/15) reported that cancer death rates are rising dramatically in the PRC, and not only among the elderly. Results from an exhaustive survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Science and Technology said the nation's cancer death rate has risen 80 percent in the past 30 years to 136 per 100,000 citizens, from 74 in the mid-1970s and 108 in the early 1990s. Cancer is now the No. 1 killer in PRC cities and No. 2 in the countryside. The disease accounts for 25 percent of all urban deaths and 21 percent in rural areas.

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II. PRC Report

15. PRC Environment

Xinhua Net (Gu Ruizhen, "BEIJING INVESTED 140 BILLION YUAN IN 7 YEARS FOR GREEN OLYMPICS", Beijing, 2008/07/14 20:00:00 GMT+0) <!-- /* Font Definitions */ @font-face {font-family:SimSun; panose-1:2 1 6 0 3 1 1 1 1 1; mso-font-alt:??; mso-font-charset:134; mso-generic-fo-t-family:auto; mso-font-pitch:variable; mso-font-signature:3 135135232 16 0 262145 0;} @font-face {font-family:"@SimSun"; panose-1:2 1 6 0 3 1 1 1 1 1; mso-font-charset:134; mso-generic-fo-t-family:auto; mso-font-pitch:variable; mso-font-signature:3 135135232 16 0 262145 0;} /* Style Definitions */ p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal {mso-style-parent:""; margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; text-align:justify; text-justify:inter-ideograph; mso-pagination:none; font-size:10.5pt; mso-bidi-font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:SimSun; mso-font-kerning:1.0pt; mso-fareast-language:ZH-CN;} @page Section1 {size:8.5in 11.0in; margin:1.0in 1.25in 1.0in 1.25in; mso-header-margin:.5in; mso-footer-margin:.5in; mso-paper-source:0;}

div.Section1 {page:Section1;} --&gt reported that "since Beijing's successful Olympic bid on July 13, 2001, Beijing has invested a total of 140 billion yuan in environmental protection. After seven years of efforts, the environmental commitments then have been fully realized", Vice Minister of Environmental Engineering Department of Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee Yu Xiaoxuan said on a symposium. The fund has been used in reducing total emission of pollutants and adjusting the economic structure layout. More than 200 heavily polluting enterprises have been relocated. The innocuous treatment rate of garbage in the city and the handing rate of industrial solid waste both reached 96.5%. The innocuous treatment rate of hazardous waste reached 76.6%.

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16. PRC Development

Tencent website, http://house.QQ.com ("'CPN CHINA WEEK 2008' HELD IN BEIJING", 2008/07/15) reported that "CPN China Week 2008" was held in Beijing on July 14, by China Planning Network (CPN). CPN was initiated by groups of professors, scholars and students from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University, which have devoted substantial resources to the development of China's cities and its urbanization process. This time, the activity includes CPN Urban Housing Conference 2008; CPN World Planning School Open House; CPN Cross-Cultural Education Roundtable; CPN City Resilience Roundtable: Rebuilding and Restoration After Sichuan Earthquake; CPN Sichuan Field Trip and Chengdu; CPN Urban Transport Congress 2008.

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17. PRC Arms Embargo

Oriental Morning Post (Wang Weilan, "FRENCH AMBASSADOR: ARMS EMBARGO ON CHINA WILL BE LIFTED SOONER OR LATER", Beijing, 2008/07/15) <!-- /* Font Definitions */ @font-face {font-family:SimSun; panose-1:2 1 6 0 3 1 1 1 1 1; mso-font-alt:??; mso-font-charset:134; mso-generic-fo-t-family:auto; mso-font-pitch:variable; mso-font-signature:3 135135232 16 0 262145 0;} @font-face {font-family:"@SimSun"; panose-1:2 1 6 0 3 1 1 1 1 1; mso-font-charset:134; mso-generic-fo-t-family:auto; mso-font-pitch:variable; mso-font-signature:3 135135232 16 0 262145 0;} /* Style Definitions */ p.MsoNormal, li.MsoNormal, div.MsoNormal {mso-style-parent:""; margin:0in; margin-bottom:.0001pt; text-align:justify; text-justify:inter-ideograph; mso-pagination:none; font-size:10.5pt; mso-bidi-font-size:12.0pt; font-family:"Times New Roman"; mso-fareast-font-family:SimSun; mso-font-kerning:1.0pt; mso-fareast-language:ZH-CN;} @page Section1 {size:8.5in 11.0in; margin:1.0in 1.25in 1.0in 1.25in; mso-header-margin:.5in; mso-footer-margin:.5in; mso-paper-source:0;} div.Section1 {page:Section1;} --&gt reported that "For France, the arms embargo is outdated and not in line with strengthening Sino-EU strategic partnership. Sooner or later, it will be lifted", French Ambassador to the PRC Su He said. French ambassador to the PRC Su He said that despite experiencing some ups and downs, France wants to use the opportunity of being EU's rotating presidency to promote the lifting of the arms embargo on the PRC, and hopes to strengthen collaboration between EU and the PRC in all areas. French President Sarkozy will attend Beijing Olympic Games, not only on behalf of French but also on EU, which is unprecedented in the history of the Olympic Games.

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III. ROK Report

18. ROK on Six-Party Talks

Yonhap News ("DOKDO ISSUE AND MT.KUMGANG SHOOTING INCIDENT, TURBULENCE PREDICTED IN SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2008/07/16) wrote that there are concerns that recent the Dokdo issue and Mt. Kumkang shooting incident might provoke turbulence in the six-party talks. One foreign official said that although the DPRK nuclear issue and the Dokdo issue are separate matters, that might influence chemistry between Korea and Japan. The Mt.Kumgang shooting incidence can be another variable, concerning the tension in inter-Korean relations. The ROK representative of six-party talks, Kim Suk, mentioned that removal from the state sponsor of the terrorism should be done in the range of six party talks, and the Mt. Kumgang shooting incidence, which is inter-Korean problem, should be separately discussed.

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