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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press ("NKOREA WANTS AID BEFORE NUCLEAR REPORT", Beijing, 2008/02/17) reported that the DPRK wants promised energy aid and removal from U.S. terrorism and sanctions blacklists before it will provide a complete declaration of its nuclear programs, American researchers said Saturday after a trip to the DPRK. DPRK officials also said they slowed the removal of fuel rods from the Yongbyon reactor because the United States and other nations have fallen behind in supplying aid, said Stanford University's Siegfried Hecker and Joel Wit, a former State Department DPRK expert. Also traveling with them was Keith Luce, a staff member for Senator Richard Lugar, Republican of Indiana. Despite the diplomatic standoff, Hecker and Wit said DPRK officials at Yongbyon appeared to be working well with U.S. officials and inspectors from the IAEA. "My feeling coming away from this visit is that the level of cooperation is very good, better than I have seen it in 10 years," said Wit.

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2. DPRK Human Rights

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "NORTH KOREA INTENSIFIES PRESS OPPRESSION", Seoul, 2008/02/18) reported that the DPRK executed the director of one of its state-run companies last year for having made phone calls abroad without permission, according to the annual report of Reporters Without Borders. The DPRK shows a marked increase in executions for the offense of communicating with people outside the country, the reported added. The group said the DPRK has intensified its oppression of the press, particularly foreign press which target DPR Koreans as an audience. The report also revealed that DPRK journalists secretly launched a magazine "Rimjingang" in November last year with a Japanese news agency. Around a dozen journalists received secret training in the PRC before returning to their country and published the first edition including interviews and an analysis of the economic situation.

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "22 N. KOREANS EXECUTED FOR DEFECTION ATTEMPT", Seoul, 2008/02/17) reported that twenty-two DPRK citizens sent back to the DPRK by ROK authorities earlier this month after their fishing boats drifted into ROK waters were reported to have been

executed by a firing squad. They were shot dead last week by DPRK military authorities of South Hwanghae Province, which believed they had attempted to defect to the ROK, Yonhap News Agency reported Sunday, quoting an unidentified government source. They were spotted on the western waters off the ROK's Yeonpyeong Island Feb. 8 and interrogated by an investigation team of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and Navy, NIS officials said. They were repatriated later in the day because they showed no intention for defection, they said. The 22 included eight men, 14 women and three students.

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3. DPRK Energy

IFES NK Brief ("LARGE-SCALE POWER PLANT TO BEGIN OPERATIONS ON RYESONG RIVER", 2008/02/15) reported that the DPRK is planning to begin operations in a power plant situated on the Ryesong River in North Hwanghae Province as the country focuses its efforts on overcoming power shortages. The first generator is scheduled to go online within the first half of this year, and construction on the second generator to be completed by year's end. With no large-scale power plant in North Hwanghae Province, electricity has had to be provided from Pyongyang and other regions, with small- and medium-sized generators providing power to local regional areas, according to the Choson Sinbo.

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4. Inter-Korean Sports Exchanges

Korea Herald ("FOOTBALL CHIEF RAPS N.K. OVER FLAG DISPUTE", Seoul, 2008/02/18) reported that Chung Mong-joon, head of the ROK Football Association, criticized the DPRK Friday for refusing to allow the ROK to raise its flag and play its anthem at next month's World Cup qualifier in Pyongyang, according to Yonhap News Agency. "There is no reason why North Korea cannot raise South Korea's flag and play our anthem," Chung said. "South Korea has allowed North Korea to raise its flag and play its anthem when the two sides played in the South," he noted.

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5. US-ROK Alliance

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "SEOUL, WASHINGTON ADVISED TO BUILD MULTI-TASKING ALLIANCE", Seoul, 2008/02/18) reported that members of the U.S.-Korea Strategic Forum presented a report on Monday that said that the ROK and the United States should develop a "multi-tasking" alliance to address new challenges including a common approach to the growing influence of the PRC in the region. "The United States and Korea must begin to sketch a new and shared strategic vision that goes beyond tactical questions relating to North Korea," the report said. "The alliance must be seen in wider and longer-term perspective as an institutionalized security partnership with a mandate to address both traditional and new security challenges." Experts involved in writing the report included John Ikenberry, professor of Princeton University; Mitchell Reiss, vice head for affairs at the College of William and Mary; and Moon Chung-in, professor of Yonsei University.

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. CONGRESS URGED TO UPGRADE KOREA'S ARMS BUYER'S STATUS", Seoul,

2008/02/18) reported that Republican Representative Ed Royce on Thursday submitted a bill to the House of Representatives to upgrade the ROK to the level of NATO+3 member states in the U.S. Foreign Military Sales program (FMS). If the ROK is granted the status, it will be able to purchase a wider variety of state-of-the-art military equipment from the U.S.

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6. US-ROK Free Trade Agreement

Korea Times (Kim Yon-se, "LEADERS REITERATE EARLY FTA RATIFICATION", Seoul, 2008/02/18) reported that ROK President-elect Lee Myung-bak called on President Roh Moo-hyun Monday to closely coordinate with the National Assembly to ratify the free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States before Roh's term expires. "Ahead of Roh's retirement and Lee's taking office, they reviewed major state affairs and transition processes over internal systems of the presidential office," Roh's spokesman Cheon Ho-seon said. The spokesman said, however, the two leaders have not reached any agreement on pending issues.

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7. ROK Intelligence

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "SPY AGENCY TO STRENGTHEN ANTI-ESPIONAGE ACTIVITIES", Seoul, 2008/02/18) reported that President-elect Lee Myung-bak's transition team is pushing ahead with overhauling the roles and missions of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) to help its strengthen activities in collecting intelligence on the DPRK, officials said Monday. The new government will also revive human intelligence (HUMINT) missions in the PRC to help collect intelligence on the DPRK, the official said. "We should know more about what's going on in North Korea through HUMINT operations to resolve the stalemate over the North's nuclear weapons program," said Nam Sung-wook, a DPRK expert at Korea University in Seoul.

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8. ROK Military

Chosun Ilbo ("DEFENSE MINISTRY EYEING OVERSEAS RESCUE FORCE", Seoul, 2008/02/18) reported that ROK military authorities are mulling a special operations force charged with rescue missions abroad in an emergency like last year's hostage crisis in Afghanistan, it was learned Sunday. The plans include authorizing the Defense Ministry to dispatch a certain number of troops overseas without prior approval from the National Assembly when multiple ROK hostages are held, a source said.

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9. ROK Politics

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "REPORT: NEW SKOREAN LEADER QUESTIONED", Seoul, 2008/02/17) reported that a special prosecutor's team questioned ROK President-elect Lee Myung-

bak on Sunday over allegations of financial fraud a week ahead of his inauguration, Yonhap said. Lee "answered (questions) in detail in a sincere manner," Kim Hak-geun, an official at the special prosecutor's office in Seoul, told reporters according to the report.

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10. US-PRC Relations

Associated Press (Scott McDonald, "CHINA CONCERNED ABOUT US SATELLITE PLANS", Beijing, 2008/02/17) reported that the PRC said Sunday it was concerned about US military plans to shoot down a damaged spy satellite that is hurtling toward Earth with 1,000 pounds of toxic fuel. The Xinhua News Agency quoted PRC foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao as saying the PRC government was monitoring the situation and has urged the U.S. to avoid causing damages to security in outer space and in other countries. "Relevant departments of China are closely watching the situation and working out preventive measures," Liu said. Xinhua did not elaborate.

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11. US-Japan Relations

Reuters (Isabel Reynolds, "RICE TO FACE JAPAN PROTEST ON MILITARY DISCIPLINE", Tokyo, 2008/02/18) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice will face complaints about US military discipline when she arrives in Tokyo next week, top Japanese officials said on Monday. "We must have a discussion so that incidents like these never occur again," Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda told reporters. "We must use the occasion to call for deep reflection," Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said "This is extremely regrettable. I am very angry."

Asahi Shimbun (Atsuko Tannai, "SECURITY CAMS EYED FOR AREAS NEAR U.S. BASES", Tokyo, 2008/02/18) reported that the Japanese government and the U.S. military in Japan are to compile measures this week aimed at preventing crimes by military personnel. Measures such as security cameras and joint patrols between local police and U.S. military have been proposed by the central government. "In Okinawa, there are not only many U.S. military bases, but many spots where U.S. military personnel go for entertainment. We would not be able to keep up with all the information flowing in, even if security cameras were installed," a high-ranking Okinawa police official said.

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12. Sino-Japanese Relations

Asahi Shimbun (Kazuto Tsukamoto, "JOINT 'GYOZA' INVESTIGATIVE TEAM EYED", Tokyo, 2008/02/16) reported that Japanese government officials are considering setting up a joint task force of police officers from Japan and the PRC to investigate the contamination of Chinese frozen gyoza dumplings with banned pesticides. Japanese officials are currently negotiating with their PRC counterparts about the dispatch of Japanese police officers to the PRC.

Asahi Shimbun ("PESTICIDE IN 'GYOZA' UNLIKELY JAPAN'S", Tokyo, 2008/02/18) reported that a chemical analysis by police of pesticide-tainted gyoza dumplings from the PRC has shown that the

methamidophos detected contains impurities and byproducts not found in the purified type of the chemical available in Japan, sources said. The new finding, coupled with the recent detection of the banned pesticide inside a sealed package of frozen gyoza from the PRC, is fueling speculation that the food products were tainted in the PRC, and not in Japan.

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II. ROK Report

13. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Peace Foundation (Min Cho (Korea Institute for National Unification Senior Researcher), "DPRK UNCLEAR, IS PLAYING WITH ORCHESTRA?", 2008/02/18) wrote that the DPRK nuclear report is a subject of political compromise, and by early March, a solution should have been found. It is a plan that includes both an open agreement and closed memorandum that can conciliate the position of DPRK and the expectation of the US State Department. Plutonium can be recorded in the open agreement and the nuclear proliferation issue can be addressed in the memorandum.

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14. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Yonhap News ("WHAT CHANGES WOULD THE NEW GOVERNMENT BRING TO DPRK UNCLEAR ISSUES? ", 2008/02/18) wrote that diplomatists predict that the main variables affecting the choices that DPRK leaders will make will be the inception of the new ROK Government and the situation of the US presidential election, and how efficiently the ROK and US, in the middle of this transitional period, will cope with DPRK strategies and keep up the motivation of the six-party talks.

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15. DPRK Human Rights

Saegae Ilbo ("RUMORS OF 22 REFUGEES BEING EXECUTED, WHAT IS THE TRUTH?", 2008/02/17) reported that the ROK people are shocked to hear the rumor that all 22 DPRK refugees found floating on the west sea and sent back to DPRK were executed. If they have been executed for real, the DPRK deserves castigation from global society. Although the authenticity of the rumor has not been verified, there is a high possibility that such rumor was spread because of the poor move made by ROK government in the return process. The ROK government should quickly elucidate the situation and prevent doubt and misconception.

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16. ROK-US Relations

Seoul Newspaper ("WE WELCOME US BILL FOR JAPAN-LEVEL WEAPONS TRADE", 2008/02/18)

said that there has been a bill submitted to the US House of Representatives that allows the ROK to quickly buy US weapons with a lower price. It is late but still very fortunate. If the US wants to reinforce the US-ROK alliance, Congress should pass the bill without further delay.

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17. ROK Military

People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy ("IS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PKO LAW DESIGNED FOR ANOTHER 'DON'T ASK ME' TROOP DISPATCH?", 2008/02/18) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade are hastening with the establishment of a PKO law for dispatching troops. It is true that the ROK must contribute more for world peace. However, advertising as if sending troops to places is contributing to world peace or trying to simply accomplish the dispatch of troops—supposedly the last means—by excluding the necessary steps of agreement process from National Assembly is a problem. The PKO law should not be enacted considering the controversy over the effectiveness of PKO activity and unconvincing logic of the government.

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