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Preceding NAPSNet Report

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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "RESEARCHER: NORTH KOREA HAS 'WEAPONIZED' PLUTONIUM", Beijing, 2009/01/17) reported that Selig Harrison, director of the Center for International Policy's Asia program, said Saturday he met this week with the the DPRK's nuclear envoy, Ri Gun, and other officials. "We are not in a position to say when we will abandon nuclear weapons," he quoted Ri as saying. Harrison said the DPRK's "much, much harder line" might be due to the rise of military hard-liners after leader Kim Jong Il suffered a stroke. "He has recovered and he is now making what is described to me as 'key decisions' but is not dealing on a day-to-day basis with detailed issues as he had done before," Harrison said. Foreign Minister Pak Ui Chun and others said the DPRK wants better relations with Barack Obama's government, according to Harrison. He said they want Obama to make sure the the DPRK receives promised energy aid and to provide help to revive DPRK agriculture, and that the DPRK wants its symphony orchestra invited to perform in the United States.

Associated Press ("N. KOREA: PRIORITY TO BUILD UP NUCLEAR DETERRENT", Seoul, 2009/01/17) reported that the DPRK said Saturday its priority is to build up its " nuclear deterrent force " to protect itself. It said even if diplomatic relations with the US are normalized, the DPRK's "status as a nuclear weapons state will remain unchanged as long as it is exposed even to the slightest U.S. nuclear threat ." The DPRK "can live without normalizing the relations with the U.S., but not without nuclear deterrent," a foreign ministry statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency said.

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2. Northern Limit Line

Yonhap ("N.KOREA STAKES FRESH CLAIM ON DISPUTED SEA BORDER WITH S.KOREA", Seoul, 2009/01/17) reported that the DPRK laid its first claim this year over the Northern Limit Line (NLL) in the Yellow Sea. A statement by a spokesman for the DPRK joint chiefs of staff criticized the ROK

defense minister for warning early this month against possible aggression by the DPRK near the NLL. "Until the day Korea is united, only the military border that we have drawn shall exist," the statement said."We hereby declare clearly that our revolutionary armed forces will maintain the border that we have professed to the world," it said.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

New York Times (Choe Sang-hun, "TENSIONS RISE ON KOREAN PENINSULA", Seoul, 2009/01/18) reported that the ROK placed more soldiers at frontier guard posts and told its fishermen to refrain from sailing near DPRK waters on Sunday. In a statement read on DPRK television by a uniformed spokesman for the joint chiefs of staff, the DPRK declared an “all-out confrontational posture” against the ROK and said, “Strong military measures will follow from our revolutionary armed force.”

Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "NKOREAN NEWSPAPER RENEWS THREATS AGAINST SKOREA", Seoul, 2009/01/19) reported that the Rodong Sinmun renewed the DPRK's threats against the ROK Monday, saying it would "destroy and wipe out" invaders in "one strike" if ROK "war maniacs ignite the fire of war." "The Lee Myung-bak group should bear in mind that our guns and bayonets ... are aimed at their throats," the paper said in a commentary, carried by the official Korean Central News Agency . "We know no empty talk."

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA VOWS CALM RESPONSE TO NKOREAN THREATS", Seoul, 2009/01/19) reported that the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff office said army, navy and air force units remained on guard on the DMZ Monday after an alert was ordered Saturday evening, but no unusual movements have been detected in the DPRK. "The government is calmly responding, preparing for various possibilities but not making rash forecasts about future developments," unification ministry spokesman Kim Ho-Nyoun told a briefing.

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4. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Korea Times ("PRESIDENT LEE REPLACES FINANCE, UNIFICATION MINISTERS", Seoul, 2009/01/19) reported that ROK Unification minister Kim Ha-joong will be replaced by Hyun In-taek, a professor of political science from Korea University.

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5. PRC-DPRK Relations

Korea Herald ("N.KOREA, CHINA EXCHANGE NEW YEAR EMBASSY RECEPTIONS", Seoul, 2009/01/16) reported that the DPRK held a New Year reception for PRC diplomats in Pyongyang, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said late Thursday. PRC ambassador to Pyongyang Liu Xiaoming attended the event, while Pak Kyong-son and Kim Thae-jong, vice department directors of the DPRK Workers' Party Central Committee, hosted the reception, it said. The PRC Foreign

Ministry invited DPRK diplomats in the PRC to a friendly gathering on Wednesday, following a Tuesday banquet hosted by the DPRK embassy in Beijing, the KCNA said in separate reports.

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6. DPRK Economy

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN FARMERS' MARKETS SLIP FROM CONTROL", Seoul, 2009/01/17) reported that the DPRK government said permitting farmers' markets to operate had been "a transitional step taken under difficult economic conditions," and according to a notice posted at Haeju Market, South Hwanghae Province, goods are limited to farm produce and clothes. All manufactured goods and imported products are to be handled by state-run stores. Markets are also only to be held once every 10 days, authorities announced. But the controls "are not effective," said an ROK government official. "They have become so essential to people that Kim Jong-il's orders don't get through."

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7. DPRK Leadership

Korea Herald ("N. KOREAN LEADER VISITS PYONGYANG SILK, GUM FACTORIES", 2009/01/16) reported that the Korean Central News Agency said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has visited a silk yarn and gum factory in Pyongyang to urge workers to enhance production and quality.

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8. DPRK Espionage

Korea Herald ("S. KOREAN ARMY OFFICER CONVICTED IN N. KOREA SEX-FOR-SECRET SCANDAL", Seoul, 2009/01/16) reported that an ROK army first lieutenant has been sentenced to three and a half years in military prison for aiding DPRK spy Won Jeong-hwa. The officer, known only by his surname Hwang, was arrested in July on charges of supplying classified information to Won while being aware of her identity.

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9. US-ROK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("HAN DUCK-SOO NAMED AMBASSADOR TO U.S.", Seoul, 2009/01/19) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak on Sunday nominated former prime minister Han Duck-soo as ambassador to the U.S. Diplomats said the nomination of Han, an expert in economy and trade, reflects Lee's will to conclude the free trade agreement between the ROK and the U.S. and to restore the bilateral alliance.

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10. ROK Military Deployments

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "SEOUL TO DEPLOY BUNKER-BUSTING BOMB BY 2012", Seoul, 2009/01/18) reported that the ROK state-funded Agency for Defense Development (ADD) is pushing to develop an indigenous guided bomb to be carried by an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) by 2012, Yonhap News Agency said Sunday. ``The bombs from the UAV could hit the enemy's strategic targets precisely with the help of their wings and precision-guidance systems,'' an ADD official was quoted as saying. ``Ordinary bombs that our military are currently using could be installed on the UAV after modification.'' Other key weapons systems that the ADD is developing include an electronic gun and a vertical-launch guided anti-submarine missile.

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11. ROK Military

Korea Herald ("ABUSE BLAMED FOR MYSTERIOUS DEATHS IN ARMY", Seoul, 2009/01/17) reported that the Presidential Committee on Suspicious Deaths said Friday that five Jehovah's Witnesses who mysteriously died in the military in the 1970s and 80s were harshly beaten and tortured by their superiors. "They died from military violence while trying to adhere to their religious conscience, and the state should bear responsibility for their deaths," said the commission in its statement. "The beating and brutal acts inflicted on them by the military should be classified as acts of torture, and clearly violate the human freedom of religion and of personal conscience."

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12. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN, EU MINISTERS HOLD TALKS ON FREE TRADE AGREEMENT", Seoul, 2009/01/19) reported that ROK Trade Minister Kim Jong-Hoon and EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton began a two-day meeting Monday to try to resolve differences over the auto trade and rules of origin that are holding up a free trade deal . "We are close to a gate that leads to a new era," Kim was quoted by Yonhap news agency as saying before the meeting. "It will not be easy to resolve contentious issues, but having talks with an open-minded attitude is more important."

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13. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France-Presse ("TIBET TO MARK SUPPRESSION OF DALAI-LAMA LED REBELLION: CHINA", Beijing, 2009/01/19) reported that Xinhua news agency reported on Monday that the Tibetan parliament unanimously approved the motion to make every March 28 "Serf Emancipation Day " to celebrate the PRC military's crushing of a Dalai Lama -led rebellion 50 years ago. "On March 28, 1959, Tibetan serfs and slaves, who accounted for more than 90 percent of the region's population, were freed after the central government foiled an armed rebellion staged by the Dalai Lama and his supporters," Xinhua said.

Reuters (Abhishek Madhukar, "DALAI LAMA SAYS FAITH IN CHINESE PEOPLE UNSHAKEN", New Delhi, 2009/01/18) reported that the Dalai Lama said on Sunday he had faith in China's people. "Our faith towards (the PRC) government is getting thinner and thinner, however our faith in the Chinese people has never shaken." He stated, "Now it is no longer a true socialist country, but rather a communist, dictatorial, capitalist country," adding criticism of its leaders was more prevalent now. "Nowadays, in restaurants and shops, tea shops, criticism of leaders is quite common. So things are changing .... governments change, leadership changes, and eventually, the policy will also change," he said.

Associated Press ("NO CHINESE RESPONSE TO MEMO ON TIBET'S AUTONOMY", New Delhi, 2009/01/17) reported that the Tibetan government-in-exile said Saturday it has yet to receive a PRC response to its request for autonomy presented by the Dalai Lama's envoys in a memo two months ago. Samdhong Rinpoche, the prime minister of the government-in-exile, called the Chinese response "very funny" because they are "going around in Europe and America explaining their views" on the open memo.

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14. PRC Political System

Reuters ("'ERRONEOUS' WESTERN DEMOCRACY NOT FOR CHINA: OFFICIAL", Beijing, 2009/01/18) reported that Jia Qinglin, the PRC's fourth-most senior official, demanded officials throw their weight behind the one-party state in an essay in the Party's main ideological journal "Seeking Truth" (Qiushi), which was reproduced on major web portals on Sunday. "Build a line of defence to resist Western two-party and multi-party systems, bicameral legislature, the separation of powers and other kinds of erroneous ideological interferences," said Jia. "Consciously abide by the Party's political discipline and resolutely safeguard the Party's centralised unity," Jia said, calling on CPPCC members to strengthen "ideological unity."

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15. PRC Bird Flu

Associated Press ("CHINA REPORTS SECOND BIRD FLU DEATH THIS YEAR", Beijing, 2009/01/18) reported that a 27-year-old woman in Jinan city of Shandong province has died from bird flu in the country's second death from the disease this year, the PRC Health Ministry said. The notice did not say how the woman, surnamed Zhang , contracted the virus.

BBC ("CHINA TREATS TODDLER FOR BIRD FLU", 2009/01/18) reported that a girl aged two is critically ill with the H5N1 strain of bird flu in Shanxi, northern PRC . The girl was discovered ill on 7 January in the central province of Hunan and taken to a hospital in her home province, PRC state media say. Health officials did not say how the child had become infected.

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16. PRC Food Safety

New York Times (Edward Wong, "MILK SCANDAL IN CHINA YIELDS CASH FOR PARENTS", Beijing, 2009/01/16) reported that the parents of a baby who died last May from drinking tainted milk formula have accepted a cash payment of more than $29,200 from Sanlu Group, a lawyer representing the parents said Friday. As part of the compensation deal, the parents have agreed to drop a lawsuit they filed in October against Sanlu in Gansu Province, where the family lives. The court, the Lanzhou Intermediate People's Court, did not accept the case.

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17. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("MORE THAN 8O PCT OF CHINA'S COASTAL WATERS POLLUTED: REPORT", Beijing, 2009/01/18) reported that raw sewage and pollution from agricultural run-off polluted 83 percent of the PRC's coastal waters in 2008, according to state media. The PRC's coastal waters last year witnessed 68 red tides, or algae blooms, Xinhua news agency said.

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18. PRC Income Disparity

BBC (Shirong Chen, "CHINA RURAL-URBAN WAGE GAP WIDENS", 2009/01/16) reported that the latest statistics from the PRC Agriculture Ministry suggest that on average, city dwellers earned 3.36 times more than those in the country. In 2008, the average income for a worker in rural China was around $690 - while those in the cities earned $2,290 on average. Wages in big cities like Shanghai and Beijing are even higher.

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II. PRC Report

19. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Guangming Daily (Ke Huishan, "CHINA RED CROSS FOUNDATION'S SUNSHINE FUND FOR WEST WOMEN ESTABLISHED", 2009/01/17) reported that China Red Cross Foundation's Sunshine Fund for Western Women was established in Beijing recently. It is an important part of "Red Cross Angle Project" of China Red Cross Foundation. The Fund aims at helping women in underdeveloped western regions of China have a cervical cancer check or operation. On the eve of its establishment, over 600,000 yuan charitable money has been raised.

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20. PRC Civil Society and Education

Jiangxi Daily (Hu Hua, "XIA ZHENGNONG FOUNDATION SENDS NEW YEAR PRESENTS TO HOMETOWN CHILDREN", 2009/01/17) reported that at the beginning of the new year, 7 schools of

Fengcheng, Yongxin, Guixi and other areas in Jiangxi province have received new year presents from Xia Zhengnong Foundation, which was named after the revolutionist of the old generation whose was also born in Jiangxi. The Foundation focuses on the cultural and educational development of Chinese teenagers. This time, it has given 4000 suits of school uniforms and TVs worth of 500,000 yuan to 7 schools.

People's Daily online (Li Haoliang, "TIANJIN FAMILY PLANNING ASSOCIATION: FIVE MEASURES TO ADDRESS PEOPLE'S DIFFICULTIES ON FAMILY PLANNING", 2009/01/16) reported that according to Tianjin Family Planning Association, a "Family Planning Care Movement" will be carried out during the spring festival this year. The Movement will give economic and spiritual help to those families whose children are dead or disabled by accidents, will care about the education issue of single children, will care about girls, will care about the reproductive health of people of child-bearing age and will also care about the grass roots members of the Association who have difficulties.

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