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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "PYONGYANG MAY DECLARE NUKES IN JUNE", 2008/06/18) reported that the DPRK is expected to issue a nuclear declaration by the end of this month, the ROK's top nuclear envoy said. "North Korea and the United States have found common ground in settling the issue of the North's declaration of its nuclear developments. I expect it to submit it this month," Kim Sook said in a meeting with foreign correspondents in Seoul. "Time is running out," Kim said. ``We need to reach an agreement before it is too late. We can't rule out the possibility that the window of opportunity may close unless we hurry up."

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("BUSH URGES N.KOREA TO HAND NUKES OVER TO U.S.", 2008/06/18) reported that amid ongoing negotiations over the declaration of the DPRK's nuclear program, US President George W. Bush said he wants Pyongyang to "disclose what they have manufactured and eventually (turn) it over." Bush said, "We'll see what they disclose, but we hopefully are in the process of disabling and dismantling their plutonium manufacturing." Bush also stressed the need to shed light on the DPRK's past nuclear activities, including its alleged delivery of nuclear materials to Syria through the multilateral mechanism.

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3. Six Party Talks

Kyodo ("U.S. ENVOY WANTS 6-WAY HEAD-OF-DELEGATION MEET 'AS SOON AS POSSIBLE' ", Washington, 2008/06/18) reported that top US nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill expressed a strong desire that a six-party chief delegates' meeting on the DPRK's nuclear programs will take place "as soon as possible." The assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs said his

journey to Japan and the PRC this week is meant to "to energize the six parties and try to set up a six-party meeting, probably a head-of-delegation meeting as soon as possible."

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4. ROK on DPRK-Japan Relations

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "JAPAN URGED TO PROVIDE N. KOREA WITH ENERGY AID ", Seoul, 2008/06/18) reported that the ROK's top nuclear envoy called for Japan to end its boycott of energy aid for the DPRK and help advance the slow-going denuclearization process, saying related parties are pressed for time. Kim Sook said the six-way talks on Pyongyang's nuclear program risk losing momentum if not resumed soon. "Now is the time for Japan to start participating over energy and economic assistance so the assistance can be successfully completed," Kim said. "North Korea should show sincerity so that its (promised) reinvestigation of the abduction issue can produce substantial results," he said.

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5. Sino-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("N. KOREAN LEADER HOPES TO WORK WITH CHINA IN 6-WAY TALKS ", Beijing, 2008/06/18) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il told PRC Vice President Xi Jinping he hopes their countries will continue to cooperate in the six-way process for denuclearizing the Korean Peninsula, the PRC's state-run media reported. Kim also told Xi at a meeting in Pyongyang he believes that while the multilateral process has had its difficulties, it has also achieved much, China Central Television reported. "Although the six-party talks have had their twists and turns, they have achieved many important agreements," the DPRK leader was quoted as saying. "China is the host, and has played an important role. I hope that the two sides can continue with good cooperation."

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6. DPRK Economy

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA'S ECONOMIC SLIDE PICKS UP SPEED", 2008/06/18) reported that the DPRK's economy shrank 2.3 percent in 2007 from a year earlier, its second straight year of contraction as devastating floods hit harvests, the ROK central bank said. The Bank of Korea estimated that the country's gross domestic product shrank more than twice as much as the 1.1 percent contraction in 2006. The 2006 slide was the first in eight years and was due mainly to worsening international relations following its first nuclear test and severe flooding. "Last year the North Korean overall economy suffered difficulties as a fall in agricultural production deepened its food shortage," the central bank said in a report.

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7. DPRK Food Supply

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS FOOD SHORTAGE: AID GROUP ",

Seoul, 2008/06/18) reported that the DPRK has called its worsening food shortage a "life-or-death question" and said resolving it was key to preserving its political system, according to a humanitarian group. The ROK group Good Friends said it obtained a copy of a DPRK government document that blames this year's food shortages on flooding in 2007 and a drive by Seoul to isolate Pyongyang. "Doing farm work well this year and resolving food problems by all means is a life-or-death question for defending our national dignity and advancing the construction of a powerful nation," read a copy of the document published by Good Friends.

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8. Russian Food Aid to the DPRK

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA TO DELIVER 3,000 TONS OF FLOUR TO NORTH KOREA", Moscow, 2008/06/18) reported that Russia will complete the delivery of almost 3,000 tons of flour to the DPRK by June 30, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The Russian government resolved to send the shipment as part of Russia's voluntary contribution to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) for 2008. "The first deliveries of the humanitarian load...arrived in North Korea on June 11 and will be distributed among the population through WFP structures," the statement says.

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9. US-ROK Joint Military Exercise

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun , "ROK, U.S. AIR FORCES START 'MAX THUNDER' DETERRENT DRILL", Gunsan, 2008/06/18) reported that a squadron of fighter jets took off from Gunsan Air Base yesterday for Max Thunder - a joint exercise to improve the interoperability of the ROK and US air forces and help them upgrade war deterrent on the peninsula. The five-day drill consists of up to 90 aircraft participating in combat simulations. Max Thunder was designed to test the war-fighting capacity of both the ROK and U.S. air forces, which must coordinate their air power and communicate in order to complete the exercise. The exercise will also help the ROK air force prepare for the annual Red Flag exercises slated for Aug. 10-22.

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10. ROK-Japan Trade Relations

Xinhua ("S KOREA, JAPAN TO RESUME TALKS ON FTA ", Seoul, 2008/06/18) reported that the ROK and Japan will hold a working-level meeting next week to study how to resume stalled negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two neighboring countries, the ROK's Trade Ministry said. The negotiations that started in December 2003 have been blocked by Japan's objection to liberalizing its agriculture market and the ROK's reluctance to further open its automobile market. There is also strong concern in the ROK that such a deal would expand its trade deficit with Japan.

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11. Sino-Japanese East Sea Gas Dispute

Agence France-Presse (Shingo Ito , "JAPAN, CHINA STRIKE LANDMARK GAS-SHARING DEAL ", Tokyo, 2008/06/18) reported that Japan and the PRC said they had struck a deal to jointly develop gas fields in the East China Sea, partly resolving a spat that has been a thorn in ties between the major energy importers. After four years of on-off talks, Asia's two largest economies agreed to share the potentially lucrative gas resources from an area that lies near islands which remain a focus of bitter dispute. Under the deal, the two countries would also jointly develop an area north of Chunxiao. But the two sides failed to resolve their disagreement over two other gas fields in the area.

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12. PRC Earthquake

The Financial Times (Geoff Dyer and Tom Mitchell , "QUAKE RECONSTRUCTION TO BOOST GROWTH", 2008/06/18) reported that last month's devastating Sichuan earthquake will boost the PRC's economic growth, thanks to the billions due to be poured into reconstruction, according to a government think-tank. The State Information Centre, a research group that is part of the government's main planning body, said on Wednesday that the reconstruction would add 0.3 percentage points to China's growth rate this year.

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13. PRC Floods

Agence France-Presse (Robert J. Saiget , "FLOOD WATERS THREATEN MILLIONS IN CHINA, QUAKE REFUGEES EVACUATED ", Beijing, 2008/06/18) reported that surging waters in southern PRC's swollen Pearl river delta threatened millions of people as authorities raced to finish the evacuation of 110,000 people in the quake-hit southwest. Although a huge flood crest flowed past the Makou monitoring station close to the city of Guangzhou on Tuesday, water levels remained 0.45 metres (1.5 feet) above warning levels a day later, the state flood headquarters said on its website. Up to 176 people have died and 52 have gone missing in flood-related incidents in the PRC this year, with 51 dead or missing since June 6 in the provinces and regions of Guangxi, Guangdong, Jiangxi and Hunan, it said.

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14. Sino-Indian Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA HAS NO PLANS TO 'ENCIRCLE' INDIA: AMBASSADOR ", Hong Kong, 2008/06/18) reported that the PRC has no plans to try and dominate the shipping lanes of the Indian Ocean, its ambassador to India said in Hong Kong. "We don't have such an intention to establish a chain to encircle India," said ambassador Zhang Yan at a lunch held by the Asia Society in Hong Kong. "It's not in China's interest to undertake this kind of strategic move. We see India as our partner," he said, adding the speculation on a PRC policy of encirclement was "unfounded."

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II. PRC Report

15. Sino-US Energy and Environmental Cooperation

Xinhua Net ("CHINA, US TO SIGN ENERGY, ENVIRONMENT PACT", 2008/06/18) reported that the PRC and the US would sign a 10-year cooperation agreement on energy and environmental issues during the fourth round of the Sino-US Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED), Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu told a regular press conference Tuesday. PRC Vice Premier Wang Qishan and US Secretary of Treasury Henry Paulson will co-chair the dialogue as special envoys of PRC President Hu Jintao and US President George W. Bush. Many ministers from the two governments will also attend the SED. Jiang told the press conference that the SED will have six topics and will focus on issues concerning the comprehensive, strategic and long-term development of Sino-US economic relations.

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16. PRC Public Health

People's Daily Online (Liu ying, Zhang Mingqi, "CHINA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FEDERATION AND TIANJIN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BUREAU JOINTLY LAUNCHED AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACTION", 2008/06/18) reported that Yesterday, the PRC Environmental Protection Federation and Tianjin Environmental Protection Bureau jointly launched an environmental action named "No Smoke Olympics". It will issue initiatives to the society through all levels of organizations like environment, food industry, health, colleges and universities. It will widely publicize hazards of smoking, and promote the further implementation of relevant rules, regulations about smoking ban at public places, thereby enhancing public awareness of harm of smoking and passive absorption, to create a good sanitary condition for the green Olympics.

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III. ROK Report

17. DPRK Internal Situation

Goodfriends ("DON'T STARVE YOUR PEOPLE", 2008/06/19) wrote in an editorial that governmental activities and border smuggling are barely stabilizing food prices in the DPRK, and a serious food crisis will occur in the near future. The DPRK government should request help to international society and accept the ROK's corn aid, regardless of political trouble.

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Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org