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I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("INTER-KOREAN COOPERATION FUND LIES DORMANT", 2008/09/01) reported that the planned budget for inter-Korean cooperation now looks excessive in light of chilly relations between the two Koreas. Seoul's Unification Ministry said only W117 billion (US\$1=W1,089) of the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund for 2008 had been used as of the end of July. This is less than 9 percent of available funds.

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2. Inter-Korean Maritime Border

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA RETURNS N. KOREAN BOAT, CREW TO THE NORTH ", Seoul, 2008/09/01) reported that the ROK on Monday returned a DPRK boat and its crew to the DPRK's authorities after rescuing the ship as it drifted in the West Sea, the Unification Ministry said. The ROK authorities rescued two DPRK aboard a half-ton boat which was drifting on the sea 11.7 km

southeast of the ROK's Yeonpyeong Island around 8:30 a.m. They returned the North Koreans and their ship to DPRK officials at a location on the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea -- the two Koreas' de facto maritime boundary -- around 1:40 p.m., the ministry said.

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3. DPRK Espionage

Donga Ilbo ("N. KOREA SPY PROBE REVIEWING 50 POSSIBLE SUSPECTS", 2008/08/30) reported that the arrest of a DPRK spy disguised as a defector has created a huge ripple effects, as military sources said yesterday that some 50 DPRK spies have infiltrated the ROK military. The Defense Security Service said it is investigating some 100 spy cases involving leaks of classified military information and praise for the DPRK government.

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4. DPRK-Laos Relations

Yonhap News ("NORTH KOREA, LAOS AGREE TO EXPAND TIES ", Seoul, 2008/08/30) reported that the DPRK and Laos agreed Saturday to expand cooperation in economy, trade, science and other fields, a DPRK news report said. The agreement was signed at a meeting between DPRK Premier Kim Yong-il and visiting Laotian Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh, the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency said. "Both sides exchanged views on boosting the bilateral friendly and cooperative relations and matters of mutual concern," the report said.

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5. DPRK-Vietnam Relations

Xinhua News ("DPRK PLEDGES TO FURTHER DEVELOP RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM", Pyongyang, 2008/09/01) reported that the DPRK will further develop the friendly and cooperative relations with Vietnam, the official KCNA news quoted the premier as saying. Kim Yong Il, premier of the DPRK cabinet, sent a congratulatory message to his Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Tan Dung on the 63rd anniversary of Vietnam's founding. Kim wished bilateral ties developed in "various fields."

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6. DPRK-Lybia Relations

Xinhua News ("DPRK PLEDGES TO BOOST FRIENDLY TIES WITH LIBYA ", Pyongyang, 2008/08/30) reported that the DPRK will further develop friendly and cooperative relations with Libya, the top legislator of the DPRK said on Sunday. Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, sent a congratulatory message to Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi on the country's ruling party's 39th birthday, the official KCNA news agency reported.

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7. DPRK on Family Reunions

Xinhua News ("DPRK RED CROSS URGES ROK TO SCRAP CONFRONTATIONAL POLICIES", Pyongyang, 2008/08/29) reported that the Red Cross Society of the DPRK has called on the ROK to give up its anti-DPRK policies and resume efforts for the reunion of separated families, the official KCNA news agency reported. The ROK has been "inciting hostility toward the DPRK under the pretext of 'consoling' the 'divided families'," a spokesman for the Central Committee of the DPRK Red Cross was quoted as saying Friday by the news agency. The ROK move is aimed at shifting the blame to its northern neighbor for the stalled family reunion process, the spokesman said.

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8. DPRK on Non-Aligned Movement

Xinhua News ("DPRK CALLS FOR INVIGORATING NAM ", Pyongyang, 2008/09/01) reported that the DPRK called for increasing the capability of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) for its actions. The NAM should be invigorated "in order to remain true to its fundamental idea, goal and principle and actively promote the interests of the non-aligned countries and other developing countries in the arena of the United Nations," said an article carried by the official Rodong Sinmun daily on the Day of the Non-Alignment.

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9. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Xinhua News ("S. KOREA, EU FAIL TO MAKE PROGRESS IN FTA TALKS ", Seoul, 2008/08/29) reported that the ROK and the European Union failed to narrow their gap in their free trade agreement (FTA) talks, ROK Trade Ministry said. During a three-day negotiation ending on Friday in Seoul, the ROK called for the EU to drop tariffs on ROK cars within three years after the bilateral FTA takes effect, while the EU side rejected the demand, local media reported.

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

Stars and Stripes ("COMMAND NAMES TO CHANGE IN NEW STRUCTURE FOR SOUTH KOREA ", 2008/09/01) reported that US and ROK forces will operate under three military commands — one American and two ROK — after the ROK takes over wartime control of all troops in the country in 2012. The biggest change will be the inactivation of the Combined Forces Command, now headed by a US general. Two new commands will take its place: the US Korea Command, and the South Korean Joint Forces Command, headed by a ROK general who would lead the militaries during war.

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11. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

The New York Times ("DESOLATE DOTS IN THE SEA STIR DEEP EMOTIONS AS SOUTH KOREA RESISTS A JAPANESE CLAIM", 2008/08/31) reported that each day, weather permitting, hundreds of South Koreans sail to this cluster of nearly uninhabitable islets and outcroppings, seven seasick hours from the Korean mainland. Still, over the past three years, the voyage to these islets, which the ROK administers but Japan claims, has become a popular pilgrimage for Koreans. This year, 80,000 people have set foot here, undeterred by the lack of a souvenir shop, restaurant or public toilet.

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12. DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA ABDUCTION ISSUE THROWN INTO THE DARK AGAIN AS FUKUDA QUILTS ", Tokyo, 2008/09/01) reported that the families of missing Japanese abducted by the DPRK hit out at Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda on Monday for being "extremely irresponsible" and "running away" from his promises after the premier suddenly announced his resignation. Fukuda's resignation comes at an untimely moment just as progress on the abductions was within sight amid speculation that the DPRK may finally take action this week to launch an agreed committee to reinvestigate the cases. Experts said Pyongyang will now likely take a wait-and-see attitude instead.

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13. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("FUKUDA TO RESIGN, SEEING DIET DEADLOCK ON KEY BILLS", 2008/09/01) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda announced Monday that he will resign, citing anticipated difficulty in passing key bills in the divided Diet. "I have decided to step down so as not to create a political void and to make it possible to pursue our policies with a new administration," he said during a hastily arranged news conference. Fukuda said he hoped his successor will make sure key bills pass in the upcoming extraordinary Diet session.

Kyodo News ("OZAWA VOWS REGIME CHANGE IN DECLARING TO RUN IN DPJ LEADERSHIP RACE ", 2008/09/01) reported that Democratic Party of Japan leader Ichiro Ozawa vowed to seek a regime change by leading the main opposition party to victory in the next House of Representatives election, as he formally declared Monday his candidacy for the DPJ's presidential election. While refusing to explain his political vision in detail until he is formally elected, Ozawa expressed willingness to assume the post of prime minister in the event the DPJ takes power.

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14. US on Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo News ("U.S. HOUSE SPEAKER PELOSI URGES JAPAN TO CONTINUE REFUELING MISSION", Tokyo, 2008/09/01) reported that Visiting U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi expressed hope Monday to her Japanese counterpart Yohei Kono that Japan continue its antiterrorism refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, a Diet official said. Pelosi, a Democrat from California, met Japanese House of Representatives Speaker Kono in the Diet building before going to Hiroshima in western Japan to participate in a meeting of Group of Eight lower house leaders.

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15. Japan Aid to Afghanistan

The Asahi Shimbun ("AID GROUPS PULL OUT OF AFGHANISTAN", 2008/08/29) reported that Japanese support organizations are suspending their activities in Afghanistan and evacuating members following the shooting death of an abducted aid worker there earlier this week. The Basic Human Needs Association, which offers support in the telecommunications field, has scrapped plans to dispatch two Japanese engineers to Afghanistan in October. The Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR Japan), which offers education on how to avoid land mines, evacuated its two Japanese members from Afghanistan to India and Pakistan immediately after Ito's death was confirmed.

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16. Japan Disaster Response Drill

The Mainichi Shimbun ("590,000 TAKE PART IN DRILLS DURING NATIONAL DISASTER PREVENTION DAY", 2008/08/29) reported that about 590,000 people took part in drills across the nation on Monday to mark National Disaster Prevention Day. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda and all his ministers participated in a government-led drill, which for the first time envisioned earthquakes in the Tonankai and Nankai regions with epicenters ranging from off the Kii Peninsula to off Shikoku. In the Kanagawa Prefecture drill, which assumed a 7.2-magnitude earthquake and had 10,000 participants, rescuers including U.S. forces in Japan saved those who were thrown into the sea due to a collapse of a quay, while doctors and nurses provided medical care.

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17. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press ("RESCUERS APPEAL FOR TENTS AFTER DEADLY CHINA QUAKE ", Beijing, 2008/09/01) reported that rescuers appealed for temporary housing and tents Monday after a weekend earthquake in southwest PRC killed at least 36 people, injured hundreds and left tens of thousands of homes in ruins. The temblor Saturday in Sichuan province, which the U.S. Geological Survey measured at magnitude 5.7, struck along the same fault line as a May 12 earthquake that killed nearly 70,000. "We need temporary houses ... we need more than 10,000 tents," said Zhang Hai, head of the foreign liaison office of the Communist Party propaganda department in Panzhihua city.

Agence-France-Presse ("CHINA RUSHES TROOPS TO QUAKE ZONE AS TOLL RISES ", 2008/09/01) reported that the PRC deployed more than 8,000 soldiers and military reservists to help search and rescue efforts in the southwest Monday after a 6.2-magnitude earthquake that left 38 people dead, state press said. The weekend quake, in a mountainous region spanning the Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, destroyed or damaged an estimated 258,000 homes and injured nearly 650 people, and aftershocks continued to be felt. Some 2,000 troops, police and firefighters already in the area have rescued more than 130 injured victims from collapsed buildings since the quake struck, it added.

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18. Sino-Russian Relations

The International Herald Tribune ("RUSSIA'S ISOLATION PLAYS INTO CHINA'S HANDS", Dushanbe, 2008/08/30) reported that Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has cast vague Central Asian support for Russia's actions in South Ossetia as a diplomatic victory. But a summit in the region held signs that the PRC, already a powerful regional player, will benefit from concerns about an aggressive Russia. As Moscow's combative rhetoric leaves it increasingly isolated, the PRC may have tipped the balance of influence in Russia's backyard.

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19. Cross Strait Relations

Agence-France-Presse ("TAIWAN TO CUT MILITARY SPENDING AMID WARMING CHINA TIES: REPORT ", Taipei, 2008/08/30) reported that Taiwan plans to scale back its military spending in 2009 amid warming ties with rival PRC, it was reported Saturday. Military spending will be 315.2 billion Taiwan dollars (10 billion US), a decline of 10.4 billion Taiwan dollars on this year, the United Daily News said, citing a draft budget pending parliament's approval. "I'm worried that the decline in military expenditures may send a wrong signal to the United States and Japan that Taiwan is short of determination to defend itself against China," said Tsai Huang-lang of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP).

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20. Sino-Indian Relations

The Associated Press (Gavin Rabinowitz, "THE LATEST 'GREAT GAME' INVOLVES INDIAN OCEAN", 2008/09/01) reported that this battered harbor town on Sri Lanka's southern tip, with its scrawny men selling even scrawnier fish, seems an unlikely focus for an emerging international competition over the energy supply routes that fuel much of the global economy. For decades the world relied on the U.S. Navy to protect this sea lane. But as India and the PRC gain economic heft, they are moving to expand their control of the waterway, sparking a new, and potentially dangerous, rivalry between Asia's emerging giants.

ANI ("EXPERTS SAY CHINA CONCERNED ABOUT INDIA'S LATEST DEFENCE MEASURES", New Delhi, 2008/09/01) reported that experts have said that the PRC is concerned, if not annoyed with India's plans to have a fleet of aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines in the next decade and recently tested nuclear-capable missiles that put the PRC's major cities well within range. New Delhi's decision to reopen air force bases near the PRC border has also invited negative reactions from officials in Beijing, they claim. Encouraging India's role as a counter to the PRC, the US too has stepped up exercises with the Indian navy and last year sold it an American warship for the first time, the 17,000-ton amphibious transport dock Trenton.

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21. PRC Security

The Washington Post ("CHINA UNLIKELY TO LOOSEN ITS GRIP IN WEST", 2008/08/30) reported that violent outbursts are continuing in the Xinjiang region of western PRC, with the latest resulting in the deaths of two policemen who were attacked Wednesday while searching a cornfield for a woman they believe is involved in a separatist cell. The attack and ensuing capture of suspects was the fourth incident this month in the area, bringing the total dead to 39 despite intense paramilitary police patrols since before Beijing's Summer Olympic Games.

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II. PRC Report

22. PRC Environment

Jinghua Times (Xia Mingqun, "BEIJING TO PREVENT POST-OLYMPIC AIR QUALITY DECLINE", 2008/08/30) reported that according to the Beijing Municipal Environment Protection Bureau, Beijing will adopt four measures to go on improving Beijing's environment after the Olympic Games. Firstly, Beijing will speed up the highly polluted vehicles' limitation and elimination. Secondly, the heavily polluted enterprises who were limited in production or stopped operation during the Olympics can recover production only by solving all the problems. Thirdly, the construction fugitive dust pollution will be more controlled, and the architectural enterprises' environmental market access standard will be raised. Fourthly, the public will be encouraged to join in the air quality protection.

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23. PRC Civil Society and Earthquake Relief

Xinhua News Agency ("JET LI ONE FOUNDATION SENDS 2.75 MILLION FUND AND MATERIALS TO PANZHUIHUA EARTHQUAKE AREA", 2008/08/31) reported that on Aug.30, a 6.1-magnitude quake jolted southwest PRC's Sichuan and Yunnan provinces. According to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the earthquake has killed 32 people. On Aug.31, China Jet Li One Foundation quickly allocated tents, quilts and other disaster relief materials worth of 250,000 yuan to Sichuan disaster areas, and after further understanding the disaster information, the fund management committee decided to send another 2.5 million yuan to Yunnan disaster areas.

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24. PRC SMEs

Yunnan Daily (Tina Fengchun, Li Rui, "YUNNAN MUNICIPAL SMALL&MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION SET UP IN KUNMING", 2008/08/31) reported that yesterday, Yunnan Municipal Small & Medium Enterprises Development Association was established in Kunming city of Yunnan province. Governor of Yunnan province said that he hoped the Association to band all Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) of the province together and insist the principal of servicing enterprises to create a better development environment for them. It is said that as at the end of 2007, Yunnan has had nearly 90,000 SMEs, accounting for 99% of the total enterprises of the

province. Those SMEs have played an important and irreplaceable role in the economic and social development of Yunnan province.

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III. ROK Report

25. ROK Politics

PRESSian ("MB ADMINISTRATION'S SIX MONTHS GET AN 'F'", 2008/09/02) reported that according to Korea Social Opinion Institute, only 27.2% of 114 political experts said at the end of last month that they support the Lee Myung-bak administration's policies. Moreover, they evaluated Lee's achievements for the past six months as only worth 35 points out of 100. Also, other than the improvement in strengthening the ROK-U.S. relationship, what he has done in other fields such as human rights, ethics, press freedom, people's livelihood, and inter-Korean relationship is worse than what the former administration had achieved, they said. Among these areas, the inter-Korean relationship has become the worst, they said.

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26. DPRK Nuclear Issue

Peace Network (Jung Wook-shik, Representative of Peace Network , "VERIFICATION ISSUE: SHOULD OBEY THE AGREEMENT", 2008/08/28) said in a column that the ROK and the U.S. agreed to continue providing heavy oil and energy equipment even though the controversy over the verification between the DPRK and the U.S. is still going on. However, such a decision makes little difference, since the time needed to restart the nuclear program will become much shorter if the DPRK chooses to rehabilitate part of the facilities instead of the whole facilities. Also, it is highly possible for the 'part' to be the reprocessing facility. The only solution is to move the focus back to the 10.3 agreement and July announcement. The U.S. should remove the DPRK from the state sponsors of terrorism list, and the DPRK should cooperate on completing the verification mechanism as both parties have promised.

Kookmin Ilbo ("DPRK SHOULD DISABLE NUKE POWER AND IMPROVE HUMANRIGHTS ", 2008/09/02) reported that the U.S. Democratic Party and Republican Party have each revealed their policy platform. Both parties asserted that they will focus on the denuclearization of the DPRK and the solving of the human rights problem. The DPRK has been expecting that they will be able to gain advantage in the nuke talks if the Democratic Party comes into the office; however, it turned out that their expectations are in vain. In order to improve the relationship with the U.S., the DPRK should abandon nuclear power as soon as possible, and should find ways to improve human rights at the same time.

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27. DPRK Food Situation

Hankook Ilbo ("DPRK SHOULD BE USED TO FOOD AID THROUGH WFP", 2008/09/02) reported that the UN's World Food Plan (WFP) will hold a press meeting today in Beijing, China, to urge the nations around the globe to start providing food to the DPRK. Radio Free Asia (RFA) announced that even though they say that the meeting is aimed at the global community, it is highly likely that the virtual objective can be the ROK government. Even though it costs more than direct aid in terms of administration, and it also can give the impression that the ROK is being generous with the DPRK, two of the best things about it is that it can guarantee the transparency of distribution, and also be a key for the improvement of the inter-Korean relationship.

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