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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press (Burt Herman, "US, NORTH KOREAN ENVOYS IN BEIJING TALKS", Seoul, 2008/02/20) reported that US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill denied that nuclear talks were at a stalemate Wednesday. During talks in Beijing, DPRK nuclear envoy Kim Kye Gwan "wanted to make very clear that they are not at present having any nuclear cooperation with any other country and they will not in the future have any nuclear cooperation with any other country," Hill said. "We had a discussion about what we think needs to be included in that. I think they understand our point of view, but we won't have a complete and correct declaration until we have a complete and correct declaration," Hill said.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "U.S. NUKE ENVOY RULES OUT POSSIBILITY OF PHASED DECLARATION", Incheon, 2008/02/19) reported that the United States will never show flexibility or leniency when receiving the list of the DPRK's nuclear arsenal, Washington's top nuclear envoy said, rebuffing several media reports that the US may step back a bit on the issue to kick-start the stalled denuclearization process. "We are not talking about breaking apart the declaration," Christopher Hill told reporters upon arriving at the international airport here. "I keep hearing about that. But it is not coming from inside the process."

Korea Herald ("US '09 BUDGET FOR NK SHIFTS TO DENUCLEARIZATION", 2008/02/19) reported that the US budget for DPRK-related funds in fiscal year (FY) 2009 is spread out between the energy and state departments with a shift away from democratization assistance to nuclear disarmament, according to Yonhap News Agency. The budget proposed earlier this month, and to start in October this year, includes the Energy Department's request for \$140.5 million for Nonproliferation and International Security (NIS) which covers the Next Generation Safeguards Initiative. This program is specifically aimed at disabling, dismantling and verifying the DPRK's nuclear program and at stopping spread of weapons of mass destruction. "Another priority in FY 2009 is disablement, dismantlement, and verification of nuclear programs in North Korea," the department's budget request says.

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3. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap (Shim Sun-ah, "S. KOREA TO SEND SECOND BATCH OF STEEL PLATES TO N.K.", Seoul, 2008/02/19) reported that the ROK will begin providing the second shipment of steel plates promised to the DPRK under a six-party nuclear deal this weekend, the Unification Ministry said Tuesday. A ship carrying 2,830 tons of steel plates worth 2.2 billion won (US\$2.3 million) will leave the southeastern port of Pohang for Nampo on the DPRK's west coast on Friday, the ministry said. The ROK provided 5,017 tons of steel plates in the first batch of energy aid on Dec. 22 and is now taking steps to provide an additional 24,710 tons in the first half of this year, according to the ministry.

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4. DPRK Energy Aid

Yonhap ("KOREAS, CHINA TO DISCUSS ENERGY ASSISTANCE FOR PYONGYANG", Seoul, 2008/02/19) reported that the two Koreas and the PRC will hold working-level talks later this week in the northeastern PRC city of Shenyang to discuss the provision of energy assistance to the DPRK under an aid-for-disarmament deal signed early last year, the Foreign Ministry said. The meeting on Thursday and Friday comes despite the protracted stalemate over Pyongyang's agreed-upon declaration of its nuclear stockpile. "In this round of consultations, the three nations plan to discuss the implementation of non-heavy fuel aid and the future schedule of such provision," ministry spokesman Cho Hee-yong said.

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5. ROK Government Reorganization

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "SKOREA TO KEEP NKOREA-FOCUSED MINISTRY", Seoul, 2008/02/20) reported that the incoming ROK government agreed Wednesday to maintain the the Unification Ministry. President-elect Lee Myung-bak is expected to name Nam Joo-hong, a university professor, as Unification Minister. Nam has written books heavily critical of reconciliation with the DPRK, including one titled, "There is No Unification," and criticized the two summit meetings.

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6. ROK, US, Japan Military Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo (Kim Min-seok, "MILITARIES OF JAPAN, U.S. AND KOREA TO COOPERATE", 2008/02/19) reported that in the first declaration of its kind, defense officials and experts from the ROK, Japan and the United States agreed yesterday to mobilize their militaries, when necessary, to handle non-security related incidents such as rescue missions. Experts said the measure will reinforce trilateral cooperation among the militaries. The three nations agreed that preventing and coping with transnational disasters or accidents will be the main role of the military in the 21st century. Seoul, Tokyo and Washington agreed to jointly formulate plans to counter bird flu and deal

with other disasters. Military activities to counter terrorism and drug trafficking were excluded, however.

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7. US-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US TROOPS IN JAPAN TO GET TRAINING AFTER TROUBLING INCIDENTS", Tokyo, 2008/02/19) reported that the US military said it would hold a "day of reflection" for troops in Japan after a series of incidents including an alleged rape that has led to new tension between the countries. All units in Japan will take part in the day to teach them "professionalism and core military values," the US Forces in Japan said in a statement. It said the day was part of the US authorities' response to the "unacceptable" conduct of US soldiers in the country.

Kyodo ("ANOTHER MARINE HELD BY U.S. AUTHORITIES, UPROAR IN JAPAN CONTINUES", Naha, 2008/02/19) reported that another US Marine is suspected of committing a crime in Okinawa Prefecture as Japan is stepping up calls for the US to toughen discipline on its military personnel stationed there, Japanese investigative sources said. U.S. military authorities have detained the Marine in his 20s who is suspected of counterfeiting dozens of \$20 notes and passing some of them in Okinawa, the sources said. Meanwhile, the municipal assembly in Nago in the central part of the main Okinawa island, where the Marine Corps' Camp Schwab is located, will adopt two resolutions protesting the alleged rape of a Japanese junior high school girl by a 38-year-old Marine staff sergeant and the alleged trespassing into a private residence by another Marine.

Associated Press (Joseph Coleman, "US MILITARY IMPOSES CURBS IN JAPAN", Tokyo, 2008/02/20) reported that the US military on Wednesday restricted troops, civilian employees and their families in Japan to bases, workplaces or off-base homes. The restrictions went beyond a midnight curfew already in place for enlisted Marines on Okinawa. "This period of reflection will allow commanders and all service members an opportunity to further review procedures and orders that govern the discipline and conduct of all U.S. service members serving in Okinawa," the U.S. military said in a statement.

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8. Japan Maritime Incident

Mainichi Shimbun ("MSDF DESTROYER SMASHES FISHING BOAT IN HALF, FATHER AND SON ANGLERS MISSING", Minamiboso, 2008/02/19) reported that a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) destroyer collided with a fishing boat off the coast of Chiba early Tuesday, splitting the fishing boat in two and leaving a father and his son missing, officials said. The 7,700-ton MSDF Atago destroyer collided with the Seitokumaru tuna trawler about 40 kilometers south-southwest of Nojimazaki Cape in Minamiboso. The hull of the 7.3-ton fishing boat was smashed in two, and two people on board the vessel, identified as 58-year-old Haruo Kichisei and his 23-year-old son Tetsuhiro, are missing.

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9. Sino-Japanese Relations

Kyodo ("JAPAN, CHINA TO HOLD VICE MINISTERIAL TALKS ON GAS, DUMPLINGS", Tokyo, 2008/02/19) reported that Japan and the PRC will hold vice foreign ministerial talks in Beijing on Friday and Saturday to seek common ground on a longstanding territorial dispute ahead of a historic visit to Japan by PRC President Hu Jintao slated for this spring, Japanese government sources said. Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka and his PRC counterpart Wang Yi are also expected to discuss at their "comprehensive policy dialogue" the recent food poisoning involving tainted PRC-made frozen meat dumplings, the sources said.

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10. PRC Political Reform

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "ELITE CHINA THINK-TANK ISSUES POLITICAL REFORM BLUEPRINT", Beijing, 2008/02/19) reported that the PRC risks dangerous instability unless it embraces democratic reforms to limit the power of the ruling Communist Party, foster competitive voting and rein in censors, the Party's top think-tank has warned in a new report. The "comprehensive political system reform plan" by scholars at the Central Party School in Beijing argues for steady liberalization that its authors say can build a "modern civil society" by 2020 and "mature democracy and rule of law" in later decades. The cost of delaying this course could be economic disarray and worsening corruption and public discontent, they write in "Storming the Fortress: A Research Report on China's Political System Reform after the 17th Party Congress".

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11. PRC Civil Society

Economic Observer Online (Wang Biqiang, "A TAXING TIME FOR CHINA'S NON-PROFITS", 2008/02/19) reported that to contribute 250 million yuan to the state treasury, or to invest in 1,000 elementary schools in the countryside? The newly implemented Enterprise Income Tax Law has chosen the former. According to the Law, which took effect on January 1, 2008, non-profit organizations must pay a 25% tax on their operating income (income derived from investments), adding huge financial pressure to those domestic groups working on *minjian* or "civil society" issues in the PRC. As the major backers for domestic charity work, public-interest foundations would be hardest hit by the new law. Sources from the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) revealed that suggestions to abolish taxes on non-profit fund's operational income would be made to the National People's Congress and CPPCC in March. Meanwhile, sources close to the State Administration of Taxation said the issue was under study and related policies might be released in the future.

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12. PRC Unrest

The Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "CHINA LAND RIGHTS ACTIVIST GOES ON TRIAL", Beijing, 2008/02/19) reported that a PRC land rights activist went on trial for subversion Tuesday for

protesting the Beijing Olympics in a case highlighting the PRC's efforts to clamp down on dissent before the Summer Games. Yang Chunlin, a laid-off factory worker, became involved with farmers outside Jiamusi demanding redress for farmland taken from them by officials for development. He gathered 10,000 signatures for an open letter demanding land rights for farmers. To rally support, he posted the letter on the Internet with the title: "We want human rights, not the Olympics." Yang's case is among the most highly charged before the August Games, challenging the Communist government's ambitions to use the Olympics to boost its legitimacy.

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13. PRC Security

Reuters (Mark Trevelyan and Ingrid Melander, "SEPARATISTS PLOT OLYMPIC ATTACKS: CHINESE OFFICIAL", Brussels, 2008/02/19) reported that militants in northwestern PRC are plotting attacks on the Beijing Olympic Games, a PRC official said on Tuesday, a day after the PRC released news of a major counter-terrorist operation in the region last month. Foreign ministry official Niu Qingbao said "Eastern Turkestan terrorists" had in the past planned attacks on PRC institutions overseas as well as engaging in militant activity inside the country. "More recently, they are still plotting terrorist attacks on the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games," Niu told a security conference hosted by the EastWest Institute, an international think-tank.

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14. PRC Space Program

Xinhua ("CHINA TO LAUNCH 10 SATELLITES IN 2008 ", Beijing, 2008/02/19) reported that the PRC plans 10 space launches this year including the Shenzhou VII spaceship, according to a scientist from the PRC's top space program research institute. The 10 launches include two environmental satellites, a meteorological satellite and a communications satellite for Venezuela, according to Yang Baohua, head of the China Academy of Space Technology. The launch of Shenzhou VII this year will spacewalk by taikonauts and lay the foundation work for the PRC's space station construction.

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15. PRC Energy Supply

The Financial Times (Robin Kwong , "HONG KONG TARGETS POWER SUPPLY", Hong Kong, 2008/02/19) reported that Hong Kong's environment secretary has warned the city's power companies to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide, a big source of air pollution, by a substantial amount within two years. "Contrary to the common belief that we are producing power in a cleaner fashion, as of today that is not the case," Edward Yau told the Financial Times as he prepared to impose stringent emission regulations. As part of the proposal, Mr Yau will lower the cap for sulphur dioxide emissions by Hong Kong power companies to 25,000 tonnes in 2010. Power generation accounts for nearly 90 per cent of sulphur dioxide emissions in the city; in 2006 the power groups pushed out 65,000 tonnes of the gas.

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II. ROK Report

16. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Pressian ("LEE MYUNG-BAK REGIME'S POLICY TOWARD DPRK IS NOT EVEN PRAGMATISM' ", 2008/02/20 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that at the Korean Association of Academic Societies Forum, Lee Myung-bak's foreign affairs and national security policies were criticized. Participants said that although President-elect Lee has repeatedly accentuated "the pragmatist principles," the foreign affairs and national security policies actually stem from animosity towards the DPRK on an ideological level, and that if the standards are decided through "don't-ask-me logic," his policies would be no greater than a return to outdated unification theories.

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17. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("THE FULFILMENT OF 2007 ROK-DPRK SUMMIT DECLARATION PASSED TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION", 2008/02/20) wrote that two-thirds of the ROK-DPRK meetings and investigations arranged in January and February for fulfillment of 2007 ROK-DPRK summit talks have yet to progress, and have been passed on to the new administration. It seems that the DPRK has restrained from giving coercion to the new administration on the basis of showing the least appreciation until it knows the detailed stance of the new administration toward fulfillment of agreement. Now the attention is drawn to examination of the new administration on the agreement-fulfillment problems and the eventual reaction of the DPRK. Mediation on the preferred agenda of both the new administration and the DPRK toward summit talk fulfillment items will be necessary.

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18. Korean Reunification

Peace Making (Yung Jun Yoon, "THE PREPARATION FOR PEACEFUL UNIFICATION OF KOREAN PENINSULA IS PRIORITY", 2008/02/18) said that the new administration must keep the preparation for peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula on the top of its priorities. The Korean Peninsula, more than any other time, is in peace mood, considering the fact that nuclear problems not being resolved until the end of year did not turn into threatening between US and DPRK. It must be a great change. However, the obstacle, the DPRK nuclear program, is not something to be compromised between the US and the DPRK. It is the ROK that must get between US and DPRK as a mediator for peace settling in the Korean Peninsula, and ultimately converting the armistice agreement into a peace agreement. Peaceful unification of the Korea Peninsula is of utmost importance.

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