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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

JoongAng Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "NORTH ON BLACKLIST UNTIL NUKES VERIFIED: U.S.", 2008/08/20) reported that Washington reiterated that it will not take Pyongyang off its list of state sponsors of terrorism unless the communist nation agrees to a proposed process through which its nuclear items can be fully verified. “What we require right now is that verification package from North Korea before we can go forward with the delisting,” State Department Spokesman Robert Wood said on Monday in Washington. “It’s really up to the North Koreans. We need that strong verification regime.”

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Xinhua News Agency ("DPRK MAY NOT BACK OFF ON VERIFICATION ISSUE ", Pyongyang, 2008/08/20) reported that the DPRK would "heighten vigilance" against the verification of its nuclear declaration raised by the US, the official KCNA news agency reported. "This situation compels the DPRK to heighten vigilance against such unjust demands as the 'verification in line with the international standard' recently claimed by the US as regards the nuclear issue," a spokesman for the DPRK foreign ministry said.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "NO PROGRESS IN NUCLEAR VERIFICATION PROTOCOL", 2008/08/20) reported that a compromise is unlikely soon between the US and the DPRK on verifying

the country's nuclear disarmament, a senior government official said. Pyongyang remains stubborn on the verification system, and this has delayed its removal from the US list of terrorism sponsoring states, the Foreign Ministry official said on condition of anonymity. ``The U.S. and North Korea are consulting on the verification protocol, but it seems difficult for the two sides to reach a compromise soon,'' the official told reporters. ``But I don't want to describe this situation as pessimistic since these kinds of difficulties are a kind of ritual when it comes to negotiations with North Korea.''

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4. DPRK on US-ROK Joint Military Exercise

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA SAYS WAR GAMES COULD IMPEDE NUCLEAR DEAL", Seoul, 2008/08/20) reported that the DPRK stepped up its criticism of a major US-ROK military exercise, saying it could impede progress on an international nuclear disarmament deal. "The DPRK will increase its war deterrent in every way as long as the US and its followers continue posing military threats to it." The DPRK will "actively take corresponding practical measures" against the war games, the spokesman said. The exercise is a clear proof of Washington's hostile policy, he said.

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("PYONGYANG SUGGESTS CROSS-BORDER CAR RACE", 2008/08/20) reported that with a permission from DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, the DPRK authorities have suggested an inter-Korean version of the "Gumball Rally," a global car race, Radio Free Asia reported on Tuesday. According to RFA, Maximilian Cooper, the organizer of the Gumball Rally, has already begun preparations for a car race that will start in the DPRK, cross the DMZ and travel across the ROK, and will consult with the ROK government soon.

Agence France-Presse ("DON'T LAUGH AT DEAR LEADER, SKOREAN ATHLETES WARNED", Beijing, 2008/08/20) reported that ROK Olympic athletes have been given detailed guidelines to avoid friction with their DPRK counterparts in Beijing, officials said. Contestants should not point or laugh at badges or portraits depicting the DPRK's "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-Il or his late father Kim Il-Sung, the (ROK) Korean Olympic Committee (KOC) says in a handbook. They should "maintain an attitude that is resolute and dignified while avoiding political issues in dialogue" when they meet DPRK counterparts, says the 150-page handbook which also covers a variety of other topics.

Yonhap News (Lee Joon-seung, "GOV'T RETURNS PROGRESSIVE PARTY'S REQUEST TO SEND DELEGATION TO N. KOREA ", Seoul, 2008/08/20) reported that the ROK's Unification Ministry said that it has returned a progressive party's request to send a large-scale delegation to the DPRK. Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun said the decision was based on adverse public sentiment toward the DPRK over the shooting death of a tourist at the Mount Geumgang resort on July 11.

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6. DPRK Food Supply

Chosun Ilbo ("WFP TO ASK S. KOREA PROVIDE FOOD AID TO N. KOREA", 2008/08/20) reported that in the next 10 days, the UN food aid agency is expected to ask the ROK to provide emergency food aid to the DPRK. According to Radio Free Asia, a World Food Programme spokesman said the agency will ask the ROK to aid the DPRK. Meanwhile, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization says North Korea is expected to produce only about three-million tons of crops this year. That is about two million less than initial projections. The low harvest is said to be due to a shortage of chemical fertilizers.

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7. DPRK Population

Yonhap News (Kim Boram, "N.KOREA'S BIRTHRATE HIGHER THAN S. KOREA'S: RESEARCH INSTITUTE", Seoul, 2008/08/20) reported that impoverished DPRK's fertility rate was estimated to be slightly higher than that of the ROK this year, a US population research center said in a report. A DPRK woman in her childbearing years delivers 2 children on average, compared to a ROK woman who bears only 1.3, said the Population Reference Bureau (PRB), a non-profit research organization in Washington. The DPRK's crude birth rate, or the number of newborn babies for every 1,000 people, was estimated to be 16, higher than Seoul's 10, the report noted.

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8. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE LAWMAKER MEETS WITH N. KOREAN OFFICIALS IN BEIJING ", Beijing, 2008/08/20) reported that a veteran lawmaker of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party met with DPRK officials Tuesday in Beijing, sources knowledgeable about Japan-DPRK relations said Wednesday. Taku Yamasaki, who is in Beijing to attend Olympic events, visited the DPRK Embassy in the PRC capital and met with embassy officials, the sources said. Asked about the meeting, Yamasaki told reporters, "I will not deny that I went to the North Korean Embassy."

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9. Sino-ROK Relations

Xinhua ("FM: CHINESE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO CHART PATH FOR TIES WITH ROK", Beijing, 2008/08/20) reported that the PRC said President Hu Jintao's upcoming visit to the Republic of Korea (ROK) would chart a path for future bilateral ties. "We expect this state visit to define the direction of future exchange and cooperation between China and the ROK, and further advance bilateral ties," a PRC Foreign Ministry senior official said. "The visit from Aug. 25 to 26, three years after Hu's last tour to Seoul, will be of great significance to bilateral ties," he said.

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10. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo News ("SCHIEFFER HOPES JAPAN WILL CONSIDER FURTHER MEASURES FOR

AFGHANISTAN", Tokyo, 2008/08/20) reported that US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer called on Japan to consider further measures to improve the situation in Afghanistan, in addition to its ongoing refueling mission in the Indian Ocean in support of antiterrorism operations. The ambassador made the remarks after meeting with ruling Liberal Democratic Party Secretary General Taro Aso, who has been "very supportive in the past" and understands "very well" the importance of the mission, Schieffer said.

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11. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("DEFENSE CHIEF HAYASHI PLEDGES TO SPEED UP FUTEMMA RELOCATION ", Naha , 2008/08/20) reported that Defense Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi pledged to try to speed up work on settling the stalled issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station within Okinawa Prefecture. "We need to make efforts to resolve this problem as soon as possible," Hayashi told a press conference. "It is important to do our utmost to realize the return and relocation of the Futemma base in line with the formal agreement reached by both governments," Hayashi said, wrapping up a two-day trip to Okinawa.

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12. Sino-Indian Trade

PTI ("NATHU LA BORDER TRADE GATHERS MOMENTUM", Gangtok, 2008/08/20) reported that annual border trade between India and the PRC through Nathu La has gained momentum with the turnover of the export of goods by Indian traders jumping by about 100 per cent last month though import of PRC goods remained lacklustre. Textile products like shawls and blankets, utensils and copper items were much sought after by PRC importers in view of the growing demand for them by the people of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Commerce and Industry department officials said. Products like vegetable oil, canned food, tea, cigarettes, coffee were also much in demand by PRC importers, they said.

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13. PRC Protest

Reuters (Ralph Jennings and Lindsay Beck, "FIVE AMERICANS HELD AS CHINA STEPS UP SCRUTINY ", Beijing, 2008/08/20) reported that five American blogger-activists and a foreign artist have been detained in Beijing as the government intensifies a crackdown on pro-Tibetan protests in the home stretch of the Olympics, rights groups said. Students for a Free Tibet said authorities detained on Tuesday five self-styled "citizen journalists" who were in Beijing to promote Tibetan freedom.

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14. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press ("REPORT: 1,200 FLEE AS QUAKE HITS SOUTHERN CHINA", Beijing, 2008/08/20) reported that a report says about 1,200 people have evacuated their homes after a 5.3-magnitude earthquake hit southern PRC near its border with Myanmar. The state-run Xinhua News Agency says no deaths were reported in Wednesday morning's quake, but many homes collapsed. A report on the U.S. Geological Survey's Web site says the quake's epicenter was about 140 miles west of the popular tourism city of Dali in the PRC's Yunnan province.

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15. ROK, PRC, Japan Summit

Korea Times (Jung Ha-won, "NORTHEAST ASIAN SUMMIT MAY BE SOON",) reported that the first ever summit between the leaders of the ROK, PRC and Japan could take place in Japan later next month to discuss pressing issues facing the Northeast Asian nations. Japanese state broadcaster NHK reported that the ROK's Lee Myung-bak, the PRC's Hu Jintao and Japan's Yasuo Fukuda are expected to meet in Kobe, Japan, on Sept. 21, quoting an unnamed Japanese government official. The ROK government denied the report, however, saying the time details about the upcoming summit have not been confirmed.

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II. PRC Report

16. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net (Lai Shaofen, Du Juan, "50 YOUTH SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS JOIN "2008 GUANGDONG AND HONGKONG YOUTH SUMMIT FORUM"", 2008/08/20) reported that on Aug.17, directors or representatives of more than 50 youth social organizations from Hongkong came to Guangzhou to join the "2008 Guangdong and Hongkong Youth Summit Forum". More than 400 Guangdong youth also participated in the forum. The two sides discussed about the economic and cultural exchange, cooperation and development between Guangdong and Hongkong. Jinan Declaration was issued by the youth, and they said they would promote the cooperation between Guangdong and Hongkong in a world vision, and integrate the two sides' resources by market system, finally to make Guangdong and Hongkong one of the most energetic and competitive regions in the world.

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17. PRC Olympics

China News online ("HUO YINGDONG SPORTS FOUNDATION GIVE HIGH BONUS TO ATHLETES", 2008/08/20) reported that according to Hongkong MingBao, the gold medal athletes will come to Hongkong next month. Besides performing, they will also get awards. In the last two Olympic Games, each medal athletes have got bonuses from the deceased Vice Chairman of CPPCC Huo Yingdong. This year, the Huo Yingdong Sports Foundation will award the athletes as before with bonuses and one kilo of gold medals. The total bonus may exceed the 32.5 million HongKong dollars giving for the last Games.

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18. PRC Urban Insecurity

China Youth (Jiang Weiwei, "10 MILLION RURAL POPULATION MIGRATING TO CITY EACH YEAR", 2008/08/20) reported that an official of the PRC Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Construction said at an interview that as at the end of 2007, the PRC's urbanization rate was 44.9%. The annual growth rate of the last 25 years is 0.95%. It is expected that in 10-15 years, the urbanization growth rate of PRC will maintain at a level of 0.8%-1%. Every 1% growth means 10 million people migrating from rural countries to the cities, which makes a big challenge of the development of municipal public industry.

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19. III. ROK Report

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20. ROK-DPRK Relations

Pressian (Choi Jae-cheon, lawyer, "LEE'S DPRK POLICY, ERA OF NEW COLD WAR?", 2008/08/20) said in an op-ed that the Lee Myung-bak administration's DPRK policy is mainly inclined to communicate with the U.S., but not with the DPRK. Likewise, the DPRK also wants to communicate only with the U.S. They are skeptical about the ROK's role in rebuilding their economy and guaranteeing their political regime. That is why they are being so persistent about the 'delisting' issue, so that they can rely less on the ROK and step into global economy themselves, which will consequently allow them to diversify the DPRK economy. In this sense, the U.S.'s demand about a complete verification mechanism and the DPRK's demand about letting them merge into the global financial system are totally exchangeable. Lee's position about this issue is still vague. The two Koreas have been failing to get rid of such 'cold war' air on the peninsula even during the post-cold war era. Meanwhile, a new era of cold war is approaching nearer and now is the time to reestablish a clear strategic vision for the unification of the two Koreas.

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