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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK Energy Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA TO LINK ENERGY AID WITH NUCLEAR VERIFICATION", Seoul, 2008/08/21) reported that the ROK will slow its provision of energy aid promised to the DPRK in last year's denuclearization deal if Pyongyang continues to block an inspection of its nuclear program, diplomatic sources here said. The ROK and the US agreed to the plan in a meeting of their chief nuclear envoys in New York last week, the sources added.

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2. US-ROK Security Alliance

Yonhap News (Yoo Cheong-mo, "LEE URGES STRONGER WAR DETERRENCE CAPABILITIES", Seoul, 2008/08/21) reported that President Lee Myung-bak called for ROK and US forces on the Korean peninsula to wield greater war deterrence capabilities. While making a surprise visit to the command center of the Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise, an annual war game jointly staged by the ROK and U.S. forces across the nation, Lee stressed that the two countries' militaries should further enhance their war preparedness so that they would be able to terminate a possible war on the peninsula in a day.

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "SOUTH KOREA'S LEE CALLS FOR STRONGER MILITARY", Seoul, 2008/08/22) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak said Friday his country needs a stronger military to cope with threats from abroad. Only a strong military can deter outside aggression and protect the lives and safety of the people," the South Korean president said in a

message to navy personnel, according to the presidential Blue House. "Only a strong military can create a rich and powerful country and contribute to world peace and prosperity." Lee also said the ROK should bolster its naval power to "immediately repel" any threat and possible terrorist strike that could take place in ROK waters.

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3. DPRK Nuclear Program

PTI ("INDIA, PAK, N KOREA URGED TO SIGN CTBT ", Vienna, 2008/08/21) reported that India, Pakistan and the DPRK were on Wednesday urged to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) for the political stability in the region. The call was made by Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) of the United Nations, a day after Iraq signed the treaty in New York.

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4. ROK Food Aid for DPRK

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "WFP ASKS SEOUL TO JOIN IN $60 MILLION AID TO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/08/21) reported that the United Nation's World Food Program (WFP) has asked Seoul to contribute to the $60 million in food aid to the DPRK, the Unification Ministry confirmed Thursday. The ministry's spokesman, Kim Ho-nyoun, told reporters the government will decide whether or not to assist in the plan after discussions with related ministries and public opinion gathering.

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5. DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("FIND OUT FATE OF 22 N.KOREANS: HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION", Seoul, 2008/08/22) reported that the ROK National Human Rights Commission has urged the Unification Ministry to set up an official channel to find out what happened to 22 DPRK citizens who were repatriated by the ROK government in February this year. The NHRC's call follows a petition by several civic groups working on human rights issues in the DPRK to prevent such from happening again.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("DEFECTOR KILLING SEOUL'S FAULT", 2008/08/21) reported that the ROK government is partly responsible for the murder of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's nephew-in-law here by DPRK spies, the Supreme Court said yesterday, ordering Seoul to pay compensation to the victim's family. The top court affirmed a verdict by a high court that faulted the government for failing to protect Lee Han-yeong, who was shot and killed by DPRK agents in 1997, 15 years after his defection to the ROK. "The [high court's] verdict that held the government responsible for compensation is fair as Lee's murder was partly caused by the illegal behavior of public servants, which led to his wife's loss," said Judge Lee Hong-hun.

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7. Inter-Korean Athletic Competition

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "FIFA WON'T PENALIZE N. KOREA OVER WORLD CUP BEHAVIOR: BLATTER ", 2008/08/21) reported that FIFA President Joseph Blatter said his organization will not penalize the DPRK over its persistent refusal to allow the ROK to use its national symbols at a World Cup qualifier in Pyongyang. His comment came a day after FIFA announced that the venue for the Sept. 10 World Cup qualifier between the two Koreas has been changed to the neutral Chinese city of Shanghai. The DPRK succeeded in moving an earlier World Cup qualifier in March to Shanghai after refusing to allow the ROK to raise its flag and play its national anthem in Pyongyang, despite FIFA rules calling for such a ceremony.

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8. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "PROJECTS UNVEILED TO REINFORCE SOVEREIGNTY OVER DOKDO", 2008/08/21) reported that the government will renovate a shelter for fishermen on Dokdo and develop infrastructure on the nearby island of Ulleng-do as part of a long-term strategy to strengthen the country's sovereignty over its easternmost islets, the Office of the Prime Minister said. Government agencies will also begin joint projects to protect the environment surrounding the rocky islets and promote international awareness of Japan's repeated claims over the islets.

Yonhap (Shin Hae-in, "NORTH-SOUTH POLITICAL PARTIES DENOUNCE JAPAN'S DOKDO CLAIM", Seoul, 2008/08/22) reported that the ROK's Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and the DPRK's Democratic Labor Party (DLP) denounced Tokyo's territorial claim over Dokdo Friday. "There can be no dispute about the fact that Dokdo belongs to Korea historically, geographically and legally," the DLP read from the joint statement, adding it was regretful that the statement could not have been read in the DPRK due to the ROK government's rejection of the DLP's visit there. "Japan should discard its vain territorial ambitions."

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9. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Xinhua ("S KOREA-EU STARTS TACKLING SENSITIVE ISSUES OF FTA ", Seoul, 2008/08/21) reported that top negotiators of ROK and the European Union (EU) will meet in Seoul next week to seek progress in their free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations by tackling sensitive issues, the Korea Herald reported. Discussions between Lee and his EU counterpart Garcia Bercero will take place from August 27 to 29 to deal with major sticking points, including automobiles, local media said. Lee said that finding common ground on such topics as tariff concessions and technical standards for automobiles will be especially tough and added that he expects the EU to keep automobiles until the very end of the negotiations.

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10. ROK Nuclear Energy

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA DEVELOPING 'SMART' REACTOR", Seoul, 2008/08/21) reported that the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute has been developing a midsized nuclear reactor called SMART, the System-integrated Modular Advanced Reactor, over the past 10 years. The reactor could convert seawater into fresh water and generate enough electricity for up to 100,000 people. The ROK is the first country to venture solely into this new technology and hopes to bring it on to the international market.

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11. Japan Military Drill

Xinhua ("JAPAN'S GSDF STAGES ANNUAL MILITARY DRILL", 2008/08/21) reported that Japan's Ground Self-Defense Forces (GSDF) on Thursday staged an annual military drill in East Fuji of Gotenba city, Shizuoka Prefecture. The drill, dubbed the "comprehensive live ammunition maneuvers" , involved some 60 tanks and armored vehicles, 30 aircraft, including F-2 jet fighters and AH-64D "Apachi" helicopters in particular, canons and missiles.

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12. Japan Export Controls

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO TOUGHEN ARMS EXPORT CONTROL", Tokyo, 2008/08/21) reported that Japan will contribute to international security by expanding the range of products subject to its arms export control, trade ministry officials said. By revising the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law, the government will especially tighten regulations on exports from Japan to 10 countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, the DPRK and Somalia. Following the revision on Nov. 1, companies and individuals will be required to obtain approval from the ministry when they plan to export items and technology that may be used for weapons to the 10 countries.

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13. Japan Nuclear Power

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("OPERATIONS POSTPONED AT MONJU NUCLEAR REACTOR", Fukui, 2008/08/21) reported that the Japan Atomic Energy Agency announced it would postpone until February the resumption of operations of the Monju fast-breeder reactor in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture. The JAEA initially planned to resume operations of the reactor, which has remained inoperative since a sodium leak in October 1995. The JAEA reported the postponement to the Fukui prefectural government and the Tsuruga municipal government, with which it had concluded a safety agreement.

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14. Sino-Japanese Trade Relations

Reuters ("MAINLAND CHINA HAS EMERGED AS JAPAN'S TOP EXPORT DESTINATION", Tokyo, 2008/08/21) reported that the PRC has emerged as Japan's top export destination for the first time since World War II, overtaking a crumbling US market in July with a spurt of pre-Olympics demand for fuel that will probably fade as the global economy slows.

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15. US-PRC Relations

Reuters (Randall Mikkelsen , "U.S. FIRM GUILTY IN DEFENSE EXPORTS TO CHINESE MAN ", Washington, 2008/08/21) reported that a US firm pleaded guilty to illegally providing a PRC national with data used in developing an unmanned aerial weapons system, the Justice Department said. The federal plea entered by privately held Atmospheric Glow Technologies Inc, of Knoxville, Tennessee, was the latest development in a US effort to crack down on improper transfers of military technology to the PRC. The department said Atmospheric Glow had been working on a U.S. Air Force research contract, and admitted to illegally providing test results of the project.

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16. PRC Protest

Reuters (Ralph Jennings and Lindsay Beck, "MORE AMERICANS HELD AS CHINA STEPS UP SCRUTINY ", Beijing, 2008/08/21) reported that at least eight American blogger-activists and several other foreigners 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 on Wednesday. "In relation to foreigners holding demonstrations in Beijing in support of Tibet independence, competent authorities have the right to handle these things according to law," Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a news conference on Wednesday. "I'd also like to emphasize that in China, activities that support Tibet independence will be strongly condemned by the Chinese people and will not be welcomed."

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II. PRC Report

17. PRC Economy

Shihua Financial News, http://www.caixun.com/ ("SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES NEED MORE POLICY SUPPORT FOR FUND RAISING", 2008/08/21) reported that experts of the PRC Development Research Foundation argued that more policy supports were needed to solve the difficult fund-raising problems of small and medium enterprises (SME). At the same time, the SMEs need to improve their own credit and insurance agencies should speed up their development. Recently, a financial interest subsidy measure was unveiled which would create favorable conditions

for financial agencies to loan to the SMEs.

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18. PRC Environment

China Water website, http://www.chinawater.com.cn/ ("CHINESE AND EUROPEAN EXPERTS INVESTIGATE SOURCE OF YELLOW RIVER", 2008/08/21) reported that on Aug.19, exporters of the Sino-EU Watershed Management Project started a ten-day investigation on the source of the Yellow River under the support of Yellow River Water Conservation Committee of Department of Water Conservation. They will explore the potential impact of climate change on the upper reaches of the Yellow River and provide policies and suggestions for addressing climate change to the new round of comprehensive planning for the Yellow River watershed.

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19. PRC Gender Equality

China News online (Wu Zhaofei, "AUTHENTIC EXPERT: CHINA ESTABLISHED NATIONAL SYSTEM FOR ADVANCING WOMEN'S STATUS", 2008/08/21) reported that on the morning of Aug. 20, the fourth Sea of Japan Rim Women's Forum was unveiled in Changchun city of Jilin province. More than 100 female workers and female studies researchers from the PRC, Russia, Japan, the ROK, Mongolia and other countries participated in it. The deputy head of China Women's Institute, Liu Bohong, said at the forum that since the reform and opening up, the PRC government has set up a national system for advancing women's status. Gender equality is the basic national policy. The proportion of female managers or leaders is growing continuously. Their educational level is also heightened. But the most important is that their self-awareness and group consciousness are both awakening. They are involving in all kinds of social areas through new ideas and methods.

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III. ROK Report

20. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Yonhap News ("NATIONAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM NEEDED TO RESPOND TO 'DPRK CRISIS'", 2008/08/22) reported that the ROK needs to establish a complete 'control tower' to deal with the crisis properly since there it is a high possible for the DPRK to undergo a radical crisis or political unraveling, said Ahn Sung-ho, professor of Chungbuk University on 21. Ahn suggested that the current government needs to establish new DPRK policies which acknowledging the agreements that were made during Roh's administration. He added that the government should maintain the discipline of separating politics and economics in the sense that the discipline can still bring peace to the inter-Korean relationship. He also asserted that the government's reciprocal action should be more strategic rather than being too tight.

Hankook Ilbo ("UNIFICATION MINISTRY LACKS CONSISTENCY", 2008/08/22) said in a column that the ROK Unification Ministry's explanation upon the disproval of the Democratic Labor Party's DPRK visit was contradictory. It is completely nonsense for them to announce that approximately ten people are allowed to visit the DPRK, while a large number of visitors are not. Moreover, even after the shooting death occurred in Mount Gumgang, there was an instance when 157 members of a Christian organization had been permitted to visit the DPRK, which violates the fairness. There is no possibility at all for the Democratic Labor Party or the Korean Federation of Teachers to praise the shooting death in Pyongyang, even though they are anti-governmental organizations. The Unification Ministry, which failed to establish a proper inter-Korean dialog channel, utilizes such an irrelevant method, namely the permission for the DPRK visit. The ministry should stop regulating irrelevant nonofficial exchanges between the two Koreas that can contribute to facilitating peaceful relationship.

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21. ROK Food Aid for DPRK

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("HUMANITARIAN FOOD AID TOWARD DPRK SHOULD NOT BE DELAYED", 2008/08/22) said in an op-ed that the ROK government is considering whether or not to respond to the World Food Program's request to send food to the DPRK. The government's biggest concern is the public sentiment. On the other hand, the government seems to care about their initial plan to ease the tension on the Korean Peninsula through food aid. Even though it is apparent that direct aid can not only save costs but also break the ice on the peninsula, the government needs to consider the current state, which is almost hopeless. The government needs to acknowledge the current situation and start sending food based on humanitarianism.

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