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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse (Lachlan Carmichael, "NKOREA TO RECEIVE 'VERY STRONG MESSAGE' ON DISARMAMENT: RICE", Shannon, 2008/07/21) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the DPRK would receive a "very strong message" about its nuclear disarmament obligations at six-party talks this week in Singapore. Rice lowered expectations for her first meeting with DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun at informal talks with their counterparts from the ROK, the PRC, Japan and Russia. "I believe there will be a very strong message that the obligations need to be met and the verification protocol really needs to be completed," Rice said.

Yonhap News ("U.S. HARDLINERS VERIFYING N. KOREA'S NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: SOURCES", Seoul, 2008/07/20) reported that a team of "hardline" US officials has taken charge of their country's efforts to verify the dismantlement of the DPRK's nuclear programs, raising the possibility that the process may be delayed, sources said. Diplomatic sources in Seoul said Patricia McNerney, chief of the US State Department's international security and non-proliferation team, represented Washington at a working group for verifying the DPRK's denuclearization at the latest six-way talks. They said McNerney's participation in the talks for the first time can be seen as a sign that the US is pushing for tough verification measures.

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "US OFFERS NUCLEAR PROPOSAL TO NORTH KOREA", Singapore, 2008/07/22) reported that the United States has proposed a mechanism for verifying the DPRK's nuclear claims, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said Monday. "We ... asked them to come back with specific comments," said Hill. "The ball is actually in the North Korean court because they already received the draft of verification protocol," ROK envoy Kim Sook told reporters

after talks with Hill.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("S, KOREAN PRESIDENT'S PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESS LACKS SUBSTANCE: N. KOREAN MEDIA ", Seoul, 2008/07/21) reported that President Lee Myung-bak's recent parliamentary address on relations with the DPRK lacks substance and merely repeats previous "anti-unification" views, a DPRK weekly claimed. Tongil Shinbo, Pyongyang's overseas public relations weekly said the address made on July 11 clearly revealed Lee's confrontational stance towards the DPRK. It added there was nothing new in the proposals made to restart bilateral dialogue.

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3. Inter-Korean Trade

ROK Ministry of Unification ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE VOLUME IN THE FIRST HALF OF '08 INCREASED BY 23% YEAR-ON-YEAR", Seoul, 2008/07/14) reported that inter-Korean trade volume in the first half of 2008 stood at 880.7 million dollars, up 23% year-on-year from 718.1 million dollars. Gaeseong Industrial Complex(GIC)-related trade such as carrying in products and transfer of factory equipment increased by 88% to 365.5 million dollars and processing-on-commission trade of clothes or TV, etc rose by 42% to 171 million dollars. The major factor behind the increase in inter-Korean trade is the growth of commercial trade, which accounts for 94% of inter-Korea trade. Commercial trade grew 47% year-on-year from 558.7 million dollars to 823.6 million dollars.

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4. Sino-DPRK Relations

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "CHINA TO BEEF UP INSPECTIONS AT NKOREAN BORDER", Seoul, 2008/07/22) reported that the PRC will step up inspections along its border with the DPRK during the Olympics to try to reduce the growing number of DPRK migrants, an official of the ROK National Intelligence Service said Tuesday. The official also dismissed a news report that the PRC plans to close all bridges into the DPRK during the Olympics and that China has demanded that DPRK citizens already working in the PRC leave.

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5. DPRK Foreign Trade

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK CABINET ADOPTS 'BORDER REGION MANAGEMENT PROVISION'", Seoul, 2008/07/22) reported that on July 18, the DPRK Cabinet publication, "Democratic Choson", revealed that the cabinet had recently adopted the 'Border Bridge Trade Complex Management Activities Provision'. The provision spells out to whom the rules and regulations must be applied regarding the orders and management activities of the border bridge trade complex. "By being adopted, the

provision firmly creates regulations on foreign economic activities that cross over border bridges and has prepared the legal support for unceasing improvements of the border bridge trade complex's management activities."

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6. DPRK Cultural Exchanges

Donga Ilbo ("PYONGYANG'S ORCHESTRA LIKELY TO PERFORM IN U.S.", 2008/07/19) reported that the DPRK State Symphony Orchestra will likely perform in the United States. "It appears that North Korea's State Symphony Orchestra will likely put on their first performance in the United States," a well-informed source on the DPRK philharmonic's plan to perform in the US said. "The chance of the orchestra performing is about 85 percent; only the final decision is left... As far as I know, it has been trying to find a sponsor for its U.S. performance."

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7. DPRK Bird Flu Prevention Measures

Xinhua ("DPRK DEVELOPS NEW METHODS TO QUICKLY DIAGNOSE BIRD FLU", Pyongyang, 2008/07/21) reported that researchers of the DPRK have recently developed a new genetic analysis method for quick diagnosis of bird flu, local media reported. Four years ago, researchers at the Veterinary Institute of the DPRK Academy of Agricultural Sciences have partially discovered the bio-characteristics of the bird flu viruses, which were prevalent at that time and set up a gene bank, the official news agency KCNA said. Meanwhile, the researchers have also developed new diagnostic reagents with high sensitivity -- over 95 percent, whose accuracy is also much bigger than its predecessors.

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8. Japan-DPRK Relations

Mainichi Shimbun ("ABDUCTEES' FAMILIES, SUPPORTERS CONTINUE TO OPPOSE LIFTING OF N. KOREA SANCTIONS", 2008/07/21) reported that a group representing families of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK held a joint meeting with supporters, deciding to continue protests against the removal of sanctions against the DPRK. During the meeting, fears were expressed that the move by the US to take the DPRK off its list of state sponsors of terrorism would result in a decline of pressure to solve the abduction problem, and members voiced "deep concern" over the decision.

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9. US-ROK Security Alliance

Xinhua ("S KOREA, U.S. TO NEGOTIATE OVER MILITARY COOPERATION", Seoul, 2008/07/21) reported that the ROK and the US will hold a new round of high-level military talks to map out the scheduled transfer of the wartime operational control of ROK troops to Seoul and other bilateral

security issues, the ROK Defense Ministry said. The talks, called the Security Policy Initiative (SPI), will beheld in Washington on Wednesday, said Won Tae-je, a spokesman for the ROK Defense Ministry.

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10. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Yomiuri Shimbun (Masahiko Takekoshi, "'ROK POSTPONES FTA TALKS OVER TAKESHIMA REFERENCE'", Seoul, 2008/07/21) reported that talks between Japan and ROK on resuming negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement have been postponed indefinitely after Seoul said it was unhappy over a reference to the Takeshima islets in school handbooks, the Yonhap News Agency reported. An official at the ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry said, "It will be difficult [to decide a schedule for the talks] for a while," because Seoul had concluded that the current environment was not conducive to discussing conditions toward the resumption of the FTA talks.

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA DENOUNCES TOKYO'S CLAIM TO DOKDO", 2008/07/21) reported that the DPRK denounced Tokyo's latest move to reinforce its longstanding territorial claim to the ROK's easternmost islets of Dokdo, according to a DPRK Internet site monitored in Seoul. The Web site "Uriminjokkiri" (among our own people), in its commentary, titled "Japan's scheme to plunder Dokdo is renewed", criticized Japan for "provoking all the Korean people." "This is a political provocation towards all the Korean people and a violation of sovereign rights," it said.

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11. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Yomiuri Shimbun ("RUSSIA 'REGRETS' TEXTBOOK MOVE ", Moscow, 2008/07/21) reported that the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement released that it found it regrettable the Japanese official handbook for the new school curriculum guideline for social science classes at middle school describes the so-called northern territories as illegally occupied by Russia. The Russian Foreign Ministry criticized the description, saying, "It will not contribute to the development of bilateral cooperation and the resolution of the border issue between the two countries."

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12. Japan SDF Solomon Islands Mission

The Australian (Greg Sheridan, "JAPAN'S TROOPS WELCOMED FOR PEACEFUL MISSION IN THE PACIFIC", 2008/07/21) reported that Japanese troops may return to Guadalcanal. But this time, they would come entirely in peace. As a result of the increased intimacy between Australia and Japan, both in strategic co-operation and aid co-ordination to the South Pacific, Japan has offered to send personnel to assist with the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands. On Thursday in the Solomon Islands, Foreign Minister Stephen Smith revealed that Japan had offered assistance to RAMSI. Mr Smith warmly welcomed Japan's assistance.

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13. Japan SDF Afghanistan Mission

The Financial Times (David Pilling, "JAPAN REVIEWS AFGHAN TROOP PLAN", Tokyo, 2008/07/21) reported that Japan is reconsidering whether to send ground troops to Afghanistan, with lawmakers expressing concern about dispatching personnel to a country suffering an upsurge in violence. Osamu Takashita, deputy chief cabinet secretary, denied that any firm decision had been taken, though he conceded that behind-the-scenes discussions might be going on. “We are considering various possibilities on how we could contribute in Afghanistan in the context of Japan’s policy to become a peace-fostering nation.”

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14. US-Japan Security Alliance

Reuters ("JAPAN RESIDENTS PROTEST AGAINST U.S. WARSHIP PLAN", Tokyo, 2008/07/21) reported that more than 10,000 people marched by a US navy base near Tokyo, calling for the Japanese government to stop the deployment of a nuclear-powered warship for the first time to Japan, rally organizers said. The protest by local residents and activists against basing the aircraft carrier USS George Washington in Yokosuka, 45 km (28 miles) southwest of Tokyo, came amid growing concerns safety after a fire on the ship in May. "This is the same as bringing a nuclear reactor into another country. Something is wrong here. The Japanese government is sacrificing the local residents' safety for its national interests."

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15. Cross Strait Relations

The Financial Times (Kathrin Hille, "TAIPEI BIDS TO SAVE US ARMS DEAL", Taipei, 2008/07/21) reported that Taiwan has abandoned a bid to buy 66 F-16 fighter jets from the US in an attempt to rescue a larger arms package before President George W. Bush leaves the White House, according to national security officials in Taipei. Taipei officials said they believed that the US had temporarily put off arms sales in order to secure Beijing’s co-operation in tackling trouble in Iran and the DPRK. “We hope that once the Olympics are over and things are less politically sensitive for Beijing, things can start moving again. Otherwise it will be too late to get these sales back on track under the current administration,” said a senior Taiwan security official.

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16. PRC Earthquake

The Associated Press ("CHINA WITHDRAWS 40,000 TROOPS FROM QUAKE ZONE", Beijing, 2008/07/21) reported that the PRC began withdrawing the first batch of 40,000 troops from three provinces hit by the massive May 12 earthquake as authorities shifted focus from rescue to reconstruction work. The order, signed by President Hu Jintao who also heads up the Central Military Commission, went into effect Monday, according to the official Xinhua News Agency.

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17. PRC Security

The Washington Post (Edward Cody, "ACROSS CHINA, SECURITY INSTEAD OF CELEBRATION", Yengishahar, 2008/07/21) reported that shortly after dawn on July 9, the local government here bused several thousand students and office workers into a public square and lined them up in front of a vocational school. As the spectators watched, witnesses said, three prisoners were brought out. Then, an execution squad fired rifles at the three point-blank, killing them on the spot. The public execution of the men was a dramatic example of the massive, unforgiving security operation that has been mounted in the PRC to protect the Beijing Games from what Communist Party authorities describe as an urgent threat of violence and anti-government protest.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Communication

China Economic Information Network, http://www.cei.gov.cn/ ("ANTI-SPAM SHORT MESSAGE FEDERATION ESTABLISHED IN BEIJING", 2008/07/21) reported that recently, the Anti–Spam Short Message Federation of China Internet Association was formally established in Beijing. The “Short Message Service Norms of China Internet Association” and “Guidance for users to send messages” were also issued at the opening ceremony. These two papers define spam for short messages and regulate the sending of short messages in detail. They provide the origin for protecting consumers’ rights. Spam short messages mainly include types of fraud, business advertising, selling of illegal bills and selling of contraband.

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19. PRC Energy

CCID Net, http://www.ccidnet.com/ ("SINO-US SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS TO HOLD FIRST ENERGY SAVING FORUM", 2008/07/21) reported that for the semiconductor enterprises to adapt the trend of environmental protection and energy saving of electrical products, the China Semiconductor Industry Association (CSIA) and Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) of the USA will jointly launch a energy saving forum for semiconductor products for the first time on September 17-18. On July 10, CSIA and SIA held a special meeting for the details of the forum. The two sides exchanged ideas and hoped the forum to be a new starting point for further cooperation.

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20. PRC Earthquake

China Radio Network, http://www.cnr.cn/ (Liu Zhigang, Liu Siran, "NAIKAI VOLUNTEERS HELP LOCAL STUDENTS FOR THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE EXAM", 2008/07/21) reported that on July 17, the College Voluntary Service Team in Disaster Areas from Nankai University

arrived at their destination: Central School of Baishu Village, Zhongjiang County, Deyang City, Sichuan Province. According to the headmaster of the school, though the condition of the school is difficult, the quality is still among the best. The Service Team including 10 students is lead by teacher Zhang Yang. The students are all backbones of all departments. The next task for them is to do post-disaster psychological counseling, psychological counseling before the examination, and career planning for the local students.

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III. ROK Report

21. ROK at ARF

Yonhap News ("MT.KUMGANG INCIDENT SEEMS DIFFICULT TO BE THE OFFICIAL AGENDA", 2008/07/22) wrote that the inter-Korean foreign ministers forum promoted by the ROK government seems hard to accomplish. One government official said that the DPRK seems to feel burdened as the ROK government tries to discuss the Mt.Kumgang incident. On the other hand, it is uncertain whether the Mt. Kumgang incident will be chosen as official agenda of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), although it seems likely to be discussed at the forum.

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