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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee, "MINISTERS FAIL TO NARROW GAPS ON N.K.", 2008/07/25) reported that wide gaps remained among members of the six-party talks even though their ministers' reaffirmed their desire to move forward with negotiation on the DPRK's nuclear programs. The US is currently waiting for the DPRK's response to its draft of the verification mechanism for Pyongyang's nuclear programs. The DPRK delegation led by Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun, however, reportedly did not talk about the draft during the ministerial talks, nor during a brief bilateral meeting with US "All parties are subjected to verification," Pak was quoted as saying. The DPRK has long believed that the ROK must also go under verification of its nuclear status.

The Associated Press (Jae-Soong Chang, "CALL FOR IAEA TO VERIFY N. KOREA NUCLEAR PROGRAMS", Singapore, 2008/07/25) reported that the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency should play a leading role in verifying the DPRK's declaration of its nuclear programs, according to a draft of a statement to be issued by Asia-Pacific nations. The IAEA's involvement, if accepted by the DPRK's government, would give backbone to efforts to permanently strip the DPRK of its nuclear programs. "The ministers emphasized the importance of the early establishment of an effective verification mechanism with the IAEA playing a leading role," said the draft statement.

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee, "VERIFICATION TALKS TO START NEXT WEEK", Seoul, 2008/07/25) reported that the United States and the DPRK will begin discussions next week regarding the details of a verification protocol for Pyongyang's nuclear programs and activities, sources said. "Working-level talks will begin pretty soon, as the United States is determined that the verification mechanism must be established by Aug. 11, the deadline if Pyongyang is to be removed from the U.S. list of states which sponsor terrorism," a diplomatic source said on condition of anonymity. Washington has handed over four pages of a draft concerning how to formulate and operate the verification, and is waiting for Pyongyang to respond.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA 'DEMANDS RESPECT AS A NUCLEAR STATE'", 2008/07/25) reported that the DPRK reportedly asked to be recognized as a nuclear state at a meeting of foreign ministers from countries in six-party talks. DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun urged the US to stop its hostile policy toward the DPRK, saying verification of the nuclear facilities and stockpiles it has declared is not a duty but cooperation.

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3. DPRK-Japan Relations

Japan Today ("MACHIMURA URGES N KOREA TO REINVESTIGATE ABDUCTION ISSUE", Singapore, 2008/07/25) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura reiterated the need for the DPRK to take "concrete" actions to fulfill its promise to reinvestigate the abduction issue. "We've seen no reaction from North Korea...it's important that they show a sincere response as soon as possible," Machimura told a press conference. "Following such agreement at the foreign-minister level, I think the working-level jobs should be started as soon as possible," Machimura said.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "N. KOREA SLAMS S. KOREA'S NEW GOVERNMENT AT REGIONAL FORUM ", Singapore, 2008/07/25) reported that DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Ui-chun unleashed criticism against the ROK's new conservative administration at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), officials said, while Seoul's top diplomat called for the resumption of inter-Korean dialogue. Speaking at the ARF Retreat attended by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and ministers from other regional powers, Pak accused the Lee Myung-bak government of negating the two inter-Korean summit agreements signed under former administrations, they added.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

Yonhap News (Lee Joon-seung, "N. KOREA LIMITS OVERLAND TRAFFIC FROM S. KOREA ", Seoul, 2008/07/25) reported that the DPRK has limited overland traffic entering the DPRK from the ROK, citing inadequate communication infrastructure near the corridor leading to the Kaesong industrial complex, government sources said. Sources said the new restrictions that limit traffic to 200 vehicles every 30 minutes in the Gyeongui corridor went into effect at 8:30 a.m., when the first group of vehicles is allowed to cross. The west coast corridor is used mainly by ROK cars going to and from the Kaesong industrial complex in the DPRK.

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6. Mt. Kumgang Shooting

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun , "SEOUL HAS N.K. PLANS, BUT STAYS MUM", 2008/07/25) reported that a senior government official said that Seoul has a plan of action should Pyongyang continue to refuse to cooperate on investigating the death of ROK tourist Park Wang-ja. "We have our own plans but it is not time yet to specify what the plans are," said the government official who requested not to be named. The senior government official mentioned that many ROK visitors to the DPRK said they were requested by the DPRK's authorities not to mention the shooting death to DPRK civilians because they are currently unaware of the shooting death.

Donga Ilbo ("SHOOTING PROMPTS BAN ON CIVILIAN VISITS TO N. KOREA ", 2008/07/25) reported that the government will not allow a large group from the Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification to visit the DPRK next month, a government source said. Also canceled was a scheduled visit to the DPRK next month by South Gyeongsang Province Governor Kim Tae-ho and a delegation. An official of the unification council said, "The council initially agreed with the North to allow 128 South Korean officials to visit for four days from July 11. Due to the shooting at Mount Geumgang, we had to postpone the trip to August 6-9. The (South Korean) Unification Ministry then told us we couldn't go so we canceled the trip."

Agence France-Presse ("RICE URGES NKOREA TO TALK TO SKOREA ON TOURIST DEATH", Perth, 2008/07/25) reported that US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged the DPRK to take up Seoul's offer to engage in direct talks over the shooting death of a ROK tourist in the DPRK. "I hope the DPRK will take up the invitation of South Korea to have direct talks concerning the tragic death of the South Korean tourist," Rice told reporters on the plane from Singapore to Perth, Australia. "There needs to be an investigation of what happened but principally so that there can be steps taken so that tragedies like this don't happen again," Rice said.

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "SOUTH KOREA STRUGGLES TO PROBE TOURIST DEATH", Seoul, 2008/07/25) reported that ROK fact-finding commission chief Hwang Boo-gi said Friday his team cannot resolve numerous questions about the July 11 shooting because the DPRK refuses to allow investigators into Mt. Kumgang. To find out whether the shooting was accidental, Hwang told reporters, his team needs to know from what location the DPRK soldier fired shots and other details.

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7. ASEAN on Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee, "ASEAN CALLS FOR INTER-KOREAN DIALOGUE", Seoul, 2008/07/25) reported that at the end of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Singapore, the attending ministers "expressed strong support for continued development of inter-Korean dialogue based on the Oct. 4 Declaration," according to the chairman's statement released late Thursday night. "The ministers also expressed their concern over the shooting of the ROK (Republic of Korea) tourist at the Mount Geumgang resort area, and their hope that the incident would be resolved expeditiously," the statement read.

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8. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee, "SEOUL SETS UP JOINT TASK FORCE ON DOKDO", 2008/07/25) reported that the government yesterday decided to set up a joint task force on Dokdo to build a permanent countermeasures system to fend off Japan's sovereignty provocations. The task force, provisionally named "countermeasures team on managing the territory of Dokdo," will be headed by the Prime Minister's Office and joined by officials from relevant ministries such as foreign affairs, maritime affairs and defense.

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9. Sino-Japanese Joint Disaster Response

Xinhua ("FM: CHINA READY TO ENHANCE COOPERATION WITH JAPAN ON DISASTER REDUCTION ", Beijing, 2008/07/25) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry said on the PRC is ready to promote cooperation with Japan on disaster prevention and reduction. "It is very necessary for China and Japan, two seismically active countries, to strengthen exchanges and cooperation in this aspect," said the ministry's spokesman Liu Jianchao, "China holds a positive attitude toward this," he added.

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10. Japanese Nuclear Power

Asahi Shimbun (Jin Nishikawa and Eisuke Sasaki, "CRACKS APPEAR IN KEY PART OF NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE", Rokkasho, 2008/07/25) reported that Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd. (JNFL), which operates the Rokkasho reprocessing plant here, has so far failed in trials to produce solidified glass, which is required to store the high-level radioactive waste produced during the reprocessing of spent fuel. On June 30, a subcommittee on nuclear fuel-cycle safety, which advises the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), approved resuming the glass-manufacturing trial. With the subcommittee's approval, JNFL restarted the trials on July 2, after a six-month break. It hopes to complete the trial, including solidified-glass production, by the end of the month.

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11. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Reuters ("CHINA AND RUSSIA TO LAUNCH ENERGY TALKS", Beijing, 2008/07/25) reported that the PRC and Russia will launch high-level talks aimed at encouraging energy cooperation between the two giant neighbours, the PRC government said, after years of frustrated deal-making over oil and gas. Liu called the launch of the two nations' vice premier-level "energy negotiations mechanism" an important step that would help them "jointly plan energy cooperation."

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12. PRC Security

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CRACKS TERROR CELL PLANNING GAMES ATTACK: STATE MEDIA ", Shanghai, 2008/07/25) reported that police in Shanghai have cracked a terrorist cell planning to attack an Olympic football venue in the PRC financial hub, state media reported. The report came as the PRC ramps up security ahead of the Summer Games amid what it described as an unprecedented terror threat. "We have obtained information that international terrorist organisations would likely launch an attack against an Olympic venue in the city during the Games," Xinhua news agency quoted the head of Shanghai's Olympic security office, Cheng Jiulong, as saying.

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13. PRC Earthquake

The New York Times (Edward Wong, "CHINA PRESSES HUSH MONEY ON GRIEVING PARENTS ", Hanwang, 2008/07/25) reported that local governments in southwest PRC's quake-ravaged Sichuan Province have begun a coordinated campaign to buy the silence of angry parents whose children died during the earthquake, according to interviews with more than a dozen parents from four collapsed schools. Officials threaten that the parents will get nothing if they refuse to sign, the parents say. The payment amounts vary by school but are roughly the same. Parents in Hanwang, a river town at the foot of mist-shrouded mountains, said they were being offered the equivalent of \$8,800 in cash and a per-parent pension of nearly \$5,600.

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14. PRC Internet Use

The Associated Press (Lydia Chen, "CHINA TOPS US FOR INTERNET USERS", 2008/07/25) reported that the PRC has the world's largest number of Internet users, passing the US by the end of June, a government-backed center said in a report today. Another 43 million netizens joined in the first half of this year, lifting the number of PRC Internet users to 253 million, China Internet Network Information Center said in its 22th Internet Development Report today. The Internet population in the United States stood at 220 million at the end of last year, according to the Beijing-based center.

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II. PRC Report

15. PRC Energy Use

Xinhua News Agency ("CHINESE PREMIER ORDERS NATIONWIDE ENERGY SAVING EFFORTS", Beijing, 2008/07/25) reported that the government and the public should take more responsibility for saving electricity and fuel to ease energy strains, said PRC Premier Wen Jiabao on Wednesday. Wen made the comment at a meeting of the State Council, or cabinet, saying that tight energy supplies have greatly hindered the PRC's economic development. Energy waste is a serious problem in government departments and institutions, centrally-administrated enterprises, large public projects and individual households, said Wen. The government should improve energy efficiency through

comprehensive measures to reduce the energy consumption of vehicles, heating and air conditioning facilities and lighting.

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16. PRC Security

China Military Network, <http://www.chinamil.com.cn> ("SHENYANG MOBILIZES CABBIES IN SECURITY CAMPAIGN", 2008/07/23) reported that Police in the Olympic Games soccer co-host city of Shenyang, northeast PRC, are offering rewards of up to 500,000 (73,500 U.S. dollars) for information on security threats. And cab drivers in the city have been given special training as "intelligence agents" in how to spot suspicious activities. The city has 19,000 registered cabs and about 38,000 taxi drivers. The drivers moved around the city and meet with many people, so their cooperation was important in ensuring security around the sports events next month, said Liu Juntao, of the bureau's public transport department.

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III. ROK Report

17. Inter Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("ROK SHOULD FIND ITS OWN ROLE...INTER-KOREAN RELATIONS REVITALIZATION IS URGENT", 2008/07/25) wrote that there is an opinion that the ROK's diplomatic strategies, which were settled after the inauguration of the Lee Myung Bak administration, might be wrongfully focused. Conflict between the two Koreas, especially at the global forum, might have been unnecessary if diplomatic strategies had been settled more wisely.

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