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Preceding NAPSNet Report

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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Uranium Enrichment

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "NORTH KOREA TRYING TO ENRICH URANIUM, SOUTH SAYS", Seoul, 2009/06/30) reported that ROK Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee told a parliamentary hearing on Tuesday that the DPRK appears to be enriching uranium . "It is clear that they are moving forward with it," Lee said, adding such a program is far easier to hide than the plutonium-based program.

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2. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("YABUNAKA SAYS NO CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR 5-PARTY TALKS ON N. KOREA", Tokyo, 2009/01/29) reported that Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka said Monday there are no concrete prospects at the moment for so-called five-party talks to discuss ways to bring the DPRK back to stalled denuclearization negotiations. ''If I were asked whether there is any concrete prospect for the realization (of the five-party talks), we are not in such a situation,'' Yabunaka told a press conference.

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3. Japan Sanctions on the DPRK

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN BLOCKS EXPORT OF SUSPECTED WMD DEVICE TO N KOREA-REPORTS", Tokyo, 2009/01/28) reported that police arrested three businessmen here Monday on suspicion of trying to export a device which could be used to develop weapons of mass destruction to Myanmar and eventually the DPRK, media said. The trio, including a 41-year-old ethnic Korean resident, were held for allegedly attempting to ship the magnetic measuring instrument without obtaining government approval, the Jiji Press and Kyodo news agencies said. The Kanagawa

prefectural police thwarted the shipment in January before it left the port of Yokohama for Myanmar, Kyodo said.

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4. US on DPRK Sanctions

Agence French Presse ("NEW NORTH KOREA SANCTIONS WILL HAVE IMPACT: US", Washington, 2009/06/28) reported that new UN sanctions intended to force the DPRK to abandon its nuclear program will have an "impact" when they take full force, the top US envoy to the United Nations has said. "When this resolution is fully enforced -- not only in terms of potential vessels that may be violating the sanctions but the financial sanctions, the arms embargo, the assets freezes -- this will be a very, very tough package that will have an impact on North Korea," Rice said.

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5. DPRK Economy

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA'S ARMS EXPORT ROUTES GETTING HARDER TO TRACK ", 2009/06/28) reported that the DPRK has sought various legal and illegal ways to dodge the tightening net of the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative for the past few years, a government source said. For instance, the DPRK took a roundabout land route via the PRC and Russia, which is harder to trace, or used transport planes at night. It also exported weapons by building assembly factories in importing countries. To circumvent an entry ban on its ships in ports, the DPRK chartered ships under the names of foreigners, falsified the country of origin, or did business through a third country. That is mostly how it was able to export to Iran, Syria, Burma and Laos.

IFES NK Brief ("NORTH KOREA BEGINS CLOSING GENERAL MARKETS", 2009/06/28) reported that it has been reported that the DPRK's market closing measure is slowly beginning to be enforced. The June 23 issue of North Korea Today, a newsletter from the ROK group Good Friends, announced that the Pyongyang general market has now been shut down, in what some call the most prominent omen that all general markets will be shut down throughout the country. As the Pyongyang general market served as the central wholesale market for the entire DPRK, some believe it was shut down first in order to encourage the use of smaller, more local traditional markets. In addition, central Party authorities have ordered department stores and general stores in Pyongyang to stock up on PRC goods.

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6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("UNIFICATION MINISTER INVITES PREDECESSORS OVER JOINT PARK, N.K. TENSION ", Seoul, 2009/06/28) reported that Unification Minister Hyun In-taek will host a meeting with over a dozen of his predecessors later Monday to discuss political tensions with the DPRK and a troubled joint industrial park, his office said. "At the meeting, the minister will outline the South Korean government's position on its North Korean policy, the Kaesong industrial complex and other current issues and will exchange opinions with his predecessors," his ministry said in a release.

KBS News ("NK CIGARETTE "BAEKSAN" TO HIT NATION'S STORES IN JULY", 2009/06/28) reported that consumers can buy cigarettes produced by a DPRK firm starting next month. A ROK company announced Friday that it will start selling some 175-thousand packs of the “Baeksan” cigarettes from July sixth, with each pack costing two-thousand-300 won, or about one dollar and 80 cents. It’s not the first time a ROK company has imported a DPRK tobacco product. In 2000, the ROK’s Korea Tobacco and Ginseng Corporation imported DPRK cigarettes under a temporary contract.

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7. DPRK Leadership

The Associated Press ("JUNE PHOTO OF NKOREA'S KIM MAY BE RECYCLED: REPORT", 2009/06/28) reported that a photo of the DPRK leader recently shown on Pyongyang's state TV appears to be a doctored version of one published in April by the country's official news agency — a possible sign his health is worsening — ROK media reported. A still photo of 67-year-old Kim Jong Il visiting an army unit, shown on state TV on June 14, is nearly identical to an April 25 military group shot of Kim, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper said. The report cited unidentified intelligence officials who said there was a "a high possibility" the April image was recycled.

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8. ROK Abductee Issue

KBS News ("COURT ALLOWS EXCLUSION OF WAR ABDUCTEES FROM COMPENSATION LAW ", 2009/06/28) reported that the Constitutional Court has allowed the exclusion of those abducted by the DPRK during the Korean War from the compensation law for abductees. Seven of nine judges on Friday rejected a petition submitted by a son of Kim Young-dong, who was a member of the Constituent Assembly in 1948. The son claimed in the petition that the exclusion is a violation of the constitutional right to equality, since his father was abducted by the DPRK during the Korean War that began in 1950.

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9. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Times ("USFK CHIEF PLEDGES SHIELD AGAINST NK MISSILES", 2009/06/28) reported that the United States will use its missile defense network to defend the ROK against incoming missiles from the DPRK under an extended deterrence pledge in case of an emergency, the chief of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said. Gen. Walter Sharp, who concurrently serves as commander of the ROK-US Combined Forces Command (CFC) and the United Nations Command (UNC), made the remarks in a forum at the Korea Military Academy in northern Seoul last Friday, according to CFC officials.

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10. ROK Climate Change

KBS News ("GOV'T TO IMPLEMENT CARBON POINT SYSTEM", 2009/06/28) reported that a new energy saving system will go into effect next month. The carbon point system will reward homes and businesses with points according to the amount of carbon emissions they have reduced by saving electricity, water or gas. The Environment Ministry says a four-person household that saves around ten percent of its monthly electricity use can receive over 50-thousand won in points over the course of a year.

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11. US-Japan Nuclear Pact

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN DENIES PACT ALLOWING NUKE-ARMED US WARSHIPS", 2009/06/28) reported that Japan's government has denied a report that Tokyo had secretly agreed with Washington during the cold war to allow US warships carrying nuclear weapons to make port calls in the country. "Such speculation has gone on for decades, but the government of Japan has said there is no such secret agreement," said a foreign ministry official. The foreign ministry official, who declined to be named, told AFP: "Such a prior consultation has never taken place. Therefore there has been no case of us letting nuclear weapons in."

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12. Japan Nuclear Power

Kyodo News ("NUCLEAR AGENCY OKS COMMERCIAL OPERATION AT KASHIWAZAKI-KARIWA PLANT ", 2009/06/28) reported that Japan's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency approved in principle Monday the restart of commercial operations at the quake-stalled Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant in Niigata Prefecture, the world's largest by output. In May, Tokyo Electric Power Co., which operates the plant, began test operations of one of its seven reactors after the 22-month suspension following a major earthquake in the area in 2007. ''The facility is working well and we believe there will be no problem in keeping the plant in operation,'' the government agency reported to a Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry panel.

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13. Japan Politics

Mainichi Shimbun ("RUMORS OF PLANNED LEADERSHIP RESHUFFLE GROUNDLESS, SAYS ANONYMOUS LDP SOURCE", 2009/06/28) reported that despite earlier signs to the contrary, it appears that Prime Minister Taro Aso has abandoned a reshuffle of the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), insiders say. "It requires a huge volume of energy to replace three leading party officials, and isn't easy," said a high-ranking official of the government who spoke on condition of anonymity. If he cannot carry out a reshuffle of the LDP leadership, Aso's influence on his administration will further decline, which will give momentum to those within the ruling coalition trying to force him to step down.

The Financial Times ("ASO URGED TO QUIT AMID FEARS OF POLL ROUT", 2009/06/28) reported that Taro Aso, Japan's beleaguered prime minister, is facing increasingly open rebellion from within his long-ruling Liberal Democratic party as fears grow among senior members that they are heading

for a historic defeat at a looming general election. Yasufumi Tanahashi, a former minister, on Friday added his voice to calls for Mr Aso to step down in time for the LDP to choose another president to lead it into the election, which must be held by October. Adding to Mr Aso's woes, two of his most important ministers have come under pressure over allegations that they were the recipients of improper political donations.

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14. Sino-Russian Military Exercise

Agence French Presse ("RUSSIA, CHINA TO HOLD MILITARY EXERCISES JULY 22-26 - REPORT", 2009/06/28) reported that Russia and the PRC will hold joint military exercises next month, a top Russian military official said Monday. "The head of the Russian and Chinese military delegations agreed that 1,300 soldiers from each side would participate," said the deputy army chief Lieutenant General Sergei Antonov, adding 20 Russian war planes would take part. The five-day exercises, dubbed Peace Mission 2009, are to focus on anti-terrorism and will take place on both countries' territories July 22-26.

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15. Cross Strait Relations

Agence French Presse ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT TO VISIT CENTRAL AMERICA AMID CHINA OPPOSITION", 2009/06/28) reported that Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou is scheduled to leave for Central America Monday, his second visit to the region in a month, to shore up ties with allies there, his spokesman said. Ma will attend Panama's presidential inauguration of Ricardo Martinelli Wednesday, and then travel on to Nicaragua and Honduras, Ma's spokesman Wang Yu- chi told AFP. However, PRC officials last week called on leaders of other countries to avoid contact with Ma while in Panama, sparking criticism from Taiwan's opposition that Ma's "diplomatic truce" was not reciprocated by Beijing.

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16. PRC Energy Supply

Payvand News ("MALAYSIA, CHINA TO DEVELOP IRAN'S RESALAT OILFIELD", 2009/06/28) reported that Malaysian Amona Company, China Oilfield Services Limited (COSL), and PRC National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) will cooperate in the development of Resalat oilfield, the Iranian Offshore Oil Company's managing director said. The Mehr News Agency quoted Mahmoud Zirakchianzadeh as saying that Iran and Malaysia's Amona Company signed a one-billion-euro ($1.4 billion) deal to develop the Resalat oilfield last year. Amona has in turn reached preliminary agreements with the Chinese COSL to conduct drilling operations and with CNOOC to establish the required marine installations, Zirakchianzadeh stated.

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17. PRC Land Rights

Times of India ("CHINA TO TACKLE DISSENT BY AMENDING LAND LAW", 2009/06/28) reported that the PRC on Saturday set out to tackle an important cause of political dissent, which is the heart-burning among farmers over forceful acquisition of their lands and poor compensation paid for it. The government admitted that land disputes were a "factor affecting rural harmony and stability". The government said it would standardize the arbitration procedure for settlement of land disputes. It wanted to give "an effective guarantee" to farmers' and make sure that their rights under the land contracts are respected, it said.

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18. PRC Environment

Caijing Magazine ("CHINA TO PROTECT SEA ISLANDS", 2009/06/28) reported that t he ninth session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress is reviewing a draft law intended to promote conservation and environmental protection on offshore islands. Many of the islands scattered around the PRC's 3-million-square-kilometer territorial sea are suffering from serious environmental degradation due to unregulated human activities. The draft stipulates that all uninhabited islands are state-owned, which means that individuals, businesses and local governments will be banned from development on any island without authorization. Special attention will be given to the protection of coral reefs and mangrove forests.

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II. PRC Report

19. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

163.com ("NGO PROTESTS HP FOR USING TOXIC MATERIALS", 2009/06/28) reported that 3 members of Greenpeace gathered at the gate of HP China on the morning of June 25, to protest HP using toxic materials in computer production. According to the check of HP computer by Greenpeace, a kind of chemical material which may lead to cancer is used with a high proportion in a certain type of HP computer. And this type of computer is widely sold all across China.

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20. PRC Civil Society and Earthquake Reconstruction

Xi'an Evening News (Wang Li, "CHINA CHARITY FEDERATION GRANTS RECONSTRUCTION OF 2 SCHOOLS IN SICHUAN", 2009/06/28) reported that China Charity Federation has arranged 5 million yuan to help reconstruction of two schools in Mianyang city, Sichuan province. Sichuan provincial charity federation has received the fund and will allocate it to the two schools.

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21. PRC Civil Society and AIDS Issue

People's Daily online ("CENTRAL PARTY SCHOOL AND HONG KONG AIDS FOUNDATION SINGED AN AGREEMENT IN BEIJING", 2009/06/29) reported that Central Party School and Hong Kong AIDS Foundation singed an agreement in Beijing on June 27. The two sides will cooperatively organize training lessons about AIDS for party school leaders and students. The project plans to provide training to 600 people in 3 three years.

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