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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Agence France Presse ("NKOREA'S KIM SAYS STANCE ON NUCLEAR DEAL UNCHANGED: REPORT", Beijing, 2008/01/30) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il told a visiting PRC delegation there was no change in his nation's stance on a deadlocked nuclear disarmament deal, PRC state media said. Kim told the delegation in Pyongyang that nations involved in the deal should fulfill their side of the bargain, the official Xinhua news agency said. But the reclusive leader added that the DPRK was willing to work with ally the PRC to try to push for its full implementation.

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2. Sino-DPRK Relations

Korea Herald ("N.K. LEADER MEETS SENIOR CHINESE OFFICIAL", 2008/01/30) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il met a senior official of the PRC Communist Party in Pyongyang, the DPRK's official news agency reported Wednesday. Kim conversed and had lunch with Wang Jiarui, director of the International Liaison Department of the PRC Communist Party Central Committee, "in a warm and friendly atmosphere," the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) said. Wang was expected to convey a "verbal message" from the PRC leader to invite Kim to the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics set to open in August. There was no mention of the letter in the news report, however.

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3. DPRK Relations with US, ROK

Xinhua ("DPRK: U.S., S. KOREA CONDUCT MORE THAN 160 AERIAL SPY MISSIONS IN JANUARY", Pyongyang, 2008/01/30) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday accused the US and ROK of committing more than 160 cases of aerial espionage against it in January, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. The U.S. forces perpetrated at least 90 cases of aerial espionage against the DPRK, and the ROK forces more than 70 cases, the official news agency said, quoting a military source.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua ("S KOREA, DPRK AGREE TO RUN CROSS-BORDER CARGO TRAINS WITH MORE FLEXIBILITY", Seoul, 2008/01/30) reported that the ROK and the DPRK agreed on Wednesday to run their cross-border cargo trains more flexibly to improve efficiency. The agreement was reached after a two-day working-level railway talks between Won In-hee, a bureau chief of the ROK's Construction and Transportation Ministry, and Pak Jong-song, a director of the DPRK's Railway Ministry, at DPRK's border city of Kaesong. "The two sides agreed on one cargo train service a day, as is now, but to improve the method of running it by cutting out empty train cars each time, starting Feb. 1," said the ROK's Unification Ministry.

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5. DPRK Telephone Service

Yonhap ("ARAB FIRM EARNS FIRST MOBILE LICENSE IN N.K.", Washington, 2008/01/30) reported that Orascom Telecom, the fourth-largest Arab phone operator based in Cairo, Egypt, announced Wednesday it earned the first commercial license to provide mobile telephone services in the DPRK. The license was given to a company subsidiary, CHEO Technology, of which the DPRK's state-owned Korea Post and Telecommunications Corporation owns 25 percent, Orascom said in a press release posted on its website.

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6. DPRK Economy

Yonhap ("N.K. LEADER INSPECTS COAL MINE: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/01/30) reported that in his latest public appearance since the start of the year, DPRK leader Kim Jong-il inspected a coal mine in the northern tip of the country, according to the DPRK's news media. "Kim Jong-il, general secretary of the Workers' Party Korea and chairman of the National Defense Commission, gave on-the-spot guidance to the March 5 Youth Mine," the North's Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. The coal mine is known to be in Junggang, Jagang Province. "He set forth tasks for systematically increasing the production at the mine and developing it under a long-term plan," the KCNA said.

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7. Disease in the DPRK

JoongAng Ilbo (Nam Jung-ho, "NORTH KOREAN TEAM GETS HELP IN THE U.S. FOR TREATING DISEASE", New York, 2008/01/30) reported that tuberculosis, practically non-existent in most developed countries, is the DPRK's biggest concern. Five public officials from the DPRK recently visited the United States to learn how to prevent and treat the disease, according to an official of The Korea Society, a New York-based nonprofit group that invited the North Koreans. The public health officials were taught how to prevent and treat tuberculosis, an infectious disease caused by bacteria. "We are interested in the efforts to dispel diseases, since they can not only serve

humanitarian purposes but also benefit U.S. medical research," said the representative of The Korea Society. "In North Korea, they can implement perfect control over their patients, making it easier to measure the effects of new medicines or new treatment."

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8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "500,000 EX-KATUSAS TO FORM ASSOCIATION", 2008/01/30) reported that former ROK reinforcement troops for the U.S. Army will launch next month an association for volunteer works to help strengthen the ROK-US alliance, the group said. The KATUSA Veteran's Association will hold an inaugural meeting Feb. 15, following a meeting between representatives of the group and Gen. B. B. Bell, commander of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), Feb. 11, the head of the association said. KATUSA stands for Korean Augmentation Troops to the U.S. Army. The program has since acted as a de facto liaison between the ROK and U.S. militaries. Currently, about 3,000 KATUSAs are serving in U.S. military units in the ROK.

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9. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Cho Jae-eun, "BILLIONS STAKED ON KOREA-EU FTA", 2008/01/30) reported that ROK exports to European Union nations will increase substantially if free trade negotiations between the ROK and the EU are finalized, according to a survey by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency released yesterday. The sixth round of talks that started Monday are currently at a standstill. Both sides are reluctant to budge on contentious issues such as auto-related technical standards. The survey of 395 EU buyers and 75 potential investors to Korea showed that 63 percent of EU buyers would increase their spending here or include Korea in their trade routes if negotiations bear fruit. In addition, 37 percent of EU investors surveyed said they would invest more in Korea if the Korea-EU FTA was completed.

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10. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN BOOSTS MISSILE DEFENCES IN TOKYO", Tokyo, 2008/01/30) reported that Japan deployed its third ballistic missile defence system in the Tokyo area as the pacifist nation beefs up its military capability in the face of the DPRK and PRC. Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) surface-to-air interceptors were installed at a Japanese air force base in Yokosuka, also home to a major US naval base, a defence ministry spokesman said. "The system was deployed today," he said, without disclosing details.

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11. ROK-Japan Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("ROK'S LEE TO MAKE APRIL VISIT TO JAPAN", 2008/01/30) reported that

the Japanese and ROK governments are in the final stage of coordinating a visit to Japan by ROK President-elect Lee Myung Bak in April, sources said. It would be the first visit to Japan by a ROK president in more than three years, since outgoing President Roh Moo-hyun came to Tokyo in December 2004. With Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda planning to attend Lee's inauguration ceremony in Seoul on Feb. 25, Lee's visit to Japan would mark the full resumption of more frequent high-level visits between the two nations.

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12. Japan-France Nuclear Power Cooperation

Yomiuri Shimbun (Michio Hayashi, "JAPAN, FRANCE EYE MORE COOPERATION ON N-POWER", Paris, 2008/01/30) reported that Japan and France are expected to agree to expand the scope of their cooperation in nuclear power utilization during a tour of Japan by French Prime Minister Francois Fillon in early April, according to diplomatic sources here. The two nations have a common interest in expanding the use of nuclear energy because they rely on other countries for carbon-based energy resources and find it increasingly difficult to secure a stable supply in the face of the hard-line resource-based diplomacy practiced by Russia and the PRC, the sources said. Japan wants to bolster its energy policy by promoting cooperation with the administration of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, which has been showing a great interest in selling French nuclear equipment and technology.

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13. Sino-Indian Relations

Xinhua ("INDIA'S AMBASSADOR: SINO-INDIAN TOURISM TO DEVELOP AT AMAZING SPEED", Kunming, 2008/01/30) reported that tourism between the PRC and India will "develop at an amazing speed", said Nirupama Rao, India's ambassador to the PRC, at the closing ceremony of the "China-India year of friendship through tourism-2007". Rao said that with the ending of the year 2007 came a new chapter of the communications between the two peoples. In 2007, a total of 70,000 PRC tourists visited India, a year-on-year 14 percent increase, and 460,000 Indian tourists came to the PRC, up by 48 percent.

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14. PRC Security

Kyodo ("CHINA BECOMES WORLD'S 3RD STRONGEST COUNTRY: THINK TANK", Beijing, 2008/01/30) reported that the PRC has risen to become the third strongest country in the world in terms of national power, following the US and Japan, according to a PRC government think tank report issued recently. In 2004, the latest available year, the PRC ranked third among the top 10, beating Germany, Britain, France, Russia, Norway, Canada and Australia, according to the "China Modernization Report 2008" issued by the China Academy of Sciences.

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15. US-PRC Economic Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US URGES CHINA TO STEP UP CURRENCY REFORM", Washington, 2008/01/30) reported that the US on Wednesday praised the PRC's efforts to allow its yuan currency to appreciate to better reflect the strength of the PRC economy, but said it was not moving fast enough. "The untold story of our approach to China's currency policy is that it is working, albeit more slowly than we would like," David McCormick, Treasury under secretary for international affairs, said. Since the yuan was given a broader trading range, the PRC currency has appreciated roughly 15 percent against the dollar and nine percent against other major currencies, he noted. "The foreign exchange market in China is also developing: daily RMB fluctuations are larger, the market is deeper, and we have seen rapid expansion in the use of foreign currency hedging instruments."

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16. PRC Media Control

The Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA STEPS UP INTERNET VIDEO CONTROL", Beijing, 2008/01/30) reported that the PRC will take a new step to tighten control of the Internet when rules go into force limiting online video-sharing to state companies. But regulators, wary of hurting a fast-growing industry, are expected to let private operators work around the restrictions. The rules are aimed at expanding a PRC censorship system that tries to block Internet use to spread dissent while promoting it for business and education. Communist leaders are especially anxious about unflattering video showing up online ahead of the Beijing Olympics in August, a major prestige project. "It seems to be that political content is the foremost concern," said Duncan Clark, chairman of BDA China Ltd., a research firm in Beijing.

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17. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

VOA News ("CHINA REPORTS BIRD FLU OUTBREAK IN TIBET", 2008/01/30) reported that the PRC agricultural authorities have reported an outbreak of bird flu among poultry in Tibet. The PRC's official Xinhua News Agency says the outbreak occurred in Tibet's Gongga county, which lies about 50 kilometers outside the capital, Lhasa. Xinhua says the outbreak, of the deadly H5N1 strain of the virus, had been suspected since January 25, and was confirmed Tuesday. The Ministry of Agriculture says efforts are underway to contain the outbreak.

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18. PRC Urban-Rural Divide

Xinhua ("CHINA TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE, RURAL AREAS", Beijing, 2008/01/30) reported that the PRC government said it would invest more funds in the countryside this year as part of its efforts to boost agricultural development and narrow the widening urban-rural gap. The decision was made when the country is confronted with difficulties in balancing the supply and demand of farm products, maintaining stable growth of grain production and farmers'

incomes, and narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas, said the first document of this year jointly issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the State Council. Governments above the county level must make sure that growth of their investment in agriculture would outpace that of their regular revenues every year, said the document, also called No. 1 central document.

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