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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "US WANTS 'FULL DISCLOSURE' FROM N KOREA", Seoul, 2008/01/08) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said Tuesday that the DPRK's failure to deliver a declaration divulging its nuclear programs by the end of 2007 is not a problem so long as it offers a full disclosure. Hill said that the problem was that the DPRK "is not quite ready to give us a complete listing of all their programs, all their facilities, all their nuclear material. That's the key issue." Hill said there was no misunderstanding on the part of Pyongyang about what is required. "They understand what we are looking for in a complete declaration."

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2. PRC on DPRK Stability

Yonhap ("CHINA HAS CONTINGENCY PLANS IF N.K. BECOMES UNSTABLE: U.S. THINK TANKS", Washington, 2008/01/06) reported that the PRC has contingency plans to dispatch troops to the DPRK should its neighbor become politically unstable, says a report by US think tanks based on interviews with PRC specialists in Pyongyang. The contingency plans outline three missions in the DPRK should the regime become unstable: humanitarian efforts to help refugees, peacekeeping activities such as serving as police, and the securing of nuclear weapons and fissile material as well as cleaning up any nuclear contamination. "China's strong preference is to receive formal authorization and coordinate closely with the U.N. in such an endeavor. However, if the international community did not react in a timely manner as the internal order in North Korea deteriorated rapidly, China would seek to take the initiative in restoring stability," it said. The report, titled "Keeping an Eye on an Unruly Neighbor," was commissioned by the U.S. Institute of Peace and written jointly by authors from the institute and the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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3. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo (Brian Lee, "MINISTRY BEGS TRANSITION TEAM TO KEEP IT ALIVE", 2008/01/07) reported that officials of the Unification Ministry pleaded for its survival yesterday in their briefing to the presidential transition team, citing the special relationship the ROK has with the DPRK, according to a spokesman for the team. "In evaluating the past five years, the ministry admitted

there had been no visible reforms in the North and that their policies had lacked effectiveness," said Lee Dong-gwan, the transition team's spokesman. Still, Lee said, the fate of the ministry has not been decided. Unification Ministry officials were tight-lipped yesterday, but one official, who declined to be named, said, "We have reached a certain cooperative level with the North and the ministry has stood at the forefront. There needs to be continuity."

Yonhap ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE HIT RECORD HIGH LAST YEAR", Seoul, 2008/01/07) reported that the two Koreas marked record cross-border trade in 2007 amid a growing mood for peace on the Korean Peninsula, the Unification Ministry said. Bilateral trade jumped 33 percent to US\$1.79 billion last year from \$1.35 billion a year earlier, according to the the ministry. "The rise mainly comes from a 52 percent increase in the trade of minerals and marine products," the ministry said in a press release. It added the amount of raw materials and goods shipped into and from the Kaesong industrial complex just north of the Inter-Korean border increased by 48 percent year-on-year. Exchanges in non-commercial areas, however, dropped by 13 percent, according to the ministry.

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4. DPRK Energy

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA'S KIM INSPECTS POWER PLANT", Seoul, 2008/01/06) reported that the DPRK's reclusive leader Kim Jong-Il inspected construction work on a hydro-electric power plant in his first public event of the new year, according to state media. The Korean Central News Agency said Kim inspected the plant at Ryesonggang, near the border city of Kaesong, "to encourage the builders there in the New Year's drive." Kim, who usually shuns publicity, has made a limited number of on-the-spot inspections to military units, farms and industrial sites to help boost morale and strengthen his grip on power.

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5. Japanese Sanctions on the DPRK

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("3 ARRESTED OVER IMPORTING NORTH KOREAN SEA URCHINS", 2008/01/07) reported that the Metropolitan Police Department arrested three men on suspicion of illegally importing DPRK sea urchins by disguising them as a product originating from the PRC. According to the investigators, the suspects are believed to have imported several hundred kilograms of DPRK sea urchins in three separate deals in April last year by disguising them as a product of the PRC and without obtaining authorization from the Economy, Industry and Trade Minister. They allegedly took the sea urchins collected in DPRK to a factory in Dandong in the PRC's Liaoning Province, where it was salted. They were able to get it through the necessary customs procedures by submitting the certificate.

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6. Japan-India Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, INDIA TO SIGN CURRENCY SWAP DEAL: OFFICIAL", Tokyo, 2008/01/05) reported that Japan and India are set to sign a currency swap deal totaling six billion dollars to guard against a possible financial crisis, a Japanese official said. Finance Minister

Fukushiro Nukaga said the finance ministry official, who declined to be named. Under the deal, the two governments will supply each other with up to three billion dollars from their foreign currency reserves for possible market intervention in the event of financial turmoil.

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7. Japan Politics

Agence France-Presse ("NEW POLL SPELLS MORE BAD NEWS FOR JAPAN GOVERNMENT", Tokyo, 2008/01/06) reported that almost half of Japanese voters now support the main opposition Democratic Party, according to a new poll Sunday that appears to confirm disenchantment with Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's government. Some 46 percent of those questioned for the survey in the Mainichi Shimbun newspaper said that they wanted the Democratic Party to win the next general elections. It indicates lingering public anger at the ruling Liberal Democratic Party amid widening scandals over mismanagement of state pensions and corruption at the defence ministry, the paper said.

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8. Sino-Japanese Joint History Project

China Daily (Qin Jize, "CHINA-JAPAN HISTORIANS MEET", 2008/01/07) reported that PRC and Japanese academics came together for the third time in a series of meetings aimed at bridging differences over interpretations of history, amid a warming of relations between the two countries. The two-day panel over the weekend, which concluded Sunday, saw more than 30 scholars from the China-Japan Joint History Research Committee and other academic circles meeting in the capital. Both PRC and Japanese scholars agreed that historians' responsibilities include conducting in-depth research that take into account the historical background of Asia and the world at large.

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9. PRC One Child Policy

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "500 CHINESE EXPELLED FROM PARTY FOR VIOLATING 'ONE-CHILD' POLICY", Beijing, 2008/01/07) reported that officials in central Hubei province have expelled 500 people from the Communist Party for violating the PRC's "one-child" family planning policy, state media reports said. Out of 93,084 people who had more children than allowed last year, 1,678 were officials or party members, the New China News Agency reported. Among the violators were seven national and local legislators or political advisers, who were punished by being stripped of their political status. Another 395 offenders lost their jobs. At the same time, in an acknowledgment that coercive policies have not worked, officials have begun to turn to incentives, such as pensions for poor farmers who have only one child or two girls.

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10. PRC Healthcare

BBC News (Shirong Chen , "CHINA UNVEILS HEALTHCARE SCHEME", 2008/01/07) reported that the PRC's health minister has announced an ambitious programme to provide basic healthcare for every citizen in the world's most populous nation. Chen Zhu said the Healthy China 2020 programme would provide a universal national health service and promote equal access to public services. With the ambitious title of Healthy China 2020, the programme has multiple goals, including improving life expectancy, which this year has reached 73 years. It will be a massive challenge for the government, but the Health Ministry has been tasked to fill what the Health Minister called "a significant gap between the Party requirements and people's new expectations".

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11. PRC Executions

The Los Angeles Times (John M. Glionna, "CHINA SHOWS CAUTION ON EXECUTIONS", Beijing, 2008/01/07) reported that facing pressure before the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, the PRC reportedly has scaled back the pace of executions. Although the government considers the number a state secret, the PRC executed 1,051 people in 2006, accounting for two-thirds of the 1,591 put to death worldwide that year, according to statistics from Amnesty International, often based on media reports. That represented a 40% drop from the PRC's recorded total of 1,770 the previous year. Yet because of state secrecy, some activists believe that the number of executions could be as high as 10,000 to 15,000 a year.

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II. ROK Report

12. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News (Cho Joon-hyung, "PROMISES FROM 2007 SUMMIT TO BE RECONSIDERED", Seoul, 2008/01/07) reported that president-elect Lee Myung-bak's transition team had decided to reconsider the issues on inter-Korean economic cooperation that had been dealt during 2007 inter-Korean summit before they are implemented. The team announced that even though they would continue to support humanitarian cooperation issues, most of the economic issues are going to be put into practice discriminatingly. Government officials analyzed that Lee is to reconsider the issues that require huge financial support in accordance with the DPRK's denuclearization process. They also stated that Lee's position is not different from the current government, which is to develop inter-Korean relationship along with the denuclearization of the DPRK.

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13. Lee Myung-bak's DPRK policy

Yonhap News ("NADUL ISLAND PROJECT EASIER THAN DIGGING CANAL IF DPRK COLLABORATES", Seoul, 2008/01/08) reported that the ROK Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security's professor Jeon Bong-geun said that one of President-elect Lee Myung-bak's main pledges, namely the Nadul island project, will be able to promoted easily if the DPRK agrees to it

and environmental problems are solved smoothly. The so-called 'Nadul island project' is to create an artificial island in Kanghwa, which is to be used as an inter-Korean economic cooperation complex. Jeon noted that since the area is where the armies of the two Koreas made conflict against one another often, it will make the issue a lot easier if the West Sea peace area is settled.

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14. ROK Unification Ministry

Yonhap News ("UNIFICATION MINISTRY REPORT ON THE OPERATION, PASSABLE", Seoul, 2008/01/08) said that the ROK unification ministry's report on its operations was fairly passable. The ministry was concerned about the report which was given to president-elect Lee Myung-bak. However, regarding the fact that they would reconsider several issues which had been agreed in the 2007 inter-Korean summit such as repairing railroads, settling the West Sea peace area, and constructing a shipbuilding complex, some worry that it may seem as if the government is trying to overthrow some issues. One government official analyzed that there would not be much change in the basic discipline of the policy toward the DPRK, which is to put the issues into practice.

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