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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Korea Herald ("U.S. NOT SURE IF N. KOREA BEGAN REMOVING SEALS ON REACTOR: STATE DEPT.", 2008/09/09) reported that the US State Department said it cannot confirm reports that the DPRK began removing seals on its nuclear reactor in a prelude to reactivating the plant, which had been disabled under a multilateral nuclear deal, reported Yonhap News Agency. "The assessment that we have right now -- and admittedly it's imperfect -- is that they are just taking some of those steps like taking some of the equipment out of storage, where it had been, perhaps taking off some of those seals, which I can't confirm," spokesman Sean McCormack said. "That's the prism through which you should see this right now."

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2. Six Party Talks

Xinhua News ("CHINA CALLS ON SIX-PARTY TALKS TO PROCEED "ON RIGHT TRACK" ", Beijing, 2008/09/09) reported that the PRC on Tuesday urged relevant parties to work together to ensure the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue proceed on the right track. "As the host of the six-party talks, China has been keeping close contact and coordination with other parties on related

issues," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said here at a regular briefing. Jiang also voiced the hope of parties involved to maintain contact and show flexibility for a proper solution to the relevant problem at an early date.

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3. DPRK Anniversary

Yonhap News (Shim Sun-ah, "N. KOREA CELEBRATES 60TH ANNIVERSARY WITH CALL FOR UNITY, STRONGER MILITARY", Seoul, 2008/09/09) reported that the DPRK celebrated its 60th founding anniversary Tuesday with a call for unity and a stronger military amid a deadlock over its nuclear programs. The DPRK was expected to hold a military parade in its capital of Pyongyang, reportedly the largest ever in terms of number of troops and military hardware on display, according to ROK military officials.

The Associated Press (Jon Herskovitz and Jack Kim, "ABSENCE PROMPTS DOUBT OVER N.KOREAN LEADER'S HEALTH ", Seoul, 2008/09/09) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il failed to appear at a triumphal military parade on Tuesday celebrating his state's 60th birthday, and a U.S. intelligence official said he may have suffered a stroke. "It does appear that Kim Jong-il has suffered a health setback, potentially a stroke," the U.S. intelligence official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. She said there have been no signs of a change in governing power and that assessing whether Kim was still capable of governing would "call for a lot of speculation."

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4. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("PYONGYANG PUBLICIZES ECONOMIC SITUATION ON 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DPRK ", 2008/09/09) reported that in order to inform the DPRK public of the current economic situation on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the DPRK (Sept. 9), state-run media outlets are reporting on the construction or expansion of factories and facilities in each region of the country. According to reports three to four production facilities per month began operations through July, and seven facilities opened last month. The news is also reporting that six new facilities have been completed or have begun operations during what little time has passed this month.

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5. ROK Food Aid to the DPRK

Donga Ilbo ("GOV`T MULLS $20 MLN IN FOOD AID TO N.KOREA", 2008/09/09) reported that the Unification Ministry is considering offering 20 million US dollars to the World Food Program to send food aid to the DPRK. The administration and the ruling Grand National Party have approved sending aid to the DPRK. Eight or nine ROK humanitarian groups will also be allowed to visit the DPRK after this month. The ministry is listening to the opinions of related organizations.

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6. Former Attempted Assassin Return to ROK

Seoul (Hyung-jin Kim, "TAEKWONDO MASTER RETURNS HOME TO SOUTH KOREA", Seoul, 2008/09/08) reported that Choi Jung-hwa, taekwondo master who has acknowledged taking part in a failed plot to assassinate former ROK president Chun Doo-hwan at the direction of the DPRK returned home to the ROK on Monday after decades overseas. Choi was expected to be cleared of most of the allegations against him because he voluntarily returned and the statue of limitations on many of them have expired, said senior prosecutor Oh Se-in. Choi hired two agents to shoot Chun during a 1982 visit to Canada, according to Oh Chang-jin, an aide to Choi. The plot, however, was detected and Choi went into hiding in Eastern Europe and the DPRK. "I was unintentionally involved", Choi told a news conference Monday. "I think that's because of my political naivety or spirit of adventure. I made such a mistake due to this combination of factors."

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7. DPRK-Pakistani Relations

Xinhua News ("DPRK TO BOOST RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN", 2008/09/09) reported that the DPRK will strengthen friendly and cooperative relations with Pakistan, the official KCNA news agency quoted a top DPRK legislator as saying. Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, sent a congratulatory message to Asif Ali Zardari, who was elected Pakistani president. The two countries maintained a traditional relationship and have cooperated in various fields.

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8. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Yonhap News (Yoo Cheong-mo, "LEE LASHES OUT AT JAPAN'S INTENTION TOWARD DOKDO ", 2008/09/09) reported that President Lee Myung-bak on Tuesday vowed to take "quiet but strong" measures to thwart Japan's attempt to turn the South Korean islets of Dokdo into an area of international territorial dispute. "Dokdo is obviously part of South Korean territory historically and by international law. Japan's real intention is to make Dokdo an internationally disputed territory," Lee said in a town hall meeting televised live nationwide.

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9. US-ROK Security Alliance

Yonhap News ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO HOLD TALKS AHEAD OF DEFENSE CHIEFS MEETING ", Seoul, 2008/09/09) reported that the ROK and the US will hold talks here later this week to set the agenda for an upcoming regular meeting of their defense chiefs, the ROK's Defense Ministry said. The 19th Security Policy Initiative (SPI), to be held here Wednesday, will involve the ROK's Deputy Defense Minister for Policy Jeon Jei-guk and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia David Sedney, the ministry said. "The sides will discuss various issues of mutual concern, but the main objective of this week's meeting will be to set the agenda for the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM)," the annual military talks that involve the countries' defense chiefs, ministry officials said.

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10. US-ROK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR TO FOCUS ON THREE KEY AREAS", 2008/09/09) reported that the incoming US ambassador to the ROK, Kathleen Stephens, said Monday she will focus on helping resolve the DPRK nuclear issue, enhancing the bilateral security alliance and ratification of a free trade deal. In a ceremony at the Department of State to take oath as the first U.S. woman ambassador to the ROK, Stephens said, “The time is right to make the changes in our security alliance that reflect today’s Korea and today’s America, and the ways in which we can work together to build a safer and better world,” she said.

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11. Russo-ROK Relations

Xinhua News ("S KOREA, RUSSIA TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN SEOUL ", 2008/09/08) reported that ROK and Russian officials will discuss bilateral economic cooperation, including energy and space development programs, in Seoul in late September, the ROK's Yonhap News Agency said. The two sides will hold their ninth joint economic committee meeting in Seoul from Sept. 22 to Sept. 23 ahead of a scheduled summit between ROK and Russian leaders, it said. The two sides will discuss overall economic cooperation in the development of the Russian Far East and Siberia, cooperation in space development, energy and transportation issues, and the automobile, construction, agriculture and fisheries industries.

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12. Comfort Women Issue

Kyodo News ("CENOTAPH UNVEILED FOR WARTIME SEX SLAVES ON MIYAKO ISLAND", Naha, 2008/09/09) reported that about 100 people from Japan and the ROK attended the unveiling Sunday of a cenotaph commemorating wartime sex slaves mainly from the Korean Peninsula forced to serve Japanese soldiers on Okinawa's Miyako Island. The inscription in English reads, "We remember the suffering of the individual women who were subjected to sexual violence by the Japanese military, lament the victims of wartime sexual violence throughout the entire world, pray for a peaceful world without any more war."

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13. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Refueling Mission

Kyodo News ("RULING COALITION PANEL OKS EXTENSION OF ANTITERRORISM MISSION ", Tokyo, 2008/09/09) reported that a joint panel of the ruling coalition agreed Tuesday to back a bill to extend the temporary law authorizing the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force's controversial refueling mission in the Indian Ocean until January 2010, panel members said. The members also said the dominant Liberal Democratic Party is expected to formally approve the government-proposed bill Thursday, a move which will pave the way for the Cabinet to endorse it Sept. 19 at the

earliest to continue the refueling mission for the U.S.-led antiterrorism operations in and around Afghanistan.

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14. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("DIET SET TO BE DISSOLVED FOR SNAP NOVEMBER POLL", 2008/09/09) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's successor will almost certainly dissolve the Lower House in late September or early October for a snap election in November, according to senior ruling coalition lawmakers. They said the most likely election date will be Nov. 2 or Nov. 9. The ruling Liberal Democratic Party's new leader will probably be elected prime minister on Sept. 24, when the extraordinary Diet session is expected to open, coalition leaders indicated.

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15. Sino-Japanese Relations

The Japan Times (Jun Hongo, "JAPANESE AND CHINESE DIFFER ON DIPLOMATIC TIES ", 2008/09/09) reported that more than 80 percent of Chinese are optimistic about future ties with Japan, while only 32 percent of Japanese feel likewise, a bilateral survey released Monday shows. On other matters, 95 percent of the survey's Japanese respondents cited worries over the safety of food imported from the PRC. The fourth annual study, conducted by Japanese nonprofit organization Genron NPO and the China Daily, covered 1,000 Japanese and 1,557 Chinese, all over 18 years old, between June and July.

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16. Japan SDF Overseas Operations

Xinhua News ("JAPAN'S DEFENSE WHITE PAPER CALLS FOR PERMANENT LAW ON SDF OVERSEAS DISPATCH", 2008/09/09) reported that the Japanese government approved at a cabinet meeting the 2008 defense white paper, which stresses the necessity to constitute a permanent law enabling the overseas dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). It was the first time for the annual defense paper to clearly point out the controversial topic. It is the most optimal choice for Japan to constitute a permanent law on sending the SDF abroad in order to play the nation's role of peace and cooperation, the paper says.

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17. PRC Media

The Associated Press (Anita Chang, "CHINA'S RELAXED REPORTING RULES SET TO EXPIRE ", 2008/09/09) reported that the PRC's relaxed rules for foreign journalists that were enacted before the Beijing Olympics will expire next month, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday. The PRC loosened its decades-old controls on foreign journalists — including requiring government permission for all interviews and travel — at the beginning of 2007. It was not known what kinds of regulations would

replace the rules that expire Oct 17.

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18. Sino-Indian Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA-INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: CHINESE FM", New Delhi, 2008/09/09) reported that the PRC-India relationship stands at a new starting point, the two should view and approach relations from a strategic and long-term perspective and keep moving forward their partnership to benefit the two countries and peoples, visiting PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said. Yang said the PRC and India are the two biggest developing countries in the world. He quoted PRC President Hu Jintao as saying that the PRC-India friendship not only serves the interest of both countries but also benefits Asia and the world at large.

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19. Sino-Pakistani Relations

Times of India ("CHINA-PAK NUCLEAR DEAL NOT POSSIBLE: INDIA", 2008/09/09) reported that amidst reports that Asif Ali Zardari, the president-elect of Pakistan, will visit the PRC next week to negotiate a nuclear deal similar to the one between India and the US, govt sources have said that India is confident that the Sino-Pak deal will not happen. On Monday, a Pakistan official on condition of anonymity said, "Pakistan is already in touch with China for the nuclear deal to meet its energy crisis and the talks would start during Zardari's visit."

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20. Sino-Russian Energy Cooperation

RIA Novosti ("CNPC PRESSES FOR GAS SUPPLY TALKS WITH RUSSIA", Irkutsk, 2008/09/09) reported that CNPC has proposed speeding up talks with Russia on natural gas supplies, a senior official at the PRC's national oil and gas company said at an East Siberian economic forum. Gazprom and CNPC signed a protocol on Russian natural gas supplies to the PRC in 2006. According to the Russian energy giant, feasibility studies for possible supply routes are currently being conducted, and a decision has been made to start discussing investment. Commercial talks have also started.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

Beijing News ("GOVERNMENT OF BEIJING'S CHAOYANG DISTRICT APOLOGIZES FOR GARBAGE SMELL", 2008/09/08) reported that yesterday, a civil administration director of the government of Beijing's Chaoyang District apologized to local residents for the smell of Gao'an village's sanitary

landfill at a news release conference. The government promised to effectively solve the problem in 20 days. According to related directors, the original treatment capacity of Gao'an village's sanitary landfill is 1000 tons per day, but with the development of the city, the quantity of refuse treatment is sharply increasing. Since last year, the refuse treatment quantity of Gao'an sanitary landfill has reached 3400-3700 tons per day. This is the main reason for the smell. For quickly solving the smell pollution problem, the government decides to invest another 91 million yuan.

Xinhua Net (Wei Mengjia, "HUBEI CARRIES OUT ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION LIABILITY INSURANCE", 2008/09/05) reported that recently, Hubei provincial environmental protection bureau and the Hubei Branch of the PRC Insurance Regulatory Commission jointly decided to put environmental pollution liability insurance into full use the next year. This insurance will cover all the important industries and enterprises of the province. Now the environmental bureaus are investigating the enterprises' loss of all kinds of environmental pollution issues during the last three years and positively guiding the introduction of insurance system for the enterprises.

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22. PRC Infrastructure

China Youth ("TRAFFIC JAM CAN'T BE SOLVED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER", 2008/09/05) reported that in order to solve the traffic problems during the Olympics Games, the government adopted an executive mandatory approach to limit travel according to the vehicles' license number. Actually, this was quite effective and the traffic problems in Beijing during the Olympic Games were mitigated. But can this measure last for long? These days this issue has caused a lot of discussion. However these executive orders cannot solve the root of traffic problems. Optimizing the public transport services may be the most effective measure to solve traffic problems.

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III. ROK Report

23. Inter-Korea Relations

Chung Se-hyun ("MISUNDERSTANDINGS UPON DPRK FOOD AID", 2008/09/09) said in a column that according to Hartmut Koschyk, a German member of parliament, Kim Yong-nam, the second highest leader of the DPRK, said that the ROK should act first if they want to improve the inter-Korean relationship. The ROK take actions to support the 6.15 and 10.4 agreements. The ROK can send a positive and strong messages toward the DPRK through providing direct food support, rather than via the World Food Program.

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24. Separated Families

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("SEPARATED FAMILIES REMAIN APART DUE TO POLITICS", 2008/09/09)

reported that it became more difficult for separated families to expect meeting each other even during Chuseok, which used to be a traditional reunion day for them along with the Lunar New year. The responsibility is on both the ROK and the DPRK, who have both let the issue of reunions between separation familiy members dissolve into a political struggle. The ROK must find ways to break the ice on the peninsula to solve the problem.

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25. DPRK Anniversary

Kookmin Ilbo ("DPRK FOUNDATION 60 YEARS", 2008/09/09) reported that the DPRK is going to hold a flourishing celebration ceremony to honor the 60th anniversary of its foundation. What is more urgent for the DPRK is to minimize the difficulties their people are going through. They must abandon weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons. Even though the DPRK might be concerned that their regime will collapse, they must realize that the possibilities of a collapse will increase if they maintain the current regime which only ignores the difficulties their people are going through.

Segye Ilbo ("DPRK HOLDS NATIONAL 'PARTY' WHILE PEOPLE STARVE", 2008/09/09) reported that the US's fourth tranche of food aid, consisting of 24,500 tons of corn, has arrived in the DPRK and has been distributed to the people. Despite the hardship North Koreans are going through, it is known that Pyongyang will hold a big party to celebrate '9.9 foundation' day. It is ridiculous of the DPRK regime to hold such a fancy party without being concerned about their people who are suffering from starvation.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org