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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Peace and Security Working Group

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA PROPOSES INFORMAL, OPEN TALKS ON N. KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2007-08-20) reported that the working group on peace and security in Northeast Asia will run until Tuesday, chaired by Russia. Russia believes that working group talks to begin in Moscow on Monday should enable all sides to freely put forward ideas, a senior Foreign Ministry official said. "We believe that this will be a 'brainstorming' session," said Vladimir Rakhmanin, ambassador at large who will represent Russia at the meeting.

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2. DPRK Flood

Agence France-Presse ("BODIES FROM NORTH KOREA RECOVERED FROM RIVER IN SOUTH ", 2007-08-20) reported that ROK officials said they had in the past week recovered at least 10 bodies, believed to be victims of devastating floods in DPRK, from a river that crosses the border. The bodies -- one on Monday, five on Wednesday, three on Friday, one on Saturday -- were recovered from Imjin River which runs across the border, the South's Dongducheon fire station rescue team said. UN agencies said on Friday that half of the country's main health centers have been submerged by floods and warned that the situation could deteriorate unless aid arrives rapidly.

(return to top) Yonhap ("AT LEAST 12 COUNTRIES OFFER HELP TO FLOOD-HIT N. KOREA: U.N.", 2007-08-18) reported that at least 12 nations have offered or begun to provide relief aid for the DPRK hit with severe flooding. Margarita Walstrom, a U.N. special envoy for relief aid, said U.N. members, including ROK, Japan, the United States, Russia, Italy and Finland, have pledged financial aid. The U.S. government is giving US$100,000 humanitarian relief through non-governmental organizations. The two Koreas on Saturday agreed to reschedule the inter-Korean summit slated for late August in Pyongyang to Oct. 2-4 after the DPRK requested a delay because of its extensive flood damage. (return to top)

3. UNDP DPRK Investigation

Associated Press ("U.N. ETHICS CHIEF: EVIDENCE SUPPORTS PROBE INTO FORMER U.N. EMPLOYEE'S CLAIMS OF RETALIATION", 2007-08-20) reported that the U.N. ethics chief said there was enough initial evidence to support an investigation into claims by a former U.N. employee that he lost his job in retaliation for concerns he raised about his agency's work in the DPRK. The head of the U.N. Ethics Office, Robert Benson, said in the confidential letter obtained Monday by The Associated Press, however, that his review of the case had turned up enough initial evidence of possible retaliation to warrant a further investigation.

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4. DPRK Refugee-Defectors

Reuters ("ACTIVISTS EYE PRECEDENT AS CHINA FREES 6 N.KOREANS", 2007-08-20) reported that two North Korean teenage boys and four women, arrested in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang last December after a failed asylum bid at the U.S. consulate, were released, raising hopes that Beijing might end a forced repatriation policy.

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5. ROK Hostages

Aljazeera ("SOUTH KOREAN HOSTAGE TALKS 'FAIL'", 2007-08-18) reported that Taliban officials have said they are deciding what to do with 19 captured aid workers after talks with an ROK delegation in southern Afghanistan ended unsuccessfully. On Monday, two female hostages who had fallen ill were released in what the Taliban called "a gesture of goodwill" after face-to-face talks with an ROK delegation in Ghazni province.

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6. ROK Presidential Race

International Herald Tribune ("FORMER SEOUL MAYOR WINS SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION", 2007-08-20) reported that Lee Myung Bak, a former Seoul mayor long known as the "hero of South Korean salarymen" because of his rise from poverty to the top of the Hyundai conglomerate, won the presidential nomination of the country's most popular political party. In the main opposition Grand National Party's primary, Lee, 65, beat his rival Park Geun Hye by a marrow margin of 1.5 percentage points. Park, daughter of the late president and military strongman Park Chung Hee, had sought to become the country's first female president. The victory made Lee a clear front-runner for the Dec. 19 election to succeed the left-leaning President Roh Moo Hyun.

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7. PRC Nuclear Power Plants

Xinhua ("CHINA BEGINS CONSTRUCTION OF LIAONING HONGYAN RIVER NUCLEAR PLANT", 2007-08-19) reported that construction began on the Hongyan River nuclear power project in northeastern China's Liaoning province. The plant, which will be the first to be built in the northeast, uses the homegrown CPR1000 reactor technology and will consist of four 1,000-megawatt (MW) units once it is completed. The Guangdong Nuclear Power Corporation is building the project together with the China Power Investment Corporation. Total investment is expected to reach 48.6 bln yuan. The PRC already has nine reactors in operation, located in east Jiangsu province and southeast Guangdong, but the country needs to complete at least two units every year if it is to meet its target of 40,000 MW of nuclear capacity by 2020.

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8. PRC-Kazakhstan Pipeline

Associated Press ("CHINA, KAZAKHSTAN AGREE TO LINK PIPE TO CASPIAN", 2007-08-19) reported that the PRC and Kazakhstan agreed Saturday to expand an oil pipeline that will link the PRC to the Caspian Sea, giving Beijing direct access to an energy-rich region controlled by Kazakhstan.

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9. PRC Typhoon

Xinhua ("TYPHOON SEPAT SWEEPS NW AFTER KILLING 19 IN SE CHINA", 2007-08-20) reported that a typhoon swept northwestward into east China's Jiangxi Province, leaving a trail of chaos in

which at least 19 people died in the southeastern provinces of Fujian and Zhejiang. The typhoon Sepat affected 1575,400 people and caused the evacuation of 732,600 people in Fujian Province until Sunday. By 8:00 a.m. Monday, the worst-hit county of Yongfeng had received 327 mm of rain.

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10. PRC Safety Standards

Associated Press ("CHINA TV AIRS SHOWS DEFENDING PRODUCTS", 2007-08-20) reported that PRC China launched a new campaign to restore international trust in its products with a weeklong television series defending the country's safety standards. Li Changjiang, director of the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, said on the 90-minute segment, that his department was doing everything possible to monitor product quality, especially after recalls of millions of toys by Mattel Inc., the world's biggest toy maker, because of lead paint and small magnets that can be swallowed by children.

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11. PRC Pig Disease Outbreak

Xinhua ("BLUE-EAR PIG DISEASE UNDER "PRELIMINARY CONTROL"", 2007-08-20) reported that blue-ear pig disease has been brought under "preliminary control" through vaccinations and mass culls of infected pigs. According to the PRC's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), as of August 19, the disease had infected 257,000 pigs in 26 Chinese provinces, of which 68,000 died and 175,000 were destroyed. The highly pathogenic disease, also known as Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome, can be fatal for pigs, but the vaccinated pigs will no longer be infected by the disease, according to Jia Youling, PRC's chief veterinary officer.

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12. Russia on Missile Over Georgia

Reuters ("RUSSIA DISAPPOINTED WITH U.S. OVER GEORGIA MISSILE", 2007-08-20) reported that Russia said on Monday it was disappointed with the United States and other countries for their "haste" in taking Georgia's side in a row over a missile dropped on Georgian soil.

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