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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Summit

The Korea Times ("'SECOND S-N SUMMIT POSSIBLE THIS YEAR'", 2006-02-06) reported that Lee Jong-seok, ROK's unification minister-nominee, said Monday he sees a summit between President Roh Moo-hyun and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il possibly taking place within the year. "President Roh Moo-hyun already said that he'd like to hold the South-North summit regardless of timing and place," Lee said. "But we're also in the opinion that the summit, if held, needs to be a meaningful one rather than just a handshaking one."

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2. ROK on DPRK Government

Washington Post ("N.KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS CAN WAIT TILL PEACE: SOUTH AIDE", 2006-02-06) reported that the ROK's nominee for the top policy maker job on the DPRK ventured into taboo territory on Monday by stating that leader Kim Jong-il was a dictator. Lee Jong-seok, the nominee for unification minister, acknowledged criticism against Kim's government during a parliamentary hearing. Lee did say he would stick to Seoul's line of not pressing Pyongyang on its human rights record for now.

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3. DPRK on Joint US-ROK Military Exercises

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA URGES SOUTH KOREA TO STOP MILITARY EXERCISES WITH US", 2006-02-06) reported that the DPRK warned that there would no true progress in inter-Korean relations unless the ROK stopped all joint military exercises with the US. "The South Korean authorities should unconditionally stop all the joint military exercises with outside forces which would bring dark clouds of a nuclear war if they truly desire progress in the north-south relations and peace on the Korean Peninsula," it said in a statement published by the KCNA news agency.

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4. DPRK Abduction

Daily Yomiuri ("KIM JONG IL DIRECTLY TIED TO ABDUCTION / ROK DOCUMENTS SAY HE INSTRUCTED SPY TO KIDNAP JAPANESE MAN, STEAL HIS IDENTITY", 2006-02-04) reported that Sin Gwang Su, a DPR Korean agent internationally wanted for the 1980 abduction of Japanese national Tadaaki Hara, told RO Korean investigative authorities in 1985 that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il personally instructed him to kidnap a Japanese man, The Yomiuri Shimbun has learned. According to documents prepared by ROK's Agency for National Security and Planning (the current National Intelligence Service), when Sin was arrested in ROK in 1985, he told the ANSP that in 1980 he had been instructed by Kim, who was then secretary general of the Workers' Party of Korea, to kidnap a Japanese man and steal his identity.

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5. DPRK-Japanese Bilateral Talks

Reuters ("JAPAN SAYS ABDUCTION ROW KEY TO NORTH KOREA TIES ", 2006-02-06) reported that according to Japan, talks on normalizing diplomatic relations between Japan and the DPRK hinge on resolving a dispute over Pyongyang's abductions of Japanese citizens. "With regards to the normalization of ties, this will be difficult if the issue of abductees is not solved," Japan's chief negotiator, Koichi Haraguchi, told reporters. "With regards for compensating for the past, this can only be discussed within the framework of normalization of diplomatic ties between the two countries," he said.

(return to top) Manichi Times ("NORTH KOREA, JAPAN FOCUS ON DIPLOMATIC TIES DESPITE LITTLE PROGRESS ON ABDUCTIONS", 2006-02-06) reported that the DPRK and Japanese envoys began talks on forging possible diplomatic ties despite making little progress in weekend meetings on the contentious issue of Pyongyang's abductions of Japanese nationals. Envoys from the two sides opened the four-day talks Saturday at a hotel in the PRC capital in the first high-level contact in three years aimed at normalizing relations. The DPRK declared after Sunday's session that differences of opinion remained on kidnappings. Delegates said Monday's session would address economic cooperation, the status of DPR Koreans living in Japan and the return of cultural relics, part of reparations demanded by Pyongyang for Japan's colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula in 1910-45. (return to top)

6. DPRK-Indonesian Relations

The Korea Times ("INDONESIAN SPECIAL ENVOY IN N. KOREA", 2006-02-05) reported that a special envoy to Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono arrived in the DPRK on Saturday and met with the country's foreign minister, the DPRK media reported. Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the Indonesian official, Nana Sutrena, paid a courtesy call on the DPRK's foreign minister, Paek Nam-sun, but gave no further details.

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7. USFK Troop Repositioning

Chosun Ilbo ("MOVING U.S. BASE 'MORE EXPENSIVE THAN PLANNED'", 2006-02-06) reported that the ROK will have to spend up to US$5.5 billion on the relocation of the U.S. Forces Korea's Yongsan base, unification minister-designate Lee Jong-seok said Monday. That is up to $2.5 billion more than the W3-5 billion originally estimated when Seoul and Washington agreed to move the base in July 2004.

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8. ROK-Japanese Relations

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN DROPS VISA REQUIREMENT FOR S KOREAN TOURISTS", 2006-0--06) reported that Japan said Monday it will drop its visa requirement for ROK tourists beginning in March in the hope of increasing exchanges and improving sour relations. The decision will allow ROK tourists to stay in Japan for up to 90 days without a visa.

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9. Sino-Japanese Relations

BBC News ("JAPAN, CHINA TO RESUME DIALOGUE", 2006-02-06) reported that the PRC and Japan are to resume routine talks amid continuing diplomatic tension over several issues, including a controversial war shrine in Tokyo. The talks are set to take place on Friday and Saturday, in Japan.

(return to top) The Associated Press ("CHINA CRITICIZES JAPANESE COMMENT ", 2006-02-06) reported that the PRC accused Japan's foreign minister of glorifying aggression after he said Tokyo's 50-year colonial rule over Taiwan was responsible for the high education standards there. A Taiwanese Cabinet minister rejected Aso's claim that its educational success was linked to Japanese rule, saying it was instead the result of heavy spending on schooling and a traditional emphasis on learning. (return to top)

10. PRC-US Relations

Reuters ("PENTAGON PLANS NEW ARMS TO MEET RIVALS LIKE CHINA ", 2006-02-06) reported that the US will build new long-range weapons in a hedge against potential rivals like the PRC the Pentagon said in a new strategic blueprint on Friday. The plan called for increasing the number of aircraft carriers in the Pacific to five or six and maintaining 60 percent of Navy submarines there, while doubling to two the number of attack submarines bought annually by 2012.

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11. Japan Iraq Pullout

Reuters ("JAPAN TO PULL TROOPS FROM IRAQ "IN MONTHS" ", 2006-02-06) reported that Japan will pull its troops from Iraq "within several months," a Japanese official was quoted as saying on Saturday, marking the first time a government figure has publicly referred to an early withdrawal. "The exit from Iraq is this year's biggest theme," Kyodo news agency quoted Assistant Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Kyoji Yanagisawa as saying in a speech in Tokyo. "At any rate, the GSDF will withdraw within several months," he said.

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12. PRC Energy Supply

The Associated Press ("OIL-HUNTING CHINA AIMS TO CURB APPETITE ", 2006-02-06) reported that just days before a PRC firm announced a $2.3 billion investment in a Nigerian oil field last month, President Hu Jintao warned that the PRC has to rein in surging energy use that has made it one of the world's biggest oil importers. While striving to secure foreign oil and gas to fuel sizzling economic growth of more than 9 percent a year, it is struggling to limit soaring reliance on outside supplies by increasing nuclear and hydroelectric power.

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13. PRC Income Disparity

Xinhua ("CHINA'S URBAN INCOME GAP WIDENS TO ALARMING LEVEL ", 2006-02-06) reported that the State Development and Reform Commission (SDRC) said in a report issued on Sunday that the PRC's urban income gap between rich and poor has widened to an alarming and unreasonable

level. The SDRC made the announcement in line with a social investigation into the PRC's urban residents and relevant statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics.

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14. PRC Rural Unrest

The Los Angeles Times ("15 INJURED IN NEW CHINA LAND CLASH", 2006-02-06) reported that in the latest case of unrest afflicting the PRC countryside, at least 15 people were wounded, some seriously, when a gun battle broke out in a land dispute between two villages in the southern province of Guangdong. Residents said tension that had been brewing for years intensified in the fall, when Xiaomeichen residents decided to build a road through neighboring Dameichen. Things came to a head Friday, when Dameichen residents tried to stop the project, reportedly prompting several people from rival Xiaomeichen to pose as policemen and shoot at them.

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15. PRC Web Censorship

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CLOSES MORE THAN 2,000 'UNHEALTHY' WEBSITES ", 2006-0--06) reported that PRC regulators closed down more than 2,000 websites last year because they had too much sex, violence or politics, state media reported. The paper referred to the websites as "unhealthy," a word describing a broad range of illegal content including pornography, excessive violence and sensitive political or religious issues.

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16. Three Gorges Project

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S THREE GORGES DAM TO BE COMPLETED AHEAD OF SCHEDULE ", 2006-02-06) reported that the PRC's Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydroelectric power project, will be completed in May this year, nine months ahead of schedule, state media reported.

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II. CanKor

17. Report #235

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-02-03) During his State of the Union Address, US President George W. Bush refrains from direct denunciation of the DPRK, nor does he mention accusations of counterfeiting, as some RO Korean officials had worried. The ROK National Intelligence Service tells South Korean lawmakers in a closed briefing there is no evidence Pyongyang is still forging US dollars, contrary to US claims. The ROK begins to dismantle anti-tank fortifications in the heart of Seoul. Several other cities also consider removing their barricades. Residents consider the 57 antitank fortifications in the area surrounding Seoul an anachronistic eyesore in an age of anti-tank missiles. The International Crisis Group releases a report examining Beijing's influence over Pyongyang, noting that it is far less than outsiders tend to believe. China shares the goal of DPRK

denuclearization, but attaches even greater importance to maintaining stability and ensuring regime survival. This issue of CanKor reproduces the report's Executive Summary.

(return to top) CanKor ("FOCUS", 2006-02-03) This week's CanKor FOCUS looks at a number of lifestyle campaigns that have recently made their appearance in the DPRK. Leader Kim Jong Il calls smokers one of the "three main fools of the 21st century", where chain-smoking is still the norm among the male half of the population. To help them butt out, a DPRK pharmaceutical company has developed a candy that suppresses the urge to smoke. Another campaign aimed at DPR Korean men targets long hair and sloppy appearance. Yet another campaign takes aim at youth delinquency and heavy alcohol consumption. (return to top)

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