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I. NAPSNet

1. New ROK Representative in Six Party Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("OUTSPOKEN OFFICIAL TO HEAD SEOUL'S TEAM IN NUKE TALKS ", 2006-02-20) reported that Deputy Foreign Minister for Policy Planning Chun Young-woo has been named to represent the ROK in six party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program. Chun dealt with the DPRK's nuclear issues at the office in charge of a now aborted light-water reactor project from 1999 to 2001 and later became deputy ambassador to the UN. During a meeting reviewing the UN Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty last May, Chun blasted the DPRK, which he said inflicted "unprecedented damage" on the credibility and sincerity of the NPT by tearing up the treaty and resuming its nuclear arms program. The DPRK retaliated with a personal attack. "Only a puppet of the U.S. would make that kind of pro-American, power worshipping, anti-national, reckless remark. How can we believe that he has the blood of our race in his body?" However, Chun is not a hardliner. "I will put all my efforts and energy into bringing real progress to" reviving the six-party talks and see to it that they "can make a meaningful contribution to realizing peace and safety on the Korean Peninsula," he vowed.

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2. US, Russia on Six Party Talks

Interfax ("RUSSIAN, U.S. OFFICIALS MEET TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREA", 2006-02-20) reported that the leaders of the Russian and US delegations to the six party talks, met on Monday to discuss issues related to the negotiations, the Russian Foreign Ministry said. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alexeyev and US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, discussed "issues relating to prospects for the resumption of the six party negotiating process and the implementation of agreements reached at the fourth round of negotiations," the ministry said.

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3. Kim Dae Jung Postpones Visit to DPRK

Kyodo News ("EX-S. KOREAN PRESIDENT KIM DAE JUNG POSTPONES VISIT TO N. KOREA", 2006-02-20) reported that former ROK President Kim Dae Jung has decided to visit the DPRK in June, instead of April as he was planning, an aide to the former president said Monday. "The decision to postpone the visit to the North resulted from former President Kim's determination," Choi Kyung Hwan was quoted as saying in a report by Yonhap News Agency. The main opposition Grand National Party has opposed Kim's visit to the DPRK taking place ahead of the May 31 local elections, saying the ruling camp would use Kim's high-profile visit to woo voter support.

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4. Inter-Korean Trade

Yonhap News ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE GROWS NEARLY 30 PCT IN JANUARY ", 2006-02-20) reported that trade between the ROK and the DPRK grew nearly 30 percent in January from a year earlier, mainly from brisk inter-Korean exchanges through an industrial complex in the DPRK, a RO

Korean trade body said Monday. According to the Korea International Trade Association (KITA), trade volume between the ROK and the DPRK amounted to US$63.11 million in January, up 27.5 percent from a year earlier.

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5. Inter-Korean Red Cross Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA UNLIKELY TO BUDGE ON POWS IN RED CROSS TALKS ", 2006-02-20) reported that a seventh meeting between the national Red Cross in the DPRK and the ROK convenes at the DPRK's Mt.Kumgang from Tuesday through Thursday. A ROK official said Monday the ROK will focus on repatriation of ROK prisoners of war remaining in the DPRK and ROK citizens abducted by it. It will also promote exchange of letters between families separated by the Korean War whose whereabouts have been confirmed, and regular reunions for such families. The DPRK is reportedly adamant that no POWs and abductees remain there. For its part, Pyongyang is expected to focus on securing 450,000 tons of fertilizer. The ROK is reportedly unwilling to make that aid conditional on more information about the POWs and abductees.

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6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO START WORK ON KAESONG FACTORY-APARTMENT IN MAY", 2006-02-20) reported that the ROK state-run industrial complex operator plans to start building an apartment-type factory complex in an industrial park in the DPRK in May to accommodate labor-intensive companies of the ROK, the operator's head said Monday. Kim Chil-doo, chief of Korea Industrial Complex Corp., said the complex will house up to 40 ROK companies at the industrial park in the DPRK border city of Kaesong. Completion of the new facility north of the demilitarized zone that separates the DPRK and ROK is scheduled for June 2007, he said. "Labor-intensive businesses, such as textile and clothing companies, will likely be the initial occupants of the factory-apartments," Kim said.

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7. US-ROK Meeting on Kaesong Project

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN UNIFICATION MINISTER MEETS WITH U.S. CONGRESSMAN", 2006-02-20) reported that the ROK's unification minister met with the visiting chairman of the US House Intelligence Committee on Monday and discussed issues of mutual interest, ministry officials said. Minister Lee Jong-seok gave Rep. Peter Hoekstra (Republican-Michigan) details of the government's future plans on the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the DPRK as the US lawmaker showed much interest in the development of the inter-Korean project. Lee called for the US Congress' cooperation in allowing the ROK to ship strategic materials to the complex, officials said.

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8. Investigation of Japanese Exports to DPRK

United Press International ("FIRMS RAIDED OVER EXPORTS TO NORTH KOREA", 2006-02-17) reported that Japanese police Friday raided two trading companies suspected of exporting to the DPRK a machine that could be used to produce chemical weapons. Police believe that the two

companies, Seishin Shoji and Meisho Yoko, both based in Tokyo, exported a device called a "freeze drier" to the DPRK from the port of Yokohama via Taiwan in September 2002 without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, the Mainichi Shimbun reported. Freeze driers are used to decompress and dry frozen food. The devices are also used to preserve materials that are vulnerable to changes in temperature, and can be used to produce chemical weapons.

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9. DPRK on Japanese Sanctions

Kyodo News ("N. KOREAN ENVOY WARNS OF 'PHYSICAL RESPONSE' TO JAPANESE SANCTIONS", 2006-02-20) reported that the DPRK envoy for normalization talks with Japan said in bilateral discussions earlier this month that his country will counter with a "strong physical response" in the event that Tokyo imposes economic sanctions against it, negotiation sources said Sunday. DPRK Ambassador Song Il Ho gave the warning to his Japanese counterpart Koichi Haraguchi during informal contacts in the course of the Feb. 4-8 meetings between the two countries' delegations in Beijing, the sources said. A Japanese delegation source described Song's remarks as an "outright threat that it would lift its freeze on launching ballistic missiles."

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10. DPRK Ferry Arrives in Japan

Reuters ("NORTH KOREAN FERRY MET WITH PROTESTS", 2006-02-20) reported that a DPRK ferry once suspected of transporting parts for Pyongyang’s missile programme arrived in Japan on Wednesday for the first time this year as concern grows that the DPRK may be preparing for a nuclear test. The Mangyongbong-92, a key link between the DPRK and the outside world, was met with protests as it arrived at the northern Japan port of Niigata.

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11. US on DPRK Human Rights

Korea Times ("US SIGNALS NEW PUSH ON N. KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS", 2006-02-17) reported that the US will intensify its campaign to draw international attention to DPRK human rights abuse, despite concerns it could hurt prospects for resuming dialogue on the state's nuclear weapons programs, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Thursday. Rice signaled that Jay Lefkowitz, the administration's special envoy on DPRK human rights, will take a more active role in the coming weeks. "We are going to get him out more," she said. "We need the rest of the international community to also pay attention to this issue." In another move to advance the human rights issue, Rice said the US is considering granting asylum to DPRK defectors.

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12. EU, US on DPRK Human Rights

Donga Ilbo ("EU NORTH KOREA RIGHTS HEARING SET ", 2006-02-20) reported that the European Parliament (EP) will call in DPRK defectors to testify at a hearing on the human rights situation in the DPRK on March 23. In April, Vitit Muntarbhorn, the UN special rapporteur on the DPRK human rights issue, will present his report on human rights conditions in the DPRK to the European

Commission of human rights. In the US, religious and human rights organizations will commemorate the third DPRK Freedom Week that begins on April 22 by urging the DPRK to improve its human rights conditions, and will stage demonstrations, exhibitions, and prayer meetings to express their opposition to PRC's forced repatriation of DPRK defectors.

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13. DPRK on Illegal Activities

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA ORDERS ENTITIES TO STAY AWAY FROM ILLEGAL ACTS: SOURCES", 2006-02-20) reported that the DPRK has recently ordered its embassies and trading entities to stay away from any kind of illegal activities, sources close to the matter said Saturday, in what may be an attempt to dispel international criticism over its alleged wrongdoings. The order, issued earlier this year through the channels of the nation's Foreign Ministry, specifically tells the entities not to engage in any money-laundering, counterfeiting or drug trafficking activities, according to the sources.

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14. Macao Bank to End Ties with DPRK

International Herald Tribune ("MACAO BANK ENDS NORTH KOREA TIES", 2006-02-16) reported that Banco Delta Asia, a Macao-based bank which the US has accused of money laundering, said Thursday that it had stopped doing business with DPRK customers. The bank will not resume ties with the DPRK or related entities and is introducing new procedures against money laundering, according to a statement issued by Banco Delta's lawyer, Heller Ehrman.

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15. DPRK Cheerleaders Imprisoned

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN CHEERLEADERS BANISHED TO CAMPS ", 2006-02-17) reported that Lee Myeong-ho, a former inmate of the Daeheung concentration camp in South Hamgyeong Province who recently escaped to PRC, said "21 beautiful women" were detained at the camp since the end of last year. "Later I found out that they were the cheerleading team that had gone to South Korea,"? he said. Lee said since inmates are forbidden to talk to one another, he could not find out for sure what mistake they had made, but the rumor was that they had broken their promise to DPRK security services not to disclose what they had seen in the ROK.

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II. CanKor

CanKor ("OPINION", 2006-02-17) A number of researchers conclude that the crackdown on the DPRK's illicit financial dealings will have the net result of pushing the DPRK more firmly into China's orbit, as illustrated in two articles on the subject by Peter Beck and Jong-Heon Lee in this week's OPINION section.

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16. Report #237

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-02-17) Celebration of Kim Jong Il's 64th birthday on Thursday 16 February rekindles international speculation about his succession. At this age, his own father Kim Il Sung had already named him as the country's next leader. Last December, however, Kim Jong Il himself ordered a stop to talk of a father-to-son succession, reportedly concerned that it would make the DPRK an "international laughingstock." Responding to the DPRK's offer to cooperate with international actions against financial crime, the USA demands evidence of the destruction of plates, machines, ink, and paper used by the DPRK for counterfeiting. Meanwhile, Banco Delta Asia, the Macau bank implicated in the DPRK money laundering allegations, terminates business links with all DPRK entities.

(return to top) CanKor ("FEEDBACK", 2006-02-17) In a letter to the CanKor editor, CRS Specialist in Asian Affairs Mark Manyin argues that there may be some "wiggle room" around the issue of how products from the Kaesong Industrial Zone will be treated in the USA-ROK Free Trade Agreement. (return to top) CanKor ("QUIDNUNC ", 2006-02-17) Ruediger Frank and Bradley Babson respond to a QUIDNUNC query on the reality of DPRK economic reforms. (return to top)

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