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I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on Six Party Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL SAYS PROGRESS IN SIX-PARTY TALKS 'BIGGEST GOAL' ", 2006-02-27) reported that a top priority for the ROK Foreign Ministry this year is to get the DPRK to actually implement an agreement signed last fall to give up its nuclear arms program in exchange for rewards. The Foreign Ministry announced its top diplomatic objectives for 2006 on Monday and said it would work toward that goal by assuming a leading role in restarting the stalled six-country talks and through further cooperation with other members.

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2. DPRK on US Non-Proliferation Campaign

Reuters ("N.KOREA WARNS UN OVER US PRESSURE ON S.KOREA", 2006-02-24) reported that the DPRK warned the UN on Friday that US efforts to draw the ROK into Washington's campaign against the spread of weapons of mass destruction could stall talks on Pyongyang's nuclear plans. For Washington to enlist parties to the nuclear talks in its "proliferation security initiative" would violate international law and the UN Charter, DPRK UN Ambassador Pak Gil Yon wrote Kofi Annan and General Assembly President Jan Eliasson. Pak, in a letter dated Wednesday, stressed that "direct or indirect joining in the proliferation security initiative by certain countries participating in the six-party talks would create new artificial obstacles to the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula."

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3. DPRK Counterfeiting

Reuters ("HK BANK LINKED TO N. KOREAN DOLLAR FORGERY", 2006-02-26) reported that authorities are preparing to seize more than \$2.67 million from Hong Kong bank accounts linked to trade in DPRK counterfeit US bank notes, a report said Sunday. The money is frozen in three accounts belonging to an unemployed PRC woman, Kwok Hiu-Ha, with Chiyu Banking, a subsidiary of Bank of China Hong Kong, the Sunday Morning Post reported, citing US court documents.

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4. ROK-US Meeting on DPRK Counterfeiting

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA'S INTELLIGENCE CHIEF VISITS U.S. OVER COUNTERFEITING", 2006-02-25) reported that the ROK intelligence chief visited Washington in January to discuss the DPRK's alleged involvement in currency counterfeiting, a ROK government official said Saturday. During the trip, Kim Seung-gyu, director of the National Intelligence Service, met with his US counterpart, CIA director Porter Goss, and "exchanged information related to the counterfeiting," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

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5. US Ambassador on DPRK Counterfeiting

JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH'S REPENTANCE NOT DEEMED ENOUGH ", 2006-02-27) reported that as Pyongyang and Washington prepare for what the US calls "briefings" about its reaction to DPRK counterfeiting of US currency, the US ambassador to the ROK, Alexander Vershbow, told the JoongAng Ilbo last week that promises of repentance from the DPRK will not be enough. Action, not words, was his theme. "There have been some signals in the last few weeks indirectly indicating that North Korea is beginning to acknowledge that there is a problem and they need to take steps to address the issues," Mr. Vershbow told the JoongAng Ilbo and JoongAng Daily on Wednesday.

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6. Inter-Korean Cooperation

Korea.net ("SEOUL EYES TEST-RUN FOR INTER-KOREAN RAILWAYS NEXT MONTH ", 2006-0-23) reported that the ROK aims to test-run the inter-Korean railways next month and will push the DPRK to agree on a schedule at a working-level meeting of the two sides next Monday, a senior government official said on Thursday. "A working-level meeting on opening of roads and railways will be held on Feb. 27-28 at the Office of Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation in Gaeseong," Shin Un-sang, vice unification minister, announced at a ministry briefing. "We will make a concerted effort to reach an agreement on technical preparations with the North and to run a trial run of the railways in March."

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7. Inter-Korean Military Meeting

JoongAng Ilbo ("STARS ADDED FOR NEXT SET OF NORTH-SOUTH GENERALS' TALKS ", 2006-0-25) reported that in response to the DPRK's request to upgrade the rank of participants in next month's general officers' meeting at Panmunjeom, the ROK Ministry of National Defense said yesterday it would send Major General Han Min-gu, the ministry's policy planning chief, as Seoul's representative to the talks. The DPRK said earlier this week it would send Lieutenant General Kim Yong-chol to the third round of such talks. Although he wears three stars, the DPRK rank is the equivalent of a two-star general in the ROK.

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8. Inter-Korean Athletics

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH-SOUTH GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN THE ICE RINK ", 2006-02-27) reported that the DPRK ice hockey team is scheduled to make a 3-day 4-night trip to the ROK, to go head-to-head with the Gangwon-do team on the 2nd of next month in Chuncheon. This marks the first time that

regional winter sports teams have met up for games, and it is also the first time for a sports team to take a land route into the country.

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9. ROK on Abductees in DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("UNIFICATION MINISTER TAKES PRAGMATIC TACK ON ABDUCTEES ", 2006-02-24) reported that Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok said Friday that he will approach the issue of RO Koreans abducted by the DPRK in terms of practicability, which means he will focus on confirming their whereabouts and bringing them back home. Appearing on CBS radio, the minister said that it was a significant achievement that the two sides agreed to work together to ascertain the fate of RO Korean abductees as well as prisoners of war during the inter-Korean Red Cross meeting. "If we just assign blame at this point, is the North going to send them back?" Lee said. "We will exert all our efforts to do whatever is necessary to provide a good cause (for repatriation) to the North, without offending them."

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10. Japan on DPRK Agent Extradition

Kyodo News ("JAPAN DEMANDS N. KOREA HAND OVER AGENTS VIA EMBASSY IN BEIJING ", 2006-02-24) reported that Japan, via its embassy in Beijing, demanded Friday that the DPRK hand over two agents suspected of abducting four Japanese nationals in two separate cases in 1978, Japanese Foreign Ministry officials said. The action follows Japanese police obtaining on Thursday arrest warrants for Sin Guang Su and Choe Sung Chol.

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11. US Vet on US-DPRK Relations

Washington Times ("U.S. VETERAN FLOGS BUSH OVER NORTH KOREA POLICY ", 2006-02-25) reported that a high-profile US Korean War veteran, visiting Seoul at the behest of local veterans, this week delivered a scathing attack on the Bush administration for a policy of "name-calling and accusation" toward the DPRK. "I do feel, personally, that reconciliation can come through negotiations and talking, not through name-calling and accusations," J. Robert Lunney said of Washington's policy toward Pyongyang. "We should be able to, as I have done in North Korea, sit down and work with the North Koreans to resolve some of the problems; some problems can be resolved through trade, and possibly tourism." The ex-naval officer visited the DPRK in 1997 and 1998 as a monitor for Joint Recovery Operations run by US and DPRK armed forces to recover the remains of Americans killed in the war. "On my trips to the North, I was constantly confronted with the fact that we are still at war -- perhaps we should strive towards a peace treaty."

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12. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("BAN SEES NO LINK BETWEEN N.K. RIGHTS AND UN TOP JOB ", 2006-02-24) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon on Friday said there was no direct connection between his candidacy for the UN top job and human rights in the DPRK, an issue Seoul has been accused of failing to address. "I don't think a specific issue like North Korean human rights has a

direct connection to the bid for the UN secretary-general's seat," Ban told reporters. Asked by a CBS reporter whether the way the South Korean government handles human rights conditions in the DPRK could hurt his bid for the UN job, Ban replied, "What the secretary general does is not directly related to a specific issue in a particular country."

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13. UN on DPRK Food Aid

Associated Press ("U.N. AGENCY OFFERS N. KOREA NEW FOOD AID PROGRAM BUT WANTS MORE ACCESS TO MONITOR", 2006-02-24) reported that the World Food Program has approved a plan to resume food aid to the DPRK but it won't begin until the DPRK allows more access to monitor where the aid goes, the UN agency said Friday. The two-year plan to feed 1.9 million people was approved Thursday by the WFP's board in Rome. But donors rejected the DPRK's restrictions limiting the agency to 10 foreign staff members and sharply reducing their ability to monitor aid distribution. "They asked us to go back to the government and seek better conditions," said Gerald Bourke, a WFP spokesman in Beijing. "We will not resume until we have a satisfactory set of operating conditions agreed with the government."

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14. Kim Jong Il Addresses Soldiers

Yonhap News ("N. KOREAN LEADER ORDERS SOLDIERS TO READ REVOLUTIONARY LITERATURE", 2006-02-25) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il ordered the country's soldiers to read many revolutionary novels to strengthen their ideology, the DPRK's news agency said Saturday. "All soldiers must read more revolutionary literature as they are important means to strengthen young people's ideology and mentality," Kim said during an inspection tour of a front-line unit, according to the Korean Central News Agency report.

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15. Russia-ROK Railroad Agreement

Mos News ("RUSSIA, SOUTH KOREA CLOSE TO RAILROAD AGREEMENT", 2006-02-27) reported that Russia and the ROK are coming closer to an agreement on connecting a Trans-Korean Railroad to the Trans-Siberian Railroad, head of Russia's transportation monopoly, the Russian Railways, said on Sunday. Vladimir Yakunin, the president of Russian Railways, said that the negotiations were being conducted within the framework of three-way meetings between Russia, the DPRK and the ROK.

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16. US-ROK Military Alliance

Stars and Stripes ("USFK: SOUTH KOREA'S GROWING MILITARY INDEPENDENCE 'HEALTHY'", 2006-02-27) reported that with years of training and planning but few public announcements, ROK military forces have been taking over key missions from the US military in the past year, according to US Forces Korea officials. The transition is making ROK more militarily independent than any time since the Korean War, according to US Marine Col. John Koenig, chief of plans and policy for the combined forces.

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17. USFJ Troop Realignment

Agence France-Presse ("US TO SHIP OUT 1,000 MORE MARINES FROM OKINAWA: REPORT", 2006-02-27) reported that the US has told Japan that it will withdraw some 8,000 marines -- 1,000 more than originally proposed -- from the Japanese island of Okinawa as part of its military realignment. The number was increased after Washington reassessed its personnel needs, the mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun said, citing Japanese government sources.

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18. US, Japan on Malacca Strait Security

Reuters ("US, JAPAN TO HELP MALAYSIA BOOST STRAIT SECURITY ", 2006-02-27) reported that the US is ready to help Malaysia boost security in the vital Malacca Strait once it concludes a pact on joint air patrols with other littoral states, a US defense commander said on Monday. Separately, Malaysia's defense chief said Japan, a major user of the busy sea lane, would provide a ship next month to Malaysia's coast guard to help patrol the strait, which carries roughly a quarter of global trade.

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19. US on Japanese Iraq Contribution

Kyodo ("U.S. ASKS JAPAN TO SEND GSDF OFFICERS TO BASRA TO TAKE UP NEW DUTY", 2006-02-27) reported that the US has asked Japan to consider having senior ground troop officers transferred to Basra in southern Iraq to take part in a new reconstruction project there after Japanese troops' withdrawal from Samawah, diplomatic sources said Sunday.

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20. PRC-Japan Comparative Military Spending

Kyodo ("JAPAN OUTSPENDS CHINA MILITARILY BUT KEEPS CLEAN", 2006-02-27) reported that as the PRC and Japan wrangle over whether the other side's military has the power to destabilize Asia, data from both governments and independent analysts show that Japan spends \$12 billion more per year on defense than the PRC but that the PRC hides untold billions of dollars in expenditures such as reservists and foreign military aid.

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21. Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France-Presse ("KOIZUMI ALLY SAYS 'MATURE' TIES WITH CHINA TO TAKE TIME ", 2006-02-27) reported that Japan and the PRC are not ready for the "mature relationship" they need and should begin looking beyond their deep-seated differences, a senior aide to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said. "It is competition and cooperation ... We must build a mature relationship under which we may see friction and cooperation coexisting," said Hidenao Nakagawa, policy chief of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, who recently visited the PRC.

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22. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN TERMINATES CHINA UNIFICATION BODY ", 2006-02-27) reported that Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian on Monday terminated the governmental committee responsible for unifying with rival PRC, significantly deepening tensions with Beijing and defying opinion in Washington. After a one-hour meeting with the National Security Council, Chen announced he was ending the National Unification Council and doing away with its guidelines, which commit Taiwan to eventual unification with the mainland.

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23. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

Reuters ("TWO MORE HUMAN BIRD FLU CASES FOUND IN CHINA", 2006-02-27) reported that a PRC girl in eastern Zhejiang province and a woman farmer in neighbouring Anhui province have been infected with bird flu, Xinhua news agency has cited the Ministry of Health as saying. The woman farmer, who was diagnosed on February 11 with symptoms of fever and pneumonia, had come into contact with sick and dead poultry, the agency said. The girl, a 9-year-old from Anji County, had visited relatives who kept poultry but it was not clear how she had been infected, Xinhua said. Both are in critical condition.

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II. CanKor

24. Report #238

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-02-24) The Executive Board of the UN World Food Programme approves a two-year plan to supply vitamin-and-mineral enriched foods produced in-country for young children and pregnant women, and food-for-work cereal rations for underemployed communities. Implementation modalities are yet to be agreed, amid concerns about staffing levels, monitoring restrictions and access. While negotiating its Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the ROK, Canada is inadvertently drawn into the growing disagreement between Washington and Seoul over whether to allow tariff-free imports of goods produced South Korean firms in the DPRK's Kaesong Industrial Complex. Foreign Affairs Canada declines to comment, given that negotiations are ongoing. It is anticipated, however, that Canada will find it problematic to afford favourable treatment to goods produced without the assurance of labour and environmental standards, and labour costs that undercut China's by 70-80 percent. The European Parliament is holding a hearing on DPRK human rights on 23 March. US-based Freedom House moves the date for its next human rights conference -- financed with money allocated under the North Korea Human Rights Act of 2004 -- to coincide with the hearing. According to a letter sent to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice by US lawmakers, not a single DPR Korean has been granted refugee status in the USA, despite the fact that asylum was a major component of the North Korean Human Rights Act.

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New York Times correspondent Norimitsu Onishi on the uneasy alliance between human rights activists and conservative South Korean Christians who in the past decade have generated the world's second-largest overseas missionary force after the USA. [\(return to top\)](#)

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