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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Japan Participation in Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA RAPS JAPAN PARTICIPATION IN NUCLEAR TALKS", 2007-0--02) reported that the DPRK voiced deep concerns over Japan's participation in the six-nation talks after Tokyo moved to seize the headquarters of Pyongyang's de facto embassy in Japan. The Resolution and Collection Corp. - a government-affiliated collection agency - last month stepped up efforts to take over the property owned by the pro-Pyongyang group Chongryun after a court ordered it to repay debts of 62.7 billion yen.

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2. PRC in Pyongyang

Reuters ("CHINA FOREIGN MINISTER ARRIVES IN NORTH KOREA-KYODO", 2007-07-02) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi arrived in the DPRK on Monday for a three-day visit. Yang's visit follows one by officials from the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog last week after the DPRK agreed to move ahead on the six-country disarmament agreement. IAEA official Olli Heinonen said on Saturday the U.N. nuclear watchdog had clarified how to monitor the shutdown of the Yongbyon nuclear facility.

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3. USFK on DPRK Threat

Associated Press ("U.S. GENERAL IN S. KOREA SAYS N. KOREA REMAINS A MILITARY THREAT", 2007-07-02) reported that the top U.S. military commander in the ROK criticized last week's missile test launches by the DPRK, saying the country remains a threat despite its recent moves toward dismantling its nuclear program. U.S. Army Gen. B.B. Bell said he welcomed Pyongyang's efforts to live up to a February commitment to shut down its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, but that he did not know the reason the DPRK continues to conduct missile launches, and why the country chose to do so while officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency were visiting the country.

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4. DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA PLEDGES $20 MLN TO UN FOR NORTH'S FOOD", 2007-07-02) reported that the ROK, which last week resumed bilateral food aid to the DPRK, said on Monday it would provide $20 million to the U.N. World Food Programme (WFP). The ROK pledge to the WFP is separate from its bilateral aid. The WFP aims to assist 1.9 million hit by food shortages among the 22.5 million population but is facing a funding shortfall. Even with a good harvest, the DPRK still falls about 1 million tonnes short of the food needed to feed its people, experts said.

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5. US-ROK FTA

Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA, US SIGN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT", 2007-07-01) reported that US President George W. Bush and his ROK counterpart pledged to work together to ensure legislative approval of the free-trade agreement signed by the two countries over the weekend. On

Saturday, ROK Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong and U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab signed a free-trade agreement that reflected U.S. calls for stricter labor and environmental standards, meeting a deadline under Bush's expiring "fast track" special trade powers.

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6. US-Japan Military Celebrate 50 Years

Associated Press ("US MILITARY MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN JAPAN", 2007-07-02) reported that, marking its 50th anniversary on Monday, Japanese and U.S. military leaders vowed to strengthen their relations and bolster their joint defenses against any missile. Japanese Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma, noting continued threats from the DPRK and the growth and modernization of the PRC's military, called the U.S. military presence in Japan an "indispensable foundation" of peace in the region. About 50,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Japan under a mutual security treaty.

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7. Japan Defense Minister on Hiroshima

Associated Press ("ABE RIPS OFFICIAL FOR A-BOMB COMMENT", 2007-07-02) reported that Japan's prime minister sternly reprimanded his defense minister on Monday for saying the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were an inevitable way of ending World War II, and asked him to refrain from making similar remarks. The defense minister's comments offended survivors of the bombings who believe the use of atomic weapons was excessive, but the minister is not expected to resign.

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8. Abe Approval Ratings

Associated Press ("POLLS: JAPAN PM'S POPULARITY SAGS, DISAPPROVAL RATE RISES AHEAD OF JULY VOTE", 2007-07-02) reported that the support rate for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government fell to its lowest level yet since he took office last September, a result that bodes ill for him in this month's elections. The polls add to indications of a steady decline in Abe's support rates since he came to office nine months ago, making the run-up to the July 29 upper house elections a fight for his political survival.

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9. PRC Labor Laws

Christian Science Monitor ("KEY ISSUE FOR CHINA'S NEW LABOR LAW: ENFORCEMENT", 2007-07-02) reported that China's top legislative body passed a comprehensive labor law, which includes provisions that have appeared in previous legislation. But what may be different this time, some observers say, is the government's willingness to enforce mandates protecting workers' rights.

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10. PRC Economy

Bloomberg ("PRC TO TOP US AS AMD'S BIGGEST MARKET NEXT YEAR", 2007-06-29) reported that

Advanced Micro Devices Inc (AMD), the world's second-biggest maker of personal-computer processors, said it expects the PRC to pass the US by the end of next year to become the company's biggest market by sales. Chip sales in China may triple to US$124 billion in the five years to 2010 as electronics makers produce computers, game consoles and handsets in the country, researcher IC Insights Inc said. AMD rival Intel Corp plans to build a US$2.5 billion facility in China, its first manufacturing site in Asia.

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11. PRC Environment

Xinhua ("RAINSTORMS KILL 24 IN C.CHINA", 2007-07-02) reported that twenty-four people have been confirmed dead, 334 injured and six missing due to landslides and floods triggered by continuous rainstorms in central China's Hubei Province since June 28. The rainstorms have affected 3.51 million people in 45 counties across the province. More than 63,000 have been evacuated and the floods have damaged 160,700 hectares of cropland and destroyed 53,400 houses.

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II. CanKor

12. Report #286

CanKor ("Current Events", 2007-06-27) A nine-member delegation of the Canada-DPR Korea Association returns from Pyongyang shortly before Canada's Ambassador to the DPRK, Marius Grinius, departs for a five-day visit, during which he meets the vice-president of the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly for what the North Korean news agency KCNA describes as a "farewell call". US$25 million in frozen funds are successfully transferred out of the Banco Delta Asia in Macau, via the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, through the Russian central bank, and finally into an account controlled by the DPRK in a Russian commercial bank. A DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesperson says it is now possible to use the funds "for improving the standard of people's living and humanitarian purposes, as planned." Chief US nuclear envoy Christopher Hill travels to Pyongyang and receives assurances that "the DPRK, too, will start implementing the February 13 agreement on the principle of 'action for action'." KCNA says Hill and the DPRK foreign minister "agreed to examine the possibility of holding talks of the heads of the delegations to the six-party talks in the first half of July and opening a meeting of the foreign ministers of the six parties during the ministerial meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum slated to take place in Philippines early in August." An International Atomic Energy Agency delegation that includes Director General Olli Heinonen visits the Yongbyon nuclear power plant this week and discusses plans for its shutdown, to begin in mid-July. The ROK resumes its shipment of 400,000 tons of badly needed rice aid to the DPRK. US diplomats meanwhile confront the UN Development Programme (UNDP) with new allegations that its funds were misused by Pyongyang to buy properties in France, Britain and Canada. The UNDP says that "the allegations do not correspond to our records." Nonetheless, US lawmakers vote to cut US$20 million from funding for the UNDP, despite the fact that the USA already withholds what is deemed to be its "share" of programming in the DPRK (as well as Burma and Cuba) from the total allocation to UNDP.

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13. Report #286

CanKor ("WHAT READERS SAY ABOUT THE CANKOR REPORT", 2007-06-27) "For over a year I have been receiving your daily reports and other interesting information on North Korea and other parts of Asia. All this time I have forwarded these reports to colleagues of mine in the embassy, dealing with North Korea. We sincerely hope to read more interesting news from CanKor / Napsnet." Joachim Corstiaans, Royal Netherlands Embassy, Beijing.

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