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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program Shutdown

Voice of America ("UN NUCLEAR MONITORS TRAVEL TO NORTH KOREA", 2007-07-28) reported that a second team of U.N. nuclear experts traveled to the DPRK Saturday to monitor the shutdown and sealing of the country's only plutonium-producing reactor. The team will replace an initial group

that went on July 12 to supervise the shutdown of the Yongbyon reactor. The next round of six-party talks is scheduled to be held in September.

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2. Philippines on Six Party Talks

Philippine Information Agency ("MANILA OFFERS TO HOST SIX PARTY TALKS", 2007-07-29) reported that the Philippines has offered to host a continuation of the talks among the six countries on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In his closing remarks after presiding over the 40th Meeting of the ASEAN Standing Committee, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo said that the Philippines is "aware of the precarious situation in the Korean Peninsula, which continues to grapple with the danger of nuclear proliferation." He said it is in the interest of ASEAN to support the Six-Party Talks and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. "For this reason, the Philippines has offered the Six-Party members, all of whom are attending the ARF, the opportunity to continue their dialogue if they wish to, here in Manila," Romulo said.

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3. DPRK-Philippino Relations

AHN ("PHILIPPINES, NORTH KOREA FORGE CONSULTATION MECHANISM", 2007-07-29) July 29, 2007 11:30 a.m. EST Komfie Manalo - AHN News Writer Manila, Philippines (AHN) - reported that senior diplomats from the Philippines and the DPRK signed an agreement creating a bilateral consultation mechanism that would provide a regular forum for both countries to discuss improvements in relations and other key issues.

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4. Koreas Joint Mining Operation

UPI ("S. KOREA TO DEVELOP MINES IN NORTH", 2007-07-27) reported that the Koreas will launch a joint on-site survey of natural resources in the North as part of efforts to boost cross-border economic cooperation. The ministry estimates the zinc deposit in Komdok mine at 200 million to 300 million tons, the largest in East Asia, and magnesite deposits in Ryongyang and Taehung at 4 billion tons, the world's third largest. The survey comes under an agreement in which the ROK agreed to provide \$80 million worth of raw materials to help the North improve its tattered light industry and produce more daily necessities in return for joint development of the North's natural resources.

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5. DPRK Local Elections

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL VOTES IN N.KOREA'S LOCAL POLLS", 2007-07-30) reported that the DPRK held elections for deputies to provincial, city and county people's assemblies on Sunday, and Kim Jong-il cast his ballots at a booth in the Chusang Co-op Farm in Hamju County, South Hamgyeong Province. Addressing farm workers after voting, Kim urged them to bring about a new surge in production of agricultural goods.

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6. ROK Hostages in Afghanistan

Yonhap ("TALIBAN SAYS IT KILLED KOREAN HOSTAGE", 2007-07-30) reported that a Taliban spokesman said the group shot to death a ROK hostage, accusing the Afghan government of not paying attention to its deadline for swapping the hostages with Taliban prisoners. According to AFP and Reuters, spokesman Yousuf Ahmadi claimed to have killed a hostage named "Sung Sin" with AK-47 gunshots at 8:30 p.m., local time. The reported killing followed another deadline extension until Wednesday that the Taliban agreed to in negotiating the terms of hostages' release.

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7. Japan Elections

The Los Angeles Times ("JAPAN'S RULING PARTY DEALT ELECTORAL BLOW", 2007-07-30) reported that Japanese voters delivered a stinging slap to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's nationalist obsessions, punishing his government for focusing on the grand ambition of a more assertive Japan while allowing the day-to-day management of the economy to descend into scandal and disarray. The elections for half the seats in Japan's upper house, seen as a midterm referendum on the government's performance, gave Abe's governing Liberal Democratic Party one of its worst losses in the 52 years it has dominated Japanese politics.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo News ("ABE VOWS TO RESHUFFLE CABINET AS LDP ALLOWS HIM TO STAY", 2007-07-30) reported that gaining his ruling coalition's go-ahead to stay in office despite a historic election defeat, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe hammered out his policies on how to manage his administration amid a fragile political situation that could turn fatal anytime. Speaking at a press conference at his Liberal Democratic Party's headquarters, Abe indicated he will reshuffle his Cabinet, ruled out an early dissolution of the House of Representatives for a general election, and sought cooperation with the largest opposition Democratic Party of Japan, the chief victor in the election. [\(return to top\)](#)

8. Japan Hybrid Technology

The Associated Press ("IN SMALL STEP AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING, JAPAN INAUGURATES FIRST HYBRID TRAIN", 2007-07-30) reported that winding past rice paddies and lazily blowing its whistle along bubbly creeks, a two-car train in rural northern Japan is the latest entrant in the battle against global warming. Encouraged by the success of hybrid cars, Japan is now bringing the world hybrid trains. Regular passenger service is set to begin Tuesday along a short mountainous route, in what will be the first commercial service of a diesel-electric hybrid train.

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9. PRC Military

Reuters ("YOU'VE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM US, CHINA'S ARMY SAYS", 2007-07-30) reported that the PRC let in a crack of light on its military modernisation on Monday, opening a camp to foreign reporters to put out the message: we have nothing to hide and you have nothing to fear. The PRC is keen to dispel jitters in Washington that its growing arms budget is far from transparent and that Beijing's rising military spending may destabilize East Asia.

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10. PRC Environment

BBC News ("CHINA SETS UP POLLUTION BLACKLIST ", 2007-07-30) reported that the PRC's environmental regulator has put 30 companies on its first blacklist of pollution violators. As Beijing moves to take action on the country's growing pollution problem, the 30 firms will be barred from receiving bank loans. The companies in question range from food processors to paper-makers and steel manufacturers.

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11. Shanghai Cooperation Organization Drill

InterFax ("RUSSIAN-CHINESE EXERCISES REFLECT HIGH LEVEL OF PARTNERSHIP - KOKOSHIN", 2007-07-30) reported that the scale of the upcoming Russian-PRC military exercises reflects the high level of cooperation between Moscow and Beijing within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Russian State Duma CIS affairs committee head Andrei Kokoshin said. "There can be no doubts that expanded Russian-Chinese cooperation meets national interests of both countries and serves the formation of a fairer and therefore more stable world arrangement," Kokoshin said.

[\(return to top\)](#) Xinhua ("DEPUTY RUSSIAN COMMANDER: SCO EXERCISE PROTOTYPE OF ANTI-TERROR OPERATION ", 2007-07-30) reported that the upcoming military exercises of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states will be a prototype of anti-terrorist operations, a deputy commander of Russia's Ground Forces said. The SCO exercise is, "in essence, a prototype of an anti-terrorist operation, the major task of which is to neutralize resistance and destroy terrorists," Lieutenant-General Vladimir Moltensky was quoted as saying. [\(return to top\)](#)

12. ASEAN Anti-Nuclear Agreement

Agence France-Presse ("ASEAN URGES NUCLEAR POWERS TO BACK TREATY ", 2007-07-30) reported that Southeast Asian nations urged the world's nuclear powers to sign on to a regional treaty aimed at keeping their corner of the world free of atomic weapons. Under the treaty, ASEAN members may not develop or test nuclear weapons and pledge not to allow the storage or transport within their territories of those weapons. But diplomats admit that with some ASEAN members allowing warships from countries such as the US to berth in their territories, there has been concern it would be difficult to determine whether any vessel is nuclear armed.

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