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I. NAPSNet

1. Hill on DPRK Nuclear Working Group

Voice of America ("WORKING GROUP FOCUSES ON 'TECHNICAL DETAILS' OF N. KOREA'S NUCLEAR SHUTDOWN", 2007-08-16) reported that U.S. envoy Christopher Hill says negotiators are discussing the "technical procedures" that would eventually be used to shut down the DPRK nuclear weapons programs. He told reporters he expected the two days of meetings in Shenyang this week to be substantive. But he said they would not yet produce a schedule for Pyongyang's nuclear disarmament. "The purpose is not so much to negotiate an agreement today or this week, but rather to identify the technical procedures that can be used to affect disablement, and so we hope that if we can have an agreement on what type of technical procedures can be used, then we can put together an actual agreement," Hill said.

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2. Churches on Six Party Talks

Christian Post ("SIX-PARTY CHURCHES TO MONITOR NUCLEAR TALKS", 2007-08-16) reported that Churches from around the world accepted a proposal to organize the churches of six countries to monitor the next six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue. The proposal was made by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia, WCC general secretary, during his keynote address last week during a World Council of Churches conference in the ROK in which he called for churches in the United States, Russia, China, Japan and the two Koreas to persuade their governments to continue talks to resolve the conflict on the peninsula.

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3. ROK Aid for DPRK Flood

Voice of America ("SOUTH KOREA CONSIDERS SENDING AID TO FLOOD-HIT NORTH KOREA", 2007-08-16) reported that the ROK says it is considering sending humanitarian aid flood affected areas and as many as 300,000 displaced people. Officials said Thursday the aid package could include blankets, food and medicine.

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4. DPRK Economy

Bloomberg ("NORTH KOREA ECONOMY SHRINKS FOR FIRST TIME IN 8 YEARS", 2007-08-16) reported that the DPRK's economy contracted in 2006 for the first time in eight years. The economy shrank 1.1 percent last year because of energy shortages and bad weather after expanding 3.8 percent in 2005, the ROK's central bank said in a report released in Seoul today. This is the first time the economy has shrunk since 1998.

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5. ROK on US Help with Hostages

Associated Press ("REPORT: SOUTH KOREA THANKS US OVER RELEASE OF 2 HOSTAGES IN AFGHANISTAN", 2007-08-16) reported that the ROK's Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo thanked the top U.S. general for America's help in achieving the recent release of two hostages in Afghanistan, a

news report said Thursday. He did not say how the U.S. had helped in the release.

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6. US Weapons Sales to ROK

Korea Times ("S. KOREA LIKELY TO GET HIGHER STATUS FOR US ARMS PURCHASE", 2007-0--16) reported that U.S. Senator Christopher Bond submitted a bill to Congress in July aimed at raising the ROK foreign military sale (FMS) status to help the Korean government purchase US weapons systems and spare parts cheaper and faster.

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7. Japan Stock Exchange

Mainichi ("JAPAN STOCKS DOWN SHARPLY IN TOKYO FOLLOWING GLOBAL STOCK FALLS", 2007-08-15) reported that Japanese stocks fell further Thursday amid global jitters over the U.S. subprime loan crisis and broader concerns about the U.S. economy. Tokyo stocks were dragged down after Wall Street tumbled again overnight. The Federal Reserve added more cash to the U.S. banking system Wednesday but failed to quash investors' jitters about problems in lending. Thursday morning, the Bank of Japan injected 400 billion yen (US$3.4 billion) into local money markets, the third time since last Friday it has acted in a bid to curb rises in a key overnight interest rate.

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8. Japan's Heatwave

Reuters ("HEATWAVE SWEEPS JAPAN, KILLS AT LEAST SEVEN", 2007-08-16) reported that record high temperatures in Japan claim at least seven people over the last few days. In Tajimi city, 400 km (250 miles) west of Tokyo, the mercury hit 40.9 degrees Celsius (105.6 Fahrenheit), topping the previous record of 40.8 logged in 1933, the Meteorological Agency said. Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO), has said it may struggle to meet peak power demand from the capital if temperatures go above 35.3 Celsius, as they have done for the last few days, especially following a strong earthquake last month damaged and closed a nuclear reactor -- the world's largest -- that supplies most of the electricity to the Tokyo region. The summer heat and humidity result in greater use of air conditioners, boosting electricity demand.

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9. Japan Quake

Bloomberg ("JAPAN'S EAST COAST SHAKEN BY MAGNITUDE 5.4 QUAKE", 2007-08-16) eported that a magnitude 5.4 earthquake shook the east coast of Japan's main island of Honshu at 4:15 a.m. local time, followed by aftershocks. There were no reports of damage or injuries and no tsunami alerts were issued.

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10. PRC Environment

CNN ("CHINESE ECO-CITY HERALDS REVOLUTION IN URBAN LIVING", 2007-08-16) reported

that a London-based engineering and design firm Arup signed a contract with the Shanghai Industrial Investment Corporation (SIIC) to build the first "truly environmentally and economically sustainable city". Situated on a plot of land that is around two-thirds the size of Manhattan, Dongtan is surrounded by wetlands and lies beside a bird sanctuary where hundreds of rare migratory birds seek refuge.

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11. PRC Food Safety

Xinhua ("CHINA URGES GLOBAL COOPERATION TO IMPROVE FOOD SAFETY", 2007-08-16) reported that the PRC called for global cooperation to improve food safety, noting that it along with product quality are an international problem. Zhao Baoqing, a spokesman for the Chinese embassy in Washington, said that the PRC will intensify food safety supervision and punish all those responsible for supplying tainted food. Zhao admitted that the PRC's food safety needs improving, but said that the vast majority of Chinese exports to United States are of high quality.

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