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I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Counterfeiting

Voice of America ("SOUTH KOREAN SPY AGENCY FINDS 'NO EVIDENCE' NORTH KOREA IS COUNTERFEITING US DOLLARS", 2006-02-02) reported that a RO Korean lawmaker has quoted intelligence officials as saying they have no evidence DPRK has recently counterfeited US dollars. RO Korean lawmakers received a closed-door briefing from RO Korean intelligence officials Thursday. Afterwards, legislator Im Jong-in said the RO Korean intelligence agency had been unable to substantiate Washington's allegation that Pyongyang is currently counterfeiting US currency.

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2. US on DPRK Counterfeiting

Chosun Ilbo (" U.S. ENVOY SAYS N.K. COUNTERFEIT ISSUE MUST BE RESOLVED ", 2006-02-02) reported that Washington's chief nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill on Wednesday admitted that the DPRK's counterfeiting activities could undermine the partnership for normalizing ties between Washington and Pyongyang. But he said it was the DPRK that made the issue a political matter by linking the financial sanctions to six party talks.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA'S QUEST FOR NUKES WAS IRRATIONAL: HILL ", 2006-02-02) reported that the US chief negotiator Christopher Hill says there is no rational explanation why the DPRK wanted nuclear weapons.

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4. US on Solution to DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France Presse ("US SEEN CONSIDERING UN SECURITY COUNCIL REFERRAL FOR NORTH KOREA", 2006-02-02) reported that the DPRK's reluctance to return to the negotiating table over its nuclear weapons program has fueled speculation the US may seek to refer the state to the UN Security Council. Christopher Hill, the chief US negotiator to the six party talks, indicated Wednesday that Washington might consider other options if the DPRK stayed away from the stalled negotiations. "We want a diplomatic solution to this problem ... we believe it's the best solution, absolutely the best solution (but) it's probably not the only solution," Hill emphasized at a forum in Washington.

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5. US on DPRK Nuclear Threat

Agence France Presse ("AL-QAEDA, IRAN AND NORTH KOREA TOP THREATS: US INTEL CHIEF", 2006-02-02) reported that Iran and the DPRK are "states of highest concern" because of the danger of nuclear proliferation but Al-Qaeda remains the top US security threat, the chief of US intelligence said.

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6. Experts on DPRK-PRC Relations

Reuters ("CHINA'S INFLUENCE IN NORTH KOREA LIMITED: REPORT", 2006-02-02) reported that the PRC has less influence in the DPRK than many think, and regional powers could mistakenly give Pyongyang time to make more nuclear weapons while they wait for Beijing to apply pressure, according to a security group. "China's influence on North Korea is more than it is willing to admit but far less than outsiders tend to believe," said the report by the Brussels-based group. "The most important implication of this analysis for policy makers is that China cannot be relied upon either to bring a more cooperative North Korea to the table or to enforce whatever is agreed there," it said. “Expecting China to compel North Korean compliance will only waste more time and give Pyongyang longer to develop its nuclear stockpile."

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7. Kim Dae-jung's Trip to DPRK

Reuters ("TWO KOREAS DISCUSS VISIT BY KIM DAE-JUNG TO NORTH", 2006-02-02) reported that the DPRK and the ROK are in talks to allow former RO Korean President Kim Dae-jung to visit the DPRK in April, as regional powers try to persuade the Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons programs. "Kim Dae-jung hopes to visit Pyongyang by train some time in April," an aide to the former president said by telephone. "The South Korean government has relayed that wish to the North." A RO Korean government official confirmed Seoul and Pyongyang were in talks about the possible visit.

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8. ROK-USA Trade

The Los Angeles Times ("U.S., SOUTH KOREA ARE NEARING NEGOTIATIONS ON FREE TRADE PACT", 2006-02-02) reported that the United States and the ROK are about to open talks on a free trade. The ROK is already the United States' seventh-largest trading partner with about $70 billion in two-way trade annually. There are complications because of Seoul's warming relations with the DPRK, and a small but fervent anti-globalization movement within the ROK.

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9. Russia-PRC Bilateral Relations

ITAR-TASS: News Agency ("FE TO REPRESENT RUSSIA DURING YEAR OF RUSSIA IN CHINA", 2006-02-02) reported that at the first meeting of the organizing committee on preparations for the participation in socio-political, trade and cultural events promised to worthily represent all Russian

constituents of the region within the framework of the Year of Russia in the PRC.

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10. Russia Bird Flu

ITAR-TASS: News Agency ("RUSSIA HAS BIRD FLU PREVENTION PLAN - CHIEF SANITARY OFFICER", 2006-02-01) reported that according to chief sanitary officer Gennady Onishchenko Russia has drawn a bird flu prevention plan.

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11. Russian Amur River

ITAR-TASS: News Agency ("AMUR RIVER MONITORING BEGINS IN RUSSIA, CHINA REJECTS JOINT STUDY", 2006-02-01) reported that a recent large-scale scientific monitoring of the water environment in the Amur River basin is so far conducted only in the Russian territory. The PRC has so far given no permission for joint work in the Sungari River basin, as well at the right bank of the Amur.

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12. Russian Pacific Environment vs Development

ITAR-TASS: News Agency ("FAR EAST ENVIRONMENTALISTS OPPOSE PLANS TO BUILD HPS ON AMUR RIVER", 2006-02-02) reported that Far Eastern environmentalists came out against plans to build hydropower stations (HPS) on the Amur River. They maintain that HPS's on the river's main channel would totally upset the hydrological regime of the river, which would result in the ruin of the wetlands.

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13. Russian Military Capabilities

ITAR-TASS: News Agency ("RUSSIAN NAVY TO ACQUIRE NEW AIRCRAFT CARRIERS -- ADMIRAL", 2006-02-01) reported that Russia's Navy will acquire new aircraft carriers in the future, Navy Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Vladimir Masorin said.

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14. Japan-US Trade

Crisscross News ("U.S. LAWMAKER HINTS AT SANCTIONS AGAINST JAPAN FOR REIMPOSING BEEF ", 2006-02-02) reported that the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte criticized Japan on Tuesday and hinted at slapping sanctions on it for reimposing an import ban on U.S. beef, saying the United States would not stop automobile imports just because of defective parts.

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15. Japanese Corruption

Crisscross News ("JAPAN'S SCANDALS REFERRED TO IN GLOBAL CORRUPTION REPORT", 2006-02-02) reported that scandals involving donations to Japanese politicians and the misuse of public money are highlighted in a report released by London based Transparency International.

(return to top) The Asahi Shimbun ("DFAA SUSPECTED OF RIGGING BIDS FOR RUNWAY-TRANSFER PROJECT AT IWAKUNI BASE", 2006-02-02) reported that more cases of suspected bid-rigging have surfaced at the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA), this time concerning the relocation of a runway at Iwakuni Base to alleviate the safety and noise concerns of residents. (return to top) Crisscross News ("DEFENSE FACILITIES ADMINISTRATION AGENCY TO BE DISSOLVED: NUKAGA", 2006-02-01) reported that Defense Agency chief Fukushiro Nukaga said Wednesday his agency will disband the Defense Facilities Administration Agency, an entity at the center of a bid-rigging scandal involving the construction of air conditioning systems. (return to top)

16. Japan & UNSC

The Asahi Shimbun ("BOLTON NEGATIVE ON JAPAN MOVE TO EXPAND UNSC", 2006-02-02) reported that U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton indicated he could not support a proposal by Japan to raise the number of members on the U.N. Security Council to 21.

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17. Japan on Iranian Nuclear Proliferation

The Los Angeles Times ("JAPAN IS IN A QUANDARY OVER IRAN NUCLEAR CRISIS", 2006-02-02) reported that Monday's move to refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council over its nuclear program has forced many countries — including France, Russia and India — to weigh economic costs. In Japan the crisis is particularly acute as its big thirst for oil has collided with its self-image as the world's conscience against the spread of nuclear weapons.

(return to top) Crisscross News ("KOIZUMI URGES IRAN TO ADDRESS NUCLEAR CONCERNS", 2002-02-02) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi urged Iran on Tuesday to address international concerns about its contentious nuclear programs, indicating his country's readiness to back a move to refer the issue to the U.N. Security Council. (return to top)

18. PRC Internet Censorship

BBC News ("INTERNET FIRMS 'BOWED TO BEIJING' ", 2006-02-02) reported that US congressmen have condemned major IT firms including Microsoft and Google for helping the PRC censor the internet, saying that US firms were putting profits before American principles of free speech.

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19. PRC Coal Mines

The China Post ("COAL MINE BLAST IN NORTHERN CHINA KILLS 23, SICKENS 53", 2006-02-02) reported that a blast at a state-owned coal mine in the northern PRC killed 23 workers and caused 53 others to be poisoned with carbon monoxide.

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20. PRC Environment

Xinhua ("BEIJING HAS LEAST BLUE-SKY DAYS IN JAN. IN SIX YEARS", 2006-02-02) reported that the city of Beijing counted only 11 blue sky days in January, the least for the same period over the last six years, due to increasing pollutants in the air.

(return to top) Xinhua ("SEWAGE OUTFALLS DISCHARGE EXCESSIVE POLLUTANTS", 2006-0--02) reported that eighty-four percent of the PRC's excessive sewage outfall is discharged directly into the sea, causing severe damage to its offshore eco-system. (return to top)

21. PRC Energy

Xinhua ("RESERVE ELECTICITY SOURCE BUILT FOR THREE GORGES POWER STATION", 2006-02-02) reported that PRC engineers have started to install electromechanical equipment in Three Gorges Power Source Station, the electricity reserve source to provide energy for the gigantic Three Gorges Power Station.

(return to top) Xinhua ("CHINA TO SEE ENOUGH POWER SUPPLY SINCE 2006", 2006-02-02) reported that the PRC will go from power shortage to sufficient supply beginning this year with the operation of newly installed generating units. (return to top)

22. PRC Bird Flu

Xinhua ("H5N1 TESTS ON PEOPLE PUT IN ISOLATION NEGATIVE", 2006-02-02) reported that The Center for Health Protection (CHP) of the Hong Kong Department of Health Thursday reported preliminary negative results for H5N1 in three people who had potential exposure to a chicken found with influenza H5N1 virus in Sha Tau Kok.

(return to top) The China Post ("HK CLOSES AVIARIES AFTER BIRD FLU TEST PROVES POSITIVE", 2006-02-02) reported that PRC officials ordered the closure of all bird parks in Hong Kong after a crested myna, found dead on a playground, and a chicken, which a villager brought to Hong Kong from the mainland, tested positive for bird flu. (return to top)

23. Cross Strait Relations

The China Post ("KMT'S MA WARNS PRESIDENT NOT TO BREAK POLICY PLEDGES", 2006-02-02) reported that opposition leader Ma Ying-jeou yesterday warned President Chen Shui-bian that he might encounter many "unforeseen risks" if he broke with a series of policy pledges not to declare independence for Taiwan.

(return to top) Xinhua ("HK NEWSPAPERS REFUTE "TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE" REMARKS", 2006-02-02) reported that Hong Kong newspapers have carried editorials in the past few days, criticizing Taiwan authority leader Chen Shui-bian's recent "Taiwan independence" remarks. (return to top) The International Herald Tribune ("TAIWAN LEADER SETS OFF A TEMPEST", 2006-01-31) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-ban said, "It's proper time now to consider seriously the abolition of the National Unification Council and the Guidelines for National Unification, to express the Taiwan identity." He also suggested that Taiwan might apply this year to the United Nations as Taiwan instead of, the Republic of China, and indicated that Taiwan might work on a new draft of its constitution. (return to top)

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