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I. NAPSNet

1. Monitoring for 2nd DPRK Nuclear Test

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA STEPS UP CHECKS FOR NORTH NUCLEAR TEST", 2007-01-10) reported that the ROK is planning to step up its ability to detect a nuclear test in the DPRK. The ROK's Meteorological Agency wants to set up a new department this year to detect seismic activity caused by events such as nuclear tests. "Because there was confusion among agencies about the seismic activity from North Korea's October 9 nuclear test, we have decided to streamline the process," said Kim Seung-bai, a spokesman for the Korea Meteorological Agency (KMA). Under the plan backed by the agency, the KMA would be responsible for monitoring all seismic activity and would take over responsibility for checking man-made seismic activity, caused by events like nuclear tests, from the Korea Institute of Geoscience and Mineral Resources, a government affiliated agency. South Korea was among the first in the world to say on October 9 there was seismic activity indicating a nuclear test in North Korea, but its seismologists initially erred on the exact location of the nuclear test.

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2. US - ROK on Six Party Talks

Xinhua ("S. KOREAN, U.S. PRESIDENTS AGREE TO PUSH FORWARD SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2007-0-11) reported that the RO Korea and the US agreed that it is necessary to push forward the process of Six Party Talks and keep close cooperation with the PRC and other nations concerned over the nuclear issues. RO Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and U.S. President George W. Bush exchanged their opinions over the Iraq situation and the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula during a 10-minute telephone conversation at about 21:30 local time (1230 GMT), according to a news release by the ROK Presidential Office. At the conversation, Bush said the latest six-party talks made some progress and he expects the nuclear issue could be resolved through diplomatic means, the news release said. Roh highly commended the U.S. efforts made in the latest round of talks and suggested to strengthen bilateral cooperation on the nuclear issues to produce substantial progress.

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3. US - Japan on Six Party Talks

Kyodo News Service ("JAPANESE, U.S. OFFICIALS URGE N. KOREAN ACTION ON NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2007-01-11) reported that Senior Japanese and U.S. officials agreed that the DPRK should move to give up its nuclear weapons program in return for economic and energy assistance as the United States and other countries have proposed. They agreed that Japan and the United States will maintain close contact with each other to help denuclearize the Korean Peninsula on the principle of "dialogue and pressure" in dealing with the DPRK, said Kenichiro Sasae, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanic Affairs Bureau. Sasae made the comments in explaining to Japanese reporters the results of his meetings earlier in the day with Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill and Deputy National Security Adviser J.D. Crouch.

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4. Japan - Germany on Six Party Talks

Deutsche Welle ("JAPAN'S ABE, MERKEL DISCUSS NORTH KOREA IN BERLIN ABE AND MERKEL IN BERLIN", 2007-01-11) reported that Japanese Premier Shinzo Abe met with his German counterpart in Berlin to explain his country's current drive to redefine its foreign policy guidelines and increase economic co-operation with EU members. "The prime minister talked to me about his idea of a modern Japanese foreign and security policy," Merkel said. "There's a lot of common ground between our two sides, particularly as far as our stance towards North Korea is concerned. We both have a vested interest in the success of the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program. We call on North Korea to end its nuclear program, and we don't like the idea of them possessing nuclear weapons, or should I say, more nuclear weapons." "Japan cannot tolerate a nuclear-armed North Korea," Abe said.

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5. Japan - ASEAN on Six Party Talks

Kyodo News Service ("JAPAN URGES ASEAN, CHINA, SEOUL TO STEP UP PRESSURE ON NORTH KOREA", 2007-01-11) reported that Japan called on the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] plus the PRC and RO Korea to step up international pressure on the DPRK in a bid to resolve the nuclear standoff and abduction issue. "I stressed in the two meetings that we should draw North Korea into resolving the issue by intensifying international pressure on it with a thorough implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions," Senior Vice Foreign Minister Katsuhito Asano said. Asano made the call during the foreign ministerial meeting between Japan and ASEAN, and the "ASEAN-plus-three" foreign ministerial meeting in the Philippine resort island of Cebu. ASEAN, in response, expressed its "support" and "understanding" over Japan's position and vowed to do its best to help resolve the nuclear and abduction issues, according to Asano. RO Korea shared ASEAN's sentiments, while the PRC "did not say a single word" to counter Japan's position, he told reporters. Asano represented Japan on behalf of Foreign Minister Taro Aso who could not make it to Cebu due to his visit to Eastern Europe.

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6. Gathering of DPRK Experts

Associated Press ("PHILIPPINES TO HOST INFORMAL GATHERING ON NORTH KOREA NEXT MONTH", 2007-01-10) reported that the Philippines offered to host an informal gathering next month of experts from the countries involved in talks on the DPRK nuclear weapons program. Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, current chairman of the 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN, whose leaders are set to attend a summit this weekend in the central Philippines' Cebu city, reiterated Manila's offer to facilitate six-party talks aimed at resolving the standoff. Romulo said the informal gathering in February — within the context of Asia's largest security forum, called the ASEAN Regional Forum — will bring together experts, academics and members of non-governmental organizations. He did not name any of the participants.

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7. ROK on DPRK Scarlett Fever Outbreak

Associated Press ("S KOREA RULES OUT MEDICAL AID TO NKOREA OVER SCARLET FEVER",

2007-01-11) reported that the ROK has chosen not to provide any medical aid to the DPRK for the outbreak of scarlet fever. The DPRK has not publicly acknowledged the outbreak of the disease, but ROK media and a civic group have reported the disease broke out in northern Ryanggang Province in October and has spread to other parts of the North. Seoul had earlier indicated that it would consider sending medical aid once it gets confirmation of the new outbreak. But Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung said the ROK will not provide medical aid to Pyongyang as scarlet fever isn't a fatal disease and the belief that the DPRK can resolve this outbreak on its own. RO Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said scarlet fever is not usually a serious disease and can be easily treated with antibiotics. But it could become a problem in the DPRK because the country lacks medicine. Scarlet fever is typically seen in children under 18. It is caused by a bacteria also related to strep throat, an infection common among children.

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8. Kaesong Industrial Complex

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL TO ALLOT BUSINESSES MORE LAND AT KAESONG", 2007-01-12) reported that despite the lack of progress in the Six Party Talks, Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung said the government would assign more factory sites in the Kaesong Industrial Complex to ROK companies. The United States has complained to Seoul about the project, contending that it is a source of foreign exchange for DPRK weapons programs and a site where the rights of workers are abused. The sites to be leased by Seoul will be used for sewing factories, a labor-intensive occupation that lends itself to the DPRK's low wage rates. The plants to be leased have been under construction since August 2005; they will be completed by June. About 40 garment companies are expected to set up shop there. But the minister said that the lease of additional plant sites in the main area of the complex would not go forward because of the unsettled nuclear issues. Seoul has not linked operations at the complex to the nuclear issue, but like most other North-South cooperative ventures, work on further developing the Kaesong complex stalled after the DPRK's missile tests in July and its nuclear test in October.

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9. Former DPRK Foreign Minister's Illness

Korea Times ("NORTH KOREA'S PAEK NAM-SUN DIED OF LUNG CANCER", 2007-01-10) reported that the DPRK foreign minister, who was believed to have suffered from chronic kidney problems, reportedly died of lung cancer, according to a DPRK newspaper. In an obituary dated Jan. 4, the Minju Chosun said, "Regrettably, Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun passed away at 4:30 a.m. on Jan. 2 at the age of 77 because of terminal disease (lung cancer)," the newspaper was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. Paek is the latest in a series of high-profile victims of lung cancer in the DPRK, the report said. Oh Jin-u, the right-hand man of the founding leader, Kim Il-sung, died of lung cancer in 1995. Lim Dong-ok, former chief of the ruling Workers' Party propaganda organ, died of the same disease in August 2006.

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10. DPRK Law Consultancy

KCNA (through BBC) ("NORTH KOREA OPENS LAW OFFICE FOR FOREIGN INVESTORS", 2007-0-11) reported that the DPRK opened the Pyongyang Law Office, an independent corporate body, to provide services for the solution of legal matters arising in various sectors. Ho Yong-ho, chief of the

office, told KCNA that his office provides legal services upon application and assignment by foreign-invested businesses (equity or contractual joint ventures and wholly-foreign owned enterprises) and Koreans in overseas as well as by the institutions, establishments, organizations and citizens at home. It introduces the laws and regulations of the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] on foreign-related matters, Kaesong Industrial Zone, Kumgangsan Tourist Zone and others. It also holds legal consultations concerning the selection of the investment project, establishment and operation of foreign businesses, dissolution and bankruptcy of businesses, concerning documents of legal nature including feasibility study reports and memorandum of association, concerning trade, transport, finance, insurance, intellectual property, real property and concerning civil law relations between corporate bodies, corporate body and individual and so on.

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11. DPRK and German Bunnies

Der Spiegel ("MONSTER BUNNIES FOR NORTH KOREA", 2007-01-10) reported that an east German pensioner who breeds rabbits the size of dogs has been asked by the DPRK to help set up a big bunny farm to alleviate food shortages in the communist country. Now journalists and rabbit gourmets from around the world are thumping at his door. It all started when Karl Szmolinsky won a prize for breeding Germany's largest rabbit, a friendly-looking 10.5 kilogram "German Gray Giant" called Robert, in February 2006. Images of the chubby monster went around the world, even reaching the DPRK, a country of 23 million which according to the United Nations Food Programme "struggle to feed themselves on a diet critically deficient in protein, fats and micronutrients." Szmolinsky, 67, from the eastern town of Eberswalde near Berlin, recalls how the DPRK embassy approached his regional breeding federation and inquired whether it might be willing to sell some rabbits to set up a breeding farm in the DPRK. Each of his rabbits produces around seven kilograms of meat, says Szmolinsky, who was so keen to help alleviate hunger in the DPRK and named a special price -- ₩80 per rabbit instead of the usual ₩200 to ₩250. "One rabbit provides a filling meal for eight people. There are a variety of recipes such as rabbit leg or rabbit roulade. No one buys rabbit fur anymore though, I just throw that in the bin," says Szmolinsky with chilling dispassion.

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12. US-ROK Security Alliance

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL SAYS U.S. BASE MOVE IS PRIORITY", 2007-01-11) reported that Seoul is determined to seek a quick relocation of US military installations, Foreign Minister Song Min-soon assured reporters. Asked at a regular press briefing, whether there had been any change in the scheduled relocation date, originally agreed to be in 2008, the foreign minister said that he had told U.S. officials that the ROK had a strong desire to see the relocation proceed as quickly as possible. But he ducked a direct answer about whether the target date of 2008 was still possible.

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13. ROK Presidential Term of Office

The Associated Press ("SKOREA'S ROH PUSHES FOR TWO-TERM PRESIDENCY AMID SKEPTICISM ", 2007-01-11) reported that ROK leader Roh Moo-Hyun vowed to push for a two-term presidency, as skepticism about the constitutional change grew. Roh's renewed pledge came after the main opposition party said they would boycott his offer and opinion polls indicated a majority of people want it to be shelved until he leaves the office. Roh also suggested that the presidential and

parliamentarian terms be synchronized by the constitutional change for political stability.

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14. ROK Bird Flu

The Associated Press ("S.KOREA: BIRD FLU TRANSMITTED TO A HUMAN ", 2007-01-11) reported that ROK officials said that the bird flu virus had been transmitted to a human during a recent outbreak among poultry, but the person showed no symptoms of disease. The Korean Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said a person, whom it didn't identify, had been infected with the deadly H5N1 strain of the virus but developed natural immunity to the disease and wasn't ill.

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15. Japan Bird Flu

Kyodo ("750 CHICKENS DEAD IN SUSPECTED BIRD FLU INFECTION AT MIYAZAKI FARM ", 2007-01-11) reported that about 750 chickens have died at a poultry farm in the town of Kiyotake, Miyazaki Prefecture, and highly pathogenic bird flu is suspected as the cause, the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry said. The ministry and the Miyazaki prefectural government have isolated those chickens that are still alive there as an emergency measure under the law to prevent infectious diseases in livestock until the results of viral examinations are obtained.

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16. Sino-Iranian Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA TELLS U.S. ITS IRAN TIES PRIVATE", 2007-01-11) reported that the PRC warned the US not to meddle in its trade relations with Iran after Washington expressed concern about a planned investment by a PRC oil company in an Iranian gas field. "We think this kind of cooperation and relationship is legitimate. Normal cooperation should not be interfered," said PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Presse ("ISRAEL'S OLMERT URGES CHINA TO BACK TOUGHER SANCTIONS ON IRAN ", 2007-01-11) reported that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert urged the PRC to back tougher sanctions to halt Iran's nuclear programme, an Israeli official said, as Olmert wrapped up a three-day visit to Beijing. Olmert told PRC leaders that "although the solution is of a diplomatic nature, at a certain moment we will have to apply economic sanctions against Iran," if it flouts the international community's demands. [\(return to top\)](#) Haaretz Daily ("CHINA: IRAN HAS RIGHT TO CIVILIAN NUCLEAR ENERGY, BUT NOT THE BOMB", 2007-01-11) reported that the PRC is opposed to Iran becoming a military nuclear power, but Tehran has the right to develop nuclear energy for civilian purposes, the PRC's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao told visiting Ehud Olmert during their meeting in Beijing. Wen said that there is a "correct" way of dealing with this, and pointed to the United Nations Security Council and to independent decisions of individual countries to apply pressure on Iran. [\(return to top\)](#)

17. PRC on Myanmar Government

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CONDEMNS UN RESOLUTION DEMANDING CHANGE IN MYANMAR ", 2007-01-11) reported that the PRC condemned a draft resolution submitted to the UN Security Council by the US that demands an end to political repression by Myanmar's military

government. "The situation in Myanmar poses no threat to regional and international peace and security, so China is firmly against the interference of the UN Security Council," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. "We believe these are purely Myanmar's internal affairs."

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18. PRC Military

The Christian Science Monitor ("FIGHTER JET SIGNALS CHINA'S MILITARY ADVANCES ", 2007-01-11) reported that a sleek, swept-wing fighter-bomber dubbed the "Jian-10," unveiled here last week, is more than just another jet plane. It is the PRC's calling card, announcing Beijing's arrival among the top ranks of military manufacturers. The latest fruit of a military modernization drive that has produced an indigenous PRC nuclear attack submarine, early warning aircraft, frigates and destroyers, cruise missiles, and computerized command and control systems, the Jian-10 is "a decisive step by China toward becoming an aviation power," the official Xinhua news agency declared.

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19. PRC Anti-Corruption Measures

The Associated Press ("HU CONTINUES GRAFT CRACKDOWN IN CHINA ", 2007-01-11) reported that President Hu Jintao has vowed to tighten a crackdown on rampant corruption amid the growing number of arrests of top Communist Party officials and senior judges across the PRC for graft and other misdeeds. Hu, who is also general secretary of the party, has warned that unless corruption is brought under control, it will undermine Communist control in the country.

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20. PRC Gender Imbalance

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS SKEWED SEX-RATIO COULD MEAN INSTABILITY ", 2007-01-11) reported that the PRC will be home to 300 million more men than women by 2020, state media said, warning the gender imbalance, along with an aging population and rapid urbanization, could be destabilizing. The PRC has about 119 boys born for every 100 girls, an imbalance that has grown since it introduced a one-child policy more than 25 years ago to curb population growth -- a restriction that bolstered a traditional preference for boys.

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