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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Test

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. OFFICIALS WARN OF N.KOREA MISSILE TEST 'NEXT WEEK'", 2006-06-15) reported that US officials reportedly fear the DPRK may test-fire a Taepodong-2 missile next week. "Putting together various signs and evidence, U.S. authorities believe that a launch within one week is possible," a ROK government source said Thursday. Washington also claims that the movements it is seeing in the DPRK are the same as those carried out before the DPRK test-launched its Taepodong-1 missile in 1998. Experts speculate that the moves the US says it has spotted may have been the deployment of target tracking and climate radar equipment or run-throughs.

(return to top) Yonhap ("TENSION ESCALATES OVER POSSIBLE MISSILE TEST", 2006-06-15) reported that ROK officials are increasingly concerned that a possible DPRK test of a ballistic missile would further complicate the already-stalled multilateral efforts to end the reclusive state's nuclear weapons program. Officials here had until recently believed there was a fifty-fifty chance of Pyongyang going ahead with its threats to conduct a rocket test, although US officials have appeared more convinced that the DPRK will fire a missile. (return to top)

2. Inter-Korean Summit Anniversary

JoongAng Ilbo ("KOREAS' DELEGATES HUDDLE IN SECRET ", 2006-06-15) reported that senior members of the DPRK and ROK delegations at a celebration here of the anniversary of the 2000 inter-Korean summit meeting skipped some scheduled events yesterday afternoon. Instead, they huddled behind closed doors in meetings that officials refused to say anything about. After broadcasters and other media began to speculate that the subject was a missile test by the DPRK that reportedly could be imminent, the Ministry of Unification reacted. Yang Chang-seok, a public relations officer at the ministry, said the speculation was not true. He refused, however, to say anything else about the meetings except that they dealt with general inter-Korean relations.

(return to top) Korea Times ("CIVIC LEADERS OF 2 KOREAS CALL FOR MORE RECONCILIATION EFFORTS", 2006-06-15) reported that in a conference at the Kwangju Culture and Art Center, delegates of the two Koreas and overseas Koreans issued a joint statement appealing to Korean people everywhere to join together to achieve unification of the peninsula. ``Now, we face the historic responsibility to open a new era toward unification, braving all kinds of challenges and adverse winds against the tide of unification by our own efforts,'' the statement said. ``Let us achieve independence for the Korean people by refusing unjust intrusion by foreign powers into inter-Korean issues.'' (return to top)

3. Inter-Korean Diplomatic Dispute

Korea Times ("GNP, NK WAGE WAR OF WORDS", 2006-06-15) reported that the secretariat of the DPRK's Committee for the Peaceful Unification of the Fatherland Thursday countered the Grand National Party's criticism that the DPRK's organization should stop intervening in ROK politics. Opening the second round of the war of nerves, the secretariat said that ``we only told the truth, and gave the GNP the pills it needs to swallow,'' according to the DPRK's state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). ``If the GNP feels that the pills are bitter, it first needs to discard its chronic malpractice of worshipping the war maniac United States.''

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4. DPRK Asylum Seekers

JoongAng Ilbo ("3 FROM NORTH NOW IN CHINA REPORTEDLY GET U.S. ASYLUM", 2006-06-15) reported that a diplomatic source in Seoul said yesterday the US will accept three of four DPRK asylum-seekers now in the US Consulate General in Shenyang, PRC. Officials in Seoul said the defectors included three men and a woman. The US reportedly decided to reject one man because he was once employed by the DPRK's State Security Department, which monitors residents and operates political prisons in the reclusive country.

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5. US on DPRK Refugees in the PRC

Yonhap ("CHINA ESPECIALLY DISCRIMINATORY AGAINST NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES: U.S. COMMITTEE", 2006-06-15) reported that the PRC focuses special discrimination against DPRK refugees, refusing to let them work or own property -- privileges granted Vietnamese refugees, a US committee report said Wednesday. An annual survey released by the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) estimated some 50,000 DPR Koreans are in the PRC in search of asylum.

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6. US on Kaesong Worker's Rights

Yonhap ("U.S. OFFICIAL FORMALLY LINKS N.K. LABOR CONCERNS TO KAESONG", 2006-06-14) reported that a senior US official on Wednesday specifically linked Washington's general concerns about the DPRK's labor conditions to an inter-Korean industrial complex, recasting doubts about workers' rights and the dubious wage system. John Miller, director of the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons at the State Department, said the Kaesong industrial park is part of the focus.

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7. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("USFK CHIEF CALLS FOR REFLECTION ON ALLIED COMMAND", 2006-06-15) reported that the commander of the US Forces Korea has said the ROK needs thorough research and preparation for a new command structure if it is to take back wartime operational control of its forces from the US. Gen. Burwell Bell also calls for research into how land, sea and air forces should be composed in peace and war.

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8. Japan Reactor Shutdown

The Associated Press ("JAPANESE NUCLEAR REACTOR SHUTS DOWN ", 2006-06-14) reported that a Japanese nuclear reactor shut down automatically Thursday because of a shaking turbine, and there was no release of radioactivity, Kyoto News agency reported. The shutdown affected a reactor at the Hermosa nuclear power plant, about 100 miles west of Tokyo, the report said.

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9. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

Interfax ("SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION LEADERS OPEN MEETING", 2006-06-15) reported that the leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member-states started a meeting on Thursday. Taking part in the 6th SCO summit are the presidents of the PRC, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The leaders of the countries having observer status at the SCO, i.e. India, Iran, Mongolia, and Pakistan, and also the president of Afghanistan should later join the meeting. Speaking at a meeting with Uzbek leader Karimov, Chinese President Hu Jintao pointed to the importance of fighting "the forces of the three evils" - terrorism, separatism, and extremism.

(return to top) Interfax ("IRAN VOWS TO DEVELOP TIES WITH SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION", 2006-06-15) reported that Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said his country will develop relations with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)'s member-states to maintain security in the region and suggested that Iran could host a meeting of the SCO energy ministers. (return to top)

10. PRC-Pakistan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PAKISTAN, CHINA START FIRST BUS SERVICE ", 2006-06-15) reported that Pakistan and the PRC launched their first passenger bus service, linking the northern Pakistani town of Gilgit with the western PRC city of Kashgar, officials said. "This is the first ever bus service in more than 50 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries," Zafar Iqbal, managing director of the state-run Northern Area Transport Company.

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11. Taiwan Leadership

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT ATTACKS OPPOSITION RECALL BID", 2006-06-15) reported that Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian has blasted the opposition for using a probe into his son-in-law to launch power struggles against him, as parliament seeks to recall the leader amid snowballing corruption scandals involving his family. The president has been under mounting pressure since late May when his son-in-law Chao Chien-ming was arrested for alleged insider trading involving bank executives, corporate bosses and government officials.

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12. PRC Journalist Trial

The Associated Press ("CHINESE JOURNALIST GETS 1-YEAR PRISON TERM ", 2006-06-15) reported that a PRC journalist found guilty of extortion after writing articles about official corruption was sentenced Thursday to one year in prison, his wife and lawyer said. Yang Xiaoqing, a reporter for the state-run China Industrial Economy News, was sentenced at the Longhui No. 1 People's Court in Hunan province, his lawyer, Zhang Xingshui said.

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13. PRC Government Secrecy

The New York Times ("SECRECY AS A TOOL OF GOVERNMENT IN CHINA", 2006-06-15) reported that the trial of a researcher for The New York Times, which is to begin here on Friday, is evidence of the PRC's increasing reliance on state secrecy laws to tighten control over information, experts in human rights and the legal system say. Even as the PRC's headlong economic boom continues to deliver wider economic and personal freedom, the scope of these laws has been broadened over the last two decades to include almost all information related to the ruling Communist Party and the government.

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14. PRC Toxic Spill

The Associated Press ("CHINESE RUSH TO CLEAN UP COAL-TAR SPILL", 2006-06-15) reported that crews armed with cotton, sponges, straw and activated carbon soaked up toxic coal tar from a northern PRC river Thursday, hurrying to absorb the spill before it reaches a city of 10 million people. It was only the latest high-profile disaster affecting the PRC's polluted waterways: There have been at least 76 water pollution accidents in the last six months, by official count.

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15. Mongolia Natural Resources

The Associated Press ("PROTESTS HALT WORK AT MONGOLIAN GOLD MINE ", 2006-06-15) reported that Canadian mining company Centerra Gold Inc. said Thursday it has temporarily halted work at its Boroo gold mine in Mongolia amid protests over the government's dealings with the company. About 800 people demonstrated Wednesday in downtown Ulan Bator over Mongolia's mining policies, which offer generous incentives to foreign mining companies such as Centerra. Critics accuse the government of giving away too much of the country's abundant mineral wealth.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org