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I. NAPSNet

1. US, ROK on Korean War Peace Treaty

Joongang Ilbo ("VERSHBOW: PEACE TREATY TALKS ARE GOING ON", 2007-09-13) reported that the US and ROK are currently discussing how the process of formally ending the Korean War would work, US Ambassador Alexander Vershbow said. "I think that we have already begun consultations with the South Korean government to develop a common approach to these talks," the ambassador said. "I expect there will be a very complex process to actually work out all of the aspects of a peace agreement that is not just a brief declaration that says the war is over, but also will involve all kinds of provisions, including military confidence-building measures," Vershbow said.

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2. Inter-Korean Summit Agenda

Yonhap ("S. KOREA DENIES REPORT ON LIKELY RE-NEGOTIATION OF INTER-KOREAN SEA BORDER", 2007-09-13) reported that a controversy erupted again over whether the ROK plans to address the disputed sea border with the DPRK at their summit next month, as a major daily here reported that the Defense Ministry has asked for the opinion of the United Nations Command (UNC) on the matter. The Defense Ministry largely denied the report, but in a rather ambiguous manner. "We did not seek the UNC's opinion on the NLL," ministry spokesman Kim Hyung-gi said. "We only inquired as to whether its 1999 position that a new sea border needs to be discussed bilaterally between the two Koreas still holds."

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3. PRC Official and Inter-Korean Relations

Washington Post ("CHINESE ENVOY GAVE N. KOREA DATA TO SOUTH, OFFICIALS SAY", 2007-0--13) reported that for years, Ambassador Li Bin was the PRC's go-to diplomat for the tense Korean Peninsula. After studies in the DPRK, Li had served several tours in the PRC embassies in the DPRK and ROK. Fluent in Korean and gregarious in nature, he also struck up an unusually personal relationship with Kim Jong Il, the DPRK leader. It turns out, according to knowledgeable PRC officials, that Li was also a resource for the ROK, who exploited his insider knowledge about Kim and the closed-door DPRK government. During a tour as the PRC's ambassador to Seoul from 2001 to 2005, the officials said, Li regularly provided the ROK with information on Kim, the DPRK and PRC-DPRK relations. Li's willingness to talk got him arrested in Beijing late last year for betraying state secrets.

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4. Israel on DPRK Nuclear Material

The New York Times ("U.S. CONFIRMS ISRAELI STRIKES HIT SYRIAN TARGET LAST WEEK", 2007-09-12) reported that one Bush administration official said Israel had recently carried out reconnaissance flights over Syria, taking pictures of possible nuclear installations that Israeli officials believed might have been supplied with material from the DPRK. The administration official said Israeli officials believed that the DPRK might be unloading some of its nuclear material on Syria. "The Israelis think North Korea is selling to Iran and Syria what little they have left," the official said. He said it was unclear whether the Israeli strike had produced any evidence that might validate that belief.

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5. Sino-DPRK Trade Relations

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK-PRC FRIENDSHIP DISTRIBUTION CENTER UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN SINUIJU", 2007-09-13) reported that it has been reported that the PRC and DPRK governments are working in unison to push forward with a plan to jointly build a goods distribution center in the DPRK city of Sinuiju. The scope of trade between the PRC and DPRK is growing by the day, yet the Sinuiju Customs Office responsible for customs clearance for PRC imports was limited from the beginning, and the need for a replacement facility has been brought up time and time again. This new distribution center appears to be in response to these calls for a larger facility. The construction of the center will be a cooperative project involving materials and capital from the PRC, while the DPRK will provide the land and labor.

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6. Inter-Korean Family Reunions

The Korea Herald ("S. KOREA ACCEPTS N. KOREA'S REQUEST FOR FAMILY REUNION DELAY", 2007-09-13) reported that the DPRK proposed postponing inter-Korean family reunions to Oct. 17-22, citing a scheduling conflict with the coming summit between the two Koreas, according to Yonhap News Agency. ROK officials said they would accept the request after the two sides exchanged a list of candidates for the reunion at the truce village of Panmunjom.

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7. US-ROK Trade Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("FIN MIN TO RALLY SUPPORT FOR U.S. CONGRESS APPROVAL OF FTA ", 2007-0--13) reported that Finance Minister Kwon O-kyu plans to rally support for a US congressional approval of the ROK's free trade agreement with the US. After attending an annual IMF general meeting for three days from Oct. 20 in Washington, Minister Kwon is scheduled to hold roundtable meetings there and in Chicago with related authorities and officials from key US research institutes and businesses.

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8. Japan Government

The Asahi Shimbun ("FUKUDA, NUKAGA ENTERING LDP PRESIDENT'S RACE", 2007-09-13) reported that Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda and Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga are throwing their hats in the ring to replace Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election Sept. 23. LDP Secretary-General Taro Aso, previously considered a likely successor to Abe, has not made his plans clear, but he is expected to announce his candidacy today.

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9. Sino-Japanese Relations

Kyodo ("CHINA'S NO. 4 LEADER JIA, JAPAN'S POLITICIANS AGREE TO PROMOTE TIES", 2007-0-

-13) reported that the PRC's fourth-ranked leader Jia Qinglin and leaders of Japan's ruling and opposition parties agreed to jointly work to develop Sino-Japanese ties, lawmakers said. Jia, who is currently on a weeklong visit to Japan from Wednesday, met in succession with Taro Aso, secretary general of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, LDP General Council Chairman Toshihiro Nikai, main opposition Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa, and Akihiro Ota, head of the LDP's coalition partner, the New Komeito party.

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10. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("U.S. EYES $2.2 BLN AIRCRAFT, MISSILE SALE TO TAIWAN", 2007-09-13) reported that the Pentagon announced tentative plans to sell surplus P-3C Orion submarine-hunting aircraft and air-defense missiles to Taiwan in deals potentially worth more than $2.23 billion, including related gear and services. Taiwan is seeking to buy 12 surplus P-3C maritime patrol aircraft with T-56 turboprop engines, data terminals and a mobile operation command center in a deal that could be worth $1.96 billion, the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a notice to Congress.

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11. PRC Party Congress

Reuters ("CHILDREN OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION POISED FOR POWER", 2007-09-13) reported that the Cultural Revolution provides the social backdrop that shaped the formative years of rising political stars who lived through the chaos or were "sent down" to the countryside to learn from the masses. But this is a group -- often called the "fifth generation" of PRC leaders -- who were young enough to be able to bounce back from the turmoil of the period and whose early political experience came as the PRC was slowly opening up. And it is this generation that could be on the rise when the Communist leadership opens a key five-yearly congress on October 15. Well-educated, less ideological and more open to the outside world, this generation which has never known a PRC that wasn't Communist could start the country on its first steps towards democracy, analysts say.

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12. PRC Internet Censorship

BBC News ("CHINESE WEB FILTERING 'ERRATIC'", 2007-09-13) reported that the PRC's firewall that tries to sanitise web browsing is much more porous than previously thought, says a study. Carried out by US researchers outside the PRC, it found that the firewall often failed to block what the PRC government finds objectionable. Often, said the study, the idea of the firewall was more effective than the technology at discouraging talk about banned subjects.

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13. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SHUTS 1,000 FACTORIES NEAR POLLUTED LAKE", 2007-09-13) reported that more than 1,000 polluting factories have been closed down near the PRC's third largest freshwater lake after it was choked by an algae bloom this year, state media reported. More than two million people in Wuxi city in the eastern province of Jiangsu were left without clean tap

water in early June because of the algae bloom that spread across Taihu lake, once renowned for its scenic beauty. Since then, more than 1,000 petrochemical plants in the cities of Wuxi, Suzhou and Changzhou have closed and 1,600 more factories are scheduled to be shut over the next two years, the Beijing Times reported.

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