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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Working Groups

Hankoryeh ("NUCLEAR WORKING GROUP MEETS OVER ENERGY AID FOR N. KOREA", 2007-0-07) reported that working-level officials from six nations met Tuesday to discuss provision of energy aid to the DPRK. The meeting will last until Wednesday and focus on how to ship and store 950,000 tons of heavy oil or equivalent aid to the North, which has a storage capacity of only 200,000 tons a year, a Foreign Ministry official said. A separate working group on nuclear disarmament will meet next week for two days in the northeastern Chinese city of Shenyang.

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2. US State Dept. Official to Travel to DPRK

International Herald Tribune ("U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL TO ACCOMPANY ACADEMIC DELEGATION TO NORTH KOREA", 2007-08-07) reported that John Merrill, an analyst in the State Department's intelligence bureau, will travel to the DPRK with John Lewis, of Stanford University, and Siegfried Hecker, former director of the Los Alamos Nuclear Laboratory. Merrill is traveling in a "research capacity," said State Department spokesman Gonzalo Gallegos, and will not negotiate with the DPRK government. No other details of the trip, including whether the group would visit the nuclear reactor, were released.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times ("NK BOYCOTTS LIBERATION DAY EVENT", 2007-08-07) reported that the DPRK has boycotted a scheduled inter-Korean event in mid-August to celebrate the anniversary of Korea's liberation from Japan's colonial rule (1910-45), condemning an ROK-U.S. joint military exercise. This is the third time that the two sides have failed to hold the inter-Korean event since 2001.

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4. DPRK Malaria and ROK Blood Supply

Chosun Ilbo ("MALARIA IN N.KOREA AFFECTING BLOOD SUPPLY IN SOUTH", 2007-08-07) reported that Malaria in the DPRK is reducing available blood donations in the South, since northern Korea has been designated a limited malaria risk area by the World Health Organization, except Mt.Baekdu on the Chinese border, and the malaria risk zone is growing into North Gyeonggi Province near the DMZ. Residents and soldiers serving in malaria risk areas are disqualified as blood donors since infection cannot be ruled out.

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5. DPRK Tourism

Asia Times ("US TOURISTS PREPARE TO 'INVADE' N KOREA", 2007-08-07) reported that the DPRK

says it will admit foreign tourists this year only until October 10. Last year, the reclusive country accepted about 20,000 visitors from abroad. The majority were Chinese and RO Koreans. Fewer than 2,000 Westerners visited the DPRK last year.

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6. ROK-Russian Maritime Drill

The Vladivostok News ("RUSSIA, S. KOREA HOLD MARINE DRILLS", 2007-08-07) reported that a patrol ship of the ROK National Maritime Police Agency arrived in the Far Eastern port of Vladivostok for a friendly visit on Tuesday to participate in joint anti-terrorism drills, a press statement from Primorye's Border Department of Federal Security Service reported. The one-day exercises, conducted on Thursday in the Peter the Great Bay, included simulated situations for the crews to practice seeking and detaining a vessel hijacked by terrorists.

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7. ROK Hostages in Afghanistan

Korea Herald ("TALIBAN DEMAND EXCHANGE OF FEMALE PRISONERS", 2007-08-07) reported that Taliban militants proposed that female ROK hostages be freed in return for the release of an equal number of female Taliban prisoners held by the Afghan government. "We do not know the exact number of Taliban women imprisoned by the Afghan government, but if (Kabul) lets them go, we will release the same number of female hostages," Ahmadi said.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("FRUSTRATION IN SEOUL AS SUMMIT IS A DEAD-END", 2007-0-07) reported that with the Afghan-US summit yielding no good news for the ROK hostages held by the Taliban, disappointed Seoul officials continued looking for a path forward. White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said, "Both leaders agreed that in negotiations for the release, there should be no quid pro quo for the hostages. The Taliban are brutal and should not be emboldened by this." In Seoul, observers said the outcome was a major setback. "It's certainly negative. Seoul was hoping that some flexibility would be shown but this narrows down the remaining options," said Ju Jae-wu, a professor of international relations at Kyung Hee University. [\(return to top\)](#)

8. ROK on Iraq Mission

Yonhap ("S. KOREA REMAINS UNDECIDED ABOUT ITS TROOPS IN IRAQ", 2007-08-07) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry denied reports that it was leaning towards extending the stay of troops in Iraq, saying it has still to make a decision on whether to retain the troops and is in the process of examining public opinion. "There is no change in our position of submitting a timetable to terminate the mission of the Zaytun unit by the end of June," a ministry spokesman said. "We are listening to opinions from various institutions before making a decision."

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9. ROK-Australian Trade Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA SEEKS FTA WITH AUSTRALIA", 2007-08-07) reported that the ROK is expected to begin free trade talks with Australia before long as a bilateral study on the feasibility of a trade pact is currently underway. Finance Minister Kwon O-kyu directed officials to actively pursue an FTA with Australia during a meeting on Monday.

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10. Japan Leadership

Kyodo ("DPJ TAKES UPPER HOUSE HELM FOR 1ST TIME WITH EDA AS CHAMBER PRESIDENT", 2007-08-07) reported that the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan took control of the House of Councillors for the first time Tuesday with senior DPJ lawmaker Satsuki Eda elected president of the chamber, marking the start of political gridlock between the ruling and opposition camps. "We are faced with an unprecedented political situation and the public's expectations regarding the House of Councillors are extremely high," Eda said in his inaugural speech. "I will work for the smooth operation of parliament based on the principles of fairness and impartiality."

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11. Japan Defense Policy

Kyodo ("COALITION'S ELECTION LOSS SPELLS DELAY FOR NSC BILL", 2007-08-07) reported that the government and ruling coalition will set aside a bill to create a Japanese version of the US National Security Council in this fall's Diet session and instead concentrate on continuing naval support for the multinational operations in Afghanistan, coalition sources said Sunday. Although some DPJ members have expressed support for creation of a Japanese NSC, Abe's aides predict "there is no way" that DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa would readily agree to debate bills strongly pushed by Abe.

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12. Japan on Iraq, Afghanistan Role

Reuters ("JAPAN OPPOSITION CHIEF SAYS "NO" TO AFGHAN MISSION", 2007-08-07) reported that the head of Japan's main opposition party reiterated his opposition to extending support for US-led operations in Afghanistan and said his party might submit a bill to scrap Tokyo's mission to help rebuild war-torn Iraq. While Ozawa opposes this, he said his party would leave open the possibility of Japan taking part in Afghan operations sanctioned by the United Nations. Ozawa said Japan should forge a "military and non-military" alliance with the US on an equal footing.

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13. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Kyodo ("ABE SHRUGS OFF FOREIGN OPINIONS ABOUT VISIT TO YASUKUNI", 2007-08-07) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said that criticism from other countries will not affect his decision whether to visit the controversial Yasukuni Shrine. "I don't think I should say whether I will visit or not just based on what a foreign country says," Abe told reporters.

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14. Japan-Australia Trade Relations

Antara News ("JAPAN, AUSTRALIA RESUME FREE TRADE TALKS", 2007-08-07) reported that Japan and Australia resumed talks aimed at thrashing out a free-trade deal that would secure vital energy supplies for Asia's largest economy but also risk angering its farmers. The four days of talks

this week in Tokyo will cover issues including trade in goods, services, intellectual property, government procurement and energy, an official at the Japanese trade ministry said.

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15. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN SEEKING AEGIS DESTROYERS FROM U.S.: REPORT", 2007-08-07) reported that Taiwan wants to buy at least six Aegis-equipped destroyers from the US at a cost of more than \$4.6 billion, a newspaper said, a plan sure to anger the PRC. The United Daily News quoted unnamed sources as saying Deputy Defense Minister Ko Cheng-heng and Chief of the General Staff Chen Yung-kang would travel to the US this month to try to secure the deal.

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16. PRC Anti-Corruption Drive

The Associated Press ("TRIALS START IN CHINA PENSION SCANDAL", 2007-08-07) reported that trials have begun in a wide-ranging pension fund scandal in the PRC's business hub of Shanghai that brought down the city's top official, a magazine reported. Seven people have been indicted in Shanghai, with the trial of Wang Guoxiong, a manager with a city government investment arm, among those already under way, the highly regarded business weekly Caijing reported in its edition published Monday.

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17. PRC Media Control

The Associated Press ("PRESS FREEDOM GROUP PROTESTS IN BEIJING", 2007-08-07) reported that police detained journalists at a rare protest in Beijing, staged by a free-press advocacy group that accuses the government of failing to meet promises for greater media freedom one year ahead of the 2008 Olympic Games. The detentions, which came during a visit to the PRC by International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge, followed the unfurling of posters depicting the Olympic rings made from handcuffs members of Reporters Without Borders on a pedestrian bridge outside the headquarters of the Beijing Olympics planning committee. The Paris-based group said the PRC continues to restrict press freedoms and lock up journalists, political dissidents and activists who publish on the Internet — despite pledges to liberalize made when bidding to stage the games.

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18. PRC Privacy Law

Channel News Asia ("CHINA TO INTRODUCE LAW ON PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION", 2007-0-07) reported that the PRC is planning to introduce its first law on protecting personal data, amid rising anger at how easily people's private details are falling into the hands of advertisers, state media reported. Such a law has become necessary in the PRC as more and more people find their personal information, such as mobile phone numbers, home addresses and even medical records, disclosed to unauthorised parties, the China Daily said.

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