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I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on Six Party Talks

Stratfor ("S. KOREA URGES N. KOREA TO RETURN", 2006-08-15) reported that ROK President Roh

Moo Hyun urged the DPRK to return to six party talks regarding its nuclear weapons program in a speech commemorating the 61st anniversary of the liberation of the Korean peninsula from Japanese forces. He also said that the ROK was willing to provide assistance to the DPRK to work toward a non-nuclear Peninsula.

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2. DPRK Flood Aid

Reuters ("S.KOREA RED CROSS PLANS MASSIVE RICE AID FOR NORTH", 2006-08-15) reported that the ROK's Red Cross can give as much as 100,000 tonnes of rice to flood-ravaged DPRK in a one-time aid package. Red Cross President Han Wan-sang said in an interview with KBS radio he hoped South and North Red Cross officials would hold talks soon about the aid plan so that shipments can begin next week. The ROK, a major supplier of aid, cut off its regular food aid last month following the missile launches, saying it could resume the aid if Pyongyang returned to stalled talks on ending its nuclear weapons programme. Seoul's food assistance last year was 500,000 tonnes of rice.

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3. DPRK Illegal Imports

Yomiuri Shimbun ("DPRK 'CLINIC' USING FREEZE DRIER", 2006-08-12) reported that a freeze drier, illegally exported from Japan and capable of being converted for biological weapons use, was reportedly transferred to Ponghwa Clinic in Pyongyang, a medical facility that treats Kim Jong Il and top officials of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, according to Japanese police. The clinic also reportedly operates on special agents to change their facial features, including the removal of scars and moles. The clinic is reportedly unknown among the public in the DPRK.

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4. Wedding at First DPRK Orthodox Temple

Itar-Tass ("FIRST WEDDING CEREMONY HELD AT ONLY ORTHODOX CHURCH IN NORTH KOREA", 2006-08-15) reported that Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad performed a marriage ceremony for Russian Ambassador to the DPRK, Andrei Karlov, at the new Holy Trinity Cathedral – the only Orthodox temple in the DPRK. That was the first-ever wedding ceremony at the new cathedral, which was blessed by Metropolitan Kirill on August 13. The construction of the Holy Trinity Cathedral began in 2003 by the initiative and under personal control of Kim Jong Il. Korea fully financed the project. The church articles were delivered from Russia.

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5. DPRK-Japan Relations

Xinhua ("DPRK DEMANDS JAPAN PAY FOR PAST COLONIAL CRIMES ", 2006-08-15) reported that the DPRK has demanded Japan pay for the crimes it committed during its colonial rule on the Korean Peninsula. The Rodong Sinmun, an official DPR Korean newspaper, also accused Japan of driving the DPRK-Japan relations to a dangerous level by escalating its "preemptive attack" policy against the DPRK. Japan's colonial rule in the Korean Peninsula resulted in 8.4 million slave workers kidnapped from Korea to Japan and 200,000 women forced to serve the Japanese army as sex slaves.

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6. Japan on WWII Anniversary

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI STRESSES INT'L FRIENDSHIP ON 61ST ANNIVERSARY OF WWII END", 2006-08-15) reported that Japan marked the 61st anniversary of the end of World War II on with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi stressing that friendship with other countries is important for Japan's prosperity. Koizumi told the government-sponsored memorial service, "We should not forget that friendly ties with other countries and territories have been fundamental to Japan's stability in the postwar era."

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7. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Reuters ("JAPAN PM DEFIES CHINA, S.KOREA WITH WAR SHRINE", 2006-08-15) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi paid his respects at Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine for war dead on Tuesday, the anniversary of his country's World War Two surrender. Tokyo's ties with Beijing and Seoul are already at their worst in decades, partly because of Koizumi's annual pilgrimages.

(return to top) Kyodo ("TANIGAKI CRITICIZES SHRINE VISIT, ABE, ASO DEFEND IT", 2006-08-15) reported that Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki, a contender to succeed Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, criticized the premier's visit to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine, while his two rivals for the post, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe and Foreign Minister Taro Aso defended the visit. (return to top)

8. PRC, ROK on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI'S YASUKUNI VISIT SPARKS OUTCRY FROM NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES", 2006-08-15) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Tokyo's war-related Yasukuni Shrine immediately sparked an outcry from neighboring countries Japan invaded and occupied before and during World War II, with the PRC and ROK leading the pack of critics. The PRC called it a "challenge to international justice," while the ROK expressed "deep disappointment and indignation." Both nations summoned the respective top envoys of Japan -- Japanese Ambassador to the PRC Yuji Miyamoto and Japanese Ambassador to the ROK Shotaro Oshima -- to lodge a formal protest.

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9. US on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Agence France-Presse ("US STAYS OUT OF JAPAN SHRINE DISPUTE", 2006-08-15) reported that the White House kept out of the controversy over Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to a shrine honoring World War II dead and war criminals, calling it an "internal matter." But with the PRC and the ROK strongly objecting to Koizumi's tour of the Yasukuni shrine, spokeswoman Dana Perino said Washington hoped Japan and its neighbors would "try to solve the problem" through diplomacy.

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10. PRC Journalist Trial

The Associated Press ("CHINA TRIES REPORTER ACCUSED OF SPYING ", 2006-08-15) reported that a reporter accused of spying for Taiwan was put on trial in the PRC's capital Tuesday, the latest in a string of espionage cases against people with overseas ties. Ching Cheong, a correspondent for Singapore's main English language newspaper, The Straits Times, was detained in April 2005, and state media later claimed he confessed to selling military secrets to Taiwan and setting up a spy network. His supporters say he is innocent.

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