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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. US - DPRK Relations

The Washington Post ("NORTH KOREAN OFFICIAL TO ATTEND N.Y. SEMINAR TRIP BUILDS ON CONTACTS WITH THE U.S. ", 2004-08-03) reported that a senior DPRK official will attend a foreign policy seminar next week in New York, allowing him to cross paths with U.S. officials attending the same meeting, diplomats said. This is the second year in a row that Li Gun, deputy head of U.S. affairs at the DPRK's Foreign Ministry, will attend the meeting of scholars and experts hosted by the National Committee on American Foreign Policy. Diplomats said that several State Department officials are expected to attend the New York conference, including Joseph R. DeTrani, special envoy for negotiations with the DPRK. But State Department spokesman J. Adam Ereli said "there are no plans for bilateral meetings between him [Li Gun] and U.S. officials."

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Agence France-Presse ("US IN DIPLOMATIC DRIVE TO END KOREAN NUCLEAR CRISIS", 2004-0--03) reported that the US held talks with the ROK on the nuclear standoff in the Korean peninsula as the US pondered a response to the DPRK's rejection of its aid-for-disarmament plan. US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck met as part of intense diplomacy in recent weeks ahead of the fourth round of six-party. "This is part of a regular pattern of diplomatic consultations that we have with our partners in this process," US State Department deputy spokesman Adam Ereli said ahead of the Kelly-Lee talks. He said the meeting was to prepare for both the working group as well as the plenary of the six-party talks among host the PRC, the US, Russia, the DPRK, Japan and ROK by the end of September.

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3. Kerry on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Donga Ilbo ("KERRY SHOWS INTENTION FOR BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA ", 2004-08-03) reported that U.S. Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry on August 2 said that he will negotiate with the DPRK directly as part of the six-way talks while continuing with the dialogues to end the DPRK nuclear program if he takes office. He pointed out in a policy report titled "Our Plan for the U.S." revealed this day that, "The North Korean nuclear crisis became more serious while the George W. Bush administration concentrated on Iraq, and it was reported that North Korea produced enough new materials to make six to nine nuclear bombs." He also added, "I'll try to come to a comprehensive agreement to end the North Korean nuclear program completely, irrevocably, and verifiably." In regard to the U.S.-ROK relationship, he said, "I'll actively work for a better relationship to advance cooperation with the South, a historical ally in the matter of economy and security."

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4. US - ROK Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, U.S. TO DISCUSS TROOP REDUCTIONS, 2ND ID RE-ORGANIZATION PLANS ", 2004-08-03) reported that the ROK and the U.S. are known to start negotiations in Seoul on Thursday on reducing U.S. troops in Korea by about 12,500 men. Ministry of National Defense spokesman Nam Dae-yeon said, "Both nations are discussing plans to open the 11th Future of the Alliance talks (FOTA) in Seoul from Thursday to Saturday. Ahn Kwang-chan, the head of Defense Ministry policy bureau, will lead the Korean delegation and U.S. Undersecretary of Defense Richard Lawless will represent the U. S. side." The U.S. officially informed Korea that it would reduce U.S. troops in Korea by 12,500 men by the end of 2005, but the Korean government will request that they stay until 2006 to 2007 out of concern for a possible security vacuum on the Korean Peninsula. It is also known that Korea plans to ask that certain core units, like the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) units, remain in Korea.

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5. DPRK Military Spending

The Washington Times ("NORTH KOREA PUMPS MONEY INTO MILITARY", 2004-08-03) reported that the DPRK is spending as much as 40 percent of its gross domestic product on its military, including its nuclear-weapons program, to give its 1.2-million-man army key advantages over better-armed U.S. and ROK forces, said Army Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, the U.S. Forces Korea commander. The four-star general said the DPRK, despite its poor economy, continues to invest between 35 percent and 40 percent of its gross domestic product in what the DPRK calls a "military first" policy - building up military forces at the expense of the civilian sector. "They are making, primarily, their investments in the asymmetrical arena," he said in an interview with The Washington Times at his headquarters in the Yongsan military garrison.

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6. MIA / POW Recovery Program

Yonhap ("N. KOREA TO HAND OVER REMAINS OF U.S. SOLDIERS ", 2004-08-03) reported that two sets of remains believed to be those of U.S. soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War will be handed over by the DPRK on Thursday, the U.N. Command said Tuesday. The remains will be delivered to the U.N. Command through the truce village of Panmunjom, located in the Demilitarized Zone dividing the two Koreas, it said.

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7. Inter- Korean Talks

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA REGRETS NORTH NO-SHOW AT MINISTER TALKS", 2004-08-03) reported that the ROK voiced regret on Tuesday at the DPRK's failure to show up for ministerial talks in Seoul, urging Pyongyang to reschedule the meetings to keep key economic projects on track. The DPRK never replied to the South's requests last month to discuss the agenda for what would have been the 15th round of inter-Korean ministerial meetings. The cabinet-level talks were slated to run for four days from Tuesday. Pyongyang has berated the South twice in the past month.

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8. Inter - Korean Relations

The New York Times ("IN A DMZ THAT BRISTLES LESS, THE VILLAGERS ARE AT HOME", 2004-08-03) reported that the armistice ending the Korean War in 1953 created the DMZ, a strip of land two and a half miles wide running about 150 miles from coast to coast. It remains enclosed in barbed wire fences, dotted with land mines and surrounded by hundreds of thousands of soldiers. In a rare moment of agreement, though, the ROK and DPRK decided in 1955 to build model villages to extol each side's superior way of life. And so was born Taesung Village, also called Freedom Village, on the southern half of the DMZ here, facing the DPRK's own model village, called Kijong. Life here has gotten easier because the North and the South are increasingly friendly. The propaganda that each side broadcast over loudspeakers ceased in June.

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9. ROK on DPRK Identity

Yonhap ("LAWMAKERS LAUNCH LEGISLATION ON NORTH KOREA'S IDENTITY ", 2004-08-03) reported that a group of reformist lawmakers on Tuesday submitted to the National Assembly a bill aimed at recognizing the DPRK as a legal entity, a move expected to deepen ideological disputes in the ROK. Currently, the ROK Constitution and the National Security Law define the DPRK only as an anti-state organization, not a state.

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10. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Korean Times ("SEOUL WON'T ADDRESS NK HUMAN TESTING ", 2004-08-03) reported that the ROK government will not confront Pyongyang over claims by a DPRK scientist that he used chemical weapons to experiment on political prisoners before defecting to the ROK, a senior official at the Unification Ministry has said. "It's hard to check the authenticity of the North Korean defector's allegation," the official told The Korea Times on condition of anonymity. "But unless the claims can be clarified, we will not take up the issue with North Korea." Responding to the latest report, the Unification Ministry official said while the international community may blame the ROK for failing to address human rights issues with the DPRK, the government believes raising the claims would hurt progress in inter-Korean relations. "South Korea fully understands the seriousness of the North Korean humanitarian issue, but we are taking a different approach to that of the international community," he said.

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11. DPRK - Vietnamese Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA SLAMS VIETNAM FOR 'COMPLICITY' IN DEFECTIONS", 2004-08-03) reported that in an interview with the DPRK's Korea Central News Agency, a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesperson said, "We have sufficient material [showing] that Vietnam conspired with the U.S. and South Korean authorities' enticed kidnapping of our citizens... We cannot overlook Vietnam's complicity in this incident." The spokesperson said, "Most of our citizens who were made to look like defectors were actually people who were visiting their relatives in Northeast China who were caught by the evil hand and seduction tactics of enemy spy bodies... Through this incident, Vietnam has revealed on its own how it could easily commit faithless acts that forsake even basic moral sense and

ethics between nations for its own interests." The spokesperson also said, "The acts of human trafficking committed by some NGOs that, in the name of humanitarianism under the provocation of the United States, entice and sell our citizens, will definitely be taken into account."

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12. DPRK Food Aid

Donga Ilbo ("JAPAN: "FOOD AID TO NORTH KOREA WILL BE DIVIDED INTO SEVERAL SHIPMENTS" ", 2004-08-03) reported that the Japanese government decided to officially approve a bill to aid the DPRK with 250,000 tons of food and $10 million worth of pharmaceuticals during a Cabinet conference scheduled on August 5. Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi announced this decision yesterday and added that food aid to the DPRK will be divided into several shipments, not conducted in one gross shipment. Even though a Japanese government official said the reason for the divided offer was because of the technical capability limits of the World Food Program, which would transport the aid, the Japanese media said there was an intention of connecting the aid with the responses of the DPRK surrounding the re-investigation into the 10 missing persons suspected of being abducted.

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13. DPRK - Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, N. KOREA EYE WORKING-LEVEL TALKS AUG. 11 IN CHINA", 2004-08-03) reported that Japan and the DPRK are planning to hold a working-level meeting from Aug. 11 in Beijing to mainly discuss the issue of the DPRK's abductions of Japanese nationals, diplomatic sources said Monday. "It will be held next week. The (formal) decision will come in a day or two," a senior Foreign Ministry official said. During the planned meeting, Japan will urge the DPRK to provide an interim report on its reinvestigation of the fates of 10 Japanese who Japan says were abducted by the DPRK but have not been accounted for, the sources said.

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14. Japan on Maritime Interdiction

Reuters ("JAPAN TO HOST SECURITY DRILL, MAY UPSET NORTH KOREA", 2004-08-03) reported that, nudged by the US, Japan will host multinational sea exercises in October as part of an initiative to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, even though analysts say the move could hurt talks with the DPRK, an unspoken focus of the drill. Japan's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that Tokyo would host the drill, the latest in the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) launched last year to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons-related materials. Japan will urge the PRC and ROK, which unlike Japan are not among the 15 core PSI members, to take part in what will be the sixth maritime PSI drill, a ministry official said.

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15. Jenkins Case

The Associated Press ("U.S. TO SEND LAWYER TO MEET JENKINS ", 2004-08-03) reported that U.S. Army officials in the ROK plan to send a military lawyer to meet with accused U.S. Army deserter Charles Robert Jenkins shortly in Japan, an official said Tuesday. The U.S. military has

refrained from formally requesting custody of Jenkins since he arrived at a Tokyo hospital last month. But Washington says it intends to bring him to justice, as soon as he is physically able, for allegedly abandoning his ROK post in 1965 and defecting to the DPRK. The U.S. Army in the ROK had received a request from Jenkins for counsel and was planning to send a lawyer as soon as scheduling permitted, a U.S. official familiar with the case said on condition of anonymity.

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16. Fischer Case

Reuters ("EX-CHESS CHAMP FISCHER SEEKS THIRD COUNTRY REFUGES", 2004-08-03) reported that former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, wanted by Washington for defying sanctions on Yugoslavia, is looking for countries willing to give him a home -- including perhaps Serbia and Montenegro -- if Japan goes ahead with a decision to deport him, an adviser said on Tuesday. Fischer has filed for refugee status in Japan and is also in contact with other countries that might accept him, Bosnitch said. Japan accepts only political refugees. Fischer's supporters in Japan say he is being persecuted by the US.

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17. Sino - US Relations

Reuters ("CHINA-U.S. TIES STRAINED OVER TAIWAN ... AGAIN ", 2004-08-03) reported that the PRC now presents Taiwan as basically the only issue worth discussing with the US. It has practically hijacked every meeting with senior US officials in Beijing. "Especially since the Taiwan election, Chinese leaders are more and more dissatisfied with the American position," said Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at Beijing's Renmin University. "On the one hand, the U.S. has gradually, in Chinese eyes, reduced pressure on Chen Shui-bian, and it has warmed up relations with him," he said. Analysts point to several snubs after Chen's re-election to a second four-year term. May, the month Chen was inaugurated, was particularly rough. That month, Bush reiterated U.S. support for the "one-China" policy in a phone call with PRC President Hu. But the Pentagon issued a report warning that the PRC's military was modernizing rapidly, with the express aim of conquering Taiwan. The House of Representatives voted to support Taiwan's bid to join the World Health Organization.

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18. US on Cross - Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US WILL NOT BACK DOWN FROM ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN, SENATORS SAY IN CHINA", 2004-08-03) reported that a US senate delegation has had "strong words and very forceful discussions" with the PRC over Taiwan, telling the PRC that the US would not back down from selling arms to the island, a leading American lawmaker said. "We believe we are still following the 1979 policy set down by China itself to recognize (the) One China (policy) but at the same time opposing any attempt by either side to change the relationship between Taiwan and the mainland by force," Senate leader Ted Stevens told reporters. He rejected the PRC's protest that US military exchanges and arms sales to Taiwan constituted a breach of the accord.

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19. Cross - Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN BRUSHES OFF CHINA'S LATEST THREAT TO ATTACK", 2004-08-03) reported that Taiwan's military brushed off on Tuesday the PRC's threat to crush any independence attempt by the democratic island, showing no alarm at the latest volley in the war of words between the arch-foes. The PRC sees Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's plan to adopt a new constitution for Taiwan by 2008 as a move toward a formal declaration of independence by a renegade province, and has been preparing for a possible military showdown. "Communist China has never given up its attempt to attack Taiwan," Taiwan defense ministry spokesman Huang Suey-sheng told a news conference. "It's no surprise that Communist China will try to use any excuse it can find to prepare for such an attack," Huang said.

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20. PRC Space Program

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA STARTS DEVELOPMENT OF ITS FIRST LUNAR EXPLORATION CRAFT", 2004-08-03) reported that the PRC has started developing its first unmanned lunar exploration craft in order to meet its own tight timetable of reaching the moon before 2007. Work on the craft, named "Chang'e 1" after a moon traveler of ancient legend, is going smoothly, making members of the moon program confident the launch will go ahead as planned, the Xinhua state news agency reported Tuesday. State media reported earlier the "Chang'e 1" is expected to orbit the moon for at least 12 months. Landing an unmanned spacecraft on the moon will take longer preparation and is not expected until 2010.

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21. PRC Political Prisoner

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ASKED TO LIFT RESTRICTIONS ON TIBET'S 'SINGING NUN' PHUNTSOG", 2004-08-03) reported that US-based Human Rights Watch urged the PRC to immediately lift all restrictions on "Singing Nun" Phuntsog Nyidron, who was released after being Tibet's longest serving female political prisoner. Phuntsog was released in March after 15 years in Tibet's notorious Drapchi Prison but has been under constant government supervision since then, Human Right Watch said in a statement. Phuntsog, 38, was arrested during a peaceful demonstration in Lhasa in October 1989, days after the exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to negotiate greater autonomy for the Himalayan region with the PRC.

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22. Northeast Asian Historical Association

Korea Times ("N-E ASIA HISTORY BODY PROPOSED", 2004-08-03) reported that in the wake of mounting concerns over the PRC's alleged distortions of Korean history, a ROK scholar on Tuesday proposed the establishment of a joint history committee consisting of experts from Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing. "South Korea should take the initiative in setting up the committee to maintain a regional identity in Northeast Asia beyond nationalistic views on history," Bae Kung-chan, a researcher at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, said in a report. As the committee produces its research findings, the three nations should ultimately reflect the result in their history textbooks

without distortion, he stressed. Given the sensitivity of the issue, Bae also said that the joint committee should be organized and operated by non-governmental groups under the auspices of the government.

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