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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Nuclear Programme

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SAYS TO COME CLEAN ON NUCLEAR PROGRAMME", 2007-08-18) reported that the DPRK says it is prepared to come clean with a complete inventory of its nuclear programme. "We will be making a transparent disclosure of all nuclear programme and nuclear equipment," DPRK foreign ministry official Ri Kun was quoted by the ROK's Yonhap news agency as telling reporters in Shenyang.

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2. DPRK-US Normalization Talks

Yonhap ("U.S., N. KOREA LIKELY TO HOLD NORMALIZATION TALKS IN GENEVA THIS MONTH", 2007-08-19) reported that officials from the United States and DPRK are likely to convene in Geneva later this month for the second round of talks on normalizing bilateral relations. The two countries held the first round of working-level talks in New York in March this year.

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3. Inter-Korean Military Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("DEFENSE MINISTER STANDS UP FOR NORTHERN LIMIT LINE", 2007-08-22) reported that ROK Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo has pledged to protect the Northern Limit Line in the West Sea as the maritime border with the DPRK. The redrawing of the sea border may be put on agenda for the planned inter-Korean summit slated for early October. Kim reportedly said he did not understand Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung's recent remark that the West Sea Battle of 2002 "should prompt South Korea to reflect how it can ensure national security." The West Sea battle killed or injured 24 RO Korean soldiers.

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4. ROK Abductees

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. URGED TO CONSIDER RESOLUTION ON WAR ABDUCTEES", 2007-08-22) reported that Lee Mi-il, president of the Korean War Abductees Family Union (KWAFU), intends to present resolution calling for the return of 80,000 RO Koreans abducted to the DPRK during the Korean War to US Congress, with the support of Republican representatives Frank Wolf and Edward Royce. Jay Lefkowitz, the U.S. special envoy for human rights in the DPRK, expressed his support for the resolution, saying that now is the right time to resolve the abductees issue.

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5. ROK Hostages in Afghanistan

Dong-a Ilbo ("HOSTAGES MAY BE ON HUNGER STRIKE", 2007-08-22) reported that Nineteen ROK hostages being held by the Taliban are said to be on a hunger strike, demanding that they be held together instead of being separate. The captives started a hunger strike from the morning of August 19. They are separated into several groups and each group has two females and one male. What they want is to be held together, said the Yonhap News Agency, quoting a local source on August 20. The 19 hostages are divided into five groups; four groups have four people and one group has three

people. The hawkish kidnappers under the direction of the Taliban hold three groups, and the dovish kidnappers under the influence of Pakistan hold two groups, said a local source according to the Yonhap.

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6. Japan-ROK Economic Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("KOREA AND JAPAN SHAKE ON FINANCIAL MONITORING", 2007-08-22) reported that financial market turmoil needs to be closely watched to ensure risks to the global economic expansion don't become excessive, the ROK and Japanese finance ministers said. Stock and credit markets have slumped around the world on concern that the rout in the US subprime mortgage industry would spread and crimp global economic growth. Kwon O-kyu and his Japanese counterpart Koji Omi released a joint statement after talks yesterday in Gwacheon, ROK. The ministers recognized the need for continuous monitoring of the volatility in international financial markets, according to yesterday's statement. They highlighted the need to identify risks in advance to help prevent such risk factors from growing too excessively.

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7. Japan-India Relations

Taiwan Sun ("INDIA, JAPAN UNVEIL A FUTURE STRATEGIC AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP ROAD MAP", 2007-08-22) reported that India and Japan today agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation and signed a road map for a future strategic and global partnership. In the road map agreed today, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe reaffirmed that the India-Japan partnership has largest potential for growth, and recognized that both countries "share a congruence of interests". The road map envisages greater political, security and defense cooperation with regular meetings of the ministers of both the countries, deepening and broadening the strategic dialogue through various channels like the regular meeting of National Security Advisers, Foreign Secretaries and young diplomats of both the countries.

(return to top) The Associated Press ("JAPAN ASKS ASIAN DEMOCRACIES TO UNITE, OMITS CHINA", 2007-08-22) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called for a "broader Asia" partnership of democracies that would include India, the US and Australia, but omit the region's superpower, the PRC. Abe's comments came in an address to a joint session of India's parliament at the start of a visit that aims to boost trade between Asia's largest and third largest economies, and counter the PRC's growing strength. (return to top)

8. Japan MSDF Indian Ocean Mission

Reuters (""NEGATIVE" MESSAGE IF JAPAN ENDS AFGHAN MISSION", 2007-08-22) reported that the failure of Japan to extend a navy mission in support of US-led operations in Afghanistan would send the wrong message to the world and to terrorists, Japan's defense minister said. Japan has been providing fuel and goods for US-led coalition warships in the Indian Ocean since 2001 under a law that expires on November 1.

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9. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The Peoples Daily Online ("CHINA, RUSSIA TO LAUNCH JOINT ANTI-TERROR DRILL IN MOSCOW", 2007-08-22) reported that the PRC's armed police and the interior forces of Russia will launch a joint anti-terrorism drill in Moscow in early September. "Cooperation 2007" will be the the first international anti-terrorism exercise for the PRC's armed police outside the PRC. The drill was in accordance with the principles of Shanghai Cooperation Organization and related agreements signed by the two countries, said sources from the PRC's armed police.

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10. Cross Straight Relations

Los Angeles Times ("MULLEN FINDS TAIWAN A HOT TOPIC IN CHINA", 2007-08-22) reported that the Navy admiral poised to become the US military's top officer reiterated that the US would not support a push for independence by Taiwan, but added that Washington would continue to urge the government in Taipei to acquire defensive weapons to hedge against an attack by Beijing. At the end of a five-day trip to the PRC, Adm. Michael G. Mullen said the issue of Taiwan came up in nearly every meeting he had with PRC officials, including a question-and-answer session with lower-level officers. Beijing's displeasure with U.S. arms sales was "pointed out to me" repeatedly, he said.

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11. PRC Censorship

The Associated Press ("CHINA: BLOGGERS SHOULD USE REAL NAMES", 2007-08-22) reported that Blog service providers in the PRC are "encouraged" to register users with their real names and contact information, according to a new government document that tones down an earlier proposal banning anonymous online blogging. At least 10 major PRC blog service providers have agreed to sign the "self-discipline pledge" issued by the Internet Society of China, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported Tuesday.

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