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I. NAPSNet

1. PRC on Six Party Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA SAYS COUNTERFEITING ALLEGATIONS HOLDING UP NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS ", 2006-01-25) reported that the PRC government says a dispute about alleged DPRK counterfeiting of US dollars, and other illegal financial activities is delaying negotiations to end the DPRK's nuclear programs.

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2. ROK on US Sanctions on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL RAPS U.S. MISSION OVER N.K. SANCTIONS BOMBSHELL", 2006-01-25) reported that the ROK Foreign Ministry slammed as "inappropriate" an explosive press release from the US Embassy a day earlier that claimed Treasury officials asked Seoul to match Washington's financial sanctions against the DPRK. A ministry spokesman said the press release was "largely inaccurate" since "sections grossly exaggerate the content of the agreement" between ROK officials and the visiting US Treasury team investigating the DPRK's financial crimes.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("ROH DEFIANT IN KOREA-U.S. TENSION ", 2006-01-25) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun was defiant in an escalating spat between his government and the US over sanctions Washington has taken against the DPRK. "The Korean government does not agree with some opinions in the U.S. that apparently want to take issue with and pressure the North Korean regime, sometimes hoping for its collapse," the president said. "If the US government attempts to resolve the problem that way, there will be friction and disagreements between Seoul and Washington." (return to top)

3. US on DPRK Counterfeiting

Reuters ("US URGES ASIA ACTION TO HALT NKOREA COUNTERFEITING", 2006-01-25) reported that the US Treasury Department urged Asian countries to take action to stop Pyongyang's suspected illegal activities including counterfeiting US currency. "I think everyone recognizes that illicit financial activities are threats to all of our financial systems," Daniel Glaser, a US Treasury official on anti-terrorist financing and financial crimes, told reporters in Tokyo.

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4. Inter-Korean Excavation Project

Yonhap News ("TWO KOREAS TEAM UP TO UNEARTH ANCIENT PALACE IN PYONGYANG", 2006-01-25) reported that the ROK and the DPRK will join hands to excavate a royal palace from an ancient Korean kingdom in Pyongyang this year, hoping to restore one of the earliest relics of Korean history, scholars in Seoul said Wednesday.

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5. ROK-US Cooperation on DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("ROH IS STEADY ON U.S. TIES BUT BERATES JAPAN", 2006-01-25) reported that after stressing that the ROK and the US governments officially have "no differences in opinions" on the DPRK nuclear issue, President Roh Moo-hyun told the press yesterday that he intended to push hard this year to regain wartime control of the Korean military, which under current arrangements would defend against a DPRK invasion under US control. He repeated his determination to "say what we have to say" to the US, asserting that the good treatment the ROK afforded its ally and a dose of plain talking would increase mutual confidence and strengthen the alliance. He also repeated his pledge to work for a "peace regime" on the peninsula.

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6. ROK on DPRK-US Relations

International Herald Tribune ("ROH WARNS U.S. OVER N. KOREA ", 2006-01-25) reported that ROK President Roh Moo Hyun warned that any attempt by Washington to pressure or topple the DPRK regime would cause friction with Seoul.

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7. DPRK Military First Policy

Joongang Ilbo ("GENERALS STILL SURROUND 'DEAR LEADER' IN PUBLIC ", 2006-01-25) reported that the Unification Ministry has said that based on some head counts at Kim Jong-il's public appearances last year, the "military-first" policy is still the driving force in politics in the DPRK. The ministry said Mr. Kim appeared in public 131 times last year, the largest annual number since the death of his father, Kim Il Sung, in 1994. Over half those appearances, the ministry said, were related to military affairs, either visits to military bases or attendance at exhibitions, parades or performances by the military. General Pak Jae-kyong, the deputy head of the military's political bureau, was Mr. Kim's most frequent companion at his appearances. Only 15 percent of his public activities, the ministry added, were related to the North's decrepit economy.

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8. DPRK Bird Flu

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA SEES FIRST HUMAN BIRD FLU INFECTION ", 2006-01-25) reported that the DPRK is believed to have detected its first human case of avian influenza. Japan's Sankei Shimbun reported on Wednesday that bird flu has spread to the capital of Pyongyang and a resident there contracted the deadly disease in December. The source did not mention how the patient was infected.

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9. ROK on PSI Drill

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO OBSERVE US-LED PSI DRILL", 2006-01-25) reported that the ROK government decided last month to cooperate partially with the US-led initiative against the

proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Foreign Ministry officials said Tuesday (Jan 24). The National Security Council decided on Dec 29 to send observers to the exercise drills under the Proliferation Security Initiative programme.

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

The Associated Press ("S. KOREAN PRESIDENT WANTS U.S. AGREEMENT ", 2006-01-25) reported that the ROK's president said Wednesday that he hopes for for an agreement this year on taking back wartime control of the country's military from the US. "I will closely consult the US to conclude the issue of South Korean military regaining wartime operational command within this year," President Roh Moo-hyun said.

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11. ROK Space Program

Space Daily ("GOV'T PLAN TO SEND FIRST SOUTH KOREAN INTO SPACE LIKELY TO BE DELAYED", 2006-01-25) reported that the ROK's plan to send its first astronaut into space within the first half of 2007 is likely to be delayed following a rescheduling request by Russia, the Science Ministry said Friday, reports Asia Pulse. It said Russian space authorities asked for the rescheduling after the US requested that its astronaut be given precedence on the rocket passenger roster.

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12. ROK on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Kyodo ("ROH SAYS WILL CONTINUE TO DEMAND KOIZUMI STOP YASUKUNI VISITS", 2006-0--25) reported that ROK President Roh Moo Hyun said Wednesday he will continue to demand that Japanese Prime Minster Junichiro Koizumi stop his visits to the war-related Yasukuni Shrine. "I will not give up (demanding that Prime Minister Koizumi stop the visits to Yasukuni)," Roh said in a New Year press conference. "I will make various efforts in such a way that our justified demand is accepted."

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13. Japan on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI SAYS ONLY CHINA, S. KOREA CRITICAL OF YASUKUNI VISITS ", 2006-01-25) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Wednesday that only the PRC and the ROK have criticized his visits to Tokyo's war-related Yasukuni Shrine, again downplaying an issue straining Japan's ties with the two countries. "No countries in Asia other than China and South Korea criticize my Yasukuni visits," Koizumi said.

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14. Japan Satellite Launch

The Associated Press ("LAUNCH TO CLEAR WAY FOR MONITORING SATELLITES", 2006-01-25) reported that a Japanese H-2A rocket lifted off from its launchpad Tuesday carrying a four-ton

observation satellite, after repeated delays. It was a crucial launch. Success will clear the way for the launching of two spy satellites by March 2007 to monitor the DPRK and other trouble spots.

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15. US on PRC and Iranian Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("U.S. ENVOY WARNS CHINA OVER IRAN NUKES ", 2006-01-25) reported that Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said Wednesday he warned PRC leaders that allowing Iran to develop nuclear weapons could threaten Beijing's crucial supplies of Middle Eastern oil. Zoellick said he warned Premier Wen Jiabao and other officials in meetings Tuesday that if they were concerned about energy security, it would be "extremely dangerous" to allow nuclear weapons development in the Middle East, center of the world oil industry.

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16. PRC-US Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINESE PRESIDENT PLANS U.S. VISIT ", 2006-01-25) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao will make his first official visit to Washington in April and his premier told a visiting US official that Beijing wanted to improve communication with Washington. Visiting Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick and the PRC Foreign Ministry both confirmed Hu's upcoming trip to the US, which comes at a time of tensions between the two countries over trade, the PRC's military buildup and its human rights record.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN PREMIER TO FOLLOW CHEN'S TOUGH CHINA TACK ", 2006-01-25) reported that Taiwan Premier Su Tseng-chang was sworn in with a new cabinet on Wednesday, pledging to uphold President Chen Shui-bian's latest policy statement which signaled a tougher stance on the PRC.

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18. PRC Media Censorship

The Associated Press ("CHINA SHUTS DOWN NEWSPAPER SUPPLEMENT ", 2006-01-25) reported that employees said Wednesday that the PRC has shut down a newspaper supplement known for its in-depth reporting on sensitive issues, the latest measure by the communist government to tighten control over the media. Production of Bing Dian, a four-page weekly supplement of the state-run China Youth Daily, was halted until further notice late Tuesday, the eve before its latest issue was to appear, the employees said.

(return to top) Reuters ("CHINA TURNS SCREWS ON MEDIA AS GOOGLE SELF-CENSORS ", 2006-01-25) reported that Web search leader Google announced restrictions on a new service for the PRC to avoid confrontation with Beijing. Google said its new Chinese service at http://www.google.cn will offer a self-censored version of its popular search system that restricts access to thousands of terms, Web sites and services to which users contribute e-mail, chat rooms and blogs. (return to top)

19. PRC Chemical Spill

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS WATER, FOOD SAFE AFTER TOXIC SPILL NEAR RUSSIAN BORDER ", 2006-01-25) reported that the PRC said that water and food supplies for millions of people living along the Songhua river, the scene of a disastrous chemical spill late last year, were now safe from contamination. The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) delivered the message after assembling the largest number of environmental scientists in modern PRC history to monitor the situation in the river.

(return to top) The Los Angeles Times ("CHINA FINDS CHEMICAL PLANTS POSE WIDESPREAD RISK TO RIVERS", 2006-01-25) reported that more than 100 chemical plants on the banks of the PRC's rivers pose safety hazards that could jeopardize drinking water and spread contamination widely, the PRC's environment chief said Tuesday. The announcement, based on a government survey of the nation's 21,000 riverside chemical plants, amounts to a sobering acknowledgment by the Beijing government that rapid industrial development has outstripped the nation's ability to regulate environmental hazards. (return to top)

20. PRC Bird Flu

Reuters ("BIRD FLU CLAIMS ANOTHER LIFE IN CHINA ", 2006-01-25) reported that a PRC woman infected with bird flu has died, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Wednesday, and Indonesia treated a chicken seller suspected of contracting the virus. The victim, a 29-year-old woman surnamed Cao, was the seventh person to die from bird flu in the PRC since November.

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21. PRC AIDS Issue

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA FACING WORSENING AIDS EPIDEMIC DESPITE LOWER FIGURE ", 2006-01-25) reported that the PRC is in the grip of a worsening HIV-AIDS epidemic, the government and UN health groups warned, despite new official figures showing that earlier assessments overestimated the number of cases. "Make no mistake, China's AIDS epidemic is growing," the World Health Organization's (WHO) chief China representative Hank Bekedam told a joint press conference. "With an estimated 70,000 new infections in 2005, the epidemic here shows no signs of abating."

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22. Mongolia Government

The Associated Press ("MONGOLIA'S GOV'T OKS NEW PRIME MINISTER ", 2006-01-25) reported that Mongolia's president and parliament on Wednesday approved a new prime minister, a major step toward rebuilding the former communist country's collapsed government. Mieagombo Enkhbold, the chairman of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, was given majority approval by parliament. President Nambaryn Enkhbayar also approved the nomination.

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