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I. NAPSNet

1. Expert on Six Party Talks

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA NEEDS TO TURN ITS BACK ON CHINA FOR NUCLEAR TALKS: CHANG", 2006-02-28) reported that the ROK's united front with the PRC at negotiations on DPRK nuclear issues is a stumbling block to the talks' progress, and the US should focus on "stripping" the two apart, a PRC watcher claimed Tuesday. Gordon Chang, a lawyer and author of books on the PRC, said Beijing holds a key to resolving the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. Speaking at a seminar hosted by the conservative Heritage Foundation, Chang concluded harshly that China "is just not ready to accept its historic role as a great power." "North Koreans can have a bigger nuclear arsenal than China's before the Chinese can become a constructive force in six-party talks," he said.

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2. Inter-Korean Cooperation

JoongAng Ilbo ("SEOUL CRITICIZED FOR REVISIONS TO KUMGANG LOANS ", 2006-03-01) reported that the ROK government is being criticized for easing conditions on loans funded from the inter-Korean cooperation funds that were given to the Korea National Tourism Organization for Mount Kumgang tour projects. On Monday, the government decided to lower the interest rate on a loan given to the organization in June 2001 by 2 percent. The organization originally received a loan of 90 billion won (\$93.7 million) with an interest rate of 4 percent and repayment over a five-year period, after a three-year deferment. However, the payback period has now been extended to 10 years at an interest rate of 2 percent. In response, some civic groups argued that public funds should not be used to finance such projects in the DPRK.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA RETURNS 18TH-CENTURY WAR MEMORIAL TO NORTH KOREA", 2006-03-01) reported that the ROK returned an 18th-century war monument looted by Japan a century ago to the DPRK on Wednesday, the 87th anniversary of the resurgence of the nation's independence movement against Japanese colonization. The ROK had been in possession of the "Bukgwandaechepbi" memorial since October when the Japanese government returned it.

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4. Uri Head to Visit DPRK

JoongAng Ilbo ("URI HEAD SETS A VISIT TO NORTH'S PLANT ZONE", 2006-03-01) reported that Uri Party's chairman, Chung Dong-young, said yesterday he planned to visit the DPRK Kaesong Industrial Complex with other party leaders this month. He said he would also ask opposition party leaders to join the trip, and was pushing for a meeting with Kim Jong-il and other senior DPRK leaders. The Grand National Party dismissed Mr. Chung's invitation yesterday, calling a trip to the DPRK an old-fashioned way for politicians to promote themselves before an election.

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5. US on DPRK Illicit Activities

Yonhap News ("NARCOTICS REPORT DETAIL N.K. MONEY-LAUNDERING, CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES", 2006-03-01) reported that the DPRK is involved in a wide range of criminal activities with proceeds going into the pockets of its leaders through money-laundering, an annual narcotics control report by the US State Department said Wednesday. The two-volume report, divided into "Drug and Chemical Control" and "Money Laundering and Financial Crimes," delivered more specifics with more confidence on the DPRK's suspected activities than last year.

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6. DPRK on Counterfeiting

JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH CALLS ITSELF A VICTIM OF PHONY U.S. BANK NOTES", 2006-03-01) reported that the DPRK has proclaimed itself a victim rather than a perpetrator of counterfeiting that Washington claims it had engaged in. The new round of positioning came just before a scheduled meeting between DPRK and US officials in New York to discuss the US charges and the sanctions it imposed as a result. A DPRK spokesman quoted by the DPRK's Korea Central News Agency late Tuesday night said that US barriers to North Korea's international financial transactions forced it to deal largely in cash. Speaking of the US, the spokesman said, "It is absurdly saying that counterfeit dollars that we could have come by through cash transactions are being manufactured and distributed by us."

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7. DPRK-PRC Relations

Christian Science Monitor ("CHINA CHANGES GAME IN N. KOREA", 2006-03-01) reported that with floods of cash and a new policy of patience and friendly support, the PRC has quietly penetrated the thick wall surrounding DPRK leader Kim Jong Il's regime - gaining significant leverage for the first time in one of the world's most closed societies. PRC leaders have gained Mr. Kim's ear, sources say, with a message that the DPRK can revitalize its economy while still holding tight political control.

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8. Japanese Investigation of DPRK Ship

Asahi Shimbun ("EXPORTED SHIP LEADS COAST GUARD TO N. KOREA PUZZLE", 2006-02-28) reported that a Japan Coast Guard investigation into a suspected illegal export last year of a three-decade-old fishing trawler to the ROK has officials scratching their heads. The boat in question bears the same name and registration as a DPRK vessel chased by Japanese patrol boats and other vessels from the Sea of Japan off the Noto Peninsula in 1999, sources said. Officials are trying to figure out how the 75-ton No. 2 Yamato Maru and the DPRK vessel that was spotted off Japan came to share the same identity.

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9. ROK-Japan Relations

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI URGES S. KOREA TO LOOK AT JAPAN'S EFFORTS FOR PEACE ", 2006-03-01) reported that Japan urged ROK President Roh Moo Hyun on Wednesday to recognize its efforts to establish a peaceful world, following Roh's opposition to any change in Japan's pacifist Constitution. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters at his official residence, "I want him to take a close look at Japan's footsteps in the 60-year postwar period and strive for Japan-South Korea friendship."

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA'S ROH TELLS JAPAN TO WIN TRUST FROM ASIAN NEIGHBORS ", 2006-03-01) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun Wednesday bluntly told Japan that it has failed to address its militaristic past, calling it a necessary step if the country wants to become a world leader. In a speech marking a civil uprising against Japanese rule 87 years ago, Roh demanded Japanese leaders stop visiting a Tokyo shrine honoring Japan's war dead.

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10. Missile Defense System Test

The Associated Press ("TARGET MISSILE TEST-LAUNCHED FROM ALASKA", 2006-03-01) reported that a missile rose more than 100 miles into the atmosphere from Alaska's Kodiak Island Thursday in the first of several tests planned this year for the national missile defense system. The purpose was to test upgrades to early warning radar installed in 1980 at Beale Air Force Base in northern California. The radar at Beale tracked the target missile and transmitted data to commanders at Colorado Springs. An actual ballistic missile interceptor was not involved.

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11. PRC-Japan East Sea Gas Dispute

The Associated Press ("JAPAN, CHINA TO HOLD TALKS ON GAS DEPOSITS ", 2006-03-01) reported that Japan and the PRC will hold talks on disputed undersea gas deposits next week in Beijing, the foreign ministry said Wednesday. The two countries plan a two-day meeting beginning Monday, to be attended by Kenichiro Sasae, head of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asia-Oceania Bureau, and his PRC counterpart Hu Zhengyao, the ministry said.

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12. PRC Arms Sales

The Financial Times ("NIGERIA SHIFTS TO CHINA ARMS", 2006-03-01) reported that Nigeria has criticised Washington for failing to help protect the country's oil assets from rebel attack, forcing it to turn to other military suppliers, including the PRC, for support. Nigerian security sources said the PRC was becoming one of Nigeria's main suppliers of military hardware. Both the US and PRC see Nigeria, the eighth largest oil exporter, as an important future supplier.

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13. PRC Rural Unrest

Xinhua ("CHINA LOOKS FOR SOLUTION TO A FEW PROTESTS IN RURAL AREAS", 2006-03-01) reported that the PRC government is looking for a solution to the protests that have occurred in the

PRC's rural areas over recent years, a senior CPC member said. "Although these incidents have only occurred occasionally in a few rural villages, the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the government have attached close importance to this issue and are looking for ways to tackle the problem," said Ouyang Song, deputy director of the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee.

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14. PRC Religious Freedom

Reuters ("RELIGION IN CHINA STILL RESTRICTED, RIGHTS GROUP SAYS ", 2006-03-01) reported that a rights group said on Wednesday that one year after PRC introduced new regulations on religious rights, freedom to worship remains restricted. The rules that took effect in March 2005 enshrine religious belief as a basic right of all citizens, but the PRC still forbids worship outside designated religious organizations, fearing the growth of groups that could challenge Communist Party rule.

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15. PRC Media Control

Reuters ("BANNED CHINESE WEEKLY REAPPEARS, BUT MUCH DILUTED ", 2006-03-01) reported that a much diluted version of a PRC newspaper supplement banned for its provocative content appeared on Wednesday in what a former deputy editor said represented a compromise. The weekly Freezing Point section of the official China Youth Daily featured none of the hard-hitting pieces for which it was previously known and was not for sale on news stands, only being distributed to newspaper subscribers.

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16. Putin on Russia G8 Summit

Interfax ("PETERSBURG G8 SUMMIT TO ADDRESS MIDDLE EAST, IRAN, NORTH KOREA", 2006-03-01) reported that key international issues will be included on the agenda for the upcoming G8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a televised interview on Wednesday. "I am sure that we will not be able to avoid discussing issues such as the situation in the Middle East, Iraq and the controversy surrounding Iran's nuclear program," Putin said. The situation on the Korean peninsula and the DPRK nuclear program are equally important, he said.

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