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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks Energy Working Group

Kyodo ("BILATERAL MEETINGS FILL 1ST DAY OF 6-WAY ENERGY TALKS", Beijing, 2007/12/11) reported that the ROK held bilateral talks with its partners in the six-party negotiations on denuclearizing the DPRK on Tuesday as a two-day meeting on energy and economic assistance for Pyongyang kicked off, the ROK's delegate said. Lim Sung Nam, deputy chief of the ROK's delegation to the six-party negotiations, told Kyodo News he held talks with his counterparts from all parties, including the DPRK, represented by Hyun Hak Bong, deputy director of the Foreign Ministry's American affairs bureau.

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2. US-DPRK Relations

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "N.KOREA CALLS U.S. "CRIMINALS" DAYS AFTER BUSH LETTER", Seoul, 2007/12/11) reported that days after the U.S. president sent his first letter to the DPRK's leader in a bid to further diplomacy, the DPRK accused the American government on Tuesday of being reckless criminals trying to stir up war. The DPRK's official media slammed the United States for a recent deployment of fighter jets and other armaments in and around the ROK. "Such moves are a part of the U.S. conservative hardliners' invariable hostile policy towards the DPRK and a reckless criminal act of chilling the denuclearization process in the Korean peninsula and driving the situation into the brink of war," said the state mouthpiece, Rodong Sinmun.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

The Korea Times ("NK BOAT RESCUED BY S. KOREA'S NAVY", 2007/12/11) reported that a ROK patrol boat Monday rescued a DPRK fishing boat with a crew of five that had been drifting for 27 days following engine failure, the Navy said Tuesday. The boat left the DPRK's South Hamkyung Province on Nov. 13 and floated into southern waters after its engine broke after one day, the spokesman said. The fishermen were suffering from hypothermia and starvation following their 27-day ordeal. ROK officials said the DPRK sailors will be allowed to return to the DPRK in their vessel in accordance with their will as soon as they recover.

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4. DPRK Economy

("STATE OF THE MARKET IN THE DPRK", 2007/12/11) reported that although not an exact statistic, it seems that there are roughly two to four marketplaces within a city. In the case of the most-

populated city, Pyongyang (19 districts), there is a marketplace in every district. The marketplace is generally active, except during the rice-planting and harvest period. However, it has become very stagnant recently due to the enforcement of restrictive measures like price regulations and age restrictions on merchants. For instance, in Pyongyang, there used to be around 50-60 merchants in one area, but now there are only 7 or 8. Now, it is that much more difficult to find good products at the market. Stallholders' daily earnings differ depending on their products. In the case of agricultural goods, merchants earn an average of 3,000 won per day, and around 5,000-6,000 won per day for marine products. Merchants who sell manufactured goods could make around 10,000 won.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

(Yoo Cheong-mo, "PRIME MINISTER HAN TO VISIT N. KOREAN INDUSTRIAL PARK WEDNESDAY", Yonhap, 2007/12/11) reported that Prime Minister Han Duck-soo will make a one-day trip to an inter-Korean industrial park in Kaesong, DPRK, on Wednesday, seeking ways to boost economic cooperation between the two countries, Han's office said. "Han plans to visit the Kaesong industrial park at 9 a.m. Wednesday to encourage employees of South Korean manufacturing companies operating in the North Korean complex," said the office. "The prime minister will also visit downtown Kaesong to look around its major sightseeing spots, including a museum and a railway station. He is to return to Seoul at around 6 p.m.," it said.

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6. ROK-PRC Trade Relations

Yonhap ("PRIME MINISTER HAN URGES CHINA TO INCREASE INVESTMENT IN S. KOREA", Beijing, 2007/12/11) reported that ROK Prime Minister Han Duck-soo Tuesday urged the PRC to increase investment in the ROK, noting that the PRC's investment in the ROK lags far behind the ROK's investment in the PRC where the ROK is one of the biggest foreign investors. Cumulative PRC investment in the ROK totaled a mere US\$1.8 billion as of the end of last year, compared with the ROK's cumulative investment in the PRC of \$35 billion, according to ROK government figures.

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7. ROK-Russia Military Relations

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "KOREA, RUSSIA TO DISCUSS HOTLINE", 2007/12/11) reported that working-level defense officials from the ROK and Russia are to hold a meeting in Seoul today to discuss the opening of a hotline between their air forces, the Korean Defense Ministry said yesterday. In 2005, the defense chiefs from both countries agreed to install an emergency communication line. The two sides will also discuss visits by their defense ministers and other ways to broaden bilateral military ties.

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8. Japan Afghanistan Role

Japan Times ("DPJ PANEL OKS OUTLINE OF AFGHANISTAN AID LAW", Tokyo, 2007/12/11) reported that a key panel of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan endorsed an outline of legislation Tuesday on assistance to Afghanistan featuring possible dispatches of Self-Defense Forces troops there. The DPJ has crafted the legislation as a counterproposal to a government-sponsored bill aimed at resuming Japan's antiterrorism mission for Afghanistan that centers on refueling support in the Indian Ocean for multinational forces. The DPJ plans to formally compile a bill if the party's shadow cabinet approves the outline possibly Wednesday. But it will hold off on presenting it to parliament during the current session because the party believes priority should be placed on investigation into Defense Ministry-related scandals, DPJ lawmakers said.

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9. US-PRC Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse (Veronica Smith, "US SAYS CHINA FAILS TO MEET WTO COMMITMENTS", Washington, 2007/12/11) reported that the PRC is failing to live up to its World Trade Organization commitments, the US trade chief told Congress Tuesday, as the two economic powers meet in the PRC to discuss strained trade relations. In an annual report to Congress, US Trade Representative (USTR) Susan Schwab cited "China's shortcomings in observing basic obligations of WTO membership as well as Chinese policies and practices that undermine previously implemented commitments."

Agence France-Presse (Dan Martin, "CHINA HITS OUT AT US ON TRADE, BUT AGREES ON EXPORT SAFETY ", Beijing, 2007/12/11) reported that the PRC said Tuesday constant US criticism over trade disputes was hurting economics ties, although the world powers agreed at top-level talks to cooperate on improving the safety of PRC exports. The PRC Vice Premier Wu Yi used her opening remarks at an annual one-day trade meeting here to hit out at what she said was rising protectionist sentiment in the US. The talks wrapped up with two agreements that saw the nations pledge to work more closely on improving the safety of food, farming feed, drugs and medical devices exported from the PRC to the US.

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10. PRC Energy

The Financial Times ("CHINA MAINTAINS THIRST FOR POWER", Beijing, 2007/12/11) reported that the surge in PRC power demand continued unabated this year, with the country adding capacity equivalent to that of the UK's entire electricity grid. About 85 per cent of the new generating capacity of 90GW is coal-fired, highlighting the significant pressure on the PRC at the talks in Bali this week over a global agreement to cut greenhouse emissions. Even with the surge in capacity, the newly generated power has easily been absorbed by a fast-growing economy still propelled by big investments in energy-intensive industries, such as steel, aluminium and cement. "We are barely keeping up with demand," said Jim Brock, a Beijing-based energy consultant.

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11. PRC Demographics

Xinhua ("BEIJING'S POPULATION FORECAST TO TOP 21.4 MLN BY 2020 ", Beijing, 2007/12/11) reported that Beijing's population is expected to top 19.5 million by 2015 and climb to 21.4 million by 2020, according to a research report released on weekend. The figure is much more than the city's target of 18 million for 2020, according to the Strategic Report on Population of Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei," released at the Beijing Population and Development Forum held in Beijing. Qu Zhenwu, a professor of Institute of Population Research attached to Renmin University, attributed the rapid population growth in Beijing to continuous influx of migrants.

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II. Republic of Korea

12. Should-be solved problem

Dailian (Lee Mee-il, "SEOUL IS COMPLETELY INDIFFERENT TO ABDUCTEES", Seoul, 2007/12/12) wrote that no one talks about ROK citizens in the DPRK, many of whom are still believed to be alive, especially who were abducted during Korean War. There were 11 meetings including 6 party talks and inter-Korea submit talks that could have offered the solution to the problem. However, the government does not try to solve it at all, even ignores a request to check a list of abductees. The reason is that Seoul do not want to discomfort the DPRK by bringing it up. However, this is not a way that can solve the problem. The list should be checked and the government should take an active position.

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