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I. NAPSNet

1. Six-Party Talks

Reuters (Chris Buckley , "NORTH KOREA TALKS FAIL TO BREAK IMPASSE", Beijing , 2008/12/11) reported that multilateral talks with DPRK failed on Thursday to break an impasse on checking Pyongyang's nuclear declarations. Host PRC said in a chairman's statement at the end of four days of talks that the delegates had agreed to convene the next meeting as soon as possible, but offered few other details. Japan's top nuclear negotiator, Akitaka Saiki, said the prospect for setting up the next round of six-party talks appeared "quite difficult," Japan's Kyodo news agency said.

Associated Press (Ron Edmonds, "WHITE HOUSE TO 'RETHINK' ITS POSITION ON NORTH KOREA ", 2008/12/11) reported that the Bush administration must now "rethink" its approach toward DPRK after the nation refused to come to terms with the United States and other partners on verification of its past atomic activities, a White House spokesman said Thursday.

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2. US Energy Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. HINTS AT SUSPENDING ENERGY AID TO N. KOREA AMID LACKLUSTER NUKE TALKS", Washington, 2008/12/11) reported that the US hinted at suspending promised energy aid to the DPRK after the breakup of the latest multilateral talks on ending the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. "Obviously, one of the things people think about is energy assistance," White House spokesperson Dana Perino said. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack buttressed Perino's remarks, saying, "This is an action-for-action negotiation. I don't think you're

going to see much action from other parties until North Korea acts."

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3. Russian Energy Aid to the DPRK

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA TO COMPLETE HEATING OIL DELIVERIES TO N.KOREA 'WITHIN MONTHS'", 2008/12/11) reported that Russia will complete heating oil deliveries to DPRK within the next several months, the head of the Russian delegation at six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear problem said. "Russia is currently completing the third shipment of 50,000 tons of heating oil to North Korea. In the next several months we will be able to deliver the remaining 50,000 tons," Alexei Borodavkin said.

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4. DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("NO JAPAN-N. KOREA MEETING HELD DURING JUST-ENDED 6-WAY NUCLEAR TALKS", Beijing, 2008/12/11) reported that Japan was unable to hold a meeting with the DPRK to address bilateral issues such as the past abductions of Japanese citizens to the DPRK on the sidelines of the six-nation talks which ended Thursday, chief Japanese delegate Akitaka Saiki said. "We called in advance for contact between Japan and North Korea, including a meeting with Mr. Kim Kye Gwan," Saiki told reporters in Beijing, referring to his DPRK counterpart. "But to our regret, North Korea probably did not have a policy of having contact with Japan."

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5. DPRK Leadership

New York Times (Steven Erlanger, "DOCTOR CONFIRMES KIM JONG-IL STROKE ", Paris , 2008/12/11) reported that the North Korean leader Kim Jong-il had a stroke in August but appears to be better, according to a French doctor who has treated him. The doctor, François-Xavier Roux, told Le Figaro, the French daily: "Kim Jong-il suffered a stroke but did not undergo an operation. He is now better." Dr. Roux, a Paris-based neurosurgeon, added: "The photos that have just been published seem recent and authentic to me. I have the impression that he is in charge in DPRK. I can't say more because of medical confidentiality and state secrecy."

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA MEDIA: KIM JONG IL VISITS COSMETICS FACTORY", Seoul, 2008/12/11) reported that DPRK state media has reported that Kim Jong Il paid a visit to a cosmetics factory on Nov. 24. The broadcast report is the first dispatch in months to provide an exact date for Kim's public appearances, the ROK's Unification Ministry said Thursday.

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6. ROK-US Military Relations

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun , "U.S. TROOP TOURS EXTENDED TO THREE YEARS ", 2008/12/11)

reported that three-year accompanied tours will be available for the U.S. troops stationed here as part of plans to improve stability and combat capability, the commander of the U.S. Forces Korea said Thursday. "We have asked for and received approval from the office of the Secretary of Defense to increase tour lengths for service members permanently assigned to ROK," Gen. Walter Sharp said in a press conference. Service members here will be able to serve alongside their families, with most expenses paid by the U.S. government. The ROK military agreed, saying that the longer tours will help improve the defense ability of the U.S. troops and stabilize their stay.

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7. USFK Base Realignment

Stars and Stripes (Ashley Rowland, "FIRST UNIT MOVES FROM YONGSAN ", 2008/12/11) reported that the first major unit to leave U.S. Army Garrison-Yongsan as part of a massive relocation of troops in the ROK will complete its move to U.S. Army Garrison-Humphreys this week. Twenty-four soldiers with the 532nd Military Intelligence Battalion are to finish the move by Dec. 12 to Humphreys, a once-sleepy helicopter base that eventually will house most U.S. troops stationed in the ROK.

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8. ROK-Japan Economic Relations

Korea Times (Kim Jae-kyoung, "KOREA, JAPAN TO EXPAND CURRENCY SWAP ", 2008/12/11) reported that ROK and Japan will more than double the ceiling on their currency swap agreement to \$30 billion from the current \$13 billion, according to the Nikkei economic daily. A Japanese newspaper reported Thursday that Seoul and Tokyo are scheduled to ink a contract to expand the ceiling of their foreign currency credit swap line in Fukuoka this weekend on the sideline of a summit between ROK, Japan and PRC. The summit will be held on Saturday. ROK is also expected to boost its currency swap deal with PRC currently set at \$4 billion.

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9. Japan Roundtable

Yomiuri Shinbun ("GOVT ROUNDTABLE TO DISCUSS NATION'S FUTURE ", 2008/12/11) reported that the government will likely launch a roundtable in February for the government, business community, labor unions, nongovernmental organizations and consumer groups to discuss short- and long-term issues that the country faces, government sources said Wednesday. Prime Minister Taro Aso, Japan Business Federation Chairman Fujio Mitarai and others are to sign on to an initiative to start the roundtable, which will focus on social responsibilities for a safe and sustainable future.

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10. Japan Environment

Asahi Shimbun (Atsushi Matsukawa , "MINISTRY: 100 NEW DAMS NEEDED TO HALT FLOODS ",

2008/12/11) reported that the land ministry is considering a huge increase in dam construction across the country to avert potentially catastrophic flooding. According to ministry estimates, Japan needs more than 100 new dams on top of the roughly 150 already in the planning or construction stages to prevent a massive flood predicted to hit a major river once every 100 to 200 years. The ministry is drawing up flood-control standards for each of the 109 first-grade river systems, including the Tonegawa river system in the Kanto region and the Yodogawa river system in the Kansai region.

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11. Sino-Russian Military Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA, RUSSIA VOW TO STEP UP MILITARY TIES: REPORT", Beijing, 2008/12/11) reported that the PRC President Hu Jintao called for stronger military ties with Russia in talks with visiting Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov, state media reported. "As the strategic partnership between China and Russia develops, the relationship between the two militaries has also continued to become more consolidated and stronger," Xinhua news agency quoted Hu as saying. "I hope ... to advance the China-Russian strategic partnership and the relationship between the two militaries from a new historical starting point to better and faster development toward the future," he was quoted as saying.

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12. Sino-Indian Joint Exercises

Xinhua Net ("CHINA, INDIA START FINALE DRILL OF JOINT ANTI-TERROR MILITARY TRAINING", 2008/12/11) reported that PRC and Indian armies started a comprehensive anti-terrorism military drill in south India's Belgaum district Thursday evening. It's the third and also the last stage of the joint anti-terrorism military training between the two sides from Dec. 6 to 12. The scenario of the drill was set as that a group of "international terrorists" secretly enter into and hide in two villages in the forest of northwestern Belgaum. The anti-terror soldiers have to "catch or kill" them without hurting innocent villagers.

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13. PRC Media

Agence France-Presse ("MEDIA TABOOS LINGER IN CHINA, BUT JOURNALISTS PUSH ENVELOPE", Beijing, 2008/12/11) reported that on the eve of reform, the PRC's regimented media relied on daily slogans, but 30 years on journalists are pushing the envelope, helped by the Internet and other new technologies, even if taboos remain. More and more, topics that were seldom seen as late as a decade ago are being reported by the PRC media, especially by daily newspapers and magazines that are considered "commercial". Although they are spin-offs of party-run propaganda papers, they must seek to stay afloat through their sales and work hard to attract readers.

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14. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France-Presse ("WORLD MUST BRING CHINA INTO DEMOCRATIC FOLD: DALAI LAMA ", Warsaw, 2008/12/11) reported that Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama called on the world community to bring PRC into the democratic mainstream, in a speech to Polish deputies Thursday. "The free world has moral responsibility to bring the PRC into the mainstream of world democracy. That is very essential, very important," the Dalai Lama told members of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee. The Dalai Lama, who was speaking during an official visit to the Polish parliament, also called on the parliaments of Poland and other European Union states to champion the cause of civil right for Tibetans within PRC.

Taipei Times (Loa Iok-sin, "COMMISSION PROMISES TO ASSIST TIBETIAN REFUGEES", 2008/12/11) reported that the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC) promised to help Tibetan refugees yesterday, saying those who entered the country illegally may be granted legal resident status. More than 100 Tibetans have been staging a sit-in at Liberty Square in Taipei since Tuesday, demanding that the government grant them legal resident status or at least a work permit. They were forcibly removed from the demonstration site and dropped off in the outskirts of the city, including Guandu, Nangang and in the mountains in Neihu at around 3am yesterday.

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15. PRC Civil Society

China.org ("EXPERTS CALL FOR LEGAL RECOGNITION OF NGOS", 2008/12/11) reported that according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs, at the end of the third quarter this year, the number of non-governmental organizations in the PRC had reached 380,000. Zhang Qun, deputy dean of the Public Management Department at Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, said the NGOs play a key role in delivering public services and providing employment. She advocated reforms to regularize the legal standing of the organizations. Tong Lihua, director of the Beijing Legal Aid Office for Migrant Workers said: "There should be laws to encourage the development of domestic non-governmental organizations."

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16. PRC-Cyber Attack

AFP ("CHINA DOWNPLAYS 'CYBER ATTACK' ON FRENCH EMBASSY WEBSITE ", Beijing , 2008/12/11) reported that PRC downplayed Thursday an alleged cyber attack on the website of the French Embassy in Beijing, saying there was no clear link between the shutdown and a diplomatic row with France over Tibet. "From the perspective of the Chinese government, China is against the hacking of the websites of the embassies of other nations," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told journalists. "We have not seen any questions or concerns raised by France." However a French diplomat told AFP the embassy website had been inaccessible for several days due to a massive cyber attack following President Nicolas Sarkozy's weekend meeting with exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama. "The server was attacked for several days, saturated by massive requests for a connection, mostly coming at night," the diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

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17. Hong Kong Bird Flu

Associated Press (Julia Zappei , "WHO URGES VIGLIANCE FOR BIRD FLU AFTER HK OUTBREAK ", Kuala Lumpur , 2008/12/11) reported that a World Health Organization official urged Asian governments Thursday not to let down their guard against bird flu, saying a new outbreak in Hong Kong shows the disease still poses a threat. WHO Western Pacific Director Shigeru Omi said Hong Kong authorities have responded well by suspending poultry imports for 21 days and starting the slaughter of 80,000 birds after three chickens found dead at a farm Monday tested positive for the H5 virus group. Further tests are being conducted to see if they had the deadly H5N1 strain.

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18. North Asia Summit

Reuters ("NORTH ASIA SUMMIT TO SHOW SYMBOLIC UNITY ON CRISIS ", Tokyo , 2008/12/11) reported that Japan, PRC and ROK will make a symbolic show of unity in battling fallout from the global financial crisis at a high-profile summit on Saturday in southern Japan. Multilateral efforts to halt the DPRK's nuclear program will also be discussed.

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19. U.N. Climate Talks

Kyodo News ("U.N. CLIMATE TALKS BEGIN, FOCUS ON POST-2012 PACT", Poznan, 2008/12/11) reported that environment ministers and officials from about 190 countries began a two-day meeting Thursday in Poznan, Poland, to advance U.N. talks for a new climate treaty. Delegates will focus on whether all the 189 nations will adopt the goal of halving global greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 as a "shared vision," and whether developed countries will pledge deep emission cuts with a midterm reduction target, such as a 25-40 percent cut from 1990 levels by 2020, a range advocated by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Japanese Environment Minister Tetsuo Saito said Wednesday that Japan aims to share the 2050 target with all parties to the UNFCCC. "To achieve the 2050 goal, it is vital that developed countries present ambitious (emissions reduction) targets and developing countries take part in (the fight against climate change) with responsibility," Saito told reporters.

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II. PRC Report

20. PRC Food Security

People's Daily online (Li Yi, "SHANGHAI FOOD RELATED ASSOCIATIONS TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO ENSURE FOOD SECURITY", 2008/12/11) reported Shanghai Consumer Protection Association

and over 20 food related associations jointly held a mobilizing conference, proposing to enhance self-regulation of the whole food industry and to ensure food security during the coming spring festival. The initiatives include: to carry out various kinds of training activities to popularize food security knowledge; to conscientiously implement the relevant national and industrial standards; to advertise productions without deception; to carry out self-examination and self-correction; to coordinate with the supervision departments on food inspection.

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21. PRC Civil Society and Elder Care

People's Daily online (Li Haiyan, "TIANJIN ENTRUSTS A CIVIL ORGANIZATION WITH OLD AGE SERVICE", 2008/12/11) reported that yesterday, Civil Affairs Bureau of Nankai District of Tianjin province and Hetong Senior Citizen Welfare Association reached an agreement, to entrust the care service of 138 senior citizens to Hetong. This is for the first time that the city government entrust professional old age service to a civil organization. The life care, food distribution, spiritual comfort, sanitation service of the 138 senior citizens will be given by this civil organization.

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22. PRC Earthquake

Beijing Times (Yang Fengli, "CHINESE MEDICAL DOCTOR ASSOCIATION COMMENDS MODEL DOCTORS", 2008/12/11) reported that the 5th Chinese Doctor Award of PRC Medical Doctor Association was held in Beijing on December 5. This ceremony focused on honoring the model doctors and their heroic deeds of sacrificing their lives to save others during the 512 Wenchuan Earthquake. The model doctors include Wang Bosong, who saved 112 patients' lives and medical equipments worth of 5 million yuan; Lu Shibi, who was near 80 years old but still worked over 14 hours a day in the disaster area; Hou Shike, the captain of PRC International Rescue Team who was awarded the first hero, and so on.

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org