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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks Energy Working Group

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "SIX-WAY WORKING GROUP ON ENERGY AID TO N. KOREA MEETS IN BEIJING", Seoul, 2007/12/12) reported that working-level officials from six nations in talks over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions met in Beijing to discuss the provision of economic and energy assistance promised to the communist nation in a multilateral deal. "This week's meeting is to discuss the provision of energy assistance to North Korea. The meeting will focus on assistance other than heavy fuel oil and who will provide what," Chun Yung-woo, the ROK's head delegate to the nuclear disarmament talks, said earlier in the day.

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2. US-DPRK Relations

The Associated Press (Matthew Lee, "RICE: US NOT READY FOR BROAD NKOREA TIES", Washington, 2007/12/12) reported that the Bush administration is not yet ready for broad engagement with the DPRK, despite signals that US ties with the DPRK are warming, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told The Associated Press. Rice said the U.S. government would not "engage broadly" with the regime until it ended all aspects of its nuclear weapons program. "This is not a regime that the United States is prepared to engage broadly," she said in an interview at her State Department office. "If we are going to engage it broadly, it's clear in the program that we have laid out how that would happen, after denuclearization."

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters (Susan Cornwell, "U.S. ENVOY HOPES FOR NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR DISCLOSURE SOON", Washington, 2007/12/12) reported that the US hopes that the DPRK will keep its promise and disclose all its nuclear activities by the end of this year, Washington's envoy to nuclear talks on the DPRK said. "We are hopeful that we will have the complete declaration provided by around the year end," Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill told reporters. "This is real," California Democratic Sen. Barbara Boxer, who presided at the closed-door briefing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said of the progress Hill described. Boxer thought Congress would approve "reasonable

sums of money" needed to support the process, including \$106 million that Hill requested as the U.S. contribution toward fuel oil that is being provided to the DPRK as an incentive.

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4. US on DPRK Terror List Status

Yonhap ("U.S. SENATOR DEMANDS CONDITIONS TO REMOVING N.K. FROM TERRORISM LIST", Washington, 2007/12/12) reported that a senior U.S. senator introduced a resolution setting conditions for removing the DPRK from the U.S. list of terrorism-sponsoring nations, one of the key incentives offered for Pyongyang's denuclearization. Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kansas) submitted Resolution 399 on Monday and so far has three co-sponsors. The resolution urges the administration not to lift the designation until it can be demonstrated that the DPRK is no longer engaged in proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and no longer counterfeiting American currency. It also demands proof that a DPRK ruling party bureau, believed to be running illicit financial activities including drug trafficking and counterfeiting, has been made inoperable. The senator also demands that the terrorist-nation designation remain until all US overseas missions have been instructed to facilitate asylum applications by North Koreans seeking protection as refugees.

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5. Alleged DPRK-Syrian Nuclear Cooperation

The Associated Press (Foster Klug, "LAWMAKER: N. KOREA HALTS WORK WITH SYRIA", Washington, 2007/12/12) reported that US officials suggested that any past nuclear cooperation between the DPRK and Syria would not scuttle nuclear disarmament talks with Pyongyang, provided the Asian country proves no cooperation is happening now. Christopher Hill, the chief U.S. envoy at the six-nation talks, said after a closed-door meeting with US senators that the US needs to make sure "that proliferation issues, whether they have existed in the past or not, certainly don't exist in the present or in the future." When asked if the DPRK must detail any cooperation with Syria in a declaration outlining all its nuclear programs due by month's end, Hill said, "All programs need to be addressed."

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6. DPRK-ROK Maritime Border Dispute

The Associated Press ("N. AND S. KOREA ARGUE OVER SEA BORDER", Seoul, 2007/12/12) reported that the DPRK rapped ROK at high-level military talks for refusing to compromise on their disputed sea border, claiming Seoul's position could lead to bloody skirmishes. The DPRK's denunciation, although expected, signals this week's general-level talks aimed at discussing a joint fishing zone and other reconciliation projects could stumble over the sea border dispute — a perennial deal-breaker in military talks. The ROK wants both sides to provide the same area around the boundary, but the DPRK wants the zone set up only south of the border.

Associated Press ("SCUFFLE ERUPTS AT KOREA MILITARY TALKS", Seoul, 2007/12/13) reported that ROK and DPRK soldiers engaged in a minor scuffle amid military talks Thursday. The talks came to a sudden halt when a DPRK officer sought to display a slide of a map with the DPRK's proposal for

a joint fishing area on the sea frontier. An ROK naval officer rushed over and stopped the DPRK officer, triggering an argument. The DPRK officer pushed the ROK officer but he refused to budge and managed to stop the slide from being displayed.

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7. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Times (Ryu Jin, "BUILDER TO SET UP VENTURE WITH NORTH", 2007/12/12) reported that Namkwang Engineering & Construction, a ROK company which has recently been stepping up efforts for inter-Korean economic projects, plans to form a joint venture with a DPRK firm for construction works in the DPRK and other countries. Namkwang E&C CEO Lee Dong-chul told reporters Tuesday that his company, along with 516 Construction Company in the DPRK, will seek to win construction orders in foreign countries including Angola as well as DPRK cities such as Gaeseong and Pyongyang. Lee added that Namkwang would largely provide capital and construction technologies to the proposed joint-venture company while the DPRK firm would supply labor.

Chosun Ilbo ("KAESONG COMPLEX IMPROVES, BUT PRODUCTIVITY STILL LAGS", 2007/12/12) reported that small and medium-size businesses are increasingly turning their eyes to the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the DPRK as a new place to invest. That's because the complex is developing with the addition of new infrastructure elements including water supply and sewage systems, while growing labor costs and tighter regulations in developing nations like the PRC have worsened business environments overseas. The average productivity of businesses in the complex is some 55 percent of that of businesses in the same industry in the ROK. Simple processing businesses such as textiles and sewing firms show a much high productivity of some 80 percent, but the productivity of businesses that need precision work is much lower. Another problem at the complex is restrictions on labor management. Lee Jae-yul, vice president of JCCOM, which set up an office in the complex last year, said that it is necessary to go through DPRK factory managers to give instructions and it is difficult to raise productivity because there is no bonus system.

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8. ROK-DPRK-Russia Pipeline Project

Joongang Ilbo ("FUTURE PIPELINE WOULD GO ACROSS NORTH KOREA", 2007/12/12) reported that the ROK and Russia agreed on a joint feasibility study into the construction of a pipeline that can transport natural gas to Northeast Asia, the government said yesterday. Any gas pipeline would likely run through the DPRK, which could fuel cross-border cooperation. The deal, reached in Moscow during a meeting of the natural resources cooperation committee, would open the door for gas produced in Russia's far east and Siberia to be sent overland to the ROK, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy said. A ministry official said the state-run Korea Gas is going to conduct technical and economic feasibility studies into the extension of the pipeline. Once this study is completed, details about the route of the pipeline and a contract for its construction can be made.

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9. ROK-Japan Relations

Korea Times ("SEOUL, TOKYO TO HOLD TALKS ON FISHING QUOTAS", 2007/12/12) reported that officials from the ROK and Japan will hold talks in Seoul this week to set the amount of fish each side will be allowed to catch in the other side's exclusive waters next year, the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry said. "The South Korea-Japan Joint Fisheries Committee will meet on Friday to discuss the terms of fishing in each other's exclusive economic zones next year," a ministry spokesman said in a press release.

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10. US-Japan Security Alliance

The Asahi Shimbun ("U.S. ACCEPTS CUT IN BASE COSTS", 2007/12/12) reported that the US agreed to a Japanese proposal to implement a modest cut in the so-called sympathy budget covering basic expenses for U.S. military bases here. Agreement was reached during talks between Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura and U.S. Ambassador Thomas Schieffer. The two sides agreed to cut about 800 million yen from the budget over a three-year period from fiscal 2008, a minimal cut in comparison to the 140 billion yen allocated yearly to the sympathy budget under a special agreement.

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11. Japan-Russia Territorial Dispute

Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "RUSSIA SEIZES 4 JAPANESE FISHING BOATS", Tokyo, 2007/12/13) reported that Japan said Thursday that Russia seized four Japanese fishing boats in disputed waters between the two countries. The boats were captured by the Russian border guard in the early hours off Kunashiri Island, one of four islands claimed by both countries, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Akira Muto, chief of the Foreign Ministry's Russia section, called the incident "unacceptable," citing Japan's territorial claims over the islands and their surrounding waters. Muto also demanded Russian officials provide further details.

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12. US-PRC Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("RECORD HIGH OIL PRICES, CHINA WIDEN US TRADE GAP", Washington, 2007/12/12) reported that the US trade deficit widened 1.2 percent in October to 57.8 billion dollars, driven by record high oil prices and an all-time high trade gap with the PRC, the government said Wednesday. The October trade balance highlighted two key factors pressuring the US economy: rising oil prices and dependence on PRC imports. Surging oil prices were the main cause of the widening gap. Prices climbed to a record 72.49 dollars an imported barrel, pushing the oil trade deficit to an all-time high of 26.3 billion dollars. The deficit in other goods, meanwhile, fell to 38.5 billion dollars, its lowest level since March 2004.

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13. Sino-Indian Trade Relations

IANAS ("INDIA, CHINA TRADE TO TOUCH \$70 BILLION BY 2010", Mumbai, 2007/12/12) reported that the PRC has become India's second largest trading partner, next only to the US, and trade between the two countries is likely to touch \$70 billion in 2010, according to PRC official sources. Statistics released by the PRC commerce ministry reveal that bilateral trade between India and the PRC in the first five months of 2007 touched \$14.2 billion, an increase of 53.70 percent over the same period last year, making it the fastest growth rate among all of the PRC's top 10 trading partners.

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14. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S HU PRAISES MILITARY, SCIENTISTS ", Beijing, 2007/12/12) reported that President Hu Jintao congratulated the PRC's military and scientists at a ceremony Wednesday to celebrate the successful launch of a moon probe. Hu devoted much of a live nationwide television broadcast to praising the country's socialist system, along with its military and scientific community, for ensuring the success of the Chang'e 1 lunar satellite.

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II. CanKor

15. Report #299

CanKor ("CANKOR FOCUS: HUMAN RIGHTS", 2007/12/12) Human rights in the DPRK continue to be a major international concern. On the occasion of international human rights day, we offer this special edition of the CanKor Report, containing a number of relevant recent articles, opinions and resources.

CanKor ("OPINION: IMPERIALISTS' HUMAN RIGHTS THEORY BLASTED", 2007/12/12) The imperialists and reactionaries have raised a hue and cry over "protection of human rights" and "stance of putting human rights above anything else" in a bid to hide their true colors as human rights abusers and slander and defame the progressive countries including socialist countries. In doing so they seek a sinister political purpose to quell the struggle of their countries for freedom and human rights on one hand and destabilize the progressive countries on the other. Rodong Sinmun today says this in a signed article.

CanKor ("OPINION: WHAT THE FREE WORLD CAN DO TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS", 2007/12/12) Now -- more on what specifically we and others in the free world are doing-and of which we all could perhaps do more. First and foremost, we seek to build an international consensus on the North Korean human rights situation... Another pillar of our strategy is to take active steps to help empower the people of North Korea directly -- for it is they who must ultimately bring about change. Given the closed nature of North Korea, the most promising feasible method of doing this is through radio broadcasting... The third pillar of our approach is seeking to assist refugees in reaching safety.

CanKor ("RESOURCES: UN RESOLUTION: SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE DPRK", 2007/12/12) The General Assembly... Decides to continue its examination of the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at its sixty-third session, and to this end requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Special Rapporteur to continue to report his findings and recommendations.

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