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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press (George Jahn, "N. KOREA ALLOWS UN INSPECTORS AT KEY NUCLEAR SITE", Vienna, 2008/10/13) reported that the DPRK lifted its ban on U.N. inspections of the plutonium-producing plant it used to set up an atomic test blast and announced it will resume deactivation of a linked facility within days, the International Atomic Energy Agency said. The moves were revealed in a restricted IAEA document to its 35-nation board of governors that was obtained by The Associated Press.

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "NORTH KOREA TO RESUME NUCLEAR DISMANTLEMENT", Seoul, 2008/10/14) reported that the DPRK planned to resume dismantling its nuclear program Tuesday for the first time in two months. IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said agency inspectors "will also now be permitted to reapply the containment and surveillance measures at the reprocessing facility." That meant agency seals taken off the plant and monitoring cameras recently removed at the DPRK's orders would be restored. The Korean Central News Agency had given no word by Tuesday afternoon if the work had gotten under way, and ROK Foreign Ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said he had no information whether the work had begun.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA WELCOMES US, NORTH KOREA MOVES ON NUCLEAR PACT", Beijing, 2008/10/13) reported that the PRC welcomed Washington's removal of the DPRK from its

terror blacklist and Pyongyang's agreement to resume disabling its nuclear facilities, calling their efforts "constructive". "China appreciates the constructive efforts made by the concerned parties," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang said. "Promoting the six-party talks process serves the common interests of the involved parties, which is also a shared aspiration of the international community," he said in a short statement issued on the ministry's Web site.

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3. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Program

Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "U.S. MOVE ON N. KOREA ASSAILED IN JAPAN", Tokyo, 2008/10/13) reported that after the Bush administration removed the DPRK from its terrorism blacklist, Japan the decision to take the country off the list of state sponsors of terrorism was condemned by family members of the abductees. Japanese Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa told reporters that the U.S. decision was "extremely regrettable." He said that "abductions amount to terrorist acts."

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4. US Export Restrictions on DPRK

Associated Press (Robin McDowell, "US CONTROLS BIRD FLU VACCINES OVER BIOWEAPON FEARS", Jakarta, 2008/10/11) reported that United States export regulations bars U.S. exports of vaccines for avian bird flu and dozens of other viruses to five countries designated "state sponsors of terrorism", including the DPRK. The countries may not get the vaccines unless they apply for special export licenses, which would be given or refused according to the discretion and timing of the U.S. The regulations have raised concern within the medical and scientific communities.

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5. ROK Energy Aid to the DPRK

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "SEOUL LIKELY TO GIVE N. KOREA 3,000 TONS OF STEEL PRODUCTS", 2008/10/13) reported that the ROK will likely send 3,000 tons of steel products to the DPRK late this month as the DPRK pledged to resume work to disable its nuclear programs, the Yonhap news agency said Monday, quoting multiple unnamed sources. The Ministry of Unification refused to detail the exact schedule. The ministry's spokesman, Kim Ho-nyoun, only said the ministry is reviewing the assistance plan.

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6. DPRK Black Market Videos

Korea Times (Park Si-soo, "SOUTHERN DRAMAS AVAILABLE IN N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/10/13) reported that various video and audio productions from capitalist countries are becoming more widely available in the DPRK, with the authorities becoming more lenient on those enjoying such contents, according to a survey of recent defectors released Monday by the Korean Bar Association.

The report said a growing number of North Koreans watch ROK soap operas or movies smuggled in from the PRC and Japan. ``Before 2000, those detected watching or listening to South Korean programs were sent to labor camps. But now most are fined or released in exchange for a bribe,'' a defector testified.

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7. DPRK Film Festival

Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "NORTH KOREA FILM FESTIVAL: HOLLYWOOD NEED NOT APPLY", Pyongyang, 2008/10/11) reported that every two years since 1987, the DPRK has hosted the Pyongyang International Film Festival. "It is practically the only occasion where North Koreans can see foreign films," said Uwe Schmelter, who heads the Japan office of the Goethe Institute, the German cultural organization that supplied Germany's films to the festival. This year, 110 films from 46 nations were screened, among them China, Russia, Germany, Sweden, Britain, Egypt and Iran. Although most films aren't overtly propagandistic, there is a strong preference for themes emphasizing family values, loyalty, the temptations of money.

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8. Japan SDF Afghanistan Role

Agence France-Presse (Kyoko Hasegawa, "JAPAN OPPOSITION WANTS BIGGER GLOBAL SECURITY ROLE", Tokyo, 2008/10/13) reported that Japan would play a more active role in global security if the opposition wins upcoming elections and would also seek better diplomacy to bring peace to Afghanistan, the shadow defence minister said. Keiichi Asao, the defence minister in the Democrats' shadow cabinet, said he would maintain support for the United States but with a different attitude. "Our use of force will need to be endorsed not only by the United States but also by the international community as a whole, namely the United Nations," he added.

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9. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua ("CHINESE DEFENSE MINISTER URGES US TO DROP TAIWAN ARMS SALE", 2008/10/13) reported that PRC Defense Minister Liang Guanglie urged the United States to immediately abolish its proposed arms sale to Taiwan and end its military connection to the island, stressing the sales plan had damaged PRC-US military ties. He said the PRC hoped the US side would take concrete action to insist on the one-China policy, abide by the three Sino-US communiques and its commitments on the Taiwan issue, immediately abolish a relevant plan for an arms sale to Taiwan and end military connection with Taiwan to avoid destroying PRC-US state-to-state and military-t--military relations.

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10. EU-PRC Energy Cooperation

Xinhua ("EXPERT: EU EXPECTS CO-OP WITH ASIA IN CLIMATE, ENERGY ", Brussels, 2008/10/11) reported that the European Union expects to reach consensuses with Asia to cooperate in combating climate change and maintaining energy security, an EU expert on Asian affairs said. "Europe wants to send a clear message at the EU-Asia summit" to build with Asian countries "consensuses to work together on climate change and energy security," which is the most important thing for Europe, Etienne Reuter, a senior advisor to the European Commission told Xinhua in an exclusive interview.

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11. PRC Energy Security

Beijing Review (" TOWARD A REGIONAL ENERGY SOLUTION", 2008/10/11) reported that as Northeast Asia rapidly rises to become one of the most dynamic economies in the world, its energy demands are skyrocketing. Regional energy security and prospects for cooperation topped the agenda of the Fourth PRC Jilin Northeast Asia Investment and Trade Expo in Changchun, Jilin Province. Against a backdrop of worsening energy shortages and soaring oil prices, experts believe that countries in Northeast Asia should go beyond bilateral cooperation with Russia to explore a broader multilateral cooperative system to overcome their ongoing energy crunches.

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12. Tibet Issue

Associated Press ("AIDE: DALAI LAMA TO BE RELEASED FROM HOSPITAL SOON", New Delhi, 2008/10/11) reported that the Dalai Lama is likely to be discharged from the hospital in the next few days, a senior aide said Saturday, a day after surgeons removed gallstones. "He had a minor surgery so he's resting," Tenzin Takhla said. "He's doing very well." Takhla said he was likely to be released from the hospital Monday or Tuesday.

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13. PRC Environment

The Los Angeles Times (John M. Glionna, "CHINA ALSO SUFFERS FROM INDOOR AIR POLLUTION", Beijing, 2008/10/13) reported that researchers have bad news for the PRC's beleaguered lower classes: The air inside their homes is up to 10 times worse than the prevailing gloom outside. Seven of 10 homes still burn coal and wood for heat, and half of PRC men smoke -- a toxic combination of indoor pollution that raises dire questions about the fate of this industrial giant's long-term public health. "In many places in rural China, the roads are good, people now have cellphones and electricity, but residents are still cooking and heating with the same fuel they have used for centuries," said Majid Ezzati, an associate professor of international health and senior author of the study. "And as a result, people are dying."

BBC News ("TAINTED CHINA WATER SICKENS 450 ", 2008/10/13) reported that about 450 people have fallen ill in southern PRC after drinking contaminated water, the Xinhua state news agency says. Four of the sick, in two villages in Guangxi province, have arsenic poisoning. Industrial waste from a metal company has been blamed.

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14. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua ("PRESIDENT HU RAISES 'QUAKE RELIEF SPIRIT' BANNER FOR NATION ", 2008/10/08) reported that President Hu Jintao urged the PRC to carry on the spirit of unity, courage, "people first" and scientific thinking that characterized the May 12 earthquake relief effort. At a ceremony in Beijing's Great Hall of the People to honor outstanding organizations and individuals for their contributions to the rescue and relief work, Hu said the spirit should be promoted among the Communist Party of China (CPC) members and the public.

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15. PRC Rural Poverty

The New York Times (Edward Wong, "CHINA ANNOUNCES LAND POLICY AIMED AT PROMOTING INCOME GROWTH IN COUNTRYSIDE ", Beijing, 2008/10/13) reported that PRC leaders said that they would adopt a rural growth policy aimed at vastly increasing the income of the PRC's hundreds of millions of farmers by the year 2020, setting in motion what could be the nation's biggest economic reform in years. The new policy is intended to stimulate market-driven economic growth in the countryside and to narrow the enormous income disparity between rural and urban PRC, one of the largest such gaps in the world. Its adoption is another significant step away from the system of communal farming and collectivization put in place under Mao.

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II. PRC Report

16. Myanmar-PRC Energy Cooperation

Kunming Daily ("CHINA INVESTS 120 BILLION YUAN TO BUILD HYDROPOWER STATION IN MYANMAR", 2008/10/13) reported that China Power Investment Corporation will invest 120 billion yuan in Enmeikai river basin to build a hydropower station with a total installed capacity of 16,500,000 kilowatts. The corporation's headquarters will be set in Kunming. It plans to start construction in 2010 and finish construction in 15 years. This is a major foreign economic project of Kunming, and will strengthen the energy cooperation between the PRC and the ASEAN countries.

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17. PRC Environment

Beijing Science and Technology News ("CHINA FACES SERIOUS ARSENIC POLLUTION THREAT", 2008/10/09) reported that according to the data from World Health Organization, at least 500 people all around the world are facing arsenic pollution threat. Most of them are in Asian countries, and the PRC suffers the most. Arsenic pollution is one kind of heavy-metal pollution. In recent years,

pesticides and herbicides which have arsenic are widely used in agriculture, and the pig and chicken feed are mixed with arsenic to increase output and make the meat look better. This is very dangerous and will cause arsenic poisoning.

Xinhua (Guo Jiaxuan, "WUHAN EXPLORES MICROBIOLOGICAL TECHNOLOGY ON LAKE POLLUTION CONTROL", Wuhan, 2008/10/09) reported that in only three months' time, the water quality of Xibei Lake in Wuhan city has clearly improved due to "Water Remediation Microbiological Technology". The Technology is developed by Huazhong Agriculture University. It gradually rebuilds the water ecological system, restoring the lake's self-purification ability and achieving a natural clean of the water.

Xinhua Net (Cheng Zilong, "CHINA TO CONTROL SONGNEN PLAIN DEGRADATION AND RESTORE SALINIZATION OF GRASSLANDS", Harbin, 2008/10/13) reported that according to Heilongjiang provincial government, the Ministry of Science and Technology and Heilongjiang province recently decided to provide scientific and technological support on Songnen Plain's degradation control and grasslands' salinization restoration. In this regard, Ministry of Science and Technology will help Heilongjaing province on soil fertilization model research of Northeast saline-alkali soil area and some other technological fields, in order to curb the deterioration of ecological environment.

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18. PRC Population Relocation

Sichuan Daily ("SICHUAN PLANS TO INVEST 5 BILLION YUAN FOR THE SETTLEMENT OF HERDSMEN", 2008/10/13) reported that in the Tibetan area of Sichuan province, there are 533,000 herdsmen, among which 219,000 haven't settled down. The Sichuan provincial government decided to invest 5 billion yuan to address the fundamental settlement problem of herdsmen in 2012, by way of government's unified planning and design, public financial support and the herdsmen's self-settlement.

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III. ROK Report

19. DPRK Nuclear Program

Segye Ilbo ("DPRK REMOVAL FROM 'THE LIST', SHOULD GAIN GLOBAL CREDIBILITY", 2008/10/13) reported that what is required at this moment to solve the DPRK nuclear problem is the DPRK's credibility. First of all, they have to rejoin Nonproliferation Treaty as soon as possible which they withdrew in 2002. The ROK government should grab this opportunity which will change the atmosphere around the area to stabilize the inter-Korean relationship.

Seoul Shinmun ("DPRK SHOULD ABANDON ALL ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN RETURN OF THE DELISTING", 2008/10/13) wrote that there is no reason to criticize the implementation of the U.S.

and the DPRK's principle of 'action for action'. The two parties should eliminate all sorts of mutual distrust and build credibility through this action. In order to achieve this goal, the DPRK should acknowledge that the agreements made during the six-party talks and bilateral talks between the DPRK and the U.S. are focused in verifying all sorts of suspicions concerning the nuclear issue including plutonium, uranium enrichment and proliferation activities.

Herald Economy ("DPRK LIFTED FROM TERRORISM-SUPPORT NATION, INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP CONCERNED", 2008/10/14) reported that the DPRK not only grabbed an important opportunity to improve the relationship with the U.S. and normalize diplomacy, but also achieved their all-time desire even without saying a word of plausible apology. The ROK's actual burden will grow as the denuclearization proceeds while leverage toward the DPRK is weakened, which will damage the inter-Korean relationship. The most urgent and the necessary task at the moment is to ensure our position at the six-party talks, as well as to reinvestigate overall structures of DPRK policy, principles and methods. The DPRK should realize that the lifting can be canceled anytime unless they actively reform and open doors and implement what has been discussed during the six-party talks.

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20. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Ohmynews ("REMOVAL FROM BLACKLIST VIRTUALLY ACKNOWLEDGING NUCLEAR POSSESSION", 2008/10/14) said in a column that the DPRK's removal from the list of state sponsors of terrorism means that the U.S. virtually acknowledges that they possess nuclear weapons, and so their future DPRK policy will flow that way. The U.S. decision is actually irretrievable. Moreover, such a perspective will be possibly become more certain as the next administration comes into the office. In this sense, the "Denuclearization 3000" plan is no longer valid. The Lee Myung-bak Administration should think about more practical and reasonable DPRK policies and unification resolutions.

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21. ROK, Japan, US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("ROK NOT TO OVERLOOK DPRK'S PLUTONIUM AND URANIUM", 2008/10/14) wrote that concerning the DPRK nuclear issue, what grabs our attention the most are the DPRK's plutonium and uranium. It is neither the U.S. nor the PRC who is under the biggest threat from a DPRK nuclear missile, but the ROK. It is impossible for the DPRK nuclear facilities to go through such a complete verification and abandonment unless the ROK, U.S. and Japan collaborate. The most urgent task at the moment for the three nations is to normalize the relationships between one another which had been worsened due to the 'delisting'.

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