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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA WARNS NUCLEAR DISMANTLING MIGHT SLOW", Beijing, 2008/12/13) reported that Kim Kye Gwan, the DPRK envoy to nuclear talks, warned Saturday that Pyongyang will slow work on dismantling its nuclear program if energy aid is delayed. "Let's watch whether economic and energy compensation projects stop or move forward," Kim said as he prepared to return to Pyongyang. "We'll adjust the speed of our disablement work if it (energy aid) doesn't come in."

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Herald ("NUCLEAR TALKS NOT FAILURE, SHOULD GO ON: FOREIGN MINISTER", Seoul, 2008/12/12) reported that Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan on Friday said the six-party talks will remain viable even after U.S. President-elect Barack Obama takes office in January. "There is no doubt that the Obama administration will tackle North Korea's denuclearization within the six-party talks framework," Yu said in a conference with ruling party legislators. "It is too soon to question the effectiveness of the talks or say North Korea's denuclearization process is dead. Although it has been

slow, the six nations generally agree a considerable amount of progress has been made on North Korea's denuclearization."

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "NUCLEAR TALKS STUCK ON VERIFICATION AS BUSH TERM ENDS", Seoul, 2008/12/15) reported that ROK analysts say the deadlock over the DPRK's denuclearization process will continue until the end of U.S. President George W. Bush's administration. "North Korea will be intending to hold back the six-party progress in a bid to seek a deal with the Obama government," said Nam Sung-wook, the president of the state-run Institute for National Security Strategy. "If South Korea suspends energy aid to North Korea and the North retaliates by halting the disablement process, an idea could emerge in the U.S. government that it needs to relist the North in its list of state sponsors of terrorism," said Kim Sung-bae, a researcher at the INSS.

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3. Energy Aid for DPRK

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Ha-won, "THE U.S. SAYS AID IS OFF THE TABLE TILL NORTH COOPERATES", 2008/12/15) reported that the U.S. State Department said on Saturday that the countries participating in the six-party talks plan to halt the promised economic and energy aid if Pyongyang does not cooperate with the effort to verify its nuclear declaration. “I think this is the understanding of other parties - that the future fuel shipments aren’t going to move forward absent a verification regime,” State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in a briefing. However, Russian chief nuclear negotiator, Alexei Borodavkin told RIA Novosti news agency that Russia “had not agreed upon any joint arrangements with the U.S. about a delay or suspension of fuel oil shipments to North Korea as an offset against dismantling of the Yongbyon nuclear research center.” “We hoped that all the parties to the talks will comply with the existing agreements,” he said.

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4. US-DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA SOCKS IT TO BUSH BUT KEEPS MUM ON OBAMA", 2008/12/15) reported that the DPRK's Rodong Shinmun daily on Saturday said the best thing for the Bush administration was to “shut up and leave the White House in silence now that is all there is left for it to do.” It said all the Bush government has done over the last eight years “is create trouble in the world, commit wrongdoings in its every endeavor, and bring about disaster.” However, the DPRK has so far made no negative comments about President-elect Barack Obama. Baek Seung-joo, of the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, said, “North Korea seems to be cautiously studying the Obama administration before the real negotiations on nuclear weapons begins.”

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5. US-DPRK Cultural Exchanges

Washington Post (Nora Boustany, "MUSICAL DIPLOMACY RESONATES WITH N. KOREA AS OFFICIAL EFFORTS STALL", Washington, 2008/12/13) reported that negotiations are underway between DPRK officials and American music leaders for DPRK orchestras to travel to the United

States and replicate the New York Philharmonic Orchestra's performance in February in Pyongyang. The New York-based Korea Society is brokering discussions among the DPRK's UN mission, the State Department and the Philharmonic with a goal of bringing 160 performers from Pyongyang's State Symphony Orchestra to New York's Lincoln Center next year.

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6. DPRK Leadership

Yonhap ("FRENCH DOCTOR DENIES TREATING N.K. LEADER: REPORT", Seoul, 2008/12/15) reported that French neurosurgeon Francois-Xavier Roux denied a report in the French newspaper Le Figaro that he treated DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. "I did not see their leader and I don't have any information about the leader," Roux said Sunday, adding that he had been misquoted. "Like many other French, German or other doctors, I have been to Korea several times," he was quoted as saying. "It was never to see their leader."

Korea Herald ("N.K. LEADER VISITS FARMS, FOLK VILLAGE", 2008/12/12) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il recently visited farms and a folk village in a provincial city, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. The report did not provide the date for the visit.

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7. DPRK Refugees

Arirang News ("OVER 1,400 NORTH KOREANS WIN EU CITIZENSHIP", 2008/12/15) reported that more than 1,400 DPR Koreans became citizens of European Union member states from 2002 to 2006. Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, says most of them are assumed to be former DPRK refugees. The EU says a large number of PRC people of Korean descent posing as DPRK defectors could be included in the figure.

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8. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "PARTIES AT WAR OVER 'IDEOLOGY BILLS'", Seoul, 2008/12/14) reported that the ROK's opposition Democratic Party said it would block any attempt to pass a bill to provide civic groups sending anti-DPRK leaflets across the border with state subsidies. DP lawmakers opposed disseminating the propaganda materials to the DPRK, arguing it has worsened inter-Korean relations

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA SLAMS SEOUL-BACKED HUMAN RIGHTS LAWS", Seoul, 2008/12/14) reported that Yonhap News Agency said that the DPRK criticized the ROK's ruling Grand National Party Sunday for pushing legislation to provide conservative activist groups with up to 300 million won (US$218,000) to aid them in making and sending anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the inter-Korean border. "Those are poisonous laws that imitate the anti-North Korea laws in the United States," Tongil Shinbo, Pyongyang's weekly magazine, said. "It goes without saying what will happen

to the relationship between the two Koreas after such laws are established."

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9. ROK Role in Afghanistan

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. ASKS KOREA TO HELP IN AFGHANISTAN REBUILDING", 2008/12/15) reported that the U.S. Defense Department on Saturday expressed gratitude to the ROK government's contribution in its war in Afghanistan so far but called for more. As areas where support is needed, he cited reconstruction, peace-keeping, and the training of the Afghan Army. A diplomatic source in Washington said since U.S. president-elect Barack Obama is giving priority to the Afghan War over the Iraq War, the Defense Department hopes that the ROK will reach a decision quickly in time with Obama's inauguration in January.

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10. ROK Climate Change

Korea Herald (Cho Ji-hyun, "KOREA TO UNVEIL GAS REDUCTION TARGET BY 2009", Seoul, 2008/12/13) reported that the ROK plans to present a mid-term greenhouse gas reduction target for 2020 by next year. In his speech to a meeting of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Poznan, Poland, on Thursday, Environment Minister Lee Maan-ee said the nation will take proactive measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with its capability. Lee stated, "Developed countries need to take a leading role by showing more ambitious commitment in greenhouse gas reduction, technology transfer and financial support. Meanwhile, developing countries should actively pursue nationally appropriate mitigation actions corresponding to their capabilities."

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11. ROK-Mongolia Energy Cooperation

Korea Herald ("S.KOREA, MONGOLIA STRIKE ENERGY DEAL", Seoul, 2008/12/12) reported that the ROK and Mongolia agreed to jointly develop coalbed methane (CBM) gas, the ROK government was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. "The MOU signed between Korea Gas Corp. and Mongolia's Ministry of Mining and Energy is significant because it could allow similar agreements in uranium, copper and other resources," a government official said.

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12. ROK-PRC-Japan Relations

Korea Herald ("S.KOREA, CHINA, JAPAN AGREE TO REGULARIZE TRIPARTITE SUMMIT", 2008/12/14) reported that the ROK presidential office was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency that ROK President Lee Myung-bak, Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso and PRC Premier Wen Jiabao agreed Saturday to widen cooperation in promoting free trade, fiscal expansion and currency swaps at their trilateral summit in Fukuoka. They also agreed to reinforce tripartite partnership for

"regional stability, prosperity and peace," while expressing regrets at the DPRK's recent refusal to agree to verification measures for its nuclear program.

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13. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

New York Times (Martin Fackler, "JAPAN RENEWS AUTHORIZATION FOR NAVAL AID IN AFGHAN WAR", Tokyo, 2008/12/12) reported that Japan's governing Liberal Democratic Party pushed through a law on Friday to extend a refueling mission by its navy in the Indian Ocean. The LDP used its majority in Parliament's lower house to override an earlier rejection of the bill by the upper house. The law allows a Japanese Navy tanker and escorting destroyer to continue operating for another year in waters off Pakistan, where they provide fuel and water for American and other warships supporting operations in Afghanistan.

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14. Japanese Nuclear Power

Asahi Shimbun ("CHUBU ELECTRIC PLANS TO DECOMMISSION TWO NUCLEAR REACTORS", Tokyo, 2008/12/15) reported that Japan's Chubu Electric Power Co. plans to decommission two old reactors in need of expensive quake-resistance upgrades at its Hamaoka Nuclear Power Station in Omaezaki, Shizuoka Prefecture, and build a new one instead, sources said. But opposition to a new reactor is certain to come from residents who have already filed a lawsuit against Chubu Electric over safety concerns. The operations of the power station's Nos. 1 and 2 reactors have been suspended since 2001 and 2004, respectively.

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15. Japanese Asylum Policy

Asahi Shimbun (Mitsusada Enyo, "REFUGEE AID PROGRAM RUNS OUT OF MONEY", Tokyo, 2008/12/13) reported that the Japanese government's financial assistance program for foreigners awaiting refugee status recognition has run dry because of a surge in applications this year. An official at the Foreign Ministry's Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Division said, "We're making adjustments so we can continue the assistance from next month on. But we'll have no choice but to work within the budgetary constraints." The number of applicants jumpted from 816 in 2007 to more than 1,400 by the end of November this year and is expected to reach 1,500 by the end of December.

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16. Cross Straits Relations

Associated Presss (Debby Wu, "TAIWAN, CHINA OPEN DIRECT SHIPPING, AIR LINKS", Keelung, Taiwan, 2008/12/15) reported that Taiwanese jetliners and cargo ships left Monday for the PRC, opening a new era of direct air and shipping services with the mainland. Evergreen Marine's "Uni-

Adroit" set sail for Tianjin after an inauguration ceremony at Kaohisung harbor presided over by Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou. The direct links will allow the southern Taiwanese port to "take full advantage of its central geographical position in east Asia" and help revive the island's economy, Ma told a group of businesspeople at the ceremony.

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17. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press (Annie Huang, "CHEN'S GRAFT CHARGES STUN DEMOCRATIC TAIWAN", Taipei, 2008/12/13) reported that former Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian on Friday was indicted Chen on charges of embezzlement and laundering bribes. Chen's wife, together with 13 other family members and close associates, were also indicted in the case. Chen claimed innocence, saying the $21 million his wife wired to their son's Swiss bank accounts came from leftover campaign donations. Taiwanese law permits such donations to be kept by political candidates.

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18. PRC Anti-Terrorism

China Daily ("CHINA HOLDS ANTI-TERROR DRILLS AFTER MUMBAI ATTACKS", Beijing, 2008/12/14) reported that armed police conducted an anti-terror drill at a hotel in Beijing on Saturday to boost the PRC's response capabilities against Mumbai-style militant attacks. "The drill was aimed at preventing terrorist attacks, especially after the Mumbai attack which had definite targets and careful plan. We noticed that the terrorists attacked different sites of the city in different ways such as explosions, shooting, kidnapping and a gunfight with the police," said Xiao Yong, the head of the unit. "We have done thorough research on different kinds of attacks and made a complete and cohesive counter-terrorism plan."

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19. PRC Food Safety

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PROBING 27 CASES OF MELAMINE-TAINTED ANIMAL FEED: STATE MEDIA", Beijing, 2008/12/15) reported that PRC police are investigating 27 cases of melamine-laced animal feed, state media said Monday. The Ministry of Agriculture examined 22,700 batches of feed throughout the country, and found 545, or 2.4 percent, were found to contain excessive melamine, the official China Daily reported.

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20. PRC Civil Unrest

Reuters ("CHINA ARRESTS DOZENS AFTER RIOT", Beijing, 2008/12/13) reported that police in northern PRC have detained dozens of people who rioted because they were angry about the compensation paid for the death of a local man, Xinhua news agency said on Saturday. The Xinhua report contradicted an earlier report from Hong Kong-based rights group Information Center for

Human Rights and Democracy which said the riot was triggered by alleged vote-buying in local village elections. Two local officials had denied the rights group's report, Xinhua said.

Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "IN CHINA, ANGER RISES AS ECONOMY FALLS", Beijing, 2008/12/12) reported that protests in the PRC have been increasing in recent weeks. "Definitely, this is the most serious problem we have seen since 1989," said Zhou Xiaozheng, a professor of sociology at People's University in Beijing. "You have millions of college students who can't find jobs. . . . You have migrant workers who have lost their jobs at factories and don't have land to go back to." "I think the leaders are scared stiff," said Susan Shirk, a professor at UC San Diego. "Certainly the Chinese Communist Party leadership believes there is a connection between economic growth, social stability and the survival of one-party rule."

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

National Ministry of Environmental Protection website ("CHINA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOUNDATION HELPS ENERGY-SAVING CAMPAIGNS OF UNDERGRADUATE ORGANIZATIONS", 2008/12/11) reported that the third round of Small Financial Aid to Undergraduate Environmental Organization Project was officially launched at People's University on December 10, Beijing. This time the project is funded by Pizza Hut Inc. The project aims to mobilize environmental protection enthusiasm of undergraduate students and to promote health development of undergraduate organizations by funding their environmental protection campaigns. This time, 50 applications of 45 universities form 31 provinces all across the country have got the aid.

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22. PRC Civil Society

Lianyungang Daily (Wang Fang, "LIANYUNGANG SOCIETY FOR PROMOTION THE GUANGCAI PROGRAM HOLDS COUNCIL MEETING", 2008/12/11) reported that yesterday morning, Lianyungang Society for Promotion the Guangcai Program held the council meeting, summarizing its work recently. According to incomplete statistics, over the past five years, over 600 private economic personages have joined Guangcai Program. They have invested over 3 billion yuan, set up over 170 anti-poverty projects, trained 50,000 workers and migrant workers, and arranged 45,000 employment positions for laid-off workers and farmers.

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23. PRC Civil Society and Public Education

Changjiang Daily (Huang Zheng, "HUBEI GOVERNMENTAL PROJECT GETS AWARD BY CIVIL ORGANIZATION", 2008/12/11) reported that the ceremony of Local Education System Innovation

Award which is co-sponsored by 12 Century Educational Institution, China Youth Daily, Nandu Foundation was held in Peking University recently. This is for the first time that the performance of government on local education innovation is evaluated by civil organizations. Hubei province's "Rural Teacher Aid Plan" got the award, for its creative solution of inadequate quantity and low quality of rural teachers.

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III. ROK Report

24. DPRK Nuclear Program

Ohmynews ("DPRK NUKE CRISIS FROM U.S.", 2008/12/11) wrote that the analysis that the US will tolerate DPRK's nuclear possession while attempting to block proliferation boosts several suspicions and gives a wrong signal to the DPRK. It will also bring incredible influences upon the ROK-US relationship and military affairs. If the U.S. government makes a different evaluation about the DPRK's nuclear weapons, pressure for the ROK to participate in missile defense will be boosted as well. Amid the economic crisis, the Barack Obama Administration, which will put priority on diplomacy, will like this option. The Lee Administration should insist on the Pentagon revising their reports.

Freezonenews ("KIM DONG-SUNG, NUCLEAR ARMAMENT, ONLY WAY TO BLOCK DPRK'S NUKE DEVELOPMENT", 2008/12/12) reported that concerning Pentagon's recent report about the DPRK nuclear weapons, Grand National Party representative Kim Dong-sung said on a radio program on Dec. 12 that the U.S. should not have written about the problem the way they did. About his remark saying that the ROK also needs to arm themselves with nuclear weapons, he said that was only to pressure the DPRK or the PRC. He added that though it is not a good idea to arm the nation with such weapons, there is no other choice but to react to them more strongly.

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25. Energy Aid for DPRK

PRESSian ("U.S. TO SUSPEND DPRK ENERGY AID, DELISTING WOULD NOT CHANGE", 2008/12/12) reported that experts analyzed that U.S. moves to suspend energy aid to the DPRK was to express their dissatisfaction over the failure of the six-party talks to agree on verification. The action also might devastate the whole process of denuclearization. It is likely for the ROK to react positively to the U.S. decision. The ROK is currently not willing to continue the aid due to Blue House's firm attitude.

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