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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters ("U.N. MONITORS RE-SEAL N.KOREAN NUCLEAR EQUIPMENT", Vienna, 2008/10/14) reported that monitors re-sealed equipment and reactivated cameras at the DPRK's nuclear complex on Tuesday, diplomats close to the U.N. atomic watchdog said, after a deal to re-launch a faltering disarmament process. A diplomat familiar with International Atomic Energy Agency operations said IAEA monitors were putting seals back on equipment at Yongbyon's shutdown plutonium-producing plant and switching agency surveillance cameras back on. The monitors regained access to the reprocessing plant, the kernel of its atomic bomb program, as well as a nuclear fuel-fabrication facility and 5 megawatt reactor.

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2. US Candidates on DPRK Nuclear Program

ANH ("MCCAIN, OBAMA REACT TO NORTH KOREA'S REMOVAL FROM TERROR LIST; PALIN HAILS "WISE DECISION"", Washington, 2008/10/14) reported that Sen. John McCain over the weekend expressed concern about the decision to remove the DPRK from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism. Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL) said he supports the move only if it makes clear to the DPRK that failure to abandon its nuclear ambitions would mean more sanctions. "I expect the administration to explain exactly how this new verification agreement advances American interests and those of our allies before I will be able to support any decision to remove North Korea from the

list of state sponsors of terrorism," McCain said. In his statement, Obama said the move was a "modest step" in dismantling the DPRK's nuclear weapons, and "an appropriate response."

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3. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN PM SAYS WON'T GIVE ENERGY AID TO NKOREA ", Tokyo, 2008/10/14) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso on Tuesday criticised the US removal of the DPRK from a terrorist blacklist and refused to give aid to Pyongyang under a nuclear disarmament deal. The conservative prime minister said Japan understood that the US decision to take the DPRK off its list of state sponsors of terrorism was a means to move forward stalled six-nation disarmament talks. "But we have made it clear that we are discontent with the delisting," Aso told a parliamentary committee.

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4. US on DPRK-Japan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US URGES NKOREA, JAPAN, TO RESOLVE ABDUCTION ISSUE", Washington, 2008/10/14) reported that the White House urged the DPRK to work with Tokyo to end the bitter dispute over Japanese nationals abducted by the secretive communist regime in the 1970s and 1980s. "We want Japan and the DPRK to continue to work on this issue together. The DPRK needs to honor its commitments to Japan and provide them resolution on this issue," said national security spokesman Gordon Johndroe.

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5. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News (Yoo Cheong-mo, "SEOUL CLAIMS CLOSE N. KOREA POLICY COOPERATION WITH U.S.", Seoul, 2008/10/14) reported that Seoul and Washington had maintained close bilateral communications channel prior to the U.S. government's announcement last Saturday of its decision to remove the DPRK from its terrorism blacklist, a top aide of President Lee Myung-bak said, dismissing media speculation over the ROK's dwindling role in the DPRK's nuclear issue. "The U.S. government's decision to take North Korea off the terrorism list had been reached on the basis of its bilateral consultation with the South Korean government," said the presidential aide in a meeting with reporters.

Associated Press (Jae-soon Chang, "SKOREAN ENVOY URGES NKOREA TO STICK TO DISARMAMENT", Seoul, 2008/10/15) reported that ROK nuclear envoy Kim Sook in an article in the Chosun Ilbo urged the DPRK on Wednesday to stick to its pledge to give up its atomic ambitions. "North Korea, which has been accused of repeatedly backing out of promises or demanding more than what it should get, can prove its denuclearization commitment only with actions, not with words," Kim said. Kim told ruling Grand National Party lawmakers that it would be difficult to complete the disabling of the North's nuclear facilities by year's end because the process has been delayed, according to GNP spokesman Cha Myeong-jin.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN DELEGATION ARRIVES IN PYONGYANG FOR YUN ISANG CONCERT", Seoul, 2008/10/14) reported that a ROK delegation of the Isang Yun Peace Foundation arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday to attend a concert there in memory of the renowned composer, Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. The KCNA said the ROK group, headed by Director Shin Kye-ryun, arrived at the Pyongyang airport to attend the 27th Yun I Sang Concert, but did not give further details.

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7. ROK on DPRK Cyberattacks

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN PM WARNS OF HACKING THREAT BY NKOREA, CHINA", Seoul, 2008/10/14) reported that ROK Prime Minister Han Seung-Soo warned his cabinet over attempts by PRC and DPRK computer hackers to obtain state secrets, officials said. The National Intelligence Service (NIS), Seoul's main spy agency, said it had told Han that about 130,000 items of government information had been hacked over the past four years. He blamed "a loosening sense of security among public servants" who recklessly use data in personal computers or on the Internet.

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8. DPRK Spy Case

Reuters (Jack Kim, "NORTH KOREA'S SEDUCTRESS SPY SENT TO PRISON", Seoul, 2008/10/15) reported that court on Wednesday convicted DPRK defector Won Jeong-hwa of extracting state secrets from military officers in return for sexual favors and sentenced her to five years in jail, a court official said. Won's lawyer said the five-year sentence was tougher than expected and he and his client are considering an appeal.

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9. Sino-DPRK Trade Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA-N.KOREA TRADE UP 25%", 2008/10/14) reported that trade between the PRC and DPRK totaled US$1.19 billion in the first half of this year, up 25 percent from the corresponding period a year before, ROK Ambassador to the PRC Shin Jung-seung said in a parliamentary audit. According to Shin, trade volume between the two countries has been increasing from $1.6 billion in 2005. “China is not publicizing the actual scale of its investment in North Korea, but it’s estimated that North Korea invests about $2 to 3 million in China, mostly in restaurants,” he said.

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10. Russo-DPRK Relations

Itar-Tass ("RUSSIAN, NKOREAN DIPLOMATS TO DISCUSS POLITICAL, TRADE COOPERATION", 2008/10/14) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his DPRK counterpart Pak Ui Chun will discuss prospects for bilateral cooperation in politics and trade during the talks on October 15, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said. "A substantive exchange of opinions on the whole range of Russian-North Korean relations will be held, including exchanges at the political level, humanitarian cooperation, regional ties; special attention will be paid to bilateral trade," Nesterenko said.

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11. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO RELEASE ONLINE MULTILINGUAL INFORMATION ON DOKDO", Seoul, 2008/10/14) reported that the ROK's state-run think tank said that it will start distributing online educational material supporting the country's sovereignty over the Dokdo islets in the East Sea. The Korea Maritime Institute (KMI) under the Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs said the material written in Korean, English, Japanese and Chinese can be posted freely on personal Internet homepages and blogs. It can also be sent to people who want to learn more about the historical background of the islets that have been part of Korea for centuries.

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12. Japan-Mongolia Energy Cooperation

United Press International ("JAPAN, MONGOLIA MEET ON URANIUM", Ulaan baatar, 2008/10/13) reported that leaders from Japan met with leaders in Mongolia to discuss cooperation on uranium mining. "It is particularly important that new uranium deposits are brought on stream because reserves at deposits currently in production are going to run down by 2020," one of the Japanese consultants told Unuudur. A deal would benefit both Mongolia and Japan as the Federation of Electric Power Companies of Japan estimates the country's annual uranium imports are more than 9,000 tons.

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13. Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN POLICE PROBE BLAST AT CHINA FRIENDSHIP OFFICE ", Tokyo, 2008/10/14) reported that police in Japan said they were probing apparent explosions in the southwest of the country, including one at the office of a group promoting Sino-Japanese relations. Employees of the local office of the Japan-China Friendship Association in southwestern Tokushima discovered damage Tuesday after returning from a three-day holiday weekend, police said. No one was injured.

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14. Sino-Russian Territorial Dispute

The Associated Press ("CHINA, RUSSIA UNVEIL BOUNDARY MARKERS", 2008/10/14) reported that the PRC and Russia jointly unveiled boundary markers today in a final step toward resolving a territorial dispute along their eastern border, their foreign ministries said. The deal is "the result of years of negotiations and shows our strategic partnership," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters at a regularly scheduled news conference. "The settlement is a concrete step of the two countries to implement a treaty of good neighborliness and friendly cooperation." Under the agreement, Russia is handing over all of Yinlong Island, known as Tarabarov Island in Russian, along with the largely uninhabited half of Heixiazi Island, or Bolshoi Ussuriysky.

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15. Sino-Russian Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA, RUSSIA TO BOOST TRADE, INVESTMENT", Moscow, 2008/10/14) reported that the PRC and Russia will further promote trade and economic cooperation while bilateral trade volume is expected to exceed 50 billion U.S. dollars this year, senior trade officials of the two countries said here Tuesday. The PRC and Russia will carry out a series of big projects in fields such as civil aviation, space exploration, energy machinery, said a statement issued after talks between visiting PRC Minister of Commerce Chen Deming and his Russian counterpart Elvira Nabiullina.

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16. Sino-Pakistani Relations

Agence France-Presse (Marianne Barriaux, "PAKISTANI PRESIDENT ARRIVES IN CHINA TO SEEK FINANCIAL HELP", Beijing, 2008/10/14) reported that Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari arrived in the PRC for a trip that was expected to see him seek help for his country's embattled economy and the expansion of its nuclear energy industry. PRC foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang indicated that nuclear energy cooperation would be discussed during Zardari's visit, when he will meet President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao, but he gave no specifics. The Financial Times newspaper also reported Tuesday, without citing sources, that Zardari would seek a soft loan of between 500 million and 1.5 billion dollars from the PRC to help Pakistan out of its financial crisis.

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17. Tibet Issue

The Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "CHINA JAILS TIBETAN MONKS CONVICTED IN BOMB BLAST", Beijing, 2008/10/14) reported that eight Buddhist monks convicted of bombing a government building in Tibet during an anti-government uprising in March have been sentenced to prison, two of them for life, a judge said. Gyurmey Dhondup and Kalsang Tsering were sentenced to life in prison while the others received sentences of between five and 15 years, Gang said in a telephone interview. He said the monks did not appeal their sentences.

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18. Cross Strait Relations

Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "CHINA REASSURES TAIWAN CONSUMERS ON MILK SAFETY", Beijing, 2008/10/15) reported that the PRC sought to reassure Taiwanese consumers that its dairy products were safe Wednesday. Spokesman Yang Yi of the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office said at a news conference, "We have taken a serious approach. China has launched a thorough investigation into this issue to help restore the trust of Taiwanese consumers."

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19. PRC Civil Society

Telegraph ("CHINA WILL BE A DEMOCRACY BY 2020, SAYS SENIOR PARTY FIGURE", 2008/10/14) reported that Zhou Tianyong, an adviser to the Communist Party's Central Committee and one of its most liberal voices, told the Daily Telegraph that "by 2020, China will basically finish its political and institutional reforms". He added: "We have a 12-year plan to establish a democratic platform. There will be public democratic involvement at all government levels." Mr Zhou added that civil society in the PRC would also play an important role. "There will be many more non-governmental organisations, chambers of commerce, industry associations and other social groups. Religion should also be given a wider platform to play a positive role. We should protect religious freedom," he said.

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20. PRC Public Health

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA AIMS TO PROVIDE HEALTHCARE FOR ALL BY 2020", Beijing, 2008/10/14) reported that the PRC unveiled details of a long-awaited overhaul of its struggling healthcare system, aiming to provide affordable basic care for all by 2020. The PRC's main economic planning body, the National Development and Reform Commission, outlined the plans on its website, saying it wanted to launch a public debate and inviting people to comment by November 14. The plan calls for greater health funding from local and national government and stricter price controls on drugs in public hospitals.

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21. PRC Unrest

International Herald Tribune ("OPPOSITION GROWS AGAINST PROPOSED CHEMICAL PLANT IN CHINA", Beijing, 2008/10/14) reported that residents of a PRC city plagued by pollution are mobilizing against a proposed chemical plant that they say could harm their health, with some urging marches against the plan, which they say puts growth before the environment. The plant proposed for Taizhou, Zhejiang Province, on the eastern coast of the PRC, would make paraxylene, a petrochemical also known as PX and used to make polyester. Now Taizhou residents, dismayed at the prospect of another chemical plant in an area already crowded with them, are threatening to re-enact those protests.

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II. PRC Report

22. Tibet Earthquake

China Tibet Information Center ("TIBET COOKING ASSOCIATION MOVES KITCHENS TO EARTHQUAKE DISASTER AREAS", Gongsanglamu, 2008/10/13) reported that since the earthquake hit Dangqiong county, Lasa city, Tibet on Oct.6, the Tibet Cooking Association has organized some restaurants to visit the epicenter three times. They took kitchenwares and vegetables, meat and other food with them, moving the kitchens to the disaster areas. They provided food for over 200 people each day. Under the coordination of Tibet Cooking Association, participating units have donated 150,000 yuan.

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23. PRC Earthquake

China Radio International ("CHINA POSITIVELY CARRIES OUT POST DISASTER PSYCHOLOGICAL RELIEF TO WENCHUAN EARTHQUAKE SURVIVORS", Panying, 2008/10/13) reported that Oct.10 was World Mental Health Day. In a related workshop held in Beijing that day, an official of the Ministry of Health said that the psychological relief to Wenchaun earthquake survivors would be a long-term project, in order to make more people go out of the shadow of the earthquake disaster as soon as possible. It is understood that the PRC Ministry of Health is making the first national public emergency psycho-social intervention contingency plan, to deal with the significant psychological problems caused by public events.

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24. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua Net (Liang Dong, "HEILONGJIANG FINDS BIG COALFIELD", 2008/10/13) reported that recently, the geological staff carefully investigated the Hegang mining area of Heilongjiang province by drilling and two–dimensional seismic methods. The investigation result showed that the Hegang mining area was full of coal resources. Preliminarily estimated, the coal resources below 900m can reach 319 million tons. These coal resources can effectively alleviate the energy shortage of Heilongjiang province, and ensure the sustainable development of coal resources.

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

nautilus@nautilus.org