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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. Russo-DPRK Relations

Xinhua ("RUSSIAN, DPRK FMS HOLD TALKS ON BILATERAL TIES, NUKE ISSUE", Moscow, 2008/10/15) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his counterpart Pak Ui Chun from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) held talks, pledging to boost bilateral ties and cooperation on international issues. "We will keep on the path of deepening political dialogue and boosting cooperation along bilateral lines and in the international arena," RIA Novosti news agency quoted Lavrov as saying. Pak, in response, told Lavrov that his country was preparing to boost bilateral cooperation with Russia.

Reuters ("RUSSIA'S LAVROV TO VISIT NORTH KOREA IN 2009 - TASS", Moscow, 2008/10/15) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit the DPRK next year, Foreign Ministry Spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said after Lavrov held talks in Moscow with his DPRK counterpart. "The date of the visit is being agreed at the moment," Itar-Tass news agency quoted Nesterenko as saying.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA STRUGGLES TOJUSTIFY NEW NUCLEAR DEAL WITH N.

KOREA", Seoul, 2008/10/15) reported that ROK nuclear negotiators tried hard to justify an agreement on verifying the DPRK's nuclear program and Seoul's role in the process. ROK's top nuclear envoy Kim Sook said that "In the latest phase surrounding the verification issue, we (ROK) were able to have our demands included in the negotiation process through in-depth dialogue with the U.S. government." His claim is apparently aimed at soothing criticisms that the compromise is too flawed to fully check the DPRK's nuclear claims, and that the ROK and the other parties were left out of the negotiating process led by the US and the DPRK.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "N. KOREA THREATENS TO SEVER ALL TIES WITH S. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/10/15) reported that the DPRK said that it would cut off all inter-Korean ties unless the conservative ROK government withdraws its "hostile policy" towards Pyongyang. "If the horde of traitors continue to mar our dignity despite continued warnings, we will have no choice but to make a grave decision, including across-the-board severance of North-South Korean ties," said the Rodong Sinmun, published by the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("GAESEONG TOURISTS TO TOP 100,000", 2008/10/15) reported that the cumulative number of tourists that have traveled to the DPRK’s border city of Gaeseong is likely to top 100-thousand in the middle of this month. Tour operator Hyundai Asan says that some 97-thousand tourists visited the border city as of the end of last month. The Gaeseong tours began December fifth of last year. Some 300 people have visited Gaeseong each day despite the death of a tourist at Mount Geumgang in July.

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5. PRC on Six-Party Talks

Xinhua ("CHINA VOICES COMMITMENT TO FURTHER SIX-PARTY TALKS", Beijing, 2008/10/13) reported that the PRC voiced its commitment to further promote the six-party talks here on Monday, calling on the concerned parties to implement the second phase action in a comprehensive and balanced way. "Promoting the six-party talks process serves the common interests of the involved parties, which is also a shared aspiration of the international community," Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said. "China will continue to strengthen its communication and coordination with the relevant parties to push forward the talks."

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6. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("ABDUCTEES' FAMILIES CALL FOR MORE SANCTIONS OVER N. KOREA

DELISTING", Tokyo, 2008/10/15) reported that the families of Japanese victims of the DPRK's past abductions urged the government to step up economic sanctions on the DPRK to maintain its pressure to resolve the issue in the wake of the US removal of the DPRK from its list of terror-sponsoring nations. Receiving a written request from the families and other groups, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura, meanwhile, assured them that Japan will not provide energy aid to the DPRK just because it launches a panel to conduct promised reinvestigations on the abduction issue, Tsutomu Nishioka, one of the group members, said.

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7. US, ROK, Japan Trilateral Security Cooperation

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "SEOUL, TOKYO, WASHINGTON HOLD SECURITY TALKS", 2008/10/15) reported that high-level diplomatic officials from the ROK, the US and Japan gathered Tuesday in Washington to discuss a raft of trilateral security cooperation issues, Seoul officials said. The tripartite meeting, which was held for the first time in five years, signals a revival of the now-defunct trilateral strategic talks, analysts here said. The main agenda included three-way cooperation for the U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they said. Seoul hopes the three-nation talks will be held on a regular basis, officials said.

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8. ROK Politics

Joongang Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, "THERE'S MOUNTING PRESSURE FOR VICE MINISTER TO RESIGN", Seoul, 2008/10/16) reported that the Lee Myung-bak administration faced mounting pressure yesterday over the fate of welfare vice minister Lee Bong-hwa as criticism of her alleged attempt to receive rice farm subsidies grew. An alliance of 31 farmers' organizations demonstrated in front of the Agriculture Ministry at the Gwacheon Government Complex yesterday, demanding vice minister Lee's resignation. The subsidy was established in 2005 in the aftermath of fierce protests by farmers against the government's plan to open the ROK rice market to imports. The Democratic Party demanded that Lee must be fired immediately, criticizing what it called the Blue House's reluctance to do so.

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9. ROK - Mongolia Joint Development

Korea Times ("KOREA, MONGOLIA TO EXPAND ENERGY TIES", 2008/10/15) reported that the ROK and Mongolia agreed Wednesday to boost cooperation in developing Mongolia's energy and mineral resources. The agreement was made at a meeting between Prime Minister Han Seung-soo and his Mongolian counterpart Sanjiin Bayar at Han's office in Seoul. Korean companies are interested in bituminous coal and uranium ore development in Tavan Tolgoi in the Gobi Desert, industry sources said.

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10. ROK President on Climate Change

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "LEE PROPOSES NEW INT'L ORGANIZATIONS ON FINANCIAL, CLIMATE CRISES", Seoul, 2008/10/15) reported that President Lee Myung-bak said on Wednesday that the world needs to create new international organizations to better cope with the financial crisis and other daunting global issues, such as climate change and a potential energy crisis. "Globalization is accelerating, while the economy rapidly transcends international borders. At this point, new international organizations are needed to regulate (unprecedented global issues) and take relevant countermeasures," Lee said, at an international knowledge economy forum in Seoul. Lee didn't elaborate on his proposal, but his top state policy adviser explained the president has long believed the world needs a new international organization that is capable of tackling current global financial market issues, and that the United Nations must set up a new organization to deal with climate change.

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11. Japanese Civil Society and the Environment

Yomiuri Shimbun (Kiyomi Arai, "NGOS LAUNCH CAMPAIGN FOR CLIMATE LAW", Kyoto, 2008/10/15) reported that Kiko Network, a Kyoto-based nongovernmental organization, and other NGOs have launched a campaign to promote legislation to reduce the impact of global warming. The primary purpose of the campaign is to encourage regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. The committee is collecting signatures to be submitted to the Diet to lobby lawmakers, hopefully to influence the government's policymaking process.

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12. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN SAYS CHINA APPEARS TO OK DIPLOMATIC TRUCE", 2008/10/15) reported that a senior Taiwanese official said that Paraguay's decision to maintain formal ties with the island appears to signal the PRC's acceptance of President Ma Ying-jeou's offer of a diplomatic truce. "The fact that we have been able to keep our diplomatic allies seems to be a positive response from China," he said. If the diplomatic truce holds, Taiwan would be able to keep its 23 diplomatic allies, mostly small and impoverished countries in Latin America, Africa and the Pacific.

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13. PRC Public Health

Associated Press ("CHINA ORDERS MILK PRODUCTS PULLED", Beijing, 2008/10/14) reported that the PRC ordered all milk products more than a month old pulled from store shelves for emergency testing, as another child in Hong Kong developed kidney stones after eating melamine-contaminated products, and a Thai company recalled packaged cookies. All milk powder and liquid milk, regardless of the brand or batch, produced before September 14 must be tested by manufacturers nationwide. Products will only be sold again after they pass quality tests and are labeled as safe. The notice is the latest in a series of measures Beijing has taken to allay worries over the quality of PRC

products and restore consumer confidence since the uproar began last month.

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14. PRC - Tibet Economic Development

Xinhua ("PREMIER: CHINA TO BOOST ECONOMIC, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN TIBETAN REGIONS",) reported that the PRC will take measures to boost economic and social development in Tibetan regions in four provinces (Qinghai, Sichuan, Yunnan, and Gansu), according to a news bulletin on Wednesday's State Council meeting chaired by Premier Wen Jiabao. The State Council agreed that measures should be taken to protect and build the ecological environment and improve people's living standard in these areas, and to make the income of urban and rural residents approach or reach the average level in western PRC by 2012 and approach national average by 2020. Moreover, public services including education, public health and medical services should be improved in these areas, and infrastructure construction should be carried out to better support development.

The Guardian (Tania Branigan, "CHINA PLANS STRING OF DAMS IN SOUTH TIBET", Lhasa, 2008/10/14) reported that the PRC is planning to build a string of new dams in southern Tibet to boost its electricity supply, the region's chief of water resources told the Guardian. Officials in Lhasa argue the dams are the least damaging way of providing power and raising living standards in the region, given its massive amount of resources. A 2003 study by the ministry of water suggested hydroelectric development could generate 1,800bn kilowatt hours a year in Tibet. No precise plans were announced regarding the number of dams currently under consideration. However, Aviva Imhof, campaign director at the International Rivers Federation, warned that, "The headwaters of most of the major rivers of Asia are in Tibet, so damming them could have implications downstream."

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15. PRC Economic Reform

LA Times (Mark Magnier, "CHINA LAND REFORM DISAPPEARS FROM RADAR", Beijing, 2008/10/15) reported that farmers land rights' issues, which were expected to be a major part of the Third Plenary Session of the 17th Central Committee, were not even mentioned in the final communique from the decision-making body. That has led some analysts to speculate that hard-liners who benefit from the status quo managed to fight off the reforms. Others say that, given the vague nature of many PRC official statements, the measures still may be implemented. Some hard-liners say that such reforms would undercut the power of the party. However, rural farmers can earn as much money in one month waiting tables as they can in one year in their village, demonstrating the wide economic divide between the urban and rural areas.

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16. PRC Foreign Reserves

Bloomberg (Kevin Hamlin and Li Yanping, "CHINA CURRENCY RESERVES RISE TO RECORD $1.9 TRILLION", 2008/10/14) reported that PRC's foreign-exchange reserves rose to a world record

$1.906 trillion, helping to strengthen the nation's finances as the credit crisis threatens to trigger a global economic slump. Currency holdings rose 32.9 percent at the end of September from a year earlier, the People's Bank of China said on its Web site today. The increase of about $97 billion over the quarter was down from a $126.6 billion gain in the previous three months. This smaller increase in the reserves -- down from a record $153.9 billion gain in the first quarter -- suggest money is leaving the country as companies free up cash because of the credit crunch, said Lu Zhengwei, chief economist at Industrial Bank Co. in Shanghai.

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17. PRC Environmental Pollution

Dong-A Ilbo ("TAINTED FISH FROM FAMOUS CHINESE LAKE FOUND", Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, 2008/10/15) reported that tainted ayu, or “sweetfish,” with high levels of formaldehyde and as hard as rubber, have been found in the PRC's Jiangsu Province. PRC media reported yesterday that Jiangsu authorities found the tainted fish after studying ayu caught in Lake Tai (Taihu) and sold in a market in the city of Wuxi. PRC food safety laws bar fish from being treated with formaldehyde, but merchants frequently use the chemical to prevent fish from going bad. Formaldehyde is known to cause lung cancer.

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18. Shanghai Transportation Development

Shanghai Daily (Chen Xingjie, "CONSTRUCTION TO START ON CITY'S FIRST GREEN EXPRESSWAY", Shanghai, 2008/10/15) reported that Shanghai will start construction of its first ecologically friendly expressway by the year's end to link Chongming Island with Qidong, a coastal city in neighboring Jiangsu Province. The proposal was approved yesterday by the Ministry of Transport and the highway is expected to be completed by 2012. The project will help to shorten transport time between Shanghai and east Jiangsu, according to the proposal. A series of environmental protection measures will be adopted to reduce the expressway's impact on the ecology, according to the proposal. For example, the construction schedule will be arranged to minimize its affect on animal mating seasons and fish migration. Twenty to 40 percent less land will be used for road construction than normal. And the noise on the road will be reduced by two to three decibels.

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II. PRC Report

19. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

People’s Daily online ("2008 CHINA ENGO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD", Renyue, 2008/10/13) reported that the 3th China ENGO Sustainable Development Annual Conference is to be held in Beijing on Oct. 30-31, 2008. The theme of this annual conference is “implementing public participation, and promoting low carbon economy”. It is

reported that this year, China Environmental Protection Federation has launched the second “Status Investigation on China Environmental Protection Organizations”, in order to study the PRC ENGOs’ new trends, achievements, problems and the international cooperation since 2005. The investigating report will be submitted on this annual conference to facilitate the communication among participants.

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20. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net (Rongyan, Liumin, "7TH ASIA-EUROPE PEOPLE’S FORUM HELD IN BEIJING", Beijing, 2008/10/13) reported that reported that the 7 th Asia-Europe People’s Forum was held in Beijing on Oct.13. Over 500 NGO representatives coming from Asia and Europe have participated in the forum and deeply exchange their opinions around the theme of this Forum “promoting social justice and environmental protection”. PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said at the opening ceremony that the PRC government has been actively supporting PRC civil organizations to involve into Asia-Europe People’s Forum, and he hoped the forum could promote the mutual understanding between the two peoples.

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21. PRC Intellectual Property

National Intellectual Property Bureau website ("INTERNET SOCIETY OF CHINA ESTABLISHED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTER", 2008/10/14) reported that recently Intellectual Property Dispute Resolution Center of Internet Society of the PRC was unviewed. 45 Internet companies, as well as the copyright holders have submitted the letter of intent to the Center, said that in the future, if there is any Internet-related intellectual property dispute, they would give priority to the Center to resolve the dispute.

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III. ROK Report

22. DPRK Nuclear Program

Ohmynews ("DESTINY OF PENINSULA, NONE OF ROK’S BUSINESS?", 2008/10/14) reported that the fact that the ROK was not engaged in the process of U.S.’s decision making to remove the DPRK from the terrorism backlist became a hot potato in Japan. It is known that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso received Bush’s phone call 30 minutes before they release the official announcement, but ROK president Lee Myung-bak got none. The U.S. decision to delist DPRK is equivalent to acknowledging that the DPRK is virtually a nuclear-armed country. Based on what he has been saying, Lee should be reluctant to accept the decision. However, the problem is that there is a contradiction between his DPRK policy and his welcoming of the decision. The Lee Administration’s irresoluteness makes the ROK excluded from all sorts of decision making about the DPRK issue, even though it is very closely related to our nation.

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23. DPRK Terrorism Delisting

Tongil News ("HOW WAS KAL 858 TERROR ACCIDENT DEALT WITH IN THE PROCESS OF DELISTING?", 2008/10/15) reported that due to U.S. decision to remove the DPRK from the state sponsors of terrorism, KAL 858 affair, which was the main reason to put the DPRK on the list, became a focus. Several civil organizations who endeavor to reveal the truth of the affair decided to send a document of interrogation to U.S. State Department, DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to question how the affair was viewed during the process of making decision to delist them. It is highly likely that the affair was not dealt individually with great importance.

Citizen's Solidarity for Peace and Unification ("WELCOME US DECISION TO DELIST DPRK, TALKS TO PEACE REGIME ON PENINSULA SHOULD BE COMMENCED ASAP!", 2008/10/15) wrote that the U.S. decision means that they chose to negotiate with the DPRK rather than to confront them. The Citizen's Solidarity for Peace and Unification said they welcome the decision since it will give the DPRK-U.S. relationship, six-party talks and air on the peninsula greatly positive influence. For this opportunity to become more effective in achieving peaceful unification of the nation, the Lee Myung-bak Administration should change their overall DPRK policy to improve the inter-Korean relationship. The only way to do it is to implement 6.15 joint statement and 10.4 declaration first.

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