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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yomiuri Shimbun (Satoshi Ogawa, "DPRK N-DISABLEMENT FACING DELAYS", Washington, 2008/11/15) reported that according to a ranking official at the U.S. State Department, delays in disablement work and provision of aid means the second phase of the DPRK's nuclear disablement will not be completed until after President-elect Barack Obama takes office in January. The official said the schedule for finishing disabling the nuclear facility had not been decided, but that it was important to keep making progress. The official also said the United States and Russia were considering stepping in to cover Japan's share of the energy aid. However, Congress will need to provide a budget to purchase this fuel oil, meaning that the energy aid likely would be provided after budgetary discussions in February at the earliest.

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2. DPRK Terrorism Delisting

Yomiuri Shimbun (Satoshi Ogawa, "U.S. CONGRESS REPORTS CRITICIZES DPRK DELISTING", Washington, 2008/11/14) reported that the removal of the DPRK from a U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism will encourage Pyongyang to continue and possibly expand support for terrorist groups and Middle East terrorism-sponsoring states, a report by the U.S. Congressional Research Service (CRS) warned. According to media accounts and other sources, the report pointed out that the DPRK is providing Iran with technical assistance to develop nuclear warheads and continuing military

assistance to Hizbollah. The report said, "the United States will no longer have the terrorism support list as a negotiating lever if it ever decided to address [the issue of] North Korean activities in the Middle East in negotiations with Pyongyang."

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3. DPRK Leadership

Associated Press ("NKOREA: KIM ATTENDS MILITARY ART PERFORMANCE", Seoul, 2008/11/16) reported that leader Kim Jong-il attended the 32nd military art festival, featuring army and navy performers, the Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch from Pyongyang on Saturday. Kim "waved back to the enthusiastically cheering performers and congratulated them on their successful presentation," the KCNA said, adding that Kim told the soldiers that art could make them better fighters. The report did not say when and where Kim watched the performance.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "SOUTH KOREAN OPPOSITION DELEGATION VISITS NORTH", Seoul, 2008/11/15) reported that the Korean Central News Agency reported a Democratic Labor Party delegation arrived in the DPRK on Saturday. ROK Vice Unification Minister Hong Yang-ho met DLP leader Kang Ki-kap on Thursday and asked him to tell Pyongyang that Seoul has not turned away from deals reached at two bilateral summits and that it is ready to discuss how to implement them, Jun Kwon-hee, a party leadership aide, said. Hong also promised the government would "make strong efforts to stop" activists from sending leaflets across the border attached to balloons, Jun said.

Korea Herald (Kim Sue-young, "SEOUL TO RESUME SUBSIDIZING CIVILIAN INTER-KOREAN ACTIVITIES", Seoul, 2008/11/14) reported that ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun said Friday that the Ministry of Unification plans to restart subsidizing local civic groups from the inter-Korean cooperation fund to assist their humanitarian activities in the DPRK. The plan awaits final approval by Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong. The government also expressed hope that the DPRK will accept an offer to send materials and equipment necessary to improve military communication between the two sides.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Donga Ilbo ("BIZ COMPLEX COMPANIES COMPLAIN OVER N.K.'S SABER RATTLING", Seoul, 2008/11/14) reported that business operators in the Kaesong Industrial Complex urged the ROK government Thursday to act decisively at a meeting with Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong. "With buyers canceling orders and raw materials and funds running short, companies operating in the Gaesong industrial complex are feeling the impact of North Korea's threat," said Moon Chang-sup, head of the business association of the complex. "The government says it is doing its best. In the eyes of businesses here at the complex, however, the government's efforts are so insufficient, it seems to have waited for such moves from North Korea," said a CEO.

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6. US Relations with DPRK, PRC

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun, "OBAMA WARNED OF POSSIBLE CONFLICT WITH N.K., CHINA", 2008/11/15) reported that ROK President-elect Barack Obama should be prepared for security emergencies such as conflict with the DPRK or the PRC, the Center for American Progress said Friday. The CAP's memo noted that the United States' military has suffered significantly in the wake of its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and urged the president-elect to recover the nation's defense capability and military resilience.

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7. DMZ Environment

Korea Herald (Cho Ji-hyun, "'DMZ COULD MAKE WORLD HERITAGE LIST", 2008/11/15) reported that the first research team dispatched to the demilitarized zone Friday pointed to the possibility of inscribing the Yeoncheon plain on the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization's World Heritage List. Seoul National University professor Kim Kwi-gon and his team finished a five-day study on the ecosystem, forests and cultural properties of the western regions of the Demilitarized Zone. The team discovered 180 species, which 13 of them were either natural treasures or a rare variety, they said.

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8. US Military in ROK

Associated Press ("US HELICOPTERS IN SKOREA TO MOVE TO IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN", Seoul, 2008/11/16) reported that the U.S. has notified the ROK of its plan to re-station one of the two Apache battalions in the ROK to make the unit available for rotational deployment to Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military command in Seoul said in a statement Sunday. There are 20 helicopters in each Apache battalion, according to U.S. military spokesman Kim Yong-kyu. The U.S. plans to send 12 A-10 attack aircraft and two MH-53 helicopters to the ROK next March to temporarily replace the departing Apaches, Kim said.

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9. US-ROK Relations

Korea Herald ("LEE MEETS OBAMA'S TOP SECURITY AIDES", Washington, 2008/11/17) reported that according to ROK presidential spokesman Lee Dong-kwan, President Lee Myung-bak on Friday met with former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and former Republican Rep. Jim Leach, both known as top aides for President-elect Barack Obama. "President Lee met with Albright and Leach for about 30 minutes to exchange views on various issues of mutual interest, including ways to overcome the global economic crisis," said the spokesman. "The meeting took place at the request of the Obama camp and we agreed not to disclose details of their discussions," he said.

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10. Sino-ROK Relations

Korea Herald ("S. KOREA TO GRANT ASYLUM TO CHINESE FOR FIRST TIME", Seoul, 2008/11/14) reported that the ROK Supreme Court ruled against the government and ordered that asylum be granted to a Chinese family who fear persecution at home, Yonhap News Agency reported. The three Chinese "belong to a category of people who 'have a well-founded fear of being persecuted' as defined by the U.N. refugee convention," presiding justice Yang Chang-soo said in the verdict.

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11. PRC, Japan, ROK Response to Financial Crisis

Joongang Ilbo (Seo Ji-eun, "ASIAN CURRENCY SWAPS ARE MAKING HEADWAY", 2008/11/17) reported that the ROK, the PRC, and Japan agreed Sunday to consider expanding bilateral currency swap contracts to jointly cope with the global financial crisis, the ROK Finance Ministry announced. “Asia faces challenges including slower economic growth and financial market fluctuations. We concurred that we should be well-prepared against the unfavorable effects of the global financial turmoil and the risks of a further slowdown in the world economy,” said a ministry statement.

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12. Japanese Whaling

Associated Press ("AUSTRALIA INVESTS IN WHALE RESEARCH", Canberra, 2008/11/16) reported that Australia will invest $3.87 million in non-lethal whale research to show Japan that the animals do not need to be killed in order to be studied, the government announced Monday. The Australian campaign will invest in aerial surveys, satellite tags and genetic studies. Environment Minister Peter Garrett said researchers do not need to use "grenade-tipped harpoons." "Australia does not believe that we need to kill whales to understand them," Garrett said.

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13. Japanese Politics

Asahi Shimbun ("ASO HINTS AT DISSOLUTION AFTER 2009 BUDGET", Washington, 2008/11/17) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso on Friday indicated he might dissolve the Lower House after passage of the fiscal 2009 budget through the Diet next spring. "When thinking about economic stimulus measures, one important factor will be starting the budget (by passing it) before the end of the fiscal year (next March 31)," Aso said.

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14. Japanese Response to Global Financial Crisis

Asahi Shimbun ("ASO TO OFFER $100 BILLION TO BEEF UP IMF CAPITAL", 2008/11/15) reported that the Japanese government will offer to lend up to $100 billion to the International Monetary Fund to help emerging economies buffeted by the global financial crisis. Prime Minister Taro Aso's proposal at the Group of 20 summit in Washington centered on efforts to bolster the IMF's crisis-response capabilities, government officials said.

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15. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press ("JAILED TAIWANESE EX-LEADER HOSPITALIZED", Taipei, 2008/11/17) reported that Taiwanese authorities took former President Chen Shui-bian from his jail cell to a hospital Sunday when a doctor detected an irregular heartbeat following Chen's five-day hunger strike over his arrest on corruption charges. A prison doctor examined 57-year-old Chen on Sunday and recommended his hospitalization, said Lee Ta-chu, an official at Tucheng Jail. Chen agreed to allow doctors to inject him with glucose, which stabilized his condition, but he is still suffering from a slow metabolism because of the prolonged fast, Tsai Kuang-chao, a doctor at Far East Memorial Hospital where the former president was first admitted said Monday.

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16. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France-Presse (Ben Sheppard, "TIBETANS PLOT NEXT MOVE AFTER DALAI LAMA ADMITS FAILURE", Dharamshala, 2008/11/17) reported that leading Tibetan exiles were set to meet in India on Monday for a week of discussions that could usher in a more radical approach to their struggle against PRC rule in Tibet. The meeting should air "the real opinions and views of the Tibetan people through free and frank discussions," said the Dalai Lama. "We certainly hope the cause of independence for Tibet is stronger by the end of the week," said Tsewang Rigzin, president of the Tibetan Youth Congress.

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA SLAMS UPCOMING SARKOZY-DALAI MEETING", Beijing, 2008/11/14) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang on Friday sharply criticized a planned meeting between French President Nicolas Sarkozy and the Dalai Lama. "At present, China's relations with both France and the EU are improving and developing. This hard-earned situation should be cherished," Qin said in a statement posted on the ministry's Web site. France should "take China's major concern seriously and properly handle relevant issues so as to contribute to the stable development of China-France and China-EU relations," he said.

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17. PRC Military

Financial Times (Mure Dickie and Martin Dickson, "CHINA HINTS AT AIRCRAFT CARRIER PROJECT", London, 2008/11/16) reported that Major General Qian Lihua, director of the PRC Ministry of National Defence's Foreign Affairs Office, said the world should not be surprised if the PRC builds an aircraft carrier. “The navy of any great power?.?.?.?has the dream to have one or more aircraft carriers,” he said in an interview. “Navies of great powers with more than 10 aircraft

carrier battle groups with strategic military objectives have a different purpose from countries with only one or two carriers used for offshore defence," he said. "Even if one day we have an aircraft carrier, unlike another country, we will not use it to pursue global deployment or global reach."

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18. Sino-US Economic Relations

Associated Press (Joe McDonald, "CHINA GIVES NO SIGN OF BAILOUT HELP ", Beijing, 2008/11/16) reported that participants at the G-20 financial summit vowed Saturday at the conclusion of the two-day conference to cooperate more closely, keep a sharper eye out for potential problems and give bigger roles to fast-rising nations. The Washington summit was an "important and positive" step toward "the reform of the international financial structure," PRC foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang said in a statement. He made no mention of possible PRC bailout contributions, and a man who answered the phone at the ministry press office said he had no information.

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19. PRC Rural Development

Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "UN SAYS CHINA SHOULD IMPROVE RURAL PUBLIC SERVICES", Beijing, 2008/11/16) reported that the PRC should move quickly to provide rural areas with better education, health, social security and employment services to sustain the country's economic growth during the global slowdown, the U.N. Development Program said Sunday. Despite the progress Beijing has made in reducing poverty and increasing life expectancy and literacy, rural citizens still have less access to basic public services than city dwellers, it said in its China Human Development Report. U.N. Resident Coordinator in China Khalid Malik stated, "These timely actions can make people feel more secure to consume, and in turn, help realize China's urgent goal of keeping a high economic growth rate."

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20. PRC Food Safety

Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "DEATHS UNCOUNTED IN CHINA'S TAINTED MILK SCANDAL", Liti Village, PRC, 2008/11/15) reported that at least five babies who died before the announcement of melamine-tainted milk are not included in the PRC's official death toll. The Health Ministry's count stands at only three deaths. Without an official verdict on the deaths, families worry they will be unable to bring lawsuits and refused compensation.

BBC ("US ISSUES ALERT OVER CHINESE MELAMINE", Washington, 2008/11/14) reported that the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a new alert on PRC food imports after finding melamine and another toxic chemical, cyanuric acid, in several products. The new alert covers a range of Chinese products including drinks, sweets, baby and pet food. It also allows US inspectors to seize any Chinese products suspected of being contaminated.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Public Health

China Central Government Network ("CHINA DISABLED PERSONS FEDERATION (CDPF) FIFTH NATIONAL CONGRESS CLOSED", 2008/11/12) reported that the PRC government will work on stable systematic policies on living support, education, healthcare and employment service to disabled people, said Vice Premier Hui Liangyu at the China Disabled Persons Federation (CDPF) fifth national congress, which closed here Thursday. In the March document jointly issued by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council, disabled people would be included in the insurance network of basic medical care, unemployment and pension while recovery care service would be added into the country's basic health care service for citizens. The government also listed measures to promote community living support, expand special education and encourage disabled people to start their own businesses.

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22. PRC Economy

Xinhua News Agency ("2008 CHINA MINING INDUSTRY CONFERENCE HELD IN BEIJING", 2008/11/12) reported that PRC Vice Premier Li Keqiang has urged members of the international mining industry to strengthen cooperation to cope with the challenges triggered by the international financial crisis. Li said in a letter to the China Mining Industry Conference that the sustainable prosperity of the international mining industry could strongly support world economic and social development. The PRC government was taking a series of measures to boost domestic demand and promote economic growth, Li said. The continued stable growth of the PRC's economy was a major contribution to the world, and would benefit the development of international mining industry. More than 3,200 officials, experts and entrepreneurs attended the three-day conference, which opened on Tuesday.

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III. ROK Report

23. DPRK Nuclear Program

Pressian ("JOEL WIT, “TO ACHIEVE DENUCLEARIZATION BY NORMALIZING RELATIONSHIP WITH DPRK”", 2008/11/17) reported that Joel Wit, who used to be the leader of the DPRK nuclear team of Barak Obama’s campaign, said in an article that the Obama Administration will remove the political root of the nuclear problem by normalizing relations with the DPRK. He added that Obama Administration may suggest a talk between high-ranking officials of the two nations and Obama could participate in the meeting if the U.S. worries about the nuclear program are eliminated thoroughly. He stated that the administration will guarantee several incentives such as economic aid in compensation for the denuclearization process. He emphasized that the basic tool which deals

with the DPRK nuclear problem is ‘diplomacy’, and thus the U.S. will maintain a diplomatic attitude. Instead of pursuing ABB (Anything But Bush), the next U.S. Administration will retain a rather practical perspective by shifting strategies while inheriting the fruits of past negotiations.

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