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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. PRC on Six Party Talks

Xinhua ("CHINESE FM: SIX-PARTY TALKS BEING COORDINATED", Beijing, 2008/10/16) reported that the PRC Foreign Ministry said the date for the next round of six-party talks is yet to be decided. The PRC is working with the other five parties to come up with a date for the next Heads of Delegation meeting, Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said at a press conference here. He stressed that the six party heads would like to meet as soon as possible.

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2. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("IAEA DISSATISFIED WITH ROLE IN VERIFYING NORTH KOREAN NUKES", Seoul, 2008/10/16) reported that the U.N. nuclear watchdog has expressed discontent over its projected role in verifying the DPRK's atomic weapons program, an ROK Foreign Ministry official said. "The IAEA director expressed regret that his agency will play a consultative and support role, not a leading role, in verifying North Korea's nuclear program," the official said. IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei presented several reasons why the IAEA should spearhead the verification process, including that it is the world's most authoritative body on inspection of nuclear facilities, according to the official.

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3. ROK Food Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("GOVERNMENT ADVISED TO RESUME FOOD AID TO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/10/16) reported that the ROK Unification Ministry ties said that it has received a formal request from the National Human Rights Commission to resume humanitarian food aid to the DPRK, but it withheld its response. "(The ministry) received a letter of advice yesterday. We will release a position on the matter later on," ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun told reporters.

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4. US on DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("SCHIEFFER TELLS ABDUCTEES' KIN N. KOREA DELISTED TO KEEP 6-WAY TALKS", Tokyo, 2008/10/16) reported that U.S. Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer told families of Japanese victims of abduction by the DPRK that Washington took Pyongyang off its blacklist of nations sponsoring terrorism to keep the stalled six-party nuclear talks alive. Schieffer sought understanding from the families that the United States had to select between continuing or terminating the talks, suggesting the chosen move would work to help advance efforts to resolve the abduction issue.

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5. ROK on Japan-DPRK Relations

Korea Times (Sunny Lee, "'DENUCLEARIZATION MORE IMPORTANT THAN ABDUCTEES'", Beijing, 2008/10/16) reported that in a PRC state television live broadcast late Wednesday night, Professor Moon Chung-in of Yonsei University said Japan should separate the DPRK nuclear issue from its demand for resolving the case of Japanese citizens abducted by the DPRK. Moon stated, "I personally believe that Japan should de-link the North Korean nuclear problem with the abductees issue.'' Moon said the Japanese government may as well raise the issue out of domestic considerations, but emphasized that denuclearization is a more important issue.

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6. DPRK Cultural Exchanges

Joongang Ilbo (Limb Jae-un, "PYONGYANG CANCELS STUDENTS' SOJOURN", 2008/10/16) reported that Professor Leonid Petrov of Australian National University told Radio Free Asia that five foreign students who were supposed to arrive in Pyongyang have had their trip suddenly canceled by the DPRK. Petrov said the move might be related to reports of Kim Jong-il's poor health. He said that the DPRK notified the group of the cancellation via e-mail and telephone, but no explanation was provided.

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7. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

IFES NK Brief ("JOINT BRANDING PLANNED FOR KAESONG INDUSTRIES", 2008/10/16) reported that the ROK Ministry of Unification, in order to foster small and mid-sized industries in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, has launched a special enterprise to jointly develop brands for companies that have technical and productive capacity, but are lacking original branding and face growth and marketing limitations. The plan set forth by the ministry is to focus on textiles, leather, bags, shoes, and other products for which the need for a name brand is high, then after receiving applications, it will forming an office for creating joint brands. If results are good, this could be gradually extended to target other products.

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8. ROK-US Security Alliance

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun , "USFK REFUSES TO SHARE COSTS", 2008/10/16) reported that US Forces Korea has refused to share expenses the ROK government was forced to pay for lawsuits involving U.S. military activities, the Justice Ministry said. Seoul requested that USFK pay some 12.2 billion won ($9.8 million) worth of costs it incurred while providing compensation for ROK residents claiming to have suffered damage due to U.S. troop bases here. Lee Choon-seok, the Democratic Party lawmaker who received the report, called for the government to "pull out all stops" to achieve the burden-sharing.

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9. Korean Diaspora

The Chosun Ilbo ("VOTING RIGHTS FOR OVERSEAS KOREANS FROM 2012 ", 2008/10/16) reported that the National Election Commission has decided to give ROK expatriates the opportunity to vote in general and presidential elections beginning 2012. Those with foreign citizenship will not be eligible. An NEC official said there are some 3 million ROK expatriates, about 80 percent or 2.4 million adults with voting rights.

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10. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("U.S. NUKE-SUB OHIO PAYS 1ST PORT CALL IN JAPAN", Yokosuka, 2008/10/16) reported that the U.S. nuclear-powered submarine Ohio made its first port call in Japan on Thursday at the U.S. naval base in Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture. The 18,750-ton Ohio was put into commission in 1981 carrying 24 submarine-launched ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads before they were removed from 2002 to 2006 for remodeling. Japan and the United States did not have prior consultations regarding whether the Ohio will bring nuclear materials to Japan, according to the Foreign Ministry.

Kyodo News ("9 YOKOSUKA RESIDENTS APPEAL CASE OF DREDGING WORK FOR U.S. CARRIER

", Tokyo , 2008/10/16) reported that nine residents of Yokosuka, Kanagawa Prefecture, have appealed a high court ruling that dismissed their plea calling on local authorities to cancel permission for the state to dredge Yokosuka port to accommodate the nuclear-powered U.S. aircraft carrier George Washington, their lawyer said Thursday. The Tokyo High Court rejected their lawsuit on Oct. 1, saying the dredging work had already been completed and that any benefit to them from the suit no longer exists.

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11. Japanese SDF Refueling Mission

Kyodo News ("ASO CALLS IN DIET FOR SUPPORT OF ANTI-TERROR REFUELING MISSION", Tokyo, 2008/10/17) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso pressed his case Friday for continuing Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean next year at the beginning of full debates in parliament on the matter during the current session. ''It is necessary to continue the refueling mission for Japan's benefit. I cannot assume that only Japan will withdraw'' from the U.S.-led antiterrorism operations in and near Afghanistan, Aso said.

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12. Sino-Indian Relations

IANS ("INDIA, CHINA STRENGTHEN BUSINESS TIES AT GUANGZHOU TRADE FAIR", New Delhi, 2008/10/16) reported that Indian and PRC exporters signed a pact at the 104th China Import Export Fair in Guangzhou, PRC, to promote bilateral trade cooperation. "This (agreement) is an attempt to realise the target of $60 billion bilateral trade by 2010," said Ajay Sahai, director general of the Federation of Indian Exports Organisations (Fieo).

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13. PRC Public Health

AFP (Priscilla Jiao , "RECALLED MILK SOLD TO STUDENTS IN CHINA: STATE MEDIA ", Shanghai , 2008/10/16) reported that dairy products that were recalled in southern PRC to be tested for the deadly chemical melamine were instead dumped at universities and sold to students at a discount, state media reported. The milk products were sold in supermarkets and student dormitories in Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong province, the Xinhua news agency said, citing a local newspaper. In one university supermarket, bulk boxes of Mengniu milk and Yili yogurt -- both suspected brands -- were sold for less than 20 yuan (2.90 dollars), or about half the original price, the report said.

Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "CHINESE GOVERNMENT SUMMONS MAJOR DAIRY COMPANIES", Beijing, 2008/10/17) reported that the PRC summoned five of its major dairy companies to a meeting Friday over the fate of Sanlu Group Co. the company at the center of a tainted milk scandal. The five companies were brought to Beijing to discuss the purchase of the company, the 21st Century Business Herald, a major business daily, reported Friday. In Hong Kong, the Department of Health said Friday two more children have developed kidney stones after drinking melamine-laced milk, bringing to 10 the total number of children with milk-related kidney

stones.

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14. PRC Health Care Reform

China Digital Times (Priscilla Jiao , "CRITICS ATTACK HEALTH PLAN AS IMPENETABLE ", 2008/10/16) reported that critics have expressed concern over the complex terminology in the draft of the new health care reform plan, on which the government is soliciting public feedback, according to central and local media and online forums. Since its release on Tuesday morning, news articles on health care reform have appeared in mainstream newspapers and netizens have expressed their opinions in online forums, Xinhua reports. By last night more than 1500 comments had been posted on the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) website in less than two days.

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15. PRC Environment

Shanghai Daily (Yang Lifei, "POLLUTION SICKENS 1,300 FARMERS IN HUBEI ", 2008/10/16) reported that more than 1,300 farmers in a remote county in Hubei Province have been diagnosed with skin ailments due to pollution from smelting plants. The government in Jianli County has promised to tear down all plants that smelt the highly profitable alloy vanadium, Changjiang Times reported today. The smelting plants discharged waste containing toxic cadmium and arsenic into waterways, which led to the pollution of both water and farms. The contaminated water also spread to several villages and polluted tens of thousands of hectares of fields.

Christian Science Monitor (Peter Ford, "AFTER POPULAR BLUE SKIES DURING OLYMPICS, BEIJING BRINGS BACK POLLUTION CONTROLS", 2008/10/16) reported that Wednesday was a "blue sky day" in the PRC capital. But whether that has anything at all to do with the new traffic restrictions that the Beijing government imposed this week seems highly doubtful. There may be less smoke, but there are just as many mirrors when it comes to presenting pollution statistics in the PRC. A "blue sky day" in official parlance means a day when the Air Pollution Index is below 100, indicating that the air quality is "excellent" or "good." It doesn't necessarily mean you can see the sky, or even the clouds; nor do PRC definitions of "excellent" and "good" match international ones, but you can't be picky when you live in Beijing.

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16. PRC Media Control

AFP ("OLYMPIC FREEDOMS FOR FOREIGN PRESS IN CHINA SET TO EXPIRE ", Beijing , 2008/10/16) reported that rules introduced before the Olympics aimed at giving foreign reporters greater freedoms in PRC are set to expire Friday. The PRC's rulers have indicated that some freedoms will be maintained but have given no details on what the post-Olympic environment will be for the international media. "PRC will continue to follow the opening-up policy and to facilitate the work of foreign media and journalists in PRC," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters.

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17. PRC Human Rights

South China Morning Post (Raymond Li, "PETITIONERS BEING HELD IN 'BLACK' JAILS, ACTIVISTS SAY", 2008/10/16) reported that rights groups claim secret prisons, or " black" jails, are sprouting up on the mainland in a campaign by regional authorities to purge petitioners. Suc accusations have been circulating for two years. Evidence of the secret prisons' existence has now come to light after a group of Beijing activists carried out a series of rescue missions from late last month to free petitioners locked up in a black jail attached to a run-down budget hotel in Beijing.

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18. PRC Energy Supply

Reuters ("CHINA'S POOR ANHUI GEARS UP FOR NUCLEAR PLANT", Beijing, 2008/10/16) reported that the PRC's poor eastern Anhui province is hoping to win central government approval to build a 4 gigawatt (GW) nuclear plant and a company has been set up to push the project forward, PRC media reported. The new joint-venture aims to supply the southern part of Anhui but also send electricity on to the country's financial hub, Shanghai, and the power-thirsty Yangtze River Delta. The plant is slated to go up near Wuhu city, on the southern bank of the Yangtze and along the route of a power transmission link into the coastal regions.

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II. PRC Report

19. PRC-ASEAN Trade Relations

China News online (Huang Yanmei, "CHINA-ASEAN AGRICULTURAL MATERIALS CHAMBER TO BE SET IN NANNING", 2008/10/13) reported that the opening ceremony of PRC-ASEAN Agricultural Materials Chamber is to be held on Oct.21 in Nanning city of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. It is reported that the Chamber is charged by All China Federation of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives (ACFSMC), and has registered at the PRC Ministry of Civil Affairs last year. The Chamber members now include over 50 large and medium-sized agricultural enterprises from the PRC and eight ASEAN countries. The Chamber will play a coordinating role and promote the establishment of PRC-ASEAN agricultural common market.

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20. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

China News online (Zeng Liming, "CHINA ANTI-CANCER ASSOCIATION HOLDS EXPERT CLINIC FOR LUNG CANCER PATIENTS", Shanghai, 2008/10/15) reported that lung cancer has the highest cancer incidence in the PRC and about 600,000 people die of lung cancer each year. Therefore, China Anti-cancer Association and Shanghai Roche Ltd. will freely hold expert clinic for lung cancer patients in November this year in 17 cities including Beijing, Tianjin, Harbin, and so on. Meantime,

the sponsor will disseminate lung cancer knowledge to the public, and encourage lung cancer patients to face the disease bravely and to receive the treatment actively.

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21. PRC Economy

China Economy Network (Li Yanzheng, Wu Ting, "GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS PROVIDES CHINA WITH ENERGY PRICE REFORM OPPORTUNITY", 2008/10/16) reported that Morgan Stanley Asia-Pacific chief economist Wang Qing said in Beijing on the 15 th that global financial crisis provided the PRC an opportunity to rationalize the energy price system, and after the improvement, the PRC may achieve sustainable development. He believes that if Europe, the United States, Japan and other countries have a negative economic growth, while the PRC's economic growth rate maintains above 8%, then in the next two years, the PRC's position in the world economy will have a big change.

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III. ROK Report

22. Inter-Korea Relations

Hankyoreh ("URGE TWO KOREAS TO BE DECISIVE", 2008/10/16) wrote that the DPRK is mistaken if they think they can achieve what they want by raising tension on the Peninsula. However, it is undeniable that what brought tension on the Peninsula is the ROK government's negligence of the 6.15 joint statement and 10.4 declaration. This means that the ROK has the key to solve the problem. Both Koreas needs to be decisive at the moment. The ROK should make sure that they would implement two declarations, while the DPRK should be more willing to resume dialog with the ROK.

Hankook Kyungje Shinmun ("BREAK OFF OF INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP, NOT A THREAT", 2008/10/16) wrote that it was greatly unsatisfactory for the DPRK to threaten to break off the relationship with the ROK. The ROK government also needs to be firm on this matter, while preparing to respond appropriately for all possible scenarios. However, this does not mean that they should provoke the DPRK emotionally.

Segye Ilbo ("DPRK'S FIRM ATTITUDE TOWARD ROK, NEEDS PRUDENCE", 2008/10/16) reported that the DPRK suddenly being stiff toward the ROK would be to stabilize the domestic atmosphere which has been influenced negatively ever since the rumor about Kim Jong-il's illness spread. Another reason for their change in the attitude is to threaten the ROK and get an advantage over the ROK by starting to talk with the U.S. while denying to do so with the ROK. The ROK should not bend to the DPRK's pressure.

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23. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

PRESSian ("DJ, 'MB SHOULD RESUME DIALOG WITH DPRK' ", 2008/10/16) reported that former ROK President Kim Dae-jung said that the reason why the current government is being neglected from the international flow is because of the break off of the inter-Korean relationship. He urged President Lee Myung-bak to acknowledge the 6.15 joint statement, suggest to the DPRK to have inter-Korean summit talks, resume humanitarian food aid, construct a laborer's residence in Gaesong Complex, and resume tours to Mt. Kumkang. He added that since the U.S. is the only nation who can balance the power on the Korean Peninsula, the ROK should try to maintain a strong alliance with the U.S. while working on keeping close relationships with the PRC, Japan and Russia.

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