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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Press (Park Chan-Kyong, "NKOREA MAY BE NUCLEAR-FREE EARLY NEXT YEAR: HILL", Seoul, 2007/11/02) reported that US envoy Christopher Hill said Friday that the DPRK could be nuclear-free "soon in the coming year" if it honors a deal to declare all its weapons programs but UN sanctions will stay in force until then. "We're expecting the first draft declaration... probably in a matter of the next couple of weeks," said Hill. "The idea is that as we receive that, we have some information on programs we would want to have follow-on discussions on, with the understanding that by the end of the year we will have a complete declaration that everyone would agree is complete."

Yonhap ("TOP NUCLEAR ENVOYS OF TWO KOREAS TO HOLD BILATERAL TALKS FRIDAY", Seoul, 2007/11/02) reported that the ROK's top nuclear envoy Chun Yung-woo and his DPRK counterpart Kim Kye-gwan will meet in Beijing next Friday, Foreign Minister Song Min-soon said. The two, Song said, "will discuss the disablement phase" of the DPRK's nuclear disarmament.

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2. Alleged DPRK-Syria Cooperation

Yonhap (Lee Dong-min, "U.S. SHOULD STEP UP DEMANDS ON N.K. NUCLEAR DECLARATION TO ADDRESS SYRIA ISSUE: EXPERTS", Washington, 2007/11/02) reported that in a forum on Thursday organized by the Korean Economic Institute, Michael Green, former Asia director at the National Security Council, said that the U.S. should raise its demands on the DPRK's disclosure of nuclear to address suspicions of nuclear cooperation with Syria. "We need to bring our expectations for this declaration back up," said Green. "It needs to include harvested plutonium. It needs to include the nature of North Korea's relationship with other countries, including engineers, personnel, and technical information."

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3. DPRK Removal from Terrorist List

Associated Press (Miki Toda, "US WORKING WITH NKOREA ON TERROR LIST", Tokyo, 2007/11/02) reported that US envoy Christopher Hill said that the DPRK must first prove it is not engaged in terrorism before the country is removed from Washington's blacklist of states sponsoring terrorism. "We want all countries in the list to be removed but we want them to be removed by showing us that they are no longer engaged in the practice that put them on the list," Hill told reporters after arriving in Tokyo . He added, "I stressed to the North Koreans we want to see progress" on the issue

of Japanese abducted by the DPRK. [Ed. note: A fact sheet on the procedures for removing U.S. sanctions from the DPRK is available at https://nautilus.org/archives/library/security/references/sanctions.html]

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4. DPRK Human Rights

Donga Ilbo ("UN RESOLUTION ON N.KOREA'S HUMAN RIGHTS SOUNDS LIKE LAST YEAR'S", 2007/11/02) reported that European Union (EU) and Japan are pursing the passage of a UN resolution on DPRK human rights that is similar to last year's resolution. The draft of the resolution is expected to be submitted on November 2 and urges for improvements on the following issues: torture, public execution, concentration camps, and forced labor; restrictions on freedom of ideology, conscience, religion and expression; serious malnutrition; and economic and social rights violations.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Reuters ("HOME DELIVERY FRIED CHICKEN -- IN NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2007/11/02) reported that Choi Won-ho, who runs a 70-store fried chicken franchise in the ROK, plans to open the DPRK's first fried chicken delivery service in Pyongyang this month. Choi said he would hire about 30 workers to take telephone orders, fry home-grown chicken and make home deliveries. "It's been tough but I'm sure it'll do well," Choi said.

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6. ROK-PRC Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL AND BEIJING HOLD DEFENSE TALKS", Seoul, 2007/11/02) reported that the ROK and the PRC held working-level defense talks in Seoul Thursday to map out details of an agreed-upon plan to set up hotlines between their navies and air forces, officials said. Also discussed was a schedule for military exchanges between the two sides next year and how to cooperate on regional security.

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7. ROK-Japan Relations

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "KIM DAE-JUNG REBUFFS JAPAN OVER REMARKS ON KIDNAPPING", Seoul, 2007/11/02) reported that, in response to former ROK President Kim Dae-jung's remarks that the Japanese government did not carry out a proper investigation into his 1973 abduction, Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said, "If he really thinks so, why didn't he tell the

Japanese government about it when he was serving as president?" Responding to Machimura's remark, Kim's spokesman Choi Kyung-hwan said, "It is very regretful that the Japanese government made such absurd remarks though it didn't do what it had to do. Former President Kim has called for a thorough probe into his abduction and protection of human rights when he was opposition leader. The Japanese government should have taken proper measures on the matter, given Kim made a state visit to Japan during his tenure."

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8. Korean Atomic Bomb Victims

Joongang Ilbo ("COURT RULES FOR A-BOMB VICTIMS HERE", Tokyo, 2007/11/02) reported that the Supreme Court ruled that Japan must pay pay a total of 48 million yen ($415,900) in damages to 40 ROK survivors of the 1945 atomic bombing in Hiroshima. The court also said it was illegal for the government to refuse to pay medical allowances to atomic bomb survivors living overseas. "The plaintiffs were forced to suffer special health problems arising from their exposure to radiation and to lead uncomfortable lives," Judge Norio Wakui was quoted as saying by Kyodo.

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9. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo ("GATES HOPES JAPAN RENEWS REFUELING SUPPORT IN 'WEEKS'", Washington, 2007/11/01) reported that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates expressed hope Thursday that Japan will restart its refueling mission in support of U.S.-led antiterrorism operations in and near Afghanistan ''in a matter of weeks.'' ''We welcome Japan's partnership in the war on terror. They are involved in other ways in the war -- in combating terrorism. But this clearly was an important area, and we hope it'll be renewed,'' he said.

Asahi Shimbun ("FOREIGN ENVOYS URGE DIET TO EXTEND MSDF OPERATION", Tokyo, 2007/11/01) reported that ambassadors of 11 nations participating in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), including the United States, Britain and Pakistan, as well as the envoy of Afghanistan, invited about 60 lawmakers of both ruling and opposition camps to the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo to urge them to extend the MSDF mission in the Indian Ocean. A Minshuto lawmaker who attended said, "There was no new information that dispelled suspicions that fuel provided by Japan was redirected for use for operations in Iraq."

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10. Japanese Politics

Kyodo ("FUKUDA, OZAWA MEET FOR 2ND TIME OVER REFUELING MISSION", Tokyo, 2007/11/02) reported that a senior ruling party lawmaker said that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda sounded out Democratic Party of Japan President Ichiro Ozawa on Friday about the DPJ joining his Liberal Democratic Party in a coalition government. The proposal came during a meeting to try to get the opposition's cooperation on an early resumption of Japan's refueling support for U.S.-led

antiterrorism operations in and near Afghanistan.

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11. US Military Bases in Japan

Asahi Shimbun ("MILITARY-COMPLIANT CITIES REWARDED", 2007/11/02) reported that the Japanese central government has designated 33 municipalities as recipients of special subsidies to alleviate the burden of hosting a U.S. military facility. Six municipalities that have so far opposed government plans to move U.S. military facilities to their jurisdictions were excluded from the subsidy program. Okinawa Governor Hirokazu Nakaima criticized the Defense Ministry's subsidies plan, saying, "It will only lead to more antagonism and backlash."

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12. Regional Military Buildup

Korea Herald ("AIRCRAFT CARRIER COMPETITION LOOMS OVER ASIA-PACIFIC", Seoul, 2007/11/02) reported that experts estimate that about 18 aircraft carriers will be operating in the Asia-Pacific region during the next decade. "Asia-Pacific powers such as the United States, China, Japan, Russia and India have entered an era of aircraft carrier competition. This silent war will be further fueled by the ongoing and tumultuous realignment of the regional security order," said Lee Choon-kun, vice president of the Seoul-based Center for Free Enterprise. "There is an emerging trend whereby the locus of regional conflicts is moving to maritime areas, from land-based ones. The possibility is increasing that countries in such regions will be engaged in armed conflicts," said Lee Sang-hyun, director of Security Studies at the Sejong Institute.

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