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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News (Kim Boram, "U.S. AMBASSADOR URGES N. KOREA TO FULFILL DENUCLEARIZATION PLEDGE", 2008/11/20) reported that the US will not stop pressing the DPRK to fulfill its pledge to denuclearize despite the upcoming change of administrations, the top U.S. envoy to Seoul said, reaffirming her country's own commitment to the process. "The U.S. remains completely committed to fully realizing the September 2005 commitment that North Korea abandon all nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programs," said U.S. Ambassador Kathleen Stephens in a speech given to retired ROK soldiers.

Chosun Ilbo ("OBAMA THINK TANK SUGGESTS ENVOY TO N.KOREA", 2008/11/20) reported that the Center for American Progress, a think tank that formulates policies for US president-elect Barack Obama, has suggested sending a special presidential envoy to Pyongyang as soon as possible and ratifying the Korea-U.S. free trade agreement. Gregory Craig, who has been designated as the White House legal adviser, suggests that within 100 days after his inauguration, Obama should send a special presidential envoy to the DPRK.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("FAMILIES OF ABDUCTEES SEND ANTI-NORTH FLYERS AGAIN DESPITE GOVE'T PLEA", Gimpo , 2008/11/20) reported that families of South Koreans abducted by DPRK continued to send balloons carrying anti-communist flyers near the inter-Korean border, despite the government's warning a day earlier. Ten representatives of the families launched 100,000 leaflets attached to 10 balloons, shouting, "Release the abductees!" The balloons were sent from Wolgotmyeon in the city of Gimpo, west of Seoul. In a written statement printed on the leaflets, the families demanded the release of 487 ROK abductees, including 436 fishermen.

The Korea Times (Kim Sue-young , "45% OPPOSE LEE'S HAWKISH STANCE ON NK ", 2008/11/20) reported that South Koreans are equally divided over President Lee Myung-bak's hawkish stance on DPRK, a survey showed. Commissioned by the Presidential National Unification Advisory Council, the poll showed that about 50 percent of respondents backs Lee's policy and some 45 percent opposed it. The survey of 1,800 adults aged 19 years or older was conducted from Nov. 7 to 8. Asked what the respondents think of DPRK, 55.3 percent called it a "partner'' to embrace and live with while only 9.7 percent called it an enemy. Less than 30 percent think DPRK is simultaneously a partner and enemy.

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3. ROK-US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREAN, U.S. NUKE ENVOYS TO ATTEND U.N. DISARMAMENT FORUM ", Seoul , 2008/11/20) reported that ROK and US nuclear envoys will discuss ways of advancing the stalled six-way talks on the DPRK nuclear program at a meeting to be held next week on the sidelines of a UN disarmament seminar, officials said. "Ambassador Sung Kim will have a separate meeting with Hwang Joon-kook, director general of the North Korean nuclear affairs bureau at the Foreign Ministry on Nov. 25," ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said. ROK officials expect Sung Kim to provide an update on Washington's discussions with Pyongyang on measures to verify the DPRK's June declaration of its nuclear stockpile.

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4. Sino-DPRK Relations

Xinhau Net ("DPRK TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC, CULTURAL COOPERATION WITH CHINA", Pyongyang, 2008/11/20) reported that the DPRK will continue to enhance economic and cultural cooperation with the PRC under the guidelines of a cooperation pact signed 55 years ago, the DPRK's vice premier said. The DPRK-PRC Cooperation Accord on Economy and Culture signed in 1953, which helped the two countries intensify economic and cultural cooperation, played an important role in boosting bilateral ties, said Vice Premier Ro Du Chol. He was speaking at a reception in Pyongyang commemorating the 55th anniversary of the agreement, co-hosted by the DPRK's Foreign Trade and Culture ministries.

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5. DPRK-Japan Relations

Mainichi Shimbun ("2 MISSING HOUSEWIVES ADDED TO LIST OF SUSPECTED ABDUCTEES BY

NORTH KOREA", 2008/11/20) reported that a group investigating the abduction of Japanese nationals by the DPRK has placed two missing housewives on its list of suspected abductees, members said. It brought the number of those that the group, the "Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to North Korea," recognized as being highly likely to have been abducted by DPRK agents to 70.

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6. ROK-Brazil Energy Cooperation

The Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "KOREA, BRAZIL TO EXPAND COOPERATION IN BIO ENERGY ", 2008/11/20) reported that ROK and Brazil signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), Thursday, to expand strategic cooperation in bio energy and other key industries. The MOU was signed by Korean Knowledge Economy Minister Lee Youn-ho and Brazilian Vice Minister of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade Ivan Ramalho on the sidelines of President Lee Myung-bak's visit to the South American country. The MOU calls for expanding bilateral investments and trade and technology exchanges through an industry cooperation committee, according to Yonhap News.

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7. ROK Anti-Piracy Operations

The Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA TO SEND KDX-II DESTROYER TO SOMALIA ", 2008/11/20) reported that ROK will early next year dispatch state-of-the-art 5,000 t-class KDX-II destroyer Gang Gam-chan to Somali waters, where a spate of hijackings of ships have led to Korean sailors spending months in captivity and hefty ransom payments. A military source on Wednesday said Seoul decided to dispatch the Gang Gam-chan to the lawless region and is minded to put the country’s six KDX-II destroyers into a four- to five-month rotation for the mission. Military authorities plan to send the gunboat to Somalia around late January after they submit a relevant motion to the National Assembly in December.

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8. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Korea Herald ("S. KOREAN LAWMAKERS TO VISIT WASHINGTON OVER DOKDO ISSUE", 2008/11/20) reported that a bipartisan group of ROK legislators will meet with US officials in Washington this week in a bid to reaffirm sovereignty over the country's easternmost islets of Dokdo with the incoming US administration, officials here were quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. "We plan to make sure that the incoming Barack Obama administration clearly acknowledges Dokdo as South Korea's land, thereby not making mistakes such as wrongly defining or naming the islets," Won Yoo-chul, who will be leading the delegation, said.

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9. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN EYES EASING LIMIT ON USE OF WEAPONS IN MSDF ANTIPIRACY MISSION", 2008/11/20) reported that Japan is considering easing the current constitutional limit on the use of weapons by the Self-Defense Forces if the forces are deployed in antipiracy activities in waters off Somalia under a possible new law, according to a draft bill made available. The draft bill, which would also authorize the Maritime Self-Defense Force to subdue pirates if they use weapons to resist and allow the force to escort foreign ships, is likely to spur controversy in light of the war-renouncing Constitution and the ban on the exercise of the right to collective self-defense.

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10. Japan-US Missile Defense Cooperation

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("MSDF FAILS TO INTERCEPT MISSILE IN TEST", 2008/11/20) reported that a Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer failed to intercept a dummy ballistic missile in space above the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii in a test held Wednesday afternoon local time, according to the Defense Ministry. The Aegis-equipped Chokai test- fired a Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) at about 4:20 p.m. to tail the mock live missile fired by the U.S. military, but failed to intercept the target.

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11. PRC on UNSC Reform

Xinhau Net ("CHINA URGES GREATER REPRESENTATION OF DEVELOPING NATIONS IN SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM", 2008/11/20) reported that the PRC urged greater representation of developing countries, especially African ones, in the reform of the United Nations Security Council. "The reform should give priority to the increasing of the representation of the developing countries, especially the African countries," Liu Zhenmin, the PRC's deputy representative to the UN, told a debate on the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. "Only by so doing can the long-time structural defect of the Security Council be corrected." Liu reiterated that "any reform plan that does not have the extensive support from the African countries will not have the support of China."

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12. PRC Cyberattacks

BBC News ("US WARNED OF CHINA 'CYBER-SPYING' ", 2008/11/20) reported that PRC has stepped up computer espionage against the US government and American businesses, according to an influential Washington congressional panel. In its annual report to Congress, the panel warned that PRC was gaining increasing access to sensitive information from US computer networks. There has been no comment so far from the PRC on the report. The report said the US government and economy were critically vulnerable to cyber-space attack since both depended heavily on computers and the internet. "China is stealing vast amounts of sensitive information from US computer networks," said Larry Wortzel, chairman of the commission.

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13. PRC Military

United Press International (Andrei Chang, "CHINA BOOSTS MILITARY TIES WITH CHILE AND ARGENTINA", 2008/11/20) reported that the PRC has been stepping up its military contacts with Chile, Bolivia and Argentina, in addition to its existing ties with Cuba and Venezuela. The engagements between the militaries of the PRC and Chile are already quite frequent. The PRC has been placing emphasis on its relations with Chile because of its economic and political strength relative to other Central and South American countries. By demonstrating the benefits of the PRC-Chile relationship, Beijing hopes to influence those South American countries that maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan to switch allegiance.

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14. PRC Economy

BBC News (Michael Bristow , "CHINA FEARS GROW OVER JOB LOSSES ", Beijing , 2008/11/20) reported that PRC has said its employment outlook is "grim", amid worries that economic problems could lead to social unrest. Unemployment is expected to rise next year as businesses close because of a lack of orders. PRC leaders are already warning that an economic downturn could lead to further protests by those facing financial hardships. It could also undermine the PRC leadership, whose legitimacy has been built on improving living standards. The authorities expect to keep the unemployment rate within its target of 4.5% this year, but that figure is expected to rise next year, it was revealed.

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15. PRC Energy Supply

BBC News ("CHINA REVIVES BURMA PIPELINE PLAN ", 2008/11/20) reported that PRC has revived its plan to build oil and gas pipelines into Burma, state media has reported. State media has said construction would begin on the previously discussed pipeline plan in 2009. The pipelines would cut shipping time and costs for journeys by sea through the Malacca Straits and secure access to energy supplies.

Financial Times (Geoff Dyer , "OIL PRICE OPENS REFORM WINDOW IN CHINA ", Beijing , 2008/11/20) reported that PRC is taking the opportunity created by low oil prices to prepare a shake-up of its pricing system that could include a new fuel tax and fewer price controls, the government’s top planning body said. The National Development and Reform Commission said the government was studying a series of reforms to oil pricing that officials say are designed to stimulate more efficient use of energy and encourage greater use of smaller cars. However, Reuters reported on Thursday that officials were also considering an increase to the existing tax on refined oil consumption, which is paid by refiners and importers.

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16. PRC Unrest

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "TAXI DRIVERS STRIKE IN LATEST CHINA UNREST ", Beijing , 2008/11/19) reported that civil unrest stemming from economic concerns flared in southwestern PRC on Wednesday as several hundred taxi drivers in Chongqing went on strike over a government plan to put more cabs on their district's roads. The protest took place two days after rioting erupted in the impoverished northwestern province of Gansu over declining incomes and property values. The official New China News Agency described the Wudu riots as a land dispute, saying that 30 people had come to the party offices to negotiate. When no resolution was reached, more people gathered, eventually attacking the office building and injuring police officers.

Reuters ("TOP OFFICIAL MEETS RIOTERS AS CHINA SEEKS STABILITY", Beijing, 2008/11/21) reported that Gansu Province Governor Xu Shousheng held a meeting with 10 representatives of protesters on Friday. Xu told the group that the changes in a government resettlement plan for victims of the May 12 earthquake were only in the planning stage and could be vetoed by the central government. He also promised to protect their livelihoods if the resettlement gets the go-ahead.

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17. PRC Tibet Issue

Los Angeles Times (Mark Magnier , "CHINA TIGHTENING CONTROL IN TIBET REGION, EXILES SAY ", Dharamsala, 2008/11/20) reported that PRC has further tightened control amid an expanded show of force in its ethnic Tibetan region in recent weeks, say exile groups. Although it is difficult to say conclusively that the two events are linked, reports of tighter control, stepped-up patrols and increased paramilitary presence in Lhasa, the regional capital, and along major transport arteries coincide with a key strategy meeting attended by exiles in northern India this week.

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA VOWS NOT TO COMPROMISE WITH TIBETAN EXILES", Beijing, 2008/11/21)

reported that an editorial in the official Tibet Daily newspaper on Friday denounced the Dalai Lama's "middle way" proposal that the region be granted control over its internal affairs while remaining a part of the PRC. The Dalai Lama's "so-called 'middle way' is a naked expression of 'Tibet independence' aimed at nakedly spreading the despicable plot of opposing the tide of history," the statement said. "Throughout the 'middle way' can be found distortions of history, ignoring of facts, and deviations from our constitution and the content of various laws," the editorial said.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net (Jiang Jie, Cai Yugao, "JIANGSU ESTABLISHES ANTI-CULT ORGANIZATION",) reported that Jiangsu Anti-Cult Organization was established and held the first meeting of council on Nov.19. The meeting discussed and approved the charter of the organization and elected the first council members, chairman of the council, and the secretary general. In is understood that the Organization

was composed of people of science and technology, social science, education, religion, media and other fields, who are voluntary to carry out anti-cult movement. At present, there are already 117 members and 45 council members.

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19. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

People's Daily online (Liu Yi, "CHINA ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS GRADUALLY GROW UP", 2008/11/20) reported that Friends of Nature, the PRC's first Environmental NGO registered in 1994, has gradually grown up with over 8000 individual members and 30 team members now and got Asian Environment Prize, Earth Prize and many other awards. At the same time, more and more fellow travelers join with them on the green road. According to the data from PRC Environmental Protection Federation, as of October 2008, Environmental NGOs all around the country has reached 3539, with an increase of 771 than in 1005. Their activities are more and more influential.

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III. ROK Report

20. U.S. Policy toward DPRK

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("ROK SHOULD PREPARE FOR US GOVN'T'S CHANGE OF DPRK POLICY", 2008/11/21) reported that the fact that the incoming Obama Administration has not put priority on the DPRK nuclear issue means that the regime of current six-party talks is likely to be maintained for the time being. However, once the current regime reveals its limitations, the ROK is going to be neglected in the negotiations. This is why the ROK government should put priority on working on its DPRK policy.

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21. Inter-Korea Relations

Kookmin Ilbo ("DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY, DPRK'S SPOKESPERSON?", 2008/11/21) wrote that the members of the ROK Democratic Labor Party's who visited the DPRK conveyed a message from the the DPRK's Chosun Social Democratic Party. The party has recently been remonstrating the ROK government to shift its DPRK policy. Concerning the fact that the main cause of the tension on the Korean Peninsula is the DPRK, since they did not show any signs of change despite the ROK government's ten years of 'tolerance', the one who needs to change is not the ROK government, but the DPRK.

Hankyure ("PROPAGANDA BILLS TOWARD DPRK", 2008/11/21) __ reported that related departments of the ROK government held a meeting aimed at halting the release of propaganda bills toward the DPRK. However, the organizations who have been releasing the bills did not stop even after the meeting was held. The government's passive action is the problem. It is irresponsible for

the government to virtually leave the issue unsettled. They need to redraw a big picture of the inter-Korean relationship if they do not want the same thing to happen again. The beginning of it should be to make sure that they are willing to implement 10.4 and 6.15 declarations.

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22. ROK Policy toward DPRK

TongilNews ("'LET'S PREVENT THE WORST FROM HAPPENING', ROK SOCIETY ACTS URGENTLY", 2008/11/21) reported that ROK society started to act urgently to prevent a total break-off of the inter-Korean relationship. People from religious, civic, and cultural fields are planning to establish a special organization which aims at the normalization of the inter-Korean relationship. The Democratic Labor Party is also planning to hold talks with President Lee Myung-bak, as well as with two former Presidents Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun.

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23. U.S.-ROK Policy toward DPRK

PRESSian ("YOON YEO-JOON, 'MB WHO IS SIMILAR WITH OBAMA, TO SHIFT DPRK POLICY'", 2008/11/21) reported that Yoon Yeo-joon, former member of the ROK assembly said in an international symposium on November 20 that since Obama Administration is going to take a comprehensive approach to solve the DPRK problem, the Lee Administration will also have to shift their policies and general attitude toward the DPRK. Yoon added that the Lee Administration and Obama Administration have similar visions about the future. He also said that Obama will not neglect the ROK government from negotiations about issues on Korean Peninsula.

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