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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("U.S., N.K. DISCUSS FOLLOW-UP STEPS TO DENUCLEARIZATION DEAL", Washington, 2007/10/22) reported that US and DPRK diplomats met in New York for follow-up discussions on a denuclearization deal reached earlier this month, the U.S. State Department said. Alexander Arvizu, deputy assistant secretary of state, was meeting DPRK officials to talk about "bilateral matters referred to in the Oct. 3 agreement," spokesman Sean McCormack said. Lacking diplomatic ties, official contacts between the two governments often take place through their U.N. missions in New York.

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee , "'N.K. NUKE DISABLEMENT TO BEGIN NOV. 1'", 2007/10/22) reported that a group of U.S. technicians will enter the DPRK by Nov. 1 to begin work on disabling the DPRK's main nuclear facilities, US nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill told reporters. The ROK's Chosun Ilbo quoted a Washington official relaying the comments made by Hill at Washington's Dulles Airport. ROK government officials confirmed the entry date to be early next month. Hill was also quoted as saying that the working group on normalizing bilateral relations with the DPRK could open in the next several weeks.

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2. DPRK Energy Aid

Agence France-Presse ("KOREAS MEET ON SIX-NATION ENERGY AID ", Seoul, 2007/10/22) reported that the ROK and DPRK began talks about promised major energy aid to the DPRK in return for its nuclear shutdown, officials said. The two-day working-level meeting at the DPRK's Mount Kumgang resort will consider the cost of repairing decrepit power plants, they told AFP on condition of anonymity. At this week's follow-up meeting, officials will draw up a list of plants and repair costs.

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3. US Energy Aid to the DPRK

Kyodo ("BUSH ASKS CONGRESS FOR $106 MILLION FOR N. KOREA AID", Washington, 2007/10/22) reported that President George W. Bush asked Congress for $106 million for energy or

assistance worth an equivalent value to DPRK in exchange for Pyongyang's possible disablement of its key nuclear facilities, the White House said. The request is intended to make good on its promise under a six-party agreement to dismantle the DPRK's nuclear programs. The DPRK is to get 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil or comparable aid if it disables the nuclear facilities and declares its nuclear programs by Dec. 31.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo ("MINISTRY STREAMLINES INVESTING IN NORTH ", 2007/10/22) reported that regulatory filing requirements to invest in the DPRK will be eased, and the Export-Import Bank of Korea will manage information on investment activities in the DPRK, according to a Ministry of Finance and Economy release yesterday. For an amount below $300,000, an investor will no longer need to hand in an annual financial report to the bank handling the company's foreign exchange deals for investments in the DPRK. For an amount below $1 million, an investor will only need to report briefly.

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5. ROK on Iraq Role

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA PUSHES TO KEEP TROOPS IN IRAQ ", Seoul, 2007/10/21) reported that the ROK's government has decided to extend the stay of its troops in Iraq until next year but will cut the size of its contingent in half, defence officials said Sunday. "The withdrawal of troops from Iraq, originally due by the end of December, will be postponed until next year," a defence ministry spokesman told AFP. "But the number will be reduced from the current 1,200 to 600."

Chosun Ilbo ("PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TAKE STAND ON TROOPS IN IRAQ", 2007/10/22) reported that the United New Democratic Party formally decided to oppose the extension of ROK troops' mandate in Iraq, transforming the matter into a hot topic for the presidential election campaign. Grand National Party presidential candidate Lee Myung-bak's camp voiced no clear position for or against the new extension. Asked why, Lee camp spokesperson Park Hyeong-joon said, "It's still difficult to make a comprehensive judgment because we haven't seen the government's concrete plan on the extension of the unit's mandate yet." UNDP candidate Chung Dong-young decided to follow his party's line. Since Sunday, Chung had said he was "considering" the matter, but after meeting with UNDP leader Oh Chung-il, and campaign co-chairmen Sohn Hak-kyu, Lee Hae-chan and Kim Geun-tae, he made up his mind to follow the party's decision.

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6. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("ENVOY URGES PROMPT RESOLUTION OF BEEF DISPUTE FOR FTA PASSAGE ", Washington, 2007/10/22) reported that the ROK envoy to Washington urged his country's legislators to reach a prompt resolution of the beef trade issue with the United States in order to expedite ratification of a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA). Addressing the parliamentary team who came

for overseas mission inspections, Ambassador Lee Tae-sik said congressional ratification of the FTA could be possible after February next year when it becomes clear who the US presidential nominees would be. "But opposition to the deal comes from the beef issue," the envoy said. "We need a reasonable, scientifically based resolution."

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7. ROK Politics

Joongang Ilbo (Lee Min-a , "GNP'S CROSSED SIGNALS ON LEE PARTNER RETURN ", 2007/10/22) reported that the conservative Grand National Party can't seem to get its signals straight about the pending extradition from the United States of Lee Myung-bak's former business partner, Kim Gyeong-jun. Lee's aides routinely say they have nothing to fear from Kim's return, while others worry that the presence of Kim, a key figure in a stock price manipulation scandal from his days as head of the asset management firm BBK, could tarnish Lee in the December presidential election. Over the weekend, Lee's U.S. lawyers submitted a second motion to a federal court to delay Kim's return on the grounds that he should first attend to a civil lawsuit in the US.

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8. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Financial Times (Jo Johnson, "JAPAN AGONISES OVER REFUELLING ", 2007/10/22) reported that Japan's parliament will begin an intense debate about the merits of a bill to extend the country's refuelling operations in the Indian Ocean, Tokyo's contribution to the US-led "war against terrorism" in Afghanistan. Foreign diplomats say the debate is crucial. It will determine whether Japan can continue to participate in the Afghan operation when Washington is worried about any signs of cracks in its anti-terror coalition. Second, there is growing concern that Japan's ability to run an effective presidency of the Group of Eight next year could be impaired if the government is distracted by what is likely to become a battle for its own survival.

The Asahi Shimbun ("MINISTRY AIMS TO INCREASE CIVILIAN CONTROL OF THE SDF", 2007/10/22) reported that the Defense Ministry has set up a committee to strengthen civilian control of the Self-Defense Forces following a reported coverup in May 2003 involving fuel provided to U.S. Navy ships. The first meeting of the committee was held Monday evening. Ishiba, now defense minister, heads the committee looking into ways to increase civilian control over the SDF. "This is not about the responsibility of a single official, but is an organizational problem," Ishiba told reporters after the first meeting.

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9. PRC Leadership

The New York Times (Joseph Kahn, "POLITBURO IN CHINA GETS FOUR NEW MEMBERS", Beijing, 2007/10/22) reported that the Communist Party announced a new leadership lineup that anoints two future leaders of the country and modestly enhances the authority of President Hu Jintao. The reshuffle promotes four officials to the nine-man Politburo Standing Committee, the country's top ruling body, including two provincial leaders expected to inherit the posts of party general secretary

and prime minister in five years' time. Three former members of the Standing Committee, including Vice President Zeng Qinghong, who did not owe their positions to Mr. Hu's patronage, were officially retired. That likely increases Mr. Hu's ability to rally support within the governing party for his domestic and international priorities.

Reuters (Paul Eckert, "U.S. ANALYSTS EXPECT CAUTION FROM NEW CHINA LEADERSHIP", Washington, 2007/10/22) reported that the PRC's new Communist Party leadership line-up unveiled on Monday brought no surprises to US PRC-watchers, who predicted months of caution and little movement on American concerns as leaders find their feet. Analyzing Hu's new team from Washington, PRC-watchers saw a conspicuous lack of political reformers, some business-savvy former provincial party bosses and a possible effort to improve relations with the estranged, democratic island of Taiwan. Above all, they said caution would reign -- at least until government posts are changed when parliament convenes in March and perhaps until after the Beijing Olympics in August.

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10. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press (Audra Ang, "CHINA TO LAUNCH LUNAR PROBE THIS WEEK", Beijing, 2007/10/22) reported that the PRC will launch its first lunar probe this week, an official said — weeks after regional rival Japan put one in high orbit over the moon in a big leap forward in Asia's undeclared space race. The launch window for China's Chang'e 1 orbiter has been set for Wednesday through Friday, with the prime time being 6 p.m. (6 a.m. EDT) Wednesday, said Li Guoping, a spokesman for the China National Space Administration.

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II. ROK Report

11. ROK Military

Yonhap News ("ROK HAS 10 SUBMARINES, DPRK HAS 60", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that according to documents that Lee Sung-ku, a member of the ROK National Assembly's National Defense Committee, distributed to the media on October 23, the ROK navy has only 10 submarines while the DPRK has about 60 of them. Lee asserted that even though the DPRK submarines are relatively small in size, and old in function, the ROK should concentrate on strengthening its naval force. He also remarked that in order to reach the goals of the "National Defense Renovation Project 2020" with such a limited budget, it is necessary to strengthen the submarine force.

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12. ROK Missile Force

Yonhap News (""ROK MILITARY HAS 1000-KM LONG CRUISE MISSILE"", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that an ROK military officials said that the military possesses a 1000-km cruise missile. The official refused to answer whether it is actually deployed or not. The missile, which can cover the whole DPRK and even reach to Beijing, not only has inertial navigation equipment, but also has equipment to clarify the locations of objects which its infrared camera records by comparing it with geographical data read in beforehand. Cheong In-ku, the commander of the missile forces, added that, even though the missile is liquid-fueled, when it is fully charged it will take about an hour for firing. However, following the response to Cheong's remarks, other officials claimed that there is no such missile.

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13. DPRK NLL Violations

Yonhp News ("DPRK VESSELS VIOLATED NLL 5 TIMES IN OCT.", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that, according to documents submitted to Mang Hyung-kyu, the member of the Grand National Party, by the Ministry of National Defense, the DPRK vessels has violated the Northern Limit Line five times since earlier this month, which is two times more than the average. The military authorities said it was likely to have happened due to certain factors such as movements to dispute the NLL, so that they are focusing on what is happening in the West Sea. Mang inferred that the intention of the DPRK may be to highlight NLL as disputed area at the meeting between defense ministers. Thus the military should deny to any efforts that try to dispute the NLL.

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14. DPRK on Computer Operating Systems

Yonhap News ("DPRK CRITICIZED MS, PRAISED LINUX", Seoul, 2007/10/23) reported that a scholar of Kim Il-song University argued that since the U.S. company Microsoft is very well aware of the computer systems of other countries who use the Windows program, the U.S. can abuse them by planting computer viruses or hacking in order to achieve their political, economic, or military purpose. On the other had, he gave high scores to Linux, which is an open system for personal computers. He added that Microsoft is intentionally trying to keep Linux from spreading worldwide.

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