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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. Six-Party Talks

Kyodo ("TOP DELEGATES TO 6-WAY NUKE TALKS TO MEET IN BEIJING DEC. 8", Lima, 2008/11/23) reported that the chief delegates to the six-party talks will meet in Beijing from Dec. 8 to try to put in writing a scheme for verifying the information provided by Pyongyang on its nuclear programs, negotiation sources said Sunday. The PRC has sounded out the other five countries on the schedule and all of them, including the DPRK, have basically agreed to it, the sources said. The PRC has not set an end date for the meeting.

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2. US Policy Toward DPRK

Korea Times (Kim Se-jeong, "US ENVOY TO NK ADVISED TO VISIT SEOUL FIRST", Seoul, 2008/11/21) reported that U.S. President-elect Barack Obama's foreign policy advisor Gregory B. Craig suggested that the new president should send a special envoy to the DPRK during his first 100 days in office. Craig wrote, "the envoy should make it clear that the efforts of the Bush administration in 2008 to resolve the standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons program through the six-party process involving all of North Korea's neighbors, as well as the direct bilateral talks the outgoing administration finally engaged in, are still on track.'' Craig also said the direct, high-level bilateral talks between the two governments are ``acceptable,'' and the envoy should be in close consultation with Seoul, Japan and China as part of denuclearization negotiations.

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3. DPRK-Japan Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("LDP PANEL: GET TOUGHER ON N. KOREA", Tokyo, 2008/11/22) reported that the Yomiuri Shimbun learned Friday that the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) plans to draw up a final list of sanctions against the DPRK and urge the government to implement it. The sanctions discussed by the committee, which is headed by Keiji Furuya, include a ban on transactions between Japanese financial institutions and foreign institutions that have business connections with the DPRK and freezing assets of the DPRK and DPRK-linked organizations.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Reuters (Jonathan Thatcher, "NORTH KOREA READIES TO SHUT BORDER WITH SOUTH", Seoul, 2008/11/24) reported that the DPRK said on Monday it would all but seal its border with the ROK. KCNA news agency said the border closure was the first step "to be taken in connection with the evermore undisguised anti-DPRK confrontational racket of the south Korean puppet authorities." "(The North) never said it would halt production or expel staff related to the production process. So even in the worst case of operating with only half of the staff, we think there won't be any problem in production," said Lee Eun-suk, an official at Shinwon Corp which has clothing factories at Kaesong.

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5. ROK Aid for DPRK

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA PREPARES TO SEND STEEL PIPES TO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2008/11/24) reported that the ROK prepared Monday to send 3,000 tons of steel pipes to the DPRK as agreed at the six-party talks, the foreign ministry said. "The government plans to provide North Korea with the steel pipes as soon as necessary administrative procedures are completed," ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said at a press briefing. "The shipment is expected to be made soon with a schedule for the resumption of the six-party talks set to be announced."

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6. DPRK Policy Statements

Donga Ilbo ("'N. KOREA COULD ANNOUNCE NEW LEADER IN EDITORIAL'", Seoul, 2008/11/22) reported that the DPRK's Workers' Party has reportedly begun writing a joint New Year's Day editorial. A government official in Seoul said Saturday, "The editorial will come out amid rumors on the failing health of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, the election of a new U.S. president, and North Korea's hard-line stance toward the South. So, all eyes are on the editorial's content." Jeong Seong-jang, a researcher on inter-Korean relations at the Sejong Institute in Seoul, said, "The editorial is likely to mention Pyongyang's principled stand to give room for the ailing Kim to prepare for contingencies." On the contrary, Yang Moo-jin, a professor at the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said, "If Kim is not in serious condition, the editorial will avoid expressions that invite a power struggle and internal division."

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7. DPRK Human Rights

Associated Press ("REPORT: NORTH KOREA REJECTS UN RIGHTS RESOLUTION", Seoul, 2008/11/22) reported that the DPRK strongly rejected a U.N. resolution approved Friday condemning its human rights record, reports said Saturday. "The resolution is a product of a political plot to forcibly change North Korea's system and ideology," Pak Dok Hun the deputy chief of the DPRK mission to the United Nations in New York said, according to the ROK Yonhap news agency. He said the ROK "will face the dearest price" for its "treacherous act" of cosponsoring the resolution.

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8. US on Korean Reunification

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong, "U.S. SEES KOREA UNIFICATION BY '25", Seoul, 2008/11/22) reported that the two Koreas could be reunified by 2025 in a form of loose confederation, the U.S. National Intelligence Council said in a report. "We see a unified Korea as likely by 2025 - if not as a unitary state, then in some form of North-South confederation," it stated. "While diplomacy working to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program continues, the final disposition of the North's nuclear infrastructure and capabilities at the time of reunification remains uncertain," it said. "A loosely confederated Korea might complicate denuclearization efforts."

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9. US-ROK Alliance

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. AND KOREA AGREE ON MILITARY COST SHARING", Seoul, 2008/11/22) reported that the ROK has reached an agreement with the United States on how to share the cost of operating the U.S. military bases here for the next five years, according to government officials. They indicated Seoul is expected to increase its financial contribution by the same proportion as the local inflation rate for each year until 2013. “Raising the contribution by only the inflationary rate means our contribution will actually remain at the same level over the years,” said a Foreign Ministry official who asked not to be named.

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10. US-ROK FTA

Korea Times (Michael Ha, "US THINK TANK FAVORS RATIFYING FTA WITH KOREA", Seoul, 2008/11/21) reported that the Center for American Progress said in a recent policy proposal that President-elect Barack Obama should support the KORUS FTA, but added the ROK should also do its part by lowering what the group described as trade barriers against U.S. automobiles. It said recent trade patterns have not been good for many American workers. The group urged the new Obama administration to protect U.S. workers by tackling the trade imbalance problem with Asia.

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11. ROK Military Accident

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "5 S.KOREAN SOLDIERS INJURED IN GRENADE EXPLOSION", Seoul, 2008/11/22) reported that a hand grenade blast injured five soldiers Sunday at an ROK military post near the Demilitarized Zone. The grenade exploded early Sunday at a guard post's barrack where 17 ROK soldiers were sleeping, an army officer said on condition of anonymity, citing department policy. "We're trying to find whether it was an accidental explosion or someone intentionally blew it up," the officer said. "But there is virtually no possibility that it was caused by a North Korean assault."

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12. ROK Textbooks

Joongang Ilbo ("FOREIGN SCHOLARS DEPLORE EFFORTS TO REWRITE KOREAN HISTORY BOOKS", Seoul, 2008/11/22) reported that over 100 foreign scholars signed a “Statement by Historians in South Korea and Abroad” earlier this month calling on the ROK government to stop its attempt to modify the texts. The overseas scholars, most of whom have worked in Korean studies, criticized the move for undermining the principle of political neutrality in education by forcing a homogeneous interpretation of history.

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13. Russo-Japanese Relations

Kyodo ("ASO, MEDVEDEV AGREE TO REALIZE PUTIN'S JAPAN VISIT EARLY NEXT YEAR", Lima, 2008/11/22) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev agreed Saturday to realize a visit to Japan early next year by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin as part of top-level political dialogue, Japanese officials said. The two, who met on the sidelines of a Pacific Rim leaders' summit in the Peruvian capital, also shared the view that Tokyo and Moscow will strive to advance talks on a decades-old territorial dispute, the officials told reporters.

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14. Japanese Climate Change Mitigation

Yomiuri Shimbun (Takeshi Kosaka, Shigeo Kida Keiko Katayama, "TEST CO2 TRADING SCHEME UNVEILED", Tokyo, 2008/11/23) reported that the Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry on Monday held a meeting to explain details of a test run of its carbon credit trading plan, for which the government began accepting applications from companies last month. The government expects about 1,000 companies will take part in the test, but some observers have expressed doubt on the test's effectiveness because the government will leave it up to companies to decide whether to participate. The bottom line is that emission-cutting goals will be decided by companies and not the government.

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15. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press (Debby Wu, "SEVERAL THOUSAND RALLY IN SUPPORT OF TAIWAN'S CHEN", Taipei, 2008/11/22) reported that several thousand demonstrators waved flags and chanted in Taiwan's capital Saturday to protest the detention of former President Chen Shui-bian on graft allegations. Many supporters waved small flags at a Taipei park Saturday reading "Taiwan is our country." Some wore headbands saying "Stop judicial persecution" and chanted "Cheers for A-bian," Chen's nickname.

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16. Cross Straits Relations

Agence France-Press ("CHINA, TAIWAN HOLD HISTORIC MEETING", Lima, 2008/11/22) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao met with Taiwan's former premier Lien Chan, honorary chairman of the island's ruling Kuomintang party, for about 40 minutes at a hotel in Lima, Peru, where leaders are meeting for an Asia-Pacific summit. Officials in Taiwan's summit delegation called it the highest-level meeting in an international setting since 1949. "It is very significant for old friends to meet far away from Asia," Lien, who has met Hu twice in the PRC this year, told reporters after the meeting.

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17. PRC Tibet Issue

Associated Press (Sam Dolnick, "DALAI LAMA WARNS TIBETAN EXILES TO BE PRUDENT", Dharmsala, 2008/11/23) reported that the Dalai Lama warned Tibetan exiles Sunday to plan with prudence or risk failure. "The next twenty years, if we are not careful, if we are not prudent in our plans, there is a great danger," the Dalai Lama said. "It could lead to the danger of failure." At a meeeting that ended Saturday, Tibetan leaders from around the globe reaffirmed support for the Dalai Lama's "middle way." "If China does not respond positively to our initiative, there is no other options left for us than to go for independence," said Dolma Gyari, deputy speaker of the Tibetan parliament-in-exile.

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18. Alleged PRC Espionage

Associated Press (, "CHINA DISMISSES US ESPIONAGE REPORT AS MISLEADING", Beijing, 2008/11/22) reported that the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a congressional advisory panel, issued a report accusing the PRC of stepping up computer espionage attacks on the American government, its defense contractors and businesses. It also said that aggressive PRC space programs were allowing Beijing to better target U.S. military forces. In a statement issued late Friday, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said that the commission "deliberately slanders and attacks China" and always sees it in a bad light. "It attempts to mislead public opinion and the general public as well as set obstacles for Sino-U.S. cooperation in extensive

fields."

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19. PRC Human Rights

Associated Press ("CHINA REJECTS UN REPORT ON TORTURE AS 'UNTRUE'", Beijing, 2008/11/22) reported that the U.N. Committee against Torture said it was "deeply concerned about the continued allegations, corroborated by numerous Chinese legal sources, of the routine and widespread use of torture and ill-treatment of suspects in police custody, especially to extract confessions or information to be used in criminal proceedings," in a 15-page report released Friday in Geneva. Qin Gang, a spokesman of the PRC Foreign Ministry, said some members of the committee were "prejudiced" against China, had ignored evidence presented by the PRC government and were citing unverified or fabricated information. "They put untrue and slanderous comments into the committee's final conclusion, which lacks justice and professional objectiveness, against which China firmly opposes," Qin said, according to a statement on the Foreign Ministry's Web site.

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II. PRC Report

20. PRC Civil Society and the 512 Earthquake

One Foundation website ("ONE FOUNDATION SICHUAN RECONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PROJECT FORMALLY LAUNCHED", 2008/11/20) reported that the first One Foundation Sichuan Reconstruction Environmental Protection Project – the Pengzhou Waste Sorting Station Project -- was formally launched recently. After the earthquake, the garbage treatment has become a serious problem of Pengzhou city. Early in July this year, the project director of One Foundation started research in Pengzhou. After having full communication with the local residents, they finally decided to establish waste sorting stations. The waste sorting stations are expected to treat 200 tons of garbage for Pengzhou, and near 200,000 people will benefit from them.

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21. PRC Civil Society and Domestic Violence

Shanxi Women Institute (Li Fenghua, "ANTI-VIOLENCE FOR WOMEN LECTURE HELD IN COMMUNITY", 2008/11/20) reported that on the afternoon of Nov.20, Shanxi Women Institute and Baishulin Street Women Federation co-hosted the “Combating Domestic Violence, Starting From Me” lecture. The over 150 participants came from various streets and communities, and were mostly residents and migrant workers. The main content of the lecture is what is gender violence, its characteristics, and the related legal knowledge. The lecture got a warm response from the audience.

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22. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Beijing Youth ("CLEFT LIP AND PALATE REPAIR CANCELS RESTRICTIONS ON DOMICILE AND INCOME", 2008/11/21) reported that Smile Train is a charitable project which gives free surgery to cleft lip and palate patients. Yesterday the director of the Beijing Charity Association said that from now on applicants for cleft lip and palate repair needn't have a certain level of income, as well as a Beijing domicile. During the past eight years, the project has helped near one thousand patients and has 6 hospitals.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org