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I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREA BLASTS SOUTH'S MINISTER AS SEOUL HESITATES ON MOUNTAIN TOUR", Seoul, 2009/11/23) reported that DPRK heaped criticism on ROK's unification minister on Monday, calling him a "traitor" impeding inter-Korean relations, as Seoul balked at Pyongyang's request to resume a lucrative mountain tour. The minister in charge of inter-Korean relations, Hyun In-taek, reasserted on the same day Seoul's hard-line position, saying the cross-border relationship "cannot bypass" the dispute over DPRK's nuclear program.

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2. DPRK Japanese Abductee Issue

Kyodo News ("EX-N. KOREAN AGENT, JAPANESE ABDUCTEE'S SON TRADE LETTERS AFTER MEETING", Saitama, Japan, 2009/11/23) reported that the son of a Japanese woman abducted by DPRK in 1978 released Monday letters he has exchanged with former DPRK agent Kim Hyong Hui since their meeting in ROK in March. At a press conference in Saitama, Koichiro Iizuka, 32, said he has decided to disclose the letters sent and received in July and August as he has grown worried about the new government's handling of the abduction issue since Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama took power in mid- September. The letter was accompanied by video footage of Kim, but contained no new information on abductees, Iizuka said.

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3. DPRK Development

Yonhap (Tony Chang, "UNDP TO RESUME N. KOREA PROJECTS NEXT YEAR: CLARK", Seoul, 2009/11/23) reported that the head of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) said Monday that the organization was finalizing plans to resume projects in DPRK next year, expecting them to cost US\$2.5 million annually. "I would expect that when the resident coordinator is properly established ... and the office is fully operational, you can probably expect next year to see some forward movement," UNDP Administrator Helen Clark said at a press conference in Seoul.

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4. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("RISING COST OF NARCOTICS IN DPRK DRIVES UP HOME, MARKET PRICES", 2009/11/23) reported that the recent hike in narcotics prices in the DPRK appears to be due to rising prices on homes and in markets. According to Daily NK, "Recent narcotics prices have grown considerably," and, "If narcotics prices rise, market prices rise across the board." As DPRK officials crack down on narcotics production and distribution, the availability of Philopon and other narcotics has been sharply reduced. This reduction in supply is driving up prices. Drug prices in the DPRK first jumped sharply in February of last year, as officials began cracking down on production centers in Hamheung and Pyeongseong.

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5. Sino-DPRK Economic Relations

Radio Free Asia ("BATTLE FOR NORTH KOREA'S RESOURCES", 2009/11/23) reported that the DPRK is pulling back from PRC mining investments in an effort to independently develop its industry and use the profits to create a self-reliant economy, according to a well-informed DPRK defector. But analysts say it is unlikely that the DPRK will be able to lock the PRC out completely, because it lacks the infrastructure and capital needed to develop the country's vast mineral resources.

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6. ROK Foreign Aid

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong and Tony Chang, "SEOUL TO DOUBLE AFRICA DEVELOPMENT AID TO \$214 MLN BY 2012", Seoul, 2009/11/24) reported that in the ministerial South Korea-Africa Forum, Seoul pledged to double its development assistance to Africa to US\$214 million by 2012. It also said it will allow a greater number of African industrial trainees -- as many as 5,000 -- to come to the ROK, and will increase the number of ROK aid workers in Africa to 1,000 by 2012. The participants adopted "Green Growth Initiative 2009-2012," agreeing to expand channels for dialogue and ultimately form a strong partnership on low-carbon green growth, according to the document.

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7. Japan on US Nuclear Posture

Kyodo ("JAPAN EAGER FOR U.S. TO KEEP NUKE DETERRENCE", 2009/11/24) reported that before the shift in political power in September, Japan aggressively lobbied a U.S. congressional nuclear task force to maintain the credibility of the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" to deter possible attacks by PRC and DPRK, sources said Monday. Tokyo's lobbying for a robust deterrence came just before President Barack Obama pledged that the U.S. would pursue the "peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." Meeting with members of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, senior Japanese diplomats expressed deep concerns about the future capability of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, the sources said.

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8. Japan-PRC-ROK Food Safety Memorandum

Kyodo ("JAPAN, CHINA, S. KOREA AGREE TO SHARE INFO OVER FOOD SAFETY", Tokyo, 2009/11/23) reported that health ministers from Japan, PRC and ROK agreed Monday to share information on food safety and coordinate measures against the outbreak of the new H1N1 influenza virus. At their third regular meeting held in Tokyo, the ministers signed a memorandum on food safety and issued a joint statement pledging to boost cooperation on food and health-related issues. Under the memorandum, the three countries will exchange information on their food inspection methods, report food safety problems and dispatch experts.

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9. PRC on Espionage Allegations

Xinhua News ("CHINA REFUTES U.S. ALLEGATIONS ON CYBER ESPIONAGE, CURRENCY MANIPULATION", Beijing, 2009/11/23) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang on Monday rejected a report from a U.S. Congressional advisory panel on PRC as "full of prejudice." The U.S.-PRC Economic and Security Review Commission, a bipartisan board appointed by Congress, accused PRC of cyber espionage and currency manipulation in its 2009 report on Thursday. The annual report on PRC "disregarded facts, was full of prejudice, and was compiled with an ulterior motive. We advise the so-called commission not to always look at PRC through tinted glasses and not to do things that interfere in PRC's internal affairs and undermine PRC-U.S. relations," Qin said.

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10. US and Cross Strait Relations

Taiwan News ("NO CHANGE ON U.S. TAIWAN POLICY", 2009/11/24) reported that United States President Barack Obama will not change anything about his country's policies towards Taiwan, visiting American Institute in Taiwan Chairman Raymond Burghardt said yesterday. After talking to Legislative Speaker Wang Jin-pyng, Burghardt said that during last week's meeting with Hu Jin Tao, Obama told Hu face to face that he would not change existing Taiwan policies, including the sale of American arms. Taiwan is expecting Washington to approve the sale of more advanced F-16 C/D fighter jets, but concern continues that the deal will be postponed or canceled altogether because of PRC's vehement protests against arms sales to the island nation.

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11. Cross-Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN CONCEDES TERRITORIAL WATERS NEAR CHINA", Taipei, 2009/11/23) reported that the Taiwan government said on Monday it was not claiming the territorial waters around two small islands that have long been part of its frontline defense against political rival PRC. Taiwan retains control over the tiny island chains of Kinmen and Matsu but does not claim the ocean around them, the Taiwan government said in a notice stating its position for the first time amid warming ties with Beijing .

Agence France Press ("TAIWAN TO CURB CHINA INVESTMENT", 2009/11/24) reported that Taiwan plans to restrict PRC stock investment in strategic sectors, as it seeks to keep control of its economy amid rapidly growing ties with the mainland, local media said yesterday. PRC institutional investors will be allowed to hold no more than a total of 10 percent in listed companies in the telecommunications, aviation and finance industries, the Commercial Times reported, citing unnamed sources. The paper also said the Financial Supervisory Commission will meet with relevant agencies soon to discuss what cap should be set on PRC investments in less-vital sectors, according to the paper.

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12. PRC-EU Summit

Kyodo News ("CHINA, EU TO HOLD SUMMIT IN NANJING ON NOV. 30", 2009/11/23) reported that PRC and the European Union will hold a summit in Nanjing on Nov. 30, the PRC Foreign Ministry said Monday. PRC and EU leaders will focus on measures to address climate change and the global economic downturn, according to the office of Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeld of Sweden. Premier Wen Jiabao will represent PRC, while the EU side will be led by Reinfeld and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, the two bodies said.

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13. PRC Environmental Activism

Associated Press (William Foreman, "HUNDREDS PROTEST TRASH INCINERATOR PLANS IN CHINA", Guangzhou, 2009/11/23) reported that hundreds of residents worried about property values and health risks protested Monday against the planned construction of a trash incinerator in Guangzhou. Officials have assured the public that the incinerator wouldn't be built until a proper environmental assessment is conducted and repeatedly defended the plan, saying it would be safe and wouldn't pose a health threat. However PRC government studies show that local regulations still allow incinerators to emit 10 times the level of dioxins — including cancer-causing agents and other poisons — permitted at comparable plants in the U.S.

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14. PRC Social Unrest

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA ACTIVIST WHO SPOKE OUT ON QUAKE GETS 3 YEARS", Beijing, 2009/11/23) reported that a veteran dissident was sentenced Monday to three years in prison after casting a spotlight on poorly built schools that collapsed during a massive earthquake in Sichuan Province last year — an apparent government attempt to squelch such information. Huang Qi, founder of a human rights Web site, had been charged with illegally possessing state secrets and his detention in June 2008 came after several posts on his blog that criticized the government's response to the massive earthquake a month earlier. Huang had alleged that state-controlled media provided skewed reports on relief efforts and accused the government of obstructing the work of non-governmental organizations responding to the disaster.

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15. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua News ("CHINA'S NATURAL GAS SHORTAGE RELIEVED, TOP ECONOMIC PLANNER", 2009/11/23) reported that the situation of gas shortage has been eased, the Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), PRC's top economic planner, said in a statement posted on its website Monday. A surging gas demand after the uncommon freezing weather has caused gas shortage in PRC's central and eastern regions, and the government is taking emergent measures to tackle this issue, Zhang Guobao, vice minister with the NDRC and director of the energy bureau, said Monday. Related departments were urged to guarantee residential and public sector gas usage, according to the statement.

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II. PRC Report

16. PRC Environment

China Youth Daily ("270 MILLION RURAL PEOPLE DON'T HAVE STANDARD DRINKING WATER", 2009/11/23) reported that there are still 270 million rural people having the problem of drinking water in the PRC now, said Li Yangbin on November 20, an official of Ministry of Water Resources. Apart from pollution, there are excessive fluorin and arsenic, iron and manganese and other harmful materials existing in some of the PRC's rural drinking water.

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17. PRC Civil Society

South Daily ("DECEMBER 12 TO BE GUANGZHOU CHARITY DAY", 2009/11/23) reported that December 12 was set to be Guangzhou Charity Day on a government meeting held yesterday. On that day, the city will concentrate to carry out large charity donation activities, in order to help needy group.

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