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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Relations

Donga Ilbo ("`UNOFFICIAL N. KOREAN MISSION TO VISIT U.S. BY YEAR`S END` ", 2008/10/23) reported that whenever the US and the DPRK face a crisis in negotiations, “Track 2,” or unofficial diplomatic channels, is put into operation. Tony Namgung said that an unofficial diplomatic mission from the DPRK will visit the US before year’s end and that a reciprocal U.S. visit will come in January. “The unofficial visits are not related to the six-party talks,” he said. “Representatives of the two nations will include high-ranking officials who even can plainly speak to their presidents.” In short, the exchange of unofficial representatives this year will be tantamount to a meeting between the DPRK and the new US administration.

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA SEEKS FOREIGN FARM AID FOR DISMANTLEMENT - REPORT", Tokyo, 2008/10/23) reported that the DPRK, in exchange for dropping its nuclear projects, is seeking foreign aid for farmers who supply food to workers at atomic facilities, a Japanese newspaper said. The DPRK has asked the U.S. to provide help for a total of 10,000 people, including the farmers and nuclear engineers who would need to change jobs, the Yomiuri Shimbun said in its evening edition. The newspaper, quoting unnamed sources in a dispatch from Washington, said the U.S. government has tentatively agreed to offer job assistance for the engineers, fearing they could

go to work for Iran, Syria or other countries.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREAN CONSERVATIVES SLAM BUSH'S N.KOREA POLICY", 2008/10/23) reported that conservatives condemned Washington's DPRK Policy. Grand National Party lawmaker Chung Mong-joon likened Washington's removal of the DPRK from a list of state sponsors of terrorism to "a second Acheson declaration," after US secretary of state Dean Acheson, who in the 1950s declared that Korea was outside America's defense perimeter. And lawmaker Song Young-sun of the splinter Pro-Park Geun-hye Alliance said, "President (George W.) Bush will give in to the tactics of Kim Jong-il, whom he used to call evil."

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4. ROK, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA, S.KOREA MEET FOR TALKS ON N.KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE", Moscow, 2008/10/23) reported that the Russian and ROK chief representatives at the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear disarmament met in Moscow to coordinate their negotiating positions. Opening the meeting, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin told his the ROK counterpart Kim Sook: "We are now at an important stage in the six-party process - near the end of the second phase of the Korean peninsula's denuclearization. There is a range of issues that need to be discussed in order to coordinate our positions."

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5. Australia on DPRK Nuclear Program

ABC News Australia ("AUSTRALIA WORKS TO COVER JAPAN'S FUEL TO NKOREA", 2008/10/23) reported that Australia is working with the United States and Japan on how to pay for a bulk fuel purchase for the DPRK, one of the inducements to Pyongyang in a nuclear disarmament deal. Australian foreign affairs officials appearing before a parliamentary committee in Canberra have confirmed Australia's involvement in discussions on how to pay for a million tonnes of oil for the DPRK. Our Canberra correspondent Linda Mottram reports that Australia is among several countries considering how to fund the purchase.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Reuters ("SYMBOLIC TRAIN BETWEEN TWO KOREAS RUNNING EMPTY", Seoul, 2008/10/23) reported that a daily cargo train service running between the DPRK and ROK once hailed as a symbol of economic cooperation has been running empty about 90 percent of the time, officials said on Thursday. "The operation is largely symbolic but it shows a continuance of regular exchanges despite frayed ties between the two countries," said a ministry official who asked not to be named.

Most of the cargo going between the ROK and the scores of ROK firms operating at the Kaesong factory park in the DPRK moves by truck, which is cheaper.

Korea Herald (Jin Dae-woong , "'SEOUL TO PRIORITIZE INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT PROJECTS' ", 2008/10/23) reported that the ROK will prioritize implementing the inter-Korean projects agreed in last year's summit once the DPRK makes further progress in denuclearizing its nuclear programs, Seoul's Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong said. The remark came in a bid to reaffirm Seoul's commitment to the Oct. 4 declaration, which the DPRK has accused the conservative Lee Myung-bak government of having denied. "If the disablement of the North's nuclear facilities are completed and the denuclearization process makes more progress, the Seoul government would actively take measures aimed at expanding economic cooperation between South and North Korea," Kim said during an annual parliamentary audit on his ministry.

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7. DPRK Food Supply

Bloomberg (Heejin Koo, "NORTH KOREA ORDERS RATION CUT TO HELP FEED ARMY, AID GROUP SAYS", 2008/10/23) reported that the DPRK cut rations for farmers in order to stock up on supplies for its military, a ROK aid group said. "Central party officials, after receiving this year's harvest reports from the Agricultural Ministry, were told that the lower-than-expected amount of harvest would not allow them to meet the quota for military stockpiles,'' Buddhist aid group Good Friends, which obtains information through contacts within the DPRK, said in its newsletter today.

Yonhap News (Shim Sun-ah, "UN SAYS N. KOREA MAY FACE 4TH CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF FOOD SHORTAGE", Seoul, 2008/10/23) reported that the UN food agency appealed for emergency aid shipments to the DPRK, warning that the impoverished country could suffer its fourth consecutive year of food shortages if it doesn't get more aid. The agency also said the DPRK's food shortage has drastically worsened in recent months, with the country's northeastern region facing "a humanitarian emergency." "Given this combination of factors over the last 12 months ... many areas are sliding towards level three, which is a level of acute food and livelihood crisis," said Jean-Pierre de Margerie, director of the World Food Program (WFP)'s Pyongyang office.

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8. DPRK Leadership

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SAYS REPORTS ON KIM'S HEALTH ARE FALSE", Seoul, 2008/10/23) reported that the DPRK's state media said that recent news reports about its leader Kim Jong-il's health were false, in their first direct comment on the reclusive ruler's suspected illness. US and ROK officials said last month Kim may have suffered a stroke in August, raising questions about leadership in Asia's only communist dynasty and who was making decisions about its nuclear arsenal. "The army and people of the DPRK hold the prestige of their top leader dearer than their lives and will never tolerate any act of defaming it," the DPRK's official KCNA news agency.

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9. US, ROK on Nuclear Safeguards

Asia Pulse ("S. KOREA, U.S. TO DISCUSS NUKE NON-PROLIFERATION GUIDELINES", Seoul, 2008/10/23) reported that the ROK and the US will hold talks to enhance non-proliferation measures and ways to promote efficient use of atomic energy, the government said Thursday. A bilateral safeguard steering committee meeting, scheduled for Friday, will touch on strengthening guidelines to prevent the use of nuclear materials for weapons manufacturing, and outline cooperation to raise nuclear fuel efficiency, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said.

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10. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Yomiuri Shimbun (Hidemichi Katsumata and Yoko Inoue , "GOVT MUST TACKLE RAMPANT PIRACY OFF SOMALIA", 2008/10/23) reported that to cope with rampant pirate attacks in the waters off the Somali coast, the government is looking into the possibility of sending the Maritime Self-Defense Force there. Alerted by an increasing number of acts of piracy involving ships owned or operated by Japanese shipping companies, the Japanese Shipowners' Association (JSA) asked the government to strengthen its efforts to crackdown on pirates in cooperation with other countries that have launched such operations.

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11. Japan on Indian Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN OPPOSITION PUSHES INDIAN PM ON NUKES", Tokyo, 2008/10/23) reported that Japan's main opposition party pressed Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to work to eliminate nuclear weapons as New Delhi seeks cooperation on civilian atomic energy. Singh was wrapping up a three-day visit to Tokyo where he signed a major loan agreement and pledged to expand military links in a sign of growing cooperation between the two Asian nations. "We hope that India maintains transparency of its nuclear sector and contributes to efforts towards an elimination of nuclear weapons," Yukio Hatoyama, secretary general of the main opposition Democratic Party, told Singh.

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12. Russo-Japanese Energy Cooperation

Dow Jones Newswires (Mari Iwata, "JAPAN, RUSSIA AFFIRM COOPERATION IN EAST SIBERIA ENERGY PROJECTS", 2008/10/23) reported that Japan and Russia will cooperate closely on energy projects, especially in resource-rich East Siberia, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Wednesday. Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Viktor Khristenko signed a memorandum in Tokyo late Tuesday under the eighth meeting of the bilateral Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Affairs. Tuesday's memorandum cited those instances of energy cooperation between Japan and Russia and said the efforts augur well for the construction of a pipeline linking East Siberia to the Pacific Ocean.

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13. Sino-Indian Relations

IANS ("INDIA BUILDING AIRFIELDS ALONG CHINA BORDER: MUKHERJEE", New Delhi, 2008/10/23) reported that India is constructing a number of airfields close to the border with the PRC to counter any potential threats even though the two countries have taken taken adequate measures to ensure peace along the frontier, External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee told parliament. "Thirteen operational roads are to be completed in Arunachal Pradesh. We are also constructing airports (airfields) close to the border," he said while replying to a supplementary during question hour in the Rajya Sabha. "There is a disputed area of 38,000 sq km that we say China has illegally occupied. In addition, there are 5,000 sq km that Pakistan has ceded to China from the part of Kashmir it controls. China thinks Arunachal Pradesh is part of its territory."

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14. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA'S ROSNEFT, CHINA'S CNPC TO SIGN OIL SUPPLY DEAL SOON ", Moscow, 2008/10/23) reported that Russia's state-controlled oil producer Rosneft and China National Petroleum Corporation will sign a contract in the next six weeks on crude deliveries to the PRC, the Russian energy minister said. Sergei Shmatko said the two companies reached the agreement on Thursday at a meeting of the energy sub-commission of the Russia-PRC intergovernmental commission. The minister said the contract would be signed for a term of no less than 15 years and the fuel supplies did not concern the construction of a pipeline spur to the PRC as part of the East Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline.

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15. Sino-EU Relations

Xinhua ("CHINESE PRESIDENT CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING SINO-EU RELATIONS", Beijing, 2008/10/23) reported that strengthening relations between the PRC and the European Union (EU) will contribute to the world peace, stability and prosperity amid complicated international situations, Chinese President Hu Jintao said. The significance of Sino-EU relations has surpassed the bilateral level and is of more and more international significance, Hu said during his meeting with European Commission President Jose Manuel Durao Barroso. Hu confirmed that the PRC is willing to work with EU to push forward their comprehensive strategic partnership.

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16. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("ARSENIC POLLUTES SCENIC LAKE IN CHINA: STATE MEDIA", Beijing, 2008/10/23) reported that water supplies for at least 26,000 people were cut off in southwest PRC after a scenic lake popular with holidaymakers was contaminated with arsenic and other pollutants, state media reported Thursday. The local vice mayor and several officials have been sacked over the

contamination of Yunnan province's Yangzonghai lake, the China News Service said. At least 18 officials have been removed from their posts or relieved of their duties pending investigation, including provincial, city and county-level Communist Party cadres, it said. Eight were reportedly demoted.

Xinhua Net ("THE STANDARDS OF ENVIRONMETAL SUPERVISION UNGRADED TO PREVENT FALSE REPORTING", 2008/10/21) reported that at the “Environment Development Forum” Zhao Hualin said that the Ministry of the Environment has upgraded its environment evaluation system to prevent false data. “The figure should be correct and transparent, because citizens can view the environmental change and observe environmental improvement,” he said.

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II. PRC Report

17. PRC Environment

Cailong China ("KUNMING TO BLACKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ILLEGALITY", 2008/10/23) reported that the Kunming municipal Environmental Bureau announced that units or individuals who violate environmental laws will be blacklisted and reported to the public. The illegal action and proposed punishment will be exposed to the media and those exposed must make a written apology in the media at their own expense and make an environmental promise. If not, they may not resume the production and operation. Citizens who report environmental violations will be awarded.

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18. Sino-Thai Trade Relations

Xinhua Net (Xu Xiaolei, Li Huaiyan, "CHINA AND THAILAND ENTERPRISES LAUNCH 'VEGETABLES FOR OIL'", 2008/10/23) reported that the PRC and Thailand enterprises have signed a trade agreement in Yunnan province to barter Yunnan’s vegetables for Thailand’s oil. According to the agreement, by the year 2010, there will be 10 million tons of vegetables bartered for 500,000 tons of oil, with a total trade volume of 500 million US dollars. There is strong complementarity of barter trade between the two sides. Yunnan province can produce 10 million tons of high quality vegetables per year and Thailand’s oil export is very convenient. The PRC will go on improving the logistical system to facilitate trade and investment.

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19. PRC Civil Society

People’s Daily online (Li Li, "50 NGOS SUBSIDIZED BY WORLD BANK 'CHINA DEVELOPMENT MARKET' PROJECT", 2008/10/23) reported that “China Development Market” project was cosponsored by the World Bank, the PRC Ministry of Civil Affairs and Poverty Alleviation Office. It aims at building a platform for the most creative grassroots organizations and the best enterprises

with the sense of social responsibility, to support civil creation. The project has attracted many NGOs. And after the experts' independent assessment and the public's online vote, 50 NGOs and their projects have been approved and got funding in Beijing.

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III. ROK Report

20. Inter-Korea Relations

Ohmynews ("DJ, MB-KIM JONGIL SHOULD COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY", 2008/10/24) reported that former ROK President Kim Dae-jung said that the current stalemate of the inter-Korean relationship is due to ROK's propaganda. Kim added that Lee Myung-bak should show his willingness to talk with the DPRK first and then suggest summit talks, so that he and Kim Jong-il can talk directly. Kim said on a radio program MBC that ROK's propaganda bill, which contains criticism toward Kim Jong-il and his family, might have provoked the DPRK. The ROK government's uncertain attitude toward the 6.15 and 10.4 declaration also contributed to the current tension on the Korean Peninsula.

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21. DPRK Food Problem

DongA Ilbo ("DPRK, TO LET PEOPLE DIE OF STARVATION?", 2008/10/24) reported that the DPRK should stop pursuing self-reliant survival since the public sentiment of DPRK people is different from what it was in 1995-1997, when the nation suffered from starvation more severely than they do now. Compared to back then, when most people were equally having it rough, due to the gap between those who have something to eat and those who have none, conflicts arose. There is only one way to solve the problem. The DPRK should try to eliminate the global community's anti-DPRK sentiment and to improve the relationships with the ROK and the U.S. by implementing the second phase of denuclearization.

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22. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Kookmin Ilbo ("GOVN'T, TO MAINTAIN CERTAIN ATTITUDE TOWARD DPRK", 2008/10/24) said in a column that the government's firm attitude toward the DPRK should be praised, in addition to their continued willingness to talk to the DPRK. The government's statement that they have not denied the 6.15 and 10.4 declaration is also a positive sign. Long-term tension on the peninsula might bring an even more serious atmosphere in the area. To prevent such a thing from happening, the government should explain the current status to the people and ask for their agreement.

Hankyoreh ("DOES GOV'T WANT PERMANENT BREAK-OFF OF INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP?", 2008/10/24) reported that Lee Myung-bak is trying to differentiate his DPRK policies from Roh Moo-hyun's, which puts priority on peace. Lee's logic is directly linked to 'early unification theory' which

was mentioned by several officials of the government. A more specific description could be ‘DPRK collapse theory’ and ‘unhelpful conversation theory’. Obviously, temporary peace on the peninsula will change into a hostile atmosphere. Even though the government has not been mentioning the ‘DPRK collapse theory’ publicly, their obsession toward the ‘differentiation’ is what leads them to depend more on collapse theory. They try to prepare for the contingency, rather than to improve the mutual relationship. World Food Plan (WFP)’s appeal which predicts humanitarian emergency in the DPRK is also in vain.

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23. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Institute for Future Strategies (Kim Keun-sik, "POSITIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT REMOVAL FROM TERRORISM BLACKLIST", 2008/10/23) said in a column that the DPRK’s denuclearization process has been going through many challenges including the removal from the state sponsors of terrorism list, it was also a representation of success. Concerning the nuclear declaration, despite early conflicts upon the content of it, the two parties succeeded to compromise. Both nations' effort to solve the problem practically cleared the air. Even though they encountered several difficulties on the procedure, based on both parties’ willingness to negotiate and mutual trust, the DPRK denuclearization is gradually going on the right pace.

Korea Institute for Future Strategies (Lee Sang-hyun, "DPRK’S REMOVAL FROM THE BLACKLIST AND FUTURE", 2008/10/23) said in a column that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il won against the U.S. once more. The Kim administration’s brinkmanship worked more effectively than ever, allowing them finally to be removed from the terrorism blacklist. The DPRK also succeeded in driving the verification issue the way they want. The final standard of the verification is far less strict than the U.S. had initially proposed. The removal from the blacklist is a meaningful progress in the sense that it relieved the DPRK nuke talks of current stagnation. However, it is highly likely that the next phase of the talks will become even more difficult.

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