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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Declaration

Kyodo ("N. KOREA COULD DECLARE WEAPONIZED PLUTONIUM", Washington, 2007/11/26) reported that the DPRK is ruling out stating the whereabouts of its nuclear arms in an upcoming initial declaration list of its entire nuclear activities but could disclose information about weaponized plutonium, according to a U.S. government official. The official said the United States delivered an unofficial paper to the DPRK during their bilateral contact in Shenyang earlier this year suggesting the elements Washington wants to see in the declaration. But Pyongyang has since spurned inclusion of the storage sites of its nuclear arsenals in the initial list of its nuclear programs. As a result, the list is expected to center on information on plutonium and other fissile materials, the official said.

Korea Herald ("NORTH KOREA VOWS TO REVEAL TRUTH IN NUKE DECLARATION", 2007/11/26) reported that the DPRK said it will "not conceal any truth" in its nuclear programs declaration. A Pyongyang-based news report published in the pro-DPRK newspaper Chosun Shinbo in Japan said, "It is North Korea's decision that it is beneficiary to proceed with the six-party talks as fast as possible." "2008 is likely to be a year of convulsion on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia, when the next implementation steps are made upon the completion of the second-phase measures," Chosun Shinbo said.

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("MULTINATIONAL DELEGATION TO VISIT N.K. TO CHECK NUCLEAR DISABLEMENT: SOURCES", Washington, 2007/11/23) reported that Sung Kim, director of the Korean Affairs Office, is expected to head to Asia early next week as leader of a multinational delegation that will monitor the ongoing disablement of the DPRK's nuclear facilities, sources said Friday. Kim is expected to go to Pyongyang with representatives from the ROK, the PRC, and Russia. Sources here said that among the 11 steps to achieve disablement, nine will be completed this year. The remaining steps,

including removal of spent fuel rods, will take place next year for technical reasons, they said.

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "CHINA: JOINT TEAM TO VISIT NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR SITE", Beijing, 2007/11/25) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesman Qin Gang said Monday that a joint team of delegates from the countries in the six-party talks would travel to Yongbyon from Tuesday "to gain an on-the-ground understanding of the progress of disablement work of the nuclear facilities."

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3. US-DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. DIPLOMAT STATIONED 'PERMANENTLY' IN PYONGYANG", 2007/11/26) reported that a U.S. diplomat has been stationed permanently at the Koryo Hotel in Pyongyang since mid-November, a source said Sunday. A source in Washington said that the U.S. plans to dispatch another permanent diplomat to Pyongyang soon, with the Koryo Hotel likely to serve as a de facto U.S. liaison office in the DPRK. The diplomat is apparently serving as a liaison officer for U.S. delegations to Pyongyang and figuring out their staying expenses there. The temporary U.S. office at the Koryo Hotel is said to be fitted out with exclusive telephone and fax lines and a computer with an Internet connection.

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4. Six-Party Talks

Korea Times (Yoon Won-sup, "SIX-PARTY TALKS TO BE HELD ON DEC. 6-8", 2007/11/23) reported that Alexander Losyukov, deputy foreign minister of Russia, said that a new round of six-party talks will likely be held in Beijing on Dec. 6-8, according to Interfax. He said that the coming gathering will assess the extent to which the parties have been abiding by their pledges under the agreement reached in February. A source in Seoul said, "The dates are not finalized yet because all the parties didn't give their consent. But the talks will likely be held in the first half of December."

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5. DPRK Leadership

Donga Ilbo ("SECOND SON OF KIM JONG IL IS HEIR APPARENT", 2007/11/26) reported that Kim Jong-chul (27), the second son of Kim Jong-Il, was appointed assistant vice chief of the Organization and Guidance Department of the Workers' Party of Korea, reported Mainichi Newspapers of Japan on November 24, quoting a PRC source. Kim Jong-chul works at the main complex of Central Committee of the Workers' Party where the office of Kim Jong-il is also located, and frequently receives orders from his father. As no other sons have been appointed to major posts yet, Mainichi analyzed that Kim Jong-chul is the most likely successor to Kim Jong-il.

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6. Inter-Korean Meetings

Joongang Ilbo ("RARE NORTH-SOUTH DEFENSE TALKS SET FOR TUESDAY", 2007/11/24) reported that an ROK military delegation is scheduled to hold talks with their DPRK counterparts on Tuesday in Pyongyang. Colonel Moon Sung-mook said the venue of the three day talks would be the Songjeonggak military guesthouse, located on the shores of the Daedong River. The guesthouse has never been opened to ROK people before, which Moon called a positive symbolic sign. The group will include 10 military officials, led by Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo, reporters and staff members.

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7. Inter-Korean Rail Link

BBC News ("KOREAS AGREE DAILY TRAIN SERVICE", 2007/11/22) reported that officials from the two Koreas have agreed that cargo trains will run every day between the ROK and the Kaesong Industrial Zone beginning on 11 December. The trains will run on a 25km (16-mile) section of track linking Munsan in the South with Bongdong in the North.

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8. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("OUTGOING GOV'T PROJECTS GRAND N. KOREAN PROGRAM", 2007/11/23) reported that the outgoing Roh Moo-hyun administration on Thursday presented a basic program on the principles and goals of the inter-Korean relationship from 2008 to 2012 to the National Assembly's Unification, Foreign Affairs and Trade Committee. All Grand National Party lawmakers on the committee boycotted the session in protest at what they say is a government attempt to fix things beyond its term in office. According to the program, the government wants to establish economic cooperation missions in Seoul and Pyongyang in 2008, which will eventually be upgraded to permanent missions. The government also expects to lay the legal foundation for members of families separated by the Korean War in the ROK to donate or turn over their assets to their family members in the DPRK before unification. The program envisages directly transmitting 100,000 KW of electricity to the Mt. Kumgang resort area and building a power plant at the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

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9. PRC on ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Yonhap ("CHINA WANTS SOUTH KOREA TO SHIFT SLOWLY ON N. KOREA IF CONSERVATIVES TAKE POWER", Seoul, 2007/11/26) reported that Wang Jiarui, the head of the international department of the Communist Party of China's Central Committee, was quoted as telling Park Geun-hye, former chairman of the Grand National Party, that the PRC hopes that the ROK's policy shift on the DPRK will be slow if conservatives takes power next year. "What North Korea is afraid of is not the GNP's takeover of power, but rather of a rapid shift of policy towards North Korea if the GNP takes power," Wang was quoted as saying by a key aide to Park.

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10. US-PRC Relations

Los Angeles Times (Mark Magnier, "CHINA'S SNUB OF U.S. VESSEL SENDS MURKY MESSAGE", Beijing, 2007/11/23) reported that analysts were unsure what to make of the PRC's decision to refuse docking to the USS Kitty Hawk in Hong Kong. "It's a little odd," said Eric Hagt, editor of China Security journal, a defense publication based in Washington. "It all seems rather unforeseen and unknowable." Theories included anger over President Bush's recent meeting with the Dalai Lama, displeasure over an announced $940-million U.S. upgrade to Taiwan's Patriot II antimissile shield, a desire to send a message before an imminent Hong Kong election, and pique over a U.S. report that criticized PRC espionage activities. "My guess is the U.S. did something that wasn't so friendly toward us," said Ni Lexiong, a military expert with the Shanghai Institute of Political Science and Law. "It's good to let them know in a rather abrupt way, otherwise they might not notice."

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "CHINA'S NAVAL REBUFF COULD BE REPLY TO DALAI LAMA'S MEDAL", Beijing, 2007/11/24) reported that Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at People's University in Beijing, said Friday that the PRC's refusal to allow a U.S. aircraft carrier to dock in Hong Kong on Thanksgiving was probably a response to President Bush's appearance with the Dalai Lama last month. "The U.S. selling weapons to Taiwan is an old issue, and China expresses its dissatisfaction constantly on that. China just hoped to use its reluctance, changing its attitude, to tell the United States that China is unhappy with Bush."

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11. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN ACTS TO BAR JUDGE; WTO UPSET", Geneva, 2007/11/23) reported that a move by Taiwan to block the appointment of the PRC's first judge on the World Trade Organization's top court threatens to plunge the W.T.O. into crisis and stoke tension between the rival countries. Bruce Gosper, who is Australia’s ambassador to the W.T.O. and heads its dispute settlement body, said on Friday, "I am extremely concerned if this situation persists much longer, then we will have a crisis in this organization."

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12. PRC Territorial Disputes

Agence France-Presse ("VIETNAM PROTESTS CHINESE MILITARY EXERCISE IN DISPUTED ISLANDS", Hanoi, 2007/11/24) reported that the Vietnam News Agency (VNA) said Saturday that Vietnam has protested over a PRC military exercise in the disputed Paracel archipelago and reasserted its claim over the islands. "China's act to conduct military exercises in the Hoang Sa (Paracel) archipelago violates Vietnam's sovereignty," foreign ministry spokesman Le Dung said. "It is not in line with the common perception of senior leaders of the two countries as well as the spirit of the recent meeting between the two prime ministers on the sidelines of the 13th ASEAN Summit in Singapore and not beneficial to a bilateral friendly relationship," he added.

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13. PRC Human Rights

Asahi Shimbun ("UYGHUR ACTIVIST SLAMS 'SLAVE LABOR' IN CHINA", 2007/11/22) reported that Rebiya Kadeer, a leading Uyghur human rights activist in exile in the US, criticized the PRC government earlier for what she called the "slave labor" imposed on young Uyghur women. According to Kadeer, the government of the autonomous region began to send young, unmarried Uyghur women to urban areas in coastal regions like Shandong province as laborers in 2006, ostensibly for job placement. In those regions, the women are forced to work at places such as sewing factories and nightclubs, and are prohibited from going out. Their monthly salaries are only one quarter of the promised amounts.

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14. PRC Nuclear Energy

Associated Press ("AREVA COMPLETES $11.9 B REACTOR SALE", Beijing, 2007/11/25) reported that France's Areva completed an $11.9 billion deal to sell two nuclear reactors to the PRC on Monday. The announcement came at the start of formal talks in Beijing between French President Nikolas Sarkozy and his PRC counterpart, Hu Jintao. "When you look at China's energy problems, nuclear energy is not the whole answer, but it is part of the answer," Areva CEO Anne Lauvergeon told a news conference.

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15. US Military in Japan

Asahi Shimbun ("CITIES TO GET CASH FOR HOSTING U.S. MILITARY", 2007/11/24) reported that 33 municipalities will receive a total of 4.6 billion yen in subsidies for hosting military facilities as part of the realignment of U.S. troops in Japan, according to a Defense Ministry list released Thursday. Iwakuni has opposed plans to move aircraft carrier-based jets to the city, but three surrounding municipalities that agreed to the move will receive the subsidy. "This is not fair because Iwakuni will bear the major brunt (of the burden of the move)," Iwakuni Mayor Katsusuke Ihara said. "No good result will emerge from any effort designed to divide local governments," he added.

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16. Japan on Global Warming

Asahi Shimbun (Yusuke Moriyama, "JAPAN TO PUSH CHINA, INDIA ON CO2 CUTS", 2007/11/24) reported that the Japanese government plans to propose that the PRC, India and other emerging economies should shoulder obligations to curb greenhouse gas emissions after the Kyoto Protocol expires, sources said. Japan will also propose at the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP 13) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Indonesia from Dec. 3, that poorer countries be offered financial and technological assistance from advanced economies.

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17. Multilateral Naval Exercise

Korea Times ("S. KOREAN NAVY JOINS AUSTRALIA-LED SUBMARINE RESCUE DRILLS", 2007/11/26) reported that the ROK Navy said Monday that it has deployed a 1,200-ton submarine to an international submarine rescue exercise under way off the coast of Australia. The exercise, named "Pacific Reach 2007," is aimed at enhancing the ability to mobilize assets and manpower worldwide in an accident or other emergency situation involving submarine. This year's training has drawn nine countries including the U.S., Japan, and Singapore, all of which are operating submarines in the Asian waters, the Navy said.

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II. ROK Report

18. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("GOVERNMENT'S PROMOTING SYSTEM IS CHANGING", Seoul, 2007/11/25 09:05:00 GMT+0) reported that the ROK government's system for promoting business with the DPRK is changing after the inter-Korean summit. Before, the Ministry of National Unification was in charge. However, parts of the process has been transferred to ministries and offices concerned with the various industries agreed upon for cooperation. Among those industries, shipbuilding and mineral resources cooperation has been transferred to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy, railroad and road repair to the Ministry of Construction and Transportation, tourism to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and health and medical treatment to the Ministry of Health and Welfare. A Ministry of National Unification official said, "As economic cooperation is getting fractionized and professionalized, we need more professional knowledge as well as negotiation capability."

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19. DPRK on ROK Presidential Election

Yonhap ("DPRK'S CRITICISM, LEE MYUNG-BAK TO LEE HOI-CHANG", Soeul, 2007/11/25 06:30:00 GMT+0) reported that with the presidential election ahead, DPRK criticism of specific candidates has been increased a lot compare to the 2002 election. Their target has been changed from the Grand National Party’s candidate, Lee Myung-bak, to an independent candidate, Lee Hoi-chang. Analyzing recent news from Korean Central Television, Pyongyang Broadcasting Company, and Rodong Shinmun shows there are seven or eight critical items a day. There were only one or two items daily in 2002. What is interesting is that they attack Lee Hoi-chang, leaving aside Lee Myung-bak who leads in the polls. It seems Lee Hoi-chang has tougher stance against the DPRK than Lee Myung-bak.

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