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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("US EXPECTS DPRK TO FORMALLY AGREE TO SAMPLING IN BEIJING", Washington, 2008/11/25) reported that the United States said Monday it expects DPRK to formally agree to let inspectors take samples from weapons-grade nuclear sites during a high-level international meeting next month in Beijing. US State Department spokesman Sean McCormack told reporters "it (sampling) is part of the agreement" which Washington reached with Pyongyang last month in exchange for striking DPRK from a terrorism blacklist. "And we hope and would expect that the verification protocol would be formalized in the six-party sense at the next heads of delegations meeting," McCormack said.

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2. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Program

Kyodo News ("SIX-WAY TALKS PLAN WELCOME, NAKASONE SAYS", 2008/11/25) reported that Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone welcomed plans Tuesday to hold the next round of six-party denuclearization talks from Dec. 8. He also reiterated Japan's hopes to put in writing a verbal agreement on verification methods, including the collection of samples, reached between Washington and Pyongyang. While falling short of explicitly acknowledging that chief delegates are set to meet in Beijing on Dec. 8, Nakasone said he was aware of such media reports and said "Japan has no objection to that (schedule) and we think it's fine."

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3. DPRK Leadership

Associated Press ("DPRK'S KIM JONG IL TOURS FACTORY NOV 25", Seoul, 2008/11/25) reported that DPRK's Kim Jong Il paid visits to machinery and soap-making factories, state media reported Tuesday. DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency did not provide an exact date for the visits but said Kim praised the machinery factory for fulfilling its assignments for this year "as of the end of October." KCNA released two pictures of Kim, one showing him standing near a large orange bulldozer during the factory tour and the other of him outside a building at the soap factory. In both images, Kim looked healthy, but in 30 still images that appeared on DPRK state television, Kim never took his left hand out of his jacket pocket.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Dong-A Ilbo ("INTER-KOREAN CIVIC, AID EXCHANGES TO SUFFER", 2008/11/26) reported that in the wake of DPRK`s announcement to block overland passage across the inter-Korean border from Monday, humanitarian aid to the impoverished country is expected to suffer from sour bilateral relations. Kang Yeong-sik, secretary-general of the ROK Sharing Movement, said the DPRK asked to postpone a visit by the charity group to Pyongyang for humanitarian aid from next month to next year. "The North is likely to suspend visits by humanitarian groups to Pyongyang for the time being to intensify tension at the (Gaesong) industrial complex," he said.

Reuters (Jack Kim, Kim Jung-hyun, David Alexander, Jonathan Thatcher , "DPRK READIES BORDER CLOSING WITH ROK", Seoul, 2008/11/25) reported that DPRK said on Monday it would all but seal its border with the ROK a week before heading into talks with its neighbor and other regional powers that are pressing it to give up nuclear weapons. The border closure was the first step "to be taken in connection with the ever more undisguised anti-DPRK confrontational racket of the South Korean puppet authorities," DPRK's KCNA news agency said.

JoongAng Daily (Jung Ha-won, "CIVIC GROUPS DECIDE TO SEND DPRK NEW LEAFLETS", 2008/11/26) reported that Choi Sung-yong, the leader of the Abductees' Family Union, and Park Sang-hak, the leader of Fighters for Free DPRK, announce that they will continue to send leaflets to the DPRK yesterday at a news conference in an annex of the Central Government Complex in Seoul. "We made the decision to keep sending the leaflets after we saw yesterday's announcement from North Korea about the Kaesong tourism program and the stoppage of railway traffic," Park Sang-hak, the leader of Fighters for Free North Korea, said in a press conference in Seoul yesterday. "If the North comes forward to have a dialogue, we will not send the balloons while the discussions are under way," said Choi. Choi also said the groups plan to send another round of leaflets towards the DPRK depending on what action the DPRK takes on Dec. 1.

Korea Hearld (Hwang Jang-jin, "DPRK SUMMIT ACCORD NONSENSICAL: GNP", 2008/11/25) reported that the ruling party leader said yesterday the government would not succumb to Pyongyang's latest pressure to commit to last year's "nonsensical" summit accord. "The summit agreement will cost tens of trillions of won to fully implement. In this regard, its many promises are

nonsensical and overblown," Park Hee-tae, chairman of the Grand National Party, said. The DPRK accused President Lee Myung-bak of reneging on the summit accord involving Seoul's massive aid and investment for industrial development of the DPRK. "We have offered to discuss what parts of the agreement can be carried out now, and made sure that we will do it. I cannot understand why the DPRK is reacting this way to our flexible stance," the GNP leader said during a radio interview. He ruled out any change to Seoul's policy that links inter-Korean economic cooperation to the DPRK's denuclearization.

Asian News International ("ROK EXPRESSES REGRET OVER DPRK RESTRICTING INTER-KOREAN PROGRAMS", Seoul, 2008/11/24) reported that ROK on Monday expressed serious regret over DPRK's decision to restrict inter-Korean economic cooperation programs. "The North's behavior of restricting and halting economic cooperation, which is meaningful to improving inter-Korean relations, constitutes a grave incident that would practically reverse the relations," Xinhua quoted Kim Ho-nyoun, a spokesman for the Unification Ministry, as saying in a statement. "The government will be firm with its position to develop inter-Korean relations, and is calling on the North to come to dialogue with South Korea," he added. According to local media, the ROK government convened an emergency meeting to discuss counter-measures to DPRK's announcement.

Joong-Ang Ilbo (Chun Chang-whan, Jung Ha-won, "9 ARE ACQUITTED OF PRO-DPRK ACTIVITY", 2008/11/26) reported that an ROK court yesterday reversed a 1983 guilty verdict against nine school teachers who were imprisoned for reading what the military regime of the time called rogue publications. Police had said the teachers organized “a pro-enemy organization” after discovering that they were reading books that had been banned under the military regime. The case was one of numerous police crackdowns on innocent people who were charged with forming anti-government groups or following DPRK ideology during the military regimes that controlled ROK from the 1960s to the ’80s.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("DPRK TO EVICT HUNDREDS OF ROK CITIZENS FROM JOINT PROJECT", Seoul, 2008/11/25) reported that DPRK is pressing ahead with plans to evict hundreds of ROK citizens from a joint industrial estate as cross-border ties worsen further, officials said Tuesday. DPRK officials told ROK estate managers to supply by Tuesday morning details of who would stay and who would leave, said ministry spokesman Kim Ho-Nyoun. "We're responding to this request," he said. The DPRK has said half of the "unnecessary" ROK staff at a joint management office or involved in construction and services should quit by December 1, when the border restrictions come into force.

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6. DPRK Economy

Yomiuri Shimbun ("N. KOREA SEIZING JAPANESE CARS", 2008/11/25) reported that DPRK authorities have begun tightening control over government officials and citizens, taking such steps as confiscating Japanese cars from senior government officials, a ROK newspaper has reported. According to the Dong-a Ilbo, the authorities began seizing Japanese cars possessed by senior

government officials from Thursday. Some observers say the movements are initiated by Chang Sung Taek, head of the Workers' Party of Korea's administrative department, who is rumored to wield power in the country now instead of Kim, to enhance his prestige.

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7. ROK Civil Society

Dong-A Ilbo ("DONATIONS TO CHILD WELFARE FACILITIES DECLINING", 2008/11/26) reported that a childcare facility in Euiwang, Gyeonggi Province, has had to cut the provision of snacks to children under its care from twice to once per day. Lim Ji-hye, a teacher at the facility, said, "Sponsorship has significantly declined. The amount of donations has decreased around 60 percent and the volume of donated goods has fallen around 70 percent. Public institutions have not cut their sponsorships, but those from individual supporters and private corporations have decreased." Nevertheless, the number of children sent to childcare facilities has jumped.

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8. Sino-ROK Military Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL, BEIJING OPEN MILITARY HOTLINES", 2008/11/25) reported that ROK and PRC on Monday opened military hotlines between their navies and air forces. At a bilateral defense policy meeting in Beijing, Song Bong-heon, director-general of the Defense Ministry’s international policy bureau, and his PRC counterpart Qian Lihua signed a memorandum of understanding and formally opened the hotlines, the Defense Ministry said. This is the first time PRC has opened a military hotline with a foreign country's command headquarters. It will now be possible to prevent accidental clashes and seek mutual cooperation in times of disaster.

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9. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute

The Asahi Shimbun ("MEDVEDEV OFFERS HOPE ON ISLES ROW", 2008/11/25) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso left here Sunday after attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, where he met with U.S. President George W. Bush, PRC President Hu Jintao, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and other leaders. Aso and Medvedev, meeting for the first time, discussed the Northern Territories issue, a sticking point in bilateral relations. The Russian president said he does not intend to leave resolution of the issue to the next generation.

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10. Japan Climate Change

Kyodo News ("PANEL BEGINS TALKS ON JAPAN'S MIDTERM EMISSIONS CUT TARGET", Tokyo, 2008/11/25) reported that a panel of environment, energy and economic experts held its first meeting Tuesday to help the government set a national midterm greenhouse gas emissions reduction target next year ahead of key U.N. climate change talks in Copenhagen. The eight-member panel,

led by former Bank of Japan Governor Toshihiko Fukui, agreed that they will steer discussions based on science, theory and objectivity, so that they can draw conclusions that will address climate change and energy security while ensuring economic growth.

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11. Sino-Jordan Energy Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("JORDAN, PRC SIGN NUCLEAR PROTOCOL", Amman, 2008/11/24) reported that PRC on Monday signed a protocol with Jordan to help the tiny desert kingdom produce nuclear power to meet its growing energy needs and desalinate water, a senior official said. "China is going to assist Jordan in mining and enriching uranium as well as training and studies related to building a nuclear station," Khaled Tukan, head of the Jordan Atomic Energy Commission, told the state-run Petra news agency.

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12. Sino-Japan Environmental Cooperation

Bloomberg (Shigeru Sato,Yuji Okada, "APAN, PRC TO SIGN PACTS FOR CLEAN-WATER, ENERGY PROJECTS", 2008/11/25) reported that Japanese companies will participate in clean-water and power projects in PRC, as efforts to improve relations between Asia’s biggest economies lead to increasing investments. As many as 20 contracts will be signed at a PRC-Japan environment forum in Tokyo on Nov. 28, Japanese Trade Minister Toshihiro Nikai told reporters today. Japanese companies, faced with shrinking population at home, are seeking to tap PRC’s demand for improved water supply and more efficient power production.

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13. PRC Environment

Associated Press ("A THIRD OF PRC'S YELLOW RIVER IS UNSAFE, STUDY SAYS", Beijing, 2008/11/25) reported that a third of PRC's fabled Yellow River, which supplies water to millions of people in the country's north, is heavily polluted by industrial waste and unsafe for any use, according to new scientific data. The Yellow River Conservancy Committee said that 33.8 percent of the river's water sampled registered worse than level 5, meaning it is unfit for drinking, aquaculture, industrial use and even agriculture, according to criteria used by the UN Environmental Program. Many polluting companies in the upper and middle reaches of Yellow River have not been well monitored by local governments, or have been protected because they gave jobs to workers, said Wen, who is the organization's PRC program director.

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14. PRC Energy

RIA Novosti ("PRC TO INVEST $30 BLN TAPPING ENERGY RESERVES IN S.CHINA SEA", Beijing, 2008/11/25) reported that PRC's biggest offshore oil producer could invest about $30 billion until

2020 to develop oil and gas deposits in the South China Sea to meet future energy demands, a prominent PRC newspaper said on Tuesday. The China Daily said the PRC National Offshore Oil Corp (CNOOC) will invest heavily in building deepwater drilling equipment and plans to drill twice the depth of its existing wells off the coast of PRC. "Huge potential lies untapped for the company in the South China Sea, which is largely unexplored," the newspaper quoted Wang Aochao, a Shanghai-based analyst with UOB-Kay Hian Ltd, as saying.

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15. PRC Human Rights

Associated Press ("EU OFFICIAL STOPPED FROM VISITING PRC ACTIVIST", Beijing, 2008/11/25) reported that security guards blocked a member of the European Parliament on Tuesday from visiting an activist whose jailed husband recently won the body's top human rights prize. Helga Trupel, who was visiting Beijing as a member of an official delegation, attempted to visit to Zeng Jinyan, who has used her blog to bring attention to rights abuses. "It's a very bad situation," Trupel said afterward. "I am hindered ... to get in contact with her and that's not about human rights but about repression of human rights."

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16. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("WARMING PRC-TAIWAN TIES PROMPT HOT AIR BALLOON TRIP", Beijing, 2008/11/25) reported that a group of adventurers plan to take advantage of warming ties between PRC and Taiwan and become the first to navigate a hot air balloon between the two neighbours, state media said Tuesday. The flight across the Taiwan Strait is scheduled for July or August next year, Xinhua news agency said, citing the mainland Chinese involved.

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17. APEC on Climate Change, Food Security

Environment News Service ("ASIA-PACIFIC LEADERS VOW TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SCARCITY", Lima, Peru, 2008/11/25) reported that at the close of their annual meeting Sunday in Lima, the heads of state and government belonging to the Asia-Pacific Economic Council, APEC, affirmed their support for "decisive and effective long term cooperation now, up to and beyond 2012 to address climate change" under the United Nations process. The APEC leaders statement supports "a global emission reduction goal" for heat-trapping greenhouse gas emissions that is the primary issue to be negotiatied through the UN process. "The frequency and intensity of natural disasters related to the distortion of climate patterns in the region is increasing and the location of, and growth of, cities and mega-cities in vulnerable areas increases the impact of catastrophic events," they stated. "Improving risk reduction, disaster preparedness and management in the region is a critical human security issue facing the region."

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

China Jilin Network (Wang Lu, "CHANGCHUN WOMEN FEDERATION ORGANIZES COMMONWEAL HEALTH ACTIVITY", 2008/11/25) reported that Changchun Women Federation and a local hospital have organized a commonweal health activity for female patients. As at now, there are already 32 applicants submitted their information and 5 are chosen to have the free minimal invasive surgery. Gynecological disease patients who are poor or disabled can apply for the free surgery.

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19. PRC Civil Society and Migrant Workers

Morning News (Chen Pan, "HANGZHOU'S FIRST GRASSROOTS CULTURAL CENTER ESTABLISHED IN JIUBAO", 2008/11/24) reported that in 2006, a 32 years old migrant worker Xu Wencai created a grassroots network using his own savings. Now the network has its carrier in real life – a grassroots cultural center was formally established in Jiubao district of Hangzhou city. In the cultural center, migrant workers can read, play chess, surf the internet and do other leisure activities. Xu now and his 7 friends spend 500 yuan each month for the operation of the center.

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20. PRC Civil Society

China Business Times (Fu Chunrong, "LOVE FUND DONATED A TOTAL OF 6 MILLION YUAN", 2008/11/24) reported that American International Assurance Co. Love Fund which was co-sponsored by China Children and Teenagers Foundation and American International Assurance Co. ltd., held a donation ceremony recently. The cooperation started in 2007, aiming to involve in more of the commonweal activities such as women and children aid of poor areas and Sichuan reconstruction. Up to now, staffs of American International Assurance Co. ltd. have donated a total of 6 million yuan.

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III. ROK Report

21. U.S. Policy toward DPRK

PRESSian ("BAEK HAK-SOON, 'OBAMA CHANGES HIS DPRK POLICY'", 2008/11/25) reported that Baek Hak-soon, senior investigator of Sejong Institute who visited Washington last week, pointed that the ROK government's inaccurate predictions about Obama Administration's DPRK policy and FTA will make them difficult to react appropriately to what will happen next. Concerning the reasons

why the ROK conservatives make such wrong predictions is because they do not want to acknowledge that the DPRK might be willing to behave collaboratively to survive and achieve prosperity within the boundary of global society. Another reason is because what they could hear about the policies from Obama's transition team was limited to a great extent. They were only allowed to listen to what the visitors say in official meetings.

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22. ROK Policy toward DPRK

TongilNews ("WOMEN'S GROUPS TO VISIT DPRK URGE GOVN'T TO ABANDON HOSTILE DPRK POLICY", 2008/11/25) reported that several women's groups urged the Lee Myung-bak Administration to abandon its hostile DPRK policy and to implement 6.15 and 10.4 joint declarations. The ROK Women's Union held a press meeting on November 25 and stated that they are seriously concerned about the DPRK's actions to suspend Gaesong tourism and the inter-Korean railroad. Since such actions are only the beginning, the only way for the government is to respect 6.15 and 10.4 declarations, they added.

Hankyoreh (Kim Yon-chul, "DPRK POLICY NEEDS EFFICIENCY THAN IDEOLOGY", 2008/11/26) said in a column that the government missed the right timing to shift their DPRK policies. The biggest concern is the Lee Myung-bak Administration's ability to control the crisis. Lee's DPRK policy lost its direction. His expectation about cooperation with the US is hard to understand. It is apparent that Barack Obama's diplomacy team, which tries to solve the DPRK nuclear issue from a 'general' point of view, will be willing to accept the ROK government's solicitation. Traditionally, the US government has pursued 'détente' when their economy was having it rough, which is totally different from the Lee Administration, who put too much focus on reviving the economy while putting no effort at all into DPRK policy. A crisis on security will make the economic situation even worse. That is what we call the 'general security'. The government should be capable of reading the US's change of strategy. What the government needs is efficiency, but not ideology. They seriously need someone who understands the notion of 'diplomacy'.

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23. Inter-Korea Relations

Ohmynews (Cheong Wook-sik, "SIX PARTY TALKS OPENED, INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP CLOSED", 2008/11/25) said in a column that the government has to grab the opportunity from the six-party talks. The inter-Korean relationship will be even more difficult to recover if they create another conflict about collecting samples from nuclear program and providing energy sources. However, if the ROK, as a mediator as well as as a facilitator, plays a fair role during the talks, the two Koreas will be able to resume the dialog.

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