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I. Napsnet

1. Japanese Energy Aid to DPRK

Yomiuri Shimbun (Tetsu Okazaki, "AUSTRALIA READY TO COVER DPRK AID WITHHELD BY JAPAN", Tokyo, 2008/10/25) reported that Australia is prepared to help take over Japan's share in providing energy aid to the DPRK, an Australian Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry spokesman said Friday. Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry told the Yomiuri by phone Friday that the country was discussing offering financial assistance for heavy oil aid for the DPRK through the six-party talks.

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2. Japan on DPRK Defectors

Asahi Shimbun (Koichi Furuya, "NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS LIVE SECRETLY UNDER JAPAN'S WATCH", Shenyang, 2008/10/25) reported that the Japanese Embassy in Beijing and the consulate-general in Shenyang have been forced to take in dozens of DPRK defectors who have barged through gates and scaled walls seeking refuge. Japan has taken in more than 160 defectors, many of whom are Japanese or ethnic Koreans who emigrated to the DPRK from Japanese soil.

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3. DPRK Defectors

Korea Times (Kim Rahn, "5-YEAR-OLD BOY GETS NK DEFECTOR STATUS", Seoul, 2008/10/26) reported that a five-year-old boy, who came to the ROK alone after parting from his DPRK mother, has obtained defector status after two years of legal battles here. The boy, identified as Hwang, was born in the PRC, but a local court ruled that a DPRK child born in a foreign country should also be recognized as a DPRK defector. ``Considering the mother was staying in North Korea about eight months before the son was born, it is unlikely that she virtually divorced the North Korean husband. We acknowledge Hwang as the child of the North Korean husband," the court said.

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4. Inter-Korean Military Talks

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "NORTH KOREA DEMANDS END TO PROPAGANDA LEAFLETS", Seoul, 2008/10/27 20:00:00 GMT+0) reported that the DPRK threatened Monday during a 20-minute meeting among military officers from the two Koreas to expel ROK citizens working in the DPRK if Seoul does not prevent activists from dropping propaganda leaflets across the border, Col. Lee Sang-cheol, head of the ROK Defense Ministry's DPRK department said. During Monday's talks, military officers also discussed improving communication between the countries, the ROK Defense Ministry said.

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "KOREAS HOLD TALKS AS ANTI-NORTH LEAFLET PLANNED", Seoul, 2008/10/27) reported that ROK activists planned to send anti-Pyongyang leaflets into the DPRK. The 100,000 leaflets to be released on Monday, printed on plastic sheets and in water-proof ink, will carry the names of ROK civilians and prisoners of war believed to be held in the DPRK, and a family tree that supposedly maps Kim Jong-il's relationships with the several women who bore his children, said the two groups who plan to launch them off the east coast. The groups said they also plan to attach U.S. dollars and PRC yuan to the leaflets. The Minju Jосon newspaper said last week the leaflets were "getting on the nerves of the army and people of the DPRK. It is beyond any doubt that this conflict will develop into a new war, a nuclear war because the U.S. massively stockpiled nuclear weapons in South Korea and all Koreans in the North and the South will suffer from it."

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6. DPRK Human Rights

BBC ("NORTH KOREA URGED TO END EXECUTIONS", New York, 2008/10/24) reported that Vitit Muntarbhorn, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, urged the DPRK to end public executions and provide food for the people not just the elite . In a report, Muntarbhorn also highlighted the continuing punishment of those who try to leave the country, as well as those forcibly returned. He

acknowledged some small advances, but said overall the rights situation was "very negative".

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "GROUP LINKS N. KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS TO SIX-PARTY TALKS", Seoul, 2008/10/26) reported that some 30 legislators from 13 countries including the ROK, Japan, and the United States adopted a joint statement calling for stronger protection of DPRK refugees' human rights at the fifth general assembly of the International Parliamentarians' Coalition for the North Korean Refugees and Human Rights. The five-point statement called on 60 member governments to make multi-level efforts to prevent DPRK refugees from being deported by member countries and better protect them. It also urged Pyongyang to take adequate protective measures for the people kidnapped by the DPRK as well as send them back to their home countries as soon as possible.

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7. ROK-US Military Alliance

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "KOREA, US TO DISCUSS DEFENSE-COST SHARING", Seoul, 2008/10/26) reported that the ROK and the United States will have a high-level meeting to discuss the issue of sharing defense costs in Seoul Oct. 29-30, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said Sunday. The two sides are expected to mainly talk about whether the ROK will support the U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK) in cash and increase its share of the USFK budget. ``The two sides have learned each other's stance so far, and so are expected to begin negotiations in earnest," a diplomatic source was quoted as saying by the Yonhap News agency.

Chosun Ilbo ("UN TO CONDEMN N.KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES", 2008/10/27) reported that the EU and Japan will jointly submit a draft resolution condemning the DPRK's human rights abuses to the UN by Thursday, the Voice of America on Saturday quoted an official with the French permanent mission to the UN as saying. The committee will vote on it in late November before sending it to a plenary meeting.

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8. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "LEE, SARKOZY AGREE ON EARLY CONCLUSION OF KOREA-EU FTA", Beijing, 2008/10/26) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak and French President Nicolas Sarkozy agreed Saturday to push for an early conclusion of the free trade deal between the ROK and the European Union (EU). President Lee called for closer cooperation between the ROK and the EU to press the DPRK to abandon its nuclear program and fulfill its obligations as a member of the international community.

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9. ROK-Japan Relations

Korea Herald ("KOREA, JAPAN AGREE TO RESUME SHUTTLE SUMMIT", Beijing, 2008/10/25) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak and Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso agreed Friday to

resume bilateral shuttle summit diplomacy that had been suspended following the outbreak of bilateral territorial and historical conflicts earlier this year. They also agreed to push a three-way summit involving the PRC in Japan in mid-December to intensify regional efforts to fight the global financial crisis and to discuss issues involving the DPRK's nuclear program, Lee's office said.

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10. Comfort Women Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("MUSEUM TO HONOR 'COMFORT WOMEN'", Seoul, 2008/10/27) reported that the Seoul Metropolitan Government on Sunday said it has approved a plan to establish the Museum of War and Women's Human Rights at the Independence Park in Seodaemun, Seoul. The Museum will include exhibits of evidence for Japan's forced mobilization of Korean women as military sex slaves, rooms for related educational programs and seminars, a library for documents and materials related to the so-called comfort women here and abroad and a place to commemorate the victims.

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11. Japanese Politics

Yomiuri Shimbun ("LDP SPLIT OVER DISSOLUTION", Tokyo, 2008/10/27) reported that Liberal Democratic Party members are split over whether Prime Minister Taro Aso intends to postpone the timing of the dissolution of the House of Representatives for a general election. Some leading ruling bloc members, such as LDP Secretary General Hiroyuki Hosoda and senior New Komeito officials, still favor an early dissolution. During press conferences and informal talks with reporters Friday and Saturday during a visit to Beijing, Aso emphasized nothing had been decided.

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12. Japanese Economy

Reuters (David Dolan, "JAPAN TO TAKE FRESH CRISIS ACTION ", Tokyo, 2008/10/27) reported that Japan pledged fresh measures on Monday to try to shield its economy from the global financial crisis and said the Group of Seven would issue a joint statement on the yen. Prime Minister Taro Aso said the government will expand its bank bailout scheme and strengthen regulations on short-selling of stocks.

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13. Sino-Japanese Relations

Associated Press ("JAPAN'S LEADER WANTS MORE PHONE TIME WITH CHINA", Beijing, 2008/10/25) reported that the PRC and Japan pledged to continue their recently warming ties, with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso saying Saturday the countries' leaders should talk more on the phone. Making his first visit to Beijing since becoming prime minister last month, Aso said he and President Hu Jintao agreed to cooperate in dealing with the challenge posed by the global financial crisis. They also discussed the DPRK's nuclear program and the war on terrorism and called for

moving ahead with "mutually beneficial strategic ties," Aso said.

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14. Asian Response to Financial Crisis

Korea Herald ("EAST ASIAN LEADERS AGREE ON \$80B WAR CHEST", Beijing, 2008/10/25) reported that the ROK, the PRC, Japan and the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations agreed on Friday to create an \$80 billion fund to fight the global economic crisis. A spokesman for ROK President Lee Myung-bak said in a statement, "(They) agreed on the need to strengthen regional cooperation and policy coordination in the face of the global financial crisis." The "ASEAN Plus Three" fund would supersede the Chiang Mai Initiative, which came into being in 2000 in the wake of the 1997/98 East Asian financial crisis to ease mainly bilateral currency swaps.

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15. Cross Straits Relations

Agence France-Presse (Amber Wang, "TAIWAN'S CHINA TOURISM BOOM STUMBLES AMID FINANCIAL TURMOIL", Taipei, 2008/10/27) reported that fewer than 300 PRC visitors came to Taiwan on average every day since July, and the number only doubled during the "Golden Week" holiday, according to Taiwan government data. "Many of our customers lose interest once they learn that it takes one and a half months just to complete the paperwork to visit Taiwan," said a tour guide from Shenzhen. "Instead they opt for places like Thailand which is cheaper and only takes three days to get a visa." Tour operators are also concerned that the recent attack on Zhang Mingqing, vice president of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, could dissuade more mainland visitors.

BBC ("TAIWAN PROTESTORS CONDEMN CHINA", Taipei, 2008/10/25) reported that tens of thousands of pro-independence Taiwanese demonstrated against the PRC on Saturday, accusing President Ma Ying-jeou of failing to stand up to Beijing. During the march, organised by the Democratic Progressive Party (DDP), protesters shouted such slogans as: "Opposing toxic products, defending sovereignty."

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16. Tibet Issue

Associated Press (Ashwini Bhatia, "DALAI LAMA SAYS HE HAS GIVEN UP ON CHINA TALKS", Dharmasala, 2008/10/25) reported that the Dalai Lama said Saturday he has given up on efforts to convince Beijing to allow greater autonomy for Tibet under PRC rule. "I have been sincerely pursuing the middle way approach in dealing with China for a long time now but there hasn't been any positive response from the Chinese side," he said in Tibetan at a public function Saturday in Dharmasala. "The issue of Tibet is not the issue of the Dalai Lama alone. It is the issue of 6 million Tibetans. I have asked the Tibetan government-in-exile, as a true democracy in exile, to decide in consultation with the Tibetan people the future course of action," the Dalai Lama said.

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17. PRC-Vietnam Territorial Dispute

Reuters ("CHINA AND VIETNAM SEEK LAND BORDER SOLUTION", Beijing, 2008/10/27) reported that the PRC and Vietnam have agreed to find a solution to a land territorial dispute this year, the two sides said in a joint statement in Beijing. They also agreed to find a "basic and lasting" solution to a festering maritime territorial dispute. "The two countries will coordinate more closely to solve the remaining problems, so as to ensure they complete demarcation and erecting land markers along the whole borderline by year end," Xinhua quoted the joint statement as saying.

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18. PRC Food Safety

Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "PREMIER SAYS CHINA TO ENSURE SAFE FOOD", 2008/10/25) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao said Saturday the country will take steps to improve its food safety, blaming the tainted milk products on a failure of regulation. "Food involves a full process from the farmland to the table, it involves many links and many processes," he said. "In every link and every process we need to put in place effective and powerful regulatory measures."

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19. PRC Media Control

The Economist ("EATING THEIR WORDS", Beijing, 2008/10/23) reported that according to a directive from the PRC Propaganda Department on reporting food-safety issues circulated in January 2005, the media is banned from naming any suspect food product until a "clear verdict" has been reached by the authorities. There are to be no exposés of safety problems concerning famous Chinese food brands or food products for export without official approval. For imported food, approval must come from Beijing. If it causes poisoning, only Xinhua, the official news agency, may break the news and even its reports must be approved by the Propaganda Department and the foreign ministry.

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20. US on Russian Arms Sales

Los Angeles Times (Sergei L. Loiko and Chris Kraul, "RUSSIA DECRIES US SANCTIONS ON ARMS EXPORTING COMPANY", Moscow, 2008/10/25) reported that Russia Foreign Minister Sergei V. Lavrov on Friday said the U.S. move to ban government agencies from dealing with state-owned arms trading company Rosoboronexport was "absolutely incompatible with the new realities in the current world structure." The U.S. State Department also imposed sanctions against companies in the PRC, the ROK, Sudan, Venezuela and the United Arab Emirates for allegedly selling technology to Iran, the DPRK and Syria that could lead to weapons of mass destruction.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

Beijing Times (Xia Mingqun, "MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BEGINS TO BROADCAST URBAN AIR QUALITY EVERYDAY", 2008/10/24) reported that yesterday, the data center of Ministry of Environmental Protection website was launched, which begins to broadcast the air quality of the nation's major cities and also the top ten cities with the best air quality every day. It is understood that the data center is based on data and diagrams, which can vividly show the air quality ranking and the proportion of fine weather. The broadcast also includes air quality forecast and water quality analyses of the nation's major river basin.

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22. PRC Civil Society

NGO Interactive Network (Wei Mengjia, "LARGE COMMONWEAL PROJECT 'RED CHINA ACTIVITY' LAUNCHED IN HUBEI", 2008/10/24) reported that recently the "Red China Activity" sponsored by the China Red Cross Foundation and many enterprises was launched in Hubei province. The activity aims at advocating popular participation in charitable causes, to improve the medical conditions of PRC rural areas and protect the health and lives of poor farmers and children. The first site of the project is in Wuhan city of Hubei province, and each of the participating enterprises will financially help Wuhan build a Love Sanitary Station.

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23. PRC Economy

Xinhua News Agency (Xu Bing, Wang Zhi, "CHINA MEDIUM AND SMALL ENTERPRISES AFFECTED BY FINANCIAL CRISIS", 2008/10/24) reported that secretary-general of China Medium and Small Enterprises Sun Xiuchun said on a news conference that in the current spreading global financial crisis, the PRC's medium and small enterprises have been affected to some extent, mainly in the Yangzi River Delta and Pearl River Delta. Some have accordingly closed down. The enterprises should positively cope with the crisis and cooperate with the government. The Dalian Municipal Government is issuing a total of 1 billion yuan bonds to the medium and small enterprises and is preparing establishing a Medium and Small Enterprises Innovation Investment Fund, to help the enterprises tide over difficulties.

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III. ROK Report

24. Inter-Korea Relations

TongilNews ("DPRK, UNCONTROLLABLE PROPAGANDA BILLS?", 2008/10/27) reported that even though the ROK Unification Ministry tried to prevent the sending of anti-DPRK leaflets by meeting representatives of DPRK defectors' organizations, they failed to persuade them to stop. Spreading such bills has been a problem between the two Koreas for a long time. However, due to the current stalemate between the two Koreas, mutual distrust will become even worse than ever before, which will result in failing to understand each other.

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25. ROK Food Policy Toward DPRK

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("DPRK FOOD AID POLICY, TOO INCONSISTENT", 2008/10/27) said in a column that concerning the DPRK food aid, ROK government's words keep changing. Though the government emphasizes sincerity on the matter, the DPRK's distrust is rising due to their inconsistent attitude. The government should start DPRK food aid as soon as possible from a humanitarian perspective.

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26. ROK-U.S. Relations

Hankyoreh ("U.S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND THE KOREAN PENINSULA", 2008/10/27) said in a column that Barack Obama's winning the U.S. Presidential Election would be a challenge to Lee Myung-bak Administration's conservative policies toward the DPRK. However, it can also be an opportunity for the ROK if the government is able to come up with more practical alternatives. The Lee Administration should consider the inter-Korean relationship from a more practical point of view by acting more decisively and positively to improve the relationships with the DPRK and the U.S.

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("US ELECTION AND INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP", 2008/10/27) said in a column that Barack Obama's winning of the U.S. election would have a negative influence on the ROK. Some experts analyze it might make the relationship among the ROK-DPRK-US similar to what it was like in Kim Young-sam's term. Even though such a scenario is barely likely to happen, what is more important is the mutual cooperation between the ROK and the U.S., regardless of the coming U.S. government's position on the DPRK issue. Concerning the DPRK policy, the U.S. should acknowledge that the ROK has the prior right on the DPRK issue, so that they can listen to the ROK's perspective. Tension between the two Koreas should be eliminated as soon as possible to strengthen ROK's influence on the matter.

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Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org