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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press (Anne Gearan, "US ENVOY TO INSPECT N. KOREA REACTOR ", Annapolis, 2007/11/27) reported that the top U.S. negotiator for talks on the DPRK's nuclear program will make a rare visit to that country to inspect ongoing work to disable its main nuclear reactor, a senior State Department official said. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill will be the highest-level US official to check on the work to make the DPRK's Yongbyon reactor unusable.

Reuters (Linda Sieg, "U.S. ENVOY SEES PROGRESS BEFORE N.KOREA VISIT", Tokyo, 2007/11/28) reported that US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said on Wednesday there had been progress on disabling the DPRK's nuclear facilities. Asked if Washington was likely to state its intention to take Pyongyang off a list of states that sponsor terrorism, Hill said, "I think we have made some progress and I would expect all elements to move ahead by the end of the year, but I don't want to get into the specifics of it until we actually see where we are at the end of the year." Hill is to meet his DPRK counterpart Kim Kye-gwan and possibly other officials in Pyongyang on a December 3-5 visit, State Department spokeswoman Nancy Beck said earlier in Washington.

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2. Inter-Korean Military Relations

Agence France-Presse ("KOREAS START RARE DEFENCE TALKS, DIFFERENCES EMERGE ", Seoul, 2007/11/27) reported that the ROK and DPRK defence chiefs met for rare talks, trying to ease military tensions to clear the way for multi-billion dollar reconciliation projects including a rail service. But differences quickly surfaced over the most intractable issue, the disputed sea border, according to pool reports from Pyongyang. At the first session of the three-day meeting, the two sides were split over how to create the joint fishing area. Kim Jang-Soo proposed creating an area bisected equally by the Northern Limit Line. But the DPRK insisted it should be established south of the line.

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN MILITARY SEEKS JOINT EFFORTS TO END KOREAN WAR", Seoul, 2007/11/27) reported that as the two Koreas opened rare defense ministerial talks in Pyongyang on Tuesday, the DPRK's hard-line military promised to fully cooperate in implementing an October summit agreement calling for an end to the current armistice regime on the Korean Peninsula, according to the latest pool reports from the DPRK. The DPRK also stressed the need for the two Koreas' military authorities to make joint efforts to declare a formal end to the 1950-53 Korean War, the reports added.

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3. Dual Use Technology Transfer to the DPRK

Kyodo ("TAIWAN FIRM SOLD WMD-RELATED TECH TO N. KOREA: JUSTICE MINISTRY", Taipei, 2007/11/27) reported that in the ''first ever discovered case'' of a Taiwanese firm transferring to the DPRK technology for producing nuclear and biological weapons, Taiwan's Bureau of Investigation said legal action against Taipei-based Yi-cheng Co. for such transfers is imminent. Bureau officials released evidence to Taipei prosecutors detailing Yi-cheng's alleged illicit transfers, including uranium enrichment technology, within the past year, a bureau official with knowledge of the case said.

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4. DPRK-Syria Alleged Missile Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA, SYRIA 'DISCUSSED CHEMICAL MISSILE WARHEADS'", 2007/11/27) reported that DPRK missile engineers during a secret visit to Syria in mid-November discussed loading chemical warheads on ballistic missiles, the Sankei Shimbun reports. Quoting an unnamed source familiar with the political situation in the Middle East, the Japanese daily said cooperation in chemical weapons was “evidence of close collaboration in the development of weapons of mass destruction” between the two countries.

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5. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("RECENT DPRK MARKET RESTRICTIONS EXTENDED TO MOBILITY OF THE PEOPLE ", 2007/11/27) reported that following Kim Jong Il’s August 26 announcement that, “Markets have become anti-Socialist Western-style markets,” measures to increase restrictions on markets across the DPRK have also restricted individuals’ ability to migrate. After the ‘Arduous March’, as market activity grew in the DPRK, the number of whole-saling ‘middle-men’ grew considerably. These traders received travel permits by applying under the guise of visiting authorities, family matters, special occasions, or other personal reasons. Long-distance traders need a travel permit. Now, as it is becoming more difficult to receive travel documents, not only long-distance traders but also even normal vacationers are facing growing difficulties. In particular, people who need to travel to the PRC for family visits are especially worried due to the increasingly strict issuance of travel permits.

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6. ROK-US Trade Relations

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREA WARNS U.S. LAWMAKERS AGAINST OPPOSING BILATERAL FTA", Seoul, 2007/11/27) reported that ROK Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon warned that the US could lose out on the "golden opportunity" to secure a firm bridgehead in the ROK market ahead of the European Union, Canada and the PRC if the American parliament fails to ratify a bilateral free trade agreement. "I am sure you share our concerns that the failure of ratification in either country may hold negative repercussions on our bilateral relations that we have painstakingly built over half a century," Kim said in a speech for business leaders of the American Chamber of Commerce in Korea.

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7. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Agence France-Presse (Shingo Ito, "JAPAN OPPOSITION VOTES TO END IRAQ MISSION", Tokyo, 2007/11/27) reported that Japan's resurgent opposition pushed through a largely symbolic bill to end the country's air mission in Iraq, accusing the government of blindly following Washington. Adding to the political showdown, parliament also decided to summon Finance Minister Fukushiro Nukaga, formerly the defence chief, over allegations of cozy ties with a scandal-tainted military contractor. The full upper house is expected to approve the bill Wednesday, a parliamentary official said. But Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda's coalition has already said it will override it through its control of the more powerful lower house.

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8. Japan-Vietnam Relations

The Associated Press (Kozo Mizoguchi, "JAPAN, VIETNAM SIGN AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE, TRADE", Tokyo, 2007/11/27) reported that Japan and Vietnam pledged to combat climate change, boost defense cooperation and deepen trade ties in a broad-ranging agreement between Tokyo and the emerging Asian economy. The two powers will promote deeper defense ties, and ships of Japan's self-defense navy will call on Vietnam, the statement said. Fukuda also said a Vietnam business delegation accompanying Triet would return home with 4.5 billion dollars' worth of contracts.

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9. US-PRC Military Relations

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "NAVY CHIEF SURPRISED CHINA REFUSES VISIT", Washington, 2007/11/27) reported that the Navy's top admiral said Tuesday that the PRC's refusal to permit a US aircraft carrier to make a Thanksgiving port call at Hong Kong was surprising and disruptive and requires an explanation from the PRC navy. The USS Kitty Hawk, which has its home port near Tokyo, was forced to return to Japan early when PRC authorities at the last minute refused to let the warship and its escort vessels enter Hong Kong harbor.

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10. US-PRC Economic Relations

The Associated Press (Martin Crutsinger, "US PRODS CHINA ON ECONOMIC REFORMS ", Washington, 2007/11/27) reported that the PRC will face major risks to its economy unless it moves more quickly to implement needed economic reforms, the Bush administration's special envoy to the PRC said. Ambassador Alan Holmer said that those policy reforms include making the PRC currency more flexible and switching the PRC economy from an over-reliance on export-led growth.

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11. Sino-Vietnamese Territorial Dispute

The Associated Press ("VIETNAM: VIETNAM PROTESTS CHINA'S MILITARY EXERCISES ON DISPUTED PARACEL ISLANDS", Hanoi, 2007/11/27) reported that Vietnam has protested the PRC's military exercises on the disputed Paracels Islands in the South China Sea, state media reported Saturday (24 Nov). "China conducting military exercises on the Paracels is in violation of Vietnam's sovereignty," the Communist Party newspaper *Nhan Dan (People)* quoted Foreign Ministry spokesman Le Dung as saying. Dung reiterated that Vietnam has historical evidence and legal foundation to its claim of sovereignty over the Paracels and also the disputed Spratly Islands.

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12. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters (Guo Shipeng, "CHINA PRODS U.S. TO BLOCK TAIWAN "SPLITTIST" MOVES ", Beijing, 2007/11/27) reported that the PRC has again prodded the US to oppose a controversial referendum on U.N. membership by Taiwan and warned Washington to stop arms sales to the island, state media said. Taiwan's "splittist" referendum was aimed at "de jure independence" and "posed a grim threat to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. "Opposing and obstructing the referendum" was in the interests of both the PRC and the US, Xinhua news agency quoted Yang as saying.

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13. PRC African Diplomacy

BBC News ("CHINA IN AFRICA: DEVELOPING TIES", 2007/11/27) reported that in almost every corner of Africa there is something that interests the PRC. The continent is rich in natural resources that promise to keep the PRC's booming, fuel-hungry economy on the road. Africa's need for new and better roads, school buildings, computer networks, telecoms systems and power generation has opened a lucrative window of opportunity for PRC firms. Critics say the PRC's approach has emboldened unsavoury governments, allowing them to ignore Western calls for reform, safe in the knowledge that Beijing will take up the slack. The PRC insist they are not interested in dominating Africa. Instead the PRC says it seeks a "harmonious world", an evolution of its Cold War search for "peaceful co-existence", and it wants to coax African countries along the path towards development. Instead of top-down aid projects, PRC companies seek profits in Africa as they bequeath the continent a new infrastructure - one that will more than likely be used to increase trade with the

PRC.

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14. PRC Environment

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "BEIJING'S ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN CITES NEED FOR ENFORCEMENT", Beijing, 2007/11/27) reported that the PRC government released a long-delayed environmental protection plan that promises added efforts to tackle the country's increasingly foul air and water and for the first time emphasizes a need to reduce greenhouse gases, officials said. The 11th Five-Year Plan to protect the environment, for 2005 to 2010, also pledges to make polluters pay for cleanup. The plan left unclear whether the government will force local officials and businesses to abide by its terms. The plan includes previously announced targets that officials have failed to meet, including reducing pollutants such as sulfur dioxide by 10 percent. It warns that the PRC's emphasis on rapid economic growth is severely affecting public health.

Agence France-Presse ("RESIDENTS FEAR CHINA'S THREE GORGES DAM", Maoping, 2007/11/27) reported that built mainly for flood control and hydropower, the Three Gorges Dam built across the PRC's longest river has been blamed for a host of worsening environmental ills to go with longstanding concerns about the 1.4 million people uprooted so far to make way for the reservoir's rising waters. "An extraordinary amount of damage has been done, not only to property but to the irreplaceable network of human and economic relations that made up the region," said Patricia Adams, executive director of Toronto-based Probe International, which chronicles the dam's problems.

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15. PRC NGOs

Xinhua ("CHINESE NGOS URGED TO STRENGTHEN CAPACITY BUILDING", 2007/11/27) reported that the PRC has reiterated its support for local non-governmental organization (NGOs) and urged them to strengthen their capacity building to play a bigger role in building a harmonious society. Li Yong, deputy director of the State Administration of Non-Governmental Organization, said that it was of great importance for PRC NGOs to strengthen capacity as a large number were withering away each year. Another speaker, Wang Weili, director of the Council for the Promotion of Cooperation between Chinese and International Non-Governmental Organizations, added PRC NGOs were facing many ubiquitous problems. These included insufficient resources, incapability and a lack of professionalism.

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II. CanKor

16. Report #298

CanKor ("FOCUS: INTER-KOREAN PRIME MINISTERIAL TALKS", 2007/11/26) The Prime Ministers of DPRK and ROK meet in Seoul where they sign agreements on a wide range of matters, including a special zone of peace and cooperation in the West Sea coastal area, cross-border freight and cargo rail service, construction of shipyards, family reunions, a tourism program to North Korea's fabled Mount Paektu, and a joint supporters group from the two Koreas, who will travel to the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games by train from Seoul via North Korea.

CanKor ("BOOK REVIEW: FACTUAL INFORMATION WITH EMOTIONAL INTERPRETATION A REVIEW OF "FAMINE IN NORTH KOREA: MARKETS, AID, AND REFORM," BY STEPHAN HAGGARD AND MARCUS NOLAND", 2007/11/27) First and foremost, it contains a rare and valuable collection of factual information on the DPRK that has been done with all the rigor and vigour for which economists are known. Finally, the debate about how to interpret these data is anything but academic only; it has grave political consequences and inevitably invites a huge share of emotion. Opponents of the views presented in the book will benefit from the opportunity to test their own interpretations and to develop counterarguments. If used as a textbook, it is suggested to provide a balance through supplementary readings that have a stronger focus on the inner workings of the system and offer a different, less normative perspective on the famine, its causes and possible solutions.

CanKor ("READER'S COMMENTS", 2007/11/27) “Greetings from Ewha Women's University, Korea. I am a doctoral student in the division of political science & diplomacy. I always thank you for the useful informations.” Park Myung-Hee, Doctoral Student at Ewha Women's University, Seoul, ROK.

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III. ROK Report

17. Inter-Korean Ministers' Talks

Dailian (Pool reporters, "OPEN THE MEETING OF NATIONAL DEFENSE MINISTERS OF TWO KOREAS", Seoul, 2007/11/28) reported that the two Koreas took different positions on joint fishery waters at the second meeting of National Defense Ministers. The ROK suggested constructing one model area, and then expanding it gradually." On the other hand, the DPRK wants to set up the joint fishery area south of the Northern Limit Line. Moon Jea-in, the spokesman of the ROK side, said that two Koreas have the same opinion on the importance of the military security for economic cooperation in the Korean peninsula.

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18. Inter-Korean Meetings

Chosun Ilbo ("THE HEAD OF DPRK’S MINISTRY OF NATIONAL UNIFICATION VISITS SEOUL", Seoul, 2007/11/28) reported that Kim Yang-kun, the head of the Ministry of National Unification of the DPRK, is going to visit Seoul on Thursday. The purpose of this visit is to evaluate the results of the inter Korean-summit declaration of 2007, discuss the direction of inter-Korean ties, and inspect industry in the ROK. One of the government officials said that this visit is going to spend more time

on inspecting economic facilities than on conference or discussion.

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