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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("US ENVOY HOPES TO VERIFY NKOREA REACTOR SHUTDOWN", Tokyo, 2007/11/28) reported that the chief US negotiator with the DPRK said he hoped to verify that the DPRK was disabling its nuclear reactor on schedule when he pays a rare visit next week. Christopher Hill, arriving in Japan at the start of his tour of Asia, also said that another round of six-nation talks on the DPRK was possible next week to move ahead on a disarmament deal. "We are to review this phase to make sure everything is done by the end of the year as planned and then we want to have a discussion on what the next phase will be like," Hill said.

Associated Press (Burt Herman, "US: NKOREA TO SUBMIT DRAFT OF NUKE PROGRAM", Seoul, 2007/11/29) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said Thursday that the DPRK is finalizing a declaration of its nuclear programs. The DPRK "have begun to put together their list, I think it's pretty close to being ready," Hill said. He said he would be talking about the declaration with DPRK officials during a visit there starting Monday. All six countries in the nuclear talks will discuss the declaration at their next full session in Beijing, likely to be held at the end of next week, he added.

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2. Inter-Korean Military Talks

Korea Times ("SEOUL PROPOSES INTER-KOREAN PANEL FOR WESTERN SEA BORDER", Pyongyang, 2007/11/28) reported that in a bid to seek a breakthrough in the stalled inter-Korean defense ministerial talks, the ROK proposed the two militaries set up a joint committee to deal with the sea border and other tension-reduction measures. The defense chiefs of the two Koreas exchanged drafts of a joint statement to summarize the results of their talks here aimed at reducing tension across the disputed border. But they failed to produce anything tangible due to sharp differences over the western maritime border. The ROK wants the joint fishing area to cover equivalent areas of both sides of the NLL. The DPRK, however, insisted the joint fishing areas should be established south of the NLL, rejecting the line as the sea border between the two Koreas.

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "2 KOREAS FAIL TO AGREE ON FISHING ZONE", Seoul, 2007/11/29) reported that defense ministers from the two Koreas failed to reach agreement Thursday on the details of a shared fishing zone. The two sides did agree after three days of meetings on security arrangements for other cross-border reconciliation projects and to establish a joint military commission to discuss military confidence-building measures.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Herald (Lee Joo-hee, "RANKING N. KOREAN OFFICIAL DUE IN SEOUL", 2007/11/28) reported that the DPRK's front man on ROK policies will visit Seoul for three days from today, Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung said yesterday. Kim Yang-gun, director of the United Front Department of the DPRK's ruling Workers' Party, was the only DPRK official who sat next to Kim Jong-il during the summit talks with President Roh Moo-hyun in October. "Five North Korean delegates will visit for three days to discuss how to implement the inter-Korean summit talks' agreement and conduct on-site inspections," Lee said.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREAN IT LEADERS TO TALK COOPERATION IN PYONGYANG", 2007/11/28) reported that the two Koreas will step up cooperation in the IT sector amid brisk inter-Korean economic cooperation since an inter-Korean summit in early October. According to the Unification Ministry, heads of eight ROK IT companies, including Dasan Networks CEO Nam Min-woo, will leave for Pyongyang on Wednesday at the invitation of DPRK authorities. They will discuss measures to facilitate inter-Korean IT cooperation with officials of the DPRK's Samcholli General Corp. during a four-day stay that ends on Dec. 1.

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA TO OPEN NEW SITE FOR SKOREA TOURISTS: COMPANY", Seoul, 2007/11/28) reported that the DPRK will next week open a new site to ROK tourists and some 5,000 people have booked up for December alone, the tour company said. Hyundai Asan said it would charge 180,000 won (193 dollars) per person for the one-day overland tour to the city of Kaesong, an ancient Korean capital just across the heavily fortified border. The DPRK will keep 100 dollars for each visitor. Hyundai Asan said this would be used to provide tour guides and maintain historic sites. Tours begin on December 5 and will be limited to 300 people each day.

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5. US on ROK Missile Defense

Yonhap ("U.S. EXPECTS SEOUL'S INTEREST IN AEGIS SEA-BASED TERMINAL CAPABILITY", Washington, 2007/11/28) reported that the US expects the ROK to be interested in acquiring far-term sea-based terminal missile-defense capability, a feature on Aegis destroyers, once the capability is made more public next year, a senior American military official said. Rear Adm. Alan B. Hicks, program director of Aegis ballistic missile defense, said the DPRK and Iran do not appear to have given up their will to advance their missile technology, a source of continuous concern.

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6. Japan Defense

Agence France-Presse (Shigemi Sato, "JAPAN PM IN DAMAGE CONTROL AFTER ARREST, IRAQ

VOTE", Tokyo, 2007/11/28) reported that Japan's two-month-old government was in damage control Wednesday as the former top defence bureaucrat was arrested in a bribery scandal and a resurgent opposition voted to end an air mission in Iraq. Prosecutors on Wednesday arrested former senior vice minister Takemasa Moriya, his wife Sachiko and a former defence contractor in a scandal in which the finance minister has been implicated. Moriya, 63, whose clout won him the nickname "emperor of the defence ministry" before he retired in August, has publicly admitted accepting fine dining, gifts and hundreds of golf rounds paid by the defence equipment trader, Yamada Corp.

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7. Sino-Japanese Relations

BBC News (Chris Hogg, "CHINESE WARSHIP ARRIVES IN JAPAN", Tokyo, 2007/11/28) reported that a PRC warship has arrived in Japan for the first time since World War II. The crew of the missile destroyer Shenzhen will spend four days in Tokyo, taking part in various events to promote good bilateral relations. The ship has been described by the PRC's ambassador to Tokyo, Cui Tiankai, as a "messenger of peace".

Kyodo ("JAPAN, CHINA TO HOLD FOREIGN MINISTERIAL TALKS IN BEIJING SATURDAY", Tokyo, 2007/11/28) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura will hold bilateral talks with his PRC counterpart in Beijing on Saturday morning, ahead of a Japan-PRC high-level economic dialogue involving various ministers from both sides, Japanese officials said. Komura, who plans to arrive in Beijing in his first visit to the PRC as foreign minister, and PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi are also scheduled to sign two documents on criminal investigation cooperation and on fiscal 2007 yen loans, which will be the last provision from Japan.

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8. Sino-US Relations

Reuters ("CHINA TELLS BUSH BARRED SHIP "MISUNDERSTANDING"", Beijing, 2007/11/28) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi told President George W. Bush on Wednesday that Beijing's refusal to let a US Navy aircraft carrier into Hong Kong was a "misunderstanding," the White House said. The Defense Department said it had issued a formal complaint to the PRC and that Beijing still had not provided sufficient explanation for blocking the USS Kitty Hawk aircraft carrier, and eight ships traveling with it, entry to Hong Kong for a long-planned Thanksgiving holiday visit. "The president raised the issue about the recent aborted port call by the USS Kitty Hawk. Foreign Minister Yang assured the president that it was a misunderstanding," White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said.

Reuters (Ben Blanchard, "CHINA DENIES CALLED US CARRIER SAGA MISUNDERSTANDING", Beijing, 2007/11/29) reported that the PRC on Thursday when denied saying that a U.S. aircraft carrier being denied entry to Hong Kong had been a misunderstanding. "Reports that Foreign Minister Yang said in the United States that it was a misunderstanding do not accord with the facts," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a news conference. "China approved the visit of the Kitty Hawk group to Hong Kong based on humanitarian reasons. The decision made by the U.S. later was up to them. The Chinese side has not received any protest from the U.S. side. I don't think there should be a protest on this issue," he said, suggesting reporters ask the U.S. why its officials

decided not to send the ship to Hong Kong after the PRC approved the visit.

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9. PRC Environment

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "CHINA TAKES ISSUE WITH DAM CRITICS", Beijing, 2007/11/28) reported that a week after a landslide near the controversial Three Gorges Dam killed more than 30 people, PRC officials defended the environmental work around the project, arguing that "geological disasters" in the area "have been effectively controlled" and dismissing negative news coverage as sensationalistic. "This area has always been an area of frequent geological disasters," said Wang Xiaofeng, director of the Three Gorges Project Construction Committee, noting that the PRC has invested more than $1.4 billion in tackling such problems. "That is not to say that in the future there will not be dangerous phenomena, including landslides, but we believe that the Chinese government has paid close attention to this and there will not be any major damage to the life and property of the people along the Yangtze River," Wang said at a news conference.

Agence France-Presse (Dan Martin, "BIGGER STILL SEEN AS BETTER IN CHINA MEGA-PROJECTS", Sandouping, 2007/11/28) reported that since ancient times, China's rulers have expressed their might through massive engineering projects -- often bearing big human and environmental costs -- large enough to match the nation's gigantic dimensions. "There's a simple reason for all these huge projects... China has always been a nation with a large population and vast land area and has always thought big," said Ma Xiangwu, a professor at Beijing's Renmin University. The Three Gorges Dam is just the latest example. Built to control Yangtze River floods and generate clean hydropower, it has attracted controversy for years for its social and environmental costs.

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10. PRC Climate Change

The Financial Times (Fiona Harvey, "UN FOCUSES CARBON BURDEN", London, 2007/11/28) reported that the PRC and India should be spared the full burden of fighting climate change, the United Nations said in an agenda-setting report published just days ahead of an intergovernmental conference to agree to a successor to the Kyoto protocols. The report of the UN Development Programme recommends that countries such as the PRC and India should be required to reduce their emissions by only 20 per cent by 2050, while the rich industrialised countries shoulder a cut of 80 per cent. The report will provide ammunition for developing countries wishing to avoid adopting stringent targets on emissions.

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II. ROK Report

11. Inter-Korean Meetings

Yonhap news ("KIM YANG-KUN, DOUBLE DATE WITH ROK", Seoul, 2007/11/29) reported that the ROK Minister of Unification Lee Jae-jung and the head of National Intelligence Service (NIS) Kim Man-bok are supposed to meet with DPRK Workers' Party official Yang-kun. The reason why there is a "one-to-two meeting" is that the Ministry of Unification of the ROK has been upgraded in dealing with inter-Korean relations. In the past, it was natural for the NIS to be a counterpart to the DPRK in this situation.

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12. Joint Fishery Area

Pressian ("DIFFICULT DECISION ON THE JOINT FISHERY AREA", Seoul, 2007/11/29) reported that two Koreas still have a hard time coming to an agreement on the joint fishery area. Moon Sung-muk, the spokeman of the ROK side, said that although the two Koreas have talked a lot about it, the speed of negotiation is still slow. Finally, it can be expected that the simple topics would be agreed to, while excluding the concrete items from the negotiation.

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