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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "N. KOREA PLEDGES TO START DISABLING NUCLEAR FACILITIES THIS WEEK", Panmunjom, 2007/10/29) reported that the DPRK Monday reconfirmed its pledge to start disabling its nuclear facilities this week during the first day of energy assistance talks. "Basically what the North Korean side said was that North Korea is moving to disable its nuclear facilities from Nov. 1 and faithfully implement its second-phase denuclearization measures under the February agreement," Lim Sung-nam, the ROK's chief delegate, told reporters. In return the DPRK "expects the other five nations to provide the economic and energy assistance promised in the Feb. 13 agreement in a timely manner," Lim added.

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2. Korean Peninsula Peace Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("ENVOY: NO NEED OF TOP LEADERS AT RITE BEFORE PEACE TALKS", Seoul, 2007/10/27) reported that US Ambassador to the ROK Alexander Vershbow said that if a ceremony is held to mark the beginning of talks about a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, it probably won't involve heads of state. He stated, "a summit is more appropriate at the end of the process."

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3. Oil Supplies to DPRK

Yonhap ("GS CALTEX TO SUPPLY HEAVY OIL TO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2007/10/28) reported that GS Caltex Co., the ROK's second-biggest oil refiner, said Sunday it is set to supply 21,000 tons of heavy oil to the DPRK as part of the six-party agreement. The oil shipment was to be sent Sunday via the port of Yeosu to arrive at the DPRK ports of Songlim and Sunbong.

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4. DPRK Military

BBC News ("OIL PRICE 'GROUNDS' N KOREAN FLEET", 2007/10/28) reported that the DPRK has been forced to ground a fleet of Antonov An-2 biplanes because of the high oil price, Yonhap news agency reported. Fuel is being diverted for other training flights, Yonhap quoted a military source as saying.

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5. DPRK-Vietnam Relations

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "KIM JONG-IL INTERESTED IN VIETNAMESE-STYLE REFORM POLICY", Seoul, 2007/10/28) reported that Yonhap News, citing the Sunday edition of the weekly Yazhou Zhoukan, a Hong Kong-based international Chinese business daily, said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has expressed his intention to follow the Vietnam-style "Doi Moi" economic reform and openness policy. Kim made the remarks during a meeting with Nong Duc Manh, secretary-general of Vietnam's Communist Party, in Pyongyang last week.

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "SEOUL WELCOMES NORTH KOREAN LEADER'S REPORTED PLAN TO VISIT VIETNAM", Seoul, 2007/10/29) reported that Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Cheon Ho-seon on Monday reacted positively to the report that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il plans to visit Vietnam. "It is encouraging if North Korea tries to learn from Vietnam's experiences," Cheon said.

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6. ROK-Japan Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT SHUNS SEOUL 'REGRET' OVER KIM", Tokyo, 2007/10/28) reported that ROK Ambassador to Japan Yu Myung-hwan planned to "express his country's regret" over the 1973 kidnapping in Tokyo of Kim Dae-jung to the Japanese government on Friday afternoon, but Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura refused to meet with him, citing scheduling difficulties. A Foreign Ministry official stated, "The ministry was unable to decide whether to accept the message as the following opinion was growing within the government: Despite the fact Japan's sovereignty was infringed as South Korea's public authority was exercised within Japan, is it acceptable for Japan to only accept a statement of regret on the matter by South Korea instead of a clear apology?"

Yomiuri Shimbun ("ROK PANEL MEMBERS SLAM JAPAN", Seoul, 2007/10/27) reported that members of the South Korean Development Committee for Clarifying the Past criticized Japan on Friday for its reaction to the probe into the 1973 Kim Dae-jung abduction. "If Japanese feel bad even after the release of this report, I think Japan is a tiny country," one committee member said.

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7. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo ("ISHIBA TO ORDER MSDF FLEET TO RETURN HOME ON NOV. 1", Tokyo, 2007/10/27) reported that Defense Ministry sources said Saturday that Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba will issue an evacuation order for the Maritime Self-Defense Force fleet involved in refueling operations in the Indian Ocean on Nov. 1, when the special antiterrorism law authorizing the mission expires. A supply vessel and a destroyer will leave early on Nov. 2 and will return home around three weeks later.

Asahi Shimbun ("ISHIBA SAYS CIVILIANS HAD RIGHT FUEL DATA", Tokyo, 2007/10/27) reported that Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba on Friday admitted that not only uniformed officers but also civilian ministry officials knew what volume of fuel was provided in February 2003 to a U.S. Navy ship in the Indian Ocean. But Ishiba denied that the ministry's internal bureaus deliberately hid that four times as much fuel as first stated went to a U.S. tanker that refueled an aircraft carrier going on to an Iraq mission.

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8. Japan-PRC Territorial Dispute

Associated Press (Dikky Sinn, "JAPAN, CHINESE PROTESTORS CLASH AT SEA", Hong Kong, 2007/10/28) reported that Japanese patrol vessels fired water cannon Sunday at a boat carrying activists from the China Federation of Defending Diaoyu Islands, who were protesting Japanese claims to territory in the East China Sea. The group's spokesman in Beijing, Li Nan, said the boat came to within eight miles of Diaoyu Island. "The Japanese used water cannon to disperse the boat to around 12 nautical miles (13 miles) away. They are now standing off in the waters," Li stated. Japan lodged a protest with the PRC through diplomatic channels Sunday following the incident, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

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9. Japanese Nuclear Power

Associated Press ("JAPAN COURT NIXES NUKE PLANT SUSPENSION", Tokyo, 2007/10/26) reported that the Shizuoka District Court found Friday that four reactors at Hamaoka Nuclear Power Station could remain in operation because their earthquake resistance and other safeguards are sufficient. A group of citizens had sued to shut down the reactors on safety concerns.

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II. Republic of Korea

10. ROK-Japan Relations

Joonang Ilbo ("ROK GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO MAKE AN APOLOGY", Seoul, 2007/10/27 04:30:00 GMT+0) reported that the ROK government will make an official apology to the Japanese government for kidnapping ex-President Kim Dae-jung. The level of apology will be "regret" which widely means apology in Japan. The Foreign Minister of Japan Komura said, "It is right to apologize for it violated the sovereignty of Japan." The ROK government decided to respond to the Japanese government's demand.

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11. ROK Troops in Iraq

Yonhap ("BUDGET FOR SPENDING TROOPS TO IRAQ", Seoul, 2007/10/28 17:55:00 GMT+0) reported that Grand National Party's Song Young-sun claimed about US\$32 million out of the budget for sending troops to Iraq were used for different purpose in 2005 and 2006. Song said "Spending the money which could be used for improving the treatment and benefits of the army in Iraq for another purpose shows us the present government's lack of concern about spending on troops."

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