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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. NUKE ENVOY TO VISIT PYONGYANG THIS WEEK", 2008/09/28) reported that Chief U.S. nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill will visit the DPRK this week, the U.S. State Department announced. According to a ROK government source, Hill will arrive in Seoul on Tuesday. He will travel to the DPRK after meeting with the ROK's chief negotiator Kim Sook. During his visit to the DPRK, Hill will reportedly hold last-moment negotiations with the DPRK over a verification protocol for the nuclear facilities and stockpiles the DPRK has declared, the main stumbling block in the talks on denuclearization.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA'S VICE FM SAYS U.S. VIOLATED NUCLEAR AGREEMENT", New York, 2008/09/28) reported that the DPRK's vice foreign minister accused the US of violating a multilateral deal to disarm the DPRK, saying Pyongyang's recent move to resume nuclear activity is based only on the action-for-action principle. Speaking at a U.N. General Assembly session, Pak Kil-yon, vice

minister of foreign affairs, blamed the U.S. for making unjust demands, such as full access to any site or facility deemed related to the DPRK nuclear program, including military facilities, which the DPRK considers unacceptable to a sovereign nation.

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3. ROK on DPRK Military

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA ARMY THREATENS SOUTH AND REGION: SEOUL", 2008/09/27) reported that the DPRK is a grave threat to regional security, deploys most of its ground forces near the border with the ROK and is ready to attack at a moment's notice, the ROK's defense minister said. "North Korea maintains a vast military and forward deploys more than 70 percent of its ground forces. It stands ready to mount a surprise attack any time," Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee told a security forum.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

The Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "SOUTH KOREA WEIGHS NORTH KOREA'S DIALOGUE OFFER", Seoul, 2008/09/27) reported that the ROK withheld a response to the DPRK's dialogue offer, as it weighed the surprise proposal to hold the first official contact between the sides since Seoul's new conservative government took office. "We're still having an internal review," a Defense Ministry official said. "It's unlikely to reach a conclusion until early next week." The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity citing department policy, declined to give details.

Chosun Ilbo ("76 PRO-N.KOREA WEBSITES WORKING OVERSEAS", 2008/09/27) reported that the National Police Agency is monitoring a total of 76 pro-DPRK websites overseas. According to data on the NPA submitted to Grand National Party lawmaker Lee Bum-rae of the National Assembly's Public Administration and Security Committee, of the websites with servers abroad, 31 in the U.S., 19 in Japan, 13 in China, 4 in Germany, and 9 in other countries. Some pro-Pyongyang websites reportedly use disguised domain names, such as "...book center," "...Korean music," "...university," "...bank," "...baduk," or "...travel agency," instead of names that are easily indicative of the DPRK.

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SLAMS SEOUL'S DECISION TO ORGANIZE N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS PANEL", Seoul, 2008/09/27) reported that Pyongyang blasted the ROK for its decision to create a special panel on DPRK human rights, calling the move an "unpardonable provocation." "We solemnly denounce the anti-DPRK human rights fuss by the Lee Myung-bak Group, labeling it as a vicious profanity of our dignity and system and another unpardonable provocation toward us," the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland said in a statement. "The move once again unveiled the pro-U.S. sycophantic and anti-DPRK confrontational nature of the treachery group which have been mad at plotting to do harm and slandering us, taking advantage of the anti-DPRK human rights fuss by the United States," said the DPRK's quasi-governmental propaganda group.

Yonhap News ("POLICE RAID HEADQUARTERS OF SUSPECTED PRO-N. KOREAN GROUP", Seoul, 2008/09/27) reported that police and National Intelligence Service officers on Saturday raided the headquarters of a political activist group that allegedly conducted pro-DPRK activities in violation of

the ROK's anti-communist security law. Law enforcement officials armed with search warrants confiscated materials from the Solidarity for Practice of the South-North Joint Declaration in northern Seoul and arrested seven members.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREA IN NO HURRY OVER INTER-KOREAN ECONOMIC PROJECTS: MINISTER ", Seoul, 2008/09/27) reported that the ROK's foreign minister said that his country will not expand inter-Korean economic cooperation until the DPRK progresses to the next stage of a three-tier denuclearization process. "The government has a plan to actively pursue economic cooperation with North Korea when the second phase is completed in a irreversible way," Yu Myung-hwan said at a breakfast meeting with alumni from Seoul National University.

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6. DPRK Economy

The Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "NORTH KOREA IN THE MIDST OF A MYSTERIOUS BUILDING BOOM", 2008/09/27) reported that high-rise apartments in shades of pink are taking shape near the Pueblo. A tangle of construction cranes juts into the skyline near Pothong Gate, a re-creation of the old city wall. About 100,000 units are to be built over the next four years. A modernistic silver-sided box of a conference center is already complete. Theaters and hotels are being renovated. Streets have been repaved and buildings repainted. DPRK officials insist that they're funding the building spree on their own, in keeping with an underlying ideology that emphasizes self-reliance. But analysts are skeptical of such claims, given the nation's economy and the regime's secretive nature and often deceptive pronouncements.

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7. DPRK Phone Service

Korea Times (Sunny Lee, "PYONGYANG TO START PUBLIC MOBILE SERVICE IN DECEMBER", Beijing, 2008/09/27) reported that people in Pyongyang, if they can afford a cell phone, may be able to use one starting December, with the help of an Egyptian telecom company. Orascom Telecom, a Cairo-based phone company, won the first mobile phone license in the DPRK in January and has been working on building the necessary infrastructure in the capital city. With the introduction of the first city-wide mobile phone service network in the capital, citizens in Pyongyang will have access to mobile phone services. However, it is not clear how the security-phobic DPRK will implement the service.

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8. Sino-DPRK Relations

KCNA ("KIM YONG NAM MEETS CHINESE DELEGATION", Pyongyang, 2008/09/28) reported that

Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, met and had a friendly conversation with the delegation of the PRC-DPRK Friendship Association led by Chairman Wu Donghe at the Mansudae Assembly Hall. The head of the delegation said that the friendly relations between the two countries provided by the leaders of the elder generation are steadily developing on good terms under the deep care of Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin and General Secretary Kim Jong Il. He expressed hope that the Korean people would achieve greater successes in socialist construction under the leadership of Kim Jong Il.

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9. DPRK Military

Xinhua News ("OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER: WAR DETERRENT NECESSARY FOR DPRK AMID INVASION THREATS", Pyongyang, 2008/09/27) reported that it was necessary for the DPRK to consolidate its war deterrent against possible invasion from the US and ROK, the official Minju Joson daily said. "The prevailing situation proves that the army and people of the DPRK were just," said a commentary carried by the Minju Joson. "U.S. was meticulously and undisguisedly pushing forward its scheme to swallow up the whole of Korea by igniting a war of aggression against the DPRK," said the article.

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10. DPRK Maritime Accident

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA SAYS 'SUNKEN SHIP IN BLACK SEA WAS NORTH KOREAN'", Moscow, 2008/09/27) reported that the Tolstoy cargo ship that has reportedly sunk in the Black Sea off the Bulgarian coast was not Russian, but DPRK, the Russian Transportation Ministry said on Saturday. "We have nothing to report in relation to this tragedy because the ship that sank on Saturday near the Bulgarian coast belongs to North Korea…The crew was not Russian either," the ministry said in a statement.

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11. ROK-Russian Relations

Joongang Ilbo (Ser Myo-ja, "SEOUL, MOSCOW TO INK ENERGY DEALS", 2008/09/27) reported that Seoul and Moscow will sign 13 industrial and energy cooperation agreements during President Lee Myung-bak's trip to Russia, the Blue House said. Lee will depart for Moscow Sunday for a summit with his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev. A meeting with Vladimir Putin, former president and current prime minister of Russia, is also scheduled. Another seven agreements on industrial cooperation are also planned, said Kim Dong-seon, presidential secretary for knowledge economy.

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12. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo News ("KAWAMURA CALLS FOR OPPOSITION TO COOPERATE OVER REFUELING

MISSION", Tokyo, 2008/09/27) reported that the government and the ruling parties should not make it a prerequisite using an extraordinary parliamentary measure to realize an extension of Japan's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura said Sunday. "We will make utmost efforts to definitely have the opposition parties understand (about the extension)...so that we don't have to do such a thing as holding (the special step of) a revote,'' Kawamura said in an interview with Kyodo News and other media organizations.

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13. Japan Space Progam

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN, FRANCE TO JOINTLY DEVELOP SATELLITE PARTS", 2008/09/27) reported that the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and the French space agency Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales (CNES) have agreed to jointly develop key semiconductor components for use on satellites and were to formally sign a deal in Britain on Sunday, it has been learned. The agreement will mark the first time that JAXA has inked a deal to jointly develop satellite components with a foreign space agency.

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14. Japan Politics

Reuters (Linda Sieg, "JAPAN MINISTER QUITS IN BLOW TO NEW PM ASO", Tokyo, 2008/09/27) reported that Japan's transport minister quit after just four days in the job over a series of contentious remarks, a blow to brand new Prime Minister Taro Aso as he considers calling a snap election. Transport Minister Nariaki Nakayama, the first to resign from Aso's cabinet, had come under fire on Saturday for calling Japan's biggest teachers union a "cancer" in the education system. It was the latest verbal gaffe by Nakayama, one of several outspoken allies whom Aso had tapped as ministers.

The Associated Press ("POLLS: NEW JAPANESE PM STARTS WITH LOW SUPPORT", Tokyo, 2008/09/27) reported that public support for Japan's new Prime Minister Taro Aso is the lowest of any newly appointed prime minister in eight years, according to several newspaper polls published Friday. The polls mainly show support for Aso below 50 percent, indicating he has failed to garner the warm public reception awarded to recent prime ministers in the early days of their administration. They also indicate Aso's ruling Liberal Democratic Party may face a tight race if he calls for parliamentary elections under the political climate.

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15. Sino-Japanese Relations

Xinhua News ("FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREE TO ADVANCE CHINA-JAPAN TIES", 2008/09/27) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and his Japanese counterpart, Hirofumi Nakasone, met here Friday and agreed to push forward relations between their two countries. Yang congratulated Nakasone on taking office as Japan's new foreign minister, and said Sino-Japanese relations have showed a sound momentum of development, and that the PRC wishes to work with Japan to comprehensively implement the various consensuses reached by leaders of the two

countries to deepen exchanges and cooperation in politics, economy, humanities and defense and constantly advance their strategic relationship of mutual benefit.

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16. Sino-Pakistani Military Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA, PAKISTAN TO FURTHER ENHANCE MILITARY TIES", 2008/09/27) reported that Pakistan was ready to work with the PRC to enhance bilateral strategic cooperation under the new circumstances, said a senior Pakistani military official. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, chief of the Army Staff of Pakistan, made the remarks in a meeting with PRC Defense Minister Liang Guanglie. Speaking highly of the good relationship between the two armed forces, he said Pakistan would continue to push forward bilateral ties and the relationship between the two armed forces.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA: NEGOTIATIONS SET WITH TAIWAN ", 2008/09/28) reported that negotiating bodies for Taiwan and the PRC will hold talks every six months to discuss ways the governments can cooperate, the head of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said in a recent interview with a Taiwanese magazine. The schedule of meetings was also announced Thursday on a news service run by the Kuomintang, Taiwan's governing party.

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18. PRC Space Program

Reuters ("CHINA'S "SPACEWALKER" HEADS BACKS TO EARTH ", Beijing, 2008/09/27) reported that the man who made the PRC's historic first "footprint in space" is preparing to return to earth after a historic mission that boosted national pride and took his country one step closer to the moon. Zhai Zhigang and two other astronauts on the Shenzhou VII craft are due to land around 5 p.m. (5 a.m. EDT) in northern Inner Mongolia region. It was the PRC's third manned space mission. The ability to "space walk" is key to a longer-term goal of assembling a space lab and then a larger space station, and maybe one distant day making a landing on the moon.

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19. PRC Environment

Xinhua News ("CHINA WILLING TO PROMOTE APEC FOREST NETWORK DEVELOPMENT", Beijing, 2008/09/27) reported that the PRC is willing to promote the forest network development in the Asia-Pacific region, Vice Premier Hui Liangyu said here Friday. Hui made the remarks in a meeting with Juan Carlos Capunay, executive director of the Secretariat of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, and other representatives who are here for the launching meeting of an Asia-Pacific Network on Forest Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management.

Xinhua News ("BEIJING IMPOSES CAR BAN TO EASE TRAFFIC JAMS", 2008/09/27) reported that Beijing has announced a series of post-Olympics car restrictions which will take effect next month and hopefully sustain the hard-won smooth traffic and good air quality during the Games. Under the new traffic restrictions, 30 percent of government vehicles will be sealed off as of October 1, said a circular issued by the Beijing municipal government on Saturday. Cars whose number plates end with 1 or 6 will be taken off roads on Monday, while those ending with 2 or 7 will be banned on Tuesday, 3 or 8 on Wednesday, 4 or 9 on Thursday and 5 or 0 on Friday. The ban does not apply on weekends.

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20. PRC AIDS Issue

Agence-France-Presse ("AIDS AWARENESS STILL LOW IN CHINA: SURVEY", Beijing, 2008/09/27) reported that knowledge and awareness of AIDS and HIV transmission in the PRC is still low, even in big cities like Shanghai, according to a survey released Friday. More than 6,000 people in six PRC cities were interviewed for the research -- supported by UNAIDS -- which also found that there was still serious stigmatisation of people living with HIV in the PRC. More than 48 percent thought they could contract HIV from a mosquito bite, and over 41 percent would be unwilling to work with a person infected with HIV.

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21. PRC Security

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S MUSLIMS SAY RAMADAN A TIME OF REPRESSION ", 2008/09/27) reported that all that was left on the chin of the Muslim man praying at the huge brownstone mosque was a small patch of stubble. He said officials had forced young men in the PRC's far western Xinjiang region to cut off their beards at the start of the holy month of Ramadan. For Muslims, Ramadan is a time of fasting and prayer. But for the PRC's Muslim ethnic Uighurs, the holy month is also full of fear and seething resentment about increasingly tight restrictions on how they practice their moderate form of Islam, influenced by the Sunni and Sufi sects.

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22. PRC Energy Supply

China Daily (Li Xiaokun, "JOINT FUND, ENERGY DEALS INKED WITH VENEZUELA", 2008/09/24) reported that the PRC and Venezuela Wednesday signed a dozen agreements, including one on doubling a joint investment fund to $12 billion and another on extending energy cooperation. President Hu Jintao and his Venezuelan counterpart Hugo Chavez attended the signing ceremony. Though the Foreign Ministry did not give details of the agreements, Chavez reportedly said the two countries had agreed to double the joint investment fund to $12 billion. Just after landing in Beijing on Tuesday, Chavez said the two countries have agreed on plans for a fleet of four oil tankers and one refinery to process Venezuela's heavy crude oil.

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II. PRC Report

23. Sino-EU Trade

Xinhua Net (Wang Youling, "CHINA AND EU REACH CONSENSUS ON IPR, ENERGY, TRADE TOPICS", 2008/09/24) reported that PRC Minister of Commerce Chen Deming and European Union (EU) trade commissioner Peter Mandelson kicked off the 23rd China-EU Mixed Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation here and reached consensus on a wide array of topics. Both sides agreed to quicken the negotiation process of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Customs Enforcement Action Plan, according to the Ministry of Commerce (MOC). They would input 73.8 million Euros (108.5 million U.S. dollars) this year to launch the Development Cooperation Plan to support bilateral environmental protection, energy, climate change and human resources development and other projects, MOC said on its official website.

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24. PRC Energy

Xinhua News ("NEW HYDROPOWER STATION STARTS OPERATION IN TIBET", Lhasa, 2008/09/27) reported that a new hydropower plant started generating electricity in southwest PRC's Tibet Autonomous Region. The Xoka Hydropower Station, in Gongbo'gyamda County in east Tibet's Nyingchi Prefecture, has four generating units each with a capacity of 10,000 kw, said Wang Lidong, director of the station's construction headquarters under the Tibet Power Co. Ltd. The station can generate 182 million kwh of electricity a year, Wang said.

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III. ROK Report

25. Inter-Korea Relations

OhmyNews (Kim Tae-kyung, "DPRK, DISPLEASED WITH ROK GOSSIPING ABOUT KIM'S ILLNESS", 2008/09/29) reported that the ROK large-scale civic delegation's visit to the DPRK eased the tension on the peninsula. Hong Sang-young, the director of Korean Sharing Movement, who went to the DPRK from September 20th to the 23rd said that the DPRK officials were displeased with the Lee Administration's gossiping about Kim Jong-il's illness. One DPRK official criticized the ROK's speculation, saying that it means that the ROK is not willing to cooperate or to communicate with the DPRK. Moreover, the DPRK's distrust toward the ROK is very serious due to Lee administration's inconsistent DPRK policy, he added. He advised that the ROK should express their will to continue the dialogue with them as soon as possible through various channels.

DongA Ilbo ("INTER-KOREAN TALKS NOT A CHANCE FOR DPRK'S PROPAGANDA", 2008/09/29) said in an op-ed that the reason why numerous inter-Korean talks which were held over the years

was mainly because the DPRK had tried to use them for propaganda. The Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun admistrations' attitude during talks also falsified the true meaning of the talks. Their consistent expression of gratitude toward the DPRK for meeting made them become greatly arrogant. ROK people are tired with talks ending up hearing only the DPRK's propaganda and nonsensical abuse. The government should change the attitude they deal with the DPRK if they want to normalize the inter-Korean relationship.

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26. DPRK Nuclear Program

Hankyoreh Ilbo ("DPRK NUKE RESUMPTION, CAUSED BY U.S", 2008/09/29) said in a column that DPRK's resumption of nuclear facilities mainly stems from the US's violation of the action-for-action principle. The DPRK's movement is neither sudden nor impulsive. It is inappropriate for some people to say that they went across the 'red line', either. Rather, it would be better to say that they were driven close to the red line. It seems that both the DPRK and the current U.S. administration think that talks with one another will not work anymore. The DPRK's sole bargaining chip during the talks with the next U.S. administration would be nuclear facilities which were resurrected. Since it is also difficult for the ROK and the PRC to stabilize the situation currently, all six parties should remain patient until the next U.S. administration reveals its policy toward the DPRK. The most important thing for the DPRK is not to worsen the situation.

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