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I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "US ENVOY ARRIVES IN NKOREA", Seoul, 2007/12/03) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill arrived in the DPRK Monday for a three-day trip to inspect work to disable its nuclear complex. "I would hope that in year 2008 I hope that we could complete this process and I think this would be a very dramatic improvement in the situation of the Korean peninsula and ... begin the process of bringing the DPRK to the international community," Hill said upon arriving in Pyongyang. "I'm looking forward to seeing a declaration soon, the declaration of all their nuclear programs and materials and infrastructure and so we look forward to six-party meetings to discuss all that," he added.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("DPRK MUST REPORT ON URANIUM", Tokyo, 2007/12/03) reported that the Japanese government has decided to urge the DPRK to have extracted plutonium, nuclear weapons and uranium enrichment programs subject to the declaration of Pyongyang's nuclear development programs at the six-party talks scheduled for early this month. According to officials at the Foreign Ministry, the disablement of the Yongbyon nuclear facilities has been going well, so the focus of the next talks has shifted to the contents of the agreed declaration of its nuclear activities.

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. 'HAS EVIDENCE' OF NORTH'S URANIUM PROGRAM", Seoul, 2007/12/03) reported that U.S. chief nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill on Saturday said his government "has evidence North Korea purchased equipment to enrich uranium." Hill made the remark in a lecture at the Graduate School of International Studies at Ewha Womans University prior to his departure for the DPRK on Monday.

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2. DPRK Removal From Terrorism List

Yomiuri Shimbun (Takashi Sakamoto , "U.S. TO SET 3 MORE TASK FOR N. KOREA", Washington, 2007/12/01) reported that sources close to the six-party talks said Friday that the U.S. government has decided to impose three new conditions for removing the DPRK from Washington's list of state sponsors of terrorism. The DPRK must reveal the amount of plutonium it has extracted; the reality of its uranium enrichment program; and the alleged transfer of nuclear technology and materials to other countries such as Syria, the sources said.

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3. Korean Peninsula Peace Accord

Korea Herald ("ROH'S SECURITY ADVISOR TO VISIT US TO DISCUSS PEACE REGIME ON KOREAN PENINSULA", Seoul, 2007/12/02) reported that Baek Jong-chun, President Roh Moo-hyun's chief secretary for security and foreign policy, will visit Washington to discuss establishing a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, the presidential office was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. Presidential spokesman Cheon Ho-sun said. "During his four-day visit there, Baek will meet his counterpart Stephen Hadley, assistant to President Bush for national security affairs, and other high government officials, in order to discuss a broad range of topics -- the South Korea-U.S. alliance, the denuclearization process in North Korea and setting up a new peace regime on the Korean peninsula."

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4. Inter-Korean Meetings

Korea Times ("NK SPY CHIEF RETURNS TO NORTH, WRAPPING UP 3-DAY TRIP", Seoul, 2007/12/01) reported that Kim Yang-gon, head of the United Front Department at the DPRK's Workers' Party, returned to the DPRK via the DMZ Saturday, officials said. "I am returning home with warm hospitality. All the things have done well," said Kim. ROK Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung said, "Kim and three other North Korean delegates had a meeting with the unification minister, the vice unification minister, the director of the National Intelligence Service and deputy director on the South side to wrap up Kim's trip to Seoul. I asked Kim to help both sides to implement the details discussed at this meeting by next governments. I also called on him to make efforts to implement other details agreed upon at the summit and prime ministers talks."

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "DEPUTY PREMIERS OF KOREAS TO BEGIN ", Seoul, 2007/12/03) reported that the ROK Ministry of Unification said deputy prime ministers of the two Koreas will begin three-day talks here Wednesday to discuss details of new cross-border economic cooperation programs agreed upon at the inter-Korean summit in October. Ministry officials said besides agreed economic cooperation projects, the ROK wants to discuss the development of an oil field off the DPRK's west coast, but the DPRK is negative about the issue. "The North Koreans said they wish to discuss items within the framework of the summit agreement, while we called on them not to limit the scope of the talks," a ministry official was quoted by Yonhap News Agency as saying.

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5. Inter-Korean Maritime Border

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA CLAIMED 12-MILE TERRITORIAL WATERS AT LAST WEEK'S TALKS: SOURCE", Seoul, 2007/12/02) reported that the DPRK urged the ROK to redraw the inter-Korean maritime border in the West Sea while claiming 12-mile territorial waters during their defense ministerial talks last week, an ROK government source was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. "North Korea claimed a right to 12-mile territorial waters as a kind of counterattack, as South Korean delegates refused to accept the North's initial request that a joint fishing zone be created south of the NLL," said the source.

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6. Inter-Korean Rail Link

Korea Herald ("KOREAS AGREE ON DAILY SCHEDULE FOR INTER-KOREAN FREIGHT TRAIN", Seoul, 2007/12/02) reported that the two Koreas have agreed on the daily schedule for a cross-border freight train that will resume service later this month for the first time in over 50 years, the ROK Unification Ministry was quoted as saying by Yonhap News Agency. The ministry said a freight train will depart from Munsan at 9:00 a.m. each weekday and reach the DPRK border station of Panmun before returning to the ROK at 2:00 p.m. The train, which will not operate during weekends, will extend its route to Bongdong once the construction of a cargo-handling facility there is completed, the ministry said.

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7. Reunions of Separated Families

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "MORE FAMILY REUNIONS PLANNED", Seoul, 2007/12/02) reported that the two Koreas agreed Saturday in their ninth Red Cross talks to expand the direct reunion of separated families and relatives. Under the agreement after three days of talks in Mount Geumgang, the two sides agreed to increase the numbers of people for the direct reunion per year by 100 to 400 beginning next year. Video reunions will be held for 160 families a year.

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8. Radio Broadcasts to DPRK

Associated Press ("US-FUNDED RADIO TO AIR SKOREA SPEECHES", Seoul, 2007/12/03) reported that U.S.-funded Open Radio for North Korea said it would transmit a recently taped speech by pro-government liberal candidate Chung Dong-young for four days starting Monday evening. The station said in a statement that it would then broadcast a speech by front-runner Lee Myung-bak of the main opposition Grand National Park. The Seoul-based radio station also plans to air speeches of other presidential candidates to the DPRK by using short-wave radio. The radio programs "can make North Koreans have an interest in the South's election ... and North Koreans can learn how a policy decision is made in a democratic society," the broadcaster said.

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9. ROK Presidential Election

Korea Herald ("NORTH KOREA FADES AS CAMPAIGN ISSUE", Seoul, 2007/12/03) reported that conservative presidential candidate Lee Hoi-chang's criticism of the ROK government's engagement policy toward the DPRK has failed to get much of a public response. Political pundits describe the phenomenon as stemming from the changed atmosphere on the Korean peninsula. A survey by SBS television and the JoongAng Ilbo newspaper last month showed that when voters were asked about their priorities, first was employment, at 24.1 percent, followed by real estate at 21 percent and education at 18.1 percent. DPRK policy and alliance with the United States received just 5.2 percent

and 2.4 percent, respectively.

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10. DPRK-PRC Trade

Asahi Shimbun (Kim Han Il, "CHINA-BASED TRADERS PAINT BLEAK PICTURE OF LIFE IN N.KOREA", Tumen, 2007/12/03) reported that Jin Zheng Guang, a third-generation Korean in the PRC, managed to make enough money reselling the catches of DPRK fishermen to buy an 80-square-meter apartment. "Even North Korean fishermen need extra income," he said, explaining that fishing boats often sell part of their haul to Chinese retailers before heading home. However, Jin said there's not much money to be made these days. "The fact is, I'm not making as much money as I had expected." A local government official who is involved in the trade of marine products from the DPRK stated, "North Korea can't provide dried cod in bulk because of fuel shortages. That means the fishing boats can't venture out into open seas."

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11. ROK on Climate Change

Korea Times (Bae Ji-sook, "KOREA SEEKS AUTONOMY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUE", Seoul, 2007/12/03) reported that Environment Minister Lee Kyoo-yong said Monday that the country will not accept a compulsory greenhouse gas emission reduction plan. Instead, he said he will ask for more efforts for additional gas reductions by the so-called developed countries at the 13th United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to be held at Bali, Indonesia from Dec. 3-14.

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12. PRC-Japan Relations

Associated Press (Charles Hutzler, "CHINA, JAPAN PLEDGE ECONOMIC COOPERATION", Beijing, 2007/12/02) reported that the PRC and Japan amicably wrapped up their first high-level trade and economic talks on Sunday by pledging greater overall cooperation, but left the issue of gas exploration in the East China Sea unresolved. PRC Premier Wen Jiabao hailed the two-day meeting as "successful," and the two sides issued a joint statement promising to strengthen efforts to form a regional free-trade zone, promote energy efficiency and improve protection of intellectual property rights. They also agreed to participate in an anti-global warming framework to replace the Kyoto Protocol, and cooperate on measures to combat money laundering, terrorism financing and smuggling.

Kyodo ("CHINA'S HU EYES JAPAN VISIT EARLY NEXT YEAR", Beijing, 2007/12/03) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao on Monday confirmed his wish to visit Japan early next year, telling Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura that he believes high-level visits between the two countries are important, a Japanese government official said. Hu also told Komura in a meeting in Beijing that a bilateral row over gas exploration rights in the East China Sea should be resolved as soon as possible, as Komura asked Hu to exert his leadership so that progress can be made, according to the official.

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13. US-Japan Relations

Asahi Shimbun ("RECORD 20% OF JAPANESE SAY US-JAPAN RELATIONS NOT GOOD", Tokyo, 2007/12/03) reported that a record one in five Japanese says relations between Japan and the United States are not what they should be, according to a survey released Saturday by the Cabinet Office. The percentage of Japanese who feel the country's relations with the United States are still good decreased to 76 percent from 83 percent in October 2006. Those who said Japan-U.S. relations are not good increased to 20 percent from 12 percent. Those who said Japan-ROK relations are not good dropped to 45 percent from last year's record-high 57 percent, while those who said the relations are good rose to 50 percent from 34 percent. The poll also said 26 percent of Japanese regard Japan-PRC relations as good, up 4 percentage points from last year.

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14. Bird Flu in PRC

BBC News ("CHINESE MAN DIES OF H5N1 BIRD FLU", 2007/12/03 02:30:00 GMT+0) reported that the Xinhua news agency said that a man in the PRC's eastern province of Jiangsu has died from the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu. It said he had no known contact with dead poultry, and no outbreaks of bird flu were reported nearby.

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