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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Yomiuri Shimbun ("U.S. 'GAVE GROUND' TO NORTH KOREA", 2008/11/02) reported that in October talks, Washington agreed to have the issues of verifying the DPRK's suspected uranium-enrichment program and nuclear proliferation referred to in an appendix to the main document, informed sources said Saturday. Given the weak binding power of the appendix, the next round of the six-party talks might fall short of addressing these problems, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

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2. US-DPRK Relations

Korea Herald ("N.K. DIPLOMATS TO MEET U.S. COUNTERPARTS IN N.Y.", 2008/11/03) reported that the US State Department said Friday that Korea desk head Sung Kim will meet Ri Gun, director general for North American Affairs at the DPRK Foreign Ministry, when Ri visits New York this week to attend a meeting arranged by a U.S. nongovernmental group. British Ambassador to the ROK Martin Uden will fly to Pyongyang this week for a routine consultation with his country's embassy there, an ROK diplomatic source said Saturday.

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3. DPRK Leadership

Agence France-Press ("SKOREA SAYS PHOTOS NOT ENOUGH TO ASSESS KIM'S HEALTH", Seoul, 2008/11/03) reported that the DPRk official media on Sunday released photographs of leader Kim Jong-il watching a football match. "It is difficult to know Chairman Kim's health condition merely with photos, still photos," ROK unification ministry spokesman Kim Ho-Nyoun told a briefing.

Chosun Ilbo ("NEW KIM JONG-IL PHOTOS HINT AT MINOR STROKE", Seoul, 2008/11/03) reported that experts said that the latest photos released of Kim Jong-il reveal signs that Kim is suffering the effects of a stroke, as in the pictures his left arm seems weak. If the pictures are genuine, they suggest he can walk with a cane, and that the stroke occurred in the right side of his brain, leaving him able to speak and make decisions.

Los Angeles Times (Mark Magnier, "KIM'S ABSENCE FURTHER FUELS SPECULATION ", Seoul, 2008/11/01) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il failed to appear at the funeral of Pak Sung-chol this week, ROK Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyeon said Friday at a news conference. Pak, 95, was considered the last of the communist state's first-generation revolutionaries.

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4. DPRK Food Situation

Los Angeles Times (Barbara Demick, "NORTH KOREAN FACADE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY CAN'T HIDE SIGNS OF HUNGER", Nampo, 2008/11/02) reported that aid agencies say the level of hunger in the DPRK is not at the point it was in the 1990s. "The current situation hasn't reached the famine proportions that it did during the 1990s. Our hope and goal is to keep it from going over the precipice," said Nancy Lindborg, president of Mercy Corps. "You have a number of factors that have conspired to create a really tough food situation."

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5. ROK Espionage Law

Joongang Ilbo ("NEW LAW IS EYED FOR ACTS OF ESPIONAGE", Seoul, 2008/11/03) reported that the ROK Ministry of Justice Sunday unveiled a plan for a new spy bill aimed at preventing national secrets from leaking to countries other than the DPRK. The present law only applies to people who are caught spying for the DPRK. “We plan to enact the law to put a greater emphasis on national security. The law to be created will be able to punish people who collect national secrets or reveal them to foreign countries other than the North,” said a ministry official who asked not to be named.

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6. US-ROK FTA

Yonhap ("US ELECTION COULD AFFECT S.KOREAN BID TO APPROVE FTA EARLY: LAWMAKER", Seoul, 2008/11/03) reported that the outcome of the coming U.S. presidential election may force the

ROK's ruling Grand National Party to change its plan to push for the early ratification of a free trade deal with Washington, Chung Mong-joon, a Supreme Council member, said Monday. "Obama has stated his opposition to the FTA on many occasions, so we should take this into consideration," Chung said at a party meeting. "It's unquestionable how important the free trade agreement is," but the party still needs to "re-examine the timing" to press for its ratification.

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7. US Military Prostitution in ROK

Joongang Ilbo ("FORMER SEX WORKERS IN FIGHT FOR COMPENSATION", Pyongtaek, 2008/10/30) reported that a group of 60 former ROK sex workers are pushing the government to provide them with special housing benefits, alleging that the government supported the establishment of brothels around US military bases after the Korean War. Former sex worker Cheon Chang-suk stated, "I remember how the government authorities hopped around from one club to another and taught us how to deal with G.I.s. They called us patriots and civil diplomats at the time, because we were helping to earn foreign currency and improve the U.S.-Korea alliance. Now, they even let passing children treat us like dirt."

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8. US, ROK, Japan Defense Cooperation

Seoul (Michael Ha, "KOREA, US, JAPAN TO RESUME DEFENSE STRATEGY MEETING", Seoul, 2008/11/02) reported that the ROK, the United States and Japan will resume their defense strategy conferences, which were halted in 2006. Yonhap quoted an ROK military official as saying "At the Korea-U.S. Military Committee Meeting in October, the two sides came to an agreement that there is a need to increase security cooperation between the three countries. Based on this view, we also agreed to actively participate in joint military exercises hosted by the United States Pacific Command.''

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9. ROK, Japan, PRC Economic Cooperation

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "E. ASIAN TRILATERAL SUMMIT PLANNED NEXT MONTH", Seoul, 2008/11/02) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak will hold a summit meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso and PRC Prime Minister Wen Jiabao in Fukuoka on Dec. 14 to discuss the DPRK nuclear threat and global financial market instability. ROK officials said the summit will deal with the creation of an $80-billion Asian bailout fund and other measures to jointly cope with the global financial turmoil.

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10. Japanese Territorial Claims

Yomiuri Shimbun (Makoto Miura, "GOVT KEEN TO WIN GLOBAL RACE TO SECURE SEABED

WEALTH", Tokyo, 2008/11/01) reported that the Japanese government on Friday decided to seek recognition of a large increase of Japan's continental shelf area from the U.N. Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. Experts estimate that gold, silver and cobalt deposits in that area are sufficient to meet the nation's projected consumption of the respective metals for 5,000 years, while methane hydrate levels are predicted to be equivalent to 100 years' supply of natural gas for the nation.

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11. Japanese Historical Disputes

Yomiuri Shimbun ("HIGH COURT UPHOLDS REJECTION OF LAWSUIT AGAINST OE BOOKS", Osaka, 2008/11/01) reported that the Osaka High Court upheld Friday a lower court's rejection of a libel suit filed by two men against Nobel Prize-winning writer Kenzaburo Oe and a publisher over descriptions in two books of mass suicides in the Battle of Okinawa during World War II. The first ruling given in March states that the army was deeply involved in the mass suicides, and it is possible to presume the veterans were involved. The suit was filed by Yutaka Umezawa, 91, the garrison commander of the Imperial Japanese Army on Zamamijima island, and Hidekazu Akamatsu, 75, for his elder brother Yoshitsugu Akamatsu, the garrison commander on Tokashikijima island.

Asahi Shimbun ("ASDF CHIEF FIRED FOR WAR ESSAY", Tokyo, 2008/11/03) reported that Gen. Toshio Tamogami, Japanese Air Self-Defense Force chief of staff, was dismissed late Friday night after the disclosure of an essay in which he tried to legitimize Japanese military action before and during World War II. Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada told reporters: "It is inappropriate for the chief of staff to make public an opinion that is clearly different from the government position. He will be relieved of his position immediately." Among the arguments Tamogami makes in his essay is: "While the Chinese government persistently makes the point about 'Japan's invasion,' Japan was a victim because it was dragged into the war against China by Chiang Kai-shek."

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12. ROK, PRC on Japanese Historical Disputes

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "SEOUL REGRETS JAPANESE GENERAL'S DISTORTIONS", Seoul, 2008/11/02) reported that the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said Saturday that former Japanese Gen. Toshio Tamogami was trying to distort history. "Japan should repent of its wrongdoings and learn from them. By doing so, Japan can build good relations with other nations,'' said the foreign ministry. Jiang Yu, a deputy spokesman of the PRC foreign ministry, said in a statement that PRC was "shocked and angered'' by Tamogami's comments.

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13. Cross Straits Relations

Agence France-Press ("CHINA'S ENVOY VISITS TAIWAN FOR HISTORIC TALKS", Taipei, 2008/11/03) reported that Chen Yunlin, head of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (ARATS), arrived in Taipei on Monday, becoming the highest-ranking PR official to ever visit the island. "The visit of (the) ARATS chief to Taiwan is of historical significance and is a

key step marking the development of cross-Strait relations," State Council Taiwan Affairs office director Wang Yi said after seeing Chen off at the airport, according to Xinhua. Chen and his Taiwanese counterpart Chiang Pin-kung will focus their dialogue on increasing direct passenger flights, opening direct cargo flights and shipping links, as well as shortening existing flight routes across the Taiwan Strait and food safety issues.

Associated Press ("TAIWAN SAYS NO VIOLENCE DURING CHINA ENVOY VISIT", Taipei, 2008/11/02) reported that Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou urged those opposed to a top PRC envoy's visit to keep their protests peaceful. "It is not such a bad thing to let Chen Yunlin understand Taiwanese views ... but (any protests) must be legal and peaceful," Ma was quoted as saying by the China Times. "I will receive Chairman Chen ... and tell him the voice of the Taiwanese public," Ma was quoted as saying. "They have some 1,300 missiles pointing at us."

Associated Press (Debby Wu, "NEGOTIATOR: CHINA TO GIVE PANDAS TO TAIWAN", Taipei, 2008/11/01) reported that the PRC will give Taiwan two pandas and will receive two of the island's unique Formosan serows in return, said Kao Koong-lian, secretary-general of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation. Serows are goatlike mammals. The PRC first offered to give the pandas to Taiwan in May 2005, naming them "Tuan Tuan" and "Yuan Yuan," which means unification in Chinese. The gifts were turned down by Taiwan's then ruling Democratic Progressive Party, which said they were part of PRC efforts to persuade the island to unify with the mainland.

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14. Taiwan Politics

Taipei Times (J. Michael Cole, "YOUNG TAIWANESE FEAR AUTHORITARIAN REVIVAL", Taipei, 2008/11/03) reported that some young Taiwanese are concerned about what they see as a dangerous and rapid shift toward authoritarian rule under the Ma Ying-jeou administration. They point to the government’s restrictions on assembly and demonstrations outside the Presidential Office Building and instances where police have disrupted the activities of people who were not breaking the law. One protestor said, “It feels like it’s martial law all over again. Perhaps what the Ma government is doing by cracking down on dissent and freedom of speech is preparing the terrain” for a Taiwan that is part of the PRC.

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15. Sino-Indian Relations

Times of India ("INSURGENT GROUPS IN N-E GETTING HELP FROM CHINA?", New Delhi, 2008/10/31) reported that Indian intelligence sources say that over the past couple of years, the PRC has been keeping up the pressure on India through channels that supply weapons and explosives to the northeastern Indian insurgent groups. In recent months, intelligence sources say the PRC has managed to increase the flow of funds into these groups. One of the reasons why the Indian security agencies have raised suspicions is that there are no markings on the weapons, but a more careful study shows the weapons to be Chinese made, sources said.

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16. Tibet Issue

Associated Press (Jay Alabaster, "DALAI LAMA SAYS HIS FAITH IN CHINA IS SHRINKING", Tokyo, 2008/11/02) reported that the Dalai Lama said Sunday that the situation in Tibet is deteriorating. "Now my faith in the Chinese government is becoming thinner, thinner, thinner," he told reporters Sunday in Tokyo.

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17. PRC Food Safety

Associated Press ("CHINA: FEED MAKERS DEFIED RULE IN ADDING CHEMICAL", Beijing, 2008/11/01) reported that animal feed makers deliberately added melamine to their products, ignoring a year-old government rule meant to protect the PRC's food supply, Agriculture Ministry official Wang Zhicai said in remarks posted on the ministry's Web site and carried by state media Saturday. Inspection teams have descended on feed makers nationwide in a "punishment" campaign to ferret out those found using excessive amounts of melamine, Wang stated.

New York Times (David Barboza, "CHINESE REGULATORS DESTROY TONS OF TAINTED ANIMAL FEED", Shanghai, 2008/11/02) reported that PRC regulators said over the weekend that they had confiscated and destroyed more than 3,600 tons of animal feed tainted with melamine. The government also said Saturday that it had closed 238 feed makers in a series of nationwide sweeps that involved more than 369,000 government inspectors.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Sohu Network ("405 ENVIRONMENTAL NGOS GATHER IN BEIJING FOR ENERGY SAVING AND LOW-CARBON ECONOMY", 2008/10/30) reported that from October 30 to 31, the 2008 China Environmental NGOs Sustainable Development Annual Meeting was held in Beijing. 405 environmental NGOs from all around the country participated in the meeting. The annual meeting was co-sponsored by the China Environmental Protection Federation and China Environmental Protection Foundation. The guests and delegates discussed climate change and sustainable development, environmental protection and public participation, capacity building of ENGOs, and the development of environmental protection associations in universities.

People’s Daily online (Ren Yue, "9TH FORD MOTOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PRIZE UNVEILED IN BEIJING", 2008/10/30) reported that yesterday the award ceremony of the 9th Ford Motor Environmental Protection Prize was held in Beijing ,and 21 NGOs and individuals got the award with a total worth of 1.5 million yuan. The most important prize with a bonus up to 500,000 yuan was conferred to Professor Pan Wenshi, who dedicated himself to the research of wild giant

panda for 13 years and contributed a lot to environmental protection.

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19. PRC Safety

Lanzhou News Network ("TEN THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS HELP CONTROL TRAFFIC IN LANZHOU", 2008/10/30) reported that a “100 days Battle on Traffic Order” was launched by Lanzhou Municipal Traffic Police Detachment. They organized ten thousand volunteers with a hundred traffic police to go to the streets, persuading pedestrians to walk safely and correcting traffic violations. They also checked cars and motorcycles without licenses and overloaded coach buses.

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III. ROK Report

20. ROK Policy Toward DPRK

Donga Ilbo (Ryu Kiljae , "WHEN DPRK THREATENS, PATIENCE AND DUTY ARE THE KEYS", 2008/11/03) wrote that patience and duty are the keys to promoting DPRK policies. In order to be sturdy despite DPRK’s threats and not to be hasty even without immediate success, patience is vital. Regarding that the two Koreas are one people and people in DPRK are suffering from human rights abuse and poverty duty is also required. But most of all, mentality and attitudes in the DPRK must change. The Mt. Kumkang incident is a good example. Without the DPRK’s will to solve the problem, it will be hard to escape ROK’s disregard toward aid.

Seoul Shinmun ("PARK CHAE-KYU, PRESIDENT OF KYUNGNAM UNIV. AND FORMER HEAD OF THE MINISTRY OF UNIFICATION, TALKS ABOUT U.S. ELECTION AND RECOVERY OF NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONSHIP", 2008/11/03) wrote that the recent situation foretells the sustainability of the DPRK’s strategy to talk with the U.S. while refusing to do so with the ROK. Therefore, this is the time Lee administration should actively work to recover the relationship with the DPRK. The DPRK probably doesn’t expect the 10.4 Declaration to be carried out at once. Lee administration must make the DPRK understand there are things that take a long time as well as things that our government can do right away. The Lee administration must start a communicative policy including sending a special envoy.

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21. ROK on US Election

Chosun Ilbo ("ARE WE PREPARED FOR WHAT COMES AFTER THE END OF BUSH-ERA?", 2008/11/03) states that the most urgent matters are alliance between U.S. and ROK, the DPRK nuclear issues, and finding solution to the financial crisis. The alliance between U.S. and ROK will not change no matter who becomes the president, but the nuclear issues could face hardships.

Barack Obama has mentioned the possibility of direct talks with Kim Jong-il. If so, the ROK's role in the nuclear issue will diminish, and the DPRK's strategy to talk with the U.S. while denying to do so with the ROK might intensify. These are the difficulties our foreign policies need to overcome.

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22. Inter-Korea Relations

Tongilnews (BAEK NAK-CHUNG, "CIVIL MOVEMENT SHOULD ACT AS 'THE THIRD PERSON CONCERNED", 2008/11/01) reported that Baek Nak-chung, the representative of the committee for implementing the 6.15 joint statement, said that the ROK government should change their direction of DPRK policy so that they can facilitate personal and private exchanges. Baek also said they need to investigate more about the characteristic and the future of the committee. Other sorts of civil organizations, including the committee themselves should not consider too much about the relationship with the government, but rather view themselves as the third person concerned, that do not belong to any governments, he stated. Concerning the DPRK's removal from the terrorism blacklist, it not only gave the DPRK an opportunity to join the global community, but also eliminated barriers of inter-Korean economic cooperation, he added. He urged the government that they should change the overall direction of the DPRK policy so that both Koreas can be prosperous.

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