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I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse (Jun Kwanwoo, "US ENVOY SEEKING TO SAVE NUKE DEAL EXTENDS STAY IN N KOREA ", Seoul, 2008/10/02) reported that US negotiator Christopher Hill has extended his stay in the DPRK where he is trying to save a crumbling nuclear disarmament deal, US and ROK officials said. A US embassy spokesman said the assistant secretary of state would not be returning Thursday afternoon as expected, but had no information on when he would come back.

Agence France-Presse ("US SAYS NO COMPROMISE ON VERIFYING NKOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM ", Washington, 2008/10/02) reported that the US said it would not compromise on rigid measures to verify the DPRK's nuclear program, rejecting any notion it was desperate in sealing an atomic deal with the DPRK. Washington wants the DPRK to adopt verification measures aimed at confirming that a declaration it provided on its nuclear program to a six-nation forum was "whole and complete and verifiable," officials said.

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "U.S. ENVOY ENDS LAST-DITCH N.KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS", Seoul, 2008/10/03) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill ended talks in Pyongyang on Friday. Hill crossed into the ROK on Friday afternoon local time and was expected to brief ROK officials and a visiting Japanese nuclear envoy before meeting with the media to discuss details of his visit.

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2. Inter-Korean Military Talks

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun , "MILITARY TALKS WITH N. KOREA END IN FAILURE", 2008/10/02) reported that the two Koreas parted ways at the truce village of Panmunjeom with little to take home from their first working-level military talks in eight months. Officials from both sides noted they failed to exchange meaningful dialogue during the hour and a half-long meeting. The ROK delegation called for DPRK's cooperation on dissolving the lingering doubts surrounding the July killing of a ROK tourist who was shot dead by a DPRK soldier in the DPRK's Mount Geumgang resort. The DPRK delegation's focus was on propaganda leaflets distributed in the DPRK by ROK

civic groups, Lee said.

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NORTH KOREA DEMANDS END TO PROPAGANDA FROM SOUTH", Seoul, 2008/10/02) reported that the DPRK threatened during military talks Thursday to expel ROK citizens from two joint projects if leaflets critical of the DPRK government keep arriving over the border. DPRK officials accused the ROK of violating an agreement to halt propaganda broadcasts on the DMZ, warning that it would further deteriorate relations and "may spark off new military clashes," the Korea Central News Agency reported. Col. Lee Sang-cheol, who headed the ROK delegation, told reporters he insisted that Seoul was abiding by the deal but legal restrictions prevent them from stopping activists from sending the leaflets.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

JoongAng Daily (Park Sang-woo , "FIVE YEARS SOUGHT FOR SPY FROM NORTH ", 2008/10/02) reported that prosecutors yesterday sought a five-year prison sentence for the confessed DPRK female spy Won Jeong-hwa, who posed as a defector to obtain military secrets from ROK military personnel. He added, "Even though the accused has shown a contrite attitude during the investigation, demanding a jail term is inevitable because she worked as a spy for such a long time [since 2001]." In response to the recommended sentence, Won said, "I have felt guilty the whole time I stayed in South Korea. However, I couldn't confess my crimes because I thought that if I did so, the North would purge my family members living there."

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young , "LIBERAL PARTY LEADER SEEKS BREAKTHROUGH IN S-N IMPASSE", 2008/10/01) reported that the leader of the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) said that members of the party will always be ready to visit Pyongyang for dialogue with DPRK officials. Before making a one-day trip to the inter-Korean industrial park in the DPRK city of Gaeseong, Chairman Chung Sye-kyun said, "To help resolve the impasse in inter-Korean relations, our party will actively promote bipartisan talks," urging the Lee Myung-bak administration to implement the Oct. 4 summit declaration made last year.

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4. DPRK Missile Systems

Dong-A Ilbo ("INTELLIGENCE: N.KOREA TO TEST NEW MISSILE ", 2008/10/02) reported that the DPRK has made a sweeping renovation of its old launch pad for intercontinental missiles on its east coast and is preparing to test a new long-range missile, government sources in Seoul said. The Seoul sources said old launch facilities for Taepodong missiles have been replaced with new ones, and the missile base in Musudan-ri is being upgraded. "North Korea has replaced a tower crane that propped up the launch pad and is improving the stability of missile fitting such as reinforcing missile supporters," one source said. "We found that a facility needed for missile assembly and final inspection are being extended."

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5. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Joongang Ilbo ("KOREA AND JAPAN AGREE ON JOINT TEST NEAR DOKDO", 2008/10/01) reported that the ROK and Japan are expected to continue joint radioactivity contamination tests in the sea near Dokdo, the ROK-controlled islets called Takeshima in Japan, for three straight years, despite the recent flare-up in the territorial dispute over the islets. Since 2006, the two countries have been jointly conducting scientific tests on the impact of radioactive waste Russia dumped in the sea decades ago. "Both countries' exclusive economic zones overlap on the area in question, so we have been conducting the tests jointly for years," said the official.

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6. ROK-Japan Relations

The Korea Herald (Yoo Soh-jung , "KOREA, JAPAN TO TAKE JOINT STEPS IN DOWNTURN", 2008/10/02) reported that ROK and Japan wrapped up their seventh round of high-level talks for boosting economic ties in Seoul yesterday. The ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said the two sides exchanged views on the current conditions of their markets, as well as their economics and trade policies. The two countries, which began the talks on Wednesday, also agreed to strengthen cooperation to absorb the shocks from the global economic downturn. The areas considered include parts and raw materials, as well as boosting energy efficiency.

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7. ROK, Japan, PRC Economic Cooperation

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "LEE PROPOSESE MINISTERIAL TALKS WITH JAPAN, CHINA OVER GLOBAL TURMOIL", Seoul, 2008/10/03) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak on Friday proposed that the ROK, the PRC, and Japan hold a tripartite meeting between their finance ministers to discuss closer policy coordination in the face of global financial turmoil. The president also instructed his Cabinet ministers to immediately push to hold a bilateral finance ministerial meeting with Russia.

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8. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("U.S. SOUNDS OUT JAPAN ABOUT SECURITY TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION PACT", Tokyo, 2008/10/02) reported that the US has sounded out Japan about concluding a new pact on cooperation over national security technologies, including terrorism information exchanges and joint development of devices to detect dangerous materials, government sources said Thursday. The overture aims at cooperation not only in technological development but performance assessment and proof of the new technologies, the sources said.

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9. Japan Role in Iraq

Kyodo News ("JICA TO OPEN FIELD OFFICE IN NORTHERN IRAQ BY NEXT SPRING ", 2008/10/02) reported that Sadako Ogata, president of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, said that the aid body is preparing to open a field office in northern Iraq by next spring to implement projects such as water and electricity infrastructure construction. "The security in Iraq was such that we could not really send our own staff into the country. But there is considerable improvement and we are going to open our field office in Irbil" in the winter or next spring, Ogata told a news conference.

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10. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("ELECTION NOW LATER THAN NOV. 2 AS EXTRA BUDGET PASSAGE LIKELY DELAYED", Tokyo, 2008/10/02) reported that a general election is now expected to take place later than Nov. 2, as the parliamentary passage of an extra budget will be delayed due to Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa's trip abroad, lawmakers said Thursday. Some members of the ruling camp have begun advocating an election at a later date, possibly next year, as the LDP is currently lagging behind the opposition Democratic Party of Japan in opinion polls. Aso is expected to decide on the timing of an election by keeping an eye on the economic situation and public opinion, the lawmakers said.

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11. Japan SDF Leak

The Asahi Shimbun ("SDF COLONEL FIRED FOR LEAKING SECRETS", 2008/10/02) reported that an Air Self-Defense Force colonel was dismissed Thursday for leaking classified intelligence data about a PRC submarine to a newspaper in 2005. Hideki Kitazumi, 50, provided information on the PRC Navy vessel's operations to a Yomiuri Shimbun reporter on May 30, 2005, even though he knew it had the highest classification given to defense secrets. He admitted to the allegations, Defense Ministry officials said.

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12. Russo-Japanese Relations

The Mainichi Daily News ("MEMORIAL BUILT FOR JAPANESE SOLDIERS WHO DIED IN RUSSIAN POW CAMP ", 2008/10/01) reported that a memorial for 19 members of the Imperial Japanese Army who were taken prisoner during the Russo-Japanese war and held at a camp in Novgorod Oblast in northwestern Russia, was unveiled last Sunday to around 300 local residents and relatives of former prisoners. The memorial -- the first of its kind -- was set up by director of the Tokyo Institute of Russian Language Yoshihiko Mori, 55, who started examining the graves in 2003, and the local village council.

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13. Sino-Indian Trade Relations

Calcutta News ("CHINA OPTS FOR TRADE DIPLOMACY WITH INDIA TO RESTORE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE", 2008/10/02) reported that the PRC has opted for trade diplomacy to restore trust and confidence in ties with India. A 70-member business delegation from the PRC, comprising all the major PRC companies, is arriving here next week on the first-ever 'government procurement' mission to India that Beijing hopes will reduce the nine-billion dollar plus trade gap that exists between the countries.

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14. PRC Environment

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "CHINA KEEPS CAR RULES IMPOSED FOR OLYMPICS ", Beijing , 2008/10/02) reported that the government began taking 30 percent of its cars in the capital off the roads Wednesday in an attempt to make permanent some of the traffic restrictions imposed during the Olympic Games, officials and media reports said. Beginning Oct. 11, PRC motorists will also stop driving one workday a week, based on the final number on their license plates. The new rules should take 800,000 vehicles off the roads each day, according to reports quoting Wang Zhaorong of Beijing's Municipal Traffic Committee.

Environmental Protection Online ("SURVEY: MORE CHINESE VALUE ENVIRONMENT OVER ECONOMY", 2008/09/30) reported that survey data presented on Sept. 19 at the Economist Conferences' Fifth PRC Branding Roundtable in Beijing indicate that 31 percent of PRC consumers identify the environment as a higher priority than the economy. "This is the first round of Green Brands research we've conducted in China, and we have found the results fascinating," said Annie Longworth, Cohn & Wolfe's Global Sustainability Practice leader. "The results indicate that Chinese consumers are highly conscious of the state of the environment and are eager to play an active role in affecting not only their own behaviors, but also those of Chinese regulators and businesses."

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15. PRC AIDS Issue

Bloomberg (Nicole Ostrow, "CHINA'S AIDS EPIDEMIC SPREADING FAST BY SEX CONTACT, STUDY SAYS ", 2008/10/02) reported that the AIDS virus is infecting more women, heterosexual couples and gay men in the PRC as the epidemic spreads from intravenous drug users to the general population, a study has found. Infections transmitted by heterosexual contact rose to 38 percent of all cases in 2006, according to a study in Yunnan province. The proportion of cases in intravenous drug abusers in Yunnan declined to 40 percent that year after accounting for 100 percent of all infections in 1989. Nationally, infections have risen in women and shot up eightfold among men who have sex with other men.

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16. PRC Public Health

The Associated Press (Ambika Ahuja, "THAI IMPORTER TO RETURN POWERED MILK TO CHINA ", Bangkok , 2008/10/02) reported that Thai dairy producer indicated its intention to return 122 tons of newly imported powered milk to the PRC regardless whether or not tests show the milk is contaminated by melamine. Thirayuth Chaisawangwong, president of the Dutch Mill Group, stated his priority is Thai consumers' safety and "we don't want to take any risk even if the test is negative," although the test results were expected by the end of week. The Thai drug agency reported that nearly 100 imports suspected of melamine contamination from China have been tested.

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17. PRC Internet Control

The New York Times ("SURVEILLANCE OF SKYPE MESSAGES FOUND IN CHINA ", San Francisco,) reported that a group of Canadian human-rights activists and computer security researchers has discovered a huge surveillance system in China that monitors and archives certain Internet text conversations that include politically charged words. The system tracks text messages sent by customers of Tom-Skype, a joint venture between a PRC wireless operator and eBay, the Web auctioneer that owns Skype, an online phone and text messaging service. The discovery draws more attention to the PRC government's Internet monitoring and filtering efforts.

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