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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Issue

Associated Press ("JAPAN, U.S. TO PUSH CREDIBLE NUKE VERIFICATION REGIME FOR N. KOREA", Washington D.C., 2008/10/29) reported that Japan's top nuclear negotiator, Akitaka Saiki, said Tuesday he and his U.S. counterpart, Christopher Hill, agreed on the need to put together a credible mechanism to check the DPRK's nuclear information. "We agreed that it is very important to turn a recent U.S.-North Korean deal on a verification mechanism into a neatly-documented six-party accord," Saiki told reporters at the Japanese Embassy in Washington. Saiki said he also thanked the United States for helping Japan's efforts to resolve a row with DPRK over Pyongyang's past abductions of Japanese nationals, and called for Washington's continued support.

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2. DPRK Leadership

Associated Press (Jean Lee, "REPORT: N. KOREA'S KIM SUFFERS 'SEROIUS' SETBACK", Seoul, 2008/10/29) reported that ailing DPRK leader Kim Jong Il suffered a serious setback in his recovery from a stroke and has been hospitalized, a newspaper reported Wednesday. The report in the Dong-a Ilbo newspaper cited an unnamed government official in saying intelligence obtained Sunday suggested "a serious problem" with Kim's health. The report did not elaborate, and the ROK's National Intelligence Service and Unification Ministry said Wednesday they could not confirm it.

Reuters (Yoo Choonsik, "NORTH KOREAN PAPER SAYS KIM JONG-IL HAD BUSY SUMMER", Pyongyang, 2008/10/28) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il had an exceptionally busy time in July and August, a DPRK weekly reported. "It is not a memory of the sizzling heat. It is the remembrances of inspection tours leader Kim Jong-il had made to army units and industrial sectors in mid-summer," The Pyongyang Times, an English-language weekly, said in its latest edition released at the weekend. The weekly did not provide any word on Kim's activities since August. It said Kim had visited over 30 places during the 20 hottest days of the year and traveled about 4,000

km (2,500 miles) to see soldiers in military posts and workers in factories and farmers in the fields.

Mainichi Daily News ("NORTH KOREAN LEADER KIM JONG-IL BANS LONG HAIR FOR MEN", Beijing, 2008/10/20) reported that in his first reported appearance following news of his hospitalization, DPRK leader Kim Jong Il lost his temper while watching a college soccer match, denouncing several players' long hair as "disgusting," according to a source close to the DPRK government. The outburst was followed by a nationwide ban on long hair for men. According to an insider, after realizing that several of the Kim Il-sung University players were sporting long hair, Kim said "I can't tell if this is men's soccer or women's soccer."

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3. DPRK Politics

The Korea Times (Michael Ha, "MAJOR CHANGES ARE COMING TO N. KOREA", 2008/10/29) reported that Marcus Noland, an expert on the DPRK economy at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, forecast that within the next decade, major economic and political changes are likely to take place in the DPRK. "I would be very surprised if we sat down 10 years from now and North Korea had not changed significantly,'' Noland said.

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4. DPRK Economy

The Institute of Far Eastern Studies ("GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS HITS DPRK ECONOMY BY WAY OF CHINA", 2008/10/29) reported that contacts within the DPRK are reporting that the DPRK people are becoming very anxious over the possibility of the international economic crisis having a long term impact as not only exports have dropped, but even cross-border smuggling is taking a hit. Recently, as PRC traders have more than halved the price of the DPRK’s main export goods such as minerals and scrap iron, the DPRK’s markets and even construction industry have felt the blow. Furthermore, it has been leaked that since last week, businesses in the DPRK have been shutting their doors as a result of the financial crisis. Mines in Hyesan have halted exports of lead and zinc, and smuggled goods have also dropped significantly as well.

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5. DPRK Food Production

Xinhua ("OFFICIAL: DPRK FOOD PRODUCTION EXPECTED TO INCREAS 17%", Pyongyang, 2008/10/29) reported that the food production in the DPRK is expected to reach 4.68 million tons in 2008, up 17 percent from last year, Ri Il-Sop, director of external cooperation department of DPRK's Ministry of Agriculture told Xinhua Wednesday. The country is still in food shortage, and the top priority is to secure supply to the most needed region. Ri blamed food shortage on floods as well as lack of fuel and fertilizer.

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6. DPRK Military

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA DEVELOPING SPECIAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES: OFFICIALS", Seoul, 2008/10/29) reported that the DPRK is working to develop special warfare capabilities in addition to missiles and nuclear weapons, the ROK's military intelligence office said Wednesday. "In addition to placing a large amount of effort into developing nuclear weapons and missiles, North Korea is increasing its special warfare capabilities based on lessons from the war in Iraq," Defense Ministry officials were quoted as saying during a parliamentary inspection of the ministry's intelligence bureau.

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7. DPRK-Chinese relations

Xinhua ("CHINA, DPRK TO ENHANCE WATER RESOURCE COOPERATION", Pyongyang, 2008/10/29) reported that the PRC and the DPRK pledged here Wednesday to enhance cooperation in the management of water resources shared by the two nations. A visiting delegation from the PRC Ministry of Water Resources and its DPRK counterparts held a meeting and reported on the hydrological condition of cross-border water. The two sides were satisfied with achievements made in the cooperation in hydrological technology and vowed to increase cooperation and communication in this area. They also reached a consensus on improving flood-control capability, strengthening hydrological supervision and personnel training.

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8. DPRK-Japan Relations

Reuters (Yoko Kubota, "JAPAN MAY CONSIDER MORE SACTIONS ON N. KOREA; KYODO", Tokyo, 2008/10/29) reported that Japan might need to impose more sanctions on the DPRK in an attempt to resolve a feud over Japanese kidnapped by Pyongyang, Kyodo News Agency quoted the deputy government spokesman as saying on Wednesday. Earlier this month, Tokyo extended for another six months its economic sanctions against the DPRK. The sanctions include a ban on imports. "What is important is whether we can generate enough pressure to make North Korea really feel troubled," Kyodo quoted Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Iwao Uruma as saying at a meeting where officials discussed the issue of abductees. "It is necessary to devise ways to apply pressure in the future."

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9. ROK Role in Iraq

Yonhap News (Byun Duk-kun, "S. KOREAN TROOPS IN IRAQ TO PULL OUT BY DEC. 20 OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2008/10/29) reported that all ROK troops currently stationed in the northern Iraqi city of Irbil will be pulled out before the end of this year, ending the country's four-year presence, a spokesman for the Defense Ministry said Wednesday. The pullout comes as a one-year extension of the ROK's troop deployment expires at the end of this year.

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10. Japan on Climate Change

Agence France-Presse ("CHARLES, ASO AGREE TO COOPERATE IN FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE", Tokyo, 2008/10/29) reported that Britain's Prince Charles and Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso agreed here Wednesday that their countries should cooperate in fighting climate change, Japanese officials said. Charles stressed the importance of forest conservation in stopping global warming during a 40-minute meeting with the prime minister at a hotel here, the officials said. "We wish to join Britain in exercising leadership in the field of climate change," Aso was quoted as telling the heir to the British throne, who has long championed environmental causes.

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11. PRC Tibet Issue

BBC News ("CHINA IN DALAI LAMA TALKS OFFER", 2008/10/29) reported that PRC authorities are to arrange fresh talks with envoys of the Dalai Lama "in the near future", the PRC state news agency Xinhua has said. The agency quoted an unnamed government official as saying the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet should "treasure this opportunity" and respond positively.

Associated Press (Audra Ang, "DALAI LAMA'S ENVOYS TO ARRIVE IN BEIJING THURSDAY", Beijing, 2008/10/30) reported that two envoys of the Dalai Lama, Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltsen, headed to the PRC on Thursday for fresh talks. The envoys will be in Beijing for about a week, said Thupten Samphel, spokesman for the Tibetan government-in-exile. PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu confirmed that the talks would take place but declined to give further details.

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12. PRC-Kazakhstan Relations

Xinhua News ("PREMIER WEN VISITS RUSSIA, KAZAKHSTAN, ATTENDS SCO MEETING", Astana, 2008/10/29) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao arrived here Wednesday evening, starting a three-day official visit to Kazakhstan at the invitation of Kazakh Prime Minister Karim Masimov. Wen is scheduled to attend the 7th prime ministers' meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). In a written statement upon his arrival at the airport, Wen spoke highly of the sound development of Sino-Kazakh relations since the two countries forged diplomatic ties 16 years ago. The PRC premier also expressed the belief that his visit would be a success given the efforts by both sides.

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13. Cross Strait Relations

New York Times (Edward Wong, "CHINA: MORE TALKS WITH TAIWAN", 2008/10/28) reported that negotiators for Taiwan and the PRC will meet in Taiwan next week to complete a set of transportation agreements, according to a report on Tuesday from the news agency of the Kuomintang, the governing party of Taiwan. It would be the first meeting since the negotiators

signed an agreement in June authorizing the start of weekend charter flights between the PRC and Taiwanese cities. In the talks set for next Monday through Friday, the two sides' main negotiating bodies are expected to agree to expand the charter flights to run every other day, and to strengthen maritime links.

Associated Press (Annie Huang, "TAIWAN PRESIDENT SAYS HE WILL MEET CHINESE ENVOY", Taipei, 2008/10/30) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou said in a television interview Wednesday he will meet with Chen Yunlin, chairman of the PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait, next week. "I will receive them in the capacity of the president of the Republic of China," Ma said. Ma said he hoped Chen would refer to him as president.

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14. PRC Land Reforms

Washington Post (Maureen Fan, "IN SOUTHEAST CHINA, SKEPTICISM ON LAND REFORMS", Hebu, PRC, 2008/10/29) reported that despite the PRC government's recently announced land reforms, designed to curb demonstations of rural unrest, there is still a large number of people who say the changes do not address their main grievance: corruption. The stated land reforms allow farmers to directly transfer their land, still technically owned by the state, to developers or other businesses. "I don't think this will give us more protection," said a farmer in the village of Xianyi, two hours' drive from Hebu, who gave his surname as Li. "We have no expectations. We just hope the government will not further take away our land, because we live on the land. If it's sold, we will lose our livelihoods." Farmers were also quoted as saying that compensation for seized land has been virtually nonexistent and that the transfers seemed primarily designed to line the pockets of party officials.

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15. PRC Food Safety

Bloomberg (Wing-Gar Cheng, "MELAMINE CASE WIDENS TO EGGS, FLAVORED BODY PAINT (UPDATE 1)", Hong Kong, 2008/10/29) reported that melamine was found in more foodstuffs across Asia. Retailers in Hong Kong were told to stop selling eggs from a processor in Hubei province, after the city's Centre for Food Safety found melamine in a sample. In Thailand, the Food and Drug Administration said it found a "high level'' of the chemical in Orphic brand milk chocolate made by the PRC's Tian Jin Heijingang Foodstuff Ltd.

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA FINDS MELAMINE IN CHINESE JELLY PRODUCT", Seoul, 2008/10/29) reported that melamine has been detected in a PRC jelly product used to make locally sold sweets, the ROK government announced Wednesday. The ROK Food and Drug Administration (KFDA) said it found 18.1 parts per million (ppm) of melamine in "Haspi," a semi-finished jelly product imported by a local confectionery company from the PRC's Hebeilangfang Aolifa Group.

Shanghai Daily (Yang Lifei, "CITY BEGINS MELAMINE TESTS ON EGGS", Shanghai, 2008/10/29) reported that Shanghai has included a routine melamine test during its monthly checks, the Shanghai Food and Drug Administration said as eggs from Shanxi Province have been found to

contain excessive amounts of the industrial chemical melamine in neighboring Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. The spot check on eggs in Shanghai started yesterday morning and city supermarkets have stopped selling eggs by Hanwei, a Dalian City-based company in Liaoning Province, a Shanghai newspaper said today. In Hangzhou, eggs by Shanxi Changzhi Green Biology Development Co were tested to have melamine of 3.5 parts per million. The legal limit is 2.5ppm, according to Xinhua news agency.

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16. PRC Military Exercise

Xinhua ("CHINA'S MILITARY EXERCISE OPENS TO FOREIGN STUDENTS IN CENTRAL CHINA", Zhengzhou, Jiangsu, 2008/10/27) reported that a group of foreign students studying at PRC's military academies will watch parts of a military exercise code-named "Vanguard-2008" being held at the central PRC's Henan Province on Monday night. The 179 foreigners, from 67 countries, are mostly first year students at the Beijing based China's University of National Defense and the Nanjing Army Command College in eastern Jiangsu Province. It is the largest group of foreign military students to observe a military exercise of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

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17. PRC Climate Change

Kyodo News ("CHINA WARNS OF 'DIFFICULTIES' IN CUTTING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS", Beijing, 2008/10/28) reported that the PRC, the world's second largest emitter of greenhouse gases, warned Wednesday of the difficulties it faces in tackling the problem and called on developed countries to help it. A policy document released by the government said China recognized that climate change will have a major impact on the country, including more extreme weather conditions, floods, droughts and rising sea- levels. "China's ongoing industrialization process and coal-dominated energy mix determine that its task of controlling greenhouse gas emissions is a tough one," the document said.

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II. PRC Report

18. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Xinhua News Agency ("CHINA, RUSSIA PLEDGE TO ENHANCE COOPERATION IN ENERGY", 2008/10/26) reported that the PRC and Russia issued a joint communique in Moscow on Tuesday, pledging to strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, science and technology and environmental protection. On energy, both sides agreed to support cooperation in oil and gas, including long-term trade of crude oil, the construction of oil pipelines linking Russia and the RPC, the upstream and downstream cooperation in oil fields, natural gas supply and the establishment of natural gas processing and chemical enterprises. The two nations will further deepen cooperation in electric power including Russia's resumption of electricity sale to the PRC. Both sides will continue

cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, including the construction of Tianwan Nuclear Power Plant, uranium mining, post-processing of spent fuel and the circulation of nuclear waste.

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19. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua Net ("TAIWAN INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATIONS WELCOME ARATS CHIEF'S VISIT", 2008/10/28) reported that seven industrial and commercial associations in Taiwan on Tuesday voiced support and welcome for the visit of mainland-based Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS) president Chen Yunlin. The associations said in a joint statement that although different parties on the island hold different opinions about Chen's visit, the associations, concerned about Taiwan's economic development, want to express support to the authority's invitation of Chen to have dialogue.

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