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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse (P. Parameswaran, "NUCLEAR SANCTIONS ON NKOREA TO REMAIN: US", Washington, 2007/12/04) reported that the US will mantain nuclear sanctions on the DPRK even if it removes the hardline nation from a US list of state sponsors of terrorism, the State Department said. It dismissed concerns that such a step, widely expected after the DPRK's decision to disband its nuclear arsenal under a multilateral deal, would lead to construction of new nuclear reactors in that country. "Such nuclear cooperation is not the goal or intent of the six-party process," said Jeffrey Bergner, the assistant secretary of state for legislative affairs.

Associated Press (Audra Ang, "US ENVOY: NKOREA DISABLEMENT ON SCHEDULE", Beijing, 2007/12/05) reported that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hil said Wednesday that efforts to disable the DPRK's reactor by year's end are going as scheduled, but work needs to continue if deadlines are to be met. Hill said the DPRK was "working hard on a declaration" and that he had made clear that it needed to be "complete and comprehensive." "I'm sure they will be prepared to meet the deadline," he said.

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2. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA NAMES DELEGATION ON EVE OF TALKS", 2007/12/04) reported that DPRK Vice Premier Jon Sung-hun will lead a delegation to the first meeting of a joint committee for inter-Korean economic cooperation at the Grand Hilton Hotel in Seoul from Tuesday to Thursday. The meeting will focus on economic cooperation as a follow-up to the inter-Korean summit declaration in early October. Analysts say the scheduled meeting is unlikely to yield substantial results, since Pyongyang notified Seoul of the roster of delegates just a day ahead of the meeting and rejected any talks to discuss the agenda in advance.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA PROPOSES EXPANSION OF NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT WITH S. KOREA", Seoul, 2007/12/04) reported that the DPRK proposed expanding joint development of its natural resources with the ROK at inter-Korean economic talks under way in Seoul, a Seoul official said. "The North has proposed to establish an additional working-level subcommittee for cooperation on resource development," said Kim Jung-tae, a ROK Unification Ministry official attending the talks that began earlier in the day. The proposal comes amid ROK hopes that the two sides can explore a rare oil field off the DPRK's west coast.

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3. US on Korean Peace Treaty

Yonhap ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS 4-NATION SUMMIT AFTER N.K.'S NUCLEAR DISCLOSURE", Seoul, 2007/12/04) reported that the ROK and the US agreed to seek a four-nation summit to declare a formal end to the Korean War, providing that Pyongyang fully discloses its nuclear stockpile, officials from Seoul said. Baek Jong-chun, the chief presidential secretary for security policy, met with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley on Monday to brief them on recent inter-Korean contacts, including those between defense ministers and a visit to Seoul by a senior Pyongyang official.

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4. ROK Politics

Financial Times (Anna Fifield, "S KOREANS SEEK MORE FORCEFUL LEADERSHIP", Seoul, 2007/12/04) reported that South Koreans head to the polls two weeks from today to choose a successor to President Roh Moo-hyun amid disappointment over his failure to deliver reforms. Fears over the state of the ROK’s economy and what some see as its declining growth potential have shaped up as a central issue ahead of the December 19 poll. Many Koreans are unimpressed with the choice of candidates with recent newspaper surveys showing that up to 35 per cent of voters remain undecided over who to support. “There is no vision, no policy, no big picture – it’s very unfortunate that we Koreans will be forced to pick the lesser of evils,” says Kim Sung-ho, a professor of political science at Yonsei University. “But the one thing that the current president has shown is that the country can run along regardless of who is in power.”

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5. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Agence France-Presse (Hiroshi Hiyama, "JAPAN PM PLEADS FOR 'WAR ON TERROR' MISSION", Tokyo, 2007/12/04) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda pleaded with the opposition to allow Japan to rejoin the US-led "war on terror," saying that international operations were achieving progress in Afghanistan. "We must realise the significance of the refueling activities in the Indian Ocean," Fukuda told the foreign affairs committee of the upper house. "I believe achievements are being made. Why is it then our nation cannot join the operation?" Fukuda said.

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6. Japan Politics

Reuters (Teruaki Ueno, "JAPAN PARTIES WOULD SPLIT VOTE IN SNAP POLL: REPORT", Tokyo, 2007/12/04) reported that Japan's main opposition party would run neck and neck with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party if a snap election were called, a poll showed, a finding that could make the prime minister wary of calling an early vote. No lower house election need be held until late 2009, but some pundits and lawmakers say Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda could call one early next year if

the political stalemate deepens over a bill to restart a naval mission supporting U.S.-led operations in Afghanistan. The national poll of voters found 32 percent of respondents would vote for the ruling LDP if a snap election were called, while the same number would pick the opposition Democratic Party, the Asahi newspaper said.

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7. Japan Missile Defense Program

The Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "JAPAN BOLSTERS MISSILE SHIELD AROUND TOKYO, PLANS FIRST INTERCEPTOR TEST", Tokyo, 2007/12/04) reported that Japan has deployed two missile defense detachments near Tokyo and plans major drills around its capital and its first sea-based interceptor test off Hawaii this month, underscoring its missile arms race with neighboring DPRK and PRC. Defense Ministry officials said Japan is installing its second "PAC-3" Patriot missile defense system at an air base just east of Tokyo. The first was set up west of Tokyo in March and nine more are to be readied around the country by March 2011. The deployment comes as the Defense Ministry is planning to conduct anti-ballistic missile drills throughout the city, testing for communications obstacles or other problems in the surrounding areas.

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8. Sino-US Relations

The Associated Press (Foster Klug, "CHINA SAYS US AGREES: FORGET NAVY SPAT", Washington, 2007/12/04) reported that PRC and American military officials have agreed to put behind them a dispute over the PRC's refusal to allow port calls to Hong Kong by U.S. Navy warships, a PRC official said. In a meeting Monday between Eric Edelman, U.S. undersecretary of defense for policy, and Lt. Gen. Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of the general staff for foreign affairs, the Kitty Hawk issue came up but "was not one of the major points that was discussed," said Wang Baodong, a spokesman for the PRC Embassy. "The two sides agreed to put the issue behind them," Wang said.

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9. Sino-Indian Military Relations

United Press International ("INDIA, CHINA TO CONDUCT MILITARY EXERCISE", New Delhi, 2007/12/04) reported that in a sign of growing ties since their 1962 war, India and the PRC reportedly will hold their first exercise this month in the PRC's Chengdu military region. The BBC, quoting Indian defense spokesman Wing Cmdr. R.K. Das, reported the military exercise jointly by the world's two largest armies will be held between Dec. 20 and Dec. 28. Das said the exercise will involve a company of troops each with the focus on a special anti-terrorism drill. "The Chinese value our long experience in handling insurgency and terrorism," he was quoted as saying.

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10. PRC Media Control

Reuters (Nick Mulvenney, "CHINA WELCOMES "FAIR AND OBJECTIVE" MEDIA TO GAMES", Beijing, 2007/12/04) reported that the PRC responded to criticism of its record on media freedom by reiterating that foreign journalists would be welcome to cover next year's Beijing Olympics "in a fair and objective way." Rights group Reporters Without Borders last week sent an open letter to International Olympic Committee president Jacques Rogge detailing what they described as abuse of journalists and accusing him of allowing it to happen by remaining silent. Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang told a regular news conference that the Paris-based group had "consistently attacked China." "We have emphasized that with the upcoming Olympics, the Chinese government and people sincerely welcome reporters from around the world to come to China and cover the Games in a fair and objective way," Qin added.

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11. US and PRC on Climate Change Issue

Bloomberg (Alex Morales and Kim Chipman, "BALI GLOBAL WARMING SUCCESS MAY DEPEND ON CHINA, U.S. AGREEMENT", 2007/12/04) reported that cobbling a global treaty to slow the planet's warming may require an unprecedented agreement between the US and the PRC, the world's largest greenhouse gas polluters. The PRC and the US each say they want the other to take on binding commitments to limit emissions in order to participate in a new accord. The PRC's officials says the country needs to expand its economy, while the Bush administration says it is concerned that emissions caps will harm economic competitiveness Both nations will have to make concessions in a new deal, says U.K. Environment Minister Phil Woolas, a Bali participant.

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II. ROK Report

12. DPRK Kidnappings of ROK Citizens

Dailian (Byun Yoon-jae, "'CAN I SEE JUST THE DEAD BODY OF MY FRIEND?'", Seoul, 2007/12/05) reported that Lee Guang-pil, a friend of an ROK citizen who was kidnapped to the DPRK in 1987, has demonstrated by driving a car placard attached saying, "Return the dead body and the death date." He is a singer, enterpriser, and a public relations spokesperson of the council of the families of people kidnapped to the DPRK. He said that he is doing it to find the dead body of his old friend and to comfort families in grief. Also he said that the government should take an active stance against kidnapping cases, not disregard them.

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13. Inter-Korean Exchanges

Naver news ("STARTING THE KAESONG SIGHTSEEING", Seoul, 2007/12/05) reported that Kaesong sightseeing has been started from Dec. 4 by Hyundai. The sightseeing schedule is for one day and it uses a railroad car, the Kyungui line. A tourist party, which had 360 people including 250 tourists, reporters, and staff set out for the first day. The oldest and youngest tourists got a bunch of flowers

as a souvenir. Also, Hyundai offers three courses which basically include Goryeo Museum and Kaesong industrial complex.

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