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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Program

Associated Press ("ROK: DPRK BUILDING BASE FOR BIGGER MISSILES", Seoul, 2008/11/04) reported that a new DPRK missile launch site under construction is designed to fire rockets even more advanced than those already capable of reaching the western U.S., ROK's defense minister said Tuesday. Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee told parliament that construction of the new site on DPRK's west coast began eight years ago and was about 80% complete. The site in the village of Dongchang-ni appears to be designed to launch "a bigger-sized missile or satellite projectile" than rockets deployed from the DPRK's east coast facility.

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2. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Program

Kyodo News ("JAPAN READY TO DROP SOME DEMANDS FOR 6-PARTY DOCUMENT", Tokyo, 2008/11/04) reported that Japan is ready to drop some of its demands regarding a document to be compiled at the next six-party nuclear talks as long as it leads to proper verification of DPRK's nuclear programs, a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. The Japanese government will not dwell on its demands that the document, which will spell out verification measures, include references to checking DPRK for uranium enrichment and nuclear proliferation activities, the official said.

New York Times (Choe Sang-Hun, "DPRK OPEN TO ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUPPLIERS", 2008/11/02) reported that nations that are not involved in the six-party process are welcome to provide energy assistance to DPRK, a diplomat from the DPRK said today. "As long as 1 million tons are ensured, it does not matter who gives it to us," DPRK Foreign Ministry researcher Ri Pyong Dok told Kyodo News. Ri reaffirmed Pyongyang's desire to push Japan out of the negotiations.

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3. DPRK Food Supply

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "DPRK BACK ON THE BRINK OF FAMINE - STUDY", Seoul, 2008/11/04) reported that DPRK has fallen into a grain deficit that has caused food prices to shoot up, its citizens to die from a lack of food and pushed the impoverished state to the brink of famine, a study obtained on Tuesday said. The problem has been exacerbated by donors cutting food and fertiliser aid in response to Pyongyang ratcheting up security concerns, according to the study by Marcus Noland and Stephan Haggard for the U.S.-based Peterson Institute for International Economics. "It looks to us like aggregate supply is on a knife's edge. That means that stuff has to be spread around incredibly equitably to avoid some serious localised shortages and deaths," Haggard said.

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4. Inter-Korea Relations

Agence France-Presse ("ANTI-PYONGYANG ACTIVISTS VOW TO SEND MORE LEAFLETS TO DPRK", Seoul, 2008/11/04) reported that a group of DPRK defectors said Tuesday they would deliver more leaflets criticizing the DPRK's leader Kim Jong Il across the border, despite appeals from Seoul and threats from Pyongyang. The Fighters for Free DPRK said they would scatter 100,000 leaflets borne by balloons on Wednesday, taking advantage of winds expected to blow northward. It said it would continue the leaflet launches "no matter how Kim Jong Il rants, no matter how the (South Korean) government is cowed with fear."

Korea Herald (Song Sang-ho, "LAWMAKERS TABLE SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE INTER-KOREAN TIES", 2008/11/04) reported that lawmakers proposed an array of measures aimed at thawing the freeze in inter-Korean relations in a question and answer session with the government yesterday. But finger-pointing over the strained ties represented differing views on specifics, although most concurred that the government should act quickly to enhance ties with Pyongyang amid improving U.S.-DPRK relations. "Now is the opportune time to break the impasse with the North. I propose dispatching to the North a special envoy, who the North and South both recognize, such as former President Kim Dae-jung," said Rep. Nam Kyung-pil of the ruling Grand National Party.

Chosun Ilbo ("DIPLOMATIC ADVISORY BOARD TO BE LAUNCHED", 2008/11/04) reported that the ROK presidential office will on Wednesday launch a group that will offer advice on diplomacy, reunification of the two Koreas, and national security to President Lee Myung-bak. An official of the presidential office said Monday the 10-member group will be chaired by former foreign minister Han Seung-joo. An official of the presidential office said, “It is not an official group, like the Presidential Council on National Competitiveness,” continuing that “President Lee formed this group to seek opinions from specialists in different areas because now is a crucial time to establish effective policies on diplomacy and national security.”

Associated Press ("ROK JOINS U.N. TO CONDEMN ABUSE IN DPRK", Seoul, 2008/11/04) reported that ROK has co-sponsored a U.N. resolution condemning DPRK's alleged human rights abuses for the first time, a Foreign Ministry official said Tuesday. The ROK plans to vote for the resolution at a U.N. General Assembly session later this month, the official said. "To interfere in the internal affairs of other countries under the pretext of 'human rights situation' is an intolerable encroachment upon independent sovereign states," the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency said Tuesday.

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5. DPRK-Japan Relations

Yonhap News Agency ("DPRK BLASTS JAPAN'S HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION AGAINST IT", Seoul, 2008/11/04) reported that Japan's ongoing endeavor to present a human rights resolution against DPRK is an intolerable violation of its sovereignty, DPRK media said Tuesday. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said that Japan, in collusion with the EU, is busy working out the draft resolution to the U.N. committee in a bid to to put it on the agenda of the 63rd UN General Assembly late this month.

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6. ROK Environment

JoonAng Ilbo (Kim Sang-jin , "RAMSAR ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON PRESERVATION OF RICE PADDIESDELEGATES SAY PADDIES ARE WETLAND TREASURES", 2008/11/05 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that whether rice paddies can be regarded as wetlands was a hotly debated topic at the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, or Ramsar, which ended its week-long program yesterday. ROK and Japan took the position that “rice paddies are not only a food supply base, but also a treasury of migratory birds and various animals and plants.” The resolution’s passing is likely to put a brake on the recent trend in ROK of declining rice paddies. “The resolution will cause the Korean government to take an interest in the development and promotion of environment-friendly agricultural techniques for sustainable management of rice fields,” said Choi Jin-ryong, a professor of agriculture and life science at Gyeongsang National University.

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7. ROK Climate Change

Yonhap News Agency (Lee Joon-seung, "ROK SCIENTISTS DEVELOP CLEAN, NON-CEMENT CONCRETE", Seoul, 2008/11/03) reported that a non-cement concrete that can help cut back on greenhouse gas emissions has been developed by ROK scientists, the government said Monday. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said a team of scientists led by Chonnam National University professor Song Jin-kyu created a concrete that eliminates cement altogether from the key building material.

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8. ROK Nuclear Waste

Dong-A Ilbo ("RADIOACTIVE WASTE BEING STORED IN SEOUL, DAEJEON", 2008/11/04) reported that the ROK Atomic Energy Research Institute has kept low and intermediate levels of radioactive waste in Seoul and Daejeon, a report by the think tank said yesterday. In the report submitted to ruling Grand National Party lawmaker Kim Jung-hoon, the institute has stored 1,163 drums (a drum equals 200 liters) of the waste in a building of the Korea Electric Power Corp.’s central training

complex in northern Seoul. The waste was generated from 2001, when the institute dismantled its two nuclear facilities inside the training complex. Also, a temporary building of the institute in Daejeon has kept 11,074 drums of radioactive waste since 1985. The government is building a disposal site for the waste cover more than two square kilometers in Gyeongju, North Gyeongsang Province, slated for completion in 2010.

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9. Japan Missile Defense

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT MAY PROPOSE MISSILE-DEFENSE SATELLITE", 2008/11/04) reported that the government's headquarters for space development strategy looks set to call for discussions on the introduction of an early warning satellite capable of detecting the launch of an enemy ballistic missile, according to a draft plan obtained by the Yomiuri Shimbun. The proposal forms part of the draft plan, which is aimed at promoting the use of rockets and satellites for defense purposes. The draft plan said it might be necessary to add small and medium-sized rockets to the nation's arsenal, in addition to the large H-2A rockets that currently form part of it.

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10. Japan Nuclear Power

Associated Press ("IAEA TO REASSESS QUAKE-HIT JAPAN NUCLEAR FACILITY", Vienna, 2008/11/03) reported that the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency says inspectors will return to Japan early next month to take another look at a nuclear facility damaged by an earthquake in 2007. The International Atomic Energy Agency says a team will re-examine the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa complex from Dec. 1-5. The facility was rocked by a magnitude-6.8 quake in July 2007 that caused malfunctions and leaks at the plant — the world's largest by capacity. It has been shut down ever since. The Vienna-based IAEA said Tuesday that the team of 10 experts will reassess safety measures designed to deal with the ongoing threat of earthquakes.

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11. Japan Food Safety

Reuters ("CHINA ACCUSES JAPAN OF MORE TOXIC SOY SAUCE", Beijing, 2008/11/04) reported that PRC says it has found toxic substances in imported Japanese soy sauce for the second time in less than a week, adding to a string of tit-for-tat accusations over food safety between the countries. Quarantine officials in Tianjin, east of Beijing, now say they have found arsenic five times beyond acceptable amounts in a Japanese brand of soy sauce, the country's quality watchdog said in a statement on Tuesday.

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12. PRC Freedom of Press

Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, Zhao Liang, "REPORTER'S SUIT CHALLENGES PRC'S MEDIA

CONTROLS", Beijing, 2008/11/04) reported that a PRC reporter whose weekly publication was closed for three months after she wrote an article that criticized one of PRC's largest banks has sued the government, her lawyer said Tuesday. In a rare challenge to Communist Party control over PRC media, journalist Cui Fan filed a lawsuit last Wednesday charging that authorities did not have the right to shut down the PRC Business Post for publishing her article that alleged the Agricultural Bank of PRC had committed forgery. "It is part of this trend of individual writers and editors pushing against the system," said David Bandurski, who studies the Chinese press for the Hong Kong-based China Media Project.

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13. PRC Human Rights

Financial Times ("BEIJING PROMISES HUMAN RIGHTS INITIATIVE", Beijing, 2008/11/04) reported that PRC is to draft its first “national action plan” on human rights which will propose ways to “expand democracy and strengthen the rule of law”, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday. The plan, to be drafted by a panel including government officials and legal and human rights experts, would be a blueprint for future reform, the report said. In February, PRC is scheduled to face a review by the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva.

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14. PRC Tibet Issue

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, Henry Sanderson, "PRC BLASTS DALAI LAMA OVER NEGOTIATIONS DOUBTS", Beijing, 2008/11/04) reported that PRC's state media launched a scathing attack Tuesday on the Dalai Lama over recent comments expressing doubt over the usefulness of new talks between Beijing and his Tibetan government-in-exile. "By stressing his 'disappointment' over the contacts and negotiations, the Dalai Lama deliberately adopted a pathetic posture only in an attempt to draw public attention and sympathy," Xinhua said. "His 'disappointment' also showed his reluctance to give up his stance to seek 'Tibetan independence,'" Xinhua said.

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15. PRC Energy

BioenergySite News Desk ("PRC GOVERNMENT APPROVES THREE WIND FARMS", 2008/11/03) reported that the Hebei Chengde Dongbaliang Wind Farm and Guangdong Shantou Shalong Wind Farm proposed PRC Resources Power Holdings Company Limited by have obtained approval from the PRC Government. Each of them will have an installed capacity of 49.5MW, with equipment to be sourced domestically.

Interfax (Terry Wang, "POOR EQUIPMENT, GRIDS AND TARIFFS A DRAG ON PRC'S WIND POWER INDUSTRY - DEVELOPERS", Shanghai, 2008/11/04) reported that PRC's wind power industry has grown rapidly in recent years, but poor quality equipment, insufficient transmission capacity and low power tariffs are holding back further development, developers and officials told Interfax at an industry forum in Beijing on Oct. 30.

Interfax ("PRC LOWERS COAL MINE CONSTRUCTION TARGET FOR 2010", Shanghai, 2008/11/04 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that PRC has reined in its coal mine development targets for 2010 to 2012, based on the country's energy conservation and pollution reduction policies as well as the potential impact of the global financial crisis, domestic media reported on Nov. 3, citing a senior government official.

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II. PRC Report

16. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua News (Zou Wensheng, "CLIMATE CHANGE MAY AFFECT FUTURE FOOD PRODUCTION OF CHINA", 2008/11/03) reported that the “climate change impact on China’s agriculture” project which was carried out by both PRC and British scientists recently issued its research report. The report shows that the PRC is one of the developing countries who are seriously suffering the adverse effects of climate change. The climate change may increase the instability of the PRC’s agricultural production. In the next 20-50 years, rice and maize production may decrease, and wheat production may increase. In this century, both of the country’s total and per capita food production will decrease. The report also points out that technological progress is very useful in addressing climate change.

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17. PRC Civil Society and Cross Strait Relations

Fujian News Network (Lin Weili, "TAIWAN-RELATED NGOS DEVELOP RAPIDLY IN FUJIAN", 2008/10/31) reported that learning from relevant department of Fujian province, at present, the registered NGOs in Fujian province has reached 10906, among which a group of Taiwan-related NGOs are becoming the highlights. Fujian is a major ancestral home of Taiwan people. In recent years, some overseas exchange associations, overseas friendship associations, hometown folks associations and so on have played an important role in enhancing the communication and cooperation between Taiwan people and their relatives in mainland. They also help to bring about a lot of economic cooperative projects and investment.

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18. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

People’s Daily online (He Jiao, "NGOS CALL ON LEGISLATION ON TOBACCO CONTROL FOR CHINA’S SECOND-HAND SMOKERS", 2008/10/31) reported that the PRC has 0.35 billion smokers and 0.54 billion second-hand smokers, according to the third PRC ENGO sustainable development annual meeting. The NGOs appealed on the meeting that in order to safeguard the rights of second-hand smokers, the country should make laws on tobacco control especially on the smoking ban in public places as soon as possible. They think the 0.54 billion people have the rights to refuse passive smoking and have a healthy smoke-free environment.

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