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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US on Six Party Talks

Kyodo ("6-PARTY CHIEF NEGOTIATORS' TALKS UNLIKELY THIS YEAR: U.S. SPOKESMAN", Washington, 2007/12/05) reported that a six-party chief negotiators' meeting on the DPRK's denuclearization is unlikely to reconvene until next year due to scheduling difficulties, the State Department said. ''The Chinese were working on when would be the most logical time to do this...It may in fact be a situation where just logistically they can't get people together till after the first of the year,'' department spokesman Tom Casey said at a news briefing.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Kyodo ("U.S. NEGOTIATOR SAYS DIFFERENCES REMAIN WITH N. KOREA ON DECLARATION", Beijing, 2007/12/06) reported that top U.S. nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill said that while his just-ended visit to the DPRK yielded progress, differences remain with Pyongyang on what should be included in a list of its nuclear programs due to be issued by the end of the year. In comments to reporters after the three-day trip, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs also said that disablement of the DPRK's nuclear facilities -- another key part of a six-party deal -- was moving forward as planned.

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3. US-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("BUSH SENDS LETTER TO NORTH KOREAN LEADER: AGENCY", Seoul, 2007/12/06) reported that US has sent a letter to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency said Thursday. Bush's personal letter was delivered by US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill to DPRK Foreign Minister Pak Ui-Chun on Wednesday, the agency said.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("TWO KOREAS ENTER 2ND DAY TALKS ON DETAILED ECONOMIC COOPERATION", Seoul, 2007/12/05) reported that working-level officials of the two Koreas continued their second day of deputy premiers' talks, seeking to agree on details of the wide-ranging economic cooperation projects their leaders agreed to at a recent summit. DPRK Deputy Premier Jun Sung-hun, heading a 27-member delegation, who flew to the ROK Tuesday on a direct charter flight from Pyongyang, proposed the two sides set up a working-level subcommittee to devise regulations that would govern increasing economic exchanges between the Koreas. The ROK's Deputy Premier Kwon O-kyu, who doubles as finance minister, urged the DPRK to phase in economic reforms that would prompt foreigners to invest more actively in the country.

The Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "SECURITY FOR CROSS-BORDER RAIL SERVICE GUARANTEED", 2007/12/05) reported that the ROK and DPRK militaries gave the green light Wednesday to a regular rail freight service across the heavily fortified border, part of a package of agreements struck during the inter-Korean summit in October. Working-level officials of the two militaries signed a written security guarantee for the daily cross-border freight train operation that begins Dec. 11 in talks at the truce village of Panmunjeom, the Ministry of National Defense said. The train link between Munsan in the ROK and Bongdong in the DPRK will carry goods to and from an inter-Korean industrial complex in the DPRK's border city of Gaeseong.

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5. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA COMPLETES 400,000-TONNE RICE AID TO NKOREA: MINISTRY", Seoul, 2007/12/05) reported that the ROK completed shipping its annual 400,000 tonnes of rice aid to the DPRK, officials said. The unification ministry said a ship carrying the final consignment left the southern port of Busan for the DPRK's eastern port of Chongjin, ending the shipments which began in June. "The government hopes this rice aid will practically help relieve North Korea of its food shortage," the ministry said in a statement.

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6. Japan on DPRK Terror List Status

The Associated Press ("JAPANESE PARLIAMENTARY PANEL WANTS US TO KEEP NORTH KOREA ON TERROR BLACKLIST", Tokyo, 2007/12/05) reported that a Japanese parliamentary committee adopted a resolution urging Washington to keep the DPRK on a U.S. terrorism blacklist. The resolution called the DPRK's abduction of at least 13 Japanese citizens in the 1970s and '80s "terrorism" and urged the Japanese government to step up diplomatic efforts to gain Washington's understanding of the issue. "A removal without the return of all abduction victims would be a disappointment to many Japanese and could even have a serious impact on the Japan-U.S. alliance," the resolution by the lower house Special Committee on the Abductions Problem said. "The United States should maintain its policy not to take North Korea off the list of terrorism-supporting nations."

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7. Japan Economy

The New York Times (Martin Fackler, "IN JAPAN, RURAL ECONOMIES WANE AS CITIES THRIVE", Noshiro, 2007/12/05) reported that the only outward sign of conflict here is the red flags of protest, but this small logging city on Japan's remote northern coast is seething. A proliferation of national chain stores outside town has already forced the closing of about half of the city's once teeming central shopping district. Now, many in this normally restrained rural community see the megamall being built nearby, by a company based near Tokyo, as the final nail in the coffin of their economy. In regions like Akita, the mountainous northern prefecture that is home to Noshiro, downtowns have emptied and factories have closed, and an exodus to Tokyo of youths seeking jobs has left behind towns that are predominantly for the elderly.

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8. Japan War Orphans

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN PM APOLOGISES TO CHINA WAR ORPHANS: OFFICIALS", Tokyo, 2007/12/05) reported that Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda made the first apology by a Japanese leader for failing to support war orphans who were left behind in the PRC following World War II, officials said. The meeting was held after parliament last week revised legislation to step up support to war orphans. Under the new law, the government is to pay 66,000 yen (600 dollars) per month to each repatriated person. In return, some 2,200 war orphans will drop their class action lawsuits against the government in which they sought compensation for the insufficient support.

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9. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CARTER SAYS CHINA ACQUIESCED TO TAIWAN ARMS SALES", Beijing, 2007/12/05) reported that former US president Jimmy Carter said that when ties with the PRC were re-established 29 years ago, Beijing privately acknowledged that the US would keep selling arms to Taiwan. At a ceremony marking the 29th anniversary of the re-establishment of diplomatic ties, Carter read excerpts from his diary concerning negotiations with the late Deng Xiaoping. "(Deng) agreed that our statement to settle the Taiwan issue peacefully would not be contradicted publicly by China and he understood that we would sell defensive weapons to Taiwan after (a US-Taiwan defence) treaty expired," Carter said.

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10. Sino-US Military Relations

The Associated Press ("US, CHINA DEFENSE TALKS END, US SIDE URGES MORE CONTACTS", Washington, 2007/12/05) reported that US and PRC defense officials ended two days of talks with the US side urging greater military contacts in the wake of a row over US naval visits to Hong Kong, a Pentagon spokesman said. The PRC's refusal to allow a US aircraft carrier and other navy vessels

to visit Hong Kong "only came up in the context of an overall discussion about the importance of improving our military-to-military relations," said spokesman Bryan Whitman. Whitman said the US side proposed that a hotline between the US and PRC defense establishments, which was agreed to during Gates' visit to Beijing in early November, be installed by February.

Financial Times (Mure Dickie, "KITTY HAWK'S TAIWAN PASSAGE ANGERS BEIJING", Beijing, 2007/12/05) reported that the PRC foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang said on Tuesday that the government was “gravely concerned” by a US decision to send an aircraft carrier through the sensitive Taiwan Strait shortly after Beijing barred it from visiting Hong Kong. “The US informed China at the time and said it took that route because of a storm,” Mr Qin said. “China expressed grave concern to the United States and requested it to take prudent actions in this sensitive area." A US navy spokesman emphasised that other navy ships travel through the strait “fairly regularly”. “Don’t read too much into it,” the spokesman said. “In the case of the Kitty Hawk, that decision was based upon operational necessity, including adverse weather."

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11. Sino-Indian Trade Relations

RTT News ("INDIA MULLS FTA WITH CHINA", 2007/12/05) reported that India is considering a Free Trade Agreement or FTA with the PRC, subject to the sensitivities of domestic industry, government said Wednesday. "India-China FTA falls under the FTAs being considered," the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Jairam Ramesh, told the Upper House of the parliament. On Tuesday, the consul general of India, Prakash Gupta, said that India expected to have a trade partnership with the PRC in areas such as software and information technology, pharmaceuticals, steel and certain categories of automobiles.

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12. PRC Environment

The Times (Robin Pagnamenta , "CHINA PLANS ENERGY MINISTRY BUT IGNORES ACTION ON EMISSIONS", 2007/12/05) reported that the PRC is planning to build bigger strategic reserves of key energy resources, such as petroleum and uranium, and create an energy ministry, according to a draft law published yesterday. However, the document made little mention of the need to develop policies to tackle soaring emissions of greenhouse gases. Energy security emerged as a key focus for the legislation, which recommends that PRC oil companies, such as Petrochina and Sinopec, be forced to establish their own government-managed stockpiles to augment an existing national reserve scheme.

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13. PRC Unrest

BBC News ("CHINA YOUTH CRIME 'IN RAPID RISE'", 2007/12/05) reported that the number of young offenders has more than doubled in 10 years, officials told a Beijing seminar. The offenders were getting younger, forming larger gangs and committing a greater variety of crimes, one academic said. Social change, the PRC's one-child policy and the internet were all partly to blame for

the rise, the experts said. "Crimes committed by youngsters have been causing a growing amount of severe social damage," the China Daily quoted Liu Guiming, deputy secretary-general of the Chinese Society of Juvenile Delinquency Research, as saying.

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II. ROK Report

14. DPRK-Syria Relations

Chosun Ilbo (Victor Cha, "THE NEGOTIATION ON DPRK'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND 'SYRIA ISSUE'", Seoul, 2007/12/06) said that the US government is probably going to remove the DPRK from the list of terrorism sponsoring states. Many conservatives have complained, including Japan, which is insisting on the resolution of the Japanese kidnapping problem. In fact, the real problem is the Syria issue. The fact that the alleged nuclear facilities of Syria seem to have a DPRK origin is used by conservatives to oppose Bush's negotiation with the DPRK. Therefore, when Bush defines the DPRK as a country without intention to support terrorism, the Bush administration should reveal its relationship with Syria's nuclear program.

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15. US Intelligence on Iran

Hankyoreh Shinmun (Editorial, "BUSH'S LIE ON IRAN", Seoul, 2007/12/06) reported that several intelligence organizations in the US, including the CIA, stated Tuesday that there is no evidence on the rumor of Iran's nuclear development. However, President Bush cast doubt even on this report, which means that he is not going to change his hardline policy on Iran. Accordingly, international society should push the Bush administration to have a proper policy to the Middle East. Based on Bush's changed policy on the DPRK, we know such pressure will positively affect its policy.

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