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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. NAPSNet

1. US, ROK on DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON AGREE N.KOREAN THREAT REMAINS", 2007/11/07) reported that the ROK agreed with the US that military threats from the DPRK like the buildup of conventional weapons remain and vowed to deter a war on the Korean Peninsula and maintain stability in the Northeast Asian region through their joint defense system. In the 29th bilateral Military Committee Meeting at the Defense Ministry in Seoul on Tuesday, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Kim Kwan-jin reached the agreement with his visiting US counterpart Adm. Michael Mullen. They also vowed to work together for the smooth transfer of wartime operational control of Korean troops to Seoul.

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2. DPRK Economy

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK ECONOMIC REVIVAL CAMPAIGN REDEFINED", 2007/11/07) reported that following the economic turmoil of the early 1990's, the North Korean Workers' Party adopted the slogan of "salvation through our own efforts" for its economic revival campaign. Recently, signs of change in that campaign have been apparent. On October 30, the Rodong Sinmun, the DPRK socialist party's newspaper, printed an editorial headlined, "Let's hold the 'salvation through our own efforts' banner even higher and go forward," in which it explained, "Our strengthening of the [campaign] in no way means building the economy while ignoring the relationship with the international economy."

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3. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

Yonhap ("TRADE BETWEEN DIVIDED KOREAS RISES 23 PERCENT IN FIRST 10 MONTHS ", Seoul, 2007/11/09) reported that b ilateral trade between the two Koreas increased by 23 percent in the first 10 months of the year due mainly to an increase in shipments of goods produced at the ROK-built industrial complex in the DPRK, the Unification Ministry said. The two-way trade volume jumped to nearly US$1.44 billion in the January-October period, up from $1.16 billion from a year earlier, according to the ministry. "The rise mainly comes from a 48 percent increase in the amount of goods shipped from Kaesong," a ministry official said.

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4. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "S. KOREA TO HEAD ARMISTICE MISSIONS BY 2012", 2007/11/07) reported that the ROK will assume more responsibility in maintaining the armistice on the Korean Peninsula by 2012 when it commences independent operational control of its armed forces during wartime, the top U.S. defense official said. US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said the ROK and the US are working on a plan to transfer a large part of the current roles and missions of the United Nations Command (UNC) to the ROK military over the next four years. ``In accordance with the roadmap, both sides agreed to complete the armistice maintenance responsibility adjustment between the UNC and the ROK military before the transition of wartime operational control in 2012,'' said a joint communique issued at the end of the 39th Security Consultative Meeting (SCM).

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5. ROK Politics

Joongng Ilbo (Lee Ka-young, "LEE HOI-CHANG PREPARES TO ANNOUNCE RUN TODAY", 2007/11/07) reported that i t now seems all but official that Lee Hoi-chang will enter the 2007 presidential race, thus trying his luck for a third straight time despite skipping the Grand National Party primary and earlier vowing to have nothing to do with this year's contest. Lee Heung-ju, his spokesman, said yesterday that Lee Hoi-chang will address the issue personally this afternoon, giving in to pleas by conservatives dissatisfied with GNP candidate Lee Myung-bak's candidacy. The news set off alarms in the camp of Lee Myung-bak, who has already seen his once-dominant poll numbers begin dropping in the face of a challenge that could split the conservative vote and ultimately aid the liberal United New Democratic Party's candidate Chung Dong-young.

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6. ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap (Yoo Cheong-mo, "ROH CALLS FOR ACCELERATING FTA TALKS WITH EU, CANADA ", Seoul, 2007/11/07) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun presided over a meeting of government officials related to free trade agreements (FTAs), and instructed them to speed up free trade negotiations with the EU and Canada. "Roh was briefed by Finance and Economy Minister Kwon O-kyu, Trade Minister Kim Jong-hoon and other FTA-related ranking officials on the latest developments in separate FTA negotiations with the EU and Canada. The president also encouraged the officials," said presidential spokesperson Cheon Ho-seon. "Roh stressed South Korea has to actively expand FTA deals with foreign countries and closely analyze potential gains and losses in individual negotiations," said Cheon.

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7. Japan Politics

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN GOVERNMENT URGES OPPOSITION END DEADLOCK ", Tokyo, 2007/11/07) reported that Japan's government urged the main opposition party to return to the negotiating table and end the current legislative deadlock. The government made its request after Ichiro Ozawa , leader of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), retracted his resignation offer. The government also indicated that it was still willing to consider power-sharing talks with the DPJ, whose executives Friday rejected the proposal, prompting Ozawa to abruptly announce his resignation as party leader.

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8. US-PRC Relations

Washington Post (Edward Cody, "CHINA AND U.S. TO ESTABLISH MILITARY HOTLINE", Beijing, 2007/11/07) reported that the PRC and the US announced that they will set up a military hotline between Beijing and Washington to avoid misunderstanding during any moments of crisis in the Pacific. The hotline, a safeguard that the United States has promoted for some time, symbolizes an improvement in military relations between the two countries. It also underlines the degree to which the PRC's rapidly improving military has come to be seen as a factor to be dealt with in the Asia-Pacific region.

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9. US-PRC Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US, CHINA SEEK IMPORTS SAFETY DEAL BY 2008 ", Washington, 2007/11/07) reported that the US and PRC are "in the final phases" of working out deals on import safety after a wave of recalls of PRC goods and hope to sign it by 2008, a top US official said. "We are working, right now, in the final phases of negotiating agreements with China on food and feed, on drugs and devices," US Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt told reporters. "We hope to sign these agreements later this year at the next session of the strategic economic dialogue in Beijing ," he said.

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10. PRC Space Program

BBC News ("CHINA PLANS SPACE STATION IN 2020", 2007/11/07) reported that the PRC is planning to launch its own space station in 2020, according to reports, in the latest sign of the country's ambitions in space. Scientists are on track to send "a small-scale 20-ton space workshop" into the Earth's orbit, rocket designer Long Lehao told state media. If successful, it would be the first such station run by a single country.

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11. PRC AIDS Issue

Reuters ("NEW CHINA HIV CASES GROW TO OVER 3,000 A MONTH", Beijing, 2007/11/07) reported that the PRC 's new HIV/AIDs cases have accelerated to more than 3,000 a month, with the proportion of cases caused by sexual transmission increasing, state media said. The PRC recorded 3,223 new infections per month on average between January and October, the official China Daily said on Tuesday, compared with 3,090 cases a month reported by Xinhua news agency for the first half of this year. Nearly 38 percent of the cases reported in the first half were caused by sexual transmission, a rise from 30 percent last year, the paper quoted Wang Ning, deputy director of the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, as saying.

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II. Republic of Korea

12. Washington's Choice

Nocut News (Koo Yong-hyoi, "DPRK, "AFTER CONFIRMING THE NAME, A TERRORISM SPONSOR, THE NEXT STEP WILL GO ON"", Seoul, 2007/11/07) re ported that ROK promotes 3(4)-party talks and peace regime negotiation, but DPRK steps back saying after confirming the elimination of ' a terrorism sponsor ' on Washington ' s list, the next step will be continued. DPRK counts ' elimination of the name, a terrorism sponsor, on the list ' as the greatest concern because it is a typical sign of U.S policy which is against DPRK. Therefore, if Washington wants to delete the name on the list, it has to take action by 15, Nov. to have the action to be available in this year.

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13. A question arisen from the old vessel

Chosun Ilbo ("DPRK, AN OLD RUSSIAN NAVAL VESSEL IS LEFT ALONE ", Seoul, 2007/11/07) reported that an escort naval vessel from Russia has been left alone for 5 years at a quay in DPRK. Recently the worn-out vessel moved from Won-san quay to Nam-po quay. The information authorities presume that DPRK imported it as scrap iron, but a suspicion that it is for the other purpose is aroused because it has not been dismantled for 5 years.

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