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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Reuters ("JAPAN, U.S. SEEK 5-PARTY TALKS ON N.KOREA IN HANOI", 2006-11-05) reported that Japan and the US want their foreign ministers to meet counterparts from PRC, ROK and Russia next week to discuss the DPRK's nuclear arms programmes, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said. The proposed meeting would take place on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum meeting in Hanoi, Aso told reporters.

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2. DPRK on Six Party Talks

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA WISHES JAPAN TO BE EXCLUDED FROM 6-PARTY TALKS: KCNA ", 2006-11-04) reported that the DPRK said that it would be best if Japan did not take part in upcoming six-party talks. "It would be much better for Japan to refrain from participating in the six-party talks and fewer attendants would not be bad for making the talks fruitful," a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman said in an interview with the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). It added that Pyongyang from the outset never asked Japan to participate in the six-party talks.

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3. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times ("NORTH KOREA NEEDS NUKES FOR SELF-DEFENCE' ", 2006-11-04) reported that a DPRK leader told visiting RO Korean politicians yesterday that the DPRK had been compelled to make nuclear weapons in order to defend itself. "During talks with DLP leaders, Kim Yong-nam made clear that the nuclear device aims to deter sanctions and pressure being exerted by the United States, and is not meant to threaten South Korea or its people," Park Yong-jin, a spokesperson for the progressive party, was quoted as telling Yonhap.

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4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Associated Press ("NUCLEAR AMBITIONS HURT NORTH KOREA'S LEADERS - ROH", 2006-11-05) reported that the DPRK's pursuit of nuclear weapons will hurt the country's leaders and further damage its already anaemic economy, ROK's president said on Monday. "North Korea's nuclear test was a foolish act indeed," Roh said in remarks delivered to parliament by the prime minister. "The nuclear arsenal will only jeopardise the stability of the North Korean regime and bring about severe economic difficulties," he said.

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5. ROK-Japan Talks on DPRK

Korea Herald ("BAN DISCOURAGES NUCLEAR ARMS DEBATE IN JAPAN ", 2006-11-06) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon yesterday voiced concern over talk in Japan of a nuclear weapons program following the DPRK's test last month. "On the option of nuclear arms, which some powerful Japanese politicians have debated since the North Korea's test, I would like to express concerns," Ban said in a news conference in Tokyo.

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6. ROK-US Talks on DPRK

Yonhap News ("TWO U.S. UNDERSECRETARIES DUE IN SEOUL FOR TALKS ON N. KOREA ", 2006-11-04) reported that two senior US officials are scheduled to arrive in Seoul on Monday night to coordinate a strategy for progress in the six-way talks, ROK's Foreign Ministry said. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, in charge of political affairs, plans to hold a "strategic dialogue" with his RO Korean counterpart Yu Myung-hwan on Tuesday and then pay a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon.

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7. ROK Labor Party Visits DPRK

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN LABOR PARTY DELEGATION ENDS CONTROVERSIAL N. KOREAN VISIT ", 2006-11-06) reported that a delegation of ROK's progressive Democratic Labor Party (DLP) was to return home Saturday, wrapping up their controversial five-day trip to the DPRK. The trip was the center of sharp media attention as it was made after a DLP secretary-general and a former party member were arrested on pro-DPRK espionage charges. The DLP delegation met the DPRK No. 2 leader Kim Yong-nam and top officials of the Social Democratic Party and visited factories and historical places.

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8. Inter-Korean Cooperation

Yonhap News ("ROH VOWS TO CONTINUE INTER-KOREAN COOPERATION AND DIALOGUE ", 2006-11-06) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun said that the ROK government will keep alive its tourist and industrial investment projects in the DPRK. In his budget speech to the National Assembly, the president said inter-Korean tourist and industrial projects in the DPRK's east coast resort of Mount Geumgang and its border city of Gaeseong are symbols of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. "The Mount Geumgang and Gaeseong projects will be continued but carried out in a way that conforms to the spirit and purport of the U.N. sanctions resolution against North Korea," the president said in a speech read by Prime Minister Han Myeong-sook.

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9. Inter-Korean Cooperation

Associated Press ("S. KOREA COS. QUESTION N. KOREA VENTURES", 2006-11-05) reported that a majority of RO Korean companies surveyed believe two key economic projects with the DPRK should

be scaled back or halted in step with international moves following the DPRK's nuclear test, a survey showed Sunday. Forty-six percent of 200 companies polled by the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that only core parts of an inter-Korean industrial park in the DPRK should be kept alive, while another 12 percent said the project should be closed, the business group said. In the case of an inter-Korean tourism venture at the DPRK's Diamond Mountain resort, 39 percent of the companies said the program should be downscaled and 29 percent called for it to be halted altogether, the group said in a statement. Still, 42 percent and 32 percent of the companies surveyed respectively supported continuing the industrial park and the tourism projects as they are, according to the survey.

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10. ROK Opposition Party on Inter-Korean Cooperation

Korea Herald ("PARTIES DIVIDED OVER ROH SPEECH ", 2006-11-06) reported that the main opposition Grand National Party criticized a pledge by President Roh Moo-hyun in a parliamentary speech yesterday to push ahead with controversial policies regarding the DPRK. Roh said the administration will continue two major inter-Korean economic projects - the Gaeseong industrial complex and tours to Mount Geumgang. "There was no apology for a failure of the government's policies in Roh's speech," GNP floor leader Kim Hyung-o said. The GNP's Secretary-General Hwang Woo-yea also said, "President Roh did not show any commitment to getting tough with the North. He was just trying to tell public that the government will continue its policy of appeasement with the North."

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11. Inter-Korean Family Reunions

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA PROPOSES RESUMING REUNIONS OF SEPARATED FAMILIES: OPPOSITION PARTY YONHAP ", 2006-11-04) reported that the DPRK has offered to resume Red Cross-sponsored reunions between separated families of the two Koreas. "Kim Yong-nam, the president of the Presidium of the (DPRK's) Supreme People's Assembly, said Red Cross talks must be held (between the Koreas) in the near future to discuss the issue of separated families," DLP Rep. Kwon Young-ghil told reporters after arriving at Incheon International Airport from Pyongyang via Beijing.

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12. Foreign Investment in DPRK

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA'S NEWEST PROFESSION: FOREIGN ENTREPRENEUR", 2006-11-05) reported that in the midst of tensions over the DPRK's nuclear program, a Western company is there searching for oil. Another just bought a bank. "North Korea is hungry for business," said Roger Barrett, the British founder of Beijing-based Korea Business Consultants, who recently took 11 Asian and European clients to Pyongyang to play golf and make contacts. A small group of Westerners are taking on the challenge of doing business in the DPRK, hoping to get in on the ground floor as its communist rulers experiment with economic reform.

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13. DPRK Counterfeit Currency

Yonhap News ("NO TRACE OF NEW N. KOREAN COUNTERFEITS IN SIX MONTHS: U.S. RESEARCHER ", 2006-11-03) reported that according to Raphael Perl, a researcher at the Congressional Research Service, there has been no evidence in the last six months "of any seizures of either illicit narcotics or counterfeit currency" produced or circulated by the DPRK. Perl said the DPRK's alleged decision to halt or suspend its illegal activities may have been caused by international pressure on the communist regime. As a result of increased international attention to its illicit activities, it became "more difficult and more risky for North Korea to engage in this type of activity and be undetected," he said. Perl, an international affairs specialist, however, claimed the DPRK may be continuing to earn hard currency through other illegal means. "At the same time, there are indications that production of counterfeit cigarettes (in North Korea) is increasing," he said.

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14. DPRK and Trans-Asian Railroad

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA STILL UNCOMMITTED TO TRANS-ASIAN RAIL PROJECT: U.N. COMMISSION CHIEF ", 2006-11-04) reported that the DPRK remains uncommitted to the Trans-Asian Railroad project that is aimed at allowing trains to move freely across the continent and to Europe, the head of a UN commission said Sunday. The executive secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), who is in the port city to take part in a meeting of transportation ministers from ESCAP member states, said the North had sent delegates to past meetings. "They seem to be following the progress made by other parties," the UN official said. He added that an invitation has been extended to the DPRK to sign an agreement that will raise the endeavor to the next level.

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15. ROK-Nigerian Relations

Korea Times ("SOUTH KOREA EXPANDS AFRICAN ENERGY TIES ", 2006-11-06) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun and Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo agreed to enhance bilateral ties, by expanding cooperation in energy, resource and plant construction sectors, the presidential office announced. In a summit at Chong Wa Dae, Roh and Obasanjo also agreed to make joint efforts to develop bilateral relations into a more substantial one, seeking future-oriented cooperation in such fields as information-technology (IT), presidential spokesman Yoon Tai-young said.

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16. PRC-African Cooperation

China Daily ("TOP LEADERS MEET VISITING AFRICAN HEADS TO CONSOLIDATE TIES", 2006-11-06) reported that top PRC leaders met visiting African leaders yesterday to consolidate bilateral ties in the wake of the two-day Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation. President Hu Jintao separately met South African President Thabo Mbeki and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who attended the Beijing summit before beginning their state visits. The development of bilateral relations has been comprehensive and rapid since the two countries established diplomatic ties nine years ago, Hu said. Hu also separately met Benin President Thomas Boni Yayi, Togo

President Faure Gnassingbe, Eritrean President Isaias Afewerki, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Nigerian President Mamadou Tandja. All the leaders expressed their appreciation for the China-African summit, which they believe reflects PRC's genuine friendship and bring benefits to African people.

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17. PRC-ASEAN Relations

People's Daily ("CHINA ENCOURAGES INVESTMENT IN ASEAN", 2006-11-06) reported that PRC would like to see more imports from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) by expanding its areas of bilateral trade with ASEAN, and will also try to provide PRC companies more financial support to promote its foreign direct investment (FDI) in ASEAN, said PRC's high-level officials during the Third China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit held at the end of last month. "Bilateral trade should not be limited to traditional areas, and should cover value-added sectors like machinery and electronics and high technology," said PRC's Premier Wen Jiabao. "We should learn from each other and use each other's resources and technologies, expanding co-operation in areas like agriculture, manufacturing and infrastructure," Wen said.

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18. PRC-EU Relations

Agence France Presse ("EU'S MANDELSON IN CHINA TO DISCUSS TRADE DISPUTES", 2006-11-06) reported that European Union Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has arrived in PRC for a five-day visit during which the two sides will discuss their increasingly testy trade relations. Mandelson is expected to try to explain a tough new EU approach to trade disputes with PRC when he meets his PRC counterpart Commerce Minister Bo Xilai beginning on Tuesday. An EU official traveling with Mandelson said the trade chief will send an "emphatic signal for partnership" to the PRC.

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19. PRC Economy

International Herald Tribune ("IN CHINA, TRADE GAP LIFTS RESERVES ABOVE \$1 TRILLION", 2006-11-06) reported that PRC foreign currency reserves have exceeded \$1 trillion to become the largest reserves held by any country, China Central Television reported, citing the currency administrator. PRC reserves are rising almost \$30 million an hour, fueled mostly by a gap between exports and imports that tripled to \$102 billion last year. The government's policy of not allowing the yuan to strengthen to reflect demand for the currency keeps PRC export prices low, further fueling the trade surplus and flooding the economy with cash. That has prompted a surge in the money supply, triggering a credit-fueled investment boom that the government is trying to cool. A barrage of measures to slow the PRC economy is working, but credit growth could accelerate next year, senior government officials said.

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20. GM Hybrid in Asia

Korea Herald ("BESIEGED U.S. AUTOMAKER TO RAMP UP POWERTRAIN SUPPORT FOR GM

DAEWOO ", 2006-11-06) reported that General Motors Corp. plans to introduce alternative propulsion systems to the Asia-Pacific market, starting with a hybrid car in 2008, the chairman of the world's largest auto giant said yesterday. "While working on powertrain improvements and alternative fuels in the near-term, GM will develop with DaimlerChrysler and BMW the most cost-effective and sophisticated two-mode hybrid system for passenger cars and trucks by the end of next year," Richard Wagoner told reporters.

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