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Preceding NAPSNet Report

1. DPRK on Nuclear Test

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA DIDN'T APOLOGIZE FOR TEST: CHINA ", 2006-10-24) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has not apologized for a nuclear test but said he had no plans for a second test while reserving Pyongyang's options if the crisis escalates, the PRC said. "He (Kim) also indicated that the DPRK has no plans for a second nuclear test but if other countries impose more pressure, the DPRK may take further steps," Liu said.

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2. US on PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("U.S. AND CHINA CALL FOR NORTH KOREA TO REJOIN TALKS", 2006-1--24) reported that the US and PRC spoke in a unified voice to call for the resumption of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program, but they did not announce concrete steps to increase pressure on the DPRK government. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she had been told by the PRC government that a special envoy sent to the DPRK had delivered "a strong message." And the PRC foreign minister, standing beside Ms. Rice, pledged his nation's commitment to breaking the stalemate over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program.

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3. PRC on DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo ("N. KOREA SAYS 2ND TEST DEPENDS ON 'EXTERNAL PRESSURE': CHINA ", 2006-10-24) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said that while the PRC stands ready to implement a UN Security Council resolution on sanctions against Pyongyang for the nuclear test, the main aid benefactor to DPRK has no plan to halt food and oil assistance to the country. Liu said the PRC would "strictly implement" the resolution, but added that would neither affect "normal business transactions" between the two countries, nor its assistance to the country.

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4. PRC-DPRK Trade

Bloomberg News ("CHINA'S IRE AT NORTH KOREA TEMPERED BY ORE ", 2006-10-24) reported that the PRC demand for iron ore is one of the economic realities that stand in the way of United Nations sanctions aimed at choking off income to the DPRK. "Mining and iron ore are strategic industries for both countries and it's in neither of their interests to cut back," said Roger Barrett, a partner at Korea Business Consultants in Beijing. The two countries will want to continue this trade "for the livelihoods of their peoples."

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5. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Test

Donga Ilbo ("SOUTH KOREA DIVIDED OVER SECURITY ISSUES", 2006-10-24) reported that critics say Cheong Wa Dae, the Ministry of Unification (MOU), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) are offering dissenting voices over the ROK's participation of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and discontinuing the inter-Korean projects. The MOU plans to maintain inter-Korean projects with some minor changes such as halting government supplements for the Mount Geumgang project and delaying additional land sale in the Gaesong Industrial Complex, sources said. However, ministries such as the MOFAT argue that it is inevitable to reduce or stop the two inter-Korean projects as countries including the US are demanding the ROK add pressure on the DPRK. Meanwhile, issues, which the government once reviewed such as expanding its role in the PSI, have not been yet publicly discussed due to protest from Cheong Wa Dae, some ministries, and opposition parties.

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6. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("FRESH SECURITY FEARS AFTER AGREEMENT ON TROOP CONTROL", 2006-10-24) reported that critics are calling for reassurance of an anxious public after the ROK and the US agreed that sole operational control of South Korean forces will be handed over to Seoul between October 2009 and March 2012. The Military Committee Meeting, a working meeting of the two countries' Joint Chiefs of Staff, asked the commander of the US Forces Korea to draw up military plans in response to the DPRK's nuclear weapons. But once the ROK has sole control of its troops, Combined Forces Command would be dismantled, so the plans would be useless, experts say.

(return to top) The Associated Press ("SKOREA DEFENSE MINISTER OFFERS TO RESIGN", 2006-10-24) reported that the ROK's defense minister said that he has offered to resign, just days after he sealed a deal with the US for Seoul to regain full wartime control of ROK forces. Conservatives have assailed Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung for making the deal in light of the increased regional tension following the DPRK's Oct. 9 nuclear test. However it was not clear Yoon's decision was linked to the criticism. (return to top)

7. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO USE COAST GUARD FOR NORTH KOREA SHIP INSPECTIONS", 2006-10-24) reported that Tokyo plans to call on the Japan Coast Guard, not the Maritime Self-Defense Force, to strengthen inspections of vessels entering or leaving the DPRK under a United Nations Security Council resolution, sources said. The measure, for the time being, was planned after government officials concluded that the US needs more time to decide how its military will inspect cargo on ships going to and coming from the DPRK. There is also the unresolved legal problems concerning the dispatch of MSDF vessels to support US ships inspecting cargo in international waters.

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8. DPRK Ship Searched

Chosun Ilbo ("HONG KONG SEIZES EMPTY N.KOREAN VESSEL", 2006-10-24) reported that a DPRK vessel suspected of carrying military equipment was searched and seized by authorities in Hong Kong, press reports say, but no banned items were uncovered. It was the first DPRK vessel to be searched after the UN passed a resolution sanctioning North Korea on Oct. 14.

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9. DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA WEAPONS TESTS REDUCE FOOD AID, UN SAYS", 2006-10-24) reported that the DPRK's tests of unconventional weapons have contributed to a reduction of badly needed food aid, with international donors thinking twice about supplying goods, a UN envoy said. Donors had committed only 10 percent of the $102 million the WFP sought last June for the DPRK, with only Ireland and Australia contributing. The ROK and PRC send humanitarian supplies separately to the DPRK.

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10. PRC on Attempted Uranium Sale

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA HOLDS ETHNIC KOREANS FOR ATTEMPTED URANIUM SALE", 2006-10-24) reported that PRC police last month arrested two men on charges of trying to sell 1 kg of enriched uranium, an essential raw material for nuclear weapons, press reports said Monday. The two were ethnic Koreans living in the PRC, police in Beijing confirmed. Press reports said Beijing police arrested the two men, identified as Chang and Chung, on charges of attempting to sell 969.03 grams of enriched uranium at a hotel there on Sept. 11.

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11. ROK Missile Program

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA SUCCESSFULLY TESTS LONGER-RANGE CRUISE MISSILE: REPORT ", 2006-10-24) reported that the ROK has successfully tested a new longer-range cruise missile which has not only the DPRK but also parts of the PRC and Japan within range, a news report has said. The Munhwa Ilbo newspaper, quoting unnamed senior government officials, said the country had succeeded in test-firing a cruise missile with a 1,000 kilometer (620-mile) range.

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12. US-ROK Trade Relations

Yonhap ("BUMPY S. KOREA-U.S. FTA TALKS MAKE HEADWAY: S. KOREAN OFFICIAL", 2006-1--24) reported that trade officials from the ROK and the US held "constructive" discussions on Tuesday, a ROK negotiator said, hinting that progress was being made in their goal to adopt a free trade agreement. "There will be no suspension in talks for industrial goods," the ROK's deputy chief negotiator, Lee Hae-min said, adding that the US side promised to make a new offer to drastically cut or eliminate tariffs on industrial goods.

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13. ROK Press Freedom

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREA BESTS OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES ON PRESS FREEDOM ", 2006-10-24) reported that the ROK improved three notches on the global press freedom scale to land in 31st among the 168 countries surveyed in the Worldwide Press Freedom Index 2006 published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the international watchdog headquartered in Paris. The report published Monday has seven nations including, in Asia, DPRK (168th), Burma (164th) and PRC (163rd) as the "worst predators of press freedom." New Zealand (18th), ROK (31st) and Australia (35th) were high on the list among countries in Asia Pacific.

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14. US on Japan Defense Issues

Kyodo ("U.S. WANTS JAPAN TO EXPAND SDF DISPATCH OVERSEAS: WHITE HOUSE OFFICIAL", 2006-10-24) reported that the US wants Japan to expand the deployment of its Self-Defense Forces overseas in line with its economic strength and interests abroad. "Japan is the second largest economy in the world, yet its ability to export security to troubled spots is still very limited," White House Deputy National Security Adviser Jack Crouch said, "We want to see Japan continue the process of strengthening its capabilities, to deploy forces overseas so Japan can continue to act effectively where its interests are affected, as it has in Iraq."

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15. PRC Space Program

Reuters ("CHINA LAUNCHES SATELLITES INTO ORBIT", 2006-10-24) reported that the PRC launched two satellites into space aboard a Long March-4B carrier rocket, the official Xinhua news agency reported, the latest step in its ambitious space program. The two Shijian-6 satellites are designed to explore space environments, radiation and to carry out related experiments.

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16. PRC Environment

The Associated Press ("REPORT: DYE TURNS YELLOW RIVER RED", 2006-10-24) reported that authorities have told a PRC heating company it will be fined for discharging dyed water into the Yellow River, turning a half-mile section bright red, a state-run newspaper said Tuesday. Sunday's incident caused an uproar in Lanzhou, a city of 2 million and the capital of the western province of Gansu. Environmental officials have taken samples and were trying to determine whether the material was toxic.

(return to top) The Financial Times ("CHINA IN POLLUTION DRIVE", 2006-10-24) reported that the PRC's environment agency is implementing a broad new strategy to monitor air pollutants, focusing on gathering better emissions data as well as using more advanced pollution monitoring and filtering technology. Li Xinming, a senior air pollution official at the State Environmental Protection Administration, said polluters would be required to pay higher fees, an emissions trading mechanism would be set up and new coal burners would be required to install flue gas desulphurisation technology. (return to top)

17. PRC Land Use

Xinhua ("CHINA NOT TO EASE CONTROL OF LAND USE", 2006-10-24) reported that the PRC will continue to tighten its control over land use with local governments being urged to make sure they do not build on any more land next year than they did this year. The Ministry of Land and Resources laid down in a recent circular that local governments must not approve more land for construction in 2007 than they did in 2006.

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18. PRC Corruption Probe

BBC News ("SHANGHAI SCANDAL 'IMPLICATES 50'", 2006-10-24) reported that more than 50 people have been detained in Shanghai's widening pension fund corruption scandal, a Beijing-funded Hong Kong newspaper has reported. Several senior Shanghai officials and businessmen have already been implicated in the alleged misuse of the multi-million dollar fund.

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19. UNSG on UN Reform

Agence France-Presse ("NEXT UN CHIEF PROMISES TO END "CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE"", 2006-10-24) reported that the next United Nations secretary-general has promised to end a "crisis of confidence" and heal divisions hampering the work of the world body. ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon, who takes over from Kofi Annan on January 1, said rebuilding trust in the UN must be a top priority.

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