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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Talks

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "N. KOREA AGREES ON NEED FOR SIX-WAY NUKE TALKS: BOSWORTH", Seoul, 2009/12/10) reported that and the United States have reached a "common understanding" on the need to resume the six-party nuclear talks and implement a 2005 deal on the DPRK's denuclearization, Stephen Bosworth, special representative for DPRK policy, said Thursday after a three-day trip there. He said, however, "It remains to be seen when and how the DPRK will return to the six-party talks," adding further consultations are needed among the other related parties. He said he had "extensive and useful talks in a candid and businesslike fashion with the DPRK s Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju and its top nuclear envoy, Kim Kye-gwan. "I communicated President's Obama's view that the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is the fundamental undertaking of the six-party talks, if resumed," he said. Bosworth said he did not ask for a meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il.

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

United Press International ("NORTH KOREA BLAMES U.S. ON NUCLEAR ISSUE", Pyongyang, 2009/12/09) reported that the DPRK said Wednesday its nuclear issue has nothing to do with the ROK as it resulted from the hostile policy of the United States. The issue is a "totally bilateral" one between the DPRK and the United States which "would be solved spontaneously" after the United States drops its anti-DPRK policy, eradicates the military threat against Pyongyang and stops its nuclear war provocation, according to the Communist country's official newspaper Rodong Sinmun, the PRC 's official Xinhua news agency reported.

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3. DPRK Economy

Agence France Presse ("CURRENCY CHANGE CRIPPLES N.KOREA MARKETS: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/12/09) reported that private markets on which DPRK citizens rely heavily for necessities have been paralysed since the communist state's shock currency revaluation last week, a report said Wednesday. Hankyoreh newspaper quoted sources in the PRC's border city of Dandong as saying private transactions -- which supplement the faltering state distribution system -- have come to a virtual halt. "The road linking Pyongyang and Sinuiju has been shut down. It's been hard to get through to partners in the North by phone," a PRC businessman told the independent daily in Dandong, across the border river from Sinuiju.

Hankyoreh ("NORTH KOREA'S FREE TRADE BASE PLANS FOR RYUCHO ISLAND SIGNAL REFORM", 2009/12/09) reported that the DPRK is reportedly planning the creation of a free trade base on Ryucho Island near Sinuiju and its development as a new special economic district. Analysts are interpreting this as a signal from the country that it plans to renew efforts at building a special economic district in Sinuiju, the largest gateway city on its border with the PRC. A source who wished to remain unnamed in Dandong reported hearing recently from senior officials in charge of the DPRK's external trade that preparations are under way for the development of Ryucho Island as part of a special economic zone. The source said, "As a result of Ryucho Island's small area (2.82 square kilometers), it looks as if they are planning to build a free trade base rather than a large-scale complex and to display wares coming out of North Korea there so that people can buy them freely."

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4. DPRK Currency

Bloomberg (Bomi Lim , "NORTH KOREAN WON PLUNGES 96% AFTER GOVERNMENT REVALUATION ", 2009/12/09) reported that the DPRK won has plummeted 96 percent against the dollar after the government revalued the currency last week, according to reports by Yonhap News Agency and an ROK aid group. A DPKR bank in Sinuiju, near the border with the PRC, offered to buy dollars for 35 won on Dec. 7, Good Friends, a Seoul-based rights group, said today on its Web site. Before the currency revaluation, the official rate was about 140 won, and as much as 3,500 won in the black market, Yonhap said.

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5. DPRK Food Security

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz , "U.N. AGENCY SEES SEVERE FOOD SHORTAGE IN NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2009/12/09) reported that the DPRK is expected to suffer a serious grain shortage this year, well short of what it needs, a U.N. official who recently returned from the impoverished state said on Wednesday. "We do estimate that the DPRK may have to import a bit over 1 million tonnes to cover the needs," said Daniele Donati, U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation's emergency operations chief, who went there on an inspection tour state last week. Donati told Reuters in a telephone call

from Bangkok the DPRK food shortage was persistent but more or less stable.

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6. DPRK Human Rights

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREA REJECT CALLS FOR UN RIGHTS EXPERT VISIT", Geneva, 2009/12/09) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday rejected calls by members of the UN Human Rights Council to grant access to a UN independent expert to assess the human rights situation in the country, a report said. Pyongyang also turned down recommendations for it to abolish the death penalty, end torture, and scrap military training for children, said the UN report summarising an examination of the human rights situation in the DPRK In total, 50 recommendations made by mostly western countries in the report adopted Wednesday by the 47-member state Human Rights Council "did not enjoy the support of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

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7. DPRK Influenza

Donga Ilbo (" N. KOREA IMPORTING TAMIFLU FOR TOP OFFICIALS ONLY", 2009/12/09) reported that teh DPRK is known to have secured Tamiflu in the wake of its first case of H1N1 influenza reported in May, but only for high-ranking government officials. The ROK civic group for DPRK human rights Good Friends said yesterday that the DPRK has secured large doses of vaccines against the flu and anti-viral drugs for leader Kim Jong Il and top officials through its foreign missions in Europe.

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "WHO 'CLOSELY' WORKING WITH N. KOREA TO FIGHT H1N1 OUTBREAK ", Seoul, 2009/12/09) reported that the World Health Organization (WHO) is working "closely" with the DPRK government to help stem the spread of an Influenza A outbreak there and assess the scope of flu infections among DPRK citizens, a WHO spokesperson said Wednesday. The highly infectious disease may be particularly dangerous to the DPRK people, who are mostly undernourished and may have weakened immune systems.

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8. Inter-Korea Relations

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("INTER-KOREAN INVESTMENT LOWEST SINCE 2000 ", 2009/12/09) reported that aid to the DPRK and investment into inter-Korean cooperative projects by the ROK government appears to be hitting a record low in 2009, dropping to a level not seen since the year 2000. According to the Unification Ministry, between January and the end of November of this year (2009), the government dispensed a mere 6.1 percent of the nearly 1.12 trillion won allocated. Just over 68.3 billion won were spent on cooperative projects between the two Koreas. This is considerably less than last year, when only 18.1 percent (only 231.2 billion won of an allocated 1.275 trillion won) was put to use.

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9. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch

Real Time Traders News ("TALIBAN WARNS SOUTH KOREA AGAINST TROOP DEPLOYMENT IN AFGHANISTAN ", 2009/12/09) reported that Afghanistan's rebel militant group Taliban has warned the ROK government of 'bad consequences' if it dispatches its defense force to take part in the fight against insurgents in the war-torn country. In a statement emailed to media Wednesday, Taliban reminded that "Seoul had promised to pull out its soldiers from Afghanistan and that it will never try to send any forces in future" in return for the release of the remaining 19 hostages in August. "If they send their forces to Afghanistan and break their promise, then they should also be prepared for bad consequences," the statement said, adding that the Taliban "will never resort to a soft approach anymore."

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10. ROK Military

Information Handling Services (Jon Grevatt, "SOUTH KOREA TO DEVELOP 'GREENER' MILITARY TECHNOLOGIES", 2009/12/09) reported that the ROK is preparing to launch a plan to develop a range of energy-saving military technologies as part of a government drive to cut the greenhouse gas emissions over the next decade. Under the project, the country's military research agencies are committed to working with local industries to develop technologies that are both environment-friendly and assist the government's efforts to reduce the country's dependency on fossil fuels. The project includes the development of hybrid electric drive (HED) technologies for the ROK Army; fuel cells and electronic propulsion for the RoK Navy; and the development of biofuel related technologies for the RoK Air Force.

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11. ROK-US Military Relations

Defense News (Jung Sung-Ki, "S. KOREA MAY LEASE U.S. MRAPS FOR AFGHAN MISSION", Seoul, 2009/12/09) reported that the ROK is discussing with the U.S. military a plan to lease or buy 10 Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to protect the 320 troops it will deploy to Afghanistan next year, the Ministry of National Defense said Dec. 8. "A final decision will be made as late as next month," Lt. Gen. Jang Kwang-il, deputy minister for policy, said in a briefing on details of the redeployment to Afghanistan, apparently in support of the upcoming 30,000-troop U.S. surge.

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12. ROK Energy

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA'S FUSION ENERGY TEST BED EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS: GOV'T ", Seoul, 2009/12/09) reported that the ROK's fusion energy test bed exceeded all expectations and highlighted the country's ability to play a role in the development of limitless, clean electricity, the government said Wednesday. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said the Korea Superconducting Tokamak Advanced Research (KSTAR), which cost 309 billion won (US$258 million) to build, has generated plasma currents reaching 320 kiloampere (kA), with the plasma field

being maintained for a maximum 3.6 seconds.

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13. Japan Abductees

Kyodo News ("OKADA: JAPAN, U.S. TOGETHER ON N. KOREA", 2009/12/09) reported that Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada on Wednesday assured relatives of Japanese abducted to the DPRK that the government will continue trying to resolve the issue in collaboration with the United States, the head of the group said. Stressing that the Democratic Party of Japan will maintain the policy of comprehensively resolving the issue as well as Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs, Okada was quoted as saying, "Japan and the United States are acting in concert on dealing with such issues."

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14. Japan Self-Defense Force

Xinhua News Agency ("JAPAN'S CRASHED MSDF CHOPPER LOCATED ON SEABED", Tokyo, 2009/12/09) reported that Japan's Defense Ministry said Wednesday that a Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) patrol helicopter that crash-landed Tuesday in waters off the city of Nagasaki, leaving two of its three crew members missing, has been located on the seabed, Kyodo News reported. The Defense Ministry said a MSDF vessel located the SH-60J helicopter on the seabed at a depth of around 100 meters at around 2:30 a.m. Wednesday.

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15. Japan-US Security Alliance

Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN TO GIVE US BASE RELOCATION PLAN NEXT WEEK", Tokyo, 2009/12/09) reported that Japan's prime minister said Wednesday that he hopes to meet with President Barack Obama next week to offer his proposals on the relocation of a major American military base in Okinawa that has led to a rift between the allies. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said members of his Cabinet are still working on the plans and he may give them to Obama on the side of the 192-nation U.N. conference in Copenhagen next week, though he has not officially asked for a meeting.

Kyodo News ("MOVING AIR TRAINING FOR U.S. FORCES TO KANSAI COULD BE 'OPTION'", Naha, 2009/12/09) reported that the top commander at U.S. Kadena Air Base in Okinawa Prefecture indicated Wednesday that the United States could consider shifting air training drills for its forces in Japan to Osaka in the future, calling it an "option." Brig. Gen. Kenneth Wilsbach, who took command of the 18th Wing in July, also said in an interview with Kyodo News that the United States and Japan should continue to talk "openly" about the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station for the benefit of the two countries.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("EX-MINISTER ADMITS SECRET PACT", 2009/12/09) reported that a former government minister who was involved in the calculation of compensation costs for the 1972

reversion of Okinawa to Japanese rule said he knew of a secret agreement between Tokyo and Washington for Japan to bear the cost of restoring farmland in the prefecture that had been used by the U.S. military. Former Transport Minister Hajime Morita told The Yomiuri Shimbun of a communication he received from the Foreign Ministry that stated: "Top secret: Japan will shoulder the cost." According to Morita, he discussed the issue of compensation for the restoration of farmland with the Foreign Ministry prior to the handover. After visiting Okinawa, he estimated the compensation cost at well over 3 million dollars.

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16. Cross-Strait Relations

United Press International ("ELECTION SLUMP FAILS TO DAMPEN CHINA TALKS", Taipei, 2009/12/09) reported that the Taiwanese government will push ahead with its proposed economic cooperation framework agreement with mainland PRC despite opposition gains in local elections. Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou said the ECFA remains a good deal for Taiwan and will help secure the island nation's economic future, a report on the Taipei-based China Post said. Ma's statements come after his Kuomintang Party, suffered a relative setback in local elections last weekend for city and town mayors and county-level magistrates.

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17. PRC Civil Unrest

Voice of America ("DOZENS OF TIBETAN PROTESTERS ARRESTED IN SOUTHWESTERN CHINA", 2009/12/09) reported that sources in the PRC's Sichuan province say dozens have been arrested after protests over the detention of a Buddhist monk jailed for a series of bombings. The PRC has reportedly increased security in parts of Sichuan, where protests have been taking place since December 5. The exact number of people detained is unclear. Estimates range from 60 to more than 150.

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SAYS IT DETAINS 94 WHO FLED JULY RIOTING", Beijing, 2009/12/09) reported that the PRC said Wednesday that police had detained 94 people who fled the western region of Xinjiang after deadly rioting there in July. A monthlong "strike hard" campaign in November caught the latest 94 people, police in Xinjiang said Wednesday.

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18. PRC Climate Change

Bloomberg ("CHINA TO CLOSE STEEL MILLS FAILING ENVIRONMENT LIMITS ", 2009/12/09) reported that the PRC, the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases, set new environmental and power standards for steelmakers and threatened closures to curb pollution and overcapacity. Plants should cap effluent discharge at 2 cubic meters and sulfur dioxide emission at 1.8 kilograms for every ton of steel made, according to draft regulations the industry ministry made available for public comment on its Web site.

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19. US on PRC Climate Change

Financial Times (Andrew Ward and Fiona Harvey , "US RULES OUT CLIMATE AID FOR CHINA", Copenhagen, 2009/12/09) reported that the PRC will receive no significant funding from the US to combat climate change, the US delegation leader at the Copenhagen conference vowed on Wednesday.
The statement, which shocked many negotiators, was part of a broader US attack on the PRC and other developing countries for not promising deeper concessions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. “I do not envision public funds, certainly not from the US, going to the PRC. We would intend to direct our public funds to the neediest countries,” said Todd Stern, special envoy for climate change.

Bloomberg (Kim Chipman, "U.S. SAYS CHINA MUST BE ‘MAJOR PLAYER’ IN GLOBAL EMISSIONS CUTS", Beijing, 2009/12/09) reported that President Barack Obama’s top climate change envoy, responding to criticism from the PRC that the U.S. isn’t doing enough to cut greenhouse-gas pollution, said the PRC must be a “major player” in the push to cut global emissions. “The country whose emissions are going up dramatically, really dramatically, is China,” U.S. negotiator Todd Stern said today in Copenhagen. There can’t be a new agreement without commitments from the PRC, he said.

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20. PRC Internet

Associated Press (Cara Anna, "CHINA CLOSES FILE-SHARING SITES IN CRACKDOWN", Beijing, 2009/12/09) reported that the PRC has closed one of the country's largest file-sharing sites in what it says is a fight against copyright infringement, but could be seen as another measure aimed at controlling what content the country's Web users can find online. The file-sharing site BTCHINA — a major source of overseas movies, television shows and games in the country — has been closed since Friday, and another site, VeryCD.com, was down Wednesday. The government says the main targets of its Web censorship are pornography, online gambling and other sites deemed harmful to society.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Civil Society

Sina.com ("UNIVERSITY STUDENTS POSITIVELY DONATE HSCS", 2009/12/09) reported that over one hundred university students in Beijing donated hematopoietic stem cells (HSCs) on December 5, the 23th International Volunteer’s Day. Some of them are volunteers of Beijing New Sunshine Charity Foundation, the sponsor of this activity.

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22. PRC Environment

Sina.com ("9 CITIES CO-PROMOTE CLEAN PRODUCTION", 2009/12/09) reported that 9 cities including Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Dongguan and other 6 cities in Guangdong province have made an Partnership Plan on Cleaner Production recently, to co-promote cleaner production in Guangdong province. At present, 400 related projects have been approved of implementation.

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23. PRC Social Welfare

Beijing Morning News ("WELFARE VOUCHER PROVIDED TO OLD AND DISABLED PEOPLE IN BEIJING", 2009/12/09) the application of welfare voucher for old and disabled people will formally be started on December 10 in Beijing. From January 2010, seriously disabled people who are unemployed and aged from 16 to 59, seriously disabled people aged from 60 to 79, and old people over 80 years old, can draw one piece of 100 RMB welfare voucher per month, and the favored person number will reach about 380,000.

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