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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Talks

Agence France-Presse ("CLINTON SAYS NKOREA-US TALKS ARE 'POSITIVE'", 2009/12/10) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that a top US-DPRK meeting in Pyongyang was "quite positive" even though it produced no date for resuming nuclear disarmament talks . "For a preliminary meeting, it was quite positive," Clinton told reporters . "The approach that our administration is taking is of strategic patience in close coordination with our six-party allies," the chief US diplomat said. "And I think that making it clear to the North Koreans what we had expected and how we were moving forward is exactly what was called for," Clinton added.

Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "NKOREA SAYS IT UNDERSTANDS NEED FOR NUCLEAR TALKS", Seoul, 2009/12/11) reported that the DPRK said Friday it will work with the United States to resolve unspecified "differences" remaining after special envoy Stephen Bosworth's visit. The DPRK Foreign Ministry said the meetings with the U.S. "deepened the mutual understanding, narrowed their differences and found not a few common points." The two sides "also reached a series of common understandings of the need to resume the six-party talks and the importance of implementing" a 2005 disarmament pact, it said in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("OBAMA CALLS ON N. KOREA TO ABANDON NUCLEAR AMBITIONS", 2009/12/10) reported that US President Barack Obama called on the DPRK and Iran to abandon their nuclear ambitions and join international efforts for nuclear dismantlement. "It's also incumbent upon all of us to insist that nations like Iran and North Korea do not game the system," Obama said while receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway, according to a transcript released by the White House. "Those who care for their own security cannot ignore the danger of an arms race in the Middle East or East Asia. Those who seek peace cannot stand idly by as nations arm themselves for nuclear war."

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3. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Herald ("'N.K. COULD PROPOSE OWN GRAND BARGAIN'", 2009/12/10) reported that the DPRK is likely to propose its own "grand bargain" in response to a comprehensive nuclear settlement Seoul and Washington plan to suggest, a US expert said. "The ticking clock is a strong argument for proposing a grand bargain, which would require the support of China and Russia. It probably is the final card that the five members of the six-party talks have to play," Larry A. Niksch, specialist in Asian affairs at the U.S. Congressional Research Service, said. "However, North Korea's response likely would be to propose its own grand bargain which would be loaded with demands and conditions" such as the normalization of diplomatic relations with the US before denuclearization, an end to the US nuclear threat, an end to US nuclear umbrella over the ROK and a US-DPRK peace treaty.

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4. US-DPRK Scientific Cooperation

EurekAlert ("AAAS PRESIDENT LEADS DELEGATION TO NORTH KOREA FOR TALKS ON SCIENCE COOPERATION", 2009/12/10) reported that a non-governmental delegation led by Nobel laureate Peter C. Agre, the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was to arrive in Pyongyang today for five days of talks with scientists and officials in the DPRK. The six-person delegation of the US-DPRK Science Engagement Consortium aims to discuss and identify future opportunities for collaborative research activities in fields of mutual interest. Distinct from other delegations that travel to the DPRK for humanitarian, economic, or nonproliferation purposes, this delegation will be the first significant effort to engage in a comprehensive effort focused on science cooperation.

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5. Russia on US-DPRK Relations

Xinhua News ("RUSSIA HAILS U.S. SPECIAL ENVOY'S TRIP TO DPRK", Moscow, 2009/12/10) reported that Russia welcomes the contact between the US and the DPRK and hopes it will be conducive to the resumption of six-party talks, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "Russia feels

satisfied that the United States and the DPRK have been able to carry out a businesslike dialogue," spokesman Andrei Nesterenko told a regular press briefing. "We hope the United States and the DPRK will soon find a common language, which would make it possible to resume six-nation talks at an early date," he said.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO PROVIDE 500,000 DOSES OF H1N1 DRUG TO N. KOREA", 2009/12/10) reported that the ROK will provide 500,000 doses of Tamiflu and other anti-viral drugs to DPRK to help stem an Influenza A outbreak there, the unification minister said following Pyongyang's prompt acceptance of the offer. The medical aid will be the first outside help to reach the nation since it admitted Wednesday that there has been a flu outbreak. "We will provide North Korea with enough doses of Tamiflu and other new flu drugs for 500,000 people," the minister in charge of inter-Korean relations, Hyun In-taek, said.

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7. Japan-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN MINISTER AGAINST VISAS FOR N.KOREA SQUAD", 2009/12/10) reported that a Japanese minister spoke out against a planned visit next year by the DPRK women's football team, citing an official visa ban against citizens of the country. Tokyo in February stages the East Asian football championships, and the DPRK team is among those invited to come to Japan for the tournament organised by the East Asian Football Federation. "I am against it as the country is under sanctions," said Hiroshi Nakai, the minister in charge of dealing with the DPRK's past kidnappings of Japanese citizens. Nakai has called on Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's office to look into the issue.

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8. DPRK Foreign Investment

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA IN FRESH ATTEMPT TO LURE FOREIGN INVESTMENT", 2009/12/10) reported that even as the DPRK struggles under UN sanctions and is in the midst of a controversial currency reform aimed at breaking the back of a nascent free market, the reclusive country is apparently in the process of changing laws in order to attract more foreign investment, an expert said. It is even offering foreign companies wages cheaper than those paid to DPRK workers at the joint-Korean Kaesong Industrial Complex, according to Jack Pritchard. But even if foreign businesses are interested in investing in the DPRK, its lack of infrastructure, including steady power supply and adequate roads and ports, make it impossible to operate factories there. Cho Young-ki, a professor at Korea University, said, "You have to build a power plant if you want to build a factory in North Korea. Cheap labor does not mean businesses will profit there."

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9. Sino-DPRK Trade Relations

Reuters ("CURRENCY SHIFT HITS NORTH KOREA BUSINESS, SPOOKS CHINA TRADERS", 2009/12/10) reported that traders in the PRC border city of Dandong say business has been drying up in neighboring DPRK following an abrupt currency shift that could spell months of uncertainty for its fragile economy. "Our clients are all waiting to see what the new exchange rate will be. Those holding goods are waiting to sell," said a PRC pharmaceuticals merchant, who has done a booming business selling vitamins and nutritional supplements to customers in the DPRK. "Shortages mean everything's really marked up over there. Pharmaceuticals sell for about ten times the price here."

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10. DPRK Development

Xinhua News ("DPRK TOP LEADER CALLS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY", Pyongyang, 2009/12/10) reported that Kim Jong Il, top leader of the DPRK, urged all sectors to develop science and technology in a bid to push forward the modernization of the country, the official KCNA said. If "ideology and army" were combined with the latest science and technology, they would "bring about great changes in the revolution and construction" and the DPRK would turn into an "invincible powerful country," said Kim while inspecting the Kanggye General Tractor Plant in Jagang province.

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11. DPRK Environment

Korea Times ("DEFORESTATION SEVERE IN FAMINE-STRICKEN NK", 2009/12/10) reported that a famine-prone, energy-starved the DPRK has destroyed forests in its search for arable land to grow crops and vegetables. In a report by the Ministry of the Environment, "land cover mapping,'' a method of showing geography by using satellite images and aerial photographs, showed that the DPRK was chopping down forests to create farmland over a great deal of its territory, especially in areas near Haeju, South Hwanghae Province. "The pictures show that the North has been suffering from severe famine and a lack of energy resources. It also means that they aren't interested in environmental preservation,'' ministry official Kim Shin-yup said.

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12. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("GUAM GOVERNOR AGAINST ACCEPTING U.S. BASE FROM JAPAN", 2009/12/10) reported that Guam Gov. Felix Camacho expressed a negative view about the idea of relocating a U.S. Marines Corps airfield in Okinawa, Japan, to the U.S. territory, citing the island’s limited capacity to host military facilities. “We are already challenged with the present numbers of the relocation of 8,000 Marines, and moving the entire Futemma base would not be possible due to our limited resources and capacity,” Camacho said after talks with visiting Japanese Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa, according to a news release from his office.

The Asahi Shimbun ("DEADLOCK FORCES FUTENMA TALKS TO HALT", 2009/12/10) reported that High-level Japan-U.S. talks aimed at resolving the Futenma relocation issue will likely be shelved due to concern the current stalemate could damage bilateral ties, Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said. Okada said US officials at the previous meeting on Dec. 4 raised concerns that the standoff over the base transfer issue could jeopardize a dialogue process aimed at strengthening the bilateral relationship. "Unless we properly deal with the situation, we could end up seriously damaging mutual trust between Japan and the United States," he added.

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13. US-Japan Security Alliance

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("MINISTRY FINDS POSSIBLE PROOF OF SECRET PACTS / RECORDS DETAIL NUKES, KOREAN EMERGENCY PLAN", 2009/12/10) reported that an internal probe by the Foreign Ministry has found documents that could prove the existence of two of the four alleged secret pacts agreed by Japan and the United States, sources said. According to the sources, the documents are a record of discussions in which Tokyo is believed to have given tacit consent to the entry of nuclear arms into this country when the Japan-US Security Treaty was revised in 1960. Other material relates to minutes taken in connection with a possible military operation in the event of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. The minutes include a statement that indicates Japan would allow the Japan-based US military to use Japanese facilities when necessary during military operations under U.N. military command. Observers say this is tantamount to Tokyo allowing the Japan-based U.S. military to be mobilized without prior consultation.

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14. Japan Space Program

Yomiuri Shimbun ("LUNAR PROBE PANEL EYES MOON BASE BY 2020", 2009/12/10) reported that a government panel tasked with determining the feasibility of launching a lunar probe has agreed to discuss a proposal to build a robot-operated base on the moon's south pole by 2020 and collect rock samples from the moon's far side for analysis on Earth by 2025. The panel will discuss the plan and, in around June 2010, submit a report to the government's space policy team, headed by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.

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15. Japan on Climate Change

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN TO SEEK EMISSION CUT OBLIGATIONS FOR NEW EMERGING ECONOMIES", 2009/12/10) reported that Japan will push for fast-growing economies such as the PRC and India to commit to binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions when it negotiates a political agreement at the U.N. climate change conference in Copenhagen, government sources said. The Japanese platform, likely to be approved Friday at a ministerial meeting, proposes the fledgling economic powerhouses, which are already major emitters, be dealt with separately from less developed countries and held accountable for reducing emissions. The proposed platform also includes the terms under which Japan will set an ambitious mid-term target of reducing emissions by 25 percent from 1990 levels by 2020.

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16. Japanese Whaling

Associated Press (Kristen Gelineau, "AUSTRALIA THREATENS JAPAN OVER WHALING PROGRAM", Sydney, 2009/12/11) reported that Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd threatened legal action against Japan on Friday if it does not stop its research whaling program. "We don't accept Japan's premise for those terms of so-called scientific whaling," Rudd told Australia's Fairfax Radio Network . "If we cannot resolve this matter diplomatically, we will take international legal action. I've said that before — I'm serious about it." On Thursday, Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada stated, "We do not think there is a need for a policy review at this point in time. I think we should try to discuss it without emotion and in a very calm way."

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17. Sino-Japanese Relations

Xinhua News ("RULING PARTIES OF CHINA, JAPAN AGREE ON SEEKING STRONGER OVERALL RELATIONSHIP", 2009/12/10) reported that ruling parties of the PRC and Japan on Thursday pledged to deepen trust and work together for a stronger strategic relationship of mutual benefit between the two countries. The pledge came out of a meeting between PRC President Hu Jintao and Secretary General of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) Ichiro Ozawa in Beijing on Thursday afternoon. "The Communist Party of China (CPC) attaches great importance to relations with DPJ and would like to work together to improve party-to-party exchange mechanism," said Hu.

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18. Sino-Japanese East Sea Gas Dispute

Japan Times ("JAPAN TO PROTEST AGAINST CHINA IF GAS DEVELOPMENT REPORT TRUE: HIRANO", 2009/12/10) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said Wednesday that Japan will protest against the PRC if it has completed a drilling facility on its own in a gas field in the East China Sea, as reported. “This is a sensitive issue for Japan too and we will watch (the development) closely,” the top government spokesman said at a news conference. “If it is true, we will state our opinion clearly.” Tokyo and Beijing agreed in June 2008 that Japanese corporations will invest in the gas exploration project, which the PRC had already started.

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19. Sino-Russian Relations

RIA Novosti ("CHINA AND RUSSIA HOLD THE FOURTH ROUND OF STRATEGIC SECURITY CONSULTATIONS", 2009/12/10) reported that on December 8, 2009, the PRC and Russia held the fourth round of strategic security consultations in Beijing. PRC State Councilor Dai Bingguo and Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev attended the consultation meeting. Both sides exchanged in-depth views on further developing PRC-Russia strategic partnership of cooperation as well as major international and regional issues of common concern.

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20. US and Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA RENEWS OPPOSITION TO US ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN", 2009/12/10) reported that the PRC reasserted its opposition to US arms sales to Taiwan on Thursday, signaling possible tensions in ties just three weeks after a state visit by President Barack Obama . Beijing is "firmly opposed to arms sales to Taiwan by the United States," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said at a regular news conference. Jiang's comments came amid U.S. media reports that Washington will grant at least part of a Taiwanese weapons request that includes F-16 fighter jets , Patriot missiles and diesel submarines. In Taiwan, Deputy Defense Minister Andrew Yang would not confirm that any announcement from Washington was forthcoming.

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21. PRC Energy Supply

The Associated Press ("TURKMEN-CHINA GAS PIPELINE NEARLY OPERATIONAL", Beijing, 2009/12/10) reported that a natural gas pipeline linking Turkmenistan and the PRC is nearly operational and President Hu Jintao will attend an inauguration ceremony during a visit to the central Asian nation this weekend, a senior PRC diplomat said. It will eventually be able to bring 30 billion cubic meters of gas annually from gas-rich Turkmenistan, undercutting Russia 's near-lock on gas supplies in that former Soviet region.

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22. PRC Economy

The New York Times ("CHINA'S ECONOMIC POWER UNSETTLES THE NEIGHBORS", 2009/12/10) reported that the PRC has long claimed to be just another developing nation, even as its economic power far outstripped that of any other emerging country. Now, it is finding it harder to cast itself as a friendly alternative to an imperious American superpower. "China 10 years ago is totally different with China now," said Ansari Bukhari, who oversees metals, machinery and other crucial sectors for Indonesia's Ministry of Industry. "They are stronger and bigger than other countries. Why do we have to give them preference?" Vietnam just devalued its currency by 5 percent, to keep it competitive with the PRC. In Thailand, manufacturers are grousing openly about their inability to match PRC prices. India has filed a sheaf of unfair-trade complaints against the PRC this year covering everything from I-beams to coated paper.

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23. PRC Climate Change

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA EMISSIONS COULD DOUBLE BY 2020: EXPERTS", 2009/12/10) reported that despite the PRC's pledges to improve energy efficiency , its carbon emissions could double by 2020 as compared with 2005 levels, surpassing limits seen as key to fighting global warming , experts say. Even if the PRC keeps its promise to reduce carbon emissions per unit of

gross domestic product (GDP) by 40 to 45 percent by 2020, and if its economy grows by just eight percent, its gas output could still double, they say. "With eight percent growth, emissions will increase by 74 percent," said Emmanuel Guerin, a climate analyst at France's Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI).

China Daily ("CHINA: POPULATION CONTROL KEY TO GLOBAL WARMING", 2009/12/10) reported that population and climate change are intertwined but the population issue has remained a blind spot when countries discuss ways to mitigate climate change and slow down global warming, according to Zhao Baige, vice-minister of National Population and Family Planning Commission of China (NPFPC) . "Dealing with climate change is not simply an issue of CO2 emission reduction but a comprehensive challenge involving political, economic, social, cultural and ecological issues, and the population concern fits right into the picture," said Zhao, who is a member of the PRC government delegation.

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24. Mongolia Energy

The Associated Press ("MONGOLIA LOOKS TO RUSSIA, CHINA IN URANIUM RACE", 2009/12/10) reported that big changes in Mongolia's uranium sector mean the country's top assets are now to be divvied up mainly between Russia and the PRC, the giant neighbours whose influence the landlocked country is perennially trying to balance. The entry of large PRC and Russian firms has come at the expense of junior miners from Australia and Canada, some of whom were squeezed out when Mongolia passed a uranium law this summer that gave the state 51 percent in the richest uranium deposits.

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II. PRC Report

25. Sino-UK Relations

Sina.com ("CHINA UK COMMUNITY XCHANGE PROJECT LAUNCHED", 2009/12/10) reported that 2009-2010 China and UK Community Xchange was launched on December 4 in Beijing. The project is co-organized by Voluntary Service Overseas (UK VOS) and China Social Workers' Association, and aims at promoting career development of community workers or volunteer leaders in the two countries.

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26. PRC Civil Society

China Youth Daily ("BEIJING TEENAGERS DONATE BOOKS TO QINGHAI STUDENTS", 2009/12/10) reported that Beijing teenagers will donate 6 million books to primary and middle school students in Qinghai province in the next five years, said Wang Shaofeng, director of Beijing Committee of

Communist Party of China on the 6th Beijing Youth Study Day.

Sina.com ("YANGFAN PLAN GETS OVERSEAS DONATION", 2009/12/10) reported that Yanfan Plan of China Siyuan Poverty Alleviation Foundation has got a fund of 1,000 EUR from French Segalen Foundation. Segalen Foundation thinks the plan is cultivating students to participate multi-culture dialogue in future and feels happy to support it.

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