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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "NO SURPRISES EXPECTED IN SIX-WAY SECURITY MEETING IN MOSCOW", 2009/02/11) reported that the DPRK and the US will have their first government-level meeting since President Barack Obama's inauguration in Moscow next week, but "no surprises" are expected in terms of who will be representing them, a diplomatic source here said Tuesday. "There will be no surprises when it comes to North Korean and U.S. participants," the source said, asking not to be named.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Bloomberg News ("CLINTON SAYS NORTH KOREA SHOULDN'T SPARK INSTABILITY IN REGION", 2009/02/11) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she hopes the DPRK's recent rhetoric won't trigger instability in the region and called on Kim Jong-Il 's regime to re-engage with the international community. The U.S. is hopeful the DPRK's behavior isn't a "precursor of any action that would up the ante, or threaten the stability and peace and security" of its neighbors, Clinton said. Clinton said there are "opportunities" for Kim's regime if it makes progress on scrapping its nuclear weapons program and said the U.S. remains committed to six-party disarmament talks.

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3. DPRK Missile Program

CNN News ("U.S. OFFICIAL: NORTH KOREA MIGHT BE MAKING MISSILE PREPARATIONS", 2009/02/11) reported that a US spy satellite snapped an image within the last several days of preparations at a DPRK missile site previously used for Taepodong-2 missile launch operations, a senior U.S. official told CNN Tuesday. The photograph shows the DPRK assembling telemetry equipment at the site -- equipment that would be needed for a launch to take place, the official said, adding that so far, there is no direct evidence of a missile being moved to the launch pad.

Reuters (Jon Herskovitz, "NORTH KOREA STEPS UP MISSILE TEST PREPARATIONS", Seoul, 2009/02/11) reported that PRC fishing vessels have moved out of waters near the Northern Limit Line, an ROK military official said on Wednesday, possibly signaling a DPRK short-range missile test is imminent. "The (Chinese) fishing boats have disappeared, but no other unusual moves have yet been detected," said the official.

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4. US on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. READY FOR POTENTIAL N. KOREAN MISSILE LAUNCH: GATES", Washington, 2009/02/10) reported that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Tuesday his military is prepared for the possibility of a DPRK ballistic missile launch. "I certainly intend to make sure that my colleagues, the secretary of state, national security adviser, president and vice president, understand what our capabilities are," Gates said in a press conference at the Pentagon. Gates said the United States would be able to effectively intercept a Taepodong-2 missile should one approach American territory. "Since the first time that they launched the missile -- it flew for a few minutes before crashing -- the range of the Taepodong 2 remains to be seen," Gates said. "So far, it's very short."

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5. DPRK-Japan Relations

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "200 NK DEFECTORS HAVE SETTLED IN JAPAN IN RECENT YEARS: SCHOLAR", Washington, 2009/02/11) reported that a bout 200 DPRK defectors have settled in Japan in recent years with most of them being Korean-Japanese who moved to the DPRK from Japan for more than two decades from the late 1950s, Tessa Morris-Suzuki, professor of Japanese history at Australian National University, said. Morris-Suzuki made the assertion in a bulletin posted on the Website of the East-West Center of the University of Hawaii. More than 93,000 Koreans living in Japan and their spouses moved to the DPRK between 1959 and 1984. Among them are nearly 7,000 Japanese.

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6. DPRK Abductions of Japanese

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "JAPANESE ABDUCTEE'S FAMILY TO MEET FORMER N. KOREAN SPY: MINISTER", Seoul, 2009/02/11) reported that the ROK has accepted Japan's request to arrange a meeting between the family members of Yaeko Taguchi, a Japanese woman abducted by the DPRK, and Kim Hyeon-hee, the former DPRK spy convicted in the bombing of a Korean Air passenger plane in 1987, according to the ROK foreign minister Yu Myong-han Wednesday. "I know that their meeting will probably take place before long," Yu said in a joint press conference with his Japanese counterpart Hirofumi Nakasone. "Details pertinent to the meeting are being coordinated," he added.

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7. DPRK Economy

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA CALLS FOR 'INHERITANCE' OF OLD ECONOMIC CAMPAIGN", 2009/02/11) reported that the DPRK's party newspaper called for the "inheritance" of the older generations' economic drive to build a strong nation, which analysts said carries a double meaning about both the country's youth and a new leader, according to Yonhap News. The theme of inheritance is not new in the DPRK, which customarily pays tribute to ancestors' struggles against colonial Japan and the U.S. military, but the recently intensifying media references to it may suggest public indoctrination on a hereditary power transfer from leader Kim Jong-il, they said.

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8. DPRK Food Supply

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREAN LEADER URGES GREATER FERTILIZER OUTPUT AMID SHRINKING AID", 2009/02/11) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has recently made two consecutive public visits aimed at encouraging fertilizer production. With the halting of decade-long rice and fertilizer aid from the ROK, the DPRK is expected to face a deeper need to invigorate its agricultural production.

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9. US-ROK Joint Military Exercise

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, U.S. PUSHING TO TEST NEW WAR PLAN AGAINST N. KOREA", Seoul, 2009/02/11) reported that the US and the ROK are pushing to adopt a new war plan against the DPRK as early as this summer when they hold their joint annual military exercise, a defense official said Wednesday. The new war plan is being drafted to reflect the change in the military alliance and will be tested during the Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise in August this year, ROK brigadier general Chun In-bum told reporters.

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO SEEK U.S. ALLIANCE VISION IN '09", 2009/02/11) reported that Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan reaffirmed Tuesday that the ROK will seek to adopt a joint vision with the United States this year for their 21st century strategic alliance. In a 2009 policy briefing to the National Assembly's foreign affairs, trade and unification committee, Yu said the Seoul government will endeavor to strengthen ties with the new US administration of Barack Obama. Yu said his ministry assesses that the Obama administration's policy on the Seoul-Washington alliance is compatible with the ROK government's plan.

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11. ROK-Japan Relations

Kyodo ("JAPAN, S. KOREA MAP OUT AFGHAN PLANS, REAFFIRM N. KOREA STRATEGY", Seoul, 2009/02/11) reported that Japan and the ROK agreed Wednesday on concrete plans for joint assistance for Afghan reconstruction in a step forward to realizing a ''mature partnership'' and reaffirmed cooperation on DPRK policies. Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone and his ROK counterpart Yu Myung Hwan criticized the DPRK's recent remarks and moves as ''intentional acts to heighten tensions'' and urged Pyongyang to ''behave in a way that would contribute to the region's stability,'' Yu said in a joint press conference afterward. The two said they also agreed that Japan and the ROK must work together closely to overcome the global economic crisis, and decided to jump-start working-level talks on a free trade agreement by upgrading them to the deputy director general level.

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12. ROK Afghanistan Role

Chosun Ilbo ("GOV'T TO BOOST SUPPORT TEAM IN AFGHANISTAN", 2009/02/11) reported that the government has decided to increase medical support in Afghanistan from 24 to about 100 staff and will make the offer when U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visits here on Feb. 19-20. It is also considering ways of deploying them in locations other than the Bagram Air Base for American troops in the province of Parwan, where they are currently based. An official said the government decided to increase medical staff to 50 this year and dispatch 20 to 30 civilian vocational trainers, and about 20 police and firefighting trainers. "Government agencies concerned are now fine-tuning a budget allocation and selection of members," he added.

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13. ROK AIDS Issue

Xinhua News ("S KOREA'S HIV CASES RISE TO RECORD HIGH IN 2008", Seoul, 2009/02/11) reported that the number of reported HIV cases in the ROK rose to a record high of 6,120, a government report said Tuesday. According to the report by the Korea Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 797 new HIV cases were reported in 2008, adding that the number of South Koreans

contracted by the AIDS-causing virus to 6,120 by the end of last year, of whom 1,084 had died. The newly reported HIV cases in 2008 was 7.1 percent higher than 744 cases in 2007, the report said.

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14. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("CLINTON REQUESTS MEETING WITH DPJ'S OZAWA DURING JAPAN VISIT ", Tokyo, 2009/02/11) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has sounded out holding a meeting with Ichiro Ozawa, leader of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan, during her three-day visit from next Monday. If realized, issues relating to the Japan-U.S. security alliance, including the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, are likely to be on the agenda, they said. Visiting foreign ministers sometimes meet with Japanese opposition leaders, but it is said rare for a U.S. state secretary to request such a meeting.

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15. Japan Politics

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("LDP 'SET TO FIELD ASSASSIN AGAINST WATANABE'", 2009/02/11) reported that the Liberal Democratic Party leadership likely will field an "assassin" candidate in the constituency currently represented by Yoshimi Watanabe, a former state minister for administrative reform who recently left the party, in the next general election, according to sources. In response, Watanabe, who was elected from Tochigi Constituency No. 3, is said to be trying to field "counterassassins" against LDP candidates in the other single-seat constituencies in the prefecture.

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16. Sino-Russian Arms Trade

United Press International ("RUSSIA MAY SELL FEWER WEAPONS TO CHINA", Washington, 2009/02/11) reported that far from rising, as so many Western pundits have predicted for so long, Russian arms sales to the PRC may plummet by at least 75 percent in the immediate future, the CEO of Russia's main official arms exporting corporation warned last Wednesday. Arms exports to the PRC could shrivel from the current 40 percent of the value of annual Russian arms exports to only 10 percent. Sino-Russian relations have soured in recent years over one key issue: the continuing refusal of the Russian government to sell the PRC any of the long shopping list of advanced, expensive ground warfare and Close Air Support weapons that the PRC still cannot produce but desperately needs to become a truly formidable major military power.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

China Post ("MILITARY TO CUT FREQUENCY OF WAR GAMES", 2009/02/11) reported that Taiwan military said it is cutting the frequency of a major military exercise, but denied the move is

connected to improving ties with the PRC. The statement by Major General Huang Kun-tsung comes amid a months-long effort by President Ma Ying-jeou to reverse his predecessor's Taiwan-centric stand and forge closer relations with Beijing authorities. Speaking to reporters, Gen. Huang said the annual 'Han Kuang' or 'Chinese Glory' live-fire exercise will now be held every 24 months.

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18. Sino-Saudi Relations

BBC News (Shirong Chen , "CHINA SEEKS TO BOLSTER SAUDI TIES", 2009/02/11) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao has arrived in Saudi Arabia at the start of his overseas tour, with energy at the top of the agenda. The oil-rich kingdom is the PRC's largest energy supplier, supplying more than 36 million tonnes of oil last year. Talks are also likely to focus on new markets for PRC goods and workers.

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19. PRC Tibet Issue

Associated Press ("CHINA REPORT: 76 SENTENCED SO FAR FOR TIBET RIOTS", Beijing, 2009/02/11) reported that the PRC has sentenced 76 people and detained more than 950 since last year's riots in Tibet, Xinhua News Agency said Wednesday. The report attributed the latest figures to Nyima Tsering, a Tibetan Communist Party official , but did not elaborate on what the sentences were, what charges they faced, or what happened to those detained. "Illegal elements will be struck down if they conduct illegal activities," the report quoted Cao Bianjiang, the deputy mayor of Lhasa, as saying.

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20. PRC Food Supply

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS WHEAT CROP AT RISK IF NO RAIN SOON", Beijing, 2009/02/11) reported that the PRC warned of a severe impact on the nation's winter wheat crop if there was no rain within the next 15 days to relieve the worst drought in half a century. "Right now, this is the critical period for the growth of winter crops," E Jingping, a top drought relief official, told a news conference. "If in 15 days there is no precipitation, the situation in the winter wheat zone will be more severe and the next stage for drought-relief operations will be abnormally difficult."

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21. PRC Economy

The Financial Times (Jamil Anderlini, "DATA HIDE SCALE OF CHINA'S JOB WOE ", 2009/02/11) reported that the collapse of the PRC's export engine appears to have hit the most vulnerable first, with the state estimating that 20m of the 130m rural migrant workers have lost their jobs and returned to home towns and villages. The implied 15.3 per cent unemployment rate among migrants

is not captured in official jobless numbers, which measure only urban workers who register as unemployed. That official number rose to 8.86m people, or 4.2 per cent of the urban workforce, in December, but economists say it vastly underestimates the true scale of the problem.

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II. PRC Report

22. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

China Women's Development Foundation website ("CHINA WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION HELPS HENAN ON DROUGHT", 2009/02/11) reported that facing the current severe drought, China Women's Development Foundation joined hands with Sohu Public Channel to launch a "Sending Water" activity. As we all know, the Foundation has a long-term project aiming at solving the drinking water problem in poor western areas. This "Sending Water" activity is just the special action plan in addressing the drought of the project. The appeal notes that a donation of only 10 RMB can help a farmer irrigate farmland of 1 acre.

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23. PRC Social Welfare

Public Welfare Times ("GUANGZHOU TO GRADUALLY EXPAND POST PROPORTION OF SOCIAL WORKERS", 2009/02/10) reported that in the near future, there will be a kind of new community emerging in Guangzhou city, Guangdong province. Social workers will gradually replace the "neighborhood mother" there. The newly established social service institution will take over some functions originally belong to the neighborhood committee. Vice Mayor of Guangzhou city Chen Guo suggested to learn experiences form Hong Kong, for the social organizations there are fully developed.

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24. PRC Environment

Green Peace website ("BID FAREWELL TO INCANDESCENT LAMPS IN THE NEW YEAR", 2009/02/10) reported that under the background of global warming, climate disasters are rampant in our country, and we need to take urgent action against global warming. One good and simple way is to replace incandescent lamps with energy-saving lamps. The nation is now preparing the timetable for parsing out incandescent lamps and Green Peace hopes this timetable can be issued in 2009.

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III. ROK Report

25. Inter-Korea Relations

PRESSian (Yeoncheol Kim, Chief manager of Hankyoreh Peace Institute, "'QUESTIONING THE SINCERITY OF STATEMENTS ON DPRK'", 2009/02/11) wrote that historically, talks between the DPRK and ROK always started from the ROK, and we were more positive because we needed them. In order to actively cope with the world situation, in order to maintain a peaceful situation in the Korean Peninsula, in order to solve the problems of separated families, or in order to create a secure environment to induce foreign capital, the ROK took the initiative. Waiting to respond to what the DPRK does is not a policy. Of course, we still have one hope. The most noteworthy keyword of the year is “mutual assistance between the ROK and the U.S.” We must stay faithful to cooperation, which has now become a faith.

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