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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREA FACES SANCTIONS FOR ANY MISSILE TEST: SEOUL", Seoul, 2009/02/12) reported that the ROK warned the DPRK on Thursday to drop any plans to fire its longest-range missile. "If North Korea goes ahead with launching the missile, it will pose a serious threat to stability in Northeast Asia as well as inter-Korean relations," ROK foreign minister Yu Myung-Hwan told reporters. "Such an act would isolate it... given various restrictions and sanctions which North Korea would incur with the missile launch, it would never be in the North's interest." He added, "We are making efforts to strengthen bilateral cooperation with the Obama administration to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue."

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2. US on Six Party Talks

Korea Herald ("CLINTON HOPES TO RESUME SIX-PARTY TALKS IN MONTHS", 2009/02/12) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she hoped the Barack Obama administration will be able to engage the DPRK within months through bilateral and multilateral talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Clinton made the remarks at a press session at the State Department.

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3. UK on US-DPRK Relations

China Post ("BRITISH LAWMAKER CALLS FOR US EMBASSY IN N.KOREA", 2009/02/12) reported that a lawmaker just back from a visit to Pyongyang urged the new US administration on Wednesday to normalise ties with the DPRK as part of a broader approach to the country. Lord David Alton called for joint international efforts to address the DPRK's human rights record and humanitarian issues and not just its nuclear weapons programme. "The creation of a US embassy in Pyongyang should be a top priority for the incoming (US) administration," Alton, chairman of Britain's All Party Parliamentary Group on the DPRK, said.

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4. ROK on US-DPRK Relations

Korea Herald ("DESPERATE NEEDS DRIVING N. KOREA TO COERCIVE CAMPAIGN TOWARD U.S.:REPORT", 2009/02/12) reported that the DPRK has become desperate as a result of Seoul's suspension of aid and fallout from its own economic reform, and the urgency of the situation is driving Pyongyang to take coercive measures towards Washington, a Seoul think tank said. Test-launching a missile will be the last resort for the DPRK's leader Kim Jong-il, who hopes the US will respond in time for the approaching spring poverty season, said the state-run Korea Institute for National Unification in a report.

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5. ROK Policy Toward the DPRK

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "OUTGOING UNIFICATION MINISTER DEFENDS LEE'S POLICY ON N. KOREA", Seoul , 2009/02/12) reported that Seoul's outgoing unification minister defended President Lee Myung-bak from critics of his hard-line policy toward the DPRK, saying he yearns for better relations with the DPRK as much as his predecessors. Kim Ha-joong brushed off rumors about discord with Lee. "Many people think President Lee is a hawk. But the Lee whom I saw was not a hawk," Kim said in a farewell luncheon with reporters. "He understood and supported my position. Just the general climate didn't allow it to work."

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6. DPRK Leadership

Yonhap (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREAN LEADER DISPLAYS HIS POWER WITH MILITARY SHAKEUP", Seoul, 2009/02/12) reported that the DPRK said Wednesday its leader Kim Jong-il appointed a new defense minister and chief of General Staff. The new top military brass appeared to be combat savvy and are known to be close confidants to Kim, analysts said. Cha Doo-hyeong, a DPRK specialist with the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, stated, "Kim promotes the military as the nation's top priority, but he knows the danger of it. Characteristic of a regime controlled by one man, the leader does not give all the power to a single person." "With the shakeup, Kim Jong-il is showing that he is powerful and is the only one who can decide on military action and a successor," he said.

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7. Inter-Korean Relations

International Herald Tribune (Su-hyun Lee , "NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS LEARN MEDIA ISN'T ALWAYS BEST GUIDE TO LIFE IN SOUTH", Seoul, 2009/02/12) reported that after she defected here from the DPRK in 2006, Ahn Mi Ock was shocked to learn that most ROK citizens lived in small apartments and had to struggle to buy one. Ahn, 44, had fully expected that once in the ROK she would enjoy the same luxurious lifestyle portrayed in the television dramas she had watched on smuggled DVDs. That disappointment aside, she and many other DPRK defectors find themselves plunging into the unaccustomed wealth of the ROK's entertainment and news media, fascinated by the astonishingly free flow of information and critiques of political leaders, but also searching for tips as to how to navigate this strange new society.

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8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "SEOUL SOUGHT TO RECLAIM WARTIME COMMAND IN 1970S", 2009/02/12) reported that former President Park Chung-hee sought to take over wartime command of ROK troops both in peacetime and wartime in the late 1970s following the inauguration of the Jimmy Carter administration, which was pushing to withdraw troops from the ROK, government reports said. The Park government, for its part, came up with measures to deter Carter's pledges, while pursuing diplomacy, seeking help from Japan and other nations, said the documents.

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9. ROK Environment

Chosun Ilbo ("LEE CALLS FOR PLAN TO SOLVE KOREA'S WATER SHORTAGE ", 2009/02/12) reported that President Lee Myung-bak is calling for a plan to deal with the country's water shortage. Lee instructed officials to look into the issue during a field visit to Gangwon Province, where local officials briefed him on the region's drought. He also said he wants to see civic campaigns urging people to use water sparingly like they would use oil.

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10. ROK Cultural Heritage

Los Angeles Times (John M. Gilliona, "IN SOUTH KOREA, ANGER SMOLDERS A YEAR AFTER A LANDMARK WAS DESTROYED", Seoul, 2009/02/11) reported that yesterday was the one-year anniversary of the Sungnyemun gate fire. Rebuilding it is proving to be quite challenging for the government, which was constructed with long-forgotten craftsmanship. 100-year old pine logs are required, as is an original Chinese text of a wooden tablet that hung on the gate.

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11. ROK Food Supply

BBC News ("DAEWOO WARNS ON MADAGASCAR PLANS", 2009/02/12) reported that the ROK's Daewoo Logistics has warned it may delay its plans to plant corn in Madagascar following the recent violence in the African nation. Daewoo's announcement comes after two weeks of unrest on the island state that has caused more than 125 deaths. Analysts said the government's decision to lease the vast quantity of land to Daewoo was a background factor to the political violence.

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12. Japan Whaling Issue

The Asahi Shimbun ("WHALING ACTIVISTS CALL IT A DAY ... FOR NOW", 2009/02/11) reported that an environmental activist group involved in skirmishes with Japanese whalers in the Antarctic Ocean said Monday it had ended its campaign for the season, adding its protest ship had run out of fuel. The U.S.-based Sea Shepherd Conservation Society quoted ship skipper Paul Watson as saying that he was "not prepared to do to the Japanese whalers what they do to the whales" and did not want the protest to "result in some serious injuries and possibly fatalities if this confrontation continues to escalate."

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13. Russo-Japanese Nuclear Cooperation

Kyodo ("RUSSIA INDICATES NUKE COOPERATION DEAL WITH JAPAN MAY SOON BE SIGNED", Moscow, 2009/02/12) reported that Sergei Kiriyenko, president of Russia's state-run Rosatom Nuclear Energy State Corp. said Wednesday that Russia can soon prepare documents to sign a bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Japan. Kiriyenko indicated that an agreement may be signed during a planned visit to Japan by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. Kiriyenko said both sides have already reached a full agreement in working-level talks on the text of the agreement.

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14. Sino-Japanese Relations

Shanghai Daily (Tom Qian, "JAPAN PLANS TO MODIFY TOURIST VISAS", Tokyo, 2009/02/11) reported that the Japan Tourism Agency plans to modify tourist visas for wealthy PRC citizens in March, Kyodo News Agency said. At present Japan only allows PRC citizens to travel in groups of between five to 40, or two to three family members with an annual income of above 250,000 yuan (US\$36,634). The agency said the definition of wealth was being discussed and air travel mileage and credit card records might be considered as references.

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15. PRC-US Relations

New York Times (Mark Landler, "U.S. PREPARES TO BROACH HARD ISSUES WITH CHINA", Washington, 2009/02/10) reported that the Obama administration plans to realign the United States' relationship with the PRC by putting more emphasis on climate change, energy and human rights, widening the focus beyond the economic concerns of the Bush years, according to senior administration officials. The administration is said to believe that a broader relationship with the PRC could create opportunities for collaboration. Yet the new focus, which is being championed by Mrs. Clinton, carries risks, experts said, because it could aggravate tensions on delicate issues like PRC's repression of Tibet and its position as the world's leading emitter of greenhouse gases.

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16. Cross Strait Relations

Xinhua News ("MAINLAND, TAIWAN TO START TWO-WAY POSTAL REMITTANCE SERVICES", 2009/02/11) reported that the PRC mainland and Taiwan will start two-way postal remittance services for the first time in 60 years, a mainland official said here Wednesday. Fan Liqing, a spokeswoman of China's State Council Taiwan Affairs Office, didn't give an exact start date for the services, but Taiwan's Chunghwa Post Co. reported earlier that two-way services would begin mid-February. "Post offices on the mainland and Taiwan are conducting technical tests and the service will start soon after the tests are done," said Fan.

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17. Sino-Saudi Relations

Xinhua ("CHINESE, SAUDI ARABIAN LEADERS PLEDGE TO DEEPEN TIES, JOINTLY TACKLE FINANCIAL CRISIS", Riyadh, 2009/02/10) reported that the PRC and Saudi Arabia on Tuesday vowed to deepen their strategic friendly ties, work together to tackle the global financial crisis and strengthen coordination in international and regional affairs. The pledge came during the talks between PRC President Hu Jintao, who arrived here earlier in the day for his second state visit to the Gulf nation, and Saudi Arabian King Abdullah bin Abdul-Aziz. Hu said the PRC values the important role Saudi Arabia has played in safeguarding regional peace and stability and ensuring international energy security. Saudi Arabia is now the PRC's largest trading partner in West Asia and North Africa, with two-way trade hitting 41.8 billion U.S. dollars in 2008.

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18. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Reuters ("RUSSIA SEEKS TO UNLOCK \$25 BLN CHINA OIL LOAN TALKS", Moscow, 2009/02/12) reported that a high-level Russian state delegation will travel to the PRC next week in a bid to unlock a \$25 billion loan that Moscow is seeking from Beijing as part of a bigger oil supply deal, two industry sources told Reuters. The PRC is considering lending the money to Russian state-controlled oil major Rosneft and pipeline monopoly Transneft in exchange for securing supplies for 20 years.

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19. PRC Tibet Issue

Bloomberg (Patrick Donahue, "DALAI LAMA WARNS ABOUT INCREASING TENSIONS IN TIBET, AFP SAYS", Berlin, 2009/02/11) reported that the Dalai Lama warned that the situation in Tibet is becoming "very tense" and that anger could boil over into an uprising "at any moment," Agence France-Presse reported. He said there was "too much anger" in his homeland, and that people who are detained are being tortured and sometimes killed, AFP reported.

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20. PRC Security

Bloomberg News (Dune Lawrence, "CHINA VOWS CRACKDOWN ON FALUN GONG, TIBET SEPARATISTS THIS YEAR", 2009/02/12) reported that Tibetan separatists, the Falun Gong religious group and crime threaten social stability ahead of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in October, the Ministry of Public Security said. Cracking down on "ethnic separatist forces, violent terrorists, and religious extremists such as Falun Gong" will top the list of major tasks for the security forces in 2009, according to a statement released on the ministry's Web Site today. Law-enforcement authorities will also handle the impact of the financial crisis by improving their ability to mediate in protests and disputes and curbing crime, according to the statement.

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21. PRC Military

Xinhua (Yan Hao, "CHINA MOBILIZES ARMY FOR NATIONAL DAY PARADE", Beijing, 2009/02/11) reported that the PRC's top military command has sent down an instruction to troops of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) selected for an unprecedented dress parade on National Day later this year. The instruction said that the parade, to be the highest level of its kind, will showcase the PLA's first-class organization, weapons systems, training results and "spiritual outlook." According to an announcement made by the Ministry of Defense on Jan. 20, the parade would be a "warm but frugal and cost-effective" show of the PRC's most sophisticated weapon systems. The instruction said the parade will promote national pride and self-confidence amid economic hard times.

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22. PRC Energy Supply

Caijing Magazine ("CHINA TO BECOME SECOND LARGEST WIND POWER PRODUCER ", 2009/02/11) reported that the PRC, having doubled its wind power installations for four straight years, is on track to surpass Germany and Spain to become the world's second largest wind energy producer by 2010, according to a Global Wind Energy Council report in February. At this rate, the PRC will reach its wind production target of 30 gigawatts in 2010, a decade ahead of schedule. The PRC's newly added wind capacity is expected to double in 2009, contributing to one-third of new installations globally, said Li Junfeng, Secretary General of the Chinese Renewable Energy Industry Association (CREIA).

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23. PRC Human Rights

The Associated Press ("CHINA REJECTS HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM AT UN", Geneva, 2009/02/12) reported that the PRC rejected proposals Wednesday to end labor camp sentences, abolish the death penalty and guarantee freedom of religion, as it concluded its first examination before the U.N. Human Rights Council. Beijing struck down virtually every suggestion made by countries such as Britain, Mexico and Germany, in a new procedure designed to open every country to scrutiny. Still, rights groups said they were happy that several important issues had been raised publicly at the U.N. for the first time and included in a 32-page report.

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24. PRC Economy

Science Christinan Monitor (Carol Huang, "CHINA AIMS FOR ITS OWN SILICON VALLEY", Shenzhen, 2009/02/09) reported that the PRC is moving to loosen the grip of high-volume, low-end manufacturing on its economy. Last month, the National Development and Reform Commission announced revised plans to transform Guangdong and neighboring Hong Kong and Macau into a "significant innovation center" by 2020. One hundred R&D labs will be set up over the next three years. By 2012, per-capita output in the region should jump 50 percent from 2007, to 80,000 yuan (\$11,700) And by 2020, the study predicts, 30 percent of all industrial output should come from high-tech manufacturing.

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24. Beijing CCTV Fire

Los Angeles Times (Peter Spiegel, "CHINA'S CCTV NETWORK GETS LITTLE SYMPATHY AFTER HOTEL FIRE", Beijing, 2009/02/11) reported that even before it was revealed Tuesday that an unauthorized fireworks display organized by China Central Television caused the spectacular fire that destroyed one of Beijing's new glass-and-steel landmarks, the state-run broadcaster was already the subject of its own firestorm on the Internet. The inferno at CCTV's new, still-unoccupied headquarters complex laid bare simmering anger and resentment toward the network both for spending public money on grand construction projects and for continuing to broadcast government propaganda. The fire -- which engulfed what was to be the Mandarin Oriental hotel, a dramatic, angular tower that stands next to the now-iconic CCTV building -- has provided a new touchstone for critics, prompting the government to move quickly to mute the outrage.

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25. PRC Water Crisis

Xinhua ("GOOD HARVEST" IN CHINA DESPITE SEVERE DROUGHT", Beijing, 2009/02/11) reported that a good summer harvest can still be expected despite the worst drought to hit the country in half a century thanks to the government's efforts to supply irrigation to the dry fields.

"The food supply in the country will remain unchanged," said E Jingping, head of the Office of State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters. But he warned that the situation in the wheat-growing areas could turn "very serious" if there was no rain in the next 15 days. The drought has left more than 40 percent of the country's wheat fields parched, especially in the major breadbasket of Central and North China. The situation is especially severe in eight provinces - Hebei, Shanxi, Anhui, Jiangsu, Henan, Shandong, Shaanxi and Gansu.

Xinhua ("CHINA SENDS THIRD AIR FORCE FREIGHTER TO MAKE RAIN IN DROUGHT AREA", Wuhan, 2009/02/11) reported that a third air force freighter is to attempt to bring two showers during the coming week to Hubei Province, which is suffering from a devastating drought, said a local meteorological officer Wednesday. Xu Yonghe, Hubei Weather Modification Office's chief engineer, was equipping the An-26 freighter with artificial rain enhancement facilities at Yangluo Airport in Wuhan City when the reporter spoke to him. The freighter arrived from south PRC's Guangzhou City on Tuesday evening. Xu said the facilities included cloud-seeding equipments and a GPS system. The plan is to create a shower between Feb. 12 and 14, and another between Feb. 15 and 17. "They could increase rainfall by 10 to 20 percent."

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II. ROK Report

26. US Missile Defense

Peace Network ("INTERCEPT DPRK'S DAEPDONG 2 WITH US'S MD?", 2009/02/11) wrote that while US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has said he could try to intercept the DPRK's Daepodong 2 with missile defense (MD), it is unlikely DPRK would proceed with as test. Even without the actual launching of Daepodong 2, it has succeeded in attracting Obama's attention. Instead, we could look at Robert Gates' comments in a different perspective. Right now, the U.S. is fighting over the coming national defense budget decision, with the MD budget in its core. In this situation, rumors of the Daepodong 2 could be encouraging factors to MD supporters. Thus, the Korean peninsula is full of rumors of launching Daepodong 2 and intercepting it through MD, and President Lee urges that no one should worry. He should come up with plans to normalize the relations between the DPRK and ROK if he wants to urge people to feel safe. But he has none.

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27. DPRK Missile Program

Seoul Shinmun ("HILLARLY WARNS DPRK ABOUT THREATS", 2009/02/12) wrote that with the concern that the DPRK might become provocative, the new Obama administration's strong warnings toward the DPRK are justified. Even if the DPRK provokes a military incident, it wouldn't be hard to cope with the situation as long as the ROK and the U.S. cooperate. However, it's always better to take precautions. Recently, all Chinese fishermen withdrew from around the West Sea. The government must first find out whether Chinese government has learned that a DPRK provocation is near, and also be prepared for the possibility of provocation along the Military Demarcation Line.

Chosun Ilbo ("DPRK MUST TAKE US'S WARNINGS SERIOUSLY", 2009/02/12) wrote that it is an exceptional case for the Secretary of the State and the Secretary of National Defense to warn against the DPRK's dangerous moves simultaneously on the same day. It can be interpreted that those in charge of US national security are saying if DPRK provokes any military incidents, it would be taken as a sign of confrontation against the Obama administration, and there would be restraints, but on the other hand, if DPRK agrees to have a talk, new opportunities would be given. The DPRK must take this direct and clear message from US seriously.

Joongang ilbo ("WILL DPRK KICK OFF THE CHANCE WITH ONE TEST-FIRING OF A MISSILE?", 2009/02/12) wrote that the Obama administration's first official message to DPRK is a warning, but at the same time, it also means to let the DPRK know the U.S. is paying attention. It is true that because President Obama has shown interest of meeting with Kim Jong-il during the process of the presidential election, the hopes of the DPRK has risen high. The problem is that the DPRK portrays the hopes through its trademark brinkmanship tactics. As Hillary Clinton has said, the U.S. values the six-party talks and if the DPRK launches a missile, it might result in no opportunities at all.

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