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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Yonhap News ("U.S. WON'T PAY N. KOREA TO RETURN TO 6-WAY TALKS: KISSINGER", 2010/03/11) reported that the US remains sincerely committed to negotiations with the DPRK on ending the latter's nuclear ambition, but it will not pay a price for the DPRK's mere return to the six-nation nuclear negotiations, Henry Kissinger said. The former U.S. secretary of state, however, noted the countries involved in the nuclear talks, including the United States, will have to decide when negotiations will stop if the DPRK continues to develop nuclear arms and refuses to give them up.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA'S REFORM WILL FAIL IF NUCLEAR AMBITION PERSISTS: MINISTER", 2010/03/11) reported that the DPRK's limited economic reforms will fail unless the country chooses to abandon its nuclear weapons ambition, the ROK's unification minister warned. "North Korea is seeking changes at present, but not at the level that is expected by the international community," Minister Hyun In-taek told a forum on the ROK's resort island of Jeju. Hyun went on to say that the international community wishes to provide cooperation and support for the DPRK to develop its economy after the country drops its nuclear arms programs.

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3. US-ROK Joint Military Exercise

The Associated Press ("US ANTI-WMD TROOPS JOIN MILITARY DRILLS IN SKOREA", 2010/03/11) reported that U.S. troops who would be tasked with eliminating the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction in the event of armed conflict are participating in military drills with the ROK, the top US commander in the country said. "They are here for this exercise and if we ever went to war, they would naturally come also," Army Gen. Walter Sharp told reporters. Sharp said that the troops are carrying out daily exercises with ROK troops to practice locating, securing and eliminating the DPRK's weapons of mass destruction. "What we are training for is all the threats that North Korea can throw at us," Sharp said.

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4. US-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US DISMISSES N.KOREA CONCERN ON WAR GAMES", Washington, 2010/03/11) reported that the United States dismissed DPRK protests over US joint exercises with the ROK, saying that the DPRK should not be surprised. "We have an important alliance with South Korea. We have done these exercises before," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley told reporters. "These should not be a surprise to North Korea," he said.

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5. Japan on Abductee Issue

Xinhua News ("JAPAN SEEKS DPRK'S DENUCLEARIZATION ALONG WITH RESOLUTION OF ABDUCTION ISSUES: JAPANESE AMBASSADOR", 2010/03/11) reported that the Japanese Ambassador to Seoul said Japan is seeking denuclearization of the DPRK along with the resolution of abduction issues between the two countries. "If North Korea (DPRK) moves toward the resolution of abduction issues based on agreements between Tokyo and Pyongyang, Japan will also take action in response," Toshinori Shigeie told a local defense forum. The ambassador also voiced support for the ROK's so-called "grand bargain" proposal aimed at achieving the DPRK's denuclearization at once, rather than gradually approaching the goal in phases, in return for international aid and other incentives for the DPRK.

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6. Japan-DPRK Relations

Mainichi Shimbun ("DPJ AGREES TO NEW KOMEITO REQUEST TO EXPAND CHILD-ALLOWANCE SCOPE", 2010/03/11) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's ruling Democratic Party of Japan decided Wednesday to expand the scope of the government's planned monthly child-rearing allowances to children at child-care institutions. On whether to include pro-Pyongyang schools in the government's plan to waive senior high school tuition, Hatoyama underscored that there is a need to set solid criteria to determine if the schools offer curricula equivalent to those at Japanese schools. While he denied that the DPRK's past abductions of Japanese nationals would be a deciding factor, Hatoyama said he found it questionable to waive tuition for schools of a country with which Japan has no diplomatic ties.

Korea Times ("BUDDHISTS OF 2 KOREAS TO DISCUSS JOINT RALLY", 2010/03/11) reported that t

he government approved the planned visit by a group of Buddhists to the DPRK later this week to discuss the holding of a rally for Buddhists from the divided halves in the DPRK, an official at the Ministry of Unification said. But the Jogye order, the largest Buddhist sect in the country, said it may postpone the visit slated for Friday because of a request from its DPRK counterpart. The ministry approved the visit by four Jogye officials planned because it is part of routine exchanges, the official said.

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7. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA THREATENS TO SCRAP SUSPENDED MOUNTAIN TOUR PROGRAM", 2010/03/11) reported that the DPRK on March 11 claimed that the Seoul government is effectively blocking South Koreans from visiting its tourist attractions and warned it could revoke all deals covering inter-Korean tours. The DPRK's Asia-Pacific Peace Committee statement carried by KCNA follows a fresh round of talks held in February that failed to reach a compromise on restarting tourism to the scenic Mt. Kumgang on the east coast and Kaesong. "If the South Korean government continues to block the travel routes while making false accusations, we will be left with no choice but to take extreme measures," an unidentified spokesman for the committee said.

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8. DPRK Mineral Sector

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA ENACTS 'COAL LAW,' SIGNALS WILL TO LURE FOREIGN MONEY", 2010/03/11) reported that the DPRK has enacted a law on the exploration, supply and use of coal, which the impoverished country claims is the food of the manufacturing industry. The enactment of the coal law was confirmed as Minju Josen, the organ of the DPRK's cabinet, carried a five-installment series on the coal law between Jan. 20 and Feb. 12. Analysts said the coal law seems to be aimed at developing its ample reserves of coal more effectively as the isolated country has difficulty in importing oil and other energy sources due to international sanctions.

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9. DPRK Economy

Xinhua ("KIM JONG IL INSPECTS HUICHON INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS", 2010/03/11) reported that Kim Jong Il, top leader of the DPRK, inspected the industrial establishments in Huichon City, the official news agency KCNA reported. Kim said the pioneer of cutting-edge technology in the present era of knowledge-based economy is the victor in the future, adding that it is important for all sectors and units to dynamically accelerate modernization based on the latest science and technology.

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10. DPRK Diplomacy

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "DIPLOMAT: NORTH KOREA SEEKS HIKE IN EMBASSY RENT", Seoul, 2010/03/12) reported that the DPRK informed embassies and international organizations last year that it would raise rental fees for their offices and living accommodation by 20 percent beginning in January, a diplomat who has knowledge of the matter said Friday. The rent increases were being opposed by the embassies and international organizations. "It's under dispute at the moment," the diplomat said.

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11. US-ROK Security Alliance

Korea Herald ("U.S. PUNDITS ECHO SEOUL ON OPCON", 2010/03/11) reported that US pundits have begun to share ROK conservatives' concerns over the planned transfer of wartime operational control from the United States to the ROK in 2012, which would have each country command its own military units. Defense Minister Kim Tae-young also said last month that transferring the control in 2012 would be "bad timing." Michael O'Hanlon, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution said the transfer should be delayed or reconsidered. Bruce Bechtol Jr., military expert on the Korean Peninsula and professor at the U.S. Marine Corps Command and Staff College, said the OPCON transfer should be delayed until the ROK is ready to fight the DPRK's asymmetric forces which include short-range ballistic missiles, long-range artillery and special operations forces.

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12. ROK Energy Supply

Korea Herald ("KOREA TO START TESTING CARBON CAPTURE PILOT PLANT", 2010/03/11) reported that the ROK will start technical evaluation testing of a carbon capture pilot plant at a local coal-fired thermal power unit this week, the government said. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said the facility set up at the plant in Hadong, located about 470 kilometers southeast of Seoul, is the first of its kind to use dry absorbents to keep carbon dioxide (CO₂) gases from being released into the atmosphere. The plant, set to go on-line on Friday, cost less to build compared with those using the more complicated "wet system." The dry system "is more eco-friendly since no liquid waste is created," the ministry said in a press release.

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13. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("HATOYAMA ONCE TOLD U.S. CURRENT FUTEMMA PLAN WOULD BE ACCEPTED: SOURCES", Tokyo, 2010/03/11) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama told US Ambassador to Japan John Roos in December that Japan would eventually accept the 2006 accord to relocate the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from Ginowan to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago, both in Okinawa Prefecture, bilateral diplomatic sources said. The premier's temporary "verbal pledge" is believed to have spurred US distrust in Japan, leading the bilateral ties to become strained.

Kyodo News ("ERUPTION OF OKINAWA ANGER COULD THREATEN JAPAN-U.S. TIES: OKINAWA GROUP", 2010/03/11) reported that a group of Okinawa prefectural assembly members urged

Cabinet ministers to move the US Marines' Futenma Air Station outside the southernmost prefecture, warning the eruption of local anger over the base relocation could threaten the Japan-US security alliance. "We told the chief Cabinet secretary that the magma of Okinawa people's anger is rising and its eruption could pose a danger to the Japan-U.S. security alliance," Shinzato said. "It is nothing but discrimination against Okinawa," Shinzato said.

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14. Japan Whaling Issue

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SET TO ARREST ANTI-WHALING ACTIVIST: REPORTS", Tokyo, 2010/03/11) reported that Japan 's Coast Guard obtained an arrest warrant for an anti-whaling activist who has been held aboard a Japanese harpoon ship since boarding it in the Antarctic last month, press reports said. New Zealander Peter Bethune, a member of the militant Sea Shepherd Conservation Society , was the captain of a high-tech powerboat that was sliced in two in a collision with the whaling ship Shonan Maru II in January. The Japan Coast Guard is expected to arrest the New Zealander when the ship arrives in Tokyo on Friday, the Jiji and Kyodo news agencies said, on suspicion of trespass.

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15. PRC Nuclear Capability

The Washington Times ("CHINA NUCLEAR ARMS", 2010/03/11) reported that the PRC's strategic nuclear forces remain shrouded in secrecy, but a new report this week identified the key location of Beijing's tightly guarded underground nuclear-weapons storage base. The report by the Project 2049 Institute, a private PRC affairs research group, also suggests the PRC military is working on a long-range conventional warhead missile capability. The conclusion is based on indicators that the PRC is not building nuclear warheads as fast as it is deploying large numbers of long-range missiles. The increase in long-range missiles without a corresponding growth in nuclear warheads is a sign that the PRC may be following the US Strategic Command in building a non-nuclear long-range strike capability, said Mark A. Stokes, a former Air Force officer and PRC specialist who authored the report.

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16. US on PRC Human Rights

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA RIGHTS RECORD WORSENING IN AREAS: US", Washington, 2010/03/11) reported that the PRC 's human rights record worsened last year as authorities increased harassment of activists and repression in the Xinjiang region, the US State Department said. "The government's human rights record remained poor and worsened in some areas," the annual report by the State Department said. It said Beijing "increased the severe cultural and religious repression of ethnic minorities " in Xinjiang. The State Department said China "continued to repress Uighurs expressing peaceful political dissent and independent Muslim religious leaders," by trying to associate the predominantly Muslim people with terrorism.

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17. Cross-Strait Relations

Xinhua News ("TOP POLITICAL ADVISOR UNDERLINES MAINLAND-TAIWAN TIES ", 2010/03/11) reported that the PRC's top political advisor Jia Qinglin urged to steadily push forward mainland-Taiwan relations, saying the two sides are facing a grand opportunity for the development of ties. Jia, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, made the call when attending a panel discussion of the annual session of the National People's Congress. "The relations across the Taiwan Strait saw comprehensive improvement and development over the past year, and we are now facing a grand opportunity to develop the ties," Jia told NPC deputies of the delegation representing Taiwan.

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18. PRC Tibet Issue

The New York Times ("CHINA INCREASES SECURITY IN TIBET TO PREVENT PROTESTS", 2010/03/11) reported that for a second straight year, the PRC government has increased security across parts of the vast Tibetan plateau to dissuade any Tibetans from holding protests this week to mark the anniversaries of ethnic uprisings. Ma Jun, the deputy chief of the Lhasa police force, said at a news conference that the police had begun a "crackdown storm" on March 2. He said 2,800 security officers had been deployed around the city and had examined thousands of people and nearly 150 businesses for signs of criminal activity, according to Xinhua, the state news agency.

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19. PRC Space Program

Xinhua News ("CHINA'S FIRST MARS PROBE POSTPONED FOR RUSSIA'S REASON", 2010/03/11) reported that the launch of the PRC's first Mars probe "Yinghuo-1", originally scheduled for October 2009 on a Russian carrier rocket, has been postponed until 2011 due to Russia's "technical reasons", a PRC space exploration official said. Ye Peijian, chief designer of Chang'e-1, the country's first moon probe, told Xinhua about the delay on the sidelines of the ongoing annual session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee, the PRC's top political advisory body.

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20. PRC Climate Change

CCTV ("CHINA EMPHASIZES EMISSION REDUCTION", 2010/03/11) reported that this year, PRC authorities plan to close down small thermal power units with a capacity of 10 million kilowatts, phasing out iron production capacity of 25 million tons, and steel production capacity of six million tons. And there will be greater financial support from the central government for the reduction of emissions, with over eighty billion yuan, or around 12 billion US dollars expected.

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21. PRC Civil Society

Associated Press (Cara Anna, "NGOs IN CHINA SAY THREATENED BY NEW DONOR RULES", Beijing, 2010/03/12) reported that aid groups working in the PRC said Friday they feel threatened by new requirements that make it harder to accept overseas donations. The rules that took effect this month require domestic non-governmental organizations — but not those connected with the government — to show proof that donor organizations based overseas are registered in their home countries, and to present notarized, detailed agreements of donations from foreign groups. Religious groups face even tighter requirements. They need approval from the State Religious Affairs Bureau for any donation that exceeds 1 million yuan (\$146,000).

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II. PRC Report

22. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net ("JIANGXI: 91 DEPARTMENT-LEVEL OFFICIALS WITHDRAW FROM INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION", 2010/03/11) reported that Jiangxi province has started a special work to address problems in industrial associations and market medium organizations since last year. As at now, 91 department-level officials have withdrawn from industrial associations, in order to maintain separation between government functional sectors and social organizations.

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23. PRC Environment

China News Net ("CHINA ARABLE LAND TO REACH WARNING LEVEL", 2010/03/11) reported that the total area of the PRC's arable land is 1.862 billion acres, and is nearly reaching the warning level of 1.8 billion acres, said vice minister of agriculture today at a press conference.

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