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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on Six Party Talks

Yonhap News ("LIFTING SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA REQUIRES NEW U.N. RESOLUTION: OFFICIAL ", Seoul, 2010/01/13) reported that the DPRK's latest demand that sanctions on it be lifted in return for its return to the six-party nuclear talks is hardly acceptable due to the need to adopt a new U.N. resolution, a ranking official in Seoul said Wednesday. "Any adjustment of a U.N. resolution basically requires the adoption of a new resolution," said the official, rebutting the DPRK's proposal contained in a statement issued by its foreign ministry on Monday.

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2. US on Six Party Talks

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "BOSWORTH CALLS ON N. KOREA TO RETURN TO 6-WAY TALKS TO DISCUSS SANCTIONS REMOVAL ", Washington, 2010/01/13) reported that the United States will consider lifting sanctions on the DPRK only after it returns to six-party talks and makes progress on its denuclearization, U.S. President Barack Obama's special envoy for the DPRK said Wednesday. "When North Korea comes back to six-party talks and resumes making progress for the goal of denuclearization, the Security Council will examine the appropriateness of a revision of the sanctions resolution," Stephen Bosworth said in a forum at the Korea Economic Institute.

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3. DPRK-US Relations

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA SAYS IT WILL ALLOW MORE U.S. TOURISTS", Beijing, 2010/01/13) reported that the DPRK said Wednesday it will begin to allow in more American tourists

after years of heavy restrictions on visits to the isolate country, according a tour operator. Only about 2,000 tourists from the U.S. have visited since the country opened to Western tourism in 1987, according to the founder of a PRC-based tour group that says it has taken most of those visitors into the isolated country. But the Koryo Group, which specializes in DPRK tourism, said it received an e-mail from the state-run Korea International Travel Company on Wednesday afternoon saying the country will accept more American tourists this year. The message gave no explanation for the move and said more specific information would come later, the agency's founder, Nicholas Bonner, told The Associated Press. "This is a big, big change," he said.

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "N. KOREA TO STAGE 'ARIRANG SHOW' FOR FOREIGN TOURISTS FROM AUGUST ", Seoul, 2010/01/13) reported that the DPRK plans to stage its trademark "Arirang Show," a giant mass entertainment spectacle, in Pyongyang for three months from Aug. 1 this year and will allow U.S. tourists to attend it, a U.S.-based tour agency said Wednesday. "We received confirmation from Pyongyang that the 'Mass Game' will run from August through October 2010," the New Korea Tours said on its Web site. "Korean Americans have a unique opportunity to visit the North this year," it said, adding slots assigned to U.S. citizens are limited and "being filled fast." But ROK passport holders are not allowed to join the tour program, it said.

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4. US on Sino-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. HAPPY WITH CHINA'S ROLE IN N. KOREAN DENUCLEARIZATION: OFFICIAL ", Washington, 2010/01/13) reported that reported that the United States expressed satisfaction with the PRC's cooperation in the international efforts to denuclearize the DPRK and Iran. "Issues such as North Korea and Iran cannot be successfully addressed without intensive and sustained involvement by China," David Shear, deputy assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, told a House Armed Services Committee panel on recent security developments in the region. "To date, we have been encouraged by China's willingness to cooperate with us in these areas, although a great deal of work remains to be done." Shear said that the PRC and the US "share the strategic objective of the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and we worked together with the international community to adopt UN Security Council Resolution 1874."

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5. Inter-Korea Relations

Arirang News ("RED CROSS CHIEF CALLS FOR MORE INTER-KOREAN FAMILY REUNIONS", 2010/01/13) reported that the head of the ROK's Red Cross has vowed to push for a new round of reunions involving families separated by the Korean War. In an interview with Yonhap News Agency, Red Cross President Yoo Chong-ha stressed the urgent need to assist aging members of divided families. The reunion issue must be dealt with separately from politics and inter-Korean dialogue, Yoo added, hinting at the possibility of holding a fresh round next month.

Xinhua News Agency (Yang Yang , "S. KOREA TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON PROMOTION OF NEW PEACE PLAN WITH DPRK ", 2010/01/13) reported that the ROK's Ministry of Unification has put aside more than 60 percent of its annual budget this year to put more emphasis on promoting a new

peace plan with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), a government official said Wednesday. An official from the ministry said 863 million won, or 61.1 percent of the total budget, is earmarked this year for promotion of the new peace plan that has been proposed by President Lee Myung-bak last August, which practically promises substantial economic aid and calls for conventional arms reduction as long as the DPRK complies with international denuclearization measures. The ministry added the high budget is in line with its main objective for this year, which is to achieve a new "inter-Korean paradigm" through dialogue and exchanges between the two countries.

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "GERMANY SUPPORTS AID-FOR-ABDUCTEE EXCHANGE BETWEEN KOREAS: ENVOY ", Seoul, 2010/01/13) reported that Germany welcomes an inter-Korean aid-fo--abductee exchange the ROK is considering, Berlin's envoy here said Wednesday, expecting that the approach modeled on a past German program will help improve humanitarian conditions in the DPRK. The remarks by Amb. Hans-Ulrich Seidt were the first official view Germany has expressed on Seoul's proposal to provide economic aid to Pyongyang in exchange for the release of Korean War prisoners and other ROK citizens allegedly held in the communist country.

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6. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch

Korea Herald (Kim Ji-hyun , "TROOP DISPATCH TO AFGHANISTAN MAY BE DELAYED ", 2010/01/13) reported that Seoul's plan to send some 300 troops to Afghanistan along with more civilian reconstruction workers may face a delay due to a political dispute over the revision of Sejong City. "The government will try to get the related bill on the troop dispatch passed in February as originally planned, but it may give the final push until the June National Assembly session," one official said. If the government aims for June, it would have to be after the June 2 local elections, for fear of the dispatch plan affecting voter sentiment, he said. This means the troops may not be dispatched by July as planned.

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7. ROK Cyber Security

Security News (John Leyden , "SOUTH KOREA SETS UP CYBERWARFARE UNIT TO REPEL NORK HACKERS", 2010/01/13) reported that the ROK has launched a cyberwarfare command centre designed to fight against possible hacking attacks blamed on the DPRK and the PRC. The division boasts a reported 200 techies, who will be tasked with tackling a reported 95,000 hacking attacks the country's military networks face every day.

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8. ROK Energy Security

Arirang News ("COLD WEATHER SPARKS ENERGY CRISIS", 2010/01/13) reported that freezing temperatures with lows falling below minus 10 degrees Celsius have depleted the country's reserve power to dangerously low levels, opening the possibility of a massive blackout. Knowledge Economy

Minister Choi Kyung-hwan said the nation's electricity usage peaked at over 68-million kw at 11 a.m. last Friday, surpassing the peak amount seen in the summer for the first time in 16 years. On that day the amount of backup energy stood at 4.4 million kw, which is below the 6-million kw level considered to be sufficient in case of emergencies.

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9. ROK Climate Change

Xinhua News Agency ("S. KOREA AUTHORIZES "LOW CARBON, GREEN GROWTH" LAW ", Seoul, 2010/01/13) reported that ROK president Lee Myung-bak formally put through the "low carbon, green growth" law Wednesday, reinforcing his pledge to become a leader in green growth in the international community. The Basic Law on Low Carbon and Green Growth, slated to go in effect on April 14, enforces the country to spend two percent of its annual gross domestic product in developing eco-friendly businesses and projects that will lead to both economic growth and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions simultaneously.

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10. ROK on USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo ("S. KOREA FOREIGN MINISTER CALLS FOR 'HARMONIOUS' FUTENMA SETTLEMENT", Seoul, 2010/01/14) reported that ROK foreign minister Yu Myung Hwan said Thursday he hopes for a ''harmonious'' settlement of the relocation of the Futenma U.S. military base. ''Korea's position is to see the issue being settled in a harmonious way between the United States and Japan,'' Yu said in an interview with Kyodo News. He said the U.S. Marines' Futemma Air Station plays an important role as a rear base of the U.S. forces in the ROK in event of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula.

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11. Japan Politics

New York Times (Martin Fackler, "JAPANESE PROSECUTORS RAID POLITICAL POWER BROKER'S OFFICE ", Tokyo, 2010/01/13) reported that prosecutors in Tokyo raided the office of one of the most powerful figures in Japan's governing party on Wednesday, expanding the latest in a series of finance scandals that have sapped support for the new government. Prosecutors searched the office of Ichiro Ozawa, the secretary general of the Democratic Party, as part of an investigation into what Japanese news reports said was more than $4 million in improperly reported political funds linked to one of Japan's largest construction companies.

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12. Japan Comfort Women

Yonhap News ("ACTIVISTS, COMFORT WOMEN HOLD 900TH JAPANESE EMBASSY PROTEST ", Seoul, 2010/01/13) reported that braving temperatures of minus 15 C a group of activists Wednesday held their 900th weekly protest rally in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul to urge

Tokyo to apologize and offer compensation for their wartime use of "comfort women." Japan has not responded so far since the rally started 18 years ago. But those victims of Japan's wartime atrocity say they will never give up demanding apology and compensation... even after they die. "Almost a century has passed since a number of young women's lives and human rights were infringed. But the perpetrator has never acknowledged the crime," the KCW said in a statement. "The Wednesday demonstration will continue until the Japanese government takes the responsibility."

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13. Japan Whaling Issue

Associated Press ("NZ GOV'T DRAFTS 'DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION' TO WHALING IN ANTARCTIC WATERS", Sydney, 2010/01/13) reported that New Zealand Prime Minister John Key said Wednesday his government has been working hard on a diplomatic solution that would put an end to Japanese whaling in Antarctic waters, the country's media reported. Key told reporters he will propose the diplomatic solution at an emergency meeting of the International Whaling Commission to be held later this month in Hawaii, according to a report by the New Zealand Press Association. Before then, however, Key will discuss the plan with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton the report said.

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14. Sino-US Military Relations

Agence France Presse ("US OFFICIAL QUESTIONS CHINA SPACE INTENTIONS", Washington, 2010/01/13) reported that a senior US defense official on Wednesday voiced doubts about the PRC's insistence that its use of space is for peaceful means as Washington appealed for steady military ties with the rising Asian power. "The Chinese have stated that they oppose the militarization of space. Their actions seem to indicate the contrary intention," said Wallace Gregson, the assistant secretary of defense in charge of Asia. "We continue to press the Chinese for explanation," Gregson told a congressional hearing.

Reuters (Phil Stewart and Jim Wolf , "U.S., EYEING RISING CHINA, TO BOLSTER ASIA LINKS", Washington, 2010/01/13) reported that the United States aims to expand its involvement in East Asia amid concerns that the PRC may use its growing military clout to coerce its neighbors or move against Taiwan, officials told Congress on Wednesday. The renewed concerns voiced by Obama administration and U.S. military officials included cyber-attacks originating in the PRC. “We will remain engaged and active throughout the region, supporting our allies and expanding our leadership in this vitally part of the world," said David Shear, a deputy assistant secretary of state, in testimony before the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee.

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15. Cross-Strait Relations

Associated Press ("TAIWAN SAYS US ARMS WILL HELP TIES WITH CHINA", Taipei, 2010/01/13)

reported that Taiwan said Wednesday that weapons purchases from the United States can give it the confidence it needs to pursue reconciliation with rival PRC — an apparent rebuke to Beijing's denunciations of American arms deals with the island. On Wednesday, Taiwan's Cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council said that Beijing should understand that weapons deals with the U.S. did not threaten its interests. "Procuring arms from the United States is for the country's security and defense so that Taiwan can feel more confident and stronger in the process of reconciling and negotiating with mainland China," MAC said in a statement. "We thank the U.S. for its long-term support." Earlier in the day the PRC's Taiwan Affairs Office in Beijing reaffirmed its strong opposition to U.S. arms transactions with Taipei, saying "the stand we take in opposing any country selling arms to Taiwan has been consistent and clear."

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16. UK on PRC Human Rights

Agence France Presse ("UK VOICES 'SERIOUS CONCERNS' ON RIGHTS IN CHINA", London, 2010/01/13) reported that Britain on Wednesday voiced "serious concerns" about human rights in the PRC over the sentencing of leading dissidents, two weeks after Beijing's execution of a mentally ill Briton chilled relations. A Foreign Office statement referred to Dhondup Wangchen, a Tibetan filmmaker jailed for six years for subversion according to his family, and leading PRC dissident Liu Xiaobo, who was sentenced to 11 years on the same charge. "The verdict (on Wangchen), like that of prominent human rights defender Liu Xiaobo, raises serious concerns about the right to freedom of expression in China," said Foreign Office minister Ivan Lewis in the statement.

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17. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France Presse ("LEADER OF CHINA'S TIBET REGION RESIGNS", Beijing, 2010/01/13) reported that the chairman of the PRC's Tibet Autonomous Region resigned Tuesday, 22 months after anti-PRC protests escalated into deadly violence in the regional capital. The regional government said it had accepted the resignation of Qiangba Puncog, 62, for unspecified reasons. Qiangba Puncog had served as chairman of Tibet's regional government since 2003. A second Tibetan official, Legqog, also resigned on Tuesday from his post as head of the regional People's Congress, the PRC's official Xinhua news agency reported.

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18. PRC Internet Control

Reuters (Alexei Oreskovic and Chris Buckley , "U.S., GOOGLE AND CHINA SQUARE OFF OVER INTERNET", Beijing, 2010/01/13) reported that Google's threat to quit the PRC over censorship and hacking intensified Sino-U.S. frictions on Wednesday as Washington said it had serious concerns and demanded an explanation from Beijing. The PRC has not made any significant comment since Google said it will not abide by censorship and may shut its Chinese-language google.cn website because of attacks from the PRC on human rights activists using its Gmail service and on dozens of companies, including Adobe Systems. PRC authorities were "seeking more information on Google's statement," the Xinhua reported, citing an unnamed official from PRC's State Council Information Office.

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19. PRC Energy Security

Bernama ("CHINA PUTS TRANSPORT OF COAL ON PRIORITY TO EASE SHORTAGE", Beijing, 2010/01/13) reported that the PRC's Ministry of Railway has put coal transport their priority in the coming weeks to ease shortage of the fuel in Hunan, Jiangxi, Hubei and Henan provinces. Many provinces and municipalities in central and eastern PRC are currently facing an energy crisis, where stockpile of coal had fallen to critical level as a result of increasing energy demand. The transportation of coal has been also delayed by the acute cold weather. According to local media, coal reserves in nearly 600 major power plants have been falling with only enough remaining for nine days, and coal supplies in 205 power plants may not last more than another week.

Mongabay ("MALAYSIA AND CHINA AGREE TO $11 BILLION DEAL TO BUILD MINES, DAMS IN BORNEO", 2010/01/13) reported that Malaysia and the PRC have agreed to an $11 billion deal that will turn a vast area of Sarawak, a Malaysian state in northern Borneo, into an industrial corridor for mining and energy development, reports The Financial Times. The suite of projects includes at least four hydroelectric dams (up to 28,000MW of power), aluminum-smelting and steel plants, coal mines (1.46 billion metric tons), and natural gas development (nearly 41 billion cubic feet), according the state government. Environmentalists say the projects will displace indigenous groups and destroy important ecosystems, endangered biodiversity and contributing to Malaysia's surging greenhouse gas emissions.

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II. PRC Report

20. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Securities News ("TENCENT NET FRIEND LOVE FUND LAUNCHED", 2010/01/13) reported that Tencent Net Friend Love Fund was formally launched in Beijing on January 10. The first project of the fund is Save Children's Heart By Net. For this project, Tencent group will donate 10 million RMB to help children with congenital heart disease in poor families.

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21. PRC Public Health

Sohu.com ("BEIJING VOLUNTARY BLOOD DONOR MAY BE RECOMMENDED FOR EMPLOYMENT", 2010/01/13) reported that Beijing Red Cross Blood Center is going to build an employment platform, and voluntary blood donors may be recommended for employment, said Liu Jiang, director of the Blood Center today. To the employer, blood donation behavior is a good assessment factor of employees, and the recommendation may help voluntary blood donors to get employed.

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22. PRC Civil Society

Haixia Urban News ("RONGXIN DONATES 1 MILLION RMB TO VOLUNTEERS", 2010/01/13) reported that Rongxin Investment Group (Fujian) donated 1 million RMB to Fuzhou Red Cross Society as a fund for volunteers' services. In recent years, Rongxi group and its chairman Ou Zonghong have donated over 30 million RMB to support public utility and made a good example for other enterprises.

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