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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA SEEKS BOTH NUCLEAR STATUS AND NORMALIZED TIES: MILITARY CHIEF ", Seoul, 2009/12/14) reported that the DPRK appears to be holding on to its ambition to be recognized as a nuclear state despite its pursuit of normalized relations with the outside world, Lee Sang-eui, chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, said Monday. "It is our assessment that North Korea has not altered its strategic goal of simultaneously securing the status of a nuclear state and the stability of its regime through the normalization of North-U.S. relations," Lee told a forum in Seoul. "Through the reinforcement of its nuclear capabilities, North Korea is strengthening its bargaining power against the U.S. and pursuing direct talks," Lee said, citing the May nuclear test. "It is our projection that Kim will continue to tighten his control (over the country), and pursue improved ties with the U.S. as well as a softening of sanctions for economic gains," he said.

JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH ASKS FOR FACE SAVING GESTURES", 2009/12/15) reported that during bilateral talks with the United States last week, the DPRK asked its U.S. counterparts to help it "save face," a ROK government official said yesterday. The official said that the DPRK didn't lay out any particular preconditions for its return to the six-party talks. Instead, the official said, the DPRK asked for something more abstract. "As far as I know, North Koreans told Bosworth to create a friendly atmosphere and build enough justification for them to come back to the talks," the official said. "Bosworth then responded that the United States will be in extensive discussions with its six-party partners on what they can do to help the North return to the table."

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2. US on Six Party Talks

Agence France Presse ("NO TIMETABLE SET FOR NORTH KOREA TALKS: US ENVOY", Moscow, 2009/12/14) reported that the United States has set no timetable with the DPRK on its return to nuclear arms talks, a senior US envoy said Monday in Moscow. "As to timelines, we don't have timelines. I would only say that we and our partners in this process very much want to resume our work as soon as possible," he said. "We are prepared to do that and I know that other countries are as well."

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3. US, Russia on Six-Party Talks

Xinhua News Agency ("RUSSIA, U.S. HAIL DPRK'S READINESS TO REJOIN SIX-PARTY TALKS ", Moscow, 2009/12/14) reported that Russia and the United States welcomed signals from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that it was ready to rejoin the six-party talks, Russian news agencies reported. "I welcome the DPRK's adherence to the six-nation negotiating process," Russia's chief nuclear envoy and Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin told a press briefing after meeting with Steven Bosworth. Bosworth said the United States was inspired by the DPRK's willingness to resume the talks. The United States highly values the negotiations and is glad that the soonest possible resumption of the talks has been confirmed, he said.

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4. DPRK Plane Interdiction

Agence France Presse ("CLINTON 'VERY PLEASED' WITH THAI SEIZURE OF NKOREA ARMS", Washington, 2009/12/14) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Monday the United States is "very pleased" with Thailand's seizure of weapons from the DPRK. Clinton told reporters, "It shows that sanctions can work. It shows that sanctions can prevent the proliferation of weapons."

JoongAng Ilbo ("MEDIA SAY NORTH ARMS ON WAY TO UKRAINE ", 2009/12/15) reported that the aircraft carrying weapons from the DPRK was on its way to Ukraine, a member of the crew has told Thai media. The Thai News Agency reported that the crew commander, a Belarussian named Mikhail Petukhou, said during a six-hour interrogation that the plane was bound for the former Soviet territory. The commander said the plane, which is registered in Georgia, had initially flown from Ukraine and loaded the weapons into the aircraft in the DPRK. The Russian news agency RIA Novosti reported that the Ukraine Foreign Ministry was investigating.

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5. DPRK Influenza

Agence France Presse ("SEOUL TO SPEND 15 MILLION DOLLARS ON FLU AID TO N.KOREA", Seoul, 2009/12/14) reported that the ROK is preparing to ship medical supplies worth more than 15

million dollars to help the DPRK fight an outbreak of swine flu, officials said Monday. The unification ministry, which handles cross-border ties, said the shipment would include antiviral drugs for 500,000 patients -- Tamiflu for 400,000 and Relenza for 100,000 -- and sanitation supplies. The aid will cost an estimated 17.8 billion won (15.3 million dollars), which will be financed by a state fund for inter-Korean cooperation, it said.

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "ALL N. KOREAN H1N1 FLU PATIENTS CURED: WHO ", Seoul, 2009/12/14) reported that the World Health Organization (WHO) said Monday that all nine DPRK citizens who were confirmed as having the H1N1 flu virus have recovered, and that no additional cases of the disease have been reported in the country. "They have all recovered and are doing well," said Suzanne Westman, coordinator of outbreak alert and response at the WHO's New Delhi office, which is monitoring the flu outbreak in the DPRK. "All contacts have been identified, put in isolation and treated," she said over the telephone.

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6. DPRK Currency Reform

Associated Press ("REPORT: NKOREA UPS LIMIT FOR CURRENCY EXCHANGE", Seoul, 2009/12/15) reported that the DPRK raised the amount of old currency that citizens can turn in for new bills after merchants rioted against the rules, Chosun Ilbo said Tuesday, citing unidentified sources inside the DPRK. Merchants hit hard by new currency rules rioted in the eastern coastal city of Hamhung on Dec. 5-6 and many people supported the protest, the paper said. In an attempt to allay the anger, the government raised the amount of old bills convertible into new currency to 500,000 won per individual from previous 100,000 won on Dec. 6, the newspaper said. The regime also assured citizens that the rest can be converted through bank deposits , that they won't be questioned if their deposits are no more than 1 million won, and that money in excess of 1 million won could also be exchanged through deposits if they explain how they accumulated the assets, according to the report.

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7. DPRK Human Rights

The Daily NK ("NORTH KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT ", 2009/12/14) reported that the Association of North Korean Human Rights Organizations gave a performance in Seoul Plaza to commemorate International Human Rights Day and encourage Seoul citizens to take an interest in DPRK human rights problems. The Association also released a statement urging the UN to immediately investigate inhumane DPRK acts; the PRC authorities to stop repatriating defectors back to the DPRK; and the DPRK to dismantle its "gulag" of political prison camps.

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8. DPRK-Australia Relations

Sydney Morning Herald (Mark Davis, "MP HAS A RAINBOW VISION OF NORTH KOREA", 2009/12/14) reported that Queensland federal Liberal MP Michael Johnson wants Australia to engage with Pyongyang's regime. He concedes that teh DPRK is "one of the darkest places on the

face of the planet" but says Australia's policy of condemning the regime has failed, and he has called on the Federal Government to open an embassy in Pyongyang. In a report tabled in Parliament, Mr Johnson says his vision is to lead a delegation of young Australian students, sports players, musicians or academics back to Pyongyang. "This would be a form of third-track diplomacy that could reignite the bilateral ties and see Australia begin a diplomatic process of connecting with key stakeholders in the North Korean regime."

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9. ROK-US Military Cooperation

Associated Press ("US GENERAL SAYS NKOREAN ATTACK WOULD HURT SEOUL", 2009/12/14) reported that the top U.S. military commander in the ROK says the DPRK could inflict heavy damage on Seoul if war broke out. Gen. Walter Sharp said Monday at a Washington think tank that U.S. and ROK forces are stronger than ever following a year of provocations from the DPRK. But he says the DPRK could do damage to Seoul because of its huge artillery and special forces operations and because it stations 70 percent of its 1.2 million-member military close to the Demilitarized Zone. Sharp says the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in the ROK work hard to make sure that they could minimize damage by quickly moving to the DMZ and getting air and naval forces ready to take out the DPRK's long range artillery.

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10. ROK Influenza

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA REPORTS PIGS INFECTED WITH TYPE-A INFLUENZA ", Seoul, 2009/12/15) reported that the ROK's farm ministry confirmed that pigs in the country have been infected with the type-A influenza virus, marking the first such case involving locally raised swine. "Infections were confirmed at five pig farms in the Gyeonggi and North Gyeongsang provinces. The movement of pigs in the area was restricted, as the animals were quarantined to stem the spread of the contagious disease," according to Ministry of Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

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11. ROK Demographics

Yonhap ("NUMBER OF AGED IN KOREA SURGES MASSIVELY", Seoul, 2009/12/14) reported that, according to a report by Statistics Korea Monday, the number of people aged 75 or older totaled 1.89 million this year compared with the 110,000 recorded in 1960. This marked a 17-fold increase over the cited period. The age group accounted for 3.9 percent of the nation's total population, up from a mere 0.4 percent around five decades ago, the report showed.

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12. Japan Abductee Issue

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA USED 'NO RHETORIC' ABOUT HOLDING TALKS WITH JAPAN:

BOSWORTH", Tokyo, 2009/12/14) reported that the DPRK used "no rhetoric" when it indicated during recent talks with the United States that it was open to further discussions with Japan on such issues as the abduction of Japanese nationals, a senior U.S. official said. "They were very low-key, they were very -- no rhetoric," Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. special representative for DPRK policy, said. Bosworth said he urged the DPRK to engage with Japan, particularly on the abduction issue.

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13. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO FORMULATE U.S. BASE RELOCATION POLICY ON TUES.", Tokyo, 2009/12/15) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said Monday that his government will decide its policy Tuesday on the issue of relocating the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture. The policy, to be finalized at a meeting of senior officials of the three parties comprising Hatoyama's coalition government, is likely to involve not fixing a relocation site for the Futenma base until next year and minimizing the risks posed by the facility as soon as possible. Tokyo will relay its policy to Washington soon, possibly by the end of this week, and seek fresh bilateral talks on the matter, government sources said.

Reuters ("JAPAN TO PUT OFF DECISION ON U.S. BASE ROW", Tokyo, 2009/12/15) reported that Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said the three parties making up Japan's ruling coalition would continue to discuss the issue of US base relocation. "On the issue of bases, we confirmed that the three parties would work together on the matter," Hirano told a news conference. Asked what that meant, Foreign Minister Tatsuya Okada told reporters later: "It means 'please wait a little longer'."

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14. Japan-US Security Alliance

Mainichi Japan ("FOREIGN MINISTRY PROBE FAILS TO FIND JAPAN-U.S. SECRET PACT ON OKINAWA REVERSION", 2009/12/14) reported that an in-house investigation by the Foreign Ministry over an alleged secret Japan-U.S. agreement regarding the reversion of Okinawa did not reveal a copy of the pact, it has emerged. Bunroku Yoshino, former director general of the ministry's American Affairs Bureau, testified in court earlier this month that he signed the document on the secret agreement and that the ministry preserved a copy of it. The latest revelations, made by an insider of a fact-finding team on the issue, have raised suspicions that the ministry has discarded the document. However, the in-house investigation has uncovered documents recording the process of bilateral negotiations on the reversion of Okinawa, which suggest that Japan footed 4 million dollars in expenses for restoring land used by U.S. bases in Okinawa Prefecture before returning the land to its owners.

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15. Japan Self-Defense Force

Kyodo News ("GOV'T NOT TO BEGIN ADDITIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE BUILDUP IN FY 2010 ", Tokyo, 2009/12/15) reported that the government and ruling parties have decided to forgo beginning

additional deployment of Patriot Advanced Capability-3 interceptors for missile defense in fiscal 2010, government sources said Monday. A basic defense guideline on the compilation of a fiscal 2010 defense budget, including the decision, will be approved by the Cabinet today, they said. The plan to deploy additional surface-to-air PAC-3 interceptors was given up after some Cabinet ministers including Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and the ruling coalition Social Democratic Party showed reluctance to pursue it, they said.

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16. Japan-Taiwan Relations

Kyodo News ("TAIWAN'S MA 'MISUNDERSTOOD' IN JAPAN: NAKADA ", Taipei, 2009/12/14) reported that Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou's attitude and policies toward Japan are misunderstood by many Japanese even though he seeks to boost bilateral relations, former Yokohama mayor Hiroshi Nakada said. "Ma's thinking on Japan, it's still unclear and misunderstood in Japan," Nakada told a press conference at Taiwan's parliament after leading a delegation of three lawmakers from both Japan's ruling and opposition camps to meet Ma. Nakada said that despite Ma's desire for stronger Taipei-Tokyo ties, his Nationalist Party (KMT) and the ruling Democratic Party of Japan lack channels of communication as they both came to power recently.

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17. Sino-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("HATOYAMA, XI AGREE TO FURTHER DEEPEN JAPAN-CHINA STRATEGIC TIES ", Tokyo, 2009/12/15) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and PRC Vice President Xi Jinping agreed Monday to deepen the two countries' strategic, mutually beneficial relationship, Xi said. Hatoyama, for his part, told Xi that while the Japan-U.S. alliance will remain the foundation of Japan's foreign policy, it is vital to strengthen Japan's relationship with both Washington and Beijing, saying that trilateral relations should not be framed in "zero-sum terms," according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Xi said to Hatoyama that the Japan-PRC relationship constitutes an extremely significant part of the PRC's foreign policy and that the development of bilateral ties would "contribute to stability and development in not just the two countries but also the whole of Asia and the entire world."

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18. PRC Media

Associated Press ("HONG KONG CABLE NETWORK BLOCKED IN CHINA", Hong Kong, 2009/12/14) reported that the PRC has blocked broadcasts of a Hong Kong cable network whose talk show guests spoke openly of political reform, reinforcing Beijing's grip over media content considered politically sensitive. Sun TV's broadcasts stopped airing in mainland PRC from Dec. 5 or sooner, though were still available in Hong Kong, Macau and other countries. "This signal was cut down, but I don't know the reason," an employee at the network's parent company, Sun Television Cybernetworks Enterprise in Hong Kong, said Monday.

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19. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Associated Press (Cara Anna, "CHINA CALLS UIGHURS WHO FLED AFTER RIOTS CRIMINALS", Beijing, 2009/12/15) reported that the PRC on Tuesday said that the 22 Muslim Uighurs who have fled the country and applied for asylum at a U.N. office in Cambodia have been involved in crimes. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said the U.N. refugee program "should not be a haven for criminals." Kitty McKinsey, a spokeswoman for the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, described its mission as "to protect any people in the world who cannot receive protection from their own government." "Sometimes the UNHCR and the government have a dispute over the kind of people in need of protection," she said.

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20. PRC Civil Rights

Reuters ("U.S., EU URGE CHINA TO RELEASE PROMINENT DISSIDENT", Brussels, 2009/12/14) reported that the European Union and the United States called on the PRC to release a prominent pro-democracy writer and rights activist who faces trial on charges of subversion. "The EU calls on the Chinese government to unconditionally release Liu Xiaobo and to end the harassment and detention," the 27-nation bloc's presidency said in a statement. The U.S. State Department said it had repeatedly raised Liu's case with PRC officials and joined the EU in voicing concern for other signatories of the "Charter 08" petition last year demanding PRC democratic reforms.

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21. PRC Climate Change

Associated Press ("IEA CHIEF SAYS CHINA CAN UPGRADE TARGET TO SLOW EMISSIONS GROWTH", Copenhagen, 2009/12/14) reported that International Energy Agency Executive Director Nobuo Tanaka said he believes the PRC can upgrade its target to slow greenhouse gas emissions growth with more foreign aid and investment in its emissions-cut projects. "Based on our analysis, projects currently planned in China such as energy conservation and the introduction of more renewable energy would slash the country's carbon intensity by 47 percent," Tanaka said. Tanaka said that after developed and developing countries agree on specific rules on a mechanism concerning the flow of funds to projects in industrializing nations to combat global warming, the PRC's potential to reduce emissions would further increase.

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22. US on PRC, Russian Relations

Agence France Presse ("US TAKES PRAGMATIC RIGHTS APPROACH TO CHINA, RUSSIA", Washington, 2009/12/14) reported that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Monday outlined a pragmatic stance toward human rights in the PRC and Russia, countries she calls key to boosting the world economy and non-proliferation efforts. "Principled pragmatism informs our approach on human rights, informs our approach with all countries but particularly with key countries like China and Russia," she said in a speech on the Obama administration's human rights agenda.

"Cooperation with each of those is critical to the health of the global economy and the non-proliferation agenda we seek, also to managing security issues like North Korea and Iran, and addressing global problems like climate change," Clinton said.

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II. PRC Report

23. PRC Civil Society

Jinghua Times ("BEIJING: TRAINING CLASS OF COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGISTS FOR THE DISABLED OPEN", 2009/12/14) reported that 91 community workers for the disabled people and social workers in Xicheng District of Beijing became the first members of community psychologists for disabled people training class. Form now on, there will be one class every week till April 2010, and then after passing examination, the 91 students will be the first professional community psychologist for the disabled people in Beijing.

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24. PRC Mineral Supply

People's Daily online ("1 BILLION-TON IRON MINE FOUND IN CHINA", 2009/12/14) reported that a 1 billion-ton iron ore deposit has been found in northern Hebei province, the head of the province's Bureau of Land and Resources said. The six-kilometer-long deposit is the largest found in China since the 1980s.

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25. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Beijing Daily ("70% BEIJING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION", 2009/12/14) reported that according to a survey of Beijing university students' environmental protection awareness, 92.5% think it is very necessary to popularize environmental knowledge in society, and 70% want to know more environmental knowledge and participate in real practice. The survey result was released on the fifth University Environment & Culture Week held on December 12 in Beijing.

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