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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Sino-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ARRANGING FOREIGN INVESTMENT DEAL FOR N.KOREA: REPORT", Seoul, 2010/02/15) reported that the PRC is arranging a huge foreign investment deal to revive the DPRK's faltering economy amid an international drive to coax Pyongyang back to nuclear disarmament talks, a report said. Beijing is helping the DPRK obtain more than 10 billion dollars in investment from PRC banks and multinational firms, the ROK's Yonhap news agency said. A DPRK body known as the Korea Taepung International Investment Group plans to conclude the deal in March, Yonhap said, adding that PRC capital would account for 60 percent of total investments.

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2. UN on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA 'NOT EAGER' TO RESTART NUKE TALKS", 2010/02/12) reported that the DPRK is in no rush to resume stalled talks aimed at persuading the country to give up its nuclear weapons arsenal, the U.N. envoy to the country said. Speaking at a news conference in Beijing after a visit to Pyonyang, Lynn Pascoe said he and DPRK officials had "a frank and open discussion back and forth on a variety of issues." But, he said, "They are not eager to return to the six-party talks." DPRK officials did indicate "interest and willingness to have international assistance" and made clear that "they do not like" the U.N. sanctions against them, Pascoe said.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("U.S. SEES NO IMMEDIATE SIGN FOR 6-WAY TALKS REOPENING: STATE DEPT.", 2010/02/12) reported that the United States said that it does not see any immediate sign that the DPRK will return to the six-party talks on ending its nuclear weapons programs. "We certainly would like to see such a sign," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said. "I'm not aware that we've seen one at this point."

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4. US-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA WILL SEEK TO END HOSTILE RELATION WITH U.S.: KCNA ", 2010/02/15) reported that the DPRK's No. 2 leader Kim Yong-nam will seek to end hostile relations with the U.S. through "dialogue and negotiation", the Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. Kim will also push to mend ties and unite with the ROK by promoting reconciliation and cooperation, KCNA said, citing Kim's report at a Pyongyang meeting held to commemorate the 68th birthday of the DPRK's head Kim Jong-il.

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREANS 'INDIFFERENT TO N.KOREAN GULAG'", 2010/02/12) reported that South Koreans are largely indifferent to human rights abuses in the DPRK such as labor camps, the military newspaper Stars and Stripes reported. The daily pointed out that Seoul in a rare report recently acknowledged that hundreds of thousands of North Koreans are languishing in the camps but has made no public effort to pressure the Kim Jong-il regime. It said many South Koreans hold "deeply conflicted" feelings toward the DPRK and are uncomfortable admitting that the camps exist.

Agence France-Presse ("S.KOREA TO PRESS N.KOREA TO FREE ABDUCTEES", 2010/02/14) reported that the ROK will push for the release of hundreds of its nationals believed held in the DPRK if the two countries hold talks this year on improving relations, a senior official said. "This issue will be treated as an important topic along with the North Korean nuclear issue if South and North Korea start dialogue," Vice Unification Minister Hong Yang-Ho said. "We have made preparations with the determination to make a breakthrough in these issues this year," Yonhap news agency quoted him as saying.

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6. DPRK Defection

Kyodo News ("N. KOREAN GOV'T OFFICIAL DETAINED IN RUSSIA SEEKING DEFECTION", 2010/02/15) reported that a DPRK government official who has been detained in Russia after smuggling himself into the country wants to defect to Russia or another country, Russian security and other sources said. The 40-year-old man, who illegally entered the Ussuriysk area in the Russian Far East last September while working for an industry-related ministry of the DPRK government, recently conveyed his desire for defection to the Russian government and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the sources said.

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7. DPRK Human Trafficking

Chosun Ilbo ("BORDER GUARDS 'KEY TO TRAFFICKING IN N.KOREANS'", 2010/02/12) reported that DPRK and PRC border guards play a vital part in the trafficking of DPRK women to the PRC, the Asahi Shimbun reported. In a feature report, the Japanese daily quoted a PRC border guard as testifying he caught a few female DPRK defectors in their teens and 20s crossing the Duman (or Tumen) River and handed them over to a Korean-Chinese human trafficker. The PRC border guard said he gets requests from a trafficker in PRC and informs his DPRK counterparts, who then ask a trafficker in the DPRK to find suitable women.

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8. DPRK Leadership

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "QUESTIONS ABOUT HEALTH AS NKOREAN LEADER TURN [sic] 68", Seoul, 2010/02/16) reported that an ROK official said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is depressed and chronically ill, and relies on rare, costly and sometimes outlawed remedies such as rhino's horn and the bile of bear gall bladder . Another intelligence expert said DPRK officials have gone twice to Beijing since 2008 to buy prized remedies, spending more than $610,000 on one shopping trip. Kim is undergoing kidney dialysis and suffers from depression, said Cheong Seong-chang, a senior analyst at the Sejong Institute, citing a "very credible" source.

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9. ROK, PRC, Japan Defense Talks

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, JAPAN AND CHINA SEEKING TO ESTABLISH SECURITY TALKS: OFFICIAL", 2010/02/15) reported that Seoul has been pushing to launch security talks involving the ROK, PRC, and Japan to discuss military and security matters in an effort to reinforce their cooperation in the region, a senior ROK government official said. "Discussions are under way to launch security talks involving South Korea, China and Japan," the official said, requesting anonymity. "We are mediating opinions of the related countries to push ahead with its launch by the end of this year." The security body will be composed of senior-level military officials from the three nations who will regularly meet to discuss military and security issues in the region, the official said.

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10. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("DEFENSE CHIEF NEGATIVE ON FUTENMA RELOCATION TO TINIAN", 2010/02/13) reported that Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa downplayed the idea of relocating a US Marine airfield in Okinawa, Japan's southernmost prefecture, to Tinian in the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. commonwealth. ''As Prime Minister Hatoyama strongly intends to solve the (relocation) issue by May, it is really difficult,'' Kitazawa told a press conference on the possibility of considering Tinian as a candidate site for the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station.

Agence France-Presse ("US SENATOR SAYS JAPAN BASE PRESENCE 'CAN BE MODIFIED'", 2010/02/15) reported that a senior US senator and defence expert said he believes the American military presence in Japan "can be modified", as a row simmers over an air base with a new centre-left government in Toyko. But Senator Jim Webb also warned that the near 50,000 US armed forces

in Japan, who are now concentrated on southern Okinawa island, remain essential to maintaining stability in the East Asian region. Even though the Democratic senator does not speak for the Obama administration, his comments suggested a softening tone from Washington, which has repeatedly urged Tokyo to stick with the original relocation plan.

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11. Japan-Australia Security Relations

Dow Jones Newswire ("JAPAN, AUSTRALIA TO SIGN MILITARY LOGISTICS PACT-NIKKEI", 2010/02/15) reported that Japan and Australia have informally agreed to adopt a framework that would enable Japan's Self-Defense Forces and Australian military forces to provide food, fuel and other logistical support to each other during peacekeeping operations, disaster-relief missions and other activities, the Nikkei reports in its Sunday edition. It would be Japan's second Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement, after the one signed with the U.S. in 1996. In 2004, the scope of that pact was expanded to include ammunition supply.

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12. Japan-Australia on Nuclear Proliferation

Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN, AUSTRALIA EYEING JOINT NUCLEAR STATEMENT", Tokyo, 2010/02/14) reported that the Japanese and Australian governments likely will issue a joint statement on nuclear policy ahead of a conference to reexamine the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in New York in May. The Japanese and Australian governments likely will propose a statement demanding that nuclear-armed states not use nuclear weapons against nonnuclear states and limit the possession of nuclear weapons to the purpose of deterrence. The Japanese and Australian governments plan to discuss the possibility of eliminating the exception whereby the five recognized nuclear powers reserve the right to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear nations allied with nuclear powers.

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13. Japanese Whaling

Associated Press (Tanalee Smith, "WHALING PROTESTER IN CUSTODY ON JAPANESE BOAT", Adelaide, 2010/02/16) reported that an anti-whaling activist from New Zealand was in custody on a Japanese vessel and will likely be taken to Japan to face charges after secretly boarding the ship as part of a protest, officials said Tuesday. Peter Bethune jumped aboard the Shonan Maru 2 from a Jet Ski on Monday with the stated goal of making a citizen's arrest of the ship's captain, while handing over a $3 million bill for the destruction of his protest ship last month.

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14. Sino-Australian Relations

The Washington Post ("AUSTRALIA WELCOMES CHINA'S INVESTMENT, IF NOT ITS

INFLUENCE", 2010/02/15) reported that ton by ton, including more than 300 million tons of ore per year and vast quantities of liquid natural gas, the PRC is buying Australia. One of the world's most staggeringly huge transfers of natural resources has both enriched and alarmed Australia, prompted a determined response from Washington and illustrated both the PRC's savvy and ungainliness as it aggressively expands its influence around the world. "China is remaking the social and political fabric of this country," said Chen Jie, a senior lecturer in international relations at the University of Western Australia who immigrated to Australia from the PRC 20 years ago. "China is intruding into society itself."

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15. Sino-Indian Relations

IANS ("BEEFING ARMY PRESENCE IN NORTHEAST NOT AIMED AT CHINA: ANTONY", 2010/02/14) reported that arguing that India was not a 'war-mongering' nation, Defence Minister A.K. Antony Monday said that strengthening the Indian Army's presence in the northeast was not aimed at the PRC but to make the army an 'effective deterrent'. "As a general policy we are trying to be friendly to all our neighbours. But there are problems. With China too we are trying to improve relations. In many areas they are improving, but there is a long-pending border dispute," the defence minister said. "We do not want an inch of soil from any other country. But we are particularly clear that we will protect every inch of our country. We have to equip our armed forces to act as an effective deterrent," said Antony.

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16. Cross-Strait Relations

Malaysia News.Net ("MAINLAND VISITORS TO TAIWAN INCREASE OVER LUNAR NEW YEAR", 2010/02/15) reported that more than 10,000 PRC tourists visited Taiwan, the first day of the Lunar New Year, setting a new daily record. Last year, there was an influx of visitors from the mainland, doubling the island's hotel occupancy rates. Taiwanese authorities have said that they expect more than 40,000 PRC visitors during the nine-day holiday period and are expecting hotels to be filled to 80% capacity.

Reuters ("CHINA'S XINHUA AGENCY DEFENDS POLICY ON TAIWAN", 2010/02/15) reported that this year will be one of "tiger leaps and dragon strides" for relations between the PRC and Taiwan, the PRC's state-backed Xinhua agency said, in defense of a charm offensive aimed at the self-ruled island. "Of course, Cross-Straits relations are a heavy responsibility and there's a long road ahead, and could run into difficulties and obstacles along the way," Xinhua said, in an editorial praising Hu Jintao's approach on the Lunar New Year. "We must recognise that the new approach to Cross-Straits relations did not come easily, take a broad view, and promote the policy of improving Cross-Straits relations and peaceful development as a political basis for the mainland and Taiwan belonging to One China."

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17. PRC Security

TNN ("CHINA WELCOMES TIGER WITH TIGHT SECURITY", 2010/02/14) reported that the Spring Festival began in the PRC as 1.3 billion people got ready to celebrate the start of the Year of the Tiger on Sunday. The Public Security Bureau, which handles all security, said it has made elaborate arrangements to ensure the safety of people across the country. It was “ready to handle emergencies to prevent serious accidents” during the Lunar New Year festivities. The government is particularly worried about gangs of organized crimes even after the judiciary sentenced dozens of them to death and long-term jail terms during recent weeks. Special arrangements have been made for security at railway stations as millions of people are traveling to their native villages during the holiday season.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua News ("UNIVERSITY OF MACAO RECEIVES DONATION OF NEARLY 150 MILLION HK DOLLARS", 2010/02/12) reported that the Wu Yee Sun Charitable Foundation Ltd. made a donation of 150 million HK dollars to the University of Macao Development Foundation (UMDF), which was the largest single benefaction since UMDF's inception in December last year.

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19. PRC Environment

Xinhua News ("UNEP CHIEF HAILS SHANGHAI EXPO'S THEME OF "BETTER CITY, BETTER LIFE", 2010/02/12) reported that executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) Achim Steiner said Friday the theme of "Better City, Better Life" for the 2010 Shanghai EXPO has shown the organizer's keen sense on environmental protection. He said that the theme has put the quality of life, which is so closely related with environment management, at the heart of this grand international event.

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