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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. DPRK Missile Program](#)
 - [2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program](#)
 - [3. US on Six Party Talks](#)
 - [4. DPRK on UN Sanctions](#)
 - [5. DPRK Economy](#)
 - [6. DPRK Foreign Relations](#)
 - [7. DPRK-France Relations](#)
 - [8. DPRK Population](#)
 - [9. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch](#)
 - [10. ROK Military](#)
 - [11. ROK-US Military Cooperation](#)
 - [12. ROK-Australia Relations](#)
 - [13. USFJ Base Relocation](#)
 - [14. Japan-Australia Relations](#)
 - [15. Japan-Singapore Defense Cooperation](#)
 - [16. Japan Climate Change](#)

- [17. Sino-Japan Climate Cooperation](#)
- [18. PRC Energy](#)
- [19. PRC on Climate Change](#)
- [20. PRC Social Unrest](#)
- [21. PRC Demographics](#)
- [22. PRC Public Health](#)
- [23. Russian Far East Missile Defense](#)
- II. PRC Report
 - [24. PRC Civil Society and the Disabled](#)
 - [25. PRC Civil Society and Public Health](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Program

Wired News (Alexis Madrigal , "HOLE IN IONOSPHERE REVEALS CLUES ABOUT NORTH KOREAN MISSILE LAUNCH", San Francisco, 2009/12/16) reported that the DPRK missile program continues to make strides in building bigger, more powerful projectiles, according to new research presented at the American Geophysical Union meeting. In April, the country launched a Taepodong-2 missile with the intent of placing a satellite in orbit. It does not appear to have done so, though the DPRK government claims it did. As the missile flew up and over Japan, it punched hole in the ionosphere. Using the more than 1,000 GPS receivers in Japan, Kosuke Heki, a geodesy specialist, was able to compute the trajectory of the rocket. While the results don't dispute the conclusion that the launch was a failure, the work does provide some interesting data about the relatively mysterious DPRK missile program. For one, Heki said, their missiles have gotten better.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Xinhua News Agency ("S. KOREA TO MAINTAIN "TWO-TRACK" POLICY TOWARDS DPRK ", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that Yu Myung-hwan, ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, told a press conference Wednesday that the ROK will maintain its "two track" policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), promoting both simultaneous dialogue and sanctions based on UN Resolutions. Yu added, "We will continue to have discussions with involved parties on the details of a package settlement in case six-party talks resume." Yu also said that he welcomes the fact that

the U.S. and the DPRK have reached a common understanding in terms of the role of six-party talks and the importance of fulfilling the Joint Statement of September, 2005.

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. US on Six Party Talks

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA URANIUM ENRICHMENT TO BE MULLED IF 6-WAY TALKS RESUME: U.S. ENVOY ", Washington, 2009/12/16) reported that U.S. point man on the DPRK Stephen Bosworth said Wednesday Pyongyang's uranium enrichment program will be dealt with once the dormant six-party negotiations on the reclusive state's overall nuclear activity resume. "It clearly will be on the agenda when the talks resume," Stephen Bosworth said at a news briefing.

Agence France-Presse ("US ENVOY URGED N.KOREA NOT TO TEST MORE NUKES", 2009/12/16) reported that US envoy Stephen Bosworth said that he urged the DPRK during his trip to Pyongyang last week to refrain from any more nuclear arms tests. Asked whether there was the potential for a third nuclear weapons test, Bosworth replied dryly: "I urged them not to do any more of that sort of thing."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. DPRK on UN Sanctions

Yonhap News (Tony Chang, "N.K. TOLD BOSWORTH THAT U.N. SANCTIONS ARE UNREASONABLE: SEOUL FM", Seoul,) reported that the DPRK apparently told a visiting U.S. envoy that international sanctions imposed on Pyongyang over its long-range rocket launch were unreasonable, insisting the launch was for non-military purposes, Seoul's top diplomat said Wednesday. "(I am) aware that North Korea delivered its position to U.S. special envoy Stephen Bosworth, who traveled to the North from Dec. 8 to 10, that the U.N. sanctions on the country are unreasonable," Yu Myung-hwan, Seoul's foreign minister, said at a press conference.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. DPRK Economy

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("NORTH KOREA ANNOUNCES NEW OFFICIAL PRICES: RICE NOW 23 WON PER KILOGRAM", 2009/12/16) reported that in accordance with the recent currency reform in the DPRK, new state-controlled prices were officially announced on December 9. An ROK NGO 'Good Friends' announced on December 13th that rice is now selling for 23 won per Kg, corn at 8 won per Kg, flour at 22 won per Kg, and pork at 45 won per Kg. On December 4, the Choson Sinbo, reported that the DPRK authorities were planning to lower prices to the same level as was seen when the July 1, 2002 Economic Management Reform Measure was enacted.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. DPRK Foreign Relations

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREA TO TEMPORARILY BAN FOREIGNERS: REPORTS", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that the DPRK plans to temporarily ban foreigners from entering the country, a move that could herald a visit by leader Kim Jong-Il to neighbouring PRC, a report said Wednesday. DPRK sources in the PRC, said the ban would last from December 20 until early February. It was unclear from the report if all foreign travellers would be barred, or only those who cross the PRC border by land. The afternoon newspaper Munhwa Ilbo quoted a Seoul intelligence source as saying Pyongyang's embassy in Beijing has stopped issuing visas for foreigners.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. DPRK-France Relations

Agence France Presse ("FRANCE NOT READY FOR DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH NORTH KOREA", Paris, 2009/12/16) reported that France has offered to forge permanent cultural links with the DPRK but not full diplomatic ties, hoping to pressure it over nuclear non-proliferation, its special envoy to Pyongyang said Wednesday. "Our proposal ... is to open a permanent structure of cooperation with North Korea -- humanitarian, cultural and linguistic cooperation," the envoy, Jack Lang, told a hearing of members of parliament. "The wish expressed by the French state is to turn a new page in relations with North Korea," he added. He told the hearing that the DPRK had promised not to contribute to nuclear proliferation by transferring nuclear fissile material, and was open to talks on human rights.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. DPRK Population

Xinhua News ("DPRK CENSUS PUTS POPULATION AT 24 MLN IN 2008", 2009/12/15) reported that the total population of the DPRK exceeded 24 million in October 2008, the official KCNA news said, citing a United Nations-aided census. "The successfully concluded census would be helpful to the adoption of state policy and the social, economic and cultural development of the country," said Ro Tu Chol, DPRK vice premier, at the 2008 census national conference.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "SEOUL TO RISK CASUALTIES IN KEEPING TROOP PRESENCE IN AFGHANISTAN: MINISTER", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that the ROK will maintain its troop presence in Afghanistan even if the forces sustain casualties after their planned deployment next year, the nation's defense minister said Wednesday. "This is a matter of national standing, and we would have to overcome" public criticism that could arise if one or more ROK soldiers die in an attack, he said. "Damage does not immediately translate into a cause for withdrawal," Kim was quoted as saying.

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "S. KOREA CALLS TALIBAN WARNING PSYCHOLOGICAL OFFENSIVE ", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that the Taliban's warning against the ROK's planned deployment of troops to Afghanistan amounts to routine rhetoric served up as part of psychological warfare, Seoul's defense ministry said Wednesday. The Taliban threatened "bad consequences" last week after the

ROK announced it would deploy up to 350 troops to Afghanistan with a mission of protecting its civilian reconstruction workers there.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. ROK Military

Yonhap News ("ARMY CONDUCTS RIVER-CROSSING DRILL WITH NEW ARMORED VEHICLES", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that the Army said it conducted its first river-crossing drill Wednesday that put to the test its newly developed K-21 armored vehicles capable of moving across water. The vehicles, deployed last month at frontline bases after a decade of development, were among about 500 caterpillar vehicles that had been brought in for the drill along the Namhan River in Yeosu, 105 kilometers southeast of Seoul, the Army said in a release.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. ROK-US Military Cooperation

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, U.S. TEAM UP FOR THREE-DAY JOINT AIR FORCE EXERCISE", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that fighter pilots of the ROK and the United States began a three-day joint exercise aimed at enhancing their tactical coordination Wednesday, an official said. The "Buddy Wing" exchange program began at Osan Air Base south of Seoul and will end on Friday, involving the F-16 fighter jets of the two allies, the ROK Air Force official told reporters.

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "S. KOREA RANKS 5TH IN U.S. ARMS PROCUREMENT IN 2008: REPORT ", Washington, 2009/12/16) reported that ROK was the fifth biggest buyer of U.S. defense goods last year on a government-to-government basis, a recent report shows. The ROK bought US\$800 million worth of U.S. arms on a foreign military sales (FMS) basis in 2008, according to the report by the Congressional Research Service.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. ROK-Australia Relations

Yonhap News (Tony Chang, " S. KOREA, AUSTRALIA AGREE TO COOPERATE ON SECURITY, DEVELOPMENT AID", Seoul, 2009/12/16) reported that Foreign ministers of the ROK and Australia agreed Wednesday to strengthen ties in security, trade, overseas development aid and other areas of mutual interest, the foreign ministry said. Yu Myung-hwan, Seoul's top diplomat, met with visiting Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith in Seoul and agreed to push to implement a bilateral security agreement signed by the leaders of the two countries earlier this year, said the ministry.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. USFJ Base Relocation

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "JAPAN COALITION LEADER WANTS US BASE OFF OKINAWA", Naha, 2009/12/16) reported that the leader of one of Japan's ruling coalition parties said Wednesday

she wants a U.S. Marine base moved off the southern island of Okinawa, deepening a dispute with Washington over the future of the airfield. Mizuho Fukushima, head of the left-leaning Social Democratic Party, said that as a member of the Cabinet she supports the closure and removal of the base. "I am optimistic something can be done to move the base off Okinawa or out of the country," she said after a meeting with Okinawa's governor, Hirokazu Nakaima, in the local capital of Naha.

Agence France Presse (Shingo Ito , "JAPAN PM UNDER FIRE OVER DELAY IN US BASE ROW", Tokyo, 2009/12/16) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama came under fire on Wednesday for delaying a decision on moving a controversial US air base in a row the government admitted has damaged ties with key ally Washington. Hatoyama defied US pressure and postponed until next year a decision on where to relocate the unpopular base on Okinawa island, a move the opposition branded "irresponsible." "Our diplomacy has been going well, except for the Japan-US alliance," Okada told a meeting of business leaders. "We have to quickly create an atmosphere in which we can discuss how we can improve the Japan-US alliance."

Mainichi ("FINAL DECISION ON FUTENMA RELOCATION EFFECTIVELY SET FOR MAY", 2009/12/16) reported that the deadline for a final decision on the relocation of U.S. forces Air Station Futenma in Okinawa has been effectively set for May even though the tripartite ruling coalition decided to postpone it indefinitely, say government insiders. "We'll pursue relocation to an area other than Henoko. We'd like to create an environment for making a decision," Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said Tuesday after deciding to postpone a final decision on the issue. "To that end, we need several months."

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. Japan-Australia Relations

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN PM DEMANDS AUS HALT ANTI-WHALING 'SABOTAGE'", Tokyo, 2009/12/16) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama asked his visiting Australian counterpart Kevin Rudd to rein in activists disrupting Japan's annual whale hunt, describing their actions as "sabotage." Hatoyama told Rudd that the activists' actions threaten the safety of the whaling fleet and its crew and requested Australia take appropriate action, according to a Japanese foreign ministry statement. The statement suggested that Rudd again threatened legal action against Japan over the hunt of the sea giants if "a diplomatic resolution proves difficult," echoing similar remarks he made last week in Australia.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. Japan-Singapore Defense Cooperation

Straits Times ("S'PORE, JAPAN SIGN MDE ", 2009/12/16) reported that Singapore-Japan defense ties were given a boost when Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean, and Japan's Minister of Defence Toshimi Kitazawa, signed a Memorandum on Defence Exchanges (MDE) on Wednesday evening. The MDE will strengthen bilateral defence ties by formalising existing defence interactions between both defence establishments, and also allow both countries to broaden their defence cooperation to include new areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. Japan Climate Change

Associated Press ("JAPAN TO BOOST CLIMATE AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO \$15 BIL. ", Tokyo, 2009/12/16) reported that Japan will shortly announce a plan to boost its financial aid to assist developing countries in the fight against climate change to \$15 billion in the three years through 2012, up from \$9.2 billion already promised, in a bid to break the impasse in an ongoing U.N. climate conference, government sources said Wednesday. The plan, expected to be announced by Environment Minister Sakihito Ozawa in Copenhagen where the COP15 talks are under way, would mean that Japan would shoulder half of the proposed annual \$10 billion aid through 2012 from developed countries to developing countries.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. Sino-Japan Climate Cooperation

Agence France Presse (Harumi Ozawa , "CHINA VP LOOKS AT GREENING OF JAPAN'S FORMER 'IRON CITY'", Tokyo, 2009/12/16) reported that the PRC's Vice President Xi Jinping wrapped up a three-day Japan visit Wednesday with a trip to a former heavy industry centre that has cut down on pollution and developed a cleaner robotics sector. Kitakyushu Mayor Kenji Kitahashi briefed Xi on the city's environmental policies while Xi also visited Yaskawa Electric Corp., a leading developer and manufacturer of industrial robots, city officials said. Xi told Kitahashi that "what Kitakyushu experienced, and its advanced measures, are useful references for us," another official said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. PRC Energy

New York Times (Keith Bradsher, "NUCLEAR POWER EXPANSION IN CHINA STIRS CONCERNS ", Shenzhen, 2009/12/16) reported that the PRC is preparing to build three times as many nuclear power plants in the coming decade as the rest of the world combined, a breakneck pace with the potential to help slow global warming. The PRC's civilian nuclear power industry — with 11 reactors operating and construction starting on as many as an additional 10 each year — is not known to have had a serious accident in 15 years of large-scale electricity production. Yet inside and outside the country, the speed of the construction program has raised safety concerns. The PRC has asked for international help in training a force of nuclear inspectors.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. PRC on Climate Change

Agence France Presse ("CHINA AGAIN SAYS OPPOSES 'CARBON TARIFFS'", Beijing, 2009/12/16) reported that the PRC on Wednesday reiterated its opposition to the idea of "carbon tariffs" being imposed on goods made in the developing world, calling it an unfair trade restriction that hurts poor countries. "China firmly opposes carbon tariffs," commerce ministry spokesman Yao Jian told reporters. He said such tariffs "restrict trade and economic development." He added they "ignore

the fact that developed and developing nations are in different stages of development and should take on different historical responsibilities and liabilities."

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. PRC Social Unrest

Associated Press (Cara Anna, "DEATHS OVER HOUSING LEAD TO CHINA REFORM CALL", Beijing, 2009/12/16) reported that the struggle for urban land in the PRC—heightened this year by a massive government stimulus plan that eased bank loans for construction—is increasingly violent as thousands of citizens lose their homes to new projects. Upset at the social unrest, a group of legal scholars from the PRC's top university are taking a rare public stand, calling for changes to a regulation that they say encourages abusive tactics by developers. In a letter to the National People's Congress Standing Committee, the five law professors from Peking University say developers have wrongly taken over the government's role of seizing property and compensating residents, leading to "mass incidents" and "extreme events."

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. PRC Demographics

New York Times (Sam Roberts, "IN 2025, INDIA TO PASS CHINA IN POPULATION, U.S. ESTIMATES ", 2009/12/16) reported that India will become the world's most populous country in 2025, surpassing the PRC, where the population will peak one year later because of declining fertility, according to United States Census Bureau projections. The bureau suggests that the projected peak in the PRC, 1.4 billion people, will be lower than previously estimated and that it will occur sooner. With the fertility rate declining to fewer than 1.6 births per woman in this decade from 2.2 in 1990, the PRC's overall population growth rate has slowed to 0.5 percent annually.

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. PRC Public Health

Xinhua News Agency ("CHINA REPORTS 116 MORE DEATHS FROM A/H1N1 FLU ", Beijing, 2009/12/16) reported that the PRC mainland has reported 116 deaths from the A/H1N1 influenza in the week from Dec. 7 to 13, the Ministry of Health announced Wednesday. A total of 7,949 A/H1N1 flu cases were reported during the period, over 30 percent of whom had been hospitalized. A/H1N1 accounted for 87.5 percent of flu cases, a minor drop from the week before last, according to the ministry.

[\(return to top\)](#)

23. Russian Far East Missile Defense

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA COMPLETES TRIALS OF NEW SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE", 2009/12/15) reported that Russia has completed preliminary testing of a long-term interceptor missile for the advanced S-400 missile-defense system, the chief of the Almaz-Antei design bureau said. Gen.

Nikolai Makarov, the chief of General Staff, said in August Russia had deployed S-400 air-defense systems in the Far East to counter the potential threat posed by the DPRK's missile tests.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. PRC Report

24. PRC Civil Society and the Disabled

Public Welfare Times ("DENSO DONATES 110 WHEELCHAIR", 2009/12/15) reported that DENSO (China) Investment Co. Ltd held a donation ceremony respectively in Tianjin and Guangzhou on December 3. It donated totally 110 wheelchairs to Tianjin and Guangzhou bureaus of civil affairs. The fund for purchasing these wheelchairs was contributed by its employees all around the country.

[\(return to top\)](#)

25. PRC Civil Society and Public Health

Public Welfare Times ("POOR JOINT DISEASE PATIENTS TO BENEFIT FROM CHUNLI SUNSHINE PLAN", 2009/12/15) reported that a Chunli Sunshine Plan which aims at aiding poor joint disease patients all around the country was formally launched in Beijing on December 11. The sponsor - China Charity Federation will cooperate with some hospitals to give surgery to the patients.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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