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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua News ("S KOREA TO SEND HAND SANITIZERS TO DPRK TO HELP PREVENT FLU SPREAD", 2010/02/16) reported that the ROK will send hand sanitizers worth one billion won (867,000 US dollars) to the DPRK by around Feb. 20 to help fight spread of A/H1N1 virus there, the government said. The government is in the final process of purchasing hand sanitizers designed to prevent the spread of the flu, and the sanitizers will be delivered via road, Seoul's Unification Ministry said.

RIA Novosti ("ANTI-PYONGYANG FLYERS SENT FROM SOUTH AS NORTH MARKS KIM'S BIRTHDAY ", 2010/02/15) reported that the DPRK celebrated the 68th birthday of its leader as defectors in the ROK launched balloons carrying propaganda leaflets towards the DPRK, a ROK news agency reported. In the ROK, some 100 defectors from the DPRK released huge balloons carrying anti- Pyongyang leaflets and small radios near the heavily fortified DPRK-ROK frontier. The protesters, shouting "Down with dictator Kim Jong-Il," attached \$1 bills to the flyers in a bid to encourage North Koreans to pick them up despite the risk of punishment.

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2. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap News ("SEOUL EFFECTIVELY INCREASES BUDGET FOR N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS", Seoul, 2010/02/16) reports that the ROK has frozen its annual budget for supporting activities to improve human rights in the DPRK this year, though the amount is far higher than what the nation's human rights body had requested, a state panel said Tuesday. The National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) said the overall budget for its activities in 12 categories was cut by 5.38 percent on-year to 4.63 billion won (US\$4 million) for the 2010 fiscal year. Funding for research into DPRK defectors and human rights conditions in the socialist state remained unchanged, however, at 331 million won, the independent commission said.

Korea Times (Do Je-hae, "SEOUL'S NK RIGHTS BILL LIKELY TO BE OBSTACLE FOR SUMMIT", 2010/02/16) reports that despite talks of an inter-Korean summit in Seoul, the ruling Grand National Party (GNP) last week did what critics believe will dash any hope of a meaningful dialogue with the DPRK. Of course, its proponents argue that a bill on the DPRK was long overdue and will improve the life of ordinary DPRK people. The DPRK Human Rights bill was passed by GNP members of the National Assembly Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Committee last Thursday. Some opposition members boycotted the vote, and more partisan fighting is expected during a parliamentary review.

The bill would call for more transparency in the delivery, distribution and monitoring of aid to the DPRK, and the creation of an ambassadorial post for DPRK Human Rights in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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3. DPRK Leadership

Bloomberg ("BIRTHDAY FLOWER MAY BE PART OF KIM JONG IL SUCCESSION", 2010/02/16) reports that the DPRK celebrated Kim Jong Il's birthday today with tens of thousands of flowers. The most intriguing blossom is a new variety of begonia sent on his son's birthday that may signify preparations for a succession. Floral tributes arrived from the PRC, Japan, Laos, Russia and Syria, the Korean Central News Agency reported this month. The inclusion of a new breed of begonia delivered on the Jan. 8 birthday of youngest son Kim Jong Un follows a pattern of using flowers to help legitimize the ruling family's power, according to Paik Hak Soon, a director of inter-Korean relations at the Sejong Institute.

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4. DPRK Diplomacy

JoongAng Daily (Chang Se-jeong, "NORTH TO APPOINT NEW AMBASSADOR, MINISTER TO CHINA", Beijing, 2010/02/16) reports that the DPRK will have its first new ambassador to the PRC in 10 years and will also replace the minister at the mission, multiple sources here said. According to sources, Choe Jin-soo will be replaced by Choe Byong-ryol, currently director general of consular affairs at the Foreign Ministry. In addition, Kim Song-gi, minister at the DPRK embassy here since 2004, will be succeeded by Pak Myong-ho, deputy director general of Chinese affairs at the Foreign Ministry. Sources said it is highly unusual for the DPRK to change both its ambassador and its deputy chief of mission to the PRC.

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5. DPRK Economy

JoongAng Daily (Yoo Jee-ho, "NORTH STRUGGLING TO SURVIVE EFFECTS OF UN SANCTIONS", 2010/02/16) reports that the DPRK, apparently strapped for cash and life supplies under tight international sanctions and suspended aid from the ROK, has made moves aimed at giving its sagging economy a boost. Won Tong-yon, a senior Workers' Party official, spent about a week in Beijing earlier this month and studied the South's plan to launch a tree-planting campaign in the DPRK. In January, a special presidential committee on social integration in Seoul named planting trees north of the border one of its 10 core projects of 2010. Aware of this, Won asked an ROK acquaintance about the possibility that the committee would replace trees with rice and fertilizer. A government official here shot down the idea.

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6. US-ROK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, CALIFORNIA SIGN MOU FOR HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY", 2010/02/16) reported that the ROK government signed a memorandum of understanding with the California state government promising continuous cooperation in construction efforts of a high-speed railway system. The MOU will allow information sharing between the two governments on the state's passenger rail service, which was granted \$2.2 billion to \$5 billion in investment from the federal government's \$8 billion mass transit program.

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7. ROK PKO Haiti Dispatch

Yonhap News ("SOUTH KOREA TO OFFICIALLY LAUNCH PEACEKEEPING UNIT FOR HAITI", Seoul, 2010/02/16) reports that the ROK will officially launch a contingent of peacekeeping troops for Haiti this week ahead of their full deployment set for later this month, officials said Tuesday. The ROK will be sending a total of 240 peacekeepers to Haiti by the end of this month, joining international efforts to aid the quake-ravaged Caribbean state. An advance unit comprised of 30 troops left the country last week. An inauguration and send-off ceremony for the unit will be held Wednesday in Incheon, attended by defense and foreign affairs-related ministers, military chiefs and family members, the defense ministry said in a press release.

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8. ROK-India Nuclear Cooperation

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, INDIA TO EXPAND PERSONNEL EXCHANGES IN NUCLEAR FIELD", Seoul, 2010/02/16) reports that the ROK and India plan to expand personnel exchanges in the nuclear field that could help lead to cooperation in the building of atomic reactors, the government said Tuesday. The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology said the exchange is a follow-up to a Seoul-New Delhi summit held in India last month, in which the two countries agreed to facilitate contact between experts and fuel vital information sharing. The ROK, which recently secured a deal to build four nuclear reactors for the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is aiming to become one of the top three exporters in the field by 2030 and is seeking new markets in such countries as Turkey, Jordan and India. The ROK operates 20 commercial reactors and ranks sixth in the world in terms of overall electric power generation.

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9. ROK Climate Change

Korea Herald ("CARBON TAX PLAN FLOATED", 2010/02/16) reported that the government is studying ways to introduce a carbon tax and other strong measures to reduce carbon emissions as part of a long-term fight against climate change, a high-ranking government official said. "The government is reviewing all options, including a carbon tax, as the country aims to reduce greenhouse gases by 4 percent by 2020 compared to the 2005 level," Yoon Young-sun, a deputy finance minister in charge of tax & customs, told The Korea Herald. "We haven't decided yet whether to introduce it or not. We're in a reviewing stage, and we haven't set a time frame."

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10. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("DPJ MAY PRESENT FUTEMMA RELOCATION PLAN AFTER COALITION OPTIONS", 2010/02/16) reported that Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano indicated Tuesday that the Democratic Party of Japan will present to a government committee studying where to relocate a U.S. Marine base in Okinawa its own idea on the issue after the party's coalition partners do so. But the government decided the same day that the panel will postpone having the partners, the Social Democratic Party and the People's New Party, present their ideas at a meeting on Wednesday due to lack of coordination among the three parties.

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11. Japan Climate Change

Japan for Sustainability ("PUBLIC SAYS JAPAN SHOULD MOVE QUICKLY ON CLIMATE CHANGE", 2010/02/16) reported that on November 9, 2009, the National Institute for Environmental Studies in Japan released the results of its public opinion poll, conducted between April and July, on the country's mid-term targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction. 42.6 percent said they thought it is a serious issue and swift action needs to be taken, while 32.0 percent responded that quick action is required regardless of the level of seriousness, revealing that more than 70 percent want prompt action to deal with climate change. Asked about global responsibilities, 52.8 percent said that developing countries should also cut their GHG emissions, which exceeded the 17.5 percent who said that developed countries should bear the responsibility.

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12. ROK on Six-Party Talks

Yonhap (Tony Chang, "N. KOREAN NUCLEAR TALKS TO RESUME SOON: SEOUL MIINISTER", Seoul, 2010/02/17) reported that the six-party talks are expected resume soon, ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said Wednesday. "I can't specify a date but (the six-party talks) will open in the near future," Yu told members of the parliament's foreign affairs committee at the National Assembly. "It is a fact that there are movements (towards reaching a deal to reopen the talks) considering various circumstances," Yu said, citing the recent high-level exchanges between the PRC and the DPRK. "I have no doubt on the talks' resumption as it is in line with North Korea's own interest," the minister said.

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13. Cross-Strait Relations

Bloomberg News ("CHINA'S HU BOOSTS ECONOMIC ZONE ON TAIWAN STRAIT, XINHUA SAYS", 2010/02/16) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao called for the accelerated development of an economic zone in Fujian province on the western side of the Taiwan Strait, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Hu celebrated the Lunar New Year in Fujian and met with Taiwanese living in the PRC, a meeting aired on the PRC's Central Television last night.

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14. Sino-Indian Relations

TNN ("INDIA TO DEPLOY AKASH MISSILES IN NORTH-EAST TO DETER CHINA", 2010/02/16) reported that India __ __ plans to progressively base six surface-to-air Akash missile squadrons in the North-East to counter the threat posed by PRC fighters, helicopters and drones in the region. __ Sources say IAF will get eight Akash tactical air defence squadrons by 2015, with the first one becoming operational by 2011 itself, at a cost of over Rs 6,100 crore. Every squadron will have two 'flights' of four Akash launchers each.

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15. PRC Naval Strategy

The New York Times ("INDIA WORRIES AS CHINA BUILDS PORTS IN SOUTH ASIA", Hambantota, 2010/02/16) reported that the PRC is investing millions to turn this fishing hamlet into a booming new port, furthering an ambitious trading strategy in South Asia that is reshaping the region and forcing India to rethink relations with its neighbors. As trade in the region grows more lucrative, the PRC has been developing port facilities in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, and it is planning to build railroad lines in Nepal. But these initiatives are irking India, whose government worries that the PRC is expanding its sphere of regional influence by surrounding India with a "string of pearls" that could eventually undermine India's pre-eminence and potentially rise to an economic and security threat.

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16. PRC Climate Change

The New York Times ("DOES THE HUGE CHINA-AUSTRALIA COAL DEAL SQUARE WITH THE COPENHAGEN ACCORD?", 2010/02/16) reported that environmental activists are attacking a \$60 billion deal that will keep PRC power stations supplied with Australian coal for at least the next two decades. Under the agreement announced last week, the Australian coal and iron ore mining company Resourcehouse will build a new mining complex to give China Power International Development 30 million tonnes of coal annually for the next two decades. Resourcehouse Chairman Clive Palmer called it the "biggest-ever export contract" for Australia, which is the world's leading exporter of coal. But in supplying the PRC, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, green groups are accusing Australia of ignoring the role it plays in maintaining dirty energy economies around the world.

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