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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Plane Interdiction

Bloomberg News (Daniel Ten Kate, "THAILAND FINDS NO TAEPODONG MISSILE PARTS IN N. KOREAN PLANE", 2009/12/17) reported that Thai authorities have found no sign of components for Taepodong-2 long-range missiles in a plane carrying weapons from the DPRK seized in Bangkok five days ago, government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn said. The "larger systems" in the seized cargo may be North Korea's M1991 or M1985 multiple launch rocket systems with a range of about 60 kilometers (37.2 miles), Panitan said by phone. Officials also found flight control systems, he said.

Washington Times ("N.K.-CHINA ACCORD FEARED IN ILLEGAL ARMS", 2009/12/17) reported that suspicions that the PRC is facilitating illegal DPRK arms exports have gained new credence as authorities investigate a plane carrying weapons from Pyongyang that was detained during a refueling stop in Thailand. Larry A. Nicksch, a specialist in Asian affairs at the Congressional Research Service who monitors the DPRK's proliferation activities, said the Bangkok seizure raises serious questions about the PRC's role. "Two-thirds of the flight path of that plane was over Chinese territory," he said. "It should have raised Chinese suspicions."

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2. DPRK Arms Exports

Itar-Tass ("NORTH KOREA EXPORTS DOUBLE THE AMOUNT OF WEAPONS THAN IN 2008", Tokyo, 2009/12/17) reported that the ROK intelligence service believes that DPRK exported the weapons by 200 million dollars more, that is to say double the amount than in the previous year, violating the UN sanctions. Umbrella companies and forged shipping documents were used for the illegal weapons exports, the Seoul newspaper Dong-A Ilbo said with the reference to some sources in the security services. The sources believe that in addition to its traditional markets in the Middle East Pyongyang succeeded to make military supplies in Africa and Southeast Asia. Along with light small arms the DPRK also exports missiles in these countries, the sources affirm.

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3. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PRESSES US, N.KOREA ON NUCLEAR TALKS", 2009/12/17) reported that PRC Vice President Xi Jinping urged the US and DPRK to continue to work towards the resumption of six-party nuclear disarmament talks . "Both sides should... continue to make efforts for the situation on the Korean peninsula to move in a good direction," Xi, who is widely expected to succeed President Hu Jintao . "The upcoming year will be crucial to resolving North Korea's nuclear problem and I hope China will play a greater role," Lee also told Xi.

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4. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua News ("RUSSIA SAYS WORK UNDERWAY TO RESUME SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2009/12/17) reported that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin said work was underway to resume the six-party talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear issue is in progress. "The Democratic People's Republic of Korean (DPRK) is commenting on that (the resumption of the talks) cautiously," Borodavkin told a press briefing. "However, we and the other participants in the six-party talks have the willingness to resume the negotiations," he said.

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5. Russia on DPRK Sanctions

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA SAYS SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA MUST CONTINUE", 2009/12/17) reported that UN sanctions against the DPRK must continue until it halts its nuclear program, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin said. "We support UN Security Council Resolution 1784. The sanctions against North Korea must be fulfilled," Borodavkin said. He said that Pyongyang's security should be ensured by international law, not through nuclear deterrence.

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6. Sino-DPRK Relations

Xinhua News ("CHINA, DPRK TO ENHANCE CO-OP BETWEEN PUBLIC SECURITY MINISTRIES ", 2009/12/17) reported that public security ministers from the PRC and DPRK agreed to enhance cooperation between their ministries. "We hope the two ministries will increase communication and coordination and promote exchanges and cooperation to jointly safeguard regional peace and stability," Meng Jianzhu, the PRC's State Councilor and Public Security Minister, said in a meeting with DPRK Minister of People's Security Ju Sang Song.

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7. Sino-DPRK Trade

KBS News ("NORTH KOREA-CHINA BORDER ALMOST DESERTED", 2009/12/17) reported that trade with the DPRK has been suspended due to confusion over its currency reform. The state has forbidden foreign tourists from entering the country. As a result, the DPRK-PRC border is inactively still. In addition the lack of a foreign exchange rate adjustment after the redenomination had halved Dandong's trade with the DPRK. A DPRK expert commented that suspending tourism in the winter is a regular practice and unrelated to currency reform. He added that foreign tourism will probably resume after February 16, DPRK leader Kim Jong Il's birthday.

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8. Russian Food Aid to the DPRK

Itar-Tass ("NORTH KOREA RECEIVES 10,000 TONS OF FLOUR AS FOOD AID FROM RUSSIA", 2009/12/17) reported that Russia has supplied the DPRK with 10,000 tons of flour as food aid, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin said. "One of these days Russia has completed supplies of 10,000 tons of flour for North Korea," the diplomat said. Supplies were made in several stages by the Russian Ministry for Emergency Situations in order to avoid famine in the DPRK.

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9. US Food Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("U.S. TO CONSIDER RESTARTING FOOD AID TO N.K. IF MONITORING PERMITTED", Washington, 2009/12/17) reported that the US will consider resuming food aid to DPRK if the DPRK allows monitoring of food distribution, a US envoy said. Robert King, US special envoy for DPRK human rights, said, "If we are able to reach agreement on being able to monitor humanitarian assistance, and if the need is there, and if the resources are on our side and the competing demands are met, we would be willing to look at providing assistance again," according to a transcript released by the State Department. "The US does not link humanitarian assistance to any political considerations," said King.

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10. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("NORTH KOREA SLAMS SEOUL FOR DMZ ECO, PEACE BELT PLAN", Seoul, 2009/12/17) reported that a DPRK weekly newspaper has lambasted ROK for trying to create an eco-tour and peace belt along the demilitarized zone (DMZ), saying "it is a plot to exploit the DMZ as a source of moneymaking," the DPRK's official Web site said. "It is a worthless idea devised by shameless separatists who don't have the slightest pride in the Korean people. Developing the DMZ, the symbol of national division and military confrontation, for commercial purposes is anti-national, anti-unification conduct," the weekly newspaper, Tongil Sinbo, reported.

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA THREATENS S. KOREA OVER NAVAL DRILLS", 2009/12/17) reported that the DPRK threatened retaliation against the ROK over what it claimed were naval drills around their disputed sea border, accusing Seoul on Thursday of attempting to escalate tension. The DPRK's Korean Central News Agency cited an unidentified source as saying that the ROK military staged underwater explosive exercises around the border. "We cannot but view this as a premeditated provocation aimed at raising tension in the militarily sensitive waters," it said. "We will deal a merciless retaliatory blow if the South Korean warlike forces keep staging military provocations" near the border.

The Korea Times ("ANTI-NK COMIC BOOKS DISTRIBUTED", 2009/12/17) reported that the National Police Agency has published comic books critical of the DPRK regime and its nuclear program to provide security education to elementary and middle school students. It invested 90 million won and produced 150,000 copies and distributed them to schools and police stations. It is part of efforts to strengthen education about security. Police have hosted several essay writing and leaflet-making contests for students.

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11. DPRK Economy

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA BUILDS ECO-FARM AS PART OF 'GREEN GROWTH' DRIVE", 2009/12/17) reported that the DPRK has built an integrated, eco-friendly farm where fish and livestock can be raised with no fuel, state media said on Dec. 15, in the country's latest pitch for "green growth." A multi-purpose solar greenhouse, built by the Natural Energy Development and Use Center, covers a vegetable gardening area, a livestock pen, a methane fermentation tank and a fish farm, according to the Korean Central News Agency. By wisely combining the elements of production, consumption and degradation, this greenhouse achieves "high economic efficiency and is completely free of environmental pollution," the report claimed.

United Press International ("NORTH KOREA LOOKS TO SPUR FREE-TRADE ZONE", 2009/12/17) reported that the DPRK's reclusive leader Kim Jong Il made a visit to the country's sputtering free-trade zone for the first time since its foundation two decades ago in an apparent bid to woo much-needed foreign capital. Kim made an "on-spot" guidance tour of the Rason free economic and trade zone on the country's northern tip bordering the PRC and Russia, the DPRK's official Central News Agency reported. "Kim's visit seems part of efforts to revive the free-trade zone to attract foreign investment," a ROK government official said.

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12. Arrest of DPRK Diplomats

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREAN DIPLOMATS JAILED FOR CIGARETTE SMUGGLING", 2009/12/17) reported that a Swedish court has sentenced two DPRK diplomats to eight months in prison for trying to smuggle cigarettes into the Nordic country. The Stockholm District Court ruled Wednesday that the diplomats - a man and his wife - cannot claim diplomatic immunity because they are not stationed in Sweden. Officers found 230,000 cigarettes hidden under blankets and baggage in their car.

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13. ROK on Climate Change

JoongAng Ilbo ("LEE SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A GLOBAL 'GREEN' THINK TANK", 2009/12/17) reported that the ROK announced yesterday a plan to establish a global think tank to advocate low-carbon, green growth strategies to the world in an effort to fight climate change while pursuing economic development. In his keynote address at the Copenhagen climate conference, President Lee Myung-bak announced plans to open the Global Green Growth Institute during the first half of next year. Lee said green growth is Korea's new national vision, and the country annually invests 2 percent of GDP into research and development of new green technologies and infrastructure, in addition to the nation's recent voluntary announcement of goals to cut emissions.

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14. US-ROK Security Alliance

The Korea Times (Hwang Doo-hyong, "NO PLANS FOR IMMEDIATE REDEPLOYMENT OF USFK ABROAD: COMMANDER", 2009/12/17) reported that the US does not have any immediate plans for redeployment of its troops in Korea to Afghanistan, Iraq or any other conflict regions, the commander of U.S. Forces in Korea insists. However, in a roundtable with bloggers at the Pentagon, Gen. Walter Sharp said that the United States, in close consultation with the ROK, will eventually redeploy some troops to meet regional and global challenges. "We are not at the point yet where we are ready to globally deploy. That will come after only much consultation with the Republic of Korea."

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15. Japan SDF

Kyodo News ("DEFENSE MINISTRY PRESERVES SPENDING", 2009/12/17) reported that the government endorsed provisional basic policy guidelines on defense spending in the fiscal 2010 budget as it put off compiling new long-term guidelines for a year. Based on the current guidelines, the provisional guidelines seek to curb spending because of the government's financial problems while striving to maintain deterrence. They do not include an increase in Self-Defense Forces' personnel. "Because filling and improving the SDF's frontline units are extremely important, we will

consider measures to (increase personnel levels) in the process of reviewing the National Defense Program Guidelines," Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said.

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16. Japan Missile Defense

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN TO AXE NEW FUNDS FOR MISSILE DEFENCE", Tokyo , 2009/12/17) reported that Japan 's centre-left government, which took power three months ago, will suspend new funds for its joint missile defence system with the US next year, officials said. The cabinet approved defence spending guidelines for the 2010/11 financial year, including a delay in the deployment of new Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) surface-to-air interceptors until after April 2011. Defence Minister Toshimi Kitazawa told reporters that "regarding the deployment of PAC-3 units at three more bases, we will wait for the new defence guidelines to be issued before proceeding with the plans".

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17. US-Japan Security Alliance

Kyodo News ("UNCERTAINTIES REMAIN ABOUT MEETING BASE TRANSFER DEADLINE: KITAZAWA", 2009/12/17) reported that Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said that uncertainties remain about meeting the 2014 deadline for relocating a U.S. military base in Okinawa, casting a cloud over the prospect of doing so offered by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama. "There are still some uncertain factors that make it difficult to say definitively (about meeting the deadline) if we are going to think about an alternative plan," the defense chief told reporters.

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18. Sino-US Trade Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA HOLDS US ENGINEER ON TRADE SECRETS CHARGE", 2009/12/17) reported that PRC police have detained an American automotive engineer for more than a year on accusations he misused trade secrets — the latest case of vague secrecy laws being used against an American in the PRC . Hu Zhicheng, a prize-winning designer of industrial catalysts to control auto emissions, has been denied reading materials during his detention in the port city of Tianjin , said the US Embassy in Beijing . The stern treatment is being meted out in a business dispute over an automobile technology. Hu told U.S. officials that investigators have threatened him with multimillion-dollar fines unless he gives the rights to his US-registered patent to a former business partner in Tianjin.

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19. Sino-Vietnamese Relations

Agence France-Presse ("VIETNAM AIMS TO COUNTER CHINA WITH SUB DEAL: ANALYSTS", 2009/12/17) reported that Vietnam 's major arms deal with Russia , reported to involve the

purchase of six submarines, aims to bolster claims against the PRC over potentially resource-rich islands in the South China Sea, analysts say. While much of Vietnam's military hardware is antiquated, it has decided to devote substantial resources to developing an underwater fleet as concerns mount over tensions with its giant neighbour over the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos, they say. "I think their primary rationale is to counteract the military build-up that the Chinese have had in the South China Sea," said Richard Bitzinger, a regional defence analyst with the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

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20. Sino-Indian Relations

Press Trust Of India ("INDIA, CHINA SHARES CORDIAL RELATIONSHIP: ARUNACHAL GOVERNOR", 2009/12/17) reported that India and the PRC share cordial ties and all outstanding issues between the two countries will be handled in a proper manner, Arunachal Pradesh Governor J J Singh said. "Both the neighbouring countries have good relationship and if any minor issues are there they are being handled in a proper manner," the former Army Chief told reporters during his visit to Kolhapur in Western Maharashtra to attend a military function. The border state, under the leadership of Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu, is marching towards progress and new projects are being taken up, Singh said.

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21. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN EYES SOUTHEAST ASIA AFTER CHINA TRADE PACT", 2009/12/17) reported that Taiwan aims to forge closer ties with Southeast Asia once it has signed a trade agreement with the PRC, the island's President Ma Ying-jeou was quoted as saying in a report. Apart from the DPRK, Taiwan is the only economy in the Asia Pacific region that has not yet signed a free-trade agreement with a country in the region, Ma told a group of scholars, according to the Economic Daily News. "We have to work even harder to become a part of the economic cooperation in this region," Ma said.

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22. PRC Energy Supply

The New York Times ("NEW GAS PIPELINE FROM CENTRAL ASIA FEEDS CHINA", 2009/12/17) reported that with the turn of a ceremonial valve, the PRC's president, Hu Jintao, opened a big natural gas pipeline from central Asia to the PRC, significantly increasing the PRC's access to the fuel. The ambitious project runs 1,140 miles across three Central Asian nations to the PRC border, linking Turkmenistan to the PRC region of Xinjiang. For the PRC pipeline, Turkmenistan says it can supply 40 billion cubic meters of gas for 30 years once the line reaches full capacity. That is about the equivalent of half of the PRC's current consumption of natural gas.

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23. PRC on Climate Change

Reuters ("CHINA SEES NO CHANCE OF CLIMATE DEAL: SOURCE", 2009/12/17) reported that the PRC has told participants at U.N. climate change negotiations it sees no possibility of achieving an operational accord to tackle global warming this week, an official involved in the talks said. The official, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters the PRC had instead suggested issuing "a short political declaration of some sort," but it was not clear what that declaration would say.

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24. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO INVEST OVER 3 TRILLION YUAN IN ENVIRONMENT: REPORT", 2009/12/17) reported that the PRC is to invest more than three trillion yuan (440 billion dollars) in environmental protection over five years from 2011, state media said, as the country battles widespread pollution. Wu Xiaoqing, deputy head of the PRC's environmental protection ministry, said a third of the overall investment would go towards the operating costs of pollution control facilities, the official People's Daily newspaper said.

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II. PRC Report

25. PRC Civil Society and Earthquake Reconstruction

China News Net ("HONG KONG BUSINESSMAN DONATES SCHOOL IN MAINLAND", 2009/12/17) reported that under the help of The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong businessman Chen Yuchang donated 200,000 RMB to reconstruct Yuchangqiaoxin Primary School in Chengde city of Hebei province. Mr. Chen has donated over 1.4 million RMB on public utility in remote areas of mainland since 1987.

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26. PRC Civil Society

Jinghua Times ("SASAC REQUIRES CENTRAL ENTERPRISES REGULATING THEIR DONATION BEHAVIOR", 2009/12/17) reported that the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) released a notice yesterday, saying that central enterprises should further regulate their donation behavior, only donate to those lawfully formed charity agencies, and keep their promise in donation.

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27. PRC Civil Society and Education

China Youth News ("LAONIU FOUNDATION DONATES 6.3 MILLION RMB TO CHINESE RED ARMY PRIMARY SCHOOL", 2009/12/17) reported that National Red Army Primary School Construction Office received 6.3 million RMB donation from Laoniu Foundation on December 13. Red Army Primary School is constructed for carrying forward the spirit of Red Army, inheriting the revolutionary tradition and spreading the spirit of the Red Army from generation to generation.

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