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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Reuters (Arshad Mohammed, "ENDING NUCLEAR IMPASSE IS UP TO DPRK: CLINTON", Tokyo, 2009/02/17) reported that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggested on Tuesday DPRK would have to make the first move to improve its relationship with the United States by ending its nuclear programs. Clinton repeated an offer of a peace treaty, the normalization of ties and aid if DPRK eliminated its nuclear weapons program. "If North Korea abides by the obligations it has already entered into and verifiably and completely eliminates its nuclear program, then there will be a reciprocal response, certainly from the United States," Clinton said. "But the decision as to whether North Korea will cooperate in the six-party talks, end provocative language and actions, is up to them -- and we are watching very closely."

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

DongA Ilbo ("'NK HAS BUILT URANIUM ENRICHMENT FACILITIES'", 2009/02/18) reported that ROK and US intelligence have discovered that the DPRK has built facilities that can produce a small amount of highly enriched uranium, a senior Seoul official said. "Despite North Korea's denial that it has a uranium enrichment program, (South Korea and the United States) have shared information that North Korea has established uranium enrichment facilities," the source said. The underground facilities are known to be located in Sowi-ri, North Pyongan Province.

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3. DPRK Missile Program

Chosun Ilbo ("DPRK DENIES MISSILE PLANS", 2009/02/17) reported that DPRK on Monday insisted it is preparing to launch a satellite, not a long-range missile as has widely been reported. "It is a naked provocation to make outlandish remarks that we are preparing to fire a long-range missile," the official Korean Central News Agency said. "It is a vicious trick to block even our peaceful scientific research activities." The U.S. warned it could shoot down any missile aimed at its shores. "Whether it's a missile or satellite, it would constitute a violation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1718," ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said in a parliamentary hearing Tuesday.

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4. ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap News (Lee Chi-dong, "NUKE THREAT MAKES N. KOREAN MISSILE MORE ALARMING: MINISTER ", Seoul, 2009/02/18) reported that the ROK's top diplomat emphasized that the DPRK's missile program poses a serious threat to international security due to its ability to launch a nuclear bomb. Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan also said that Pyongyang would still face stern punitive measures from the United Nations even if it launches a satellite, and not a missile as feared. "North Korea's missile is not a mere conventional weapon," Yu said at a meeting with foreign envoys here. "The combination of its long-range missile and nuclear capability will have a very serious impact to the world's peace and security."

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("GOV'T SEEKS PROBE INTO ANTI-PYONGYANG LEAFLET ACTIVISTS", Seoul, 2009/02/17) reported that Seoul's unification minister asked the prosecution to investigate activists who sent DPRK currency over the border as part of an anti-Pyongyang campaign, in an alleged violation of ROK law. "Our staff submitted a request in the unification minister's name for an investigation to the Seoul Central District Prosecutors' Office," ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun told reporters, referring to the new minister who took office last week, Hyun In-taek.

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6. PRC on Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua News ("PRC CALLS FOR CONTINUED STABILITY ON KOREAN PENINSULA", 2009/02/17) reported that PRC urged on Tuesday all parties on the Korean Peninsula to work together to maintain peace and stability. "We hope relevant parties can recognize that maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is in their common interests and the common wish of the international community," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said.

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7. US on DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("CLINTON TELLS FAMILIES N. KOREA ABDUCTION ISSUE IS U.S. PRIORITY", 2009/02/17) reported that visiting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met relatives of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK in the past and pledged to help Japan resolve the issue, calling it a priority for the US. Clinton, who met relatives of Japanese nationals abducted by the DPRK in the 1970s and 1980s at the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, said the abduction issue should be a priority for the US, according to Shigeo Iizuka, brother of abductee Yaeko Taguchi.

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8. DPRK Leadership

Agence France Presse ("STRESSES "BLOODLINE INHERITANCE" ON KIM'S BIRTHDAY", Seoul, 2009/02/17) reported that DPRK's state media stressed the "inheritance of bloodline" in an editorial marking the 67th birthday of leader Kim Jong Il, an ROK official said Tuesday. "Prospects for the revolution of juche are bright in the midst of the glorious inheritance of the bloodline of Paektu," the editorial said.

Mainichi Japan ("MEMO REPORTEDLY NAMES KIM JONG IL'S THIRD SON AS SUCCESSOR", 2009/02/17) reported that a source close to the DPRK government said that an internal memo circulating in the DPRK military headquarters has named Kim Jong Il's third son, Kim Jong Un, as his successor. According to a Beijing diplomatic source, Kim Jong Un has applied as a candidate in the Supreme People's Assembly elections, a must for those in the upper echelons of the party or military. However, Kim's second son, Kim Jong Chol, is complicating the transfer of power as he is also apparently vying for the position following his appointment to a top post in the Workers' Party of DPRK.

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9. DPRK Food Supply

IFES NK Brief ("RICE PRICES PLUMMET IN NORTH KOREA", 2009/02/18) reported that the online newsletter 'Open News for North Korea' has recently reported that the cost of rice in the DPRK has fallen drastically. The report stated, "The price of rice in a number of cities, including Pyongyang, Nampo, Sinuiju, Hyesan, and Chungjin, has fallen an average of 300-400 won since the middle of last month," but noted, "however, this is the nominal price, and considering that North Korea's exchange rate has risen 10-20 percent compared to the Chinese Yuan, the actual fall in price is even greater."

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10. DPRK-UK Education Exchanges

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREA WELCOMING NATIVE ENGLISH TEACHERS WITH OPEN ARMS", Seoul, 2009/02/17) reported that the DPRK is calling on Britain to send more English teachers, hoping to enhance the nation's international cooperation by raising the English proficiency of its youths, a chief British organizer said. The British Council in Beijing, which operates the English teacher trainer program for the DPRK, increased the number of its teaching staff in Pyongyang from three to four last month, following the DPRK's requests to expand the program, said Grahame Bilbow, education director at the British embassy in the PRC.

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11. ROK Defense

Arirang News ("DEFENSE CHIEF DELEGATES TO FRONTLINE COMMANDERS", 2009/02/17) reported that the defense minister has delegated more authority to frontline army, navy and air force commanders enabling troops to respond more quickly to possible acts of aggression by DPRK soldiers. The Defense Ministry is reportedly planning to station surface-to-air missiles in coastal areas near the maritime border.

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12. ROK Government

Korea Herald (Lee Yong-sung, "ROK TO MERGE 25 PUBLIC AGENCIES INTO 11", 2009/02/17) reported that the government has finalized a plan to merge 25 public institutions into 11 during the first half of this year, officials said yesterday. The Science and Engineering Foundation, Research Foundation and Foundation for International Cooperation of Science and Technology will be merged into the tentatively named ROK Research Foundation. The Game Industry Agency, Culture and Content Agency and Broadcasting Institute will be merged into the ROK Content Agency. The government plans to gradually reduce the number of employees over three to four years.

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13. ROK-Russian Energy Trade

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO IMPORT RUSSIAN NATURAL GAS STARTING IN APRIL ", Seoul, 2009/02/18) reported that the ROK will bring in 1.5 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per year from Russia starting in April to ensure a steady supply of the vital fuel resource, the government said Wednesday. The Ministry of Knowledge Economy said the 20-year import deal with Sakhalin Energy, which recently began operating a new LNG refining plant, will also reduce the country's dependence on gas from the Middle East and Southeast Asian countries.

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14. US on Japan SDF Peacekeeping Operations

Xinhua ("U.S SECRETARY OF STATE CALLS ON JAPAN TO PLAY BIGGER ROLE IN UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS", Tokyo, 2009/02/17) reported that visiting US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called on Japan Tuesday to play a greater role in United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping operations, Kyodo News reported, citing defense ministry officials . During talks with Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada, Clinton said she wanted to "encourage" deeper engagement by Japan in such operations, said the report. She also voiced her hope that Japan could protect foreign ships in emergencies after dispatching destroyers on anti-piracy mission off Somalia in early March.

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15. US-Japan Security Alliance

Japan Times (Jun Hongo, "JAPAN, U.S. SIGN ACCORD ON FORCES", 2009/02/16) reported that Japan and the United States formally signed an agreement to relocate about 8,000 U.S. Marines from Okinawa to Guam by 2014 and reinforce security ties. At a signing ceremony with Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone at the Iikura guest house in Tokyo, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, making her first trip as chief diplomat, reassured Japan that its ties with the U.S. are key to Washington's policy in Asia and will contribute to peace and stability in the region. "The realignment reflects the commitment we have to modernize our military posture in the Pacific," Clinton said.

Yonhap (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREAN LEADER CALLS FOR 'UNITY' AHEAD OF PARLIAMENTARY POLLS", Seoul, 2009/02/18) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il called for "single-hearted unity" on Wednesday. "The forthcoming election will exalt the dignity and authority of our socialist country," Kim said in an open letter to his citizens. "The election to the 12th Supreme People's Assembly is all the more significant in that it is to be held in a pulsating period where a fresh revolutionary upsurge is being brought about on all fronts of the building of a great, prosperous and powerful country," Kim said in the letter, according to the Korean Central News Agency.

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16. Japan-US Joint Drill

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, U.S. HOLD JOINT DRILL FOR U.S. MILITARY PLANE CRASH IN OKINAWA", Naha, 2009/02/18) reported that Japan and the United States held a joint drill in Okinawa Prefecture Wednesday as preparation to deal with a crash of a U.S. military plane in the prefecture. The drill is aimed at confirming initial response action to be taken for liaison and rescue operations following an accident involving a U.S. military plane outside its facilities in Okinawa.

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17. Japan-US Relations

New York Times (Mark Landler, "CLINTON HAILS ALLIANCE WITH JAPAN", 2009/02/17) reported that in words and gestures, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton offered reassurance to Japan on Tuesday, calling its alliance with the U.S. a “cornerstone” of American foreign policy and meeting with families of Japanese citizens abducted by DPRK. “The possible missile launch that North Korea is talking about would be very unhelpful in moving our relationship forward,” she said after a meeting with the Japanese foreign minister, Hirofumi Nakasone. Mrs. Clinton brought an invitation from President Obama to Prime Minister Taro Aso to meet him in Washington next Tuesday.

Mainichi Japan ("JOURNALIST SUES GOV'T OVER ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS ON CRIMES BY U.S. SOLDIERS", 2009/02/17) reported that journalist Takao Saito filed a complaint on Monday with the Tokyo District Court against the central government asking for the disclosure of documents at the National Diet Library for crimes committed by U.S. soldiers. According to the lawsuit, the library started in June 2008 banning access to the documents, created by the Justice Ministry in 1972, which mention that Japan waives jurisdiction over crimes committed by U.S. soldiers in Japan with the exception of important cases. The ministry requested the library not disclose the papers to the public, saying "It may possibly have a bad influence on relationships with other countries."

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18. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("OPPOSITION CAMP TO STEP UP ATTACKS ON ASO AFTER NAKAGAWA'S RESIGNATION", 2009/02/18) reported that opposition parties have set their sights on intensifying attacks on Prime Minister Taro Aso following the resignation of Finance Minister Shoichi Nakagawa, expressing their intention to push the Japanese leader to take responsibility for appointing Nakagawa as a Cabinet minister. "People are dumbfounded," Ozawa told reporters. "It is time to seek the people's judgment especially when such a situation occurs," he said, calling on the prime minister to dissolve the House of Representatives for a general election.

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19. Russo-Japanese Relations

Kyodo News (Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, "ASO, MEDVEDEV HOLD SUMMIT TALKS IN SAKHALIN ", 2009/02/17) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the capital of Sakhalin Island, Russia, with Aso becoming the first Japanese premier in the postwar period to set foot on the island. In their talks, expected to last for about 80 minutes, the two leaders are set to discuss a diverse range of bilateral issues including a longstanding territorial dispute involving four Russian-held islands off Hokkaido in northern Japan.

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20. Sino-Russian Energy Cooperation

Bloomberg News ("RUSSIA AGREES TO $25 BILLION OIL-FOR-LOANS DEAL WITH CHINA", Moscow, 2009/02/17) reported that Russia agreed to supply the PRC with oil for 20 years in return

for a $25 billion credit, as the world's largest energy producer seeks to expand its presence on East Asian markets. Russia signed the accord in Beijing today to deliver 15 million metric tons a year (301,000 barrels a day) for the next two decades, as well as build a branch from a new Siberian pipeline to the PRC border, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin said on Russian state broadcaster Vesti-24.

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21. US and Cross Strait Relations

Central News Agency (Jian Chen, "U.S.-PRC MILITARY TALKS WILL NOT AFFECT TAIWAN TIES: MOFA", Taipei, 2009/02/16) reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed confidence Monday that U.S.-Taiwan relations would not be affected by plans between the United States and PRC to resume military consultations. "As these consultations had been in progress up to last year, there is no need for concern that they will affect the continuity of the smooth ties between the U.S. and Taiwan," said Harry Tseng, director-general of the Ministry's Department of North American Affairs.

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22. Sino-US Relations

Union-Tribune (Steve Liewer, "PRC'S MILITARY REBIRTH PROMPTS U.S. RESPONSE", 2009/02/17) reported that the PRC is building destroyers, frigates and submarines; researching ways to construct an aircraft carrier; developing more sophisticated defense satellites; and aiming more missiles toward the island of Taiwan. Top Pentagon commanders are responding to China's strategies by shifting more surface ships, submarines and service members from the East Coast to the West Coast. Two attack submarines have been moved to the Point Loma Naval Base, the aircraft carrier Carl Vinson will join two other carriers next year at North Island Naval Air Station and the first batch of Littoral Combat Ships will be assigned to San Diego.

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23. Sino-Venezuelan Trade Relations

Agence France Press ("VENEZUELA, CHINA BOOST ECONOMIC TIES", Caracas, 2009/02/18) reported that Venezuela and the PRC agreed to boost economic relations, as Vice President Xi Jinping began a two-day visit to the country and Beijing continued to expand its presence in Latin America . Xi and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez agreed to establish a joint business committee to foster contacts between business leaders in both nations and increase ties in the service, trade and investment sectors.

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24. PRC Tibet Issue

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "RIGHTS GROUP REPORTS PROTESTS AMONG TIBETANS", Beijing, 2009/02/18) reported that the London-based Free Tibet Campaign said Wednesday that protests have broken out in Tibet. At least 24 people were detained and several injured in the demonstrations Sunday and Monday around the town of Lithang that drew hundreds of participants and onlookers. Paramilitary police were patrolling the area and arresting others they suspect of taking part in the protest, it said.

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25. PRC Climate Change

Reuters (Arshad Mohammed, "CLINTON SAYS U.S. AND JAPAN SHOULD AID PRC ON CLEAN ENERGY", Tokyo, 2009/02/17) reported that the U.S. and Japan should work with PRC on clean energy, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Tuesday. Clinton said that if PRC followed the development paths of the United States and Japan "we would overload our environment with carbon-based emissions." "Japan is, as you know, a leader in clean energy and there is an opportunity for Japan, working with China, to help make buildings more energy efficient, to help create more energy-efficient vehicles."

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26. PRC Environment

Xinhua News ("BEIJING GETS 1,500 NEW CARS EVERY DAY", Beijing, 2009/02/17) reported that about 1,500 cars join the already clogged roads in this PRC capital city daily, increasing traffic pressure and safety risks, officials said Tuesday. A total of 65,970 new vehicles have been registered in Beijing in the first 45 days of this year, with a daily increase of 1,466 vehicles, the Beijing Traffic Management Bureau said.

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27. PRC AIDS Issue

Agence France Press ("AIDS CHINA'S DEADLIEST INFECTIOUS DISEASE: GOVT", 2009/02/18) reported that AIDS has become the PRC 's deadliest infectious disease for the first time, the government said, with figures showing at least one person died on average every hour in the first nine months of last year. AIDS overtook tuberculosis and rabies as the country's number one disease killer in 2008, the health ministry said in a report released on Tuesday.

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II. PRC Report

28. PRC Energy

Beijing Morning News ("IMPORTANT OVERSEAS ENERGY INVESTMENT TO GET NATIONAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT", 2009/02/17) reported that according to the national energy meeting held recently, PRC will encourage enterprises to carry out overseas resource development, and give financial support such as loan interest subsidy, concessional loan, increasing ratio of financial capital infusion and so on, to important overseas energy investment. The nation hopes to further enhance its oil reserve capacity by these preferential policies.

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29. PRC Information Services

South Daily (Wu Wei, "GUANGDONG TO ESTABLISH MODERN INFORMATION SERVICE ASSOCIATION", 2009/02/17) reported that after three months' preparation, Guangdong Modern Information Service Association is to be established next month. The Association will play the role as an industrial intermediary, to guide optimization of the distribution of resources, to coordinate the relationship between its members and the government, and to promote regional cooperation of the industry. At present, there are over 3000 modern information service enterprises in Guangdong province, and the provincial finance allocates 200 million RMB each year to support the development of the modern information service industry.

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30. Sino-British Economic Cooperation

Guangzhou Evening News (Zhou Xiaoling, "PRC-BRITISH BUSINESS COUNCIL ENCOURAGES BRITISH COMPANIES TO DEVELOP IN DONGGUAN CITY", 2009/02/17) reported that Chairman of PRC-British Business Council Sir Brewer said in a seminar named "Insurance in Practice" held in Dongguan city of Guagndong province yesterday that Dongguan is one of cities who have the greatest potential of development in PRC. He will encourage British financial enterprises to visit Dongguan and enhance the cooperation with Dongguan financial industry.

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