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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Six-Party Talks

Kyodo ("BOSWORTH TO FLY TO ASIA THIS WEEK TO HELP REOPEN 6-PARTY TALKS ", Washington, 2010/02/22) reported that U.S. special representative for the DPRK Stephen Bosworth will travel to the PRC, Japan and the ROK later this week to explore ways to resume the six-party talks, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip Crowley said Monday. He said Bosworth has "no plan" at this moment to visit the DPRK or Russia. Crowley added that Sung Kim, U.S. special envoy for the six-party talks, will also join the Asian tour but that they have no plan to meet DPRK officials in Beijing or any other places during the trip. "We are looking for a signal from North Korea and we are still waiting for that signal."

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "SEOUL'S TOP NUCLEAR NEGOTIATOR HEADS TO CHINA OVER N.K. NUKE", Seoul, 2010/02/23) reported that Wi Sung-lac, the ROK's top negotiator to six-nation talks, left for the PRC on Tuesday for talks with PRC officials on ways to bring Pyongyang back to the negotiations. "We plan to check current conditions, especially our efforts to resume the six-party talks and this will include talks on the recent North Korea-China meeting between Wu and Kim Kye-gwan," Wi told reporters.

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2. Russia on DPRK Sanctions

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA OPPOSES 'ENDLESS' SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA", 2010/02/22)

reported that Russia argued against the "endless" continuation of sanctions against the DPRK, saying they should be revoked once they have had their effect. "The UN Security Council's decisions are aimed primarily at easing concern over North Korea's nuclear program, and not at the economic isolation of the country," Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko said.

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3. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("TUITION PLAN BAN ON KOREA SCHOOLS EYED: NAKAI WANTS TO LINK SUBSIDIES TO ABDUCTIONS", 2010/02/22) reported that Hiroshi Nakai, minister in charge of the abduction issue, has asked education minister Tatsuo Kawabata to bar schools that cater to the children of residents with ethnic ties to the DPRK from the planned tuition-free subsidy program, government sources said. Nakai apparently wants the exemption put in place to demonstrate Japan's firm stance on the abduction issue. "If the government decided to designate chosen gakko as beneficiaries of the subsidy program in addition to others, it would be tantamount to providing effective economic aid to North Korea, although Japan has applied its own sanctions to that country (in addition to U.N. sanctions)," Nakai was quoted as saying.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("READ ALL ABOUT IT: DEFECTORS KEY NEWS SOURCE ON N. KOREA", 2010/02/22) reported that figuring out what's going on in the DPRK is no easy task, but human rights groups in the ROK reckon they have stumbled on a winning combination. The groups, set up by defectors from the DPRK who fled to the ROK, rely on those fleeing to provide news from across the demilitarized zone. The key weapon in their news arsenal is the cellphone. Defectors routinely stay in touch with relatives in the DPRK, thereby providing a constant stream of information.

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5. DPRK Demographics

Agence France-Presse ("LIFE EXPECTANCY DECLINES IN N.KOREA SINCE 1990S: CENSUS", 2010/02/22) reported that life expectancy in the DPRK has declined over the past 15 years, with an increase in infant mortality and more mothers dying in childbirth, according to census figures. The 2008 census conducted with help with the United Nations Population Fund was the first since 1993. The population rose from 21.2 million to 24.05 million over the 15-year period. But infant mortality rose from 14 per 1,000 live births to 19, and the maternal mortality rate grew from 54 to 77 deaths per 100,000 live births. As a result, overall life expectancy declined by 3.4 years to 69.3. A report by the UN's World Food Programme last September said one-third of the country's women and children aged under five are malnourished.

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6. DPRK Leadership

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREA SUCCESSION PLAN HIT BY CURRENCY CHAOS: ANALYST", 2010/02/22) reported that the DPRK's bungled currency revaluation will likely delay plans to promote leader Kim Jong-Il's third son as successor, an analyst said. Lee Ki-Dong, of the state-funded Institute for National Security Strategy, told a seminar on the currency change that the November 30 revaluation was aimed at creating an atmosphere conducive to a third-generation succession. "The fulfilment of North Korea's goal to achieve a strong, prosperous socialist state in 2012 is closely linked to the justification for another hereditary succession," Lee told the seminar. The economic damage caused by the currency change was likely to delay plans to promote the succession, he said.

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7. DPRK Economy

Xinhua News ("DPRK'S KIM JONG IL INSPECTS IRON, STEEL COMPLEX", 2010/02/20) reported that Kim Jong Il, the top leader of the DPRK, has inspected the Hwanghae Iron and Steel Complex, the official news agency KCNA reported. Kim inspected various production processes in the complex, learned about the technological upgrade and praised the workers for their efforts. Kim stressed self-reliance, saying that entirely depending on locally available raw materials is the "philosophy governing the development of the economy in the DPRK." He said the enterprises related to the complex have an important role to play in keeping the production going at a high rate, which is the most important task for the complex.

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8. US-ROK Trade Relations

Reuters ("USTR TO EXPLORE S.KOREA AUTO OPTIONS IN DETROIT", 2010/02/20) reported that US Trade Representative Ron Kirk will discuss options for resolving auto trade concerns that have long blocked approval of a free trade agreement with ROK when he meets in Detroit with industry leaders, a U.S. trade official said. The trip takes Kirk to the epicenter of U.S. opposition to the free trade deal, which the two countries signed nearly three years ago under then-President George W. Bush.

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9. Japan-ROK Territorial Dispute

Kyodo News ("SHIMANE GOVERNOR WANTS MORE PUBLIC ATTENTION GIVEN TO TAKESHIMA ISLETS", 2010/02/22) reported that the governor of Shimane Prefecture called for greater public attention to be given to the sovereignty dispute over a group of ROK-controlled islets in the Sea of Japan. Zenbe Mizoguchi said galvanizing public support at the national level is "absolutely necessary" to settle the issue as he spoke in a ceremony to mark the fifth "Takeshima Day" since the local authority in western Japan designated Feb. 22 as a day for promoting Japan's claim to the islets.

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10. Japan-US Defense Cooperation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, U.S. PLAN DRONE R&D STUDY", 2010/02/22) reported that Japan and the US are set to launch a joint study project for developing a device that would provide an eye for use in unmanned aerial vehicle navigation, defense ministry officials said. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and U.S. Ambassador to Japan John Roos exchanged a document last Wednesday giving the OK to develop such a control device, which would be designed to be in place when the global positioning system is jammed or experiences glitches.

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11. Japan on US Nuclear Posture

PNND ("204 JAPANESE LEGISLATORS CALL ON PRESIDENT OBAMA TO ADOPT 'SOLE PURPOSE' DOCTRINE", 2010/02/21) reported that PNND member Hideo Hiraoka and 203 other Japanese legislators sent a letter today to US President Obama with regard to the US Nuclear Posture Review and the forthcoming NPT Review Conference. The letter calls on the US to adopt as a first step a 'sole purpose' policy (i.e. that the US nuclear weapons are only for deterrence against others from using nuclear weapons against the United States or its allies), and asserts that Japan will not seek the road toward possession of nuclear weapons if the US adopts such a policy.

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12. Japan Politics

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("LDP BOYCOTTS LOWER HOUSE SESSION", 2010/02/22) reported that the major opposition Liberal Democratic Party intensified its confrontational stance against the ruling camp on Diet business in a move spurred by a victory by an LDP-backed candidate in Nagasaki gubernatorial election. The LDP boycotted a House of Representatives Budget Committee session to protest the ruling camp's refusal to summon Democratic Party of Japan Secretary General Ichiro Ozawa and others for questioning over their alleged involvement in political funding irregularities. The move followed a meeting of LDP executives held earlier in the day in which it was decided to boycott Diet sessions unless the ruling camp led by the DPJ agrees to summon Ozawa and others to testify as witnesses before the Diet.

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13. Japan on Whaling Issue

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SAYS WHALING NOT A LEGAL ISSUE", 2010/02/22) reported that Japan insisted its whaling programme in Antarctic waters complies with international law, following a threat by Australia to take legal action against the country. Japan's top government spokesman, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano, on Monday said the international court was not the right forum for the dispute because Japan's "research whaling" is legal under international law. He reiterated Japan's position that it seeks a diplomatic solution "rather than making a case in a court."

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14. Sino-Japanese East Sea Territorial Dispute

Bloomberg News ("JAPAN MAY TAKE CHINA TO TRIBUNAL OVER EAST CHINA SEA GAS FIELD", 2010/02/22) reported that Japan may take a dispute with the PRC over developing a natural gas field in the East China Sea to an international maritime tribunal, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirofumi Hirano said. Asia's two biggest economies have failed to implement an agreement signed in June 2008 to develop the Chunxiao field together, and Japan has objected to PRC drilling near a contested border. The Mainichi newspaper today said Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's administration may appeal to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea over the issue.

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15. PRC on US Defense Strategy

China Daily ("CHINA CIRCLED BY CHAIN OF US ANTI-MISSILE SYSTEMS", 2010/02/22) reported that Washington appears determined to surround the PRC with US-built anti-missile systems, military scholars have observed. Quite a few military experts have noted that Washington's latest proposed weapon deal with Taiwan is the key part of a US strategic encirclement of the PRC in the East Asian region, and that the missiles could soon have a footprint that extends from Japan to the Republic of Korea and Taiwan. Air force colonel Dai Xu, a renowned military strategist, wrote in an article released this month that "China is in a crescent-shaped ring of encirclement. The ring begins in Japan, stretches through nations in the South China Sea to India, and ends in Afghanistan. Washington's deployment of anti-missile systems around China's periphery forms a crescent-shaped encirclement".

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16. Sino-Indian Relations

Calcutta News ("INDIA-CHINA AERIAL WAR GAMES IN 2012: IAF CHIEF", 2010/02/22) reported that in yet another sign of the growing India-PRC military ties, the air forces of the two countries will stage their first joint war game in 2012, the Indian Air Force (IAF) chief said. 'The planning has commenced. We are expecting political approval soon. In all probability, the exercise will be conducted in 2012,' Air Chief Marshal Pradeep Naik told reporters here. With this, all three wings of the armed forces would have engaged in joint exercises with their PRC counterparts.

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17. Cross-Strait Relations

BBC News ("TAIWAN GDP SOARS ON EXPORTS TO CHINA", 2010/02/22) reported that Taiwan's economy grew at an annualised rate of 18% in the last three months of 2009, driven by demand for hi-tech products from the PRC. The growth was better than expected, and an increase on the 8.25% expansion between July and October. Using a different measure - comparing the fourth quarter with the same period of 2008 - its economy expanded 9.2%.

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18. PRC Space Program

Agence France-Presse ("US LUNAR PULL-OUT LEAVES CHINA SHOOTING FOR MOON", Beijing, 2010/02/22) reported that the PRC aims to land its first astronauts on the moon within a decade at the dawn of a new era of manned space exploration -- a race it now leads thanks to the US decision to drop its lunar programme. US President Barack Obama earlier this month said he planned to drop the costly Constellation space programme, a budget move that would kill off future moon exploration if it is approved by Congress. In contrast, the PRC has a fast-growing human spaceflight project that has notched one success after another, including a spacewalk by astronauts in 2008, with plans for a manned lunar mission by around 2020. The turnaround is viewed as yet another example of the Asian power's rising profile and technical prowess.

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19. PRC Internet Control

Reuters ("CHINA MILITARY OFFICER URGES NEW INTERNET CONTROL AGENCY", 2010/02/22) reported that a senior PRC military officer has called for a new national body to enforce Internet controls. People's Liberation Army Major General Huang Yongyin said the PRC needed to keep pace with the efforts of other big powers to fight online infiltration and attacks. "For national security, the Internet has already become a new battlefield without gunpowder," Huang wrote in the February issue of Chinese Cadres Tribune, a magazine published by the Communist Party's influential Central Party School .

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20. PRC Civil Society

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA TELLS SCHOOLS TO SHUN BRITISH AGENCY OXFAM", Beijing, 2010/02/23) reported that the PRC is telling schools to shun the international relief agency Oxfam and bar their campus recruitment efforts. Oxfam Hong Kong, which oversees the group's mainland China operations, is a " non-governmental organization seeking to infiltrate our interior," said a notice attributed to the Education Ministry seen Tuesday on the job services Web site hosted by Beijing's Minzu University. It called the group's chairman, public affairs consultant Lo Chi-kin, a "stalwart of the opposition faction."

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21. PRC Economy

The Los Angeles Times ("YOUNG, EDUCATED AND JOBLESS IN CHINA", 2010/02/18) reported that Guan Jian is one of an estimated 3 million jobless or underemployed college graduates in the PRC, products of a mass social experiment by central planners to churn out more professionals for the PRC's economic development. Nicknamed the Ant Tribe, after the title of a recent book documenting their struggles, they now constitute a vast army of educated young people whose growing

restlessness worries the PRC government. Recognizing the potential threat, Beijing is urging state-run companies to put college graduates on their payrolls, and it's encouraging degree holders to work in the countryside. Others are being steered into the military. State media have reported female graduates seeking marriage just end their fruitless job hunt.

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22. PRC Internal Migration

Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "CHINA PROMISES BETTER BENEFITS FOR RURAL MIGRANTS", Beijing, 2010/02/23) reported that the PRC will grant young migrant workers more social service benefits and help them rent or buy homes in smaller cities. Han Jun, a senior research fellow at the Development Research Center, a think tank that advises the PRC's Cabinet, said Tuesday that a policy paper released last month made it clear that the government is "striving for substantial reform of the household registration system" to allow migrants, especially younger ones, to register in cities. However, the reform plan aims to get migrants registered in cities and townships close to their home villages — not expensive places like Beijing or Shanghai where migrants flock for construction and service sector jobs.

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II. PRC Report

23. Sino-Japanese Environmental Cooperation

Beijing Times ("NET FRIEND INVITED TO JAPAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATION", 2010/02/22) reported that officials of Beijing Municipal Urban Appearance Committee, experts, citizen representatives went to Japan to observe and study new technology of refuse disposal today. One invited citizen representative is a net friend who opposed construction of refuse burning plant in Asuwen area of Beijing and submitted a 40-page refuse treatment plan to government.

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24. PRC Civil Society

International Online ("VOLUNTEERS WALK TO RAISE FUND FOR HOPE PROJECT", 2010/02/22) reported that over 200 Hong Kong volunteers arrived in Guangzhou on foot yesterday, and ended a 6-day walking activity for raising fund for Hope Project. This activity has attracted over 4000 people to participate and raised fund over 68 million Hong Kong dollars since the first launch in 1993.

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25. PRC Environment

Xinhua News ("FUJIAN TO ESTABLISH MARINE POLLUTION TRACEABLE ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPENSATION MECHANISM", 2010/02/21) reported that in order to control the gradually serious marine land-based pollution, Fujian province, who has a coastline over 3700 kilometers, plans to establish marine pollution traceable accountability and compensation mechanism this year.

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