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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on Six Party Talks

Global Security Newswire ("U.S. HOPES FOR GOOD NEWS ON NORTH KOREA", 2010/03/23) reported that the United States said yesterday that it wants DPRK leader Kim Jong Il's rumored upcoming trip to the PRC to include the announcement that the country is returning to denuclearization talks , the Korea Herald reported. "I hope when he arrives in Beijing, he'll announce that North Korea's willing to come back to the six-party process and take affirmative action steps towards denuclearization," U.S. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said. "We wish him safe travels".

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2. US on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap News ("N. KOREAN MISSILE COULD SOMEDAY THREATEN U.S.: PENTAGON", Washington, 2010/03/23) reported that the DPRK and Iran have been enhancing their long range missile capabilities to the extent that they eventually will threaten the United States, a senior U.S. defense official said. Deputy Secretary of Defense William Lynn told a forum here, "North Korea continues to develop its ICBM-class Taepo Dong II. And Iran is at work on a space launch vehicle that could provide the basis for a long-range ICBM. Both could someday threaten the United States itself." The Pentagon official said that U.S. missile defense "remains focused on regional actors such as North Korea and Iran," without intending to "affect the strategic balance with Russia or China," noting, "Systems that could some day be deployed against our forces are becoming more accurate and harder to defeat, while attaining greater ranges."

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3. US Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News ("U.S. TO CONSIDER RESUMING FOOD AID TO N. KOREA: STATE DEPT.", 2010/03/23) reported that the United States Tuesday said it will consider restarting food aid to the

DPRK, which was suspended early last year amid heightened tensions over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests. "There are profound needs for the North Korean population," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said. "And to the extent that North Korea wants to accept aid from the international community, including the United States, we will be willing to consider that." Crowley was responding to a demand by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter made in Seoul earlier in the day that Washington have unconditional direct talks with the DPRK and provide humanitarian aid to help denuclearize the DPRK.

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4. DPRK Detention of Americans

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "US MAN HELD IN NKOREA RALLIED AGAINST PYONGYANG", Seoul, 2010/03/24) reported that activists in Seoul said Aijalon Mahli Gomes was an acquaintance of Robert Park. In the days after Park's arrest, Gomes attended at least two rallies in Seoul calling for Park's release. "I saw him weeping," Jo Sung-rae of Pax Koreana said. Jo said Gomes, who contacted him in November about working with his rights group, met Park in Seoul last summer. "I felt he may have gone to North Korea after being inspired by Robert Park," Jo said.

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5. DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA'S WORST CONCENTRATION CAMP EXPOSED", 2010/03/23) reports that the DPRK's worst concentration camp is a reeducation center where women who escaped to the PRC are subjected to the most brutal treatment, NGO Good Friends said. The Jeungsan Reeducation Center in South Pyongan Province has a reputation for cruelty and the saying goes that even healthy people leave as cripples. The facility was turned into a reeducation center after the regime revised the criminal law in 2004. Before the law was revised, the DPRK had four kinds of detention centers -- reeducation, education, confinement and labor training camps in descending order of severity.

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6. DPRK Defectors

Xinhua News Agency ("DPRK ACCUSES S KOREA, U.S. OF MAKING ISSUE OF DEFECTORS FROM NORTH", 2010/03/23) reported that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on Tuesday accused the ROK and the United States of making an issue of "defectors from the North." The accusation was made by a spokesperson of the DPRK's national reconciliation council, according to the official KCNA news agency. The news agency quoted the spokesperson as saying that the ROK and the United States describe those defectors as refugees while they in fact are "criminals" and "traitors" from the DPRK. "They have abandoned their families, parents, brothers and sisters and friends in quest of their own comfort," the spokesperson said.

Agence France Presse ("NKOREAN ASYLUM SEEKERS CAUGHT ", 2010/03/23) reported that sixteen DPRK asylum seekers, including three children, have been arrested in northern Thailand and charged with illegal entry, police said on Tuesday. The group were detained on Monday in Nong Khai province after crossing the Mekong river from neighbouring Laos, local police said. "They came

from a village in North Korea... through China and Laos. It took them 20 days,' a marine police officer in Nong Khai told AFP, saying the group included two girls and a boy, aged between three and eight.

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7. Inter-Korea Economic Cooperation

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "S. KOREA OKS VISIT TO N. KOREA BY TOUR OPERATORS UNDER ASSET FREEZE THREAT", Seoul, 2010/03/24) reported that the ROK issued travel permits Wednesday to businessmen planning to visit the DPRK. Unification Ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo said 39 companies with interests in the Mt. Kumgang tour project had planned to send officials to the resort for the purported asset inspection that is set for Thursday, though only nine firms with real estate holdings at the resort were allowed to send delegates. Korean Tourism Organization officials intend to conduct their own inspection of facilities before the survey takes place, Lee said, adding the government has no plans to meet with the officials before the trip. "We have no plans to ask the visitors to relay our position to the North," she said. No ROK government officials will accompany the business group.

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8. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "NEW S. KOREAN VICE MINISTER PLEDGES TO MAINTAIN HARDLINE STANCE ON N. KOREA", Seoul, 2010/03/23) reports that a career-long government specialist on inter-Korean relations took office Tuesday as the ROK's vice unification minister, touting his government's policy of tying large-scale aid to the DPRK to progress in Pyongyang's denuclearization. "For the past two years, we have established new principles and directions for inter-Korean relations," Um said in his inauguration speech at the ministry in Seoul. "We should consistently pursue changes in North Korea and progress in inter-Korean relations that is based on principles," he said.

Korea Times ("SOUTH PROPOSES ECOLOGICAL PEACE BELT IN DMZ", 2010/03/23) reported that the ROK is seeking talks with the DPRK to turn the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the inter-Korean border into an ecological peace belt, housing facilities for environmental protection and inter-Korean cooperation. In a report to President Lee Myung-bak at Cheong Wa Dae Tuesday, Kang Man-soo, chairman of the Presidential Council on National Competitiveness, said the DMZ should be preserved by the world as it is home to a variety of rare species, as well as containing historical and cultural heritages.

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9. ROK-US Military Relations

JoongAng Daily (Yoo Jee-ho, "KOREA, U.S. COULD DELAY WARTIME CONTROL TRANSFER", 2010/03/24) reports that the ROK and the United States both feel the need to delay transferring wartime operational control from Washington to Seoul under the current climate, a senior government official said this week. Some ROK officials have recently called for a delay of the

transfer, which is scheduled to take place in April 2012, because of persistent threats from the DPRK. Addressing reporters in a background briefing Monday, the senior official explained that under the ROK-U.S. agreement on the planned transfer, the two sides can discuss delaying the shift of the control by one to two years.

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10. USFK Base Relocation

Korea Times ("USFK WILL RETURN COMMAND BUNKER FOR NOTHING", 2010/03/23) reported that the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) said Tuesday that it will return an underground command bunker to the ROK at no cost under the bilateral Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). "Under the Status of Forces Agreement, the Republic of Korea grants land and facilities to USFK," the USFK said in a news release. "The USFK will return SOFA granted land and facilities back to the ROK government when we are done using it for mutual defense," it said. A USFK official reconfirmed that the bunker will be given to the ROK free of charge when the relocation of U.S. bases is implemented, though the exact timeframe of the base move has yet to be fixed.

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11. ROK-Japan History

JoongAng Daily (Yoo Jee-ho, "JAPAN OFFICE NEVER EXISTED IN 4TH CENTURY", 2010/03/24) reports that after two years of joint study, 34 historians from the ROK and Japan have agreed to rewrite one small but significant point of history - but whether Japanese textbook publishers will agree to do the same remains to be seen. The Korea-Japan Joint History Research Committee yesterday revealed that the study that began in June 2007 failed to establish common interpretations of several sensitive historical events. However, they did agree that a disputed Japanese government office said to have been established in the fourth century to rule Korean kingdoms never existed.

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "SEOUL SEEKS HELP FROM CHINA, JAPAN IN LOCATING AHN JUNG-GEUN'S REMAINS", Seoul, 2010/03/24) reported that the ROK has formally asked the PRC and Japan to help in efforts to locate the remains of Ahn Jung-geun, a government source said Wednesday. The government also said it will launch a team of experts to search for his remains. "The government has been requesting China and Japan's cooperation in finding the remains of Ahn, and the issue will be discussed at the foreign ministerial meeting of South Korea, Japan and China if necessary," an official said on condition of anonymity.

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12. ROK Climate Change

JoongAng Daily (Kang Joo-an, "TURF WAR SLOWING PRESIDENT'S GREEN GROWTH BLUEPRINT", 2010/03/23) reports that the Lee Myung-bak administration has used "green growth," as its operative phrase. But its legal foundation for green growth strategies has been met with opposition from a presidential body. The Regulatory Reform Committee, which reviews law enforcement measures, yesterday ordered changes in the enforcement ordinance for the Framework Act on Low Carbon Green Growth. It was scheduled to go into effect on April 14. After a meeting,

the committee concluded that under the act, companies related to green growth could face “a double whammy” of restrictions from both the Ministry of Knowledge Economy and the Ministry of Environment.

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA TO BUILD WIND GENERATORS ALONG WEST COAST", 2010/03/23) reported that the ROK plans to build over two hundred wind generators along sea walls on the west coast that will help the country cut back on green house gas emissions and provide clean electricity to 400,000 homes, a state-run rural development corporation said Tuesday. The Korea Rural Community Corp. (KRC) said it signed a memorandum of understanding earlier in the day with local companies to build 240 wind generators by 2016 that can generate a combined 966 gigawatt of electric power per year.

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13. Japan Abductee Issue

Kyodo News ("AID TO BE EXTENDED FOR ABDUCTEES", 2010/03/23) reported that the Lower House unanimously approved a bill Tuesday to extend for five years the financial support provided to help support five Japanese abductees repatriated from the DPRK and their offspring. The legislation is aimed at helping the returnees and their children establish stable lives by providing them monetary benefits through March 2015. The current law stipulates that the central and local governments provide monthly payments of ¥170,000 per returnee, or ¥240,000 for a two-person household, and ¥30,000 for each additional family member.

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14. Japan Politics

Reuters ("U.S. MARINE BASE ROW PUTS PRESSURE ON JAPAN PM: POLL", 2010/03/23) reported that nearly half of Japanese voters think Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama should quit if he fails to resolve by the end of May a row over a U.S. airbase that is eroding his ratings ahead of a mid-year election, a survey showed Tuesday. More than 73 percent of voters polled by the Sankei said they were unhappy with his management of the problem.

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15. Japan-US Nuclear Energy Cooperation

BBC News ("BILL GATES AND TOSHIBA DISCUSS NUCLEAR POWER VENTURE", 2010/03/23) reports that Mr Gates' TerraPower and Toshiba are investigating technology for mini-reactors, which are more cost-efficient than conventional units. The hope is that the new reactors might be suitable for use in cities or emerging-market countries. Mr Gates is the principal owner of TerraPower, which investigates ways to improve emission-free energy supplies using small nuclear reactors.

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16. PRC Nuclear Energy

Xinhua News ("CHINA NUCLEAR POWER COMPANIES HIGHLIGHT GREEN DEVELOPMENT", Beijing, 2010/03/23) reports that the PRC's nuclear power giants were committed to green development of nuclear energy, said an insider at an exhibition that opened here on Tuesday. Liu Bin, Chief engineer of Huaneng Group (CHNG), a major nuclear power company in the country, made the remarks at the 11th the PRC international nuclear industry exhibition that would run till Friday. "CHNG, among others, will further promote green development of nuclear power," said Liu. The PRC Techenergy Co., Ltd. (CTEC), which ranks top in nuclear power projects in progress worldwide, had made clean energy including nuclear power, wind power and solar energy, a priority, said Zhao Hua, its chief engineer at the same occasion.

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17. Sino-Russian Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PUTIN, CHINA'S XI VOW 'STRATEGIC' SUPPORT IN FIRST MEETING", Moscow, 2010/03/23) reports that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, tipped to become the PRC's president, hailed the strength of bilateral ties Tuesday as they looked to forge a counterbalance to the power of the US. "We are in favour of Russia playing an important role in international and regional affairs," Xi, currently the PRC's vice-president, said after the pair held their first talks. "We will surely support you." In our opinion, the PRC and Russia should in the future facilitate the establishment of a multipolar world and democratisation of international relations, " he added, speaking through a Russian translator.

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18. US on PRC Internet

Associated Press ("US: CHINA SHOULD REFLECT ON GOOGLE RETREAT", 2010/03/23) reported that the United States is urging Beijing to "seriously consider" the meaning of Google's decision to partially withdraw from the PRC over Internet restrictions. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley told reporters Tuesday that the U.S. government played no part in the Web giant's choice. But he says that Beijing "should seriously consider the implications when one of the world's most recognizable institutions has decided that it's too difficult to do business in China."

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19. PRC Internet

EarthTimes ("ACTIVISTS 'CRY,' STATE MEDIA SNEER AT GOOGLE EXIT ", 2010/03/23) reported that PRC rights activists on Tuesday lamented Google Inc's decision to close its main website in the PRC and divert it to an uncensored Hong Kong-based version. "Seeing that Google has gone, I feel very, very upset," said Liu Shasha, a rights activist from the central province of Henan. "There is no hope for democracy in China. I want to cry," Liu said. Popular blogger and rights activist Zhao Jing, who uses the online name Michael Anti, invoked the PRC's most famous ancient philosopher. "Google is right, for Confucius has already told us: It's not proper to enter a dangerous

country," Zhao said."For Hong Kongers like myself, Google's move shows how valuable Hong Kong's autonomy is," Zhao said.

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II. PRC Report

20. PRC Climate Change

Beijing Times (Wang Hui, "BEIJING PALACE MUSEUM FOLLOWS EARTH HOUR, ", 2010/03/23) reported that Beijing Palace Museum will participate into the Earth Hour launched by World Wildlife Fund this year. At 8:30 pm of March 27th, Beijing Palace Museum will turn out its lights for one hour along with the Paris Ferris wheel, New York's Empire State Building and other international landmarks, to call public's attention to climate change.

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21. PRC Civil Society

Jinghua Times ("CHINESE STARS DONATE FOR SOUTHWEST DROUGHT", 2010/03/23) reported that famous PRC movie director Feng Xiaogang, actor Zhang Guoli and some other PRC stars jointly launched a donation proposal, calling on the public to donate for relief efforts for the southwestern drought yesterday. They themselves donated 1 million RMB through the Red Cross Society, and hoped more people show their love.

China Ningbo Net ("VENTURE PHILANTHROPY COMPETITION HELD IN NINGBO", 2010/03/23) reported that a Venture Philanthropy Competition was held in Ningbo city of Zhejiang province. The individual or team winner will receive 5,000 RMB to be used as a special philanthropic fund and will be entered into the "youth business incubator", where they will receive professional training and have an office for free.

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