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Preceding NAPSNet Report

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I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA'S POLICY EFFECTIVE IN PRESSING N. KOREA INTO TALKS: OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2010/02/25) reported that a top ROK official on relations with DPRK touted his government's tough approach toward the communist neighbor, saying Thursday that the policy has proven effective in pressing Pyongyang to open up for dialogue. DPRK has been making some conciliatory gestures toward ROK after it drew tough U.N. sanctions for its May nuclear test. The sanctions are believed to have deepened the impoverished DPRK's economic woes amid the lack of assistance from ROK.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("CHINA SAID TO PUSH THE NORTH ON NUKE TALKS", 2010/02/25) reported that the PRC has “strongly urged” the DPRK to stop demands for the lifting of international sanctions as a precondition to the resumption of the six-party talks, sources in Beijing said. The PRC’s comments reportedly came during a Feb. 9 to 13 visit there by Kim Gye-gwan, the chief DPRK nuclear negotiator. Sources said the PRC officials told their DPRK counterparts that lifting sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council is a complicated process that requires time. Another Beijing source said if North Korea again accepts inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, it could be considered “a meaningful move” in the denuclearization process.

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3. Sino-DPRK Relations

Bloomberg ("CHINA, NORTH KOREA, TO BUILD, RUN YALU RIVER BRIDGE, XINHUA SAYS", 2010/02/25) reported that PRC and DPRK signed an agreement today to jointly build, manage and maintain a new highway bridge over the Yalu river, the official Xinhua news agency reported. The agreement was signed by PRC's Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Hailong and DPRK's Vice Foreign Minister Park Gil Yon, Xinhua said in a report from Beijing.

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4. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("PRO-NORTH SCHOOL TUITION WAIVER DIMS", 2010/02/25) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama suggested Thursday that pro-Pyongyang high schools for Korean residents are unlikely to be covered by a proposed tuition fee exemption due to difficulties in checking their curriculum against Japanese guidelines. "When we can't necessarily see the teaching content at the 'chosen gakko' (pro-Pyongyang schools) and what they are teaching, I see (Hiroshi) Nakai's idea as one (that merits consideration)," Hatoyama told reporters. "I've heard it's likely to go in that direction, but we're putting the final touches to the matter," Hatoyama said.

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5. Sino-DPRK Trade

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PROBES PATH OF SEIZED NORTH KOREA ARMS", Beijing, 2010/02/25) reported that PRC said on Thursday it was investigating whether a shipment of DPRK arms destined for Congo in violation of UN sanctions transited PRC territory. UN diplomats said on Tuesday that South Africa had notified the UN Security Council panel monitoring sanctions imposed on DPRK that the weapons had been seized in November. "PRC is looking into this issue... the PRC side will also take part in relevant discussions," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang said, in response to a report that the shipment went through the port of Dalian in northeast China .

Xinhua ("CHINA DENIES VIOLATING UN SANCTION ON DPRK", Beijing, 2010/02/25) reported that PRC denied on Thursday that its economic and trade exchanges with the DPRK has violated a UN resolution. At a regular press conference, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang was asked to comment on a report by Yonhap news of the ROK quoted by China Daily saying Pyongyang announced two islets adjacent to PRC's northernmost port city Dandong would be developed by PRC enterprises as a free trade area. "This project is purely normal economic and trade contact between the two countries. It does not go against the UN relevant resolution of sanction on the DPRK," he said.

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6. Inter-Korea Trade

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("SOUTH KOREA'S TRADE WITH NORTH KOREA FALLS INTO THE RED", 2010/02/25) reported that inter-Korean trade, in which ROK recorded surpluses throughout the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations, has now fallen into the red under the current government. According to customs statistics released on February 25, Seoul ran a trade deficit with DPRK under the Kim Young Sam administration until 1997, and then ran trade surpluses through the Kim Dae Jung and Roh Moo Hyun administrations, almost until the end of 2007. Seoul has fallen back into the red, however, during the last two years of the current government. In other words, the People's Government (under Kim Dae Jung) and the Participatory Government (under Roh Moo Hyun) exported more to DPRK than they imported, while this trend has now been reversed under Lee Myung-bak.

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7. DPRK on US-ROK Joint Military Drill

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA SLAMS PLANNED U.S.-S. KOREAN MILITARY DRILLS", Beijing, 2010/02/25) reported that DPRK on Thursday criticized U.S.-ROK joint military exercises slated for March 8-18, threatening to employ "all the offensive and defensive means including nuclear deterrent" for retaliation. "If the U.S. imperialists and ROK warmongers launch the joint military exercises for aggression, ignoring our repeated warnings, we will react to them with our powerful military counteraction, and if necessary, mercilessly destroy the bulwark of aggression by mobilizing all the offensive and defensive means including nuclear deterrent," Korean Central News Agency quoted a spokesman for the Korean People's Army as saying in a statement. The United States and ROK call the exercises "annual ones" and "defensive," but they are "pilot operations and nuclear war exercises aimed to preempt a surprise attack" on DPRK, the unidentified spokesman said.

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8. DPRK-US Public Health Collaboration

CISAC ("CISAC'S SHARON PERRY HELPS DEVELOP NORTH KOREA'S FIRST DRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS DIAGNOSTIC LAB", 2010/02/25) reported that in an unprecedented collaboration between US and DPRK tuberculosis experts, Stanford specialists are working with doctors from Pyongyang's Ministry of Public Health to develop that country's first diagnostic laboratory for drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB). A U.S. team led by Stanford epidemiologist Sharon Perry, a CISAC senior research scientist, recently returned from North Korea after completing installation of the lab. This was an important step in the project led by the Bay Area TB Consortium (BATC), which Perry directs, and the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI). "The new laboratory will fill a critical gap in North Korea's TB control program," Perry said.

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9. DPRK Food Aid

Donga Ilbo ("NK SEEKS MORE CHINA AID AS FOOD SHORTAGES WORSEN", 2010/02/25) reported that food shortages in DPRK are worsening, with the country this year getting more aggressive in receiving food aid from its closest ally, PRC. A source familiar with DPRK issues said yesterday, "DPRK is attempting to gain more food than usual from PRC through this month." A ROK

government official said, “We have said we cannot send a large amount of food without progress in inter-Korean relations. International organizations such as the U.N. World Food Program have also announced a reduction in food aid for DPRK this year. Accordingly, DPRK has no choice but to acquire more food from PRC.”

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10. US-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, U.S. AGREE ON TROOPS' COOPERATION ON DISASTER RELIEF", Tokyo, 2010/02/25) reported that Japan and the United States agreed Thursday during senior working-level discussions aimed at deepening the bilateral alliance that their troops should cooperate in the areas of disaster relief and humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, Japanese government officials said. During the talks, the two allies are expected to develop a common awareness of the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region, and also discuss specific areas in which they are seeking to enhance cooperation, including information assurance, cyber security, and issues associated with space.

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11. US-Japan Military Alliance

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "JAPAN STARTING TO BALK AT FOOTING BILL FOR U.S. FORCES", Ginowan, Okinawa, 2010/02/25) reported that in Japan, where land is a precious commodity, many U.S. bases boast golf courses, football fields and giant shopping malls whose food courts offer everything from Taco Bell to Subway to Starbucks. They are the most visible point of grievance in a sharpening debate about the cost to Japan of supporting the 47,000 U.S. service members — about $2 billion a year. But facing economic woes and seeking a more equal relationship with the U.S., the Hatoyama administration is questioning whether Japan should spend so much on U.S. forces. Japanese call their share a "kindness budget," implying the U.S. is getting a free ride, and its opponents say it is rife with waste. The opposition also reflects a long-standing feeling, particularly on the left, that the U.S. is taking its security alliance with Japan too much for granted.

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12. US-Japan Nuclear Pact

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN TO COME CLEAN ABOUT SECRET MILITARY PACTS WITH U.S.", 2010/02/25) reported that the Japanese government will officially admit that it signed two secret pacts with the U.S. in 1960 and 1972, allowing the U.S. Forces Japan to intervene in a war on the Korean Peninsula without consulting Tokyo and allowing the U.S. to deploy nuclear weapons in Okinawa in a regional emergency. The Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported Wednesday that an expert committee at the Japanese Foreign Ministry recently investigated the question and recommended admitting the existence of the two secret pacts. They will be made public in March.

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13. Japan-Iran Energy Cooperation

Agence France-Presse ("IRAN WANTS TO DISCUSS JAPAN OFFER TO ENRICH URANIUM: REPORT", 2010/02/25) reported that Iran will study a Japanese offer to enrich uranium for Tehran to allow it access to nuclear power for peaceful purposes, an Iranian politician was quoted as saying in Tokyo. "It has the substance to be worth discussing. We want to deepen the discussion on it," visiting parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani told reporters late Wednesday, according to the Nikkei business daily.

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14. Japan Climate Change

Mainichi Daily ("ANTI-GLOBAL WARMING BILL TO CALL FOR PROMOTION OF NUCLEAR POWER GENERATION", 2010/02/25) reported that an anti-global warming bill the government is set to submit to the ongoing Diet session will call for the promotion of nuclear power generation as the core of its measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, government sources said. The initial draft of the bill called only for the promotion of the development of next-generation, low-emission power generation technologies, such as batteries that can store a massive volume of electric power generated by low-emission methods. The government also intends to incorporate a clause that will call for the introduction of an emission quota transaction system within a year from the enforcement of the law. The government will coordinate views on the issue between senior vice ministers and other top officials at ministries concerned, and approve the bill at a Cabinet meeting in early March before submitting it to the Diet.

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15. Japan Whaling Issue

Kyodo News ("JAPAN SAYS AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL TO END WHALING 'REGRETTABLE'", Tokyo, 2010/02/25) reported that a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official on Thursday described as 'regrettable' Australia's move to submit a proposal to the International Whaling Commission seeking to end whaling in the Antarctic Ocean within five years. ''It is regrettable that such a proposal was made,'' State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Koichi Takemasa told a press conference following Australia's announcement of the proposal the same day. The proposal also calls for an immediate end to so-called ''scientific whaling,'' which Japan has been conducting, and says that all whaling activities other than current aboriginal subsistence whaling should eventually be phased out. The issue of whaling was discussed during telephone talks between Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and his New Zealand counterpart Murray McCully the same day.

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16. Japan Politics

Kyodo News ("RULING BLOC REJECTS LDP CENSURE MOTION AGAINST LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER", 2010/02/25) reported that Japan 's ruling parties voted down in a plenary session for the House of Representatives on Thursday a no-confidence motion against Speaker Takahiro

Yokomichi submitted by the main opposition Liberal Democratic Party. The Democratic Party of Japan-led ruling coalition also rejected a censure motion against Takeaki Matsumoto, chairman of the lower chamber's steering committee.

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17. PRC on US-Japan Military Alliance

Xinhua ("CHINA URGES JAPAN-U.S. MILITARY CO-OP NOT TO TARGET THIRD PARTY", Beijing, 2010/02/25) reported that PRC's defence ministry said Thursday Japan's exaggeration of PRC's military power hurts bilateral ties. Defense Ministry spokesman Huang Xueping made the remarks after a report said Japanese leaders may revise the country's defence policies to strengthen the Japan-U.S. alliance and confront PRC's increased military strength."PRC-Japan defense relations have developed rapidly. But irrespective of why the Japanese leaders made the comments, they have hurt the trust and sentiment that has built up," Huang said. Calling the Japan-U.S. military alliance an "outcome of history," Huang urged the two countries to confine their military arrangements to a bilateral framework and to not target a third party.

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18. Cross-Strait Relations

Xinhua ("CHINESE MAINLAND PLANS TO SEND MORE PROVINCIAL HEAVYWEIGHTS TO VISIT TAIWAN ", Beijing, 2010/02/24) reported that the PRC mainland plans to send more senior provincial officials to visit Taiwan this year after sending three in 2009, a spokesperson said here Wednesday. Fan Liqing, spokeswoman for the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office, told a regular press conference visits by provincial heavyweights last year have deepened economic cooperation, boosted cultural exchanges across the Strait and benefited local people. Fan did not say how many officials or when they will visit the island, adding that the mainland will have discussions with Taiwan. In addition, she confirmed that the CPC and the Kuomintang will continue to sponsor the annual Cross-Strait Economic, Trade and Cultural Forum this year.

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19. PRC Nuclear Capability

RIA Novosti ("CHINA COULD BUILD UP NUCLEAR CAPABILITY TO COUNTER U.S. MISSILE SHIELD", 2010/02/25) reported that the PRC could strengthen its nuclear capability in response to US global missile defense plans, a Russian military expert said. "At present, China has a very limited nuclear potential, but my recent contacts with Chinese military representatives indicate that if the United States deploys a global missile defense system, in particular in the Far East, China will build up its offensive capability," said Lt. Gen. Yevgeny Buzhinsky, former department deputy head in the Russian Defense Ministry.

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20. PRC Security

Xinhua ("CHINA POLICE GEAR UP SECURITY FOR UPCOMING NPC,CPPCC SESSIONS", 2010/02/25) reported that the Ministry of Public Security urged police nationwide to ensure security for the upcoming annual sessions of the PRC's top legislature and top political advisory body. Police should safeguard people's livelihood, strengthen the safety supervision of hazardous materials and large-scale events, and tighten security checks on traffic going into Beijing, vice minister Huang Ming said at a security meeting in Beijing Tuesday. Police in Beijing's seven neighboring provincial-level regions have been asked to maintain social stability and reinforce checks on vehicles, flights and trains entering the city from March 1 to March 15.

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21. PRC Internet Control

Xinhua ("LINKING HACKERS' CYBER ATTACKS WITH CHINESE GOVERNMENT, MILITARY GROUNDLESS: DEFENSE SPOKESMAN", Beijing, 2010/02/25) reported that the National Defense Ministry spokesman Thursday said associating hackers' cyber attacks with PRC government and the military was groundless. "The act to link up cyber attacks by hackers with the PRC government and the military is both irresponsible and calculated to achieve hype out of ulterior motives," said Huang Xueping, spokesman of the Ministry of National Defense. Huang made the remarks when asked to comment on media reports claiming the PRC government and the military were involved in hackers' cyber attacks on Google.

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II. PRC Report

22. PRC Environment

People’s Daily online ("2010 SANJIANGYUAN ECO-PROTECTION PROJECT LAUNCHED", 2010/02/25) reported that 2010 Sanjiangyuan Eco-protection and construction project was formally launched Tuesday in Qinghai province. Since the first launch of this project in 2006, the country has invested an accumulative total of 3.3 billion RMB, accounting for 44% of the total investment. The project will be finished by 2013.

South Daily ("GUANGZHOU DOMESTIC REFUSE TREATMENT ADOPTS BURNING METHOD", 2010/02/25) reported that a two-day Guangzhou Domestic Refuse Treatment Experts Consultation Meeting was ended Tuesday in Guangzhou. A Expert Consultation Suggested signed by 32 experts was published to the media. The Suggestion shows that 31 invited experts agree that burning is a primary choose of domestic refuse treatment for Guangzhou, only 1 expert opposes burning and advocates recycling at a maximum.

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23. PRC Disaster Relief

International Online ("CHINA DONATES ANOTHER 20 MILLION RMB TO HAITI", 2010/02/25) reported that PRC government decided Tuesday to donate another 20 million RMB to Haiti earthquake disaster area, for providing the needy tent, said Yao Jian, spokesman of Ministry of Business today. The aid materials are tried to be sent to Haiti before May (local rainy season), said Yao.

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