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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua News ("TALKS FOR PEACE TREATY, LIFTING OF SANCTIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON PROGRESS IN DENUCLEARIZATION: S KOREAN OFFICIAL", 2010/01/25) reported that talks for a peace treaty on the Korean Peninsula and lifting of sanctions on the DPRK should be based on achieving progress in the process of the DPRK's denuclearization, Wi Sung-lac, Special Representative for Korean Peninsula Peace and Security Affairs, said. Wi told the ROK's Yonhap News Agency that the nuclear negotiations and talks for a peace treaty "do not clash with each other, but can be held in parallel", however, he noted that the two issues only can be discussed simultaneously after the process of the DPRK's denuclearization gains driving force.

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua News ("S.KOREA TO DELAY MILITARY TALKS WITH DPRK ", 2010/01/25) reported that the ROK notified the DPRK of its decision to delay working-level military talks on easing border restrictions initially proposed by Pyongyang to be held on Jan. 26. The decision was in response to the DPRK proposal to discuss transportation, communication and customs system at the industrial park jointly run by the two Koreas, shortly after the two sides wrapped up the first bilateral talks of the year on improving operations at the industrial park in the DPRK's border town of Kaesong, with another round of such talks slated to be held on Feb. 1. "It will be more effective to hold a meeting after we see the outcome of the second round of talks at the Kaesong complex," Seoul's Ministry of Defense said, adding that it would propose a later date "at an appropriate time."

Yonhap ("S. KOREANS ASKED TO WEAR MASKS WHEN ENTERING N. KOREAN INDUSTRIAL PARK", Seoul, 2010/01/26) reported that the DPRK is requiring ROK citizns to wear masks when they enter the industrial complex in Kaesong in an effort to stem the spread of influenza A (H1N1), sources said Tuesday. Radio Free Asia reported earlier in the day that three DPRK citizns living in Kaesong have been confirmed infected with the H1N1 virus. ROK Unification Ministry spokesman

Chun Hae-sung said he has yet to check the report, but watchers say the disease is spreading in the DPRK.

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3. US-DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("US WARSHIP SAILS TO AID A NORTH KOREAN-FLAGGED VESSEL THREATENED BY PIRATES", Manama, 2010/01/25) reported that the US Navy says it overtook a suspected Somali pirate skiff that tried to attack a commercial ship in the Gulf of Aden. A Navy statement issued Sunday says a security team aboard the merchant vessel Napht Al Yemen 1 repelled the Jan. 20 pirate attack without U.S. help. The commercial ship is Yemeni owned but sails under a DPRK flag. The incident marked a rare example of the U.S. military aiding the DPRK.

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4. DPRK Economy

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREANS BARTER AMID CURRENCY CHANGE CHAOS", 2010/01/25) reported that the DPRK 's politically motivated currency revaluation is forcing its people to barter for food to survive even though the regime promised a new year drive to raise living standards, experts say. "Inflation is widespread despite the regime's desperate efforts to stabilise prices," said Lee Seung-Yong, director of the ROK Good Friends welfare group .

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5. US on DPRK Economy

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA FLUNKS GLOBAL ECONOMIC FREEDOM TEST", 2010/01/25) reported that the DPRK ranks at the bottom in a worldwide index of economic freedom for the 16th year running. In the 2010 Economic Freedom Index by the Wall Street Journal and the conservative Heritage Foundation, the DPRK came last among 179 countries surveyed with a score of 1 out of a possible 100 points. The DPRK scored five points in two out of 10 categories -- for property rights and freedom from corruption. It scored zero in the remaining eight -- business freedom, trade freedom, fiscal freedom, government spending, monetary freedom, investment freedom, financial freedom, and labor freedom.

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6. DPRK Leadership

The Los Angeles Times (John M. Glionna, "NORTH KOREA HONORS SEAMEN WHO TRIED TO SAVE KIM PORTRAITS", 2010/01/25) reported that s eamen who bravely go down with their ship can attain glory in any nation, but in the DPRK, hero status also comes to seafarers who die while trying to preserve images of the Dear Leader. The DPRK offered posthumous awards to crew members who drowned while reportedly attempting to save portraits of leader Kim Jong Il and his late father, Kim Il Sung, as a cargo ship sank in frigid water off the PRC coast in November. Analysts

say such awards drive home the sense of personal sacrifice called for by Kim's cult of personality.

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7. ROK Peacekeeping Operations

Yonhap News ("SEOUL MAY SEND ITS LARGEST NAVAL SHIP TO HAITI FOR PKO MISSION: SOURCE", 2010/01/25) reported that the ROK is considering sending about 250 peacekeeping troops aboard its largest naval ship, the Dokdo, to Haiti, a defense ministry source in Seoul said. The 1,400-ton Dokdo is a helicopter carrier commissioned in 2007 that also accommodates armored vehicles, tanks and trucks for landing missions. The amphibious landing ship measuring 199 meters in length and 31 meters in width is known as the largest helicopter carrier in Asia.

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8. ROK-Indian Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA, INDIA ESTABLISH 'STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP'", 2010/01/25) reported that the ROK and India agreed at a summit to upgrade their relations to a "strategic partnership" and expand mutual trade volume to US$30 billion by 2014. ROK President Lee Myung-bak and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed to expand their countries' cooperation to cover diplomacy, security, global issues, and culture based on their existing economic ties, according to a joint statement issued after their summit in New Delhi.

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9. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo ("U.S. SAYS STANCE ON OKINAWA BASE ISSUE UNCHANGED AFTER LOCAL ELECTION", Washington, 2010/01/25) reported that the United States said Monday its stance of wanting Japan to relocate Futenma air base in line with a 2006 bilateral deal remains intact despite the victory in a mayoral election of a challenger opposed to hosting the base in his city. ''It really doesn't'' affect the U.S. position on the relocation issue, State Department spokeman Philip Crowley told reporters. ''And I think Prime Minister (Yukio) Hatoyama publicly reaffirmed earlier today in Japan that his government will make the decision by the end of May based on thorough review of the options that are now under way,'' he said.

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10. Japan Politics

Japan Times ("LDP TRIES TO BUILD STEAM BEFORE POLL", 2010/01/25) reported that the opposition-leading Liberal Democratic Party held its annual convention Sunday, promising party reform and victory in the July Upper House election. But despite all the chest-thumping, reform in the LDP a ppears to be at a standstill as the once-ruling party scrambles to offer the public a fresh image. "We need to think over the meaning of that general election," said LDP President Sadakazu Tanigaki in his New Year address, referring to the devastating election in August that ousted it from

power. Tanigaki promised that the party would regain its sense of urgency and responsibility, and deliver "fresh and precise" policies in order to win the public's mandate.

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11. Cross-Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("AIDES: US NOTIFIES CONGRESS ON TAIWAN ARMS SALES", 2010/01/25) reported that the Obama administration has notified Congress that it has decided to sell weapons to Taiwan , a move expected to worsen already tense ties between the PRC and the United States, senior congressional aides said. The PRC considers Taiwan a renegade province and will vehemently object to the arms package, which is likely to include UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters , Patriot Advanced Capability-3 missiles and material related to Taiwan's defense communications network. The package appears to dodge a thorny issue: The aides say the F-16 fighter jets that Taiwan covets are not likely to be included.

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "TAIWAN ARMS SALE LATEST TEST FOR US-CHINA TIES", Beijing, 2010/01/26) reported that the PRC criticized the U.S. Tuesday ahead of the expected announcement of new arms sales to Taiwan. Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu mentioned no specific measures under consideration, but warned that arms sales would "impair the larger interests of China-U.S cooperation." "Once again, we urge the U.S. side to recognize the sensitivity of weapon sales to Taiwan and its gravity," Ma said.

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12. PRC African Diplomacy

Xinhua News ("SUDAN UNDERSCORES IMPORTANCE OF CHINA-ARAB ENERGY CO-OP CONFERENCE", 2010/01/25) reported that Sudanese Minister of Energy and Mining al-Zubair Ahmed al-Hassan on Sunday highlighted the importance of the second PRC-Arab Conference on Energy Cooperation, due to be held on Jan. 26-28 in Khartoum. "The conference is a true fruit of the Sino-Arab cooperation and reflects seriousness of the Chinese government to enhance its partnership with the Arab states," al-Hassan said at a press conference in Khartoum. "The conference comes as part of the exchange of benefits between China and the Arab states in the field of energy," he added.

Financial Times ("CHINA MAKES FORAY INTO MAURITIUS ", 2010/01/25) reported that the PRC's state-led approach to foreign investment is muscling India aside in its traditional "backyard" by investing $700m in a special economic zone in the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius to service Beijing's expansion in Africa. Ramakrishna Sithanen, the vice-prime minister of Mauritius and minister of finance, said the PRC was "extremely aggressively" pursuing its objectives in Africa via Mauritius with a wave of strategic investments on the island. However, the PRC's growing relationship with Mauritius and other Indian Ocean countries, together with Beijing's strengthening naval power, threaten to dilute India's influence in the region, according to some defence analysts.

The Associated Press ("A CHINATOWN IN ALGIERS? IT'S ALL ABOUT OIL", 2010/01/25) reported that while still struggling with the aftermath of a decade-long Islamic insurgency, oil-rich yet

impoverished Algeria is getting a makeover. Some 50 PRC firms, largely state-controlled, have been awarded $20 billion in government construction contracts, or 10 percent of the massive investment plan promised by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika for a nation where jobs and housing are scarce and al-Qaida has struck roots. Algerian exports to the PRC barely top $300 million because the PRC is a latecomer to the North African nation's biggest asset, the oil and gas under its portion of the Sahara Desert, which is dominated by U.S. firms. "But we're very active for the prospecting of new fields," Ling said.

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13. Hong Kong Government

Agence France-Presse ("HONG KONG DEMOCRATS PRESS VOTES-FOR-ALL CAMPAIGN", Hong Kong, 2010/01/25) reported that five pro-democracy lawmakers said on Monday they would push ahead with a plan to resign over at the slow pace of democratic reform in Hong Kong , despite growing opposition from the PRC. The group said they would quit on Tuesday, in the hope that the by-election would be a de-facto referendum on universal suffrage in the southern Chinese territory, 13 years after it was returned to Beijing by Britain. The PRC government has said Hong Kong's chief executive could be directly elected by 2017 and the legislature by 2020, but pro-democracy lawmakers want universal suffrage by 2012.

Agence France-Presse (Polly Hui, "HONG KONG LAWMAKERS RESIGN IN DEMOCRACY PUSH", Hong Kong, 2010/01/26) reported that five pro-democracy lawmakers in Hong Kong resigned their seats Tuesday, vowing to turn the resulting elections into a populist campaign for universal suffrage. Three members of the League of Social Democrats and two from the Civic Party tendered their resignations at the Legislative Council. "We are giving the opportunity back to the people to vote for real democracy," Civic Party leader Audrey Eu said after her two colleagues quit. "So we call on the people, if you truly believe in democracy, there is no reason to fear. There is no reason to fear the people's will. We are going to do it by five pieces of paper, by five resignation letters," she said.

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14. PRC Government

The New York Times ("CHINA TO MOVE AGAINST LOCAL LOBBISTS", 2010/01/25) reported that addressing a facet of political life all too familiar to Americans, the PRC's government is reported to have ordered the closure of thousands of “regional liaison offices” — in essence, lobbying firms — that local governments and companies operate in Beijing to curry favor with high officials. The government-affiliated magazine Outlook Weekly reported that Beijing officials have vowed to shutter the liaison offices within six months in an effort to stanch what some analysts call a culture of unalloyed corruption surrounding the institutions.

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15. PRC Energy Supply

Xinhua News ("SINO-KAZAK PIPELINE TRANSPORTS 20 MLN TONS OF OIL TO CHINA", Urumqi,

2010/01/25) reported that the Sino-Kazak Pipeline has piped more than 20 million tonnes of crude oil from Kazakhstan to the PRC since it became operational in 2006, according to the regional government of Xinjiang. Last year, the pipeline carried 7.73 million tonnes of crude oil into the PRC, up 26 percent year-on-year, the inspection and quarantine bureau in the northwestern Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region said in a press release Monday. The volume makes up about 4 percent of the country's crude imports, which is estimated at around 204 million tonnes last year.

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16. PRC Civil Society and Ethnic Groups

Global Times ("ENDANGERED MOSUO RECEIVES NGO HELP", 2010/01/25) reported that every year the Rotary Club of Beijing (RCB) sends a check to the Lugu Lake area, located on the border of Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, so that around 30 Mosuo students are able to continue their education. The Mosuo, one of the PRC's smallest, and most underprivileged, ethnic groups, live in a mountainous region located on the northwestern corner of Yunnan Province, adjacent to Tibet. Some 50,000 Mosuo live near Lugu Lake, where the average way of life revolves around outdated agrarian farming techniques. RCB, a Beijing based charity organization consisting mainly of businessmen, was introduced to the needy Mosuo students by a Yunnan based NGO, Lugu Lake Mosuo Cultural Development Association (LLMCDA).

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17. PRC on Climate Change

BBC News ("CHINA HAS 'OPEN MIND' ON CAUSE OF CLIMATE CHANGE", 2010/01/25) reported that the PRC 's lead climate change negotiator has said he was keeping an "open attitude" as to whether global warming was man-made or due to natural cycles. Xie Zhenhua said climate warming was a "solid fact" and that mainstream scientific opinion held it was due to emissions of gases such as CO2. He was speaking in Delhi at a meeting of envoys from Brazil, the PRC, India and South Africa. They agreed to submit their plans to cut emissions by the end of January.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Social Welfare

The Beijing Times ("THE ELDERY AND DISABLED PEOPLE IN BEIJING TO BE EQUIPPED WITH E-SERVICE DEVICE", 2010/01/25) reported that the eldery and disabled people in Beijing are expected to be equipped with electric service devices this year, according to the municipal Eldery People's Office today. This "little assistant" provides services of one-touch first aid, contacting families members, sending short massage and so on.

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19. PRC Environment

China Environment News ("CARBON NEUTRAL ALLIANCE FOUND IN CHINA", 2010/01/25) reported that the PRC's first Carbon Neutral Alliance was founded in Beijing recently. The Alliance will provides carbon neutral service to domestic enterprises, public units, and social organizations, and help them realize the goal of carbon neutrality in an efficient, quick and transparent way.

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20. Cross-Strait Relations

China Taiwan Net ("TZU CHI FOUNDATION DONATES WINTER SUPPLIES OF 50 MILLION TO SICHUAN", 2010/01/25) reported that edible oil, rice, cotton-padded clothes and other winter supplies have been allocated to Deyang, Shifang and several other earthquake disaster areas in Sichuan province recently. The winter supplies were contributed by a donation of over 50 million RMB from Taiwan's Tzu Chi Foundation.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org