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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Program

Associated Press (Ahn Young-joon, "N. KOREA LASHES OUT OVER MISSILE-TEST WARNINGS", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that DPRK lashed out Thursday at critics warning it not to test a long-range missile, saying it would punish those trying to disrupt its plan to send what it calls a satellite into orbit. On Thursday, the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of DPRK accused ROK of "trumpeting about 'sanctions'" against its satellite launch, saying outsiders will know "what will soar in the air in the days ahead." "If the puppet warmongers infringe upon our inviolable dignity even a bit ... we will not only punish the provokers but reduce their stronghold to debris," the committee said in a statement carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency.

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA LIKELY TO HAVE IMPROVED MISSILE FUEL TECHNOLOGY", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that DPRK may have advanced its fuel type and injection systems for its long-range ballistic missile, allowing its leader Kim Jong-il greater freedom in choosing when to go ahead with a launch, officials and missile experts said Thursday. ROK officials and experts say the fueling time could be reduced to a single day if the DPRK has fully developed the capability to produce solid fuel for its long-range missiles. "A launch would then be ready just as shortly as a firecracker," said Hong Il-hee, who leads research on rocket thrusters at the state-funded ROK Aerospace Research Institute.

JoongAng Ilbo (Kim Min-seok , "PROBLEMS BESET NORTH LAUNCH PLANS", 2009/02/26) reported that Pyongyang will still face mounting problems in getting the satellite into space, according to experts here who raised questions about the technical and diplomatic feasibility of the launch. "Given the size of the rocket, the satellite will likely be a low-orbit device that will circle the Earth about seven to nine times a day, while floating about 600 to 700 kilometers [373 to 435 miles] above the Earth's surface," said a researcher at ROK's Agency for Defense Development. Most low-orbit satellites need to be fired towards the North or South Pole in order to successfully reach orbit. This means DPRK would need to fire its rocket towards PRC, Russian, Japanese or ROK airspace, and those countries are unlikely to approve such an action without knowing whether or not the rocket will crash-land in their territory.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "N. KOREA TESTING RADARS, EQUIPMENT AT BASE: OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2009/02/27) reported that the DPRK appears to have begun testing radars and other equipment at its rocket-launching site, an ROK Ministry of National Defense official said Friday. "Considering the brisk activity at the Musudan-ri base, we've concluded that the North's authorities have started testing radars and other equipment as they assemble them," the official said. But he did not know whether the DPRK may have tried switching on the thruster that would be used in the rocket. "We would know it fairly easily once the North tests a component like that because it generates clearer signs," he said.

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2. ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Bloomberg (Heejin Koo, "SOUTH KOREA REVIEWS RESPONSE TO NORTH MISSILE TEST ", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that ROK is reviewing "every possible" response in the event DPRK tests a long-range missile, the Foreign Ministry said. "We are reviewing every possible countermeasure with other nations," Foreign Ministry spokesman Moon Tae Young told reporters in Seoul today. "It's too early to say what kind of countermeasure we will take if North Korea tests a missile."

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3. PRC on DPRK Missile Program

Agence France Presse ("CHINA NUCLEAR ENVOY VISITS N KOREA FOR MISSILE TALKS-REPORT", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that PRC's chief nuclear envoy Wu Dawei visited DPRK earlier this week as part of efforts to stop DPRK firing a long-range missile, Yonhap news agency said, quoting an unnamed source. "Vice Foreign Minister Wu visited Pyongyang to deliver a message of concern over North Korea's preparations for the launch of a rocket carrying what it claims to be a communications satellite," the "informed source" told Yonhap.

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4. Japan-DPRK Arms Trade

Agence France Presse ("JAPANESE TRADING FIRM RAIDED OVER N KOREA LINK - REPORTS", Tokyo, 2009/02/26) reported that Japanese police Thursday raided a Tokyo trading company suspected of attempting to export to DPRK equipment that can be used to make missiles, reports

said. Public broadcaster NHK said the company, Toko Boeki, was suspected of trying to send the magnetic measuring instruments, which could be used to make missiles, to DPRK via a third country. The trading house is reportedly linked to the DPRK residents' association in Japan, Chongryon.

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5. DPRK Leadership

United Press International ("PHOTO SHOWS KIM JONG IL WITH CIGARETTE", Pyongyang, 2009/02/25) reported that a photograph of Kim Jong Il released Wednesday by the DPRK government shows him doing something he has supposedly given up -- smoking. The shot shows the 67-year-old on a tour of a cigarette-manufacturing plant, Yonhap, the ROK news agency, reports. Kim has removed one glove, freeing his hand to take a cigarette. The secretive DPRK leader is supposed to have obeyed his doctors' orders and given up cigarettes several years ago.

Reuters ("CIA THINKS KIM IS STILL IN CONTROL OF NORTH KOREA", Langley, Virginia, 2009/02/26) reported that CIA Director Leon Panetta said on Wednesday it appears DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is still in control. Panetta told reporters: "Without getting into classified information, I think certainly the indication is that he continues to be in control of that country."

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6. DPRK Internal

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("CELEBRATORY RATIONS ISSUED FOR KIM JONG IL'S BIRTHDAY", 2009/02/26) reported that it has been reported that 2-3 day's worth of special rations were issued to parts of North Pyongan and South Hwanghae provinces, including to those DPRKoreans working in the Kaesong Industrial Complex, to mark the February 16 birthday of Kim Jong Il. For families with more than four members, 2 kilograms of rice and 2 kilograms of noodles, with corn making up the rest of the rations. Smaller families received a kilogram each of rice and noodles, in addition to corn. Recently, rations have been in very short supply, even on farms, so DPRKoreans have been very much looking forward to these special rations. Since last year, the number of guards stationed at farms was increased sharply, along with increasingly more intrusive house searches, as the theft and consumption of food by those living on the farms was banned.

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7. Inter-Korea Relations

Agence France Presse ("ACTIVISTS QUESTIONED FOR FLOATING CASH INTO NORTH KOREA", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that ROK prosecutors Thursday questioned two activists who distributed DPRK banknotes across the border along with leaflets denouncing the DPRK's leader, Kim Jong Il. The two released balloons carrying 20,000 flyers and dozens of DPRK banknotes last week.

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8. US on DPRK

Agence France Presse ("CLINTON DISPATCHING NEW NORTH KOREA ENVOY", Washington, 2009/02/26) reported that a U.S. official says Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is planning to send the administration's new envoy on DPRK policy to consult in Moscow and Asian capitals. Clinton is expected to announce at the State Department today that Stephen Bosworth will travel to the capitals of four countries that have been working with Washington to get Pyongyang to give up its nuclear program. Those four are Russia, Japan, PRC and ROK.

Agence France Presse ("US BLASTS "ABYSMAL" N KOREA RIGHTS RECORD", Washington, 2009/02/25) reported that DPRK's human rights record is abysmal, with authorities even killing some babies upon birth in a vast network of prisons, the U.S. State Department charged. "North Korea's human rights record remained abysmal," the State Department said in its global report for 2008, in some of its harshest criticism of any country. DPRK authorities are believed to have carried out "numerous" arbitrary killings, including of perceived opponents of the regime, defectors and possibly citizens who only made contact with foreigners. The State Department painted a dismal picture of DPRK's prisons, saying that torture was commonplace and even non-political prisoners faced threats to their lives.

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9. Japan on DPRK

Washington Post (Glenn Kessler, "JAPAN PREMIER CAUTIOUS ON N. KOREA", Tokyo, 2009/02/26) reported that the global economic crisis has complicated the effort to end DPRK's nuclear ambitions, diminishing the "cards" for Pyongyang and nations seeking to end its weapons program, Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso said in an interview yesterday. He said the economic downturn has made it harder for PRC and ROK to keep providing assistance to DPRK -- and harder for other nations to confront DPRK. "With the world economy becoming more difficult, I believe the cards on hand for North Korea are becoming more restrained and more restricted," Aso said, speaking through an interpreter. "It's maybe difficult to move too urgently, and in terms of North Korea, it's probably more difficult for all the players to move."

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10. DPRK-PRC Relations

Bloomberg (Bill Austin, "CHINA INVITES KIM JONG IL TO BEIJING FOR HU SUMMIT, YONHAP SAYS", 2009/02/25) reported that PRC invited DPRK leader Kim Jong Il to a summit in Beijing with President Hu Jintao, Yonhap News reported. The invitation, to celebrate 60 years of diplomatic ties, was extended by Jia Qinglin, a PRC politburo member. No date has been set.

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11. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Yonhap News ("COURT SAYS KOREA-JAPAN FISHERIES AGREEMENT CONSTITUTIONAL", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that Seoul's Constitutional Court ruled Thursday that a fisheries treaty between ROK and Japan conforms to the Constitution, saying the accord designating the two countries' joint fishing zone in the East Sea does not affect ROK's territorial sovereignty over Dokdo, located in the middle of the zone.

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12. ROK Government

Yonhap News ("PARTIES ON COLLISION COURSE OVER DISPUTED MEDIA BILLS", Seoul, 2009/02/26) reported that the National Assembly was again heading towards partisan deadlock on Thursday as opposition lawmakers refused to discuss economy-related bills in protest of an earlier legislative move on media reform. The ruling Grand National Party (GNP) the day before unilaterally introduced a set of controversial bills that would, among other things, allow newspaper companies to own a stake in broadcasters. Opposition Democratic Party (DP) Chairman Chung Sye-kyun said his party will use any means necessary to block the media bills and will, in the meantime, refuse to cooperate with the GNP's efforts to formulate a supplementary budget aimed at tackling the economic crisis.

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13. ROK-US Relations

Korea Times ("US REAFFIRMS PLEDGE TO DEFEND S. KOREA", 2009/02/26) reported that the United States Wednesday reiterated its commitment to defend ROK against any provocation from DPRK as it threatens a missile launch and even imminent war. "All I can tell you is that the U.S.-ROK alliance is a strong one. We have many plans for a multitude of contingencies, were there to be provocative action by the North," Yonhap News quoted Geoff Morrell, Pentagon press secretary, as telling a daily news conference. "And we feel we are well prepared to defend the South against any provocation."

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14. Japan Defense

Kyodo News ("MSDF MAY DIVERT OILER TO SOMALIA TASK FORCE", 2009/02/25) reported that the Defense Ministry might divert a refueling ship engaged in U.S.-led antiterrorism operations in the Indian Ocean to back its expected antipiracy mission off Somalia, Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada said Tuesday. The Maritime Self-Defense Force ship is refueling destroyers from Japan and ships from other nations, but sending it to the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden might provoke criticism that the missions are being mismanaged. "Although we are not yet at the stage to state with any certainty, we are considering various options," Hamada told a news conference.

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15. Japan Government

Kyodo News ("LDP AND DPJ FACE OFF OVER ASO'S WHITE HOUSE VISIT", 2009/02/26) reported that ruling bloc and opposition lawmakers toed their parties' lines Wednesday responding to the first meeting between Prime Minister Taro Aso and U.S. President Barack Obama. "The (top-level meeting) was of great significance," Hiroyuki Hosoda, secretary general of Aso's Liberal Democratic Party, told reporters in Tokyo. "We know now that President Obama is amply aware" of the need to resolve major issues, such as DPRK's nuclear ambitions and the abductions. In contrast, Ichiro Ozawa, head of the Democratic Party of Japan, the main opposition force, was less sanguine, saying the talks "lacked substance." Referring to Aso's declining support rates, Ozawa said, "It is impossible for a leader who is losing public trust to promote effective diplomatic negotiations."

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16. Japan-US Relations

Reuters (Yoko Kubota, "JAPAN OPPOSITION'S U.S. MILITARY REMARKS DRAW CRITICISM", Tokyo, 2009/02/26) reported that Japan's main opposition party leader, who could become prime minister this year, has drawn criticism from the government for saying that he wants a smaller U.S. military presence in the country. Japan's top government spokesman criticized Ozawa's remark on Thursday. "The Japanese government thinks that to limit it just to the 7th Fleet is unrealistic," Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura said in a news conference on Thursday. "Is it appropriate for the Democratic Party leader, who is advocating for an administration change, to have such an idea under the current U.S.-Japan security alliance?"

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17. Japan Bird Flu

Kyodo ("H7 BIRD VIRUS DETECTED IN AICHI PREF.", Nagoya, 2009/02/27) reported that the H7 bird flu virus has been detected at a quail farm in Toyohashi, Aichi Prefecture, the prefectural government and the farm ministry said Friday. As the infected quails have not died, the virus "may be of attenuated virulence," the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry and the local government said. The farm has suspended shipping quails since Wednesday, while the authorities are investigating the infection route.

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18. PRC Human Rights

Reuters (Lucy Hornby, "CHINA DECRIES U.S. CRITICISM OF ITS RIGHTS RECORD", Beijing, 2009/02/26) reported that PRC denounced on Thursday U.S. criticism of its human rights record in an annual tit-for-tat exchange, saying the United States should put its own house in order first. "Over the 30 years of development and reform we have seen a constant development of the economy, religious freedom has been protected, and all of China's ethnic groups increasingly have more and more freedom and rights," spokesman Ma Zhaoxu told a news conference. "We urge the U.S. to own up to its own human rights problems, and not use human rights as an excuse or publish human rights reports in order to meddle in others' internal affairs."

Christian Science Monitor (Peter Ford, "CHINA CRACKS DOWN ON HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS",

Beijing, 2009/02/25) reported that one of PRC's most prominent human rights law firms is fighting a government closure order. At a hearing next week the Yitong law firm, which has been at the center of several high-profile political cases, will appeal a ruling by a local Justice Department in Beijing suspending the practice for six months. The closure order, which activists here say is unlikely to be overturned at the hearing, is part of "a wider effort to stifle and intimidate lawyers who aspire to defend human rights and the public interest," says Albert Ho, chairman of the PRC Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group in Hong Kong.

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19. PRC Energy

Bloomberg (Winnie Zhu, "CHINA'S 2008 ENERGY CONSUMPTION RISES AT SLOWEST PACE ", Shanghai, 2009/02/26) reported that PRC's energy consumption grew the least last year since the country started releasing the data in 2003 as the global financial crisis curbed factory output and slashed exports. Energy use increased 4 percent to the equivalent of 2.85 billion metric tons of standard coal, the National Bureau of Statistics said in a statement on its Web site today. That compares with the 7.8 percent gain in 2007 and the 9.3 percent growth in 2006.

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20. PRC Tibet Issue

New York Times (Edward Wong, "TIBETANS GREET NEW YEAR IN OPPOSITION", Tongren, PRC, 2009/02/25) reported that there were few signs of new year festivities in Tongren. But a monk watching the ritual on Wednesday morning made it clear: This was a ceremony of mourning, not celebration. "There is no Losar," he said, standing in this monastery town on the edge of the Tibetan plateau. "They killed so many people last year." Monks, nomads and merchants have turned the joyous Losar holiday into a dirge, memorializing Tibetans who died in last year's conflict and pining for the return of the exiled Dalai Lama. An informal grass-roots boycott is under way. Tibetans are forsaking dancing and dinner parties for vigils with yak-butter candles and the chanting of prayers.

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21. Sino-US Climate Change Cooperation

Associated Press ("US-CHINA TIES NEEDED TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE", Beijing, 2009/02/26) reported that a top PRC expert said Thursday that the fight against climate change will give the United States and PRC a chance to strengthen an often tempestuous relationship by working together on solutions. Kenneth Lieberthal, a leading PRC scholar and former White House adviser, laid out nine key recommendations, including calling for a U.S.-PRC summit that highlights clean energy.

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22. US-PRC Military Relations

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "US-CHINA RESUME MILITARY TIES, TOP OFFICER SAYS", Beijing, 2009/02/27) reported that the five-month suspension in U.S.-PRC military contacts to protest Washington's arms sales to Taiwan has ended with the visit this week of David Sedney, U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asian security affairs, Rear Admiral Yang Yi said Friday. However Major General Qian Lihua, the Defense Ministry's head of foreign affairs, said military-t-military ties remained in a "difficult period." "We expect the U.S. side to take concrete measures for the resumption and development of our military ties," Qian was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua News Agency .

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23. Russo-PRC Arms Trade

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIAN OFFICIALS SUSPECTED OF TRYING TO SMUGGLE ARMS TO CHINA", Moscow, 2009/02/26) reported that a group of Russian Navy officials are suspected of attempting to smuggle 30 anti-submarine missiles and 200 airplane bombs worth a total of \$18 million to Tajikistan for sale to PRC, an official said. Russia's chief military prosecutor, Sergei Fridinsky, said a criminal case had been opened and an investigation was ongoing, adding that the smugglers included a number of businessmen. A Navy spokesman confirmed the statement, adding that the consignment had been listed in a customs declaration as 'de-commissioned, recycled ammunition'. According to some media reports, high-ranking navy officials, including vice admirals and rear admirals, may have been involved in it.

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II. PRC Report

24. PRC Economy

Qianlong Network (An Li, "SKILLFUL WOMEN ASSOCIATION TO BE FOUND", 2009/02/25) reported that a Skillful Women Association is to be founded by Beijing Municipal Woman's Federation this year, aiming at helping women especially college graduates get jobs or start their own business. Besides, the municipal Woman's Federation will also establish a Skillful Women Handicrafts R&D Base, to promote the technology research of "Skillful Woman" handicrafts and to bring the handicrafts into the working plan of governmental spending.

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25. PRC-Australia Disaster Relief Cooperation

China Social Organization Network (Jing Yaping, "CHINESE ORGANIZATIONS IN AUSTRALIA RAISE MONEY FOR LOCAL NATURE DISASTERS", 2009/02/26) reported that 20 PRC organizations jointly held Disaster Relief Evening Party in Queensland, Australia, Feb.21st . The activity aims at helping people who suffered from the wildfires of Victoria and the floods of Northern Queensland. 35,000 Australian dollars was donated upon the spot.

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26. PRC Government

Hunan Daily (Yi Bowen, "HUNAN PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT ASSOCIATION FOUND", 2009/02/25) reported that Hunan Provincial Government Procurement Association was found on Feb. 24th. The Association aims at connecting government, enterprises, and society for industrial self-regulation and management, reflecting the wishes and requirements of members, and promoting the healthy development of government procurement. From 2002-2008, the provincial government procurement has increased from 2.891 billion RMB to 13.8 billion RMB, and the procurement teams are also gradually growing.

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III. ROK Report

27. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Hankyoreh ("FAILURE OF JEESEOK KIM'S FUNDAMENTALISM-ORIENTED DPRK POLICIES", 2009/02/27) wrote that the deteriorated relation between North and South is a typical maladministration of the Lee Myung-bak administration. A survey done by Hankook Ilbo on the past one year since President Lee's inauguration, people picked 'North-South relations (16.9%)' as the second worst performance, following 'economy (27%)'. In a survey done by Kyunghyang Shinmun, 69.8% of the people answered that President Lee is responsible (28.3% entirely, 41.5% partially) for the stalemated situation in North-South relations. The US's policy on DPRK has changed its direction, but the Bush administration's fundamentalism is still being continued by the Lee administration. If the government truly hopes for a betterment of North-South relationship, they must get rid of fundamentalism to begin with. The situation is too urgent just to wait for a change in DPRK-US relations to have some effect.

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28. DPRK Nuclear Program

PRESSian ("SEHYUN JUNG, "HOLDING ONTO JAPANESE KIDNAP ISSUE WILL DO NO GOOD," "MUST CLEAR UP THE PAST TO GAIN AUTHORITY", 2009/02/26) wrote that Chung Se-hyun, former Minister of Unification, said on 26th during his speech at the 'DPRK-Japan Liaison Conference for Normalization of Diplomatic Relations' held by the ROK YMCA in Tokyo that "if Japan adheres to its policy of 'first solve the kidnap issue,' Japan might be criticized for being an obstacle to solving DPRK's nuclear issues and deconstructing the Cold War order." He also added that regarding DPRK's nuclear issue, 'advantages and disadvantages' should be weighed more than "good or evil" in coming up with solutions, and that "only through structural and comprehensive approach such as solving the root cause of the insecurity of DPRK's political system through deconstructing the Cold War order, could this problem be solved."

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Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org