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MARKTWO

I.NAPSNet

1. DPRK Illegal Shipments

Reuters (Lucy Hornby and Benjamin Kang Lim, "CHINA SEIZES SMUGGLED METAL BOUND FOR NORTH KOREA", Beijing, 2009/07/28) reported that PRC border police have seized 70 kg (154 lb) of the strategic metal vanadium bound for the DPRK, a local newspaper said on Tuesday, foiling an attempt to smuggle a material used to make missile parts. Altogether 68 bottles totaling 70 kg of vanadium worth 200,000 yuan (\$29,280) were seized at the Dandong border with the DPRK, the Dandong News said. The PRC restricts the export of vanadium and other minor metals as part of a domestic policy meant to preserve strategic metals, encourage investment in processing industries and control international price fluctuations.

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2. Inter-Korea Relations

Yonhap ("S. KOREAN LAWMAKER PLANS PYONGYANG VISIT TO DISCUSS AID", Seoul, 2009/07/28) reported that a ROK lawmaker plans to lead a group of civic officials on a visit to Pyongyang to discuss humanitarian aid despite a breakdown in cross-border dialogue exacerbated by the DPRK's recent military provocations, his aides said Tuesday. Rep. Chung Eui-hwa of the ruling Grand National Party, who also serves as joint head of the Korea Sharing Movement (KSM), a civic aid group, has requested government permission to make a four-day visit to Pyongyang starting Wednesday, according to his aides. The group is expected to meet with officials from the DPRK's Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation to discuss medical and other humanitarian support projects.

Yonhap ("AID GROUP'S PYONGYANG VISIT LIKELY TO BE POSTPONED", Seoul, 2009/07/28) reported that a ROK lawmaker and a group of civic aid officials' planned visit to Pyongyang for talks on humanitarian aid will likely be postponed due to an apparent breakdown of communications over protocol regarding cross-border entry, officials said Tuesday.

Yonhap (Tony Chang, "SEOUL MUST AMEND LAWS TO PROTECT ITS WORKERS IN N. KOREA: EXPERTS", Seoul, 2009/01/29) reported that the ROK needs to amend laws governing inter-Korean civilian and business affairs in order to be able to protect its workers in the DPRK and deal with criminal cases, law experts said Wednesday. "Currently, there are virtually no provisions in South Korean laws related to protection of those working in the inter-Korean complex in the North," said Ko Sung-ho, a professor of DPRK studies at the Korea Institute of National Unification.

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3. DPRK Armistice Celebration

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN LEADER WATCHES CHORUS SHOW FOR ARMISTICE ANNIVERSARY", Seoul, 2009/07/28) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il marked the anniversary of the Korean War armistice by watching a national choral performance, state media said Tuesday. Kim Jong-il watched the performance by the Merited State Chorus and expressed great satisfaction, said the Korean Central News Agency. The report did not reveal the date of the visit or its location, customarily.

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4. DPRK Food Supply

IFES NK Brief ("DPRK ESTABLISHES NEW MINISTRY OF FOODSTUFF MANUFACTURING", 2009/07/25) reported that the Standing Committee of the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly announced, through a cabinet order on July 22, the establishment of a new Ministry of Foodstuff Manufacturing. According to Korean Central Broadcasting, the standing committee created the new bureau with Cabinet Order 161, but no further details were revealed. The designation of 'Ministry', however, indicates that the new entity will be under the control of the Cabinet.

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5. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap (Tony Chang, "FOUNDATION GIVES N. KOREAN DEFECTORS LEG-UP IN CAPITALIST SOUTH", Paju, South Korea, 2009/07/28) reported that a small but increasing number of DPRK defectors are not only aspiring to higher-paid employment but to one day own their own business. Merry Year Foundation (MYF), a non-profit body set up in late 2007 with a mission of providing micro credit loans and building social enterprises, is helping them realize that dream. Officials at the foundation say that what they provide is more than jobs, but an extended education program for defectors to get on-site working experience and later acquire entrepreneurial skills. The foundation, despite having been established just two years ago, has set an ambitious goal of ultimately producing at least three defector-turned-corporate executives annually from 2018.

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6. ROK Domestic Politics

Yonhap ("OPPOSITION TAKES MEDIA LAW CONFRONTATION TO STREETS AHEAD OF COURT RULING", Seoul, 2009/07/28) reported that the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) was poised to take to the streets Tuesday to protest railroaded media law revisions, as their campaign to nullify the legislation intensified with a legal battle. Party members were set to stage street rallies near party headquarters in southern Seoul and in Sinchon, a bustling college district, later Tuesday, according to party officials.

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7. ROK Military

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "S. KOREA PUSHES TO UPGRADE MILITARY COMMUNICATION: OFFICIAL", Seoul, 2009/07/28) reported that the ROK plans to improve the speed of its military communication network by at least 10-fold by 2020, sharpening its edge in information technology. "The existing Spider system was only able to transmit still images and voice data," Yoon said. "The new system will allow for the integrated transmission of video, image and voice data at more than 10 times the (current) speed." The development of the Tactical Information Communication Network, or TICN, is expected to be completed by 2012, Yoon said. The committee also decided to localize the development and production of vehicles that would be used to detect signs of chemical agents, Yoon said.

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8. ROK-Japan Military Relations

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "JAPAN'S AIR FORCE CHIEF IN S. KOREA TO DISCUSS BILATERAL TIES", Seoul, 2009/07/28) reported that Japan's air force chief arrived in ROK on Tuesday to meet with local defense officials and discuss ways to improve military trust between the two countries, the Air Force here said. Japanese Air Self-Defense Force Chief of Staff Kenichiro Hokazono paid a courtesy call on ROK Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee in Seoul and plans to meet with his ROK counterpart, Lee Kye-hoon, on Wednesday, the Air Force said in a statement.

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9. Japan-US Military Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("ZUSHI TO OK U.S. MILITARY HOUSING PLAN", 2009/07/28) reported that Zushi Mayor Ryuichi Hirai officially announced Monday that the city will start negotiations with the central government over a national plan to build 700 additional housing units for the U.S. military in the Ikego area straddling Zushi and Yokohama, on the premise that the plan will be accepted. The mayor said the municipal government would impose certain conditions in exchange for its cooperation, such as a freeze on further U.S. military housing in the area following the building of the 700 units.

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10. Japan-Mongolia Relations

Kyodo News ("MONGOLIAN LAWMAKER URGES JAPAN TO ACTIVELY JOIN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT", 2009/07/28) reported that a Mongolian lawmaker who was once a professional sumo wrestler has urged Japan to actively participate in the country's development of natural resources, while expressing his hope for Japanese cooperation in Mongolia's information technology sector and education. "Many countries such as Russia and China have shown interest in Mongolia's natural resources. We would like Japanese firms to actively join in development and utilize its advanced technology," Davaa Batbayar, a special aide to Mongolia's presidential office, said.

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11. Japan Politics

Agence-France Presse (Kyoko Hasegawa, "JAPAN'S POLITICS OFTEN A FAMILY BUSINESS", Yokosuka, 2009/07/28) reported that in Japan's election next month, the two candidates for the prime minister's post are carrying on a family battle that started in the 1950s when their grandfathers were premiers. The clash of the political bluebloods -- incumbent Taro Aso and his rival Yukio Hatoyama -- casts a spotlight on Japan's rich and powerful clans that have dominated, and some say stifled, post-war politics. About one third of Japan's parliamentarians are hereditary politicians -- often derided as "botchan" or "babies from rich families" -- who inherited their districts and fund-raising bodies from a relative, usually their father.

Kyodo News ("CABINET LAUNCHES TIRADE AGAINST DPJ'S PLEDGES AHEAD OF ELECTION", Tokyo, 2009/07/29) reported that members of the Cabinet on Tuesday lashed out at the campaign pledges the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan unveiled, with some blasting its economic steps as the "height of populism" or its foreign policy as "extremely irresponsible."

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12. Japan DPJ Platform

Kyodo News ("DPJ-LED GOV'T TO END REFUELING MISSION IN JAN.: SENIOR DPJ LAWMAKER", Tokyo, 2009/07/29) reported that the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan has no intention of extending Japan's refueling mission in and around Afghanistan beyond its expiration in January if it takes power following the Aug. 30 general election, a senior DPJ lawmaker said Tuesday. "We have been seeking a withdrawal (of the Maritime Self-Defense Force from the refueling mission) from the start," the lawmaker said on condition of anonymity. "We are basically not considering extending it."

Yomiuri Shimbun (Takeo Azuma, "ELECTION 2009--BATTLE FOR POWER / DPJ SHIFT TO PRAGMATIC APPROACH CAUSES STIR", 2009/07/29) reported that the Democratic Party of Japan, in its manifesto, has shifted to a pragmatic approach in its foreign policy, a move clearly aimed at attracting conservative votes in the Aug. 30 House of Representatives election. The change is also intended to open the way for flexibility in policymaking in the event the party win the election and takes power, political analysts said. But the policy shift, rather than representing a fundamental change brought about through intraparty brainstorming, seems to have been decided on the hoof, thereby containing a potential danger, the analysts added. With its accession to power becoming a realistic possibility, the DPJ decided to change its policy strategy based on the judgment that if it stuck to its conventional stance, Japan-U.S. relations would cool rapidly.

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13. Sino-US Relations

Associated Press (Martin Crutsinger, "US, CHINA HAVE POINTED QUESTIONS IN PRIVATE", Washington, 2009/07/28) reported that Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said Tuesday that the United States and PRC have reached agreement on the need to work toward more balanced global growth once the current economic crisis has ended. "Our two nations are committed to a strong and stable international financial system that will contribute to more stable, balanced growth globally," Geithner said. In his opening comments, PRC Vice Premier Wang Qishan voiced support for a key U.S. goal that PRC shift to more domestic-led growth rather than depending so much on exports that drive up the U.S. trade deficit. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was leading a separate set of discussions at the State Department focused on foreign policy concerns, including the need to restrain the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Officials from both nations played down the prospects for any breakthroughs this week on the major issues that separate the two nations, including America's massive trade deficit with the PRC.

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14. Sino-US Energy

Bloomberg (Indira A.R. Lakshmanan, "CHINA, U.S. SIGN COOPERATION ACCORD ON CLEAN ENERGY, CLIMATE", 2009/06/28) reported that the PRC and the U.S. signed a memorandum of understanding today that they will cooperate on clean-energy technology and work to reverse climate change. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the agreement builds on past efforts, including the 10-year framework for Energy Environment Cooperation, "and highlights the importance of climate change in our bilateral relationship by creating a platform for climate policy, dialogue and cooperation." PRC State Councilor Dai Bingguo praised the agreement, calling it "an important outcome" and the result of "many rounds of consultations."

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15. Sino-Nepal Relations

Reuters (Gopal Sharma, "CHINA PRESSES NEPAL TO CRACKDOWN ON TIBETANS: GROUP", Kathmandu, 2009/07/28) reported that Nepal, under increasing pressure from the PRC, was cracking down on Tibetan refugees despite centuries of shared culture with Tibet, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) said on Tuesday. The Washington-based group said Tibetan refugees were "increasingly demoralized" as Nepal "relinquishes its historic and sovereign interests in response to incentivized political pressure from Beijing and its sympathizers." Kathmandu says Tibetan refugees are free to live in Nepal but cannot carry out any anti-PRC activities.

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16. Sino-Japan Relations

Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN: ACTIVIST VISIT WON'T AFFECT TIES WITH CHINA",

Tokyo, 2009/07/28) reported that the visit to Japan of an exiled Uighur activist who the PRC blames for this month's ethnic riots will not affect relations between Tokyo and Beijing because its approval was not politically motivated, the government said Tuesday. The PRC's Foreign Ministry expressed "strong dissatisfaction" Monday with Japan for allowing a visit by Rebiya Kadeer, the U.S.-based dissident who heads the pro-independence World Uyghur Congress. But Japan Foreign Ministry Press Secretary Kazuo Kodama said Kadeer's visit should not be a problem because she is not scheduled to meet with any government officials during her three-day trip. Kadeer said she will use her visit to highlight the plight of ethnic Uighurs and the struggle for independence.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PUSHES FOR PERMANENT MEDIA OFFICES IN TAIWAN", Taipei, 2009/07/28) reported that a visiting PRC official called on Taiwan to allow the PRC's media to open permanent bureaux there, as ties between the two former cross-Strait foes continue to improve. Under Taiwan's current regulations, journalists from the PRC media outlets are limited to three-month work permits on a rotational basis. "Three months is really too short for visiting reporters to be able to research and file in-depth news stories," Zhou Guizhen, an official of the PRC's State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, said during a seminar here, calling on authorities to allow permanent media offices on each side.

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18. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Associated Press ("CHINA'S XINJIANG GETS SOME PHONE, INTERNET SERVICE", Beijing, 2009/07/28) reported that limited phone messaging and Internet access are now available in the PRC's Xinjiang region, more than three weeks after the government cut services in the wake of deadly ethnic riots, officials said Tuesday. Yang Guoqing, with the provincial government news center, said the government is now sending SMS (short message service) text messages to citizens, though they still cannot message each other. Mobile phone users got their first government text message on Sunday, the official China Daily reported. Internet access to a few select government and business-related Web sites is also available now, but most are still being blocked, the paper reported. Xinjiang had also restored access for specialized operations like Internet banking services, online stock exchange and university enrollment services, it said.

Agence France-Presse (Hiroshi Hiyama, "UIGHUR LEADER SAYS 10,000 'DISAPPEARED' IN CHINA", Tokyo, 2009/07/29) reported that Rebiya Kadeer, the US-based head of the World Uighur Congress, said Wednesday nearly 10,000 of her people were detained or killed this month in ethnic unrest and appealed for the United Nations to investigate their fate. "Uighur people who were there must have been either killed or taken away," she told a Tokyo press conference. "The next morning, the streets were cleaned and the bodies of ethnic Han (Chinese) were left in the streets." "I want to urge the international community to dispatch an independent, third-party investigation mission to investigate what happened," she said. "If China can confidently say that the Uighur people are at fault, then open up the area, tell the third-party commission what really happened."

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19. PRC Energy

Bloomberg ("CHINA CUTS GASOLINE, DIESEL PRICES ON PUBLIC CONCERN", 2009/07/28) reported that the PRC, the world's second-biggest energy user, cut gasoline and diesel prices by at least 3.3 percent after three increases since March triggered public concern that fuel costs are too high. Pump prices for 90 octane gasoline will be set at a maximum of 5.7 yuan (\$0.83) a liter, or about \$3.14 a gallon, in Beijing, the National Development and Reform Commission said in a statement on its Web site. Prices were adjusted to reflect the decline in global crude prices, said PRC's top planning agency. Today's price cut, the second this year, will help to lower costs for manufacturers as the PRC targets 8 percent economic growth this year to generate jobs and maintain social stability.

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20. PRC Climate

Agence-France Presse ("CHINA ENERGY FIRMS MUST TAKE ACTION ON CLIMATE: GREENPEACE", Beijing, 2009/07/28) reported that the PRC's energy firms must do more to combat climate change and reduce dependence on coal, environmental group Greenpeace said on Tuesday, warning of a rise in "extreme" weather. "China is suffering the pains of extreme weather events such as droughts, heatwaves, typhoons and floods, worsened by climate change," Greenpeace China's climate campaigner Yang Ailun said as he unveiled a new report. The new Greenpeace China report urged PRC's top 10 power companies to take the lead in addressing global warming and cutting greenhouse gas emissions as they are the biggest emitters. For every one kilowatt hour of energy produced, the PRC emits 1.8 times more carbon dioxide than the average in Japan's electricity sector and significantly more than in Germany and the United States, it said. The PRC should also double its national renewable energy target for 2020 to 30 percent of total energy production, it said.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

Xinhua Net ("DALIAN TO LAUNCH HYBRID POWER BUSES FOR SUMMER DAVOS", 2009/07/28) reported that a new type of hybrid power bus that cuts fuel use by 30% is to go into mass production for the Summer Davos Forum starting Sept. 10 in Dalian City of Liaoning Province. Half of the bus's cost (400,000 yuan) would be covered by government subsidy.

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22. PRC Internet Control

21 Century Economic News ("CHINA BANS ONLINE MAFIA GAMES", 2009/07/28) reported that

China's Ministry of Culture has prohibited websites from running, publishing or offering links to online games featuring mafia-like gangs, and threatened “severe punishment” for those who violate the ban. Such games violated regulations on Internet administration, because they “advocate obscenity, gambling, or violence,” said a circular posted on the ministry's website on Monday.

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