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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Missile Program

Kyodo News ("NAKASONE, CHINESE LEADERS AGREE NORTH SHOULD FORGO ROCKET LAUNCH", Beijing, 2009/03/02) reported that Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone said Sunday he agreed with senior PRC officials to urge DPRK not to launch what it says is a satellite but the rest of the world suspects is a long-range ballistic missile. Nakasone made the remarks after talks in Beijing with his counterpart, Yang Jiechi, Premier Wen Jiabao and State Councilor Dai Bingguo. "Tension is rising, and we agreed to seek (North Korea's) restraint," Nakasone said. He told the PRC officials that Japan believes a launch would be in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution adopted in 2006 that prohibits DPRK from engaging in any ballistic missile activities. "The Chinese did not say whether they see it that way or not, but of course they have deep concerns and have been working to urge restraint," Nakasone told reporters.

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "'N. KOREAN MISSILE CAN REACH US IN 33 MINUTES'", 2009/03/02) reported that the Heritage Foundation, a U.S. conservative think-tank, has released a documentary film which stresses the necessity of a missile defense system in a bid to protect America from "enemies'' including DPRK and Iran. "Our enemies are attempting to stockpile arsenals that threaten our freedom and prosperity. DPRK and Iran are the most prominent, but this also includes Russia, PRC and other nations that have missiles capable of killing Americans in very large numbers and threatening our allies,'' it said. The footage includes neocon figures including Robert Joseph, former assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

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2. US on DPRK Missile Program

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "US MONITORING NKOREA MISSILE ACTIVITY FROM JAPAN", Misawa Air Base, 2009/03/03) reported that the U.S. military is closely monitoring activities in the DPRK from its bases in Japan , officials said Tuesday. "U.S. Army forces in Japan are always vigilant and more than capable of defending Japan from any threat, including ballistic missiles , and as always we are working closely with our Japanese allies," Maj. James Crawford, a spokesman for the U.S. Army in Japan, said.

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3. Japan on DPRK Missile Program

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO DEPLOY INTERCEPTOR IN SEA OF JAPAN TO COUNTER N.KOREA", Tokyo, 2009/03/03) reported that Japan plans to deploy an Aegis-equipped destroyer carrying the Standard Missile-3 interceptor to the Sea of Japan (East Sea) to prepare for a possible DPRK missile launch, a senior Defense Ministry official said Tuesday. ''We would have no other choice but to intercept,'' said a senior Maritime Self-Defense Force officer. The steps would be taken based on a provision on missile interception in the Self-Defense Forces Law added in a 2005 amendment.

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4. Six-Party Talks

Agence France Presse ("US NKOREA ENVOY DUE IN BEIJING ON TUESDAY", Washington, 2009/03/02) reported that the new US envoy for DPRK, Stephen Bosworth, is due in Beijing on Tuesday, a US official said. "He is scheduled to meet with senior officials in Beijing. He will then visit Tokyo and Seoul and will consult with Russian officials, who will travel separately to the region," the official said.

Xinhua News Agency ("S KOREA NAMES NEW ENVOY FOR SIX-PARTY TALKS", Seoul, 2009/03/02) reported that the ROK government on Monday named Wi Sung-lac as its chief negotiator for the six-party talks on the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula. Wi, 55, special assistant to Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan, will replace Kim Sook to work as the nation's chief nuclear envoy, the ministry said. Wi served as minister for political affairs at the ROK Embassy in Washington from 2004-2007 after leading the foreign ministry's North American affairs bureau from 2003-2004.

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5. US-DPRK Relations

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA: US MUST CANCEL MILITARY DRILL WITH SOUTH", Seoul, 2009/03/02) reported that DPRK demanded today that the U.S. call off its annual military drill with ROK, a report said. Yonhap quoted an unnamed ROK military official as saying the DPRK warned the

upcoming drill would "further stir up" tensions on the Korean peninsula. The report said the U.N. Command insisted that the exercise — involving 26,000 American troops, an unspecified number of ROK soldiers and a U.S. aircraft carrier — is purely defensive and not preparation for an invasion as the DPRK claims. The U.N. Command said the sides discussed "measures to reduce tension and introduce transparency" and agreed to further meetings during a half-hour of talks.

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6. DPRK Environment

Yonhap News (Kim Hyun, "N. KOREANS WORK TO MAKE COUNTRY GREEN ON TREE-PLANTING DAY: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/03/02) reported that DPRK workers and students rolled up their sleeves Monday for Tree-planting Day, state-run media said. DPRK has a high deforestation rate, as residents have cut down trees for fuel. Deforestation is closely linked to the country's chronic food shortages, as barren mountain slopes leave rice farms prone to severe flooding by summer monsoons, according to aid workers in Seoul.

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "US TO GO AHEAD WITH MILITARY DRILLS IN SKOREA", Seoul, 2009/03/03) reported that U.S. military spokesman Kim Yong-kyu said Tuesday that planned military exercises would go ahead at sites across the ROK from March 9-20. The DPRK's Minju Joson newspaper said the maneuvers were aimed at "rounding off the capability to make a military strike ." "The revolutionary armed forces of the DPRK are in full combat readiness to resolutely shatter any provocation of the enemy," it said.

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7. ROK Anti-Piracy Dispatch

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "S. KOREA LAUNCHES WARSHIP UNIT TO COMBAT PIRATES IN SOMALI WATERS", Seoul, 2009/03/03) reported that the ROK launched a 300-strong naval unit Tuesday to be deployed on a warship to piracy-infested Somali waters, the Navy said. The ceremony marking the launch of the "Cheonghae" unit took place in South Korea's southeastern port city of Busan, the Navy said in a statement.

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8. ROK Nuclear Energy

Reuters (Angela Moon, "S.KOREA SCRAPS URANIUM DEALS ON WEAK PRICES-REPORT", 2009/03/02) reported that the ROK Electric Power Corp has cancelled two preliminary deals to develop uranium mines in the United States and Slovakia due to weak product prices, Yonhap reported on Monday, citing officials from the energy firm. The power monopoly will instead seek to buy uranium mines currently in development or in production stage in Australia, South Africa and Kazakhstan.

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9. ROK International Relations

Yonhap News (Ser Myo-ja, "PRESIDENT WILL REVEAL A VISION FOR A 'NEW ASIA'", Seoul, 2009/03/03 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that President Lee Myung-bak left for New Zealand yesterday, beginning a seven-day tour of Asia-Pacific nations during which he will make public a vision for a "New Asia." "In the past, ROK's diplomacy in the region was focused on economic cooperation, but the plan is to expand the scope of the cooperation network to security and cultural matters," a presidential spokesman said. "The president also planned to invite heads of the 10 member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for a special summit in June," the spokesman said.

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10. ROK-EU Trade Relations

Yonhap News ("KOREA-EU TRADE TALKS ADVANCE", 2009/03/03) reported that chief negotiators from ROK and the European Union will meet in Brussels this week to resolve contentious issues related to free trade negotiations such as auto trade and rules of origin, the trade ministry said yesterday. Lee Hye-min, Korean deputy minister for trade, and his European counterpart, Ignacio Garcia Bercero, are hoping to stirke a deal during the inter-session meeting that will run Tuesday to Thursday, the ministry said.

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11. ROK Politics

Yonhap News ("RIVAL PARTIES AGREE TO VOTE ON MEDIA BILLS IN JUNE", Seoul, 2009/03/02) reported that ROK's rival parties reached a last-minute agreement Monday to put disputed media industry reform bills to a plenary session vote after 100 days of further discussions also involving civic activist groups, party officials said. The agreement on the proposed legislation of the four most contentious bills centered on cross-ownership of print and broadcast media was announced after a meeting at the parliament between Park Hee-tae, chairman of the ruling Grand National Party (GNP), and his counterpart of the main opposition Democratic Party (DP), Chung Sye-kyun.

Dong A Ilbo ("POSSIBLE CONSPIRACY VS. ATTACKED LAWMAKER PROBED", Seoul, 2009/03/02) reported that Seoul police yesterday expanded its investigation on the assault on ruling Grand National Party lawmaker Chun Yu-ok, saying her attacker might have planned the attack beforehand with four other civic group members at the scene. Chun the same day proposed a partial revision to the Act on the Compensation and Honor Restoration of Democratization Movement Activists. Approval of the revision will extend the reexamination period to 10 years, which will allow a review of protests defined as democratic movement by the Commission for Democratization Movement Activists' Compensation.

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12. ROK Korean War Atrocities

Korea Times (Bae Ji-sook, "GOV'T KILLED 3,400 CIVILIANS DURING WAR", 2009/03/02) reported that more than 3,400 prisoners and ordinary civilians were killed by ROK military and police during the Korean War (1950-1953), a the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said Monday. This is the first time a government agency has acknowledged the massacre of civilians during the war. It said the Counterintelligence Corps of the Headquarters of the Army, correctional officers and local and military police killed the prisoners and civilians in Busan and nearby areas from July through September in 1950, just after the war broke out.

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13. Japan Nuclear Energy

Agence France Presse (Chloe Coupeau, "FRANCE TO SEND HUGE NUCLEAR FUEL SHIPMENT TO JAPAN", Cherbourgh, France, 2009/03/01 19:00:00 GMT+0) reported that France is set to send recycled nuclear fuel to Japan. "This is the first MOX transport to Japan for eight years. This will be the largest shipment of plutonium in history - the MOX fuel elements contain a total of 1.8 tonnes of plutonium. That's enough to make 225 nuclear weapons," Greenpeace said. Greenpeace argues that the chances of nuclear weapons proliferation are increased because of the risks of the shipments being seized en route by would-be terrorists.

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14. US-Japan Relations

Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN ORDERED TO PAY $58M FOR US WARPLANE NOISE", Tokyo, 2009/02/27) reported that a court ordered the Japanese government to pay 5.6 billion yen ($57.7 million) to compensate people whose lives are disrupted by the noise of warplanes at a U.S. air base on the southern island of Okinawa, the Defense Ministry said. The Fukuoka High Court ruling doubled the 2.8 million yen compensation awarded in 2005 to the people living around Kadena Air Base, and upheld the appeals of 5,540 residents, Defense Ministry spokesman Katashi Toyota said.

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15. Sino-Japan Relations

Xinhua News Agency ("JAPAN, CHINA TO BEGIN TEACHER EXCHANGES", Beijing, 2009/03/01) reported that PRC and Japan will launch a bilateral exchange program involving about 1,500 teachers over the next three years, said Japanese Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nagasone here Sunday. According to Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kazuo Kodama, Japan would accept 1,000 PRC teachers while sending 500 Japanese teachers to PRC. As to bilateral exchanges of youth, Kodama said on Saturday that the two sides will work together to implement a youth exchange program involving about 4,000 young people this year.

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16. PRC in Afghanistan

Associated Press (Slobodan Lekic, "NATO MAY ASK CHINA FOR SUPPORT IN AFGHANISTAN", Brussels, 2009/03/02) reported that NATO may ask PRC to provide support for the war effort in Afghanistan, including possibly opening a supply link for alliance forces, a senior U.S. official said Monday. The subject is still under consideration and no decision has been reached on whether to approach Beijing, the official said on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the issue.

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17. PRC Space Program

IDG News Service (Owen Fletcher, "CHINA'S FIRST LUNAR PROBE CRASHES INTO THE MOON", 2009/03/02) reported that PRC's first lunar probe made a planned crash into the moon Sunday, completing the first phase of a lunar program partly meant to solidify Beijing's status as a space power. The planned crash by Chang'e I was an exercise paving the way for a "soft landing" by a future PRC mission, the PRC National Space Administration said.

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18. Sino-Finland Climate Change Cooperation

Xinhua News Agency ("FINLAND BUYS 1.4 MILLION TONNES CO2 CREDITS FROM CHINA", 2009/03/02) reported that Finland said Monday it has signed a contract with a PRC company to purchase 1.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide credits over ten years from 2009 as a Clean Development Mechanism, a key component of the Kyoto Protocol. The project is designed to promote the use of methane fermentation reactors and cooking utensils in a mountainous area in PRC's south central Hunan Province. The reactor can convert organic waste materials such as livestock excrement to methane.

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19. PRC Tibet Issue

United Press International ("CHINA SAYS IT HELPED TIBET DOWN FEUDALISM", Beijing, 2009/03/02) reported that PRC says it has developed Tibet's economy since 1959. In a white paper released Monday by the State Council Information Office, it said the PRC had helped the Tibetan people by repealing the monasteries' "feudal occupation and exploitation" and "personal slavery," as well as feudal management and hierarchy inside the monasteries. Meanwhile, PRC control of Tibet has resulted in economic development as Beijing's investments in Tibet over the past 50 years have resulted the region's gross domestic product soaring from $25 million in 1959 to $5.78 billion in 2008.

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "CHINA TOP PAPER BLAMES TIBET TROUBLE ON WEST", Beijing, 2009/03/01) reported that the People's Daily said on Monday contention over the future of Tibet was spurred by Western governments and groups seeking to contain the country's rise. "In recent years, China's overall strength has constantly grown…and this has aroused the anxiety and disquiet of some Westerners. The provocative actions around the so-called 'Tibet issue' in 2008 were by no means a coincidence."

Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "CHINA ADVISORY BODY DEFENDS ACTIONS IN TIBET", Beijing, 2009/03/03) reported that Jia Qinglin, head of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said the PRC was right to crack down on rioters in Tibet last year. "We unequivocally supported the party and government in dealing with the destructive and disruptive, violent and illegal incidents in Lhasa, Tibet and other areas in accordance with the law," Jia said. "We will improve our external publicity work to help the international community acquire a better understanding of our country's political system and system of political parties," he said.

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20. Cross-Strait Relations

Associated Press ("CHINA NOT DEMANDING IMMEDIATE RETURN OF TAIWAN ART", Taipei, 2009/03/02) reported that a visiting PRC museum director said Monday that Beijing is not demanding that Taiwan immediately return 600,000 items of art taken from the mainland six decades ago by the retreating losing army in PRC's civil war. Beijing Palace Museum Curator Zheng Xinmiao said that artifacts in both PRC and Taiwanese museums are "China's cultural heritage jointly owned by people across the Taiwan Strait." "Their (future) will be decided by our compatriots and by history," Zheng said. "For now, we will keep up our exchanges and cooperation."

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net (She Jingjing, "ZHEJIANG PROVINCE PLANTS MEMORIAL FOREST FOR VOLUNTEERS", 2009/03/02) reported that Zhejiang province's first Volunteer Memorial Forest was started to be planted in the western suburbs of Hangzhou city on Feb 28 th . More than 300 outstanding representatives of volunteers planted Jinqian pine, southern yew and other precious saplings in the rain. It is understood that the forest is planned to occupy an area of 50 mu, and will be an important base for the volunteers to carry out activities and receive education.

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22. PRC Environment

Changjiang River Business Daily (Liu Chunyan, "200 VOLUNTEERS GO TO COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS", 2009/03/02) reported that 200 volunteers from Wuhan Polytechnic University, Tianhe Airport and some enterprises went to Evergreen Garden Community yesterday morning, to carry out a series of environmental education activities, such as food waste disposal, air quality testing and birth control. Volunteers who participated in such activities for more than two times can be recommended preferentially to work in environmental protection enterprises.

People's Daily ("FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PERCUSSION BAND COMES TO THE FORE IN GUANGDONG",) reported that the reporter has interviewed a special band recently. The instruments they play are not jazz drums, but some wastes picked up from the dump, such as empty beer bottles, ash bins, tyres and so on. Though they are not instruments, but the music played by them is the same pleasing. The band members hope this kind of performance can promote the environmental protection awareness of the public.

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III. ROK Report

23. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Yonhap News ("NEW ENVOY FOR SIX-PARTY TALKS, WILL ROK'S ROLE CHANGE?", 2009/03/02) wrote the new ROK chief negotiator for the six-party talks, Wi Sung-lac, is evaluated as more flexible in his methodology compared to Kim Sook, the former chief nuclear envoy. Wi's strengths not only include his expertise on the United States and DPRK nuclear issues, but also his many acquaintances with the chief representatives of other nations. However, some point out that there is limit to his freedom depending on the judgments of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cheongwadae.

Chosun Ilbo ("POLITICAL TARGET OF KWANGMYONGSONG-2 IS ROK", 2009/03/03) wrote that within the boundaries of its limitations, the DPRK will try to improve relations with the US, advance its close relations with China, and solve local problems, but wait until later to better relations with the ROK. If the ROK sticks to its principles, unable to read the changes of the current situation, it will be in danger. The US and China will expect more positive DPRK policies from the ROK, and there will be growing tensions within the ROK regarding DPRK policies. In order to escape from the vicious circle of confrontation, negotiation, and agreement, it must come up with ways to cooperate internationally with an engagement policy based on principles of DPRK development.

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24. DPRK Missile Program

Ohmynews ("WHAT MD IS AIMING AT IS US CONGRESS, NOT DPRK MISSILE", 2009/02/28) reported that the US military authorities persistently claim that they can intercept DPRK's missiles with their missile defense system (MD). The interception will not be necessary to begin with. Then why are the US military authorities so alert? It would be correct to view it as using the missile issue to save MD from budget war in the Congress. They are exaggerating a satellite launch into a 'Daepodong 2 Missile', trying to make it seem as if MD is urgently necessary. What is more heartbreaking is that Korean press is blindly following this. It is hard to find reports of MD's shortcomings, and all it is doing is hurriedly copying the statements of the US military authorities.

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25. Inter-Korea Relations

Maeil Business Newspaper ("PRESIDENT LEE, DPRK SHOULD ANSWER TO 'RESPECTING NORTH-SOUTH AGREEMENT", 2009/03/02) wrote that President Lee said through his 3.1 Independence Day speech that he "will respect the North-South agreements." To be exact, "respecting the agreements" is not something entirely new. However, this time it could mean more, as a gesture of stepping up, because President Lee said it directly himself. We evaluate the change in President Lee's perspective on DPRK positively and urge the DPRK to stop the provocation and come out to the table right away.

Seoul Business Newspaper ("DPRK SHOULD ANSWER ROK'S SUGGESTION TO A TALK", 2009/03/02) wrote that because of President Lee's claim to respect the North-South agreements and suggestion to unconditional talks, DPRK has lost its excuses. DPRK should stop being obstinate and come to the table right away.

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