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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR ENVOY SET TO VISIT U.S., SAYS SOUTH", Seoul, 2010/03/03) reported that DPRK top nuclear envoy Kim Kye-gwan plans to visit the United States in early March, ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said on Wednesday. Kim was invited to attend an academic function but U.S. officials were reluctant to sit down for direct talks unless there was a clear indication such dialogue would quickly lead to a resumption of wider nuclear discussions, Yu told a news briefing.

Yonhap (Byun Duk-kun, "S. KOREAN FM SAYS N. KOREA-U.S. TALKS POSSIBLE, BUT WITHIN 6-WAY FRAMEWORK", Seoul, 2010/03/03) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan said Wednesday there could be additional bilateral talks between the United States and the DPRK, but that such talks must be held within the context of the six-party talks. Yu noted such dialogue between the U.S. and the DPRK may take place within the first half of this month, if and when the DPRK chief nuclear negotiator Kim Kye-gwan visits the United States. A U.S. official told reporters in Washington, however, that the government has not yet "made a decision as to whether to grant a visa" to Kim.

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2. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France Presse ("N.KOREA SAYS WAR GAMES THREATEN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT", Seoul, 2010/03/02) reported that the DPRK warned on Tuesday that ROK-US war games this month would torpedo efforts to rid the peninsula of nuclear weapons, and vowed to strengthen its atomic arsenal if necessary. The March 8-18 exercise comes "at a time when the international community is growing more vocal than ever before calling for a settlement of the nuclear issue", the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a commentary. "Obviously, this (exercise) is a deliberate attempt to disturb peace on the peninsula and torpedo the process for its de-nuclearisation."

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3. DPRK Economy

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA ACKNOWLEDGES FAILURE OF CURRENCY REFORM", Beijing, 2010/03/02) reports that the DPRK has acknowledged the failure of the currency reform it conducted last November, saying it caused confusion in the supply of money and the distribution of goods, sources familiar with the PRC-DPRK relations said Tuesday. The DPRK made the acknowledgement in a note sent to its diplomatic missions abroad in mid-February, the sources said. The note urged the DPRK to "get united and overcome the difficulty," they said. It is rare for the DPRK to acknowledge a failure of economic policy.

Bloomberg ("NORTH KOREA MAY CREATE EIGHT SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES, NIKKEI SAYS ", 2010/03/02) reported that the DPRK is considering designating eight cities as special economic zones to attract foreign investment, Nikkei English News said, citing an unidentified official involved with the nation's investment agency, Taepung International Investment Group.

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4. DPRK Leadership

Bloomberg ("NORTH KOREA HEIR-APPARENT TO KIM DIRECTS ARTILLERY, DONG-A SAYS ", 2010/03/02) reported that Kim Jong Un, heir-apparent to DPRK leader Kim Jong Il, directed artillery drills early this year near its western sea border with the ROK, the Dong-A Ilbo reported, citing a source it didn't identify. Jong Un is the third son of the DPRK's leader and is being groomed to succeed his father, according to the daily newspaper.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("TWO KOREAS HOLD TALKS ON IMPROVING JOINT INDUSTRIAL PARK", Seoul, 2010/03/02) reported that representatives from the two Koreas got down to brass tacks Tuesday on easing the DPRK's border restrictions encumbering ROK operations at a joint industrial park, an official said. The sides agreed to separate their discussions into three subcommittees dealing with each of the DPRK's restrictions, the official told reporters.

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6. DPRK Defectors

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREAN SOLDIER DEFECTS TO SOUTH KOREA", Seoul, 2010/03/03) reported that the ROK National Intelligence Service says a DPRK soldier has defected to the ROK. The NIS said Wednesday that the soldier was being questioned over the reasons for his defection. It declined to give his name, rank or the date he defected.

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7. ROK Military

EarthTimes ("THREE PILOTS KILLED IN CRASHES OF TWO FIGHTER JETS IN SOUTH KOREA ", 2010/03/02) reported that two ROK fighter jets crashed Tuesday while on the same training exercise, killing all three pilots on board, a news report said. The F-5Fs disappeared from radar five minutes after takeoff from a military base in Gangneung on the east coast, the Yonhap News Agency reported, citing the air force. The causes of the crashes remained unclear, but conditions in the area were foggy at the time, a military spokesman was quoted as saying. The bodies of the three pilots and plane wreckage were recovered on Mount Hwangbyeong, about 20 kilometres west of Gangneung, in Gangwon province.

Agence France-Presse ("S.KOREAN AIR FORCE GROUNDS FIGHTERS AFTER DEATHS", Seoul, 2010/03/03) reported that the ROK air force grounded most its fighter jets for safety checks on Wednesday. Only those "essential for surveillance flights" were still operating on Wednesday, a spokesman said, adding: "When safety checks are completed the aircraft will return to flying one by another, starting Thursday."

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8. ROK-Philippines Nuclear Cooperation

JoongAng Daily (Moon Gwang-lip, Choi Hyeon-chul, "PHILIPPINES ASKS TO BUY 2 KOREAN NUCLEAR REACTORS", 2010/03/03) reported that a special envoy from the Philippine government expressed the Southeast Asian country's intent to sign a deal for the construction of two ROK standardized nuclear plants originally meant for the DPRK, officials from the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said Tuesday.

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9. ROK-US Military Cooperation

Associated Press ("KANSAS NATIONAL GUARD TROOPS HEADED TO SOUTH KOREA", 2010/03/02) reported that about 145 National Guard troops from the 35th Infantry Division in Leavenworth will deploy to the ROK this week for training. Maj. Gen. Tod Bunting, the adjutant general, said the soldiers will be taking part in joint training with ROK troops. The exercise will focus on strategic, operational and tactical aspects of general military operations in the ROK theater of operations.

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10. ROK-UAE Climate Cooperation

Yonhap News ("UAE SEEKS S. KOREAN COOPERATION IN CLEAN ENERGY CITY CONSTRUCTION", Seoul, 2010/03/02) reported that the United Arab Emirate (UAE) is seeking the ROK's cooperation in creating the world's first carbon-neutral city, the ROK government said Tuesday. The Ministry of Knowledge Economy said Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, head of the Masdar project, arrived in Seoul leading a 14-person delegation from the UAE to pursue cooperative ties

with local reusable energy companies and laboratories. Masdar, under construction near Abu Dhabi International Airport, is striving to become an eco-friendly, zero carbon emission city. Once completed, it will cover 6 million square meters of land and aims to house 50,000 people and 1,500 companies.

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11. Japan Self-Defense Force

Kyodo News ("JAPAN EXTENDS SDF PEACEKEEPING MISSION IN NEPAL FOR ANOTHER 4 MONTHS", Tokyo, 2010/03/02) reports that Japan decided Tuesday to extend the Self-Defense Forces' activities as part of a U.N. mission to support the peace process in Nepal for an additional four months until July 31. The Cabinet endorsed the extension in line with a U.N. Security resolution in January which decided to renew the mandate of the U.N. Mission in Nepal, or UNMIN, until May 15. It is the fifth time that the SDF mission in Nepal has been extended and the first decision to extend under the current Japanese government led by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.

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12. Japan Nuclear Energy

Yomiuri Shimbun ("SEPCO STARTS 2ND PLUTHERMAL REACTOR IN NATION", Matsuyama, 2010/03/02) reports that Shikoku Electric Power Co. activated Ikata nuclear power plant's No. 3 reactor on Monday for power generation using plutonium-uranium mixed oxide fuel. The 890,000-kilowatt No. 3 reactor in Ikatacho, Ehime Prefecture, is expected to go critical by Tuesday morning. It will be the nation's second "pluthermal" power plant.

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13. Japan Climate Change

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO STEP UP SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ALONG MEKONG", Tokyo, 2010/03/02) reports that Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada pledged to offer more support for environmental protection along the Mekong River when he met with Laotian President Choummaly Sayasone in Tokyo on Tuesday, Japanese officials said. Okada made the remarks in connection with the development of the Mekong Basin, over which Japan and the PRC are engaged in a fierce competition. The Japanese foreign minister pledged support for forest preservation, the management of water resources and the conservation of endangered dolphins in the river, they said.

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14. Sino-US Relations

Kyodo News ("U.S. ENVOYS ARRIVE IN BEIJING FOR FENCE-MENDING TRIP", Beijing, 2010/03/02) reports that two senior U.S. diplomats arrived in Beijing on Tuesday on a three-day visit to try to mend "bumpy" ties between the two countries. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg and Jeffrey Bader, senior director for Asian affairs at the U.S. National Security Council,

are in the PRC to discuss "bilateral, regional and global issues" before moving on to Tokyo on Thursday, State Department spokesman Phillip Crowley said in Washington on Monday. "We've gone through a bit of a bumpy path here, and I think there's an interest both within the United States and the PRC to get back to business as usual as quickly as possible," Crowley said.

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15. PRC on Iranian Sanctions

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SAYS STILL ROOM FOR IRAN NUCLEAR TALKS", 2010/03/02) reported that the PRC on Tuesday called for more talks to resolve the Iranian nuclear standoff, after Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Moscow was ready to consider new sanctions against Tehran. "We call for a resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic means. We believe there is still room for diplomatic efforts," foreign ministry spokesman Qin Gang told reporters when asked about Medvedev's statement. "We believe parties concerned should step up diplomatic efforts and push for progress in dialogue and negotiations to properly resolve the Iranian nuclear issue."

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16. PRC Civil Society

Bloomberg ("CHINA PLANNING MEASURES TO BOLSTER XINJIANG ECONOMY, XINHUA SAYS ", 2010/03/02) reported that the PRC's government is preparing measure to bolster the economic and social development of the nation's westernmost Xinjiang province, the official Xinhua News Agency reported, citing Zhou Yongkang, a member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Development should benefit all ethnic groups in the region, Xinhua cited Zhou as saying. Issues of housing, education and employment should be "appropriately resolved" to ensure social harmony, Xinhua cited Zhou as saying.

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17. Cross-Strait Relations

Reuters ("DESPITE CHINA, TAIWAN PRESIDENT TO VISIT S.PACIFIC, U.S.", 2010/03/02) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou will visit six South Pacific nations this month and stop over twice in U.S. territory, his office said on Tuesday. Ma will travel from March 21-27, visiting all six of its South Pacific diplomatic allies: Kiribati, Nauru, the Marshall Islands , Palau , the Solomons and Tuvalu. Ma and his counterparts will discuss agriculture, solar energy and long-term development.

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II. PRC Report

18. PRC Climate Change

Beijing Times ("CIVILIAN PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO NPC ENVIRONMENTAL AND RESOURCES PROTECTION COMMITTEE", 2010/03/02) reported that a Civilian Proposal was submitted to the National People's Congress (NPC) Environment and Resources Protection Committee on Monday in Beijing. This new proposal aims to reduce the burning of urban refuse and was written by a Beijing resident who used to be a senior engineer and has researched refuse burning for 28 years.

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19. PRC Relief Aid to Chile

Xinhua Net ("CHINA PROVIDE 1 MILL USD TO CHILE",) reported that a spokesman for the Ministry of Business said in order to help the Chilean government and people in earthquake disaster relief, the PRC government has decided to provide 1 million US dollars in emergency humanitarian assistance in cash, and will go on providing other various kinds of humanitarian assistances as needed.

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20. PRC Civil Society

Yunnan Net ("LESS THAN 10% DONATION FOR YUNNAN DROUGHT ARRIVED AT ACCOUNT", 2010/03/02) reported that Yunnan government made an appeal for donations and aid following a recent drought in Yunnan. But as of March 1st, less than 10% of promised donations have arrived. The Yunnan government has urged the promising donors to fulfill their obligations as soon as possible.

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