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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("STEINBERG CALLS FOR NORTH KOREA'S RETURN TO 6-WAY TALKS", Washington, 2010/03/29) reported that the US called on the DPRK to return to the six-party talks on its denuclearization, saying a peace treaty, normalization of ties and other issues can be discussed within the framework of the talks. "We made clear, and the other countries who are our partners -- Russia, China, Japan and South Korea -- have made clear that the way forward on those issues, both multilateral and bilateral, is to return to the talks and recommit to the 2005 declaration," James Steinberg, deputy secretary of state, told reporters.

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2. Sino-DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREAN LEADER KIM MEETS NEW CHINESE ENVOY: REPORTS", Seoul, 2010/03/29) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il has personally welcomed the PRC's new ambassador to Pyongyang, PRC and DPRK state media reported. The KCNA reported that Kim hosted a dinner for PRC ambassador Liu Hongcai, "and had a warm talk with him." Liu "conveyed the regards of Chinese President Hu Jintao to Kim" and Kim said that "the traditional friendship" between the two communist countries "would be further strengthened," Xinhua reported.

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3. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO TIGHTEN SCRUTINY ON EXPORTS TO NORTH VIA 3RD STATE: NAKAI", 2010/03/29) reported that Hiroshi Nakai, minister in charge of DPRK abduction issues, said Monday the government is working toward enhancing a surveillance network to block the DPRK from

obtaining exports from Japan through a third country. Nakai also said he thinks Japan should tighten its sanctions against Pyongyang, but added it is yet to be decided whether the government will extend its ongoing measures due to expire April 13 for six months or a year.

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4. Japan-DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("NORTH SCHOOLS TO GET TUITION BREAK", 2010/03/29) reported that the government plans to make pro-Pyongyang Korean schools in Japan eligible for a planned tuition waiver program for high school students, but each school will first be screened by a third-party body under the education ministry, according to government sources. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama has in principle approved an education ministry plan to include the Korean schools in the waiver program, although specific procedures are to be decided after the Upper House election this summer, the sources said.

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5. ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Xinhua News ("SUNKEN WARSHIP UNLIKELY TO HAVE HIT MINE LAID BY S KOREA: DM", Seoul, 2010/03/29) reported that the ROK's Defense Minister Kim Tae-young ruled out the possibility that the sunken warship might have run into a sea mine laid by ROK forces, leaving room for an interpretation that an outside force could have installed it if the incident indeed was caused by a mine, local media reported. The country removed all mines in the region when he was serving as the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2008, he reportedly said.

Agence France-Presse ("NO SOUNDS OF LIFE IN SUNKEN S.KOREA WARSHIP", 2010/03/29) reported that divers reached a sunken ROK warship but heard no sounds of life from within the hull, dimming hopes that some of the 46 missing crewmen may have survived. "Our navy divers knocked on the stern with hammers in the afternoon, but so far there is no response from the inside," said defence ministry spokesman Won Tae-Jae. In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman said the US Navy would be providing further assistance.

Associated Press (Young-joon Ahn and Hyung-jin Kim, "SKOREAN PRESIDENT VISITS SITE WHERE NAVY SHIP SANK", Baengyeong Island, 2010/03/30) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak ordered his military to stay alert for any moves by the DPRK. "Since the sinking took place at the front line, the military should thoroughly prepare for any move by North Korea," Lee told his Cabinet, according to the spokesman. "I want the military to maintain its readiness." Defense Minister Kim Tae-young told lawmakers Monday that a floating mine dispatched from the DPRK was one of several scenarios for the disaster. "North Korea may have intentionally floated underwater mines to inflict damage on us," Kim said. DPRK suicide squads known as "human torpedoes" may be behind the explosion, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper said in a report Tuesday, citing unidentified high-ranking defectors from the DPRK.

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6. DPRK Energy

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREA TO BUILD LIGHT WATER REACTOR SOON: STATE MEDIA", Seoul, 2010/03/29) reported that the DPRK will build a light water nuclear power plant "in the near future", its official news agency said, also taking a swipe at speculation about the health of leader Kim Jong-Il . The country "will witness the appearance of a light water reactor power plant relying on its own nuclear fuel in the near future in the 2010s", the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

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7. DPRK Economy

Yonhap News ("HEAD OF INDIAN STEELMAKER VISITS PYONGYANG: KCNA", 2010/03/29) reported that a delegation from an Indian steelmaker arrived in the DPRK capital of Pyongyang on Monday, the DPRK's official media reported. "A delegation of the Global Steel Holdings Limited of India led by Chairman Pramod Mittal arrived here (Pyongyang)," the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a one-paragraph English-language report.

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA BLASTS FOREIGN REPORTS ABOUT CURRENCY REFORM", Beijing, 2010/03/29) reported that the DPRK criticized US, Japanese and ROK reports about the alleged failure of Pyongyang's currency reform last November, "calling it despicable propaganda." "There are 'analysis and comment' that shortage of food and economic difficulties are more serious than those in the 1990s due to the 'failure of monetary reform,'" the official Korean Central News Agency said. Behind such reports, KCNA said, are "forces displeased with any investment" in the DPRK.

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8. DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SLAMS U.N. RESOLUTION TO MAINTAIN SPECIAL HUMAN RIGHTS ENVOY", Seoul, 2010/03/29) reported that the DPRK blasted a U.N. resolution adopted last week to extend the mandate of a special envoy on human rights conditions in the communist state, calling it a plot by the United States and Japan to undermine its political system. The U.N. Human Rights Council passed a resolution last Friday to extend the mandate for a special rapporteur on DPRK human rights that had been set to expire at the end of June. An unnamed spokesman for the DPRK's Foreign Ministry told the official Korean Central News Agency that the resolution is "peppered with distortions and fabrications and it is a product of a politically motivated plot of the U.S. and Japan."

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9. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("HATOYAMA BACKPEDALS ON COMING UP WITH FUTEMMA PLAN BY MARCH ", Tokyo, 2010/03/29) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama indicated his government might not be able to come up with a single proposal for the relocation of a US Marine base in Okinawa

Prefecture by the end of March as he promised earlier, saying it is not legally bound to do so. Hatoyama's remarks came shortly after Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada indicated prior to his talks with US Defense Secretary Robert Gates in Washington that Japan does not have to narrow its proposals down to one before it begins negotiating with the United States in earnest.

Reuters ("U.S. "RESPECTS" JAPAN'S REQUEST ON AIRBASE: PENTAGON", 2010/03/29) reported that the Pentagon said it respected Japan's request to consider alternatives to a US air base relocation, but stopped short of promising to explore new options as a way to soothe strained ties. The comments by a Pentagon spokesman came as US Defense Secretary Robert Gates met Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada at the Pentagon . "We respect Japan's request to explore alternatives," Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said. "But with respect to any discussions or details, we'll conduct those discussions through diplomatic channels."

Kyodo ("HATOYAMA SAYS NOT COMING UP WITH FUTENMA PLAN BY MARCH 'NO BIG DEAL' ", Tokyo, 2010/03/30) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama suggested Tuesday his government is highly unlikely to meet a self-imposed end-of-March deadline to proffer a single proposal for the relocation of a U.S. Marine base in Okinawa Prefecture. "I thought (the end of March) was a rough target for the government to have a proposal to be accepted by the public, starting with (the people of) Okinawa and moreover by the United States," Hatoyama told reporters. "Putting it off by one, two or several days is no big deal." The important thing, he said, is to have the parties concerned accept a solid proposal in May.

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10. Japan Politics

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN PM'S EX-AIDE ADMITS FAKING FUNDRAISING RECORDS", Tokyo, 2010/03/29) reported that a former aide to Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama admitted to cooking the books on political fundraising reports to hide money from the premier's own family fortune . The funding scandal has hurt the half-year-old centre-left government led by Hatoyama, whose approval rating has now fallen to 36 percent, down seven points from February, according to a new poll by the business daily Nikkei . Hatoyama's former chief accountant Keiji Katsuba appeared before the Tokyo District Court and admitted misreporting millions of dollars, saying that "nothing is inaccurate" in his indictment.

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11. PRC African Investment

The Christian Science Monitor ("CHINA MINING COMPANY CAUSES UNREST IN NIGER", 2010/03/29) reported that the sun-wizened Tuareg women of Azalik have declared war on the PRC . Like their ancestors, they once eked out a living selling dried salts from an ancestral well. Everything changed last year, when the government leased their land to the PRC Nuclear International Uranium Corporation (Sino-U) for uranium exploration. Left with no livelihood and no compensation, a hundred women gathered to launch stones at mining machinery. As resource-hungry PRC expands its holdings here, local groups and Tuareg-led political opposition are voicing concerns over PRC investment in the Saharan state's graft-ridden mining industry.

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12. Sino-Indian Relations

The Hindu ("INDIA SHORING UP PRESENCE ALONG BORDER WITH CHINA ", 2010/03/29) reported that India said it is shoring up its military presence in the northern borders and upgrading infrastructure along the border with the PRC in the light of Beijing's rapid infrastructure development and its upgraded military force projection in Tibet Autonomous Region and Xinjiang province. While efforts to build 73 roads near Sino-Indian border have been taken up with vigour, Indian Air Force upgraded advanced landing grounds, including at Daulat Beg Oldie, to facilitate landing of AN-32 transport aircraft while the Army is raising two Mountain Divisions in the north-east and plans to acquire ultra-light howitzers that can be dropped via helicopters at higher altitudes.

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13. Sino-Australian Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA SENTENCES RIO TINTO EMPLOYEES IN BRIBE CASE", 2010/03/29) reported that four employees of the British-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto, including an Australian citizen, were found guilty Monday of accepting millions of dollars in bribes and stealing commercial secrets. They were given sentences of 7 years to 14 years in prison, and were later dismissed by their employer. Rio Tinto, which until Monday had defended its employees, said court evidence showing that in recent years the employees had accepted about \$13.5 million in bribes was "beyond doubt." Stern Hu, the Australian citizen who served as Rio Tinto's general manager in Shanghai, was sentenced to seven years in prison for bribery and five years for stealing business secrets.

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14. Cross-Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN'S EX-VP CALLS FOR REALISM ON CHINA", 2010/03/29) reported that Former Taiwanese Vice President Annette Lu said that her opposition party should be more realistic about taking advantage of the PRC's increasing economic clout while not losing sight of the party's pro-independence goals. "The DPP needs to become more realistic to face the rising of China," she said. "Some people (in the party) still pretend China still is the old China and try to neglect the fact that so many Taiwanese are in fact there and so much change has been going on." "(Ma) pushes so fast toward ... unification, so that's why I realize it's very important at least to build a national consensus saying Taiwan has become independent," she said.

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15. US on PRC Cyberattacks

The Times ("CHINESE CITY IS HACKER'S HUB", 2010/03/29) reported that a city in eastern PRC has been identified as the world capital of cyber espionage by a US internet security company.

The firm traced 12 billion emails in a study which showed that a higher number of "targeted attacks" on computers come from the PRC than previously thought. Researchers for Symantec found almost 30 of "malicious" emails were sent from the PRC and that 21.3 came from the city of Shaoxing alone. They were able to identify key targets for the hackers as experts in Asian defence policy and human rights activists, strongly suggesting state involvement.

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16. PRC on Nuclear Security

The New York Times ("CHINA STRUGGLES WITH STANCE ON NUCLEAR POWER AS SUMMIT NEARS", 2010/03/29) reported that two weeks before the United States hosts a summit on nuclear security, one of its most important invitees, the PRC, has yet to RSVP. Officials in Washington had assumed that the PRC would not participate in the summit as punishment for a \$6.4 billion US weapons sale to Taiwan that was announced in January. But some U.S. officials and analysts say the PRC's failure to announce its intentions suggests that the government is trying to figure out how it can take part. "China is going to have to weigh its desire to punish the United States with its own desire to send a signal to the world that they are a responsible player that need not be viewed as threatening," said Christopher P. Twomey, an expert on the PRC's nuclear strategy at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey.

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17. PRC Security

The Telegraph ("CHINA SPENDS RECORD AMOUNT TARGETING DOMESTIC SECURITY THREATS ", 2010/03/29) reported that the PRC is spending record amounts on "domestic security" amid fears the main threat to the country's future will come from within. Almost £50 billion will be spent combating internal threats this year, according to figures from the Ministry of Finance. The sum is now almost the same as the £51 billion that the PRC spends on defence, and is more than its health care budget. The funding is going on a vast network of official and unofficial police, including the employment of an estimated five million private security guards this year. These guards are used as an unofficial police force by the Ministry of Public Security.

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18. PRC Maritime Security Exercise

Xinhua News ("MARITIME ANTI-TERROR EXERCISE LAUNCHED AHEAD OF SHANGHAI WORLD EXPO ", 2010/03/29) reported that maritime police authorities in Shanghai and the eastern PRC provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang launched a joint anti-terror exercise Saturday in the run-up to the Shanghai World Expo. Seven naval vessels joined the maneuver, which was held in the waters off the Zhoushan Islands in Zhejiang Province, said Qian Junmin, a senior officer with the maritime police force in Jiangsu Province. For security considerations, the sea off Shanghai will be patrolled by armed boats and motorboats during the Expo, scheduled from May 1 to Oct. 31.

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19. PRC Anti-Piracy Operations

Global Times ("CHINA'S FOURTH NAVAL ESCORT MISSION LEAVES GULF OF ADEN ", 2010/03/29) reported that the PRC's fourth Gulf of Aden mission left the Somali waters on Saturday local time after having successfully escorted more than 6,00 domestic and foreign vessels since the flotilla arrived in the region in November last year. The fourth mission served as part of a multinational coalition of warships patrolling the pirate-infested waters. The PRC's fifth Gulf of Aden mission took over the escort of merchant vessels through the troubled waters in a handover ceremony from the fourth mission on Wednesday.

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20. PRC Environment

Global Times ("CHINA TO BOOST WATER INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRUCTION TO BETTER COPE WITH DISASTERS", 2010/03/29) reported that the PRC's Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) said Sunday the country will step up water conservation infrastructure construction to better cope with natural disasters. The central government has allocated over 80 billion yuan (11.7 billion U.S. dollars) this year for water conservation projects. Total investment in the sector is expected to hit 200 billion yuan, MWR vice minister Jiao Yong said. Jiao said water conservation facilities in the PRC would be expanded while insuring the quality of the projects.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua News ("LITTLE ORANGE LIGHT READING ACTION LAUNCHED", 2010/03/29) reported that Little Orange Light Reading Action, sponsored by Shanxi Provincial Hope Project Office and Taiyuan Radio, was launched yesterday in Taiyuan of Shanxi province. The Action will set up many book donation sites and send special persons responsible for the love donation. The books will be given to children in local Hope Project primary schools.

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22. PRC Civil Society and Earthquake Reconstruction

Xinhua News ("YAO MING FOUNDATION HELD LARGE CHARITY DINNER", 2010/03/29) reported that the famous PRC basketball star Yao Ming has held a large charity dinner yesterday, on which he announced that 3 primary schools funded by Yao Foundation already completed construction in Sichuan earthquake areas, and another 3 would be completed by this summer.

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23. PRC Civil Society and the Environment

Xinhua News ("2010 CHINA AUTOMOBILE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION ACTION LAUNCHED", 2010/03/29) reported that 2010 China Automobile Environment Protection Action was formally launched in Beijing recently. The Action was jointly held by Automobile Net and All-China Environment Protection Foundation, and aimed at promoting automobile environment protection, and make balance between automobile consumption and environment protection.

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