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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("SPY AGENCIES BELIEVE NKOREA HAS NUKE WARHEADS", Seoul, 2009/03/31) reported that Daniel Pinkston, senior analyst with the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, said Tuesday intelligence agencies have information that DPRK has assembled several nuclear warheads for its medium-range Rodong missiles capable of targeting Japan . He said the agencies believe that probably five to eight warheads have been assembled. "It might be right, it might be wrong -- but if others believe it is true, it has implications for the psychological aspects of deterrence," he said, describing the assessment as "quite significant."

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2. ROK on DPRK Missile Test

Yonhap News ("LEE SAYS N. KOREA'S ROCKET LAUNCH LINKED TO NUCLEAR PROGRAM ", 2009/03/30) reported that President Lee Myung-bak warned that the DPRK's rocket launch, if carried out, would further ruin inter-Korean relations as well as international disarmament talks, saying the launch can be seen as related to its nuclear weapons program. In an interview with the British newspaper Financial Times, published Monday, Lee said there was no direct link between the

inter-Korean relationship and the stalled six-party nuclear disarmament talks, but that the North's firing of a missile "or whatever it is" would hurt both.

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3. Russia on DPRK Missile Test

Xinhua News ("RUSSIAN ENVOY: UN SECURITY COUNCIL AWAITS DPRK LAUNCH IN SUSPENSE", Moscow, 2009/03/30) reported that the UN Security Council is awaiting the satellite launch from the DPRK in breathless suspense, said Russian UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin. "We wait whether there will be a launch, what rocket this will be and how it will fly," the Interfax quoted Churkin as saying at a press conference. "A grey zone" will be created if DPRK launched the satellite, "because UN Security Council resolution 1718 does not directly ban the launching of satellites but does ban launching ballistic missiles," said Churkin, who preferred to continue six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear issue.

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4. Japan on DPRK Missile Test

Kyodo News ("ASO, OTA AGREE ON NEED FOR MORE SANCTIONS IF N. KOREA LAUNCHES ROCKET", Tokyo, 2009/03/30) reported that Prime Minister Taro Aso and New Komeito party leader Akihiro Ota agreed Monday to impose additional economic sanctions on the DPRK if it launches a rocket, Ota told reporters. During the meeting with Aso at the prime minister's office, Ota told the premier that it is important to strengthen economic sanctions on the DPRK if Pyongyang launches a rocket, with which Aso agreed.

Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "JAPAN URGES NORTH KOREA TO CANCEL ROCKET LAUNCH", Tokyo, 2009/03/31) reported that Japan urged the DPRK on Tuesday to cancel an impending rocket launch and prepared to defend itself against any danger from it. "North Korea should listen to the international community, and we strongly urge the North to refrain from the launch," said a resolution passed unanimously in both houses of Japan's parliament.

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5. DPRK on Detained Journalists

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA TO TRY AMERICAN JOURNALISTS FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY, HOSTILE ACTS: KCNA", Seoul, 2009/03/31) reported that the DPRK said that it will soon put to trial two American journalists detained on a border with the PRC earlier this month for illegal entry and hostile acts. "The illegal entry of U.S. reporters into the DPRK and their suspected hostile acts have been confirmed by evidence and their statements, according to the results of intermediary investigation conducted by a competent organ of the DPRK," the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch from Pyongyang.

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6. DPRK on ROK PSI Role

Xinhau News ("DPRK BLASTS S. KOREA'S INTENTION TO PARTICIPATE IN PSI", Pyongyang, 2009/03/30) reported that the DPRK blasted the intention of the ROK to participate in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) on Monday. "We solemnly declare that should the Lee group participate in the 'PSI,' oblivious of this reality, the DPRK will consider this as a declaration of a war and promptly take a resolute countermeasure against it," the KCNA cited a spokesman for the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea as saying.

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7. EU-DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("EU, REPORTERS PROMISE 400 MILLION WON TO PROMOTE RADIO BROADCASTS INTO NORTH", Seoul, 2009/03/30) reported that the European Union (EU) and an international group of journalists forged a deal on Tuesday to provide 400 million won (US\$290,000) to help anti-Pyongyang radio broadcasting stations run mostly by defectors from the DPRK. The EU and the Reporters sans Frontiers (RSF) signed the deal with three stations -- Free North Korea Radio, Open Radio for Korea and Radio Free Chosun -- in Seoul to fund their programs for the next three years.

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8. ROK Afghanistan Support

Korea Herald ("YU TO RENEW SUPPORT FOR AFGHAN REBUILDING", 2009/03/30) reported that Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan will renew the government's support in rebuilding Afghanistan during an international conference in the Netherlands today, the Foreign Ministry said. "The minister is expected to show the Seoul government's support for helping to rebuild Afghanistan's economy and society," the ministry said in a press release.

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9. Japan SDF Anti-Piracy Operations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN BEGINS ANTIPIRACY MISSION OFF SOMALIA, ESCORTS 5 SHIPS", Tokyo, 2009/03/30) reported that Japanese destroyers began their antipiracy mission off the coast of Somalia on Monday, marking the start of the first such mission abroad for the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, the Defense Ministry said. The Maritime Self-Defense Force's 4,650-ton Sazanami and 4,550-ton Samidare began escorting three automobile carriers and two tankers -- all operated by Japanese firms -- in the pirate-infested Gulf of Aden, it said.

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10. Japan SDF Peacekeeping Role

The Japan Times (Eric Talmadge , "SDF ASSUMING A MORE GLOBAL ROLE",) reported that the political leadership and defense planners — with the blessing of Washington, their closest ally — are cautiously moving the Self-Defense Forces away from their longtime role as a stay-at-home military. The new stance, while still centered on national defense, allows troops to be sent all over the world for a broad range of operations. "I would anticipate the SDF taking a significantly larger role on the international stage in the years to come. There are any number of international and domestic factors that all point in the same direction on this point," said Eric Heginbotham, a political scientist with the U.S.-based RAND Corp.

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11. Japan Climate Change

Agence France Press ("JAPAN MONITORS CLIMATE LINK AS CHERRY BLOSSOMS APPEAR EARLY", 2009/03/21) reported that Japanese authorities have declared the cherry blossom season open in Tokyo, with the flowers appearing seven days earlier than the area's average, and one day earlier than last year. The country's meteorological agency, which reports on the closely-watched marker of spring each year, says the effects of global warming could be responsible. Researchers at Kyushu University have predicted that global warming would prompt cherry trees to bloom in northern Japan more than three weeks earlier than average by the end of this century, one daily Japanese newspaper reported.

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12. Japan Politics

Bloomberg News (Toko Sekiguchi, "JAPAN OPPOSITION-BACKED CANDIDATE LOSES CHIBA GOVERNOR ELECTION", 2009/03/30) reported that the opposition Democratic Party of Japan lost in a regional election, the first contest since leader Ichiro Ozawa refused to step down last week after an aide was indicted for campaign finance violations. Former actor and independent candidate Kensaku Morita yesterday beat DPJ-backed Taira Yoshida for the Chiba prefecture governor's seat. Morita received 45.5 percent of the vote, while Yoshida came in second with 28.6 percent, according to the Chiba government's website.

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13. Japan Food Security

The New York Times ("JAPAN'S RICE FARMERS FEAR THEIR FUTURE IS SHRINKING", 2009/03/30) reported that to hear many farmers and agricultural experts tell it, rural Japan is fast approaching some sort of dead end, the result of depopulation, trade liberalization and depleted government coffers. In Shonai, farmland prices have dropped as much as 70 percent in the past 15 years, and the number of farmers has shrunk by half since 1990. Aging is seen as the biggest problem in rural areas, where, according to the Agriculture Ministry, 70 percent of Japan's three million farmers are 60 or older. Since 2000, soaring deficits have forced Tokyo to halve spending on public works projects, which propped up rural economies, and plunging exports have now eliminated factory jobs on which many farming households depended for extra income.

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14. Sino-Indian Energy Trade

The Financial Times ("INDIA LOOKS TO CHINA FOR POWER", 2009/03/30) reported that PRC companies are building \$7bn of power plant equipment for customers in India, in a business that is underpinning growing trade between Asia's second and third largest economies. PRC producers are processing orders from India for 20,000 megawatts of boilers, turbines and generators, the main equipment in a power station. "India and China both need each other for growth. There's huge demand on the Indian side and there's huge supply available on the Chinese side - and that is creating a big opportunity for trade," said Swaminathan Krishnaswamy, vicepresident for India chemicals and power and Sino-India business development at Lloyd's Register.

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15. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

The Hindu ("SINO-INDIAN BORDER TRANQUIL: MENON ", New Delhi, 2009/03/30) reported that the Sino-Indian border is tranquil and both sides are maintaining the status quo, Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon said. Pointing out that both sides had their own perceptions about the boundary, Mr. Menon said each side treated the other's crossing over as an incursion. But the important thing was whether there had been a change in the pattern of incursions and whether it was taking place in new places. The answer to both was in the negative, he said. "Both sides maintain the status quo. We don't see changes in the pattern by either side," Mr. Menon added.

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16. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Reuters ("RUSSIA SEES FINAL LOAN-FOR-OIL DEAL WITH CHINA SOON", Moscow, 2009/03/30) reported that Russia will sign a final deal with the PRC guaranteeing crude supplies in exchange for \$25 billion in loans within one or two weeks, RIA news agency quoted Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin as saying on Monday. The PRC is due to lend \$15 billion to state-controlled Russian oil major Rosneft and another \$10 billion to pipeline monopoly Transneft.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN DEFENDS TRADE PACT WITH CHINA", Taipei, 2009/03/30) reported that Taiwan's economics minister has defended a proposed controversial trade agreement with the PRC, saying it would help raise the island's gross domestic product. In a seminar Sunday, Yiin Chii-ming warned that Taiwan's GDP could drop by 1.0 percentage point following the formation of a single market by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations by 2015, the Commercial Times said. However, the island can get access to the bloc by forging an economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with the PRC, which has inked a free trade deal with ASEAN, Yiin said.

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18. PRC Investments in Africa

The New York Times (Lydia Polgreen, "AS CHINESE INVESTMENT IN AFRICA DROPS, HOPE SINKS", 2009/03/25) reported that as global commodity prices have plummeted and several of the PRC's African partners have stumbled deeper into chaos, the PRC has backed away from some of its riskiest and most aggressive plans, looking for the same guarantees that Western companies have long sought for their investments: economic and political stability. "The political situation is not very stable," Huo Zhengde, the PRC ambassador here, said in an interview, explaining the country's hesitation to invest billions in Guinea, where a junta seized power after the death of the longtime president in December. "The international markets are not favorable."

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19. PRC Security

The Associated Press (Alexa Olesen, "CHINA CRACKS DOWN IN MUSLIM WEST", 2009/03/30) reported that an overseas rights activist said that authorities in the PRC's predominantly Muslim far west are closing unregistered Islamic schools and conducting house-to-house searches in a new security crackdown in the restive region. The campaign under way for five weeks in the city of Hotan underscores Beijing's persisting concerns about separatist movements in its Central Asian border province of Xinjiang.

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20. PRC Disease Reporting

Caijing Magazine (Gong Jing, Liu Jingjing, "MINISTRY INVESTIGATES HFMD EPIDEMIC", 2009/03/30) reported that three Ministry of Health officials were sent to Heze city in Shandong province on March 24 to investigate the outbreak of hand-foot-and-mouth disease, or HFMD, according to the Ministry of Health on the evening of March 26. On March 24, Beijing News, Southern Metropolis Daily and several other domestic media sources reported that Heze authorities were suspected of concealing at least two death reports.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua Net (Zhang Jiansong, "SHANGHAI HOLDS THE FIRST NGO SPECIAL JOB FAIR FOR GRADUATES", 2009/03/29) reported that Shanghai Bureau of Civil Affairs and Shanghai Administration Bureau of NGOs have held a NGO Special Job Fair at the municipal stadium. 170 private non-enterprise units, social organizations, and foundations provide about 1800 positions to

university graduates, which gathered 30,000 students to apply. It is understood that the position category in this job fair reached 250, and the highest salary may reach 5,000 RMB.

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22. PRC Civil Society and Earthquake Reconstruction

Xinhua Net (Liu Dajiang, "LIKACHENG FOUNDATION DONATES 0.11 BILLION RMB FOR SICHUAN RECONSTRUCTION", 2009/03/29) reported that "Thanks for the care from the enterprises, and with this money, I can reduce the financial burden for my family", said Lidongli, a student in Chengdu College of Information and Engineering, with a scholarship of 2000 RMB at the opening ceremony of Likacheng Foundation Education Project in Sichuan Earthquake Area. This is the second round of the donation project of Likacheng Foundation in Sichuan. This time, the donation amount is 110,000,000 RMB.

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23. PRC Environment

Sina Net ("BEIJING TURNS OFF LIGHTS FOR ONE HOUR YESTERDAY EVENING", 2009/03/29) reported that the National Stadium, known as the "bird's nest", the National Aquatic Center, also called "water cubic" and buildings around the Olympic Park have turned off the landscape light for one hour, in response to the "Earth Hour" event sponsored by World Wildlife Fund. Chief of WWF (China) said the Beijing citizens' enthusiasm for the event is much more than expected, and hoped this event can promote the public's awareness of environmental protection.

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III. ROK Report

24. ROK on DPRK Missile Program

Hankyoreh ("PRESIDENT LEE'S 'PRACTICAL' COMMENT ON DPRK", 2009/03/31) wrote that President Lee Myung-bak's statement that he "disagrees with military countermeasures to DPRK's missile launch" is good news, considering worries that the launch might cause a series of provocative reactions and worsen the situation in the Korean peninsula. The reason president Lee changed his mind at this point is probably because of the reality that Korea's hardline policies will not be effective without cooperation from China and Russia. Moreover, with the first summit meeting with US President Barack Obama coming on April 2, he probably wanted to keep the same pace with the US.

Donga Ilbo ("INDULGENCE FOR DPRK'S MISSILE LAUNCH ALREADY?", 2009/03/31) wrote that President is declaring that he won't use a strong card that could possibly pressure the DPRK, thus tolerating the DPRK's provocation. Before the president's interview, Robert Gates, US Secretary of Defense, also stated that he has no plans to intercept the DPRK's missile. We are not even sure that

cooperation between the two countries will be enough, and the two countries have just absurdly supported the DPRK instead.

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25. U.S. Policy toward DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("DO OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES ON DPRK REALLY EXIST?", 2009/03/31) wrote that it seems that the US government has decided it is difficult to take any countermeasures other than discussing it in UN Security Council, even if the DPRK launches missiles. This will eventually spread the recognition that "even the US can't do anything" around the entire Korean peninsula and international society, raising doubts about Obama administration's policies on the DPRK. The Lee Myung-bak administration and Obama administration must quickly come up with basic principles and a rough plan on how to deal with DPRK for the next four years, during which the two presidential terms overlap.

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26. DPRK Internal Situation

Goodfriends ("TO LET RESIDENTS LIVE BY THEMSELVES", 2009/03/31) reported that salesmen over the DPRK are facing difficulties. The first reason behind it is because of migration restrictions on the residents. Second reason is because these people lack money. The only cities still with food rations are Pyongyang and Hoeryung. It doesn't seem right to try to control the market in this situation.

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27. ROK Policy Toward Climate Change

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("NOTEWORTHY CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL COUNTERMEASURES TO GLOBAL WARMING", 2009/03/31) wrote that there is big possibility ROK will become one of the greenhouse gas emission reduction target after Post Kyoto Protocol starts in 2013. However, the ROK is missing the international trend and still focusing on how to be exempt from responsibility. Government's Low-carbon Green Growth Policy, which adopted a loose greenhouse gas reduction goal, is also unsuccessful because of strong opposition from the economic sector.

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