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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Xinhua News ("PEACE TREATY THE BEST ROUTE TO DENUCLEARIZATION: DPRK STATE MEDIA ", 2010/02/03) reported that the conclusion of a peace treaty would push forward the Korean peninsula's denuclearization process, the DPRK's official KCNA news agency said. In a commentary, KCNA said a peace treaty would help build confidence between the DPRK and the United States to end hostile relations and give strong impetus to the denuclearization process. It was illogical to assert that the establishment of the peacekeeping regime was a matter to be taken up after the nuclear issue was settled. "This was nothing but an artifice to dodge the proposal," KCNA said.

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2. US on DPRK Terror List Status

Agence France-Presse ("OBAMA KEEPS NORTH KOREA OFF US TERROR LIST", Washington, 2010/02/04) reported that P resident Barack Obama certified that the DPRK would remain off the US list of terrorist states, despite some calls from Congress for the state to be put back on. The president, in a letter to Democratic leaders on Capitol Hill confirmed that the DPRK "does not meet the statutory criteria to again be designated as a state sponsor of terrorism." The DPRK was added to the blacklist on January 20, 1988, following the bombing by its agents of a KAL plane on November 29, 1987 which killed all 115 on board. The State Department has said that the DPRK was not known to have sponsored any terrorist acts since that bombing.

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3. US on DPRK Military

Mainichi Japan ("U.S. INTELLIGENCE CHIEF: N. KOREA MILITARY CRUMBLING", Washington, 2010/02/03) reported that President Barack Obama's top intelligence official said that the DPRK relies on its nuclear weapons program because of a crumbling military that cannot compete with the ROK. Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair described in testimony before the U.S. Congress a DPRK army that struggles with aging weapons, poorly trained, out-of-shape soldiers, inflexible leaders, corruption, low morale and problems with command and control. The DPRK, Blair said, has little chance of reversing a huge gap in military capabilities with the ROK and so "relies on its nuclear program to deter external attacks on the state and to its regime."

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Agence France Presse ("TWO KOREAS SET TO DISCUSS RESUMING TOURISM PROJECTS", Seoul, 2010/02/03) reported that the DPRK and the ROK will hold talks next week about resuming tourism projects in the communist state if Seoul's conditions for the meeting are met, officials said Wednesday. The tours to the Mount Kumgang resort and the historic city of Kaesong earned the sanctions-hit DPRK tens of millions of dollars a year until they were halted in 2008 amid worsening relations.

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA WANTS SHARP PAY RISE FOR KAESONG WORKERS: REPORT ", 2010/02/03) reported that the DPRK demanded a more than three-fold wage hike for its workers at a joint industrial complex with the ROK when delegates from the sides met there for talks earlier this week, Pyongyang's official media said Wednesday. The Unification Ministry in Seoul disputed the report, saying that the DPRK did not specify its demand concerning a pay raise during Monday's talks held in its border town of Kaesong.

Korea Herald ("MAJORITY OF STUDENTS SEE NEED FOR REUNIFICATION ", 2010/02/03) reported that according to a survey of 1,083 middle- and high-school students nationwide, 70.3 percent of the respondents said that reunification is needed. The poll was released by the Education Center for Unification, which is affiliated with the Unification Ministry. In the survey, 28.4 percent said reunification is needed to strengthen the nation while 24.7 percent said it is needed to address the issue of separated families, and 24.6 percent said it is needed as the DPRK and ROK are one nation. Of the respondents, 33.3 percent said they have a positive view about the DPRK while 66.7 percent said they have a negative one.

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5. DPRK Plane Interdiction

Bloomberg (Daniel Ten Kate, "THAILAND URGES UN ACTION ON N. KOREAN ARMS CACHE AS COST RISES", 2010/02/03) reported that Thailand said it urged the United Nations Security Council to offer recommendations “as soon as possible” on handling the DPRK weapons seized in December as it counts the cost of securing the cache. “We hope this could be resolved very soon,” a government spokesman __ said in a telephone interview today in Bangkok. “Different government

agencies are now asking us to pay for the cost of maintaining the plane and guarding the weapons."

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6. DPRK Vessel Hijacking

Bloomberg (Caroline Alexander, "NORTH KOREAN CARGO SHIP HIJACKED IN GULF OF ADEN, EU FORCE SAYS", 2010/02/03) reported that a DPRK cargo ship was hijacked by pirates in the Gulf of Aden just south of the Yemeni coast, the European Union's anti-piracy force said. The vessel, the RIM, is a general cargo ship of 4,800 tons and is the DPRK's flagged and owned by the White Sea Shipping of Libya, the EU naval force said. Coalition forces are monitoring its position.

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7. DPRK Economy

Institute for Far Eastern Studies ("DPRK LAUNCHES ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE TO MEET 2010 ECONOMIC GOALS ", 2010/02/03) reported that in order to meet this year's economic goals, DPRK authorities are calling on the people to launch an "all-out offensive". Day after day, the DPRK media outlets are calling for "continuing reform" and "continuing improvements," even introducing a new motivational song titled, "It's a war of attack." According to the (North) Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the front page of the January 29 issue of the Rodong Sinmun carried an editorial titled, "Raise the fighting spirit of 10 million soldiers, and advance the all-out fighting spirit of this year," while the second page of the same paper carried a political commentary titled, "Let's practically demonstrate." The editorial called on citizens of the DPRK to work toward improving the standard of living and improving the lives of the people.

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN FINANCE CHIEF SACKED OVER CURRENCY DEBACLE", 2010/02/03) reported that the DPRK regime apparently sacked the Workers' Party's Finance Director Pak Nam-gi, letting him take the fall for the failed currency reform late last year. Pak was appointed finance director in July 2007 to oversee the DPRK 's economic policies and has spent the past few years trying to root out a nascent market economy. "Right now, the DPRK officials are busy blaming each other for the failed currency reform and Pak, who spearheaded the revaluation, is believed to have been sacked," said a diplomatic source in Beijing.

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8. DPRK Unrest

Agence France Presse (Jun Kwanwoo , "VIOLENCE IN N.KOREA AS HUNGER WOES MOUNT: REPORTS", Seoul, 2010/02/03) reported that angry DPRK citizens have attacked security agents as hunger woes mount following a crackdown on free-market trade, according to reports from groups in Seoul with contacts in the communist state. "Traders and residents have lost their property due to the redenomination," Daily NK, an online newspaper hostile to the reclusive regime, quoted one source in the DPRK as saying. "Therefore, people are taking revenge on agents, since they feel so desperate that regardless of their actions, they will die," the source in DPRK Hamkyung province said. "As a result, social unrest is becoming more serious."

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9. DPRK Foreign Investment

Financial Times (Heba Saleh and Christian Oliver, "N. KOREA MOBILE PHONE OPERATOR EXPANDS", 2010/02/03) reported that Orascom Telecom, the Egypt-based mobile network operator, says its subsidiary in the DPRK, Koryolink, has acquired 100,000 subscribers in its first year and expects to add millions more in the next five years. The expansion plans come as the isolated east Asian country of 24m, which says it wants to be considered a "mighty and prosperous nation" by 2012, steps up efforts to attract foreign investment. "We see that there is a very big plan for an economic boom," said Khaled Bichara, chief executive of Orascom. "They are really looking to have, by 2012, a much stronger economy. We believe that mobiles and eventually international communication will definitely be part of this."

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10. ROK Afghanistan Dispatch

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA SEEKS TO DEPLOY WEAPON LOCATER, ROBOT IN AFGHANISTAN ", 2010/02/03) reported that the ROK is seeking to purchase an acoustic weapons locating system and a military robot to enhance the safety of its troops likely to be deployed to Afghanistan later this year, a defense official in Seoul said. The army robot and the hostile artillery locating system will track and protect troops from roadside bombs, dubbed "improvised explosive devices (IEDs)," the official said, requesting anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

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11. US-ROK Military Relations

Yonhap News ("U.S. COMMANDER SAYS 'NO CHANGE' IN TROOP NUMBER IN S. KOREA ", 2010/02/03) reported the number of U.S. troops in the ROK will remain unchanged after Seoul takes back the wartime operational control of its troops from Washington, the top U.S. commander here said Wednesday, strongly denying speculation of weakened U.S. military support after the transition. "The U.S. troop numbers will stay the same as we fight side-by-side. The transition does not mean the United States will reduce its commitment," Gen. Walter Sharp told a group of graduating cadets of the Korea Military Academy. "We will never reduce our responsibility to defend Korea. It will always be our No. 1 responsibility."

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA SAYS REDEPLOYMENT OF U.S. FORCES A 'LONG-TERM DISCUSSION'", 2010/02/03) reported that the possibility of the United States redeploying its troops out of the ROK after Seoul takes back wartime operational control of its troops from the U.S. military is a matter that will require deliberate discussions between the two sides, defense officials here said. "This issue (of transferring operational control) and follow-up measures are subject to bilateral discussions over the mid to long-term period," said Yeom Wan-kyun, head of the U.S. policy bureau at Seoul's defense ministry, adding "working-level examinations" are currently being conducted by both sides.

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12. Japan Politics

New York Times (Martin Fackler , "INDICTMENT UNLIKELY FOR POWER BROKER IN JAPAN ", 2010/02/03) reported that the kingpin of Japan's governing party is not likely to face charges in an investigation into campaign finance, major Japanese newspapers reported on Wednesday. But it remains unclear whether he will be forced to step down over the scandal, which threatens to derail his party's reformist agenda. Japanese news reports said that Tokyo prosecutors had decided not to file charges against the secretary general of the Democratic Party, Ichiro Ozawa, though they would probably prosecute at least one of his former aides for misreporting $4.4 million in political funds. Still, the scandal, which broke late last year, has sapped public support for the prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama, by making his fledgling government look tainted by the same corruption it had vowed to end.

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13. PRC Human Rights

Associated Press (Cara Anna, "ONE YEAR ON, CHINA STAYS SILENT ON MISSING LAWYER", Beijing, 2010/02/03) reported that one of the PRC's most daring activist lawyers disappeared a year ago Thursday, and the government that so closely monitored him has not explained where he is, infuriating even those used to Beijing's indifference to outside pressure on human rights. High-profile dissidents have disappeared in the PRC before, but not for so long without details from authorities. Family and friends have no idea whether Gao Zhisheng, who had been under strict police surveillance, is even in custody.

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14. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France Presse ("CHINA'S PANCHEN LAMA VOTED VP OF STATE BUDDHISM BODY: REPORT", Beijing, 2010/02/03) reported that the PRC's controversial choice as the second highest Tibetan spiritual figure, the 19-year-old Panchen Lama, was voted vice president of the nation's Buddhist Association Wednesday, state media reported. The appointment comes just days after negotiations on the future of Tibet between PRC officials and envoys of the region's exiled spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, which failed to make any headway. The Panchen Lama, addressing the closing ceremony of the association's national conference, said he would "uphold the leadership of the Communist Party of China," the official Xinhua news agency reported.

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15. PRC Internet Issue

Agence France Presse ("CHINA WELCOMES FOREIGN INTERNET FIRMS: MINISTER", 2010/02/03) reported that access to the Internet in the PRC is "completely open" and foreign firms are welcome to work in the thriving sector, the PRC's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said on Wednesday. "We are

always very happy to welcome foreign firms (in China), including Internet firms," Yang told a joint press conference with his French counterpart Bernard Kouchner on a visit to Paris. "We will continue to provide them with a suitable environment for their business. But at the same time, they must take into account China's realities and cultural tradition."

Reuters ("CHINA INTERNET CEO LAMENTS STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA", Beijing, 2010/02/03) reported that the PRC will never have its voice heard on the international stage unless the government loosens its tight grip over the media and film industry, the CEO of the country's No. 2 Internet portal said Wednesday.Charles Zhang, the often outspoken chief executive of Sohu.com Inc, told a forum in Beijing that plans to create global PRC media giants were doomed to fail if the government did not relax controls. "Chinese newspapers and television stations completely lack meaningful competition, and have no independent personality ... so they have no authority or respect," Zhang said.

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16. PRC Energy

Associated Press (Andy Wong, "CHINA DOUBLES WIND POWER IN SINGLE YEAR", 2010/02/03) reported that the PRC doubled the amount of energy generated from windmills last year, a report from the global wind industry said Wednesday. The Global Wind Energy Council, which represents companies that make and manage wind power stations, said the sector grew rapidly last year — with total wind capacity up 31 percent — despite the economic downturn. The PRC became the biggest market for new wind turbines last year, as it doubled power capacity from 12 gigawatts to 25 gigawatts.

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17. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Associated Press (Scott Mcdonald, "CHINA POLICE BOSS SAYS XINJIANG GETTING BETTER", 2010/02/03) reported that the situation in western PRC 's Xinjiang region is stable more than six months after deadly ethnic riots, but "hostile forces" are still looking for ways to foment unrest there, the country's public security minister said. Meng Jianzhu, the country's top police officer, praised security forces for their work in restoring stability to the region but warned the situation was still complicated. "Now the overall social situation of Xinjiang is stable and the situation is now developing toward a good direction," Meng said. But he added that "hostile forces at home and abroad are not content with their failure, and are looking for any possible opportunities to launch new sabotage activities against us

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18. Sino-US Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA RESPONSE TO TAIWAN DEAL 'UNFORTUNATE': US", Singapore, 2010/02/03) reported that the PRC's reaction to a US-Taiwan arms deal is "unfortunate", US Deputy Undersecretary of the Air Force Bruce Lemkin said after Beijing warned of international repercussions. Asked if Washington would back off after the PRC's strong response, including a

threat to impose sanctions on US companies, Lemkin said "this is a policy decision based on principle, and based on our commitment in the Taiwan Relations Act."

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19. Sino-US Trade Relations

Kyodo News ("OBAMA TO GET 'MUCH TOUGHER' AGAINST CHINA IN TRADE, CURRENCY", 2010/02/03) reported that President Barack Obama on Wednesday vowed to get "much tougher" against the PRC in enforcement of international trade rules and correction of the value of its currency. Obama told an annual meeting with senators from his Democratic Party that Washington will do its utmost to pry open markets of the PRC and other trading partners. "So the approach that we're taking is to try to get much tougher about enforcement of existing rules, putting constant pressure on China and other countries to open up their markets in reciprocal ways," the president said during the meeting, broadcast live by CNN television .

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20. Hong Kong Politics

EarthTimes ("PRO-CHINA PARTIES BOYCOTT DEMOCRACY REFERENDUM IN HONG KONG ", 2010/02/03) reported that all major pro-PRC and pro-government parties in Hong Kong said Wednesday they would boycott upcoming by-elections because they consider them a waste of public money. The by-elections, not yet scheduled, would fill the seats of five pro-democracy legislators who resigned to protest government policy. The pro-Beijing Federation of Trade Unions joined the Democratic Alliance and the Liberal Party in saying it will not stand in the five by-elections. The parties called the process "a farce" and a waste of public money, making it likely that pro-democracy candidates would stand uncontested.

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II. PRC Report

21. PRC Environment

China News Net ("1/5 ARABLE LAND POLLUTED BY HEAVY METAL", 2010/02/03) reported that the PRC's soil pollution is now very serious, and about 1/5 arable land has been polluted by heavy metal. Soil pollution prevention law is under making and will be issued soon, sources from China-French Environment Seminar held in Shanghai recently.

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22. PRC Climate Change

Xinhua Net ("CHINA GERMANY CO-INVEST TO BUILD LOW-CARBON DEMONSTRATION CITY",

2010/02/03) reported that Jiangyin Low-Carbon Demonstration City Project co-cooperated by China and Germany was formally signed recently in Suzhou province. The total investment is about 3 billion RMB, when finishing construction, greenhouse gas emission of the demonstration city will decrease 50% comparing with the current number.

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23. PRC Civil Society

Xinhua News ("425, 000 SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN CHINA AS AT END OF 2009", 2010/02/03) reported that as at the end of 2009, there are about 425,000 registered social organizations in the PRC, according to Civil Affairs Development Statistics Report issued by Ministry of Civil Affairs today.

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