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MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times (Lee Tae-hoon, "N. KOREA MAY DETONATE 3RD NUKE DEVICE", Seoul, 2010/12/25) reported that the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) reported on December 25 that the DPRK may detonate a third nuclear device and provoke border clashes to escalate tension on the Korean Peninsula next year. KIDA said that through a third nuclear test, Pyongyang could show the world that it has no plans to scrap its atomic weapons program. "The test would be designed to highlight that the Communist country is a nuclear power," KIDA reported. It added that Pyongyang might even launch an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching U.S. territories in the Pacific and the western coast of North America.

Korea Times (Lee Tae-hoon, "UKRAINE MODEL FEASIBLE FOR DENUCLEARIZING NK", Seoul, 2009/12/24) reported that in a paper, titled "The Obama Administration's Denuclearization Policy and the North Korean Nuclear Issue," the ROK National Assembly Research Service (NARS) pointed out on December 24 that Washington is highly likely to offer Pyongyang a similar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) agreement as applied to Ukraine in return for denuclearization. "Given that the North's development of nuclear weapons has reached a certain stage and it already has nuclear facilities, engineers and scientists, compensation will be unavoidable," the report said. "It should be noted that the North is demanding a security guarantee and economic compensation for abandoning its nuclear program."

Washington Post (R. Jeffrey Smith and Joby Warrick, "PAKISTANI SCIENTIST DEPICTS MORE ADVANCED NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN NORTH KOREA", Washington, 2009/12/28) reported that the DPRK has constructed a plant to manufacture a gas needed for uranium enrichment, according to a previously unpublicized account by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan. Khan also said that the DPRK may have been enriching uranium on a small scale by 2002, with "maybe 3,000 or even more" centrifuges, and that Pakistan helped the country with vital machinery, drawings and technical advice for at least six years.

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2. KEDO Project

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "'NK PILFERED EQUIPMENT AT NUCLEAR REACTOR SITE'", Seoul, 2009/12/30) reported that the ROK plans to ask the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization for cooperation in checking the validity of a report that the DPRK has pilfered equipment at the Shinpo nuclear reactor site, a government official said Wednesday. "It will not be easy to confirm the report because Pyongyang has sealed off the area," the official said. "We have to discuss this issue with KEDO members."

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3. DPRK New Year's Editorial

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NORTH KOREA HOLDS MASSIVE NEW YEAR'S RALLY", Seoul, 2010/01/02) reported that tens of thousands of DPR Koreans rallied in Pyongyang Saturday to support the government's policies for the new year. Choe Yong Rim, a senior Pyongyang city official, called on citizens to "concentrate all efforts on improving the people's standard of living," the Korean Central News Agency said. In the New Year's editorial, the DPRK called for the rapid development of agriculture and light industry and the production of higher-quality consumer goods. It also urged an end to hostile relations with the U.S. and renewed its commitment to making the Korean peninsula nuclear-free through negotiations.

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "'PYONGYANG WANTS INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT'", Seoul, 2010/01/03) reported that the ROK Ministry of Unification responded positively to the DPRK's New Year's editorial, saying that the DPRK underlined denuclearization through dialogue and negotiations. The ministry also said that the DPRK appeared to place emphasis on the economy, including the improvement of people's livelihood.

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4. US-DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("N. KOREA PUTS PEACE TREATY BEFORE NORMAL TIES: SOURCES", 2009/12/28) reported that the DPRK conveyed to the United States that it places more emphasis on pursuing a peace treaty than a normalization of bilateral relations, according to an unidentified diplomatic source. Pyongyang officials including Vice Foreign Minister Kang Suk-joo relayed the message to Washington's special envoy Stephen Bosworth when he visited the DPRK earlier this month. The officials reportedly said normalizing diplomatic relations were of less importance because they could

"collapse at any unwarranted moment."

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5. DPRK Detention of Missionary

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "KOREAN-AMERICAN MISSIONARY CROSSES BORDER INTO N. KOREA", Seoul, 2010/12/27) reported that Robert Park, a Korean-American human rights activist, crossed the frozen Tumen River into the DPRK from the PRC on Christmas day, according to a member of the Seoul-based group Pax Koreana. Park carried a letter which calls for opening the border for food and medicines to be delivered to DPRK people, and releasing all political prisoners, the group said. "I am an American citizen. I brought God's love. God loves you and God bless you," Park reportedly said in Korean as he crossed over near the northeastern city of Hoeryong, according to the group.

Yonhap ("ACTIVIST'S DETENTION NOT TO AFFECT EFFORTS TO REOPEN 6-WAY TALKS", Seoul, 2009/12/31) reported that the United States said Wednesday that the illegal entry of an American missionary into the DPRK will not affect U.S. efforts to bring the DPRK back to the six-party talks. "We consider this to be a consular issue unrelated to any security or political issues," the State Department said in a statement.

Yonhap ("U.S. SEEKING CONSULAR ACCESS TO AMERICAN ACTIVIST IN N.K.", Seoul, 2009/12/30) reported that the United States said Tuesday it is seeking consular access to an American activist held in the DPRK for illegal entry. "The DPRK government has confirmed it is holding a U.S. citizen pending an investigation," State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said in statement. "We will continue to work through the Swedish Embassy, our protecting power in Pyongyang, to seek consular access to this American citizen."

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6. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "N. KOREA WANTS TALKS ON GAESEONG SITE", Seoul, 2010/01/03) reported that Pyongyang has expressed interest in having working-level talks with Seoul on issues regarding the inter-Korean industrial complex at Gaeseong, according to a source well versed on the DPRK on Sunday. The Ministry of Unification, meanwhile, said that it was willing to have talks if the DPRK makes an official request. "We have yet to receive any proposal from Pyongyang to discuss pending issues regarding the joint Gaeseong Industrial Complex in the North," a ministry official said.

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7. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "LEE SAYS N. KOREA POLICY IS IN RIGHT DIRECTION", Seoul, 2009/12/31) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak said on December 31 there was little progress in inter-Korean relations in 2009, but his government has laid the groundwork for

developing relations in a positive direction. "We've seen a lot of changes in diplomatic, security and defense fields over the past year. The government worked successfully to brace for a paradigm shift," Lee said. "It will be hard to achieve a breakthrough in stalled inter-Korean relations without resolving the North Korean nuclear issue," Lee said.

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8. ROK Aid for DPRK

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "SEOUL INCREASING AID TO N. KOREA VIA NGOS", Seoul, 2010/12/25) reported that the ROK Ministry of Unification plans to supply 15 billion won (about \$13 million) in funding for humanitarian projects of the World Health Organization and UNICEF supporting infants and improving public health care in the DPRK, according to ministry sources. It is also reviewing a plan to spend 5 to 10 billion won in order to provide babies, infants and pregnant women in the North with nourishing food via local civic organizations.

Korea Times ("JEJU PLANS TO SEND TANGERINES TO NK", Seoul, 2009/12/27) reported that the government said on December 26 that it would consider giving financial support to Jeju's plan to send its tangerines to the DPRK. Jeju asked the Ministry of Unification on December 14 to finance its plan to send 20,000 tons of local tangerines to the DPRK as part of humanitarian efforts. The city asked the central government to offer 3 billion won from the government's inter-Korean cooperation fund.

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9. Inter-Korean Relations

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "2 KOREAS OPEN MODERN MILITARY HOT LINES", Seoul, 2010/12/30) reported that military hot lines between ROK and the DPRK opened Wednesday after being connected using fiber-optic cables, the Ministry of Unification announced. The lines will be used when the two sides need to exchange lists of visitors and discuss whether to approve departures to and from the DPRK, a ministry official said. "South and North Korea are expected to exchange information on border-crossings in a prompt and stable way," the official said, requesting anonymity.

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "LEE PROPOSES ESTABLISHING REGULAR DIALOGUE CHANNEL WITH N.K.", Seoul, 2010/01/04) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak proposed Monday that the two Koreas establish a liaison office in each other's capital for "standing dialogue". "The government will endeavor to improve relations with North Korea," he said in a televised New Year's address. Lee reiterated his call for the DPRK to rejoin the six-nation nuclear talks as early as possible, saying "This will ensure the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and open up real cooperation between the two Koreas."

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10. UN-DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("UNDP TO RESUME OPERATIONS IN N. KOREA IN FEBRUARY", Seoul, 2009/12/27) reported that the U.N. development agency plans to restart its operations in the DPRK in February after a two-year hiatus, Voice of America reported Saturday. Stephane Dujarric, spokesman at the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), said that the remodeling of its Pyongyang office was completed in September and works are underway to install furniture and other equipment as well as to connect the Internet. The office will become "fully operational" by the end of February, he said.

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11. DPRK Economy

Korea Times ("PYONGYANG'S DEPARTMENT STORE IS 'CROWDED WITH SHOPPERS'", Tokyo, 2010/01/02) reported that Pyongyang's main department store was crowded with New Year Holiday shoppers, Chosun Sinbo said on Saturday. "With the coming of the new year, the footsteps of Pyongyang citizens are heading to the department store," the newspaper said, citing its reporter from the DPRK capital. "The products, including foods, daily commodities, clothes, furniture, home electronic appliances, are sold according to the new price system," it said.

Yonhap ("N. KOREA'S NEW CURRENCY PLUMMETS AGAINST CHINESE YUAN: REPORT", Yonhap, 2010/01/04) reported new currency introduced in late November has plummeted in value compared to the PRC yuan, Open Radio for North Korea claimed Sunday. Citing unidentified sources along the Sino-DPRK border, the radio said that merchants were exchanging one yuan for 1,000 new DPRK won as of late last month, plummeting from the 50 won traded for every yuan on December 3, right after Pyongyang introduced the new currency.

Joongang Ilbo ("REPORT SAYS NORTH BANS ALL FOREIGN CURRENCIES", Seoul, 2009/12/29) reported that the DPRK has issued a decree preventing its citizens from possessing or using foreign currencies, according to Daily NK citing sources in the DPRK. The Unification Ministry in Seoul could not immediately corroborate the report. Spokesman Chun Hae-sung said that ROK NGOs who have recently visited the DPRK have told the ministry about different versions of the DPRK post-currency reform - some saying the country was in chaos and others relaying that the DPRK was relatively calm.

Chosun Ilbo ("OVER 80% OF N.KOREANS DEPEND ON MARKETS", Seoul, 2009/12/30) reported that around 80 to 90 percent of DPRK citizens buy daily necessities in the market and an average of one person per household is a trader, making it unlikely that the regime will succeed in reverting to a centralized economy, Han Ki-bum, a DPRK expert and former National Intelligence Service agent said. Citing interviews with DPRK defectors and sources in the North, Han wrote, "Some traders promote fantasies about South Korean goods. When young customers approach, these merchants tell them, 'Look at the [South Korean] mark. It's the best. Take it or regret it later.'"

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12. DPRK Defectors

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREANS 'STRANDED' AT JAPANESE MISSIONS IN CHINA", Seoul, 2010/01/04) reported that the Sankei Shimbun, citing diplomatic sources, said some dozen DPRK refugees are

stranded at several Japanese missions in China as Beijing cracked down on refugees in late 2008. The Japanese daily says this is the first time the PRC has prevented DPRK defectors from leaving for Japan.

VOA News ("INCREASING NUMBERS OF N.KOREAN REFUGEES HEAD TO THAILAND", Seoul, 2010/01/04) reported that Thai immigration authorities say they took more than 1,000 DPRK refugees into custody in 2009, compared with less than 400 in 2008 when Beijing tightened security for the Olympics. Police superintendent Sutham Chatarsa said, "We don't have the policy to send them back to North Korea. We want to take care of them until they are accepted into a third country. It's not the same as people coming from Cambodia or Laos. North Koreans come here because of political problems. So, we want them to get to a third country."

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13. ROK Anti-Piracy Activities

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "MISSION OF KOREAN ANTI-PIRACY FORCES OFF SOMALIA EXTENDED", Seoul, 2010/12/29) reported that the National Assembly passed a motion Tuesday to extend the mission of the Navy's anti-piracy Cheonghae Unit, which is in waters off Somalia, until the end of 2010. The contingent consists of a 4,500-ton KDX-II destroyer, a Lynx anti-submarine helicopter and a group of 30 UDT/SEAL forces.

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14. ROK Peacekeeping Operations

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "KOREA TO SEND 1,000 TROOPS FOR PKO", Seoul, 2009/12/31) reported that the ROK plans to send more than 1,000 troops to participate in U.N. peacekeeping operations (PKO) in 2010, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said on December 31. "Given its international status, it is appropriate to send more than 1,000 troops to PKOs," a ministry official said. He said that disputed areas in Africa were being reviewed for operations, but details on the exact numbers and locations will be determined after consultations with the U.N.

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15. ROK Climate Change

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "KOREA TO INTRODUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TRADING IN 2010", Seoul, 2009/12/29) reported that the National Assembly approved a bill Tuesday to introduce emissions permit trading, often called carbon dioxide permit trading. Under the measure, companies or other entities engaged in the manufacturing of goods are required to comply with binding rules on the amount of pollutants that they can emit. Those entities can buy or sell permits to one another to meet the requirements.

Korea Herald ("KOREA RANKS LOWEST IN SUPPLY RATIO OF RENEWABLE ENERGY", Seoul, 2009/12/31) reported that the supply ratio of renewable energy in the ROK was the lowest among the 30 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, data provided by

Statistics Korea showed Thursday. According to the data , the ratio of renewable energy supplied in the ROK was 1.4 percent of total energy production in 2007.

Yonhap ("KOREA'S CARBON EMISSIONS ROSE 2.9% IN 2007", Seoul, 2009/12/28) reported that the ROK's emissions of greenhouse gas rose 2.9 percent from a year earlier in 2007, government statistics showed on December 28, nearly three times faster than the growth rate of 2006. The Ministry of Knowledge Economy said the 2007 data was based on a calculating method required by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The data showed Korea's emissions of greenhouse gas stood at 620 million metric tons in 2007, compared with 602 million metric tons in 2006.

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16. ROK Nuclear Exports

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "KOREA WINS \$40 BIL. UAE NUCLEAR DEAL", Seoul, 2009/12/27) reported that a consortium led by the Korea Electric Power Corp. won a \$40 billion contract on December 27 to build nuclear power plants in the United Arab Emirates. It is the largest-ever energy deal awarded in the Middle East. The deal with the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corp. marks the first nuclear technology export for the ROK.

Korea Times (Lee Tae-hoon, "KEPCO BIDDING FOR \$20 BILLION NUCLEAR PLANT DEAL WITH TURKEY", Seoul, 2010/12/27) reported that the ROK government is pushing for a major nuclear plant construction deal with Turkey, a Korea Electric Power Corp. (KEPCO) official said on November 28. "KEPCO is in talks with Turkey for the construction of up to four light-water type power reactors, the same type scheduled to be built in the UAE," said the official. Each reactor is expected to cost \$5 billion.

Donga Ilbo ("SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN NUKE POWER SOUGHT BY 2012", Seoul, 2009/12/29) reported that the ROK Knowledge Economy Ministry said on December 28, "To successfully build the UAE nuclear power plants and prepare the full-fledged export of Korean nuclear technology, we will devise follow-up measures including technological independence, acquisition and cultivation of professionals in nuclear reactor technology, and preparation of a plan on assisting the export of nuclear reactors. They will be announced next month." The government plans to develop technologies that have yet to be fully developed domestically, including the design of nuclear reactor code, and secure independence in the field by 2012.

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17. ROK Environment

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "KOREA TO EXPORT 'GREEN GROWTH' PROGRAMS", Seoul, 2010/12/30) reported that the ROK government-proposed bill on green growth plans was approved by the National Assembly Tuesday. "The legislation is a big step forward for the government. We will focus on laying the groundwork for making Korea a global leader in the green growth sector," said Kim Sang-hyup, secretary for future and vision. "It is meaningful in that many countries, including the United States, Japan, China and India, have not yet set up similar laws. Korea's Green Growth

Law will be an example for them."

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18. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Yomiuri Shimbun ("HIGH SCHOOL MANUAL OMITTS DISPUTE OVER TAKESHIMA", Tokyo, 2009/12/26) reported that a new instruction manual for high school social studies classes does not mention the territorial dispute with the ROK over the Dokdo/Takeshima islets. The Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Ministry presented the manual explaining its new teaching guidelines for high school curriculums to officials of prefectural boards of education on December 25. The new guidelines will take effect in the 2013 academic year.

Korea Times (Kim Sue-young, "DOKDO TESTS KOREA-JAPAN TIES AGAIN", Seoul, 2010/12/25) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan called in Japanese Ambassador to Seoul Toshinori Shigeie to deliver a message of protest against Japan's plan to teach its students about its claim to sovereignty over the Dokdo/Takeshima islets, according to a ministry official Friday. "No matter what claim Tokyo makes, our government stresses once again that there is no territorial dispute between the two sides," foreign ministry spokesman Moon Tae-young said. Japan released a teaching manual for high school teachers which did not name Dokdo/Takeshima in its description of sovereignty claims, but suggested helping students to comprehend territorial issues using middle school curricula.

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19. ROK-Japan Relations

Asahi Shimbun ("SIA SENT WARTIME RECORDS ON KOREANS", Tokyo, 2009/12/31) reported that the Social Insurance Agency sent copies of pension records to the ROK government for 4,727 Koreans forced to work in Japan during World War II, sources said Tuesday. However, the agency said it did not look at how long each individual had paid into the system, and so their eligibility to collect withdrawal allowances from Japan is yet to be determined.

Donga Ilbo ("ANTI-JAPANESE SENTIMENT EASING IN S.KOREA: POLL", Seoul, 2010/01/01) reported that the Korea Research Center asked 1,000 ROK men and women nationwide on their perceptions of Japan. According to the survey, 35.9 percent said they hate Japan while 10.8 percent said they like it. The remaining 52 percent said they neither hate nor like Japan. Given that 63.4 percent of Koreans said they hated Japan in a joint survey conducted by The Dong-A Ilbo and the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun in March 2005, anti-Japanese sentiment in the ROK has markedly eased.

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20. USJ Base Relocation

Yomiuri Shimbun ("U.S. FORCES TO REPAIR FUTENMA RUNWAYS", Tokyo, 2009/12/30) reported that the public affairs office of the U.S. Marine Corps in Okinawa Prefecture announced December

27 that the marine corps would begin on January 10 repairing the runways at its Futenma Air Station in Ginowan. The repair work will last for about three months, during which time airplanes will be temporarily moved to U.S. Kadena Air Station. An officer in the section said repairs had been postponed under the assumption that Futenma Air Station's land would be returned in 2014, but the marine corps became unable to wait further because significantly more time than predicted had passed without the construction of the alternative facility.

Yomiuri Shimbun ("PM: FUTENMA TO GUAM MOVE 'DIFFICULT'", Tokyo, 2009/12/27) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said December 26 the idea of moving a U.S. airfield in Okinawa to Guam was difficult, making it more likely that the U.S. Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station will be relocated within Japan. Hatoyama said: "There might have been a time when we should have considered transferring the functions of the Futenma airfield to Guam. Thinking realistically, however, it would be impossible from the standpoint of deterrence to relocate all its functions to Guam."

Asahi Shimbun ("FUTENMA AIR STATION TO STAY PUT?", Tokyo, 2010/01/01) reported that Japanese government officials have floated the idea of keeping the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture, but transferring some of its helicopter drills to a remote island. The candidate islands are Iejima, 9 kilometers northwest of the Okinawa main island, and Shimojishima, about 300 kilometers southwest of the main island.

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21. Japan Climate Change

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT TARGETS AT LEAST 20% RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2020", Tokyo, 2009/12/28) reported that the Japanese government aims to have solar power and other forms of renewable energy account for at least 20 percent of the nation's total energy generation by 2020, Environment Minister Sakihito Ozawa said. Ozawa said the government would specify this goal in a basic bill on measures to tackle global warming that is scheduled to be submitted to the ordinary Diet session next year.

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22. US-PRC Relations

Washington Post (John Pomfret, "U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS TO FACE STRAINS, EXPERTS SAY", Washington, 2010/01/03) reported that the Barack Obama administration is expected to approve the sale of several billion dollars in Black Hawk helicopters and anti-missile batteries to Taiwan early this year, possibly accompanied by a plan gauging design and manufacturing capacity for diesel-powered submarines. The president is also preparing to meet the Dalai Lama. "The U.S.-China relationship is now far broader and deeper than any one issue alone," said Ben Rhodes, a deputy national security adviser. "We will have disagreements . . . but we have demonstrated that we will work together on critical global and regional issues, such as economic recovery, nuclear proliferation and climate change, because doing so is in our mutual interest."

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23. PRC-ASEAN Trade Relations

BBC News (Andrew Walker, "CHINA AND ASEAN FREE TRADE DEAL BEGINS", 2010/01/01) reported that a new free trade area came into effect on Friday, incorporating the PRC and the six founding members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean). They plan to eliminate tariffs on 90% of imported goods. In terms of population it will be the largest trade area in the world, with nearly 1.9 billion people, and it includes some of the leading export driven economies.

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24. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Associated Press ("XINJIANG ENACTS A CURB ON DISSENT", 2010/12/31) reported that the government of Xinjiang said Thursday that it had adopted what appeared to be a sweeping law barring the spread of views deemed to threaten national unity. The government said on its Web site that the measure, a vaguely described law on "education for ethnic unity in Xinjiang," was adopted Tuesday by the local legislature and would take effect in February.

Reuters (Ben Blanchard, "CHINA SEES LONG-TERM STABILITY STRUGGLE IN XINJIANG", Beijing, 2010/01/03) reported that Wang Lequan, Xinjiang's Communist Party chief, said there would be no let up in the fight against the separatists, nor would the government relax its grip. "Nothing can be done if there is no stability in Xinjiang. The struggle against separatism and separatists is long, complex and acute," the official Xinjiang Daily paraphrased Wang as telling police late last month. "Unswervingly follow the line that stability trumps all ... (which) is the main task and number one responsibility," he added.

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO LIFT INTERNET, PHONE BANS IN XINJIANG: STATE MEDIA", Beijing, 2009/12/29) reported that the PRC plans to restore online access and lift a ban on text messages and international calls in Xinjiang, Xinhua news agency said Tuesday. It quoted the regional government as saying it had restored access to part of the wire's website as well as parts of the website of the state-run People's Daily newspaper. "And according to relevant circumstances, (the government) will gradually restore access to other websites and Internet services, and open up mobile text messages and international long-distance phone services," the report said.

Associated Press (Gillian Wong, "CHINA JAILS SENIOR TIBETAN LAMA FOR 8 1/2 YEARS", Beijing, 2009/12/31) reported that a court in southwestern Sichuan province convicted Phurbu Tsering Rinpoche, who headed a convent in Ganzi, a predominantly Tibetan prefecture in the province, to 8 1/2 years in jail for illegal land occupation and ammunition possession, Beijing-based attorney Jiang Tianyong said. The sentence was handed down Dec. 23, eight months after the monk first went on trial in April, after authorities said they found a pistol, more than 100 bullets under a bed in his living room. His lawyers said he was forced into making a confession following a four-day police interrogation and threats to detain his family.

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25. Cross-Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN LEADER VOWS NOT TO SEEK INDEPENDENCE", Taipei, 2010/01/01) reported that Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou on Friday renewed his pledge not to seek formal independence for the island. "At the present stage any radical political choice, whether it be unification or independence, would trigger serious confrontation and turbulence," Ma said in his New Year's address. "I insist on maintaining the situation of 'no unification, no independence, no use of force' to promote cross-strait exchanges and cooperation ... for peaceful developments in the Taiwan Strait," he said.

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN'S MA URGES BEIJING ON DISSIDENTS: REPORT", Taipei, 2009/12/26) Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou has called on Chinese authorities to "tolerate" political opponents, the Liberty Times reported Sunday. "Pursuing democracy and human rights has been a persistent goal of my political career and ...since I took the office last year," Ma said. Ma "called on Beijing to tolerate those people who voice their opinions in a peaceful manner," during a trip to central Taiwan Saturday, the report said.

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26. PRC Military

Reuters ("CHINESE ADMIRAL FLOATS IDEA OF OVERSEAS NAVAL BASES", Beijing, 2009/12/30) reported that reflecting on the hardships endured by PRC patrol ships in the anti-piracy effort, Rear Admiral Yin Zhou floated the idea of bases abroad to support the vessels. "This is entirely a matter for the country's foreign policy circles, but I feel that would be appropriate if we could have a relatively stable, fixed base for supplies and maintenance," said Yin, who is director of an advisory committee for the PRC navy's drive to upgrade information technology. "I think countries near any relatively long-term supply bases established by China, and other countries participating in the escort mission, could understand," he said, adding that would be more affordable than re-supplying via ship on the high seas.

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27. PRC Anti-Piracy

Xinhua ("HIJACKED CHINESE BULK CARRIER RESCUED", Beijing, 2009/12/28) reported that a hijacked PRC bulk carrier and 25 Chinese crew members aboard were successfully rescued at 3 a.m. on Dec. 28, according to the PRC Marine Search and Rescue Center. After the rescue mission, PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said that "De Xin Hai", the hijacked vessel, has been under protection of a PRC naval escort fleet.

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28. PRC Climate Change

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA ADOPTS LAW TO BOOST RENEWABLE ENERGY INDUSTRY",

Beijing, 2009/12/26) reported that the PRC national assembly Saturday adopted a law supporting its renewable energy industry. The new law obliges electricity grid companies to buy all the power produced by renewable sources. It also empowers the State Council's energy department, the electricity regulatory agency and its finance departments to determine the amount of renewable energy available in the country's overall power generating capacity.

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