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Contents in this Issue:

- I. NAPSNet
 - [1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
 - [2. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
 - [3. Inter-Korean Relations](#)
 - [4. DPRK-Japan Relations](#)
 - [5. DPRK Arms Exports](#)
 - [6. DPRK Economy](#)
 - [7. DPRK Energy Supply](#)
 - [8. DPRK Leadership](#)
 - [9. DPRK Food Supply](#)
 - [10. ROK Nuclear Energy](#)
 - [11. ROK Military Exports](#)
 - [12. ROK Politics](#)
 - [13. ROK Climate Change](#)
 - [14. Japan-US Relations](#)
 - [15. USFJ Base Relocation](#)
 - [16. Japan Politics](#)

- [17. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute](#)
- [18. Indo-Japanese Relations](#)
- [19. Sino-Indian Relations](#)
- [20. PRC Territorial Disputes](#)
- [21. US and Cross Strait Relations](#)
- [22. Hong Kong Government](#)
- [23. PRC Internet](#)
- [24. PRC Environment](#)
- [25. Russian Far East Energy Exports](#)
- II. PRC Report
 - [26. PRC Environment](#)
 - [27. PRC Energy Supply](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA SAYS DIALOGUE WITH N. KOREA IN 2010 SHOULD HELP DENUCLEARIZE PYONGYANG", 2010/01/04) reported that ROK Unification Minister Hyun In-taek said that dialogue between the two Koreas should bring about a "turning point" this year in the solution of the DPRK nuclear problem. "Among others, a turning point in resolving the North Korean nuclear problem should be created through productive inter-Korean dialogue," he said. He also called for greater regional cooperation to help end hostility on the peninsula. "People's hope for reunification should be brought together, while we must expand at full speed cooperation with neighboring countries to form consensus on it," he said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA'S LAVROV SAYS SIX-PARTY TALKS WITH N.KOREA 'MANDATORY'", 2009/12/28) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that circumstances for the resumption of talks with the DPRK on its controversial nuclear program have improved. "The resumption of six-party talks is mandatory, and now circumstances for holding them are a bit better than earlier," Lavrov said. "We consider it necessary to discuss all questions that arise in a particular

format, taking into consideration the resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council remain in force," he said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. Inter-Korean Relations

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA CALLS ON NORTH TO SEARCH FOR WAR DEAD", Seoul, 2010/01/04) reported that the ROK 's president proposed a humanitarian project with rival DPRK on Monday under which the two states would cooperate in repatriating remains of tens of thousands of soldiers killed during the 1950-53 Korean War . " South Korea will not forget those who gave their lives on foreign soil," Lee Myung-bak said. He said the recovery project would be an appropriate way to mark the 60th anniversary of the start of the war.

Yonhap ("SEOUL SHOULD SEEK SUMMIT WITH N.K.: KIDA", Seoul, 2010/01/03) reported that the Korea Institute for Defense Analysis said Sunday in its report on security issues facing the Korean Peninsula that the ROK should seek "various contacts" with the DPRK, including a third inter-Korean summit, to move forward with the "grand bargain" plan proposed by President Lee Myung-bak last year. KIDA expressed skepticism that ongoing multilateral efforts aimed at denuclearizing North Korea would reach a breakthrough this year, but underscored the need to maintain the process of negotiations that will ultimately contribute to the establishment of a peace regime.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "TWO N. KOREANS RESCUED IN EAST SEA TO BE REPATRIATED: OFFICIALS", Seoul, 2010/01/05) reported that the ROK said Tuesday it will repatriate two DPRK fishermen who were rescued earlier this week after their boat had drifted south of the East Sea border. The fishermen were spotted on January 3 by coastguard 48 kilometers northeast of the Dokdo islets, Chun Hae-sung, spokesman for the Unification Ministry, told reporters. "The two men were fishing before their boat drifted. They have expressed their desire to return home during questioning by our authorities," Chun said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. DPRK-Japan Relations

Kyodo News ("N. KOREA URGES PRO-PYONGYANG BODY IN JAPAN TO HELP IMPROVE TIES", 2010/01/02) reported that the DPRK's No. 2 leader urged the pro- Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, or Chongryon, in a New Year's letter to "positively contribute to" improving bilateral relations with Japan based on the spirit of the Pyongyang Declaration . It was the first time since a New Year's letter to Chongryon in 2003 that Kim Yong Nam has referred to the declaration, raising speculations that Pyongyang may have become more interested in Japan 's DPRK policy under the government of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, who took office in September. Chongryon added that it will make efforts to get Japan to lift the ban on the Mangyongbong-92, a ferry linking the DPRK and Japan, to enter Japanese ports as part of what Pyongyang says are "unjust sanctions" imposed by Tokyo .

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. DPRK Arms Exports

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN ARMS 'SOLD TO CONGOLESE INSURGENTS'", 2009/12/24) reported that the DPRK smuggled about 3,400 tons of weapons into the Democratic Republic of Congo in the midst of a civil war there in January, with some of them going to Congolese insurgents or nearby countries, VOA quoted a UN official as saying. Christian Dietrich, a member of the UN Security Council committee investigating Congo, told VOA that the DPRK ship Birobong arrived in the port of Boma, Congo on Jan. 21, where it unloaded some 3,400 tons of weapons, 100 times the amount seized in Thailand earlier this month. the DPRK in May also sent military instructors to train Congolese government soldiers for about four weeks.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. DPRK Economy

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA TRIES TO BRING LIFE TO FAILED TRADE ZONE", 2010/01/04) reported that reclusive DPRK upgraded the status of a city it has designated as a foreign investment zone, in what may be another in a series of attempts by the destitute state to regain control of the faltering economy. "The city of Rason has become a special city," the DPRK's KCNA news agency said in a brief dispatch on Monday. Rason, also known as Rajin-Songbong, was designated by North Korea as a free trade zone in 1991.

Yonhap ("N.K. FIGUREHEAD SEES THREATS IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD", Seoul, 2009/12/29) reported that Charles Boyd, president of Business Executives for National Security, a nonpartisan Washington-based organization, led a group of U.S. businessmen to Pyongyang in December to meet with Kim Yong-nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, and other officials. "Kim Yong-nam, president of the Supreme People's Assembly, told him how threatened North Korea felt by its neighbors," said a report carried by the Web site North Korean Economy Watch. A retired U.S. Air Force four-star general, Boyd told the Web site, "To the extent that I could, I think I tried to relieve him of some of his anxiety about the external threats to the country."

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. DPRK Energy Supply

Xinhua News ("DPRK TOP LEADER TOURS CONSTRUCTION SITE OF HYDROPOWER PROJECT", Pyongyang, 2010/01/04) reported that Kim Jong-Il, top leader of the DPRK, has recently paid a visit to the construction site of a hydropower station in northern Jagang province, the official KCNA news agency reported. KCNA said Kim, braving temperatures as low as minus 30 degrees centigrade, toured the Huichon Hydropower Station, which will be the largest one the DPRK has built in 20 years. KCNA, giving no date for the visit, said Kim called on the construction workers to bring into full play the "Huichon Speed," a revolutionary spirit created by the workers, and complete the large project in two or three years.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. DPRK Leadership

Korea Herald (Kim So-hyun, "N.K. POWER TRANSFER ANNOUNCEMENT LIKELY", Seoul, 2010/01/03) reported that the DPRK media highlighted the "morning star," a nickname for Kim Jong-il's apparent heir, in their New Year's Day meteorological reports. "A bright full moon shined through the night in the skies above Mt. Baekdu, marking the maximum distance of vision until dawn came," the Korean Central News Agency and the Korean Central Broadcasting Station said on January 2. "Venus, also known as the 'morning star,' shed an unusually bright light above the Chonji before sunrise." They also described this year as "a revolutionary year that will be long remembered in the nation's history for its auspicious event" in the same meteorological reports, suggesting Jong-eun's status as the successor may become official this year.

Yonhap ("KIM JONG-IL CONDUCTS ABOUT 200 GUIDANCE TOURS THIS YEAR: KCNA", Seoul, 2009/12/27) reported that leader DPRK Kim Jong-il conducted about 200 field guidance tours of local farms and military camps in 2009, the Korean Central News Agency said Saturday, marking the highest number of public appearances he has made since coming to power. "It was a hard work unprecedented in the history and a partisan long march," the KCNA said, adding that the increased appearances indicated that Kim strove to solve issues pertaining to the people's livelihoods.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. DPRK Food Supply

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA'S CLAIMS FOOD OUTPUT OF 5 MILLION TONS", 2009/12/26) reported that the DPRK informed the UN its food output this year was 5.01 million tons. The yield included 2.34 million tons of rice, 1.7 million tons of corn, 560,000 tons of potatoes, 240,000 tons of wheat and barley and 150,000 tons of beans. The figure represents an increase of 330,000 tons over the 4.68 million tons the DPRK claimed last year. The original estimate was about 4 million tons. The DPRK's rice harvest increased this year thanks to little harm from floods and droughts, according to DPRK sources. Corn output was poor due to cold-weather damage in the border region with the PRC and Kangwon Province.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. ROK Nuclear Energy

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL WANTS 'SOVEREIGNTY' IN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT", 2009/12/31) reported that the ROK should seek "peaceful nuclear sovereignty," Minister of Knowledge Economy Choi Kyung-hwan suggested, emancipating itself from tight US limits on what it can and cannot do in the field. "Korea's current know-how of nuclear processes is incomplete, and that should improve in the future," Choi said. He agreed that control of raw materials and reprocessing provisions in the Korea-US Atomic Energy Agreement are "excessive." The country could assert its sovereignty by reclaiming the right to reprocess spent fuel rods, which is restricted by the bilateral agreement. The other two areas are mining and enrichment of uranium, and making and use of nuclear fuel.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. ROK Military Exports

Yonhap (Shin Hae-in, "S. KOREA'S DEFENSE EXPORTS REACH US\$1.17 BLN IN 2009", Seoul, 2010/01/05) reported that ROK exports of defense products reached a record-high US\$1.17 billion last year, on the back of stable performances by smaller firms and diversification of sales items, the country's weapons procurement agency said Tuesday. With an increasing number of local firms joining in exports of defense items, the weapons agency said it plans to work on revising the country's defense industry law to prevent weapons from going into enemy states.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. ROK Politics

Yonhap ("LEE'S APPROVAL RATING TOPS 50%", Seoul, 2010/01/01) reported that a survey of 1,000 adults conducted by Donga Ilbo and Korea Research Center showed that as many as 51.6 percent of voters endorse ROK President Lee Myung-bak's current economic and social policies, the first time Lee's approval rating has entered the 50 percent range since April last year. Donga attributed Lee's upward popularity to the ROK's stabilizing economic situation and the clinching of a \$40 billion deal by ROK companies to build nuclear power plants in the United Arab Emirates.

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. ROK Climate Change

Korea Herald ("LEE, U.N. CHIEF AGREE TO COOPERATE FOR GLOBAL WARMING DEAL", Seoul, 2010/01/03) reported that President Lee Myung-bak and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon agreed to work together to forge a binding global warming deal in the New Year, the presidential office said Sunday. "The president called for adherence to the Copenhagen Accord and pledged to work with the U.N. to reach a binding deal when countries meet again in the Mexican capital," said Cheong Wa Dae spokeswoman Kim Eun-hye.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. Japan-US Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN LEADER WANTS EQUAL TIES WITH US", 2010/01/04) reported that Japan 's prime minister said he will press for more equal ties with Washington this year, the 50th anniversary of a joint security treaty that grants many special privileges to US troops stationed in the country. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama , in a New Year's speech shown live on national television, said he hopes the alliance will evolve to become more open and candid. It is important "for both sides to be able to firmly say what needs to be said, and to increase the relationship of trust," he said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. USFJ Base Relocation

The Asahi Shimbun ("HATOYAMA VOWS FUTENMA DECISION BY MAY", 2010/01/04) reported that declaring he had no intention of "wasting time," Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama reiterated Monday his government's intention to decide by May where to relocate the Futenma U.S. military airfield. Speaking at his first news conference of 2010, Hatoyama said the government has "firmly set a fixed target date" on deciding where to relocate the heliport functions of U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, situated in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture. "I am confident that people will feel that while it took a lot of time, the final outcome was good," Hatoyama said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. Japan Politics

Reuters ("JAPAN PM EYES CRUCIAL ELECTION AS PROBLEMS MOUNT", 2010/01/04) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama urged his party to go all out to win a vital upper house election this year, as economic and diplomatic woes erode support for his three-month-old administration. "This year is crucial," Hatoyama said in a brief speech. "We must win the upper house election," added the prime minister, flanked by party Secretary-General Ichiro Ozawa, a political mastermind many suspect is pulling policy strings. "I hope you will work as hard as you can with the sense that this is in a way the most important year in Japanese history."

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. Russo-Japanese Territorial Dispute

ITAR-TASS ("LAVROV CALLS FOR CONSTRUCTIVE SOLUTION TO RF-JAPANESE TERR DISPUTE", 2009/12/28) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said it was necessary to search for mutually acceptable ways to solve the territorial problem with Japan in a calm, constructive and benevolent atmosphere. Lavrov said Russia was ready to look for a non-standard solution to the territorial problem with Japan. "Special attention was riveted to a border treaty. We should search for mutually acceptable ways in a calm, constructive and benevolent atmosphere. It is necessary to intensify Russian-Japanese relations," Lavrov said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. Indo-Japanese Relations

Asahi Shimbun (Kyohei Matsuda, "MARITIME SECURITY AGREEMENT SIGNED", Tokyo, 2009/12/30) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and his Indian counterpart, Manmohan Singh, agreed Tuesday on an action plan for greater cooperation in maritime security. The agreement covers nine areas, including frequent discussions between the top officials of the two countries' foreign and defense ministries to strengthen cooperation to protect sea lanes in the Indian Ocean. The agreement also calls for maritime security dialogue and joint training exercises as well as cooperative measures to deal with natural disasters.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. Sino-Indian Relations

Press Trust of India ("INDIA CONCERNED ABOUT CHINA'S WEAPONS SUPPLY TO PAK: KRISHNA", 2010/01/03) reported that taking exception to the PRC's involvement in several projects in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), India on Sunday described it as "illegal" and said it has conveyed its concern over this as well as supply of PRC weapons to Pakistan. Despite differences on a host of issues with the PRC, External Affairs Minister S M Krishna who is expected to visit Beijing in April this year said the country did not see it in "antagonistic terms".

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. PRC Territorial Disputes

Agence France-Presse ("VIETNAM CONDEMNS CHINA'S ISLAND TOURISM PLANS", Hanoi, 2010/01/05) reported that Vietnam condemned what it says is a PRC plan to develop tourism on the disputed Paracel archipelago. The Paracels would be included in the PRC's plan to develop nearby Hainan island into an international tourist site, Vietnamese foreign ministry spokeswoman Nguyen Phuong Nga said in a statement late Monday. The PRC announced its intention on December 31, the ministry said. Nga demanded China immediately end the plan which "causes tension and further complicates the East Sea situation". On Tuesday, PRC foreign ministry spokeswoman Jiang Yu said Beijing had "taken note" of the Vietnamese protest. She added: "I want to reiterate that China has indisputable sovereignty over the Spratleys and the Paracels."

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. US and Cross Strait Relations

Kyodo News ("TAIWAN LEADER CALLS FOR CLOSER SECURITY TIES WITH JAPAN, U.S.", 2010/01/04) reported that Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou met with a former Japanese defense chief on Monday and expressed hope for closer cooperation with Japan and the United States on regional security, the presidential office said. "We hope we can cooperate more closely in this regard," Ma was quoted as telling former Japanese Defense Agency Director General Yoshinori Ono.

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. Hong Kong Government

The Los Angeles Times ("HONG KONG SEEKS DEMOCRACY", 2010/01/04) reported that thousands of Hong Kong residents marched to the PRC government's liaison office on Friday demanding that Beijing grant full democracy to the semiautonomous financial hub. Chanting "One man, one vote to choose our leader!" and clutching signs reading "Democracy now," the demonstrators set off from a crowded street in the heart of the central financial district. Some held aloft portraits of PRC dissident Liu Xiaobo, demanding his release after he was sentenced last week to 11 years on subversion charges. The sizable turnout for the New Year's Day protest -- police said 9,000 people took part -- was a boost to Hong Kong's political opposition, which is trying to reignite the

democracy movement at a time when residents are more preoccupied with economic issues.

[\(return to top\)](#)

23. PRC Internet

Reuters (Chris Buckley, "CHINA SAYS 5,394 ARRESTED IN INTERNET PORN CRACKDOWN", Beijing, 2009/12/31) reported that the PRC police said late on Thursday the crackdown on Internet pornography had brought 5,394 arrests and 4,186 criminal case investigations in 2009 -- a fourfold increase in the number of such cases compared with 2008. The announcement on the Ministry of Public Security's website said the drive would deepen in 2010. Police would "intensify punishments for Internet operations that violate laws and regulations", said the statement from the ministry's Internet security section. "Strengthen monitoring of information," it urged, "Press Internet service providers to put in place preventive technology."

[\(return to top\)](#)

24. PRC Environment

Bloomberg News ("CNPC SAYS FUEL SPILL IN YELLOW RIVER IS UNDER CONTROL", 2010/01/04) reported that China National Petroleum Corp. said it has stopped a diesel fuel leak that contaminated the Yellow River, the country's second longest and one of the main sources of drinking water in the north. The situation remains "serious" and more than 700 workers have been deployed by state-owned CNPC and the government to prevent the leak from spreading and for clean up operations, the PRC's largest oil company said today in a statement posted on its Web site. More than 100 metric tons of diesel spilled into tributaries of the river, China National Radio said today.

[\(return to top\)](#)

25. Russian Far East Energy Exports

RIA Novosti ("PUTIN SAYS NO PROBLEM WITH FILLING STRATEGIC ESPO PIPELINE", 2009/12/29) reported that Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said oil producers were lining up to pump their crude through an inaugurated strategic oil pipeline. On Monday, Putin officially launched the East-Siberia - Pacific Ocean (ESPO) oil pipeline and the first shipment of ESPO oil. "We are moving from excessive dependence on [oil] transiting countries," the premier said. The pipeline's first leg is designed to pump 30 million metric tons of Siberian oil to the PRC, Japan, and the ROK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

II. PRC Report

26. PRC Environment

Huigang communication ("CHINA RESTRICTS PRODUCTION OF TWO MINERALS OVER RESERVE,

ENVIRONMENT CONCERNS", 2010/01/04) reported that the PRC has begun to restrict the mining and production of refractory clay and fluorite over concerns about reserve decrease and environmental pollution, according to a notice posted on the central government's website Sunday.

[\(return to top\)](#)

27. PRC Energy Supply

China Securities News ("PETROLEUM RESERVE BASE UNDERWAY IN NW CHINA", 2009/12/31) reported that the PRC has launched the construction of a national petroleum reserve base in Yongdeng County of Lanzhou City, Gansu province. It has a capacity of three million cubic meters, said an official with Lanzhou Petrochemical Company of China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). Construction of the project, which started Tuesday, is expected to cost around 2.38 billion yuan.

China News Net ("CHINA TO BECOME THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST WIND POWER PRODUCER", 2009/12/31) reported that the PRC will become the world's third largest wind power producer this year, an official with the National Energy Administration said Wednesday. The country's installed wind power capacity would total 20 million kw this year. The capacity was 764,000 kw by the end of 2004 and increased to 12 million kw in 2008.

[\(return to top\)](#)

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