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MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Leadership

Agence France-Presse ("DPRK'S KIM INSPECTS ARTILLERY UNIT: STATE MEDIA", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has visited an artillery unit, the Korean Central News Agency said Monday. Kim watched a firing drill from an observation platform and met soldiers afterwards during the visit. The report did not specify when his trip took place. On Saturday it was reported that Kim inspected a tank unit in his first public appearance of the year.

Chosun Ilbo ("DPRK SHUFFLES ECONOMIC POSTS", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that DPRK state media reported that Kim Tae-bong was appointed new metal industry minister and Hur Tack new power industry minister. They replace Kim Sung-hyun and Pak Nam-chil. Kim Kyong-ok was newly-named first deputy director of the ruling party's Organization Guidance Department that controls the party, Army and administration and is headed by leader Kim Jong-il.

Telegraph (Richard Spencer, "KIM JONG-IL'S WOMEN BANNED FROM PLANNING SUCCESSION", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that Mr Kim is reluctant to allow any of his three sons access to the levers of power. He is said to be unimpressed with their political abilities. Mr Kim's sister, who is close to him and whose husband is one of the most powerful men in the regime, is said to be supportive of the dictator's oldest son, Jong-nam. One report in ROK media suggests his personal assistant, widely believed to be his mistress, backs one of the other two. But none of these women has dared to propose any of the three for power, and Mr Kim himself is said to be resolved to prevent either them or anyone else from raising the subject until 2012.

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2. DPRK Economy

Agence France Press ("DPRK HOLDS RALLY TO PROMOTE CAMPAIGN TO REPAIR ECONOMY", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that DPRK Monday held a mass rally in the capital Pyongyang, vowing to launch a new year drive to rebuild its economy, state media said Monday. The rally drew about 100,000 people including top government and ruling party officials, according to the DPRK's state broadcasting stations monitored by ROK's Yonhap news agency. DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il didn't appear at the event.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Tests

Global Security Newswire ("ROK WARNS OF SECOND DPRK NUCLEAR TEST", Washington, 2009/01/05) reported that ROK warned last week that the DPRK might threaten to conduct another nuclear blast or test additional ballistic missiles in an effort to strengthen its position in negotiations over its nuclear program, the Korea Times reported. A follow-up to Pyongyang's October 2006 nuclear test could be an attempt to move away from six-nation talks in favor of direct diplomacy with the incoming Obama administration in the United States, according to a report from the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, an organization linked to the ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry.

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4. US DPRK Policy

JoongAng Ilbo (Jung Ha-won , "OBAMA'S DPRK TEAM BEGINNING TO TAKE SHAPE", 2009/01/05) reported that as the Barack Obama administration takes shape ahead of the January inauguration, the president-elect and his national security team are shaping future DPRK policy. Prominent players from Obama's presidential campaign, liberal Washington think tanks and national security advisers from the Bill Clinton era are considered likely candidates to both lead efforts to denuclearize the DPRK and handle diplomacy with all of East Asia and the Pacific region. The U.S. State Department may create a new office exclusively for DPRK's nuclear issues and designate a special envoy to handle the matter. Christopher Hill is the most likely candidate to fill the new post

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News Service (Kim Hyun, "ROK TO BUILD NURSERY FOR DPRK MOTHERS", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that ROK will build a day-care center for DPRK children whose mothers work at a joint industrial park, Seoul officials said Monday. About 300 DPRK nursing mothers are currently employed by ROK firms operating in the inter-Korean complex.

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6. Sino-DPRK Relations

JoongAng Ilbo (Jeong Yong-soo, "PRC AND DPRK IN NEW DIPLOMATIC DANCE", Seoul,

2009/01/03) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and PRC president Hu Jintao sent celebratory New Year's messages to each other and declared 2009 as the "year of friendship" to mark the 60th anniversary of the two countries' diplomatic relations, according to the two countries' state-run media. Chun Hyun-joon, senior researcher at Korea Institute for National Unification, said the DPRK plans to use its close political relations with Beijing as a "negotiating card" during the upcoming nuclear talks with Washington. Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korean studies professor at Dongguk University, stated, "The North is girding for a big play with the Obama administration, and it could get much help from China not only in terms of cementing the regime's security but also in obtaining economic aid."

China Daily ("CHINA COAL MINER VENTURES INTO DPRK", 2008/12/26) reported that Henan Yima Coal Mining Group, a major coal miner in Central PRC's Henan province, plans to invest in a 10-million-ton coal mine and a 1.2-million-ton coal chemical project in the DPRK, the company said. Yima Group reached an agreement on Dec 12 with the Anju Coal Mining Association, the DPRK'S largest coal mining enterprise with nearly ten coal mines, to develop the two projects, according to a statement on its website. Yima Group will hold controlling stakes in both projects according to the agreement.

Yonhap News ("FLOW OF N. KOREAN DEFECTORS SLOWS IN 2008 DUE TO CHINA'S BORDER CONTROL", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that about 2,800 DPRK defectors entered the ROK in 2008, the Unification Ministry said on Monday, reflecting a slowdown that was partly caused by tightened border controls in the PRC. The PRC tightened control of its border with the DPRK in and around the Summer Olympics, prompting a sharp drop in the number of the North Koreans successively making it out of the country in the latter half of the year. "The slowdown was possibly affected by China's domestic and foreign policy among many other reasons," a Unification Ministry official said.

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7. ROK Environment

Yonhap News Service ("PRESIDENT URGES FIRMS TO INVEST IN 'GREEN TECHNOLOGY'", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak called on the country's business firms on Monday to invest in developing environmentally friendly technologies, saying green technology will give them significant competitiveness once the ongoing economic crisis ends. "There is always an end to a crisis. And that is why I believe we must also prepare for what comes next while working to overcome the difficulty that faces us today," the president said in a meeting with the ROK Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

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8. ROK Government

Yonhap News Service (Tony Chang, "OPPOSITION PARTIALLY DISBANDS SIT-DOWN, MAKES ROOM FOR TALKS", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that members of the Democratic Party (DP) ended their sit-in protest at the entrance of the main hall of the assembly earlier in the day on National Assembly Speaker Kim Hyong-o's promise Sunday that he would not invoke his authority to put those bills to a vote without cross-party compromise. DP lawmakers, however, were still occupying

the assembly's main hall. Some 20 aides and staff members of the minor Democratic Labor Party, refusing to end their sit-in at the entrance, were frog-marched out of the building by security officials.

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9. ROK Energy

Xinhua ("ROK ANNOUNCES MASSIVE INVESTMENT PLAN INTO OVERSEAS ENERGY DEVELOPMENT", Seoul, 2009/01/05) reported that ROK government said Monday that ROK companies are planning to increase overseas investment on energy development projects this year by over 20 percent. According to the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, about 7 billion U.S. dollars is expected to be invested in developing energy sources this year, up 22.8 percent from the 5.7 billion-dollar spent in 2008. The ministry said it would accelerate efforts to purchase stakes in global oil fields in return for providing world-class drill ships and other shipbuilding technology to oil-producing countries.

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10. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Chosun Ilbo ("COAST GUARD MOOTS DOKDO FORWARD BASE", 2009/01/05) reported that the Korea Coast Guard wants to build a forward base on Ulleung Island to respond rapidly to any emergency on the Dokdo islets that would require the dispatch of heavier vessels. The Coast Guard on Monday said it will build a special pier there as part of the Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs Ministry's phase-2 project for Ulleung Island's Sadong Port.

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11. ROK-Japan Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPANESE FEEL FRIENDLIER TOWARD KOREANS THAN VICE VERSA", 2009/01/05) reported that most South Koreans feel unfriendly toward Japan with 62 percent, far outnumbering those who do, a poll finds. But 50 percent of Japanese feel friendly toward Koreans, as against 41 percent who do not. The figures are down from a poll conducted in the wake of the 2002 World Cup in the two countries, the proportion of Koreans who felt friendly toward Japan was 42 percent, and that of Japanese who felt friendly toward Koreans was 77 percent. That can probably be traced to recurring disagreements over Korea's Dokdo islets, which Japan is trying to claim.

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12. Japan Energy

Bloomberg (Jason Clenfield, "TOKYO TO PROVIDE TAX CUTS FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION", 2009/01/05) reported that Tokyo's metropolitan government may provide tax cuts for small and medium-sized companies that invest in energy-saving equipment, according to the Yomiuri newspaper. The tax breaks, expected to total about 25 billion yen (\$270 million) over five years from

April, would be available to about 40,000 companies that have invested in energy-saving appliances.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT TO HUNT FOR MINERALS, RARE RESOURCES", 2009/01/05) reported that the government compiled a draft plan on the development of ocean energy and mineral resources that calls for starting research on resources, including rare metals, from fiscal 2009, and completing it within 10 years in a bid to secure such resources amid intensifying international competition, according to sources. Under the plan, the government plans to identify the geographical distribution of energy resources, such as petroleum and natural gas, and rare metals, including rare earths used mainly in electronic products, the sources said. It also intends to assess the volume of deposits of such resources in waters surrounding the nation, they added.

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13. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("ASO IN TROUBLE AS DIET CONVENES",) reported that the Diet session opened amid ominous signs that Prime Minister Taro Aso faces growing unrest from within his own Liberal Democratic Party. Yoshimi Watanabe threatened to quit the party unless Aso dissolves the chamber soon and reverses policy on a controversial plan to pay out 2 trillion yen in cash handouts to households. While Aso must surely be concerned about the possibility of more LDP Diet members lining up behind Watanabe, his priority for this Diet session will be early passage of a second supplementary fiscal 2008 budget as well as the fiscal 2009 budget. But in achieving that goal the government might be forced to resort to high-handed parliamentary tactics that would only inflame the opposition further.

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14. Sino-Japan Territorial Dispute

Agence France Press ("JAPAN SAYS 'CANNOT ACCEPT' PRC GAS DEVELOPMENT", Tokyo, 2009/01/05) reported that Japan said Monday it "cannot accept" PRC's development of a gas field near a disputed part of the East China Sea after Beijing insisted it was acting within its own waters. "The area should be under negotiations. The Japanese government expresses its regret that China is unilaterally developing the field," Chief Cabinet Secretary Takeo Kawamura told reporters.

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15. Sino-Russian Space Cooperation

United Press International ("CHINA-RUSSIA MARS MISSION SET FOR TAKEOFF", Hong Kong, 2009/01/05) reported that the first joint PRC-Russian mission to Mars is set to take off in October and reach the red planet in August 2010, an exploration project designer said. A Russian Zenit rocket will launch a PRC Yinghuo-1 satellite and a Russian Phobos-Grunt unmanned lander, Chen Changya, chief designer of the PRC-Russia Mars exploration project, told Hong Kong's Wen Wei Po newspaper. Phobos-Grunt is expected to study Mars from orbit, including its atmosphere and dust storms, plasma and radiation, before landing on Phobos, one of Mars' two small moons.

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16. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN BELIEVES CHINA MAY CUT MISSILES AIMED AT IT", Taipei, 2009/01/05) reported that the PRC may be planning to slowly reduce the number of missiles aimed at Taiwan in a significant show of goodwill toward the self-ruled island, a Taiwanese military official said Sunday. But Beijing may be planning to remove some of its approximately 1,300 short-range and mid-range missiles aimed at Taiwan, which is about 160 km (99 miles) away, said island defense ministry spokeswoman Chih Yu-lan.

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17. PRC Maritime Security

CARGONews Asia ("CHINA USES PORTS TO PROTECT TRADE LANES", 2009/01/05) reported that a port being built in southern Sri Lanka near the main shipping route across the Indian Ocean is part of a PRC effort to project influence and protect vital trade lanes, according to a US military study, Asia Pulse reported. The study lists the commercial-shipping container port at Hambantota being built by PRC contractors as part of PRC's so-called "string of pearls" strategy to gain political influence and be able to project power in the Indian Ocean region. Other facilities listed in the report are Pakistan's Gwadar port, near the mouth of the Persian Gulf, as a naval base and surveillance facility, and the Woody Island airfield in the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea.

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18. Sino-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("PRC'S HU TELLS BUSH SINO-US TIES WILL REMAIN STRONG: GOVT", Beijing, 2009/01/05) reported that the PRC foreign ministry said that President Hu Jintao told his US counterpart George W. Bush by telephone late Sunday that bilateral ties would remain strong. "In a new historical period, China and the United States will definitely be able to stick firmly to the overall direction of a relationship characterised by constructive cooperation," said Hu. "This will help develop a Sino-US relationship that is healthy and stable, comprehensive and deep," he said,

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19. PRC Bird Flu

LA Times (Mary Engel, "NEW BIRD FLU CASES REVIVE FEARS OF HUMAN PANDEMIC", 2009/01/04) reported that the deadly H5N1 virus has resurfaced in poultry in Hong Kong for the first time in six years. The government ordered the slaughter of 80,000 fowl at two large farms after the latest outbreak killed 60 chickens at one of the farms. Investigators are looking for the source of the infection and testing the effectiveness of the vaccine used since 2003 to inoculate chickens, geese and ducks against H5N1.

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20. PRC Internet Censorship

Financial Times (Kathrin Hille, "PRC STEPS UP INTERNET CENSORS' SCRUTINY", Beijing , 2009/01/05) reported that the PRC government is stepping up internet scrutiny by equipping its web censors with more advanced software, according to Beijing TRS Information Technology, the PRC's leading provider of search technology and text mining solutions. He Zhaohui, marketing manager at TRS, claimed that TRS is increasingly selling advanced text mining solutions enabling censors to monitor and forecast public opinion rather than take down dangerous talk after it happened.

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21. PRC Tibet Issue

Agence France Press ("PRC AIMING TO LURE THREE MILLION TOURISTS TO TIBET: STATE MEDIA", Beijing, 2009/01/05) reported that PRC has launched a campaign to attract three million tourists to Tibet this year, after deadly unrest saw a huge drop-off in visitors in 2008, state media reported on Monday. The aim of the government's campaign is to "restore the safe, civilised and healthy image of Tibet as a tourist destination", Xinhua said. Local authorities have earmarked 50 million yuan for promotions and 350 million yuan for tourist infrastructure.

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22. PRC Energy

Wall Street Journal ("PRC ACCELERATES FILLING UP ITS OIL RESERVES", 2009/01/05) reported that as the U.S. seeks to stockpile oil, PRC has been doing the same, observers say, and is expected to quicken the pace — a development that already may be helping to boost oil prices. PRC's top energy official, Zhang Guobao, head of the National Energy Administration, in the People's Daily newspaper said that PRC should take advantage of the falling global energy demand to increase its oil reserves. Mr Zhang said RPC will "encourage companies to utilize idle storage capacity to increase inventories."

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II. PRC Report

23. PRC Civil Society and Education

Guizhou Urban News ("VOLUNTEERS' NEW YEAR GUIZHOU PROVINCE ESTABLISHES TEENAGERS SOCIAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION", 2009/01/01) reported that on December 30, 2008, Guizhou provincial Teenagers Social Education Association was established in Guiyang city. More than 140 people have been absorbed as the first members. They are representatives of teenagers social education from all industries. The Association's main function is to optimize the social education environment of teenagers, carry out extensive social survey and find valuable projects for teenagers social education.

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24. PRC Civil Society

Farmer's Daily (Zheng Yingying, "AGRICULTURAL TOURISM ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED IN ZHEJIANG", 2009/01/01) reported that agricultural tourism is a new industry adapting to the consuming trend of urban and rural residents in recent years. Residents go to rural tourist attractions for leisure and tourism. The Association is set up to further promote the development of agricultural tourism and provide consultation, industrial guidance, industrial communication, scientific support and talent training to its members.

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