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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("JAPAN WELCOMES N. KOREA'S READINESS TO RETURN TO 6-WAY TALKS", Tokyo, 2009/10/06) reported that J apan welcomed that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il has referred to the possibility of his country's return to the stalled six-party talks for the first time since Pyongyang declared its withdrawal in April.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua News ("CHINA APPRECIATES DPRK'S COMMITMENT TO REALIZING DENUCLEARIZATION OF KOREAN PENINSULAR: FM ", Beijing, 2009/10/06) reported that the PRC expressed appreciation over the DPRK's commitment to the goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsular and its adherence to realizing the goal through multilateral dialogues including the six-party talks. The PRC has always supported the DPRK-U.S. bilateral dialogue aiming at increasing mutual understanding and trust, and believed all sides should adhere to the six-party talks and make joint efforts for the early resumption of the process, Ma said in a statement.

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3. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Itar-Tass ("RUSSIA WELCOMES INTENTION OF N KOREA, US TO HOLD DIALOGUE", Moscow, 2009/10/06) reported that Russia has welcomed as positive the intention of the DPRK and the US to

hold a bilateral dialogue as well as Pyongyang's readiness to resume the six-party talks on nuclear dossier, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexei Borodavkin told Itar-Tass. "We support the intention of North Korea and the United States to hold a bilateral dialogue as a prelude and a preparatory stage for resuming the six-party talks," he said. The diplomat noted that there was nothing exceptional in such contacts. "They have been held earlier within the framework of the six-party negotiating process. Such contacts exist not only between the U.S. and North Korea, but also between other negotiators," he said.

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4. Sino-DPRK Relations

The Financial Times (Christian Oliver, "CHINA EYES N KOREA'S MINERAL WEALTH", Seoul, 2009/10/06) reported that if resource-hungry PRC hopes revived camaraderie will grant it a large bite of the DPRK's massive untapped mineral wealth, analysts and diplomats warn, Beijing could be sorely disappointed. Trade with the PRC is growing, reaching $2.8bn last year from about $2bn in 2007. But military authorities in the DPRK are perceived as hostile to the changes in society and infrastructure that foreign investment could bring. "If the North opens its mineral resources to foreign countries, that is tantamount to taking a military, social and political gamble, jeopardising their security," said Lim Eul-chul, of Seoul's Institute of Far Eastern Studies. A ROK diplomat closely involved with nuclear talks doubted Pyongyang would allow the PRC to make big investments inside its border. "They cannot permit that kind of influence," he said.

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5. ROK on Sino-DPRK Relations

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "CHINA BRIEFS S. KOREA ON WEN'S TRIP TO PYONGYANG", Seoul, 2009/10/07) reported that the ROK was briefed by Beijing on PRC Premier Wen Jiabao's trip to the DPRK earlier this week, Seoul's foreign ministry said Wednesday, declining to give details. The ministry denied a media report that the ROK officially requested an explanation from the PRC on the possibility that Beijing's new economic cooperation deals with the DPRK made during Wen's trip could undermine the U.N. Security Council sanctions on Pyongyang.

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6. ROK, France on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap (Lee Chi-dong, "S. KOREAN FM, FRENCH ENVOY DISCUSS N. KOREAN ISSUE", Seoul, 2009/10/07) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan asked Jack Lang, French President Nicolas Sarkozy's special envoy on Pyongyang, Wednesday to step up bilateral cooperation in dealing with the DPRK. "Minister Yu explained the South Korean government's policy and position on the nuclear issue and South-North Korea relations and asked the special envoy to play a leading role in strengthening cooperative ties between South Korea and France for desirable North Korea policy," the ministry said in a press release.

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7. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Xinhua News ("S KOREA PLANS TO INCREASE BUDGET SPENDING BY 30% ON INTER-KOREAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION FOR 2010 ", Seoul, 2009/10/06) reported that the ROK government said it is planning to raise its budget spending on inter-Korean economic cooperation for 2010 by 30 percent from this year's. According to the Ministry of Strategy and Finance, it has planned for a budget spending amounting to 398.2 billion won (about 339.6 million U.S. dollars) for next year to support economic cooperation projects with the DPRK, up 30 percent from 304.6 billion won set aside for 2009. According to the ministry, 81.7 billion won of the planned budget will be used to improve the infrastructure in the joint Kaesong industrial park such as the construction of accommodation facilities and roads.

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8. Interdiction of DPRK Vessel

DongA Ilbo ("'SEIZED NK CONTAINERS HAD CHEMICAL WEAPONS ITEMS' ", 2009/10/06) reported that four DPRK containers seized in the ROK port of Busan last month had items related to chemical weapons, the Dong-A Ilbo has learned. The National Intelligence Service and the Korea Coast Guard seized the containers shipped by DPRK on a Panama-registered freighter Sept. 22. Speculation has grown that the items are probably clothing to protect against chemical weapons, but the ROK government has not officially confirmed or denied this.

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9. DPRK Leadership

Agence France-Presse ("KIM JONG-IL'S SON GETS PARTY JOB: LAWMAKER", Seoul, 2009/10/06) reported that the youngest son of the DPRK 's Kim Jong-Il has been given a post in the ruling communist party in preparation for his eventual takeover of the leadership, a ROK lawmaker said. Kim Jong-Un is expected to be officially named as successor to his father some time between 2010 and 2012, said legislator Yoon Sang-Hyun of the ruling Grand National Party . "The son has taken on a deputy director-level position in the Workers Party of Korea ," he told AFP, citing a confidential report he received from ROK government officials.

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10. DPRK Economy

Chosun Ilbo ("POVERTY PROMPTED ESCAPE OF 11 N.KOREANS", 2009/10/06) reported that all 11 North Koreans who arrived in the ROK by boat reportedly fled dire poverty at home. "In a joint government investigation, all 11 North Koreans testified that they escaped from the North because it was hard to make a living there. I understand that none of them had any political motivation," a government source said. "The 11 people are members of two families of six and five each. All of them said they want to defect to South Korea."

The Washington Post (Blaine Harden, "NORTH KOREAN PRISONS HAVE BECOME A SYSTEM OF EXTORTION, REFUGEES SAY", Tokyo, 2009/10/06) reported that the DPRK's infamous penal system, which for decades has silenced political dissent with slave labor camps, has evolved into a mechanism for extorting money from citizens trading in private markets, according to surveys of more than 1,600 DPRK refugees. Reacting to an explosive rise in market activity, the DPRK has criminalized everyday market behavior and created a new kind of gulag for those it deems economic criminals, according to a report on the refugee surveys. Yet if traders can pay bribes, security officials will often leave them alone, the report says. "This is a system for shaking people down," said Marcus Noland, co-author of the report and deputy director of the Washington-based Peterson Institute for International Economics.

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11. DPRK Food Supply

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA SUFFERS EXCESSIVE RISE IN FOOD PRICES: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/10/06) reported that the DPRK is suffering an excessive rise in food prices due to decreased international aid to the poverty-stricken country, a local research institute said. According to the Samsung Economic Research Institute, the price of rice in the DPRK hovered around 2,000 won per kilogram in August, a little less than the monthly average salary of 3,000 won for its urban workers. The price of corn averaged 1,000 won per kilogram, the research institute said. "North Korea is suffering an excessive rise in food prices due to a supply shortage," it said.

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12. US Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap News (Hwang Doo-hyong, "OBAMA URGED TO RESUME FOOD AID TO NORTH KOREA: NGO", Washington, 2009/10/06) reported that an Asian women's rights group called on the Barack Obama administration to immediately resume humanitarian aid to the DPRK to help relieve a food shortage for children, women and others in the DPRK. The Northeast Asian Women's Peace Conference made the policy recommendations to the Obama administration in a session held at George Washington University.

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13. USFK Base Realignment

Yonhap News (Sam Kim, "TWO U.S. BASES IN CENTRAL S. KOREA LIKELY TO CLOSE NEXT YEAR", Seoul, 2009/10/06) reported that t wo U.S. military bases in central ROK will likely close next year as part of ongoing plans to consolidate American forces here, their command said. As part of its global realignment plan, the U.S. is moving to relocate its forces to two modern bases under construction south of Seoul by 2016. The Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) said Tuesday in a news release that the closure of Camps Eagle and Long in the city of Wonju, 132km east of the ROK capital, "is expected to occur in 2010."

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14. ROK Environment

Korea Herald ("'4-RIVERS PROJECT WILL CAUSE WATER SHORTAGES'", 2009/10/06) reported that the four-river restoration project, actively pushed forward by President Lee Myung-bak, was a hot topic as the National Assembly entered its second day of government audits. While legislators belonging to the ruling Grand National Party emphasized that the project was essential for green growth, opposition party lawmakers argued that it would produce a shortage of drinking water and cause environmental damage. Reps. Won Hye-young, Kim Sang-hee and Kim Jae-yun of the main opposition Democratic Party, also members of the parliamentary environment committee, demanded an immediate stop to the scheme.

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15. Japan SDF Indian Ocean Mission

Kyodo News ("DEFENSE CHIEF DENIES CABINET DISCORD OVER JAPAN'S REFUELING MISSION", 2009/10/06) reported that Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said there is no discord among members of Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's Cabinet over whether to terminate Japan's ongoing refueling mission in support of U.S.-led antiterrorism operations in and around Afghanistan after a special law authorizing it expires Jan. 15. "For the Democratic Party of Japan, there is no option to enact a new law to continue the refueling mission," Kitazawa told a press conference.

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16. Japan SDF Iraq Role

Kyodo News ("GOV'T DISCLOSES DETAILED DATA ON ASDF IRAQ MISSION", Tokyo, 2009/10/06) reported that the government has disclosed detailed data for the first time on the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force's air transportation mission in and around Iraq in support of multinational forces, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said. The disclosure in late September of the ASDF's weekly airlift data between July 2006 and December last year marks a turnaround from the policy of the previous government led by the Liberal Democratic Party that provided blacked-out documents only. The disclosed information showed the ASDF airlifted some 26,000 troops between July 2006 and the force's completion of the mission in December 2008 and that about 70 percent of the troops were U.S. forces.

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17. US Military in Japan

Associated Press ("JAPAN: US TROOP REVIEW NEEDED FOR SUSTAINABILITY", Tokyo, 2009/10/07) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said Wednesday he wants to review the deployment of U.S. troops in Japan to ease the burden on the people of Okinawa . "The only way this presence can be sustained in the long term is to make sure that the burden on the Okinawans is decreased in some way," Okada told journalists. "Only by accomplishing these goals will we be able to ensure that the U.S.-Japan alliance will be sustainable."

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18. Japan Climate Change

Japan for Sustainability ("JAPAN CLIMATE LEADERS' PARTNERSHIP RELEASES COMMON VISION TO REALIZE SUSTAINABLE LOW-CARBON SOCIETY", 2009/10/06) reported that five major Japanese blue-chip companies established a corporate leaders' network, called Japan Climate Leaders' Partnership (Japan-CLP), on July 30, 2009, making it the first such organization in Japan aiming to realize a sustainable low-carbon society from a business point of view. On the same day, they also released a shared vision, "Towards a sustainable low-carbon society: Our common vision," incorporating a sense of urgency and commitments on climate change from a business standpoint. Japan-CLP is calling for other companies to support their vision.

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19. Sino-Indian Territorial Dispute

Times of India (Indrani Bagchi, "LAC INTRUSION CAUSE OF CONCERN FOR INDIA", 2009/10/06) reported that PRC officials collared the Indian embassy at a meeting and registered their protest at the PM's visit to Arunachal Pradesh. In return, India told the PRC that the state belonged to India and that was the reality PRC would have to live with. Over the past year, India has repeatedly complained about the PRC breaching the LAC in several places. Over the past few months, the Indian army has moved 6,000 troops from Jammu and Kashmir to a point on its border with the PRC and Bhutan, Indian Army chief Gen Deepak Kapoor announced. Though this was described as a "routine rotation" by the army, it was regarded as significant after the allegations of incursions and breaches by the PRC and India.

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20. Sino-Mongolian Trade Relations

The Financial Times (William MacNamara , "COPPER MINE TO TRANSFORM MONGOLIA", 2009/10/06) reported that Mongolia has positioned itself to become a large copper exporter, after it on Tuesday signed an agreement with multinational mining companies to develop an enormous deposit near the PRC border. Mongolia’s economy and its social fabric – many Mongolians are semi-nomadic – stand to be transformed by the project, which would represent one-third of gross domestic product if it were operational today. “We anticipate that the vast majority of output will go to China,” said Bret Clayton, head of Rio’s copper division, prior to a signing ceremony in Ulan Bator on Tuesday. It will be an important source of supply for the Chinese market.”

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21. PRC Ethnic Unrest

The Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "TRADITIONS FADE AS CHINA SETTLES NOMADS IN TOWNS", Genhe City, 2009/10/06) reported that the PRC has moved most of the small Ewenki ethnic group from the steppe to the city, giving its members better access to medical services, education

and jobs but, inevitably, changing their traditions. They are among more than 700,000 nomadic herders — mostly Tibetans, Mongols and Kazaks in western PRC — the government has resettled since 2000. The government says resettlement raises living standards and protects the grasslands from overgrazing and desertification. Many living near international borders have been moved for security, as Beijing worries about sabotage, smuggling and illegal border crossing.

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22. PRC Energy Use

The New York Times ("ENERGY EFFICIENCY RANKS HIGH IN CHINA'S PLANS; CO2 IS SELDOM DISCUSSED", Dezhou, 2009/10/06) reported that in more than a dozen interviews with business leaders in wind, solar and other renewable energy industries throughout the PRC, officials repeatedly discussed CO2 emission reductions, using general platitudes about "blue skies," but were able to offer little in the way of specifics. Until, that is, talk returned to the kilowatt-hours and dollars that could be saved by low-carbon technologies. "In China, many people understand what energy efficiency is. They think energy efficiency has no relationship with climate change. But they understand how to save energy," said Jiamin Jin, executive director of the Global Environmental Institute in Beijing.

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23. PRC Climate Change

Reuters (Chisa Fujioka and David Fogarty, "RICH NATIONS TRYING TO KILL KYOTO PACT, SAYS CHINA", Bangkok, 2009/10/06) reported that the PRC and a top G77 official accused rich nations on trying to kill off the Kyoto Protocol, the U.N.'s main weapon in the fight against global warming, as nations try to craft a broader climate pact. The PRC's special envoy for climate change, Yu Qingtai, accused rich nations of trying to change the rules of the game at the last minute. "I have yet to see a developed country or a group of developed countries coming up to say to the public, the international community and to their own people that they are not here to kill the Kyoto Protocol," Yu told reporters.

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24. PRC H1N1 Outbreak

Bloomberg News (Feiwen Rong, "CHINA’S FIRST SWINE FLU DEATH UNDERSCORES THREAT", 2009/10/06) reported that the PRC’s first death from swine flu, in Tibet, prompted the health ministry to hold an emergency meeting and send 200,000 doses of vaccine to the region’s capital, Lhasa, state radio reported today. The victim was an 18-year-old woman who was admitted to hospital in Lhasa on Oct. 3 and died the following day, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported. In China, the “sheer size of the population means that H1N1 could potentially create a heavy burden of disease and overwhelm the health care system,” Vivian Tan, a spokeswoman in Beijing for WHO, a Geneva-based United Nations agency, said last month.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org