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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK-Iran Arms Trade

Chosun Ilbo ("IRAN 'BOUGHT MASSES OF N.KOREAN ARMS'", 2009/12/04) reported that Iran has imported piles of DPRK-made conventional weapons, the Washington Post reported, even though both countries are under UN sanctions over their nuclear programs. Weapons also went to two Palestinian militant organizations, the Iran-backed Hezbollah and the Islamist Hamas, the paper said. To avoid international pursuit, the DPRK weapons were "shipped halfway around the globe in sealed containers, labeled as oil-drilling supplies, that passed through a succession of freighters and ports," including the PRC, Southeast Asia and the Dubai free trade zone, before reaching Iran, it said.

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2. US-DPRK Talks

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong, "BOSWORTH NOT TO DISCUSS PEACE TREATY, BUT RESUMPTION OF 6-WAY TALKS: STATE DEPT. ", Washington, 2009/12/07) reported that the U.S. will not try to hammer out a peace treaty with DPRK, but rather discuss the resumption of the six-party talks, the State Department said Monday. Stephen Bosworth, special representative for DPRK policy, will be in Pyongyang for three days starting Tuesday.

Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "OBAMA ENVOY BEGINS RARE TRIP TO NKOREA", Seoul, 2009/12/08) reported that US envoy Stephen Bosworth's delegation flew to Pyongyang from a U.S. military base near Seoul , the U.S. Embassy in Seoul said. The Korean Central News Agency later said in a one-sentence dispatch that the delegation arrived in Pyongyang. Footage from broadcaster APTN in Pyongyang showed Bosworth and Washington's lead nuclear negotiator, Sung Kim, arriving at an airport in Pyongyang, shaking hands with DPRK officials and posing for photos.

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3. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Xinhua ("DPRK BLAMES U.S. FOR KOREAN PENINSULA NUCLEARIZATION", Pyongyang, 2009/12/07) reported that the DPRK on Monday blamed the United States for the nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, describing it a troublemaker in the region. In a commentary of DPRK's official Rodong Sinmun daily, the DPRK said the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula was triggered by nuclear weapons imported from the United States into ROK, adding that ROK had become "the biggest nuclear arsenal in the Far East." The DPRK has made ceaseless efforts to push the United States to withdraw nuclear weapons from ROK in a bid to make the Korean Peninsula a denuclearized peaceful region, the commentary said. But, it emphasized that the U.S. government gave no response to those efforts.

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4. DPRK Japan Abductee Issue

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, AT U.N. MEETING, URGES N. KOREA TO TAKE ACTION TO RESOLVE ABDUCTION", Geneva, 2009/12/08) reported that Japan urged DPRK on Monday to take concrete actions to resolve the abduction issue as the U.N. Human Rights Council held a meeting to review the rights situation in the country. Pyongyang should ''set a concrete time frame and to take concrete actions in order to resolve the abduction issue as soon as possible, including ensuring the immediate return of Japanese and other abductees,'' Shinichi Kitajima, permanent representative of Japan to the international organizations in Geneva, said in a speech delivered to the sixth session of the Universal Periodic Review.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

Korea Herald ("N. KOREA TRADE DEPENDENCY HITS 40%", 2009/12/05) reported that the the DPRK economy's dependency on international trade is nearing 40 percent, a think tank reported yesterday. According to the Korea Development Institute's report on the DPRK's economy in the 2000s, the DPRK carried out international trade worth $5.64 billion last year. The cross border trade figure of $5.64 billion recorded last year is equivalent to about 40 percent of the DPRK's gross domestic product, which is estimated to be about $15 billion.

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6. DPRK-Australian Cultural Exchange

Courier Mail ("NORTH KOREANS BANNED FROM ASIA-PACIFIC TRIENNIAL", 2009/12/07) reported that the Queensland Art Gallery has become embroiled in an international propaganda and censorship row with six DPRK nationals banned from visiting Brisbane's sixth Asia-Pacific Triennial. A spokesman for Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith said the artists' studio produces favourable propaganda images of leader Kim Jong-il. The spokesman said the ban was also part of the Australian government's response to the DPRK's missile and nuclear and weapons program.

Associated Press (Rohan Sullivan, "AUSTRALIA ACCUSED OF CENSORSHIP OVER NKOREAN ART", Sydney, 2009/12/08) reported that Nick Bonner, a Beijing-based British businessman who helped curate an exhibition of DPRK art at the Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art accused

the Australian government of censorship Tuesday after it denied visas to the DPRK artists . "There's no way on earth that any of the pieces we commissioned for the inks and oils can in any way resemble propaganda," Bonner said. "It's fine art we are talking about." "For an artist to produce a body of work and not be able to speak about it, that is censorship," Bonner said.

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7. DPRK Currency Reform

Daily NK (Jung Kwon Ho, "FORCED EQUALITY TRUMPETED BY STATE MEDIA", Shenyang, China, 2009/12/07) reported that DPRK's currency redenomination may have been completed on the 6th, but now the authorities have started on a propaganda campaign based on the notion that "Redenomination is the moment to start the socialist strong and prosperous state." A source from North Pyongan Province reported on Sunday, "The authorities have been claiming, 'Redenomination is a great socialist reform for the workers and farmers,' through local third broadcasting and mobile speaker vans."

Bloomberg (Sangim Han, "N. KOREA RICE PRICES SURGE AFTER REVALUATION, AID GROUP SAYS", 2009/12/07) reported that DPRK rice prices have more than doubled since the government revalued the currency last week, a ROK aid group said. Yonhap News Agency reported on Dec. 1. One kilogram (2.2 pounds) of rice cost 50 won as of Dec. 5, compared with 16 won to 17 won on Dec. 2, Buddhist aid group Good Friends, which obtains information through contacts within DPRK, said in its newsletter today. One in four school children were absent due to hunger on Dec. 3, indicating how widespread the struggle to find food had become, the group said, without saying how it derived the number.

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8. ROK on DPRK Economy

Yonhap ("KOREA YET TO SEE THREAT IN N. KOREA AMID CURRENCY REFORM TUMULT", Seoul, 2009/12/07) reported that ROK defense officials declined Monday to confirm reports that DPRK's military has entered a heightened alert over concerns of social turmoil following the communist state's surprise currency reform. ROK media reported this week that DPRK placed its troops on an elevated alert after conducting the first currency revaluation in 17 years. But the officials here said the 1.2-million DPRK military has yet to make moves that would indicate a threat to ROK.

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9. DPRK Security

Yonhap (Tony Chang, "NETWORK OF ULTRA-DEEP TUNNELS BUILT IN PYONGYANG: DEFECTOR", Seoul, 2009/12/08) reported that Hwang Jang-yop, a former secretary of the Workers' Party, said the DPRK has built a network of secret ultra-deep tunnels that can be used by its leader Kim Jong-il and senior officials as escape routes in times of emergency. During a program on Free North Korea Radio, a Seoul-based anti-Pyongyang station, aired Monday, Hwang claimed that there were secret tunnels built more than 300 meters below ground, linking Pyongyang with strategic locations within a radius of 40 to 50 kilometers. "In particular, an ultra-deep underground tunnel

was built to connect one of Kim's residences in Pyongyang to Nampo," Hwang said, noting that the DPRK's leaders could escape to the PRC by traveling through the tunnels.

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10. DPRK Human Rights

Associated Press (Eliane Engeler, "NORTH KOREA GRILLED AT UN RIGHTS COUNCIL", Geneva, 2009/12/07) reported that DPRK made a rare appearance before a U.N. human rights organization on Monday, facing accusations of widespread abuses such as forced labor, public executions and torture. The communist state, which also was accused of allowing its population to go hungry and forcing women prison inmates to have abortions, defended itself before the Human Rights Council during a three-hour session in surprisingly candid language. At one point, it said public executions were carried out at request of victims' families.

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11. DPRK H1N1 Influenza

Yonhap ("N. KOREA STARTS WINTER VACATION EARLY DUE TO H1N1: REPORT", Seoul, 2009/12/07) reported that DPRK schools have started winter vacation a month early due to the rapid spread of the H1N1 virus in the communist country, an aid group said Monday. Good Friends, a Seoul-based group that frequently visits DPRK, said DPRK schools started winter recess last Friday following a joint meeting of health and education ministry officials.

Associated Press ("SKOREAN PRESIDENT OFFERS SWINE FLU AID TO NKOREA", Seoul, 2009/12/08) reported that on Tuesday, ROK President Lee Myung-bak instructed the Cabinet to verify reports of DPRK influenze outbreak and study ways to send swine flu medication to the DPRK without any conditions, his office said in a statement. "It would be good if emergency aid is provided as there are concerns that swine flu could spread rapidly," Lee told the Cabinet meeting.

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12. ROK's Role in Afghanistan

JoongAng Ilbo (Kang Joo-an and Seo Ji-eun, "AFGHANISTAN STAYS COULD BE SHORTENED", 2009/12/07) reported that the Defense Ministry is considering to reverse the government’s plan to extend the tour for troops dispatched to Afghanistan from the original one year to two and a half years, said sources within the National Assembly. The Ministry said last Friday that, "We will submit a 340 troop dispatch plan to the National Assembly around Friday.” The dispatch period will be from July next year till December 2012.

Associated Press ("SKOREA TO SEND UP TO 350 TROOPS TO AFGHANISTAN", Seoul, 2009/12/08) reported that the ROK says it plans to send up to 350 troops to Afghanistan next year. The Defense Ministry says the Cabinet approved a new plan Tuesday to send troops to protect aid workers, and that it will be sent to the National Assembly this week.

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13. ROK-PRC, Japan Relations

Telegraph ("SOUTH KOREA PLANS TO DIG TUNNELS TO JAPAN AND CHINA", 2009/12/07) reported that President Lee Myung Bak has ordered an economic and technical feasibility study into the prospect of creating the links stretching hundreds of miles. The proposals would join western ROK with Kyushu, southern Japan, and a second route with the PRC's Shandong Province. Huh Moon- Doy, head of a bilateral tunnel committee, said the union would create a strong alliance between the nations. He said: "The tunnel would be the very symbol of such co-operation." But he admitted there were "deep and lingering anxieties among Korean citizens over closer connections with Japan".

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14. Japan Aid to Afghanistan

Asahi Shimbun ("OGATA: AFGHAN AID TO FOCUS ON EXPANDING KABUL", 2009/12/07) reported that Japan's civilian assistance to Afghanistan, worth up to about 450 billion yen, is expected to focus on a project to expand the increasingly overpopulated capital of Kabul, according to the head of the nation's foreign aid agency. In an interview with The Asahi Shimbun, Japan International Cooperation Agency President Sadako Ogata said the plan to create Afghanistan's "new capital" would help provide jobs to former members of the Taliban.

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15. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO INFORM U.S. OF POLICY ON FUTEMMA BASE BY DEC. 18: HATOYAMA", Tokyo, 2009/12/07) reported that Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama said Monday that the government would inform the United States of its policy on the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station in Okinawa Prefecture by Dec. 18, when he may meet with U.S. President Barack Obama in Copenhagen, but did not elaborate on how much substance the information would have.

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO EARMARK U.S. FORCES REALIGNMENT EXPENSES IN FY 2010 budget", Tokyo, 2009/12/08) reported that Japan will earmark in its fiscal 2010 budget expenses related to U.S. forces realignment involving the relocation of a U.S. military airfield in Okinawa and the transfer of 8,000 Marines from the southernmost prefecture to Guam, Defense Minister Toshimi Kitazawa said Tuesday. ''Prime Minister (Yukio Hatoyama) has approved the allocation,'' which is required under a 2006 bilateral accord on the reconfiguration of U.S. forces, the minister said at a news conference.

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16. US-China Emissions Reduction

Bloomberg (Alex Morales, "EU SAYS U.S., CHINA MUST RAISE GREENHOUSE-GAS PLEDGES", 2009/12/07) reported that PRC and the U.S. must do more than they've pledged to persuade the European Union to raise its own emissions-reduction commitment to help contain global warming, the 27-nation EU said today in Copenhagen. The U.S. and PRC, which emit 40 percent of the world's greenhouse gases, made offers less than two weeks ago on steps they'll take to curb climate change. Their pledges aren't enough to convince the EU to bump up its reduction goal to 30 percent from 20 percent in the three decades through 2020, said Swedish Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren, speaking for the bloc.

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17. Cross Strait Relations

Central News Agency ("PREMIER DENIES NEED FOR CHINA POLICY CHANGES", 2009/12/08) reported that Premier Wu Den-yih denied Monday that there is a need to change government policy toward PRC. With regard to the proposed economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) with PRC, the government will go ahead with it as planned, as it will serve Taiwan's interests and benefit the public, he added. However, the premier said, the government's policy toward PRC should still meet three requirements - the country's needs, public support and legislative supervision.

Central News Agency ("PROPOSED TRADE PACT NOT INCLUDED IN CROSS-STRAIT TALKS, SAYS MA", 2009/12/07) reported that President Ma Ying-jeou said yesterday that a proposed trade pact with PRC will not be discussed in the upcoming cross-strait meeting, although both sides will discuss the progress of the trade pact after the meeting. He said the economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA) will be signed in an "open and transparent" environment. He noted that there are concerns that the trade pact would flood Taiwan with cheaper Chinese products, cause job losses and make Taiwan too dependent on PRC.

The China Post ("TAIWAN, CHINA PLANNING GREEN COOPERATION: MINISTER", Taipei, 2009/12/07) reported that reported that Taiwan and PRC may soon open a new front in their efforts to cement bilateral ties, as talks on cooperation on the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) could be in the works, Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) Minister Stephen Shu-hung Shen said Monday. Noting that environmental protection officials from Taiwan and PRC have started planning joint measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, Shen said the officials from both sides may meet after the Copenhagen Climate Conference for a forum on environment protection or to discuss CDM collaboration.

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18. PRC African Investment

The Guardian ("CHINA 'WANTS TO SET UP FACTORIES IN AFRICA'", 2009/12/07) reported that t he PRC government has shown "strong interest" in setting up factories in Africa, helping the continent develop a manufacturing base and boost its economy, the president of the World Bank said today. While most attention on the PRC _ 's investment in Africa has focused on its large-scale pursuit of natural resources, experts say a growing number of entrepreneurs are experimenting with production.

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19. PRC Energy Supply

The Wall Street Journal ("WIND POWER WINDS UP CHINA'S COMPETITORS", 2009/12/07) reported that Beijing has big plans for wind power as a renewable energy of the future, but the PRC may already have too much of a good thing. At home, the PRC's power-transmission infrastructure can't handle the intermittent electricity supply already being generated from wind. It is estimated that 30% of last year's wind-power supply went unused. Despite that bottleneck, Beijing wants more. The government hopes to see 100 gigawatts of wind-power capacity installed in the PRC by 2020, a more-than-eightfold increase from 2008, making wind the third most important source of power in the PRC behind coal and hydroelectric.

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