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Preceding NAPSNet Report

MARKTWO

I. Napsnet

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Herald ("BOSWORTH BRACING FOR NUKE TALKS", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that Stephen Bosworth, Washington's special envoy on the DPRK, said Monday he has no illusions regarding the mission of denuclearizing the DPRK. "It is a very difficult mandate ... very difficult sort of task," Bosworth told Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan just before they sat down for talks. "I am very committed to working in very close harmony with your government and your team. I think if we all work together, we can make some progress," he said.

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2. DPRK Missile Program

Associated Press (Jae-Soon Chang, "N. KOREA THREATENS 'WAR' IF SATELLITE IS SHOT DOWN", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that the DPRK ordered its armed forces on standby and warned Monday it will retaliate against anyone seeking to block its planned satellite launch. "If the enemies recklessly opt for intercepting our satellite, our revolutionary armed forces will launch without hesitation a just retaliatory strike operation not only against all the interceptor means involved but against the strongholds" of the U.S., Japan and the ROK, the general staff of the DPRK military said in a statement. "Shooting our satellite for peaceful purposes will precisely mean a war," said the statement, carried by the Korea Central News Agency.

Yonhap ("N. KOREA POSSIBLY PLAYING UP THREAT AGAINST SOUTH'S JOINT MILITARY DRILL: SEOUL", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that the DPRK appears to have inflated its threats to retaliate against ROK and U.S. forces if they intercept a planned rocket launch, defense spokesman Won Tae-jae said. "(The threat of retaliation) is something we need to examine militarily, but we believe it to be part of the North's political rhetoric," Won said in a briefing at the Ministry of National Defense. "We're making full preparations in case the threat turns out to be true."

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3. DPRK Missile Sales

Arirang News ("FRESH CLAIM OVER N.KOREAN MISSILE TECHNOLOGY", Seoul, 2009/03/06) reported that the Claremont Institute, says the DPRK may bring in foreign currency valued at about $1.5 billion a year exporting more than 1,000 Scud missiles to the Middle East. The institute says the DPRK has expanded its missile trade with states such as Iran and Syria providing technology related to its intercontinental ballistic missile.

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4. DPRK Threats

Associated Press (Jean H. Lee, "PLANES TO AVOID N. KOREAN AIRSPACE AFTER THREAT", Seoul, 2009/03/06) reported that Air Canada and Singapore Airlines joined ROK airlines in rerouting flights to avoid DPRK airspace Friday after the country threatened the ROK's passenger planes. "We plan to make our flight detour through Japanese airspace until the crisis is resolved," said Park Hyun-soo, deputy general manager of Asiana Airlines' operations control center.

Yonhap ("PRESIDENT LEE RECEIVES BRIEFING ON N. KOREAN THREAT", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that ROK President Lee Myung-bak received a rare briefing from his security-related ministers Monday on DPRK threats. The content of Monday's special briefing was not immediately released. An official at Cheong Wa Dae, however, tried to downplay the significance of the briefing, saying, "The president is briefed on new and current security issues every time he comes back from a trip."

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("SCORES OF S. KOREANS UNABLE TO RETURN FROM NORTH'S INDUSTRIAL ZONE", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that about 80 people who were scheduled to return by 5 p.m. from the inter-Korean complex in Kaesong were not able to make the trip after the DPRK cut off the last remaining inter-Korean communications channel, Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun said. ROK citizens are allowed to cross the border only after the DPRK is notified through a military communications line. The ministry spokesman said, "Factories in the Kaesong industrial complex are operating as usual."

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6. Inter-Korean Tourism

Yonhap ("HUNDREDS OF SOUTH KOREANS CANCEL BORDER TRIP AS N. KOREA CUTS OFF COMMUNICATION CHANNEL", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that hundreds of ROK citizens planning to visit the DPRK on Monday canceled their trips after Pyongyang cut off the last inter-Korean communications channel. "Our government will put priority on the safety of our citizens in preparing measures to deal with (the closure)," Seoul's Unification Ministry spokesman Kim Ho-nyoun said.

Yonhap ("SUSPENDED TOURS TO N. KOREA COST $65 MLN, HYUNDAI ASAN SAYS ", Seoul, 2009/03/08) reported that Hyundai Asan Corp. said Monday that suspended tours to Mt. Kumgang has cost about 100 billion won ($65.1 million) in lost sales. Chang Hwan-bin, a senior executive at Hyundai Asan, said "We have in mind that the resumption will be further delayed."

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7. DPRK Elections

New York Times (Choe Sang-hun, "AMID A VOTE, NORTH KOREA AWAITS CLUES TO ITS FUTURE", Seoul, 2009/03/08) reported that the DPRK elected its Parliament on Sunday. The new Assembly's first task when it convenes in the coming weeks will be to re-elect Kim Jong-il as chairman of the National Defense Commission. The new Parliament may also replace members of his cabinet and the National Defense Commission.

Associated Press (Hyung-jin Kim, "NKOREAN LEADER KIM RE-ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that Kim Jong Il was unanimously re-elected to the DPRK parliament. All eligible voters in Constituency No. 333 cast ballots for Kim, renewing their "unshakable determination to devotedly safeguard" the leader, the Korean Central News Agency said in first results from Sunday's poll.

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8. US-DPRK Relations

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "US SEEKS DIALOGUE WITH NKOREA AMID MISSILE THREAT", Seoul, 2009/03/07) reported that U.S. special envoy Stephen W. Bosworth called Saturday for talks with the DPRK. "We're reaching out now. We want dialogue," Bosworth said upon arrival in the ROK. He also urged Pyongyang to halt its belligerent tone after issuing the warning about the safety of commercial airlines. "I don't think the warning was very helpful," said Bosworth. "Everyone would be much happier if they would drop that line of rhetoric."

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9. Japanese Abductees Issue

Yonhap ("FORMER N. KOREAN SPY TO MEET FAMILY OF OF JAPANESE ABDUCTEE IN BUSAN", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that former DPRK spy Kim Hyun-hui will meet the family of Yaeko Taguchi, a Japanese woman kidnapped by the DPRK in 1978, in Busan on Wednesday, the Japanese embassy said. The ROK government would not go into detail on the planned meeting, saying it has only helped arrange it as Kim is under the protection of the National Intelligence Service. "Basically, the meeting is being organized by the Japanese government," an ROK foreign ministry official said. "The government's position is to provide assistance as much as possible on the abduction issue."

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10. DPRK Defectors

Asahi Shimbun (Hiroyoshi Itabashi, "N. KOREA DEFECTOR AIDED ILLEGAL ENTRY", Osaka, 2009/03/09) reported that Hiroko Saito, a 67-year-old Japanese woman who defected from the DPRK, was arrested Sunday on suspicion of illegally passing off four Chinese as her kin to help them enter the country, Osaka prefectural police said. Investigators believe Saito was coerced by a group of Chinese brokers who assisted her flight from the DPRK into helping the four pose as her daughter, son, son-in-law and niece. They said it was the first case in which foreign nationals had entered the country illegally by taking advantage of a system to allow the kin of a Japanese person who flees the DPRK to obtain resident status in Japan.

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11. US-ROK Military Exercises

Reuters (Jack Kim, "TENSION HIGH ON KOREAN PENINSULA AMID MILITARY DRILLS", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that U.S. and ROK troops began annual military drills on Monday. The DPRK army said in a statement the drills were a "provocation" that would only occur "on the eve of a war," and cut off a telephone hotline with the ROK military. The military drills are scheduled to run until March 20, and are longer and on a greater scale than in previous years.

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12. ROK-Indonesia Relations

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "KOREA, INDONESIA TO BOOST ENERGY TIES", Jakarta, 2009/03/06)

reported that President Lee Myung-bak and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono agreed Friday to expand substantial cooperation between the two countries in the fields of energy and resources. The agreement includes the extension of a contract to develop oil fields in West Madura, Indonesia, and securing an additional 200,000 hectares of forested areas for ROK businesses that produce wood pellets, on top of the current 500,000 hectares.

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13. ROK Diplomacy

Korea Times (Na Jeong-ju, "LEE SEEKS STRONGER TIES WITH ASIA", Seoul, 2009/03/08) reported that the ROK is seeking to upgrade ties with every Asian country and not just focus on diplomacy with the United States, Japan, the PRC, and Russia, President Lee Myung-bak said Sunday. ``Korea needs to consolidate relationships with our Asian neighbors to brace for the era of Asia,'' Lee said. ``I believe Korea is capable enough to become a leader in Asia and represent the continent on the global stage.'' Lee said he will boost the ROK's international status by seeking free trade agreements with all Asian countries and raising economic aid to developing countries in the region. Also, the ROK will seek ways to increase Asia's role in overcoming the global economic recession and fighting climate change, he said.

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14. ROK Military

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREAN SIMULATE MINE ATTACKS ON NAVAL VESSELS", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that researchers from the Korea Institute of Machinery and Materials are studying torpedo and mine explosions with simulation technology they developed. The institute says the shock test can calculate the aftermath and degree of damage from an attack. Chief researcher Chung Jung-hoon stated, "In the United States, simulation tests are conducted in which mines are placed out at sea. For Korea, a country where a real shock test cannot be done, simulation analysis like this is necessary to verify the capability."

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15. ROK Energy

Yonhap ("GOV'T TO HELP BUILD 10 WIND POWER GENERATORS BY 2010", Seoul, 2009/03/09) reported that the ROK government will place orders to build 10 new indigenously-made wind power generators to help reduce Seoul's reliance on imports in the renewable energy sector. The 2-to-3 megawatt generators, which are expected to compete commercially with market-dominating foreign products, will be built on land owned by three state-run thermal power plants by 2010, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy said.

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16. ROK Environment

ICLEI ("KOREA'S 6TH LARGEST CITY JOINS ICLEI", 2009/03/03) reported that Incheon Metropolitan City recently became a Full Member of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). ICLEI works with local governments through international performance-based, results-oriented campaigns and programs. ICLEI Members in the ROK are now representing nearly 85% of the population of the country.

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17. ROK Historical Disputes

Donga Ilbo ("APPEAL FILED AGAINST COMMISSION'S VIEW OF 1948 JEJU INCIDENT", Seoul, 2009/03/07) reported that a group of Army veterans who commanded ground troops in the April 3 Jeju incident will file a constitutional appeal against the national truth commission's report on the incident. They claim the commission conducted an incorrect investigation, resulting in the recognition of rebels in the incident as victims and an excessively high number of victims. Dr. Rhee In-su, the adopted son of former President Rhee Syngman, and Chae Myeong-shin, who was in charge of troops responsible for cracking down on the rebels, said Friday that they will file the appeal.

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18. Remains of Soldiers from Korean War

Korea Times (Jung Sung-ki, "WAR REMAINS RECOVERY TO BEGIN NEXT WEEK", Seoul, 2009/03/06) reported that the Ministry of National Defense's agency for war remains' recovery and identification was scheduled to start operations for this year on Monday, the agency said Friday. Eight teams of the Agency for Killed in Action Recovery and Identification (MAKRI) will lead the excavation work in 38 regions across the nation, it said in a news release. Twenty-one teams from Army units will support the agency's operations, it added.

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19. ROK Atomic Bomb Survivors

Los Angeles Times (John M. Glionna, "ATOMIC BOMB SURVIVORS IN SOUTH KOREA STILL FEEL THE WOUNDS", Hapcheon, 2009/03/07) reported that on Monday, about 300 Hapcheon residents who survived the atomic bombing in Hiroshima will file suit against the Japanese government for wartime reparations. The survivors, represented by a team of Japanese lawyers, were spurred on by a Japanese Supreme Court ruling that recognized their right to receive reparations for mental anguish.

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20. Japanese Politics

Asahi Shimbun ("PROSECUTORS PLAN TO QUESTION OZAWA", Tokyo, 2009/03/07) reported that prosecutors plan to question Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) chief Ichiro Ozawa over

suspected illegal donations. One leading prosecutor said, "If questioning Ozawa is necessary for our investigation, it would be appropriate to do so in the early stages." However, another leading prosecutor said: "We should deal with the issue in a cautious manner. We want to prevent the questioning from becoming a tool of political strife."

Asahi Shimbun ("57% OF VOTERS SAY OZAWA SHOULD RESIGN", Tokyo, 2009/03/09) reported that fifty-seven percent of voters said Ichiro Ozawa should resign as president of Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), while 77 percent felt his explanation for a donation scandal was "unconvincing," an Asahi Shimbun survey showed. Thirty-six percent of the respondents said they would vote for Minshuto under the proportional representation system if a Lower House election were held now, down from 42 percent in the previous Feb. 19-20 poll. If a Lower House election were held now, 24 percent would vote for the LDP, up from 22 percent in the February survey.

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21. Japanese Space Program

Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPANESE ON THE MOON IN 2025?", Tokyo, 2009/03/09) reported that a Japanese government task force on space development has drawn up a plan to send the nation's first piloted mission to the moon between 2025 and 2030, government officials said. The plan, formulated by the headquarters for space development strategies, was presented Friday to an expert panel that reports to the headquarters. The initiative likely see a unique combination of leading Japanese robotics technology on a piloted space mission.

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22. Russo-Japan Military Relations

Vladivostock Times ("DELEGATION OF JAPAN ARMY VISITS TRAINING TANK REGIMENT IN FEFD", Vladivostock, 2009/03/08) reported that a Japanese Army delegation headed by Colonel General Takasi Sakai, the Northern Army Self-Defense Forces Commander, visited Knyaze-Volkonskiy Training Firing Ground. The Japanese visitors had a chance to observe the battle training exercises in the field. The visit is a reciprocal trip after a Russian Army Delegation paid a visit to Tokyo in autumn 2008.

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23. Cross Strait Relations

Associated Press (Peter Enav, "OFFICIAL: TAIWAN WANTS CHINESE MILITARY CONTACTS", Taipei, 2009/03/09) reported that Taiwan is working on setting up a think tank to coordinate contacts with the PRC military, a Defense Ministry official said Monday. The official said that the purpose of the new liaison organization would be to build mutual trust with the PRC military "on a step by step basis." "We want to establish a think tank to reduce the unsafe factors in relations between the sides," he said, without elaborating.

Washington Post ("TAIWAN SAYS ITS NOT READY FOR PEACE TALKS WITH CHINA", Taipei,

2009/03/05) reported that Taiwanese President Ma Ying-jeou on Thursday ruled out any near-term prospect of peace talks with the PRC, saying relations are too tenuous to consider discussing political or military issues. "At this stage we will only talk about economic and trade issues," Taiwanese presidential spokesman Wang Yu-chi said.

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24. PRC on Economic Crisis

Associated Press (Christopher Bodeen, "CHINA CALLS FOR CLOSER US TIES IN ECONOMIC CRISIS", Beijing, 2009/03/07) reported that PRC foreign minister Yang Jiechi said Saturday the PRC is looking to next month's G-20 meeting in London to boost confidence and global coordination in dealing with the world financial crisis. Yang said the summit should "play a role in boosting the public's confidence." "In this regard we are willing to work with the United States and other countries in the world to weather the storm and make joint efforts to tackle the difficulties brought by the financial crisis," Yang said.

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25. PRC Space Program

Yomiuri Shimbun (Satoshi Saeki, "CHINA 'AIMS TO PUT PROBE ON THE MOON'", Beijing, 2009/03/08) reported that the PRC plans to accelerate its space development program, including by constructing a large-scale space station by about 2020 and sending an unmanned lunar probe to the moon by 2013. The PRC also will carry out a spaceship docking test in 2011 in its expedited program, officials responsible for space projects attending the National People's Congress and the People's Political Consultative Conference told the PRC media.

Sky and Telescope (Kelly Beatly, "CHINESE CRAFT WHACKS THE MOON", 2009/03/02) wrote that the PRC's recent planned crash of a lunar module raised several questions. The crash took place while the Moon was up, but sunset in Beijing was still about two hours away — not ideal conditions for lunar observing. The near-side impact site was in daylight, yet the crash would have been closer to the terminator, or even in shadow, just a couple days earlier. So why pick March 1st and not February 27th? NASA officials are lining up an army of telescopes to try to record the LCROSS finale, now scheduled for early September or thereabouts. Wouldn't it have made sense for Chinese scientists to alert their Western colleagues of Chang'e 1's impending crash?

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26. PRC Tibet Issue

Reuters ("CHINA STRENGTHENS TIBET FRONTIER TO DETER UNREST", Beijing, 2009/03/09) reported that the PRC China beefed up security forces guarding Tibet's frontier with south Asia . Fu Hongyu, Communist Party commissar of the Ministry of Public Security 's Border Control Department , told Xinhua news agency on Monday that the extra security would "fully protect the stability of Tibet's frontier region." "To address stability protection in Tibet , we have deployed troops to strengthen controls along the Tibetan (international) frontier at points of entry and on key sectors and roads," said Fu.

Associated Press (Audra Ang, "CHINA CLAMPS DOWN AHEAD OF KEY TIBETAN ANNIVERSARY", Daofu, 2009/03/08) reported that military convoys rumble along winding mountain roads, the Internet has been cut in potential trouble spots and motorists must run a gantlet of inspection checkpoints as Beijing mounts a show of force in Tibetan areas to prevent a repeat of uprisings against PRC rule. "There have been thousands of police and troops here since the Lhasa riots last year. It has affected our lives," said one resident. "Food is more expensive and harder to buy because the soldiers are eating a lot."

Associated Press ("TIBETAN WOMEN HELD FOR PROTESTING IN WESTERN CHINA", Beijing, 2009/03/07) reported that the International Campaign for Tibet said Saturday that authorities detained a nun and another woman protesting in a Tibetan area of western PRC. The women, who protested separately, handed out leaflets in Ganzi town in Sichuan province calling for religious freedom, the release of prisoners and respect for human rights for all Tibetans.

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27. PRC Ethnic Unrest

BBC ("CHINA WARNS ON XINJIANG STABILITY", 2009/03/06) reported that Xinjiang parliament chairman Nur Bekri said the PRC feared unrest and militancy in neighbouring countries could spread into its northwestern province. "We don't believe that hostile forces from home and abroad will give up," Reuters quoted him as saying. "I'm afraid we will face a more severe situation in maintaining stability than last year, our task will probably be heavier, and the struggle will probably be fiercer," he said.

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28. PRC Environment

Associated Press (Henry Sanderson, "A NEW MANTRA FOR CHINA'S BIG THIRST: LESS IS MORE", Zhangiyang Village, 2009/03/08) reported that the PRC is building three canals to bring water hundreds of miles to Beijing and other cities in the north. More than 350,000 people in the way will be forced to move. Experts and environmentalists say it's time the PRC took an approach based on conservation rather than engineering. "States that continue to have a monopoly on political power do tend toward these large engineering solutions," said David Pietz, a Washington State University professor.

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29. PRC Earthquake

Associated Press ("CHINA SAYS QUAKE'S STRENGTH WAS CAUSED SCHOOLS TO FALL", Beijing, 2009/03/08) reported that Wei Hong, executive vice governor of Sichuan Province, said the strength of last year's massive earthquake was the main reason so many schools collapsed. Wei said the conclusion was made after an investigation by engineering experts from Tsinghua University and official experts from Sichuan province . Wei also said the total number of schoolchildren killed had not yet been calculated.

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30. PRC Civil Society

Reuters (Lucy Hornby, "IN NEW MOVE, CHINA'S RED CROSS FUNDS NGOS", Beijing, 2009/03/07) reported that the PRC Red Cross disbursed 20 million yuan to non-government organisations in an unprecedented to help rebuild after the May 12 earthquake. "It was a real change for us. Before, we tried to do everything ourselves, but we didn't have enough people," executive vice president Jiang Yiman said. "Besides, we are founded on the volunteer principle and we need to leverage that in society."

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II. ROK Report

31. ROK Policy toward Global Warming

Kyunghyang Shinmun ("GLOBAL WARMING, TOO MUCH WARNINGS, TOO LITTLE MEASURES", 2009/03/09) wrote that the ROK is promoting a Low Carbon, Green Growth Plan and Green New Deal Project. The problem is that 32 trillion Won out of 50 trillion Won budget for Green New Deal project is focused on civil engineering and construction. This is nothing but civil engineering and construction growth plan under the pretense of green growth.

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32. ROK Diplomacy

Seoul Shinmun ("PRESIDENT, PLANNING AND PRACTICING CONCEPTION OF NEW ASIA IS IMPORTANT", 2009/03/09) wrote that it is timely that the conception of east Asia is reflecting the changes of the era. However, China and Japan already have an immense influence in Asia. The conception of a new Asia could sound void, or it could remain as just another declaration. Speaking out loud on global issues like overcoming economic crisis or climate change could possibly stimulate competing nations. During the previous government, the plan to become a hub in Northeast Asia fell apart because of strong opposition from neighboring nations. For the new Asia conception to succeed, we need a delicate diplomatic strategy as well as separate economic cooperation plans that fit each nation in Asia. In addition, a cooperative system between the civil and official organizations must be prepared to support the idea.

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33. DPRK Missile Program

Chosun Ilbo ("US-CHINA, TOGETHER WARNS THE DANGERS OF DPRK'S MISSILE LAUNCH", 2009/03/09) wrote that the US and China seem to have discussed what to do in case DPRK ignores the warnings of neighboring nations and launches its missiles. If the DPRK ignores China's warnings

“not to harm the peace on the Korean Peninsula,” China will not be able to pretend that nothing happened. The US is a country DPRK is constantly requesting for a normalization of relations, and China is the only country on earth supporting the DPRK. Will the DPRK really ignore the one voice from these two countries?

Yonhap News ("OPPOSING THE LAUNCH… 'STILL DISCUSSING THE AFTERMEASURES'", 2009/03/09) reported that the 5 countries of the six-party talks seem to all be in agreement to oppose the DPRK’s plans to launch missiles for it could raise tension and worsen relations around the Korean peninsula. However, according to one diplomatic official, “the related countries are still discussing how to take measures in case DPRK really launched the missile or the satellite, but China and Russia have not made their positions clear, yet.” He also added that “even after (Special Envoy Stephen) Bosworth returns to the US after the visit, more discussion will be necessary."

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III. Briefing Book Update

34. Briefing Book Update

("GLOBAL NUCLEAR FUTURES BRIEFING BOOK UPDATED", 2009/03/09) The Nautilus Institute's Global Nuclear Futures Briefing Book has been updated to reflect recent and anticipated changes in US policy toward peaceful use of nuclear power. The page on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) has been renamed "US Global Nuclear Policy." New material on the Next Generation Safeguards Initiative (NGSI) has been added. Further updates will be added as the new administration announces its nuclear policy.

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