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I. United States

1. Inter-Korean Talks

The Associated Press ("S. KOREAN DELEGATION ARRIVES IN NORTH," Seoul, 11/8/01) reported that a 29-member ROK delegation headed by Unification Minister Hong Soon-young arrived on Thursday at Mount Kumgang in the DPRK for a new round of reconciliation talks. Ten ROK reporters accompanied the delegation. The four- day Cabinet-level talks were set to begin on November 7. Hong hopes to meet DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to seek a breakthrough in the reconciliation process and urge him to visit the ROK.

2. ROK Political Developments

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT KIM RESIGNS AS HEAD OF HIS BELEAGUERED RULING PARTY," Seoul, 11/8/01) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung stepped down as head of his political party Thursday, trying to mend relations inside the ruling camp following an election defeat. Kim said that he will remain as an ordinary party member, but would

rather focus on state affairs such as the economy and reconciliation with the DPRK. Kim said in a statement, "I feel full responsibility for the election defeat and hope that my resignation as party president will help solidify the party's unity."

3. ROK-US Joint Military Exercises

Agencies ("CANCELLATION OF MILITARY EXERCISE WITH US 'NOT A GESTURE TO NORTH'," Seoul, 11/8/01) reported that ROK officials on November 7 denied that the cancellation of a ROK-US joint military exercise scheduled for this month was a gesture to avoid provoking the DPRK ahead of bilateral talks. ROK Defense Ministry spokesman Jung Sung-yup said, " The decision on Foal Eagle is not relevant to the resumption of the inter-Korean peace talks." Officials at the US Forces in the ROK also played down the cancellation of Foal Eagle.

4. DPRK Support of Anti-Terrorism

Reuters ("U.S. GREETS N. KOREA PLAN TO SIGN UN TERRORISM PACT," Washington, 11/7/01) reported on November 7 that the US welcomed reports that the ROK planned to join a UN pact against terrorism. The US did not say if this would help remove the DPRK from the US list of states sponsoring terrorism. DPRK watchers said that the move to join the UN pact was aimed at improved ties with the US. A US official said on November 7, "We've been reticent to list publicly steps we've told them they need to take. However we've had a number of discussions about it so they do know what they have to do."

5. PRC Support for Anti-Terrorism

The Associated Press ("CHINA RATIFIES UN ANTI-TERROR TREATY," Beijing, 11/8/01) reported that the PRC said Thursday that it has ratified the UN International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings and renewed its appeal for Muslim separatists in its northwest to be seen as part of a global terror threat. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said that the country will also sign the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism. Ratifying the bombing treaty commits the PRC to helping other governments catch and prosecute people who bomb buses and other public facilities in each other's countries. The financing treaty obligates governments to prosecute or extradite people accused of funding terrorist activities. It requires banks to take steps to identify suspicious transactions.

6. PRC Destroyer Visit to Hong Kong

The South China Morning Post (Glenn Schloss, "PLA PORT CALL MARKS HISTORIC TRANSITION," 11/8/01) reported that the PRC guided- missile destroyer Shenzhen will dock in Victoria Harbour on November 10. It is believed to be the first major People's Liberation Army (PLA) warship to visit Hong Kong. Hong Kong sociologist and political commentator Lau Siu-kai, said, "It reflects the fact that the political atmosphere in Hong Kong has changed to such an extent that the PLA is no longer seen as menacing or frightening or a threat to Hong Kong people." An unnamed military analyst said, "There is clearly a political message in this. The PLA seems to be saying it is not going to be outdone by the US in the harbor of one of China's most important cities." He described the visit as "clearly without precedent." PLA warships rarely visit other mainland ports and the stop-over could be interpreted as further proof of the "one country, two systems" status being applied to Hong Kong. Other experts viewed the port call as a sign of Hong Kong's integration with the mainland. The Luhai-class destroyer is the most advanced PRC-built warship. According to Jane's Navy

International magazine, it was designed with a "stealth" capability to minimize the ship's detection by radar and is coated with a membrane to absorb radar waves. Malcolm Davis, a lecturer at the Joint Services Command and Staff College in Britain, said that the Shenzhen's deployment to Britain, Germany, France and Italy was designed to highlight the PRC's movement from a "brown water" fleet protecting its coast to a "blue water" fleet capability, allowing it to project power abroad. He added that the warship would support any PRC operation against Taiwan or the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

7. Japanese Military Deployment

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO ASSIST U.S.-LED TERROR WAR," Tokyo, 11/8/01) and Reuters ("JAPAN SHIPS TO DEPART FOR INDIAN OCEAN ON FRIDAY," Tokyo, 11/8/01) reported that Tsutomu Himeno, deputy spokesman for Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, said that Japan's Cabinet voted Thursday to dispatch three warships to provide non-combat support in the US-led war on terrorism. The ships--the destroyers Kurama and Kirisame and the supply vessel Hamana--will leave the southern port of Sasebo on November 9 and are due to reach the Indian Ocean in about two weeks and spend a couple of months gathering information on possible routes for Japanese vessels to ferry supplies to US-led forces.

II. Japan

1. Japan's View of FTA Agreement

The Daily Yomiuri ("CHINA, ASEAN PLAN FTA TALKS," 11/07/01) reported that the PRC and ASEAN have agreed to negotiate a free- trade agreement that, if created, will be the largest such accord in terms of population and area converted. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi denied that any agreement reached by the PRC and the ASEAN would threaten Japan's position in the region. Koizumi said, "Such a view is masochistic. ASEAN greatly appreciates its relations with Japan. There is no fear of being left behind. Japan welcomes the deepening of relations between China and ASEAN."

2. Japanese View of Afghanistan Reconstruction

Mainichi Shinbun ("GOC'T SEEKS BACKING FOR POST-TALIBAN CONFERENCE," 11/07/01) reported that Japanese Foreign Ministry officials are discussing with G-8 nations and neighboring countries of Afghanistan about a planned Tokyo conference aimed at establishing a post-Taliban administration. The Japanese government intends to officially announce conference details after the Taliban collapses.

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