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1. Six-Party Talks

Bloomberg (Heejin Koo and Allen T. Cheng, "North Korea Nuclear Envoys Call Two-Day Talks Recess", Beijing, 2007/09/30) reported that the nations involved in the six-party talks called a two-day recess so the involved governments can consider a draft statement on the timing and process for disabling the DPRK's plants. PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, reading a statement at the Diaoyutai State Guest House in Beijing, said the parties had "meaningful discussions", and will release a final version of the document "after two days." ROK Ambassador Chun Yung-woo stated, "The document outlines a timeframe on what North Korea needs to do in terms of its disabling duties. The text clearly states that it will be completed by December 31."

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I. NAPSNet

2. US Fuel Aid to DPRK

Reuters (Tabassum Zakaria, "Bush authorizes \$25 million energy aid for N.Korea", Washington, 2007/09/28) reported that US President George W. Bush on Friday authorized \$25 million in energy aid for the DPRK as a reward for movement toward dismantling its nuclear weapons program. The U.S. aid would provide up to 50,000 metric tons of heavy fuel oil, the White House said. The DPRK "has met its commitments to date with respect to shutting down the Yongbyon facilities" and allowing monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Gordon Johndroe, White House National Security Council spokesman, said.

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3. Japanese Sanctions on DPRK

Kyodo ("Japan to extend sanctions on N. Korea for 6 months", Tokyo, 2007/09/30) reported that Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura said Sunday that Japan will extend its economic sanctions on the DPRK for another six months as there is no progress in the abduction issue. Machimura told reporters, "There is basically no progress in the abduction issue," Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka. We are not in a situation in which we can stop or ease the sanctions." If there is any progress, the government may review the policy, he added.

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4. Inter-Korean Summit Meeting

Korea Times (Kim Rahn, "Civic Groups at Odds Over Summit Agenda", Seoul, 2007/09/28 17:30:00 GMT+0) reported that progressive civic groups see the inter-Korean summit as a chance to boost peace in the Korean Peninsula, while conservative groups are denouncing the ROK government for avoiding talking about sensitive issues. Civil Society Organizations Network in Korea, a coalition of 189 civic groups, said the meeting between South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and North

Korean leader Kim Jong-il should be a push to make rapid progress in discussing peace. But Park Sang-hak, head of Democracy Network Against NK Gulag, said Roh should talk about more important issues such as human rights, ROK citizens kidnapped by the DPRK, and dispersed families.

Korea Herald ("Seoul weighing array of points for Oct. summit", Seoul, 2007/09/30) reported that the ROK government said that the two Koreas may discuss establishing a joint committee to cooperate in reducing conventional weapons at the upcoming summit meeting. "We probably would not see immediate results, but such a committee could be meaningful, in that we would open a channel of dialogue with the North on the issue of conventional weapons," said Kim Jin-moo, a researcher at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "Roh's attendance at N. Korea's Arirang mass games sparks outrage", Seoul, 2007/09/30 07:55:00 GMT+0) reported that ROK human rights groups criticized President Roh Moo-hyun's decision to attend the Arirang Mass Games during the upcoming inter-Korean summit. DPRK defectors, who have taken part in the mass gymnastics, have long complained that children are often banned from going to the bathroom and are provided with minimal food rations during hours-long practices that continue for months.

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4. ROK-US Relations

Korea Times (Kang Hyun-kyung, "Lee Myung-bak to Meet Bush Next Month", Seoul, 2007/09/28) reported that presidential nominee Lee Myung-bak of the main opposition Grand National Party (GNP) is scheduled to meet U.S. President George W. Bush in mid-October, party spokesman Rep. Park Heong-joon said. Lee also plans to meet Republican and Democratic leaders in Washington and New York.

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5. ROK Internet Censorship

Dong-A Ilbo ("Confusion over Cheong Wa Dae's Pro-North Website Policy", Seoul, 2007/09/29) reported that Cheong Wa Dae is considering ending the ban on Internet access to pro-DPRK websites. At the same time, however, the Ministry of Information and Communication on September 18 ordered 13 domestic social organizations to erase 1,660 articles posted on their websites in 10 days. "This order is irrelevant from Cheong Wa Dae's plan to terminate the blockade on access to pro-North websites," said a person related to the Ministry. "In case the social organizations fail to erase pro-North articles by 12 o'clock at night September 28, we plan to file criminal charges."

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6. Japanese Textbook Controversy

BBC ("Huge Japan protest over textbook", Okinawa, 2007/09/29) reported that over 100,000 people in Okinawa took part in a protest over Education Ministry moves to change passages in new history

books about mass suicides on the island during World War II. The textbooks said that as the Americans prepared to invade, the Japanese army handed out grenades to Okinawa residents and ordered them to kill themselves, a claim supported by many survivors. The Ministry ordered publishers to make revisions and submit them for approval.

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7. Japanese Reporter Killed in Myanmar

Kyodo ("Japan FM lodges stern protest with Myanmar over death of Japanese", New York, 2007/09/28) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura lodged a stern protest in a meeting with his Myanmar counterpart, Nyan Win, on Friday at United Nations headquarters over the shooting death Thursday of Kenji Nagai. Nyan Win offered apologies to Komura, saying he is indeed sorry for the death of a Japanese national. "Demonstrations are beginning to calm down, and we would also like to exercise restraint," the Myanmar minister was quoted as saying.

BBC ("Japan inquiry into reporter death", Tokyo, 2007/09/28) reported that Japan is sending Deputy Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka to Myanmar to investigate the fatal shooting of Kenji Nagai on Thursday, who was covering the anti-government protests. Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said Japan would "find the way to solve this issue and to make further decisions. Sanctions are not the best step to take now."

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8. Taiwan Politics

Associated Press ("Taiwanese Party Asserts Island's Independence", Taipei, 2007/09/30) reported that Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party passed a resolution Sunday 250-73 asserting the island's separate identity from the PRC and calling for a referendum on Taiwan's sovereignty. The resolution for a "normal country" calls for general use of "Taiwan" as the island's name, without specifically abolishing its current formal name, the Republic of China. It also calls for the enactment of a new constitution, but gives no specific deadline.

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9. PRC Military Buildup

Associated Press (Eric Talmadge, "US official notes China's military gains", Kadena Air Base, Japan, 2007/09/29 08:05:00 GMT+0) reported that Lt. Gen. Bruce Wright, commander of the U.S. forces in Japan, said that the PRC is modernizing its military and its air defenses are now nearly impenetrable to all but the newest of American fighters. He added that that the Iraq war is reducing the availability of U.S. troops and equipment to meet other contingencies. "Are we in trouble? It depends on the scenario," Wright said Thursday. "But you have to be concerned about the small number of our forces and the age of our forces."

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10. Taiwan Missile Development

Associated Press (Annie Huang, " Taiwan develops missile targeting China", Taipei, 2007/09/29 04:10:00 GMT+0) reported that Wang Kao-cheng, professor of strategic studies of Tamkang University, said on Saturday that the U.S. could block Taiwan's program to develop long-range missiles by withholding sophisticated satellite guidance technology from the Taiwanese military. "The U.S. has objected to Taiwan developing mid- to long-range missiles, fearing it could embolden the island's authorities to take more provocative policies toward China," said Wang.

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