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1. ROK Military Drills

Chosun Ilbo ("LIVE FIRE DRILLS ON ALL COASTS THIS WEEK", 2010/12/13) reported that the [ROK] military is carrying out live-fire drills at 27 sites in all coastal areas from Monday to Friday, it announced Sunday. These include 15 sites on the west coast, including Anma Island, Daecheon Port, Miyeo Island and Eocheong Island. Pohang, Gangneung, and sea surrounding Ulleung Island are part of the six sites on the east coast, and another six on the south coast include Yukji Island, Geoje Island, and Jeju Island. Although the five West Sea islands have not been designated as drill sites, a military source said there is a possibility of live-fire exercises taking place there on short notice based on weather and strategic considerations.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/12/13/2010121300989.html

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2. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("RUSSIA WORRIED ABOUT NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES", 2010/12/13) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Monday he was deeply worried by the DPRK's capacity to enrich uranium which could be used to make nuclear weapons. During a meeting with his DPRK counterpart Pak Ui-Chun, "Lavrov expressed his deep concern about information about the industrial uranium enrichment capability at Yongbyon," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/1099004/1/.html

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3. ROK-US Defense Relations

JoongAng Ilbo ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON SIGN TOF ON JOINT SECURITY PLAN", 2010/12/14) reported that the ROK and the United States signed a terms of reference (TOF) yesterday on a new joint security committee to better deal with the DPRK's nuclear threat and other weapons of mass destruction, the Ministry of National Defense said. The signing, accomplished during the Security Policy Initiative (SPI) meeting in Seoul, is a step closer to institutionalizing the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee. It will be the first time the U.S. forms such a committee with a non-NATO country. Deputy Defense Minister Chang Kwang-il and Michael Schiffer, deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asia and Pacific security affairs, are presiding over the SPI meeting and signed the terms of reference, the ministry said. "The committee is aimed at [counteracting] North Korea's threat of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction," said a ministry official. The official added that the committee is also aimed at expanding the scope of information the two countries share and monitoring the efficacy of extended deterrence on a regular basis.

<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/article/view.asp?aid=2929622>

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4. ROK-Japan Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN 'COULD DEPLOY TROOPS IN KOREA IN EMERGENCY'", 2010/12/13) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan raised hackles in the ROK on Saturday by saying Tokyo will consider dispatching troops there to rescue Japanese citizens in case of an emergency. Kan told reporters his government will consult on the matter with the ROK government and revise Japanese laws to allow the country's Self-Defense Force to engage in such rescue operations. The daily Tokyo Shimbun reported on Sunday that the Japanese government already sounded out to the Korean government the possibility of dispatching SDF transport aircraft and vessels to Seoul, Incheon and Busan to rescue around 28,000 Japanese citizens residing in the ROK. But the daily said the ROK government rejected the proposal citing a potential public outrage among RO Koreans. Seoul was also reportedly concerned that the consultation itself could give the impression that a war is imminent.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2010/12/13/2010121300401.html

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5. Sino-US Military Relations

Global Times ("CHINA RESUMES MILITARY EXCHANGES WITH US", 2010/12/13) reported that the PRC and the US resumed military exchanges Friday as senior defense officials from both sides held what the Pentagon called "productive" talks in Washington and agreed that US Defense Secretary Robert Gates would pay a visit to the PRC next month. The talks were co-chaired by Ma Xiaotian, deputy chief of the general staff of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and Michele Flournoy, US under-secretary of defense. The two sides also agreed that Chen Bingde, chief of the general staff of the PLA, would visit the US at a mutually convenient date in 2011, according to the PRC Ministry of Defense. Ma said in order to keep the military-to-military ties on a stable development track, both sides need to respect each other's core interests and major concerns, properly handle differences and sensitive issues, continuously foster and increase mutual strategic trust, according to Xinhua.

<http://china.globaltimes.cn/diplomacy/2010-12/601241.html>

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