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2. UNC-DPRK Talks

Agence France-Presse ("N.KOREA HOLDS FIRST TALKS WITH UN COMMAND ON SHIP SINKING", Seoul, 2010/07/15) reported that the DPRK military on Thursday held its first talks with the US-led UN Command since the sinking of the Cheonan. The two sides met for 90 minutes at Panmunjom to discuss the sinking, according to a spokesman for the command. KCNA said agreement was reached on the date, venue and make-up of the delegations for follow-up talks, without giving further details. A statement from UN Command said the details of further talks would be confirmed later. "After consulting superiors, both sides could hold another round of colonel-level talks or go straight into the higher-level meeting," a UNC spokesman told AFP.

Associated Press (Kwang-tae Kim, "NKOREA DEMANDS ITS OWN PROBE INTO SHIP SINKING", Seoul, 2010/07/15) reported that the DPRK military renewed its call for its own investigation into the sinking of the Cheonan as it met Thursday with the U.S.-led U.N. Command. "Field investigation by an inspection group ... should precede under any circumstances to ensure the successful opening of the general-level talks," the Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch.

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4. Russia on Six Party Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA'S LAVROV CALLS FOR CALM OVER S.KOREA SHIP SINKING TO RESUME SIX-PARTY TALKS ", 2010/07/14) reported that negotiators from the six party talks on the DPRK's nuclear disarmament should avoid the escalation of emotions in the wake of the ROK's Cheonan warship sinking, the Russian foreign minister said on Wednesday. "I believe that the most important at the present time is to ease the situation, avoid agitation, escalation of emotions and start preparing conditions for the resumption of the six-party talks," Sergei Lavrov told journalists concerning the situation with the Cheonan.

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5. DPRK Internal Situation

Kyodo News ("FORMER N. KOREAN RAILWAYS MINISTER KIM YONG SAM EXECUTED: REPORT", 2010/07/14) reported that former DPRK Railways Minister Kim Yong Sam was executed in March last year for failing to maintain locomotive trains that had been in store for wartime, Radio Free Asia, a nonprofit radio station, reported Wednesday on its Internet edition. A source on DPRK affairs said Kim got into trouble during an inspection by the National Defense Commission for scrapping locomotive trains that were in store for wartime.

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6. Sino-DPRK Economic Relations

JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA LEASES OUT ITS SQUID BEDS TO CHINA", 2010/07/14) reported that the DPRK is allowing PRC fishermen into its territorial waters on the East Sea in exchange for cash, according to Seoul government officials. The DPRK and PRC governments recently agreed to allow squid boats from the PRC to fish in the DPRK waters, said a Seoul official who declined to be named. About 250 PRC boats are operating near Najin and Chongjin, two port cities in North Hamgyong Province, a northeast coastal area. It is the first time such a large number of PRC crafts have been allowed to operate in the DPRK's seas, he said.

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7. Inter-Korea Relations

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN MINISTRY SEEKS TO BOLSTER MONITORING OF N. KOREA", 2010/07/14) reported that a ROK government branch plans to step up its monitoring of the DPRK next year by increasing funding for the activity five-fold, an official said Wednesday. The Unification Ministry is seeking 33.9 billion won (US\$28.1 million) next year to scrutinize the DPRK and assess its political, economic and social situation, the official said, asking for anonymity. The funding, a 516 percent increase compared to this year if approved, is part of the 328 billion won (US\$272 million) budget that the ministry is seeking for next year, the official said.

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8. ROK-US Joint Naval Exercises

Bloomberg ("U.S., SOUTH KOREA PLAN WAR GAMES IN YELLOW SEA, MORRELL SAYS", 2010/07/14) reported that Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton will meet with their counterparts in Seoul July 21 and will "discuss and likely approve" the air and naval exercises, which will be held "shortly thereafter," Morrell told reporters at a briefing. The war games "are defensive in nature but will send a clear message of deterrence to North Korea," he said.

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA STILL UNHAPPY ABOUT S.KOREA-U.S. DRILL", 2010/07/14) reported that the PRC reaffirmed its opposition to a joint ROK-U.S. maritime exercise despite sweeping changes to the plan that would spare Beijing the sight of some of the biggest U.S. ships. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang commented on a Chosun Ilbo story that U.S. ships could be deployed in the East Sea for the drill, instead of the West Sea as originally planned. "Our position is clear as we've already said. We'll closely watch developments. Korean issues can't be fundamentally resolved by military means. Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and regional stability must be sought in a way that promotes reconciliation and peace, not damage the interests of the countries in the region and aggravate discord," he added.

Yonhap ("S. KOREA SAYS JOIN NAVAL DRILL WITH U.S. TO TAKE PLACE IN EAST SEA", Seoul, 2010/07/15) reported that the ROK and the United States have agreed to change the location of their joint naval exercise to the East Sea, a senior defense ministry official said Thursday. "The joint South Korea-U.S. naval drill will be staged in the East Sea," the official said, adding he expects the exercise to be carried out this month. When asked if the PRC's protests affected the decision to change the location, the official replied, "It can't be ruled out."

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11. ROK-US Military Relations

Yonhap News ("SEOUL CONSIDERING HAVING U.S. RETAIN LEAD IN JOINT MILITARY DRILL FOR FEW MORE YEARS: SOURCE", 2010/07/14) reported that the ROK is looking into the possibility of having the United States to retain control of the two countries' joint military drills for a few more years to correlate better with the changed schedule in the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) between the countries, a military source here said Wednesday. In addition to the U.S. running this year's UFG set for August, Seoul is considering having the U.S. keep the head role until 2012. "Since the date of wartime command transfer was delayed, an adjustment of the plan for the joint military exercise has become inevitable," the source said on the condition of anonymity.

The new plan would be for the ROK to take back the lead in the UFG from 2013, the source said, adding that the adjustments will be one of the topics at next week's "two plus two" meeting between

foreign and defense ministers of the two nations.

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12. ROK Military

Yonhap News ("DEFENSE CHIEF VOWS TO BUILD STRONGER MILITARY", 2010/07/14) reported that Defense Minister Kim Tae-young pledged Wednesday to build a stronger military to ensure that DPRK provocation will never happen again, admitting to "painful mistakes" that failed to prevent the March sinking of a warship. Kim made the remark at a biannual meeting of some 300 commanders, renewing his calls for maximum defense readiness to counter the DPRK. "We must bitterly regret our painful mistakes because we failed to prevent the enemy's attack, though such attack had been anticipated," Kim said.

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13. ROK-Japan Relations

Donga Ilbo ("JAPAN FM URGES REMEMBERING KOREAN PAIN OVER COLONIZATION", 2010/07/14) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said, "I recognize that Korean pride was deeply bruised when they lost their country." In a written interview with The Dong-A Ilbo, he said, "I think we should never forget the painful minds of the victims," adding, "Based on such recognition of the past, I want to strengthen (Japan's) future-oriented friendly relationship with (South) Korea in looking forward to the next 100 years." "Japan has consistently shown strong support for (South) Korea on the sinking of the warship Cheonan," he said. "There is no change in the direction Japan will seek on the normalization of diplomatic relations with North Korea after comprehensively addressing all pending issues such as the North's kidnappings, nuclear weapons and missiles."

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14. ROK-Japan Defense Cooperation

Arirang News ("JAPAN'S FM TALKS ABOUT SEOUL-TOKYO DEFENSE COOPERATION", 2010/07/14) reported that Japan's top diplomat says it is time the bilateral relationship between Seoul and Tokyo expand further beyond politics, the economy and culture to include cooperation in the areas of security and defense. Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada said his country shares fundamental values with neighboring ROK, expressing optimism over the two allies' joint efforts to guarantee peace and stability in East Asia.

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15. Japan-Indonesia Defense Cooperation

The Jakarta Post ("RI, JAPAN JOIN FORCES TO FACE SECURITY THREATS, PIRACY ", 2010/07/14) reported that Japan and Indonesia look to expand security cooperation, including possibly establishing a joint anti-piracy force in the Gulf of Aden, after decades of focusing on economic development ties, officials say. Japanese Ambassador to Indonesia Kojiro Shiojiri said in a seminar to mark the Japan Self-Defense Force Day that Indonesia and Japan were "strategic partners" who had made constructive contributions to the region. "Japan looks to elevate the relations in every aspect, including on security," he said. Shingo Miyamoto, counsellor at the Japanese Embassy in Jakarta, said the Indonesia Military (TNI) could work with the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) on a joint anti-piracy force in the Gulf of Aden, given that many sailors passing through the area were Indonesians.

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16. Japan-US Security Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, U.S. REAFFIRM COOPERATION ON N. KOREA, IRAN", 2010/07/14) reported that Japan and the United States reaffirmed their cooperation on a response to the DPRK over the March sinking of a ROK warship, Japanese Foreign State Secretary Koichi Takemasa said after meeting with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg. On a fresh sanctions resolution adopted last month by the U.N. Security Council against Iran over its nuclear programs, Takemasa also told reporters that he and Steinberg agreed to work closely on seeking full implementation of the sanctions.

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17. Sino-Singapore Military Cooperation

Xinhua News Agency ("CHINA SEEKS TO ADVANCE MILITARY TIES WITH SINGAPORE", 2010/07/14) reported that the PRC Tuesday pledged to continue to promote the development of military relations with Singapore. PRC Defense Minister Liang Guanglie made the remarks when meeting with Chiang Chie Foo, visiting Permanent Secretary of the Singaporean Defense Ministry. Bilateral military ties had undergone a healthy development, with sound exchanges and cooperation mechanisms, frequent high-level visits and good cooperation in personnel training, joint military training and escort missions, Liang said. The PRC was willing to work with Singapore to continuously boost relations between the two countries and armed forces, so as to play an active role in jointly safeguarding regional security and stability, he said.

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18. Sino-Qatar Military Cooperation

Xinhua News Agency ("CHINA, QATAR VOW TO BOOST MILITARY COOPERATION ", 2010/07/14) reported that the PRC and Qatar agreed to further boost military cooperation at a meeting of senior military officials in Beijing Wednesday. The PRC and Qatar, with different social systems, historical backgrounds and cultural traditions, always respected, supported and helped each other and treated each other on an equal footing, said PRC Defense Minister Liang Guanglie when meeting with Hamad Bin Ali Al-Attiya, visiting chief of the general staff of Qatar's armed forces Wednesday. Recent years had witnessed the development of friendly cooperative relations of the two nations and enhanced military ties, Liang said. The PRC attached great importance to its relations with Qatar and was ready to further exchanges and cooperation of the two nations and armed forces, he said.

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19. PRC Human Rights

The Age ("CHINA PONDERES CLOSING LABOUR CAMPS ", 2010/07/14) reported that the PRC is considering closing its network of labour camps, allowing an unprecedented public debate over the controversial "re-education" program. The many abuses at the camps have led to an unprecedented open debate in the Beijing News, a government-owned newspaper, about whether they should be closed down. Yu Jianrong, a liberal legal scholar and adviser to the government, wrote in an editorial it was important for the PRC to "advance with the times". "The system has already seen its day. From its establishment until before the Cultural Revolution, re-education through labour was 'a tool of political struggle'," he wrote. "After reform and opening, it became a 'method of social management'. But its fundamental nature has not changed. It is still a method of social control outside of judicial procedure."

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20. PRC Ethnic Unrest

Kyodo News ("ETHNIC ZHUANG VILLAGERS, HAN CHINESE CLASH IN SOUTHERN CHINA: REPORTS", 2010/07/14) reported that more than 100 people have been injured in clashes this week between ethnic minority villagers and majority Han Chinese mining company workers in southern PRC's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region over the company's alleged land grab and water pollution, a Hong Kong- based human rights watchdog and media reports said Wednesday. The Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy said thousands of Zhuang people fought with hundreds of Han Chinese from the Shandong Xinfu Aluminium Co. whose mining activities were said

to have polluted sources of drinking water in the province's Jinxi County. Violence erupted over road construction Sunday when hundreds of Han workers attacked the Zhuang villagers with wooden sticks. The villagers fought back with makeshift weapons in the following days, smashing the company office and damaging cars including police and military vehicles, the center said.

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21. PRC Internet

Financial Times ("CHINA'S 'TWEETERS' TARGETED BY INTERNET POLICE", 2010/07/14) reported that PRC micro-blogging sites have become the latest target of Beijing's internet police, which have ordered companies providing Twitter-like services to step up monitoring and purge sites of politically "sensitive" words and expressions. In the last week, most of the largest and most popular micro-blogging websites in the PRC have been shut down for "maintenance" or have switched to "beta" or "testing" versions. These backup websites are being used while the companies "strengthen their self-censorship systems" and remove all politically sensitive content under orders from PRC internet authorities, according to employees at some of those companies.

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22. Cross-Strait Relations

Channel News Asia ("NO TIMETABLE FOR POLITICAL TALKS WITH CHINA: GIO HEAD", 2010/07/14) reported that Taiwan does not have any timetable for political talks with the PRC after the recent signing of a bilateral economic cooperation framework agreement (ECFA), the Government Information Office (GIO) minister said in New York. Fielding questions about whether the two sides of the Taiwan Strait will begin political negotiations after the recent signing of the ECFA, Johnny Chiang said the ECFA is purely an economic accord and has nothing to do with politics. "There is still a long way to go and there is no timetable" for the two sides of the strait to enter political negotiations, Chiang said.

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