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2. US-DPRK Relations

Reuters ("U.S. READY TO TALK TO N.KOREA IN RIGHT CIRCUMSTANCES", 2010/07/15) reported that the United States said it wanted the DPRK to give up "its provocative ways" and show some commitment to abandoning its nuclear programs before resuming diplomatic talks with Pyongyang. A US diplomat said Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would discuss the issue as well as what actions the US might take in response to the DPRK's alleged sinking of a ROK warship when she visits Seoul next week. "The United States and South Korea have always maintained ... that we are prepared under the right circumstances, to sit down in a dialogue with North Korea," Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell told reporters.

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3. US Sanctions on the DPRK

Donga Ilbo ("US TO ADJUST TIMING OF SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2010/07/15) reported that the US will reportedly flexibly adjust the schedule for its announcement of sanctions on the DPRK. Analysts say Washington will likely announce its own sanctions in phases after examining if Pyongyang's friendly gestures following the UN Security Council's presidential statement condemning the Cheonan sinking will bring about practical measures for denuclearization. A diplomatic source in Washington said, "North Korea is showing friendly gestures, expressing interest in general talks with the U.N. Command in South Korea following the U.N. Security Council's adoption of the presidential statement. So Washington is closely examining Pyongyang's response."

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4. DPRK and ROK Naval Ship Sinking

Joongang Ilbo ("POSTER IN PYONGYANG RECALLS THE CHEONAN", 2010/07/15) reported that a poster spotted in Pyongyang by a visiting PRC businessman seems to admit the DPRK's role in the sinking of the ROK naval ship Cheonan in March, according to Radio Free Asia. The US-based media outlet reported on its Korean Web site that the poster shows a fully armed soldier cutting a corvette similar to the Cheonan in half with his bare fist. Below the image is the phrase "Deom-byeo-de-l-myeon Dan-mae-e!" ("Ready to crush any attack with a single blow!"). The RFA did not specify the date the photo was taken but, citing unnamed sources, said it was likely the poster was made after the Cheonan sinking to encourage military heroism among DPRK soldiers.

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5. Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("DEFECTORS START RESEARCH CENTER ON PYONGYANG", 2010/07/16) reported that the world's first DPRK research institute set up by a DPRK defector opened in Seoul. The World Institute for North Korean Studies, or WINK, which is housed in a small office in Yeoksam-dong, in southern Seoul, had an opening ceremony attended by dozens of well-known DPRK experts. An Chan-il says that current studies of the reclusive country, in the ROK or elsewhere, are not engaging the DPRK, either because of ideological differences or a lack of interest in doing so. Therefore, the research has little impact on the DPRK. "The alternative solutions we will provide will in particular cover the areas of politics, economy and social integration."

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6. Inter-Korean Economic Relations

IFES NK Brief ("FIRST REAL ESTATE AUCTION HELD IN KAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ", 2010/07/15) reported that a real estate auction was held in the Kaesong Industrial Complex for the first time since the joint inter-Korean project was launched. According to the Kaesong Industrial District Development Committee, factory plots (20,472.7 ?) in the stage-1 area of the KIC were being auctioned off on July 12. A government source stated, "Land in the KIC has been sold before, but this is the first I know of land rights being auctioned off." This move by the government highlights the fact that ROK companies in the KIC continue to tread on rocky financial footing, despite the announcement by the Ministry of Unification that emergency management stability funds would be made available.

Yonhap (Sam Kim, "S. KOREA EASES RESTRICTION ON JOINT FACTORY PARK WITH N. KOREA",

Seoul, 2010/07/16) reported that the ROK said Friday it has eased its restriction on the number of ROK workers allowed to stay at the Kaesong joint factory complex. Unification Ministry spokeswoman Lee Jong-joo said in a briefing that the number of workers permitted in Kaesong will increase to about 600. "This is the result of the experience we've had from the last two months of managing the cap and what we've been hearing from the companies," Lee said. "But the penalties (for the sinking of the Cheonan) will continue as planned. This is a measure aimed at minimizing the difficulties our companies are having."

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8. DPRK Public Health

The New York Times ("IN REPORT, GRIM VIEW OF NORTH KOREAN HEALTH CARE ", 2010/07/15) reported that DPRK doctors perform surgeries without anesthesia in clinics where hypodermic needles are not sterilized and sheets not washed, the human rights group Amnesty International said. Drawn from interviews with more than 40 North Koreans who had defected over the past six years, as well as with health professionals who have worked with North Koreans, the paper depicted a DPRK health system in dire straits. "The North Korean people are in critical need of medical and food aid," said Catherine Baber, Amnesty International's deputy director for the Asia-Pacific. "It is crucial that aid to North Korea is not used as a political football by donor countries."

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9. DPRK Leadership

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA INCREASING POWER OF RULING PARTY TO FACILITATE POWER SUCCESSION", 2010/07/13) reported that in a bid to facilitate a hereditary power transfer, the DPRK appears to be increasing the authority of its ruling party even though it remains to be seen how leader Kim Jong-il will balance it with his military-first policy, a source said. "Kim's son, Jong-un, is likely to rise to power through the Workers' Party just like his father did, and that's why North Korea is touting the party so strongly this year," the ROK source told reporters.

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10. US-ROK Joint Naval Exercises

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. MULLS YEAR-ROUND DRILLS WITH S.KOREA", 2010/07/15) reported that the US government is apparently debating how to stage joint exercises with the ROK not only this month but all year round as a response to the DPRK's torpedo attack on the ROK Navy corvette Cheonan in March. A diplomatic source in Washington on Tuesday said the U.S. is thinking a lot about these

joint exercises "to deliver a clear message to the North." Following the planned joint drill this month, the two countries will further upgrade the Ulchi Freedom Guardian exercise, which is staged in August every year, and may also possibly conduct various other kinds of drills.

Agence France-Presse ("S.KOREA, US TO STAGE SERIES OF NAVAL DRILLS", Seoul, 2010/07/16) reported that the ROK and the United States will stage a series of naval exercises this year to deter the DPRK, the defence ministry said Friday. A ministry spokesman told AFP, "there will be a series of joint naval drills around the peninsula, probably 10, with US forces this year". The ministry also announced that a separate anti-proliferation naval drill would be held off the ROK in October, as part of Seoul's military response to the Cheonan sinking.

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12. PRC on US-ROK Naval Exercise

Xinhua News ("CHINA CALLS FOR RESTRAINT AS U.S., ROK PLAN MILITARY DRILL ", 2010/07/15) reported that the PRC on Thursday called for calm and restraint to avoid escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula in response to a possible naval drill by the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang made the remarks at a regular news briefing, saying the PRC hoped the actions of all parties would contribute to the security, mutual trust, friendship, peace and stability of the region. All countries in the region needed to work together, and strengthen mutual trust and cooperation through dialogue, so as to maintain regional security and stability, Qin said.

Yonhap (Hwang Doo-hyong, "U.S. DISMISSES CHINA'S CONCERNS OVER S. KOREA-U.S. JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES", Washington, 2010/07/15) reported that the United States Thursday reiterated that the ROK-U.S. joint military exercises are intended for the DPRK not the PRC. "It should not cause alarm from the Chinese or anyone else," Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell told reporters. "This is about sending a message to the DPRK. This is not about sending a message to the Chinese. It should not be interpreted as such."

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14. ROK Military

Joongang Ilbo ("COURT GIVES NOD TO BIG NAVY PORT ON JEJU ISLAND", 2010/07/15) reported

that after 15 months of controversy, the Seoul Administrative Court rejected Jeju residents' request to stop the Defense Ministry from building a naval base on the island. The ruling gave the ministry permission to speed up the building of a port for 20 battleships and two large cruisers by 2014. Park Jeong-hwa, the judge who presided over the case, said there were no illegalities in the way the ministry handled the project. Yoon Ho-gyeong, the head of a Gangjeong villagers association that is opposed to the base, said he can't accept the ruling.

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15. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO SOUND OUT U.S. ON 1-RUNWAY OPTION FOR FUTENMA RELOCATION", Tokyo, 2010/07/15) reported that the government has decided to push a plan to build a single 1,800-meter runway in Cape Henoko in Nago, Okinawa Prefecture, and its adjacent waters through land reclamation as a new facility to replace a US Marine base in the prefecture, government sources said. The new plan, which seeks to relocate the Futenma Air Station in the crowded city of Ginowan on the same Okinawa island, will be pitched to the U.S. side during a working-level meeting of the two governments to be held in Washington on Thursday and Friday.

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16. Japan on UNSC Reform

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, BRAZIL TO COOPERATE OVER U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL REFORM", 2010/07/15) reported that Japan and Brazil reaffirmed that they will continue to closely work together on reform of the United Nations Security Council, as the two countries aim for permanent membership, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said. Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada and his Brazilian counterpart Celso Amorim also talked over the phone about Iran's nuclear program.

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17. Japanese Nuclear Technology Exports

The Australian ("ANXIETY MUSHROOMS OVER JAPANESE NUCLEAR EXPORTS ", 2010/07/15) reported that it's hard not to draw cynical conclusions about Japan's decision to pursue sales of nuclear technology overseas. One of the country's most treasured principles appears to have a price as it hawks nuclear systems to India, the Middle East and perhaps other countries. For years the world's leading advocate of nuclear disarmament, Japan has recently opened talks with India about supplying reactor technology. It has also set up a powerful nuclear export organisation comprised of leading nuclear energy companies and government agencies.

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18. Japan-India Nuclear Cooperation

Kyodo ("IRAN AIRS CONCERNS OVER JAPAN'S CIVILIAN NUKE PACT TALKS WITH INDIA ", Tokyo, 2010/07/16) reported that visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Pacific Affairs Mohammad Ali Fathollahi told reporters at the Iranian Embassy in Tokyo that he expressed regret at the start of the Japan-India nuclear talks during his meeting Thursday with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada. During the meeting Thursday, Okada requested that Iran halt its uranium enrichment activities and make continued efforts to allay international concern over its nuclear program, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Fathollahi, however, maintained in a press conference Friday that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and said that he confirmed with Okada that all the NPT signatories are entitled to peaceful use of nuclear energy.

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19. Japan Politics

The Asahi Shimbun ("SURVEY: 73% SAY KAN CAN STAY", 2010/07/15) reported that seventy-three percent of voters said there is no need for Prime Minister Naoto Kan to resign over his ruling Democratic Party of Japan's poor showing in Sunday's Upper House election, an Asahi Shimbun survey showed. Only 17 percent of respondents said Kan should resign. Asked if they trusted the LDP to control the government, 64 percent said they did not think so, compared with 17 percent who answered in the affirmative. The approval rate for Kan's Cabinet was 37 percent, down from 39 percent in the previous survey on July 3 and 4.

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20. Sino-Japanese Relations

Global Times ("YOUTH EXCHANGES PAVE WAY FOR SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS ", 2010/07/15) reported that bilateral ties between the PRC and Japan have improved during the past four years, Yuji Miyamoto, the former Japanese ambassador to the PRC, told the Global Times in an exclusive interview Thursday. When asked about how much this goal had been achieved during his four-year tenure, Miyamoto said it could not be realized within a short period of time without stronger efforts made by both sides. "I am quite satisfied with the current development of the bilateral ties, which have become better and closer than ever before," he said.

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21. Sino-Russian Relations

Calcutta News ("RUSSIA TO ENHANCE ENERGY COOPERATION WITH CHINA: MINISTER", 2010/07/15) reported that Russia wants to further develop cooperation with the PRC in oil, gas, nuclear power and coal sectors, said Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko. The minister told PRC ambassador to Russia Li Hui that the PRC and Russia have seen fast progress in energy cooperation during recent years, notably the joint efforts in oil pipeline construction and Tianwan nuclear power plant project. Shmatko hoped that the two countries would complement each other in energy sectors, especially in oil, natural gas, nuclear power, electricity and coal, to achieve win-win situation.

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22. Sino-Argentine Nuclear Cooperation

Dow Jones ("CHINA'S CNNC KEEN TO BUILD ARGENTINA NUCLEAR POWER PLANT", 2010/07/15) reported that China National Nuclear Corp., or CNNC, has expressed interest in helping to build Argentina's fourth nuclear power plant, Argentina's Planning Ministry said Tuesday. Planning Minister Julio de Vido met with the head of CNNC, Mao Xiaming, to discuss the tender of construction contracts. They agreed that a PRC delegation will travel to Argentina in August, while in September representatives from Argentina's National Atomic Energy Commission will visit the PRC the ministry said.

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23. PRC Anti-Piracy Operations

Global Times ("CHINESE NAVY CONTINUES TO MONITOR WATERS IN GULF OF ADEN ", 2010/07/15) reported that the 6th fleet of the PRC navy is expected to take over from the 5th fleet, which has been on a mission to monitor the waters off the Somali coast for more than three months. The two fleets met off the west coast of Gulf of Aden on Wednesday, and they are expected to exchange information before the handover ceremony.

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24. PRC Migrant Labor

The Associated Press ("BEIJING STARTS GATING, LOCKING MIGRANT VILLAGES", 2010/07/15) reported that the government calls it "sealed management." The PRC's capital has started gating and locking some of its lower-income neighborhoods overnight, with police or security checking identification papers around the clock, in a throwback to an older style of control. It's Beijing's latest effort to reduce rising crime often blamed on the millions of rural PRC migrating to cities for work. The capital's Communist Party secretary wants the approach promoted citywide. But some state media and experts say the move not only looks bad but imposes another layer of control on the already stigmatized, vulnerable migrants.

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25. PRC Internet Use

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S ONLINE POPULATION REACHES 420 MILLION", 2010/07/15) reported that the PRC's online population, the world's largest, has reached 420 million as more people access the Internet with cell phones. The number of Internet users grew by 36 million in the first six months this year, said the government-sanctioned China Internet Network Information Center on Thursday. About 277 million people get online with their phones, the report said.

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