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1. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press ("NKOREA LAMBASTS SKOREA'S NEW DEFENSE CHIEF", 2010/12/06) reported that the DPRK lambasted the ROK's new defense chief Sunday for threatening to launch air strikes against the DPRK and accused the ROK of causing "uncontrollable, extreme" tension on the peninsula. Kim took office Saturday, replacing a predecessor who resigned amid criticism that ROK's response to the Nov. 23 shelling was too slow and weak. "The frantic provocations ... are rapidly driving the situation on the Korean peninsula to an uncontrollable extreme phase," the official Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch from Pyongyang.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101205/ap_on_re_as/as_koreas_clash

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2. ROK Military

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA STARTS LIVE-FIRE DRILLS, IGNORES NORTH THREAT", 2010/12/06) reported that the ROK started nationwide live-fire naval exercises on Monday, ignoring Pyongyang's warnings against conducting provocative drills in disputed waters off the west coast of the divided peninsula. The ROK's military said the exercises were scheduled to take place in the vicinity of the tense Northern Limit Line (NLL), but not near Yeonpyeong island which was hit by a barrage of DPRK shells 13 days ago. Pyongyang said the drills, expected to last around a week, showed the ROK was "hell-bent" on setting off a war.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6B50KX20101206>

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA ADVISED TO DOUBLE NUMBER OF MARINES TO COUNTER N. KOREA", 2010/12/06) reported that a presidential security panel proposed Monday that the ROK more than double the number of its marines, a core force in defending the country's western border islands, and reverse the ongoing reduction of mandatory military service period for all armed forces, sources said. The Commission for National Security Review said the ROK should turn the Marine Corp into "Rapid Reaction Force" and increase the number of marines to around 12,000 from the current 5,000 by creating another division, the sources said, asking not to be named before a formal government announcement on the report. The commission also called for restoring the 24-month military service period, according to the sources.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2010/12/06/90/0301000000AEN20101206003000315F.HTML>

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3. PRC, US on DPRK Talks

Reuters ("CHINA'S HU TELLS OBAMA KOREA TENSION COULD GO OUT OF CONTROL", 2010/12/06) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao on Monday warned U.S. President Barack Obama that tensions on the Korean peninsula could spiral out of control if not dealt with properly, their first discussion on the issue since the DPRK shelled the ROK nearly two weeks ago. Analysts said Hu's comments showed a greater sense of urgency in the PRC leadership over the mounting tension and also an attempt to avoid the perception that Beijing is siding with its ally Pyongyang to face off against the United States, Japan and ROK whose foreign ministers meet later in the day to discuss the DPRK. The White House said Obama, in a telephone call with Hu, urged Beijing to work with the United States and others to "send a clear message to North Korea that its provocations are unacceptable." But the three are expected to discuss Beijing's proposal for emergency regional talks on the crisis.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE6B50KX20101206>

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4. Japan Self-Defense Force

Xinhua Net ("JAPAN SEEKS TO LIMIT DEFENSE EXPENSES GROWTH IN DRAFT GUIDELINES",

2010/12/06) reported that a draft of Japan's policy guidelines urged for limiting the growth of its defense expenses at zero percent or lower from their fiscal 2009 level in the next five years, local media reported on Sunday. The Ministry of Defense has requested a 155,000-quota for the Ground Self-Defense Force, down 2,000 from its previous request. The number is expected to be further cut due to strong calls for the reduction within the Democratic Party of Japan-led ruling bloc, Kyodo News reported. The document, which is to be approved by the Cabinet later this month, said Japan will enhance defense cooperation not only with the United States but also with ROK and Australia. The document indicates that Japan will shift toward a more multifunctional, resilient and effective defense capability to help contain threats to regional security and avoid a situation in which Japan would be a power vacuum in the region, according to Kyodo News report.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2010-12/05/c_13635586.htm

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5. IAEA Global Nuclear Fuel Bank

World Nuclear News ("IAEA APPROVES GLOBAL NUCLEAR FUEL BANK", 2010/12/06) reported that the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has adopted a resolution establishing a global nuclear fuel bank aimed at providing an alternative to countries seeking producing their own nuclear fuel. At its meeting on 3 December, the IAEA board agreed to create an international low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuel bank, fulfilling the conditions of the \$50 million pledge proposed by the US-based Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) organization and US billionaire Warren Buffett. The NTI pledged \$50 million of funding for the fuel bank in September 2006, conditional on nations providing a further \$100 million and the IAEA taking the necessary actions to approve the establishment of the reserve. The IAEA will now draw up a framework that defines the fuel bank's structure, access and location. World Nuclear Association director general and former US Ambassador to the IAEA John Ritch said, "Any mechanism that truly fortifies the nuclear non-proliferation system warrants support, both from the nuclear industry and from governments worldwide," but noted that "no-one has yet explained a scenario where a country is denied fuel by other governments even though it is meeting its commitments - and then turns to the same governments to supply the fuel through the IAEA."

http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/ENF-IAEA_approves_global_nuclear_fuel_bank-0612105.html

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