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I. United States

1. Working Group Talks

Kyodo News ("JAPAN SAYS NORTH SIX-WAY WORKING GROUP TALKS LIKELY 17-20 AUGUST", 2004-08-02) reported that parties to six-way talks aimed at resolving the DPRK nuclear standoff have begun trying to set a working group meeting for 17-20 August in Beijing ahead of the fourth round of plenary discussions, sources close to the talks said Monday. The venue is expected to be Beijing, which is where the previous six-way meetings have been held, the sources said. The participants plan to hold the fourth round by the end of September. Ning Fukui, the PRC's ambassador in charge of the DPRK nuclear issue, is expected to propose the schedule to Japan when he visits Japan later this week, and Japan is likely to agree to it, the sources said.

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2. Inter - Korean Relations

Korea Times ("INTER-KOREAN MINISTERIAL MEETING LIKELY TO BE POSTPONED ", 2004-08-02) reported that the inter-Korean ministerial meeting slated for Tuesday is unlikely to be held as the DPRK on Monday turned down a working-level preparatory border contact. "Our understanding is that the Aug. 3-6 dialogue will inevitably be put off since North Korea did not contact us the day before the talks are set to start," said a senior Unification Ministry official. The ROK and DPRK officials had their routine daily telephone talks at the truce village of Panmunjom early in the day but there was no mention of the scheduled Cabinet-level cross border meeting in Seoul.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("ENVOY SEEKS ACCOUNTING OF NUKE PROGRAMS", 2004-07-30) reported that a US envoy to six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear dispute has underscored to PRC officials the importance of taking into account all of the DPRK's nuclear programs if the issue is to be resolved, a U.S. Embassy spokeswoman said Friday. Joseph DeTrani met Thursday with his counterpart, Ning Fukui, and spoke on Friday with Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi, the PRC's chief delegate to the talks, the spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity. DeTrani's visit was aimed at sorting out details for lower-level working group discussions prior to the next round of six-party meetings, expected to be held by the end of September.

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4. PRC and ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("SEOUL, BEIJING AGREE URANIUM ISSUE KEY TO SOLVING NUKE ROW ", 2004-08-02) reported that the ROK and PRC agreed here Monday that the major issue in the 21-month standoff over the DPRK's nuclear program lies in disputes over an allegation that the DPRK has a highly enriched uranium-based nuclear weapons program, a Seoul official said. The agreement was made between Cho Tae-young, head of the Foreign Ministry's task force on the North's nuclear program, and Ning Fukui, special envoy on the DPRK nuclear issue, that the dispute over DPRK's alleged possession of the program is a fundamental issue in solving the standoff, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Korea Times ("SEOUL, BEIJING DISCUSS 6-WAY TALKS", 2004-08-02) reported that the ROK and PRC on Monday discussed the agenda and timetable for the next round of working-level nuclear meetings aimed at addressing the prolonged row over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Cho Tai-yong, head of the Foreign Ministry's task force on the DPRK nuclear issue, and his PRC counterpart Ning Fukui, coordinated the details of the multilateral talks at the ministry building in central Seoul. "I look forward to a very productive consultation," Cho said before entering into discussions. In response, the PRC's special envoy on the DPRK nuclear issue, said the six countries should hold talks in detail over working-level and high-level discussions before the main six-party talks are held in September.

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5. DPRK on US Relations

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("N KOREA SAYS US USING SIX-WAY TALKS TO SHIELD "FRANTIC ARMS BUILD-UP"", 2004-08-02) reported that the US would soon deploy a new carrier flotilla made up of nuclear-powered submarines centered on the latest type nuclear-powered carrier "John Stennis" and different types of warships including Aegis destroyer around the Korean Peninsula. The commentary said: The US does not seek peace and security on the Korean Peninsula but aggression and war. It is a daydream of the US to bring the DPRK to its knees by means of war. The DPRK has already made a solemn declaration that it would not remain a passive on-looker to the US frantic arms build-up behind the curtain of the six-party talks and sit idle until the US has wound up its preparations for attack and taken up the offensive position and it mounts a pre-emptive attack on it. The US should immediately discontinue the arms build-up aimed to invade the DPRK.

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6. DPRK Missile Systems

Jane's Defense Weekly (Excerpt) ("NORTH KOREA DEPLOY NEW MISSILES", 2004-08-02) reported that emerging reports indicate that the DPRK is developing-- and is in the process of deploying--at least two new ballistic missile systems. The first is a land-based road-mobile medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM)/intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) with an estimated range of 2,500-4,000km. The second is a companion submarine or ship-mounted ballistic missile system with a range of at least 2,500km. Both systems appear to be based on the decommissioned Soviet R-27 (NATO: SS-N-6) submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). It is believed that the R-27 technology originated with personnel from the VP Makeyev Design Bureau in Miass, Chelyabinsk. A group of 20 missile specialists from the bureau was detained in December 1992 as they were attempting to depart for the DPRK.

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7. US Troop Withdrawal from the ROK

Yonhap ("U.S. TO STICK TO 2005 DEADLINE FOR TROOP PULLOUT: MILITARY SOURCE ", 2004-08-02) reported that the US will stick to its decision to withdraw about one third of the 37,000 U.S. troops in the ROK by the end of 2005 as scheduled, a senior U.S. military official said Sunday. "We've already told South Korea on several occasions that there's no change to our plan to pull out 12,500 U.S. troops in the Korean Peninsula by the end of 2005," the official said.

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8. ROK Troop Transfer

Reuters ("U.S. SET TO SHIFT 3,600 TROOPS TO IRAQ FROM S.KOREA ", 2004-08-02) reported that a brigade of 3,600 U.S. troops prepared Monday to depart for Iraq from their base near the ROK's border with the DPRK, officials said. No plans have been announced for their replacement in the ROK but it was not immediately clear if the move was part of U.S. plans for a global realignment of its troops. The plans include reducing the 37,500 troops in the ROK by a third. Under plans announced in May, the troops would be leaving "soon" for Iraq, a spokesman for the division said. He declined to give deployment details, citing security concerns.

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9. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREAN OFFICIAL SAYS NORTH MAY FOLLOW LIBYAN EXAMPLE IF OFFERED AID", 2004-08-02) reported that the DPRK may take the path Libya chose, abandoning its nuclear weapons programs in return for a security guarantee and massive economic aid from Western countries, if the US provides such a guarantee in a reliable manner, a senior ROK government official said Monday 2 August . "North Korea will surely accept if the United States clandestinely offers a security guarantee for North Korea, either bilaterally or by way of Japan or South Korea, and they discuss the issue through the six-party nuclear talks," said Moon Jung-in, chairman of the presidential Northeast Asian Era Committee.

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10. Inter - Korean Exchange Visits

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREAN REPORTS INTER-KOREAN EXCHANGE VISITS UP 74 PER CENT", 2004-08-02) reported that a total of 9,866 people from the ROK and DPRK crossed the border to visit the other side of the peninsula in the first half, up 74 per cent over the same period of last year, the Unification Ministry said Monday (2 August). The number of ROK citizens who visited the DPRK during the six-month period totaled 9,545, said the ministry. The number does not include 82,444 ROK citizens who visited Mt Kumgang, a DPRK mountain resort on the east coast, which has been open to southern visitors since 1998, it noted. The number of DPRK citizens to the South came to 321.

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11. Official ROK Web Site Notes DPRK View

JoongAng Ilbo ("OFFICIAL SITE PROMOTES NORTH'S VIEW ", 2004-08-02) reported that a statement openly supporting the DPRK's political agenda was posted on the Internet site of the Government Information Agency, the mouthpiece of the Roh administration, the JoongAng Ilbo found yesterday. The contribution, written by an Internet user, was screened by the site's operator (www.news.go.kr). The writer urged the formation of a ROK delegation as soon as possible to express condolences to the DPRK on the 10th anniversary of the death of its leader, Kim Il Sung. The statement also criticized the ROK's recent acceptance of DPRK defectors, calling it a violation of the agreement between the two Koreas' leaders in June 2000. The writer also criticized the recent U.S. congressional approval of the North Korea Human Rights Act, calling it, "intervention into the domestic affairs of a foreign country and a model of imperialism."

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12. DPRK Famine

Voice of America ("NORTH KOREA REPORTEDLY SUFFERS SEVERE CROP DAMAGE", 2004-08-02) reported that the DPRK's official news agency, in a rare report on a natural disaster, is warning of severe damage to crops in the impoverished country from torrential rains last month. The Korean Central News Agency says heavy rains have swamped at least 100,000 hectares of cropland and more than a 1,000 homes have been flooded, mainly in the southern and central part of the country. That would be about four percent of the DPRK's arable land. The state-run news agency adds the damaged fields are unlikely to produce a crop this year.

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13. DPRK Food Aid

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREAN TRAIN BLAST VICTIMS SEE HOPE AS FIRST RUSSIAN AID ARRIVES", 2004-08-02) reported that Russia's first ever food donation to the DPRK has arrived in the impoverished nation, bringing hope to millions, including the victims of April's deadly train blast, the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) said. The ship MV Kallisto, docked at the west coast port of Nampo, was in the process of discharging its cargo of 34,700 tones of wheat, valued at ten million dollars, according to a WFP statement. "We are delighted that one of the world's key nations has joined our family of donors," said Richard Ragan, WFP country director for the DPRK.

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14. DPRK Abductions

Kyodo News ("ABDUCTION PROBE GROUP ADDS SAITAMA MAN AS VICTIM OF ABDUCTION", 2004-08-02) reported that a citizens group investigating possible cases of the DPRK having abducted Japanese nationals said Monday a man missing from Saitama Prefecture since 1976 is probably an abduction victim. The Investigation Commission on Missing Japanese Probably Related to the DPRK said it suspects Susumu Fujita, who was 19 at the time he went missing, was abducted by the DPRK because a man in a photograph brought from the DPRK about six months ago by a man who escaped the DPRK and went to the PRC, closely resembles Fujita.

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15. Abductee Reunion

CNN.com ("JENKINS COULD MEET LAWYER SOON", 2004-08-02) reported that alleged U.S. Army deserter Charles Jenkins could meet with a military lawyer soon, according to a Japanese government official. "The conditions are in place," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said on Monday. "Depending on the circumstances of the U.S. military counsel and Mr Jenkins' health, the meeting could take place soon," Reuters reported him as saying. The U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Howard Baker, said that Washington would not seek immediate custody of Jenkins and would allow doctors to treat him first.

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16. Fischer Deportation

The Associated Press ("FISCHER APPEALS JAPAN DEPORTATION ORDER ", 2004-08-02) reported that former world chess champion Bobby Fischer, who was taken into custody by Japanese authorities two weeks ago for traveling with a revoked U.S. passport, has appealed a deportation order to the US, an adviser said Monday. The American chess player, wanted by U.S. authorities for playing a 1992 match in the former Yugoslavia in violation of international sanctions, was granted a three-day extension Friday to contest Japan's decision last week to deport him. The deadline for the appeal - addressed to Japan's justice minister - was midnight Monday, and a decision typically takes two to three weeks, Bosnitch told The Associated Press. "If there is some move to railroad this along before that, we'll ask a court for an injunction" to stop the immigration proceedings, Bosnitch said. Fischer maintains the proceedings are illegal.

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17. Sino - US Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA WARNS U.S. ON TAIWAN OPPOSITION ", 2004-08-02) reported that the PRC's No. 2 leader warned visiting U.S. senators Monday that the Beijing government would never allow Taiwan to be independent, state television reported. Wu Bangguo, who is chairman of the PRC's legislature, said the Taiwan question is the most sensitive issue in U.S.-PRC relations, the report said. He said Washington must abide by the one-China policy, which opposes formal independence for the self-ruled island, it added.

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18. PRC on Taiwan Constitution

The Associated Press ("CHINA OFFICIAL THREATENS WAR WITH TAIWAN", 2004-07-30) reported that a senior PRC official warned that Beijing won't rule out war with Taiwan if the island's president pursues his plan to adopt a new constitution by 2008, the government's China Daily newspaper reported Friday. Wang Zaixi, vice minister of the State Council's Taiwan Affairs Office, also said it would be an "unwise move" for Taiwan to buy more advanced weapons from the US, the paper said. Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian has said he plans to introduce a new constitution for the island when his term ends in 2008. "New tensions and even a serious crisis in the cross-Straits situation may arise, if Chen obstinately pursues his timetable," Wang said in an interview with the China Daily. "We cannot completely rule out the possibility (of a military conflict) though it is not at all what we hope for," the paper quoted Wang as saying. The paper, writing in English, inserted the parentheses itself.

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19. Cross - Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S DEFENSE MINISTER WARNS TAIWAN ", 2004-08-01) reported that the PRC's defense minister issued a stern warning to Taiwan, saying the mainland military has the strength and determination to "smash" any moves toward independence by the self-ruled island, state media reported Sunday. Speaking at a reception marking the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Liberation Army, Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan said the PRC's "territorial sovereignty and integrity is supreme," the official Xinhua News Agency said. "The PLA has the determination and ability to smash any attempt at Taiwan independence," Cao said Saturday at the Great Hall of the People, the seat of the country's legislature. "We will never allow anybody to separate Taiwan from China in any form," he said. "The will of 1.3 billion Chinese people cannot be infringed upon."

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20. PRC Military Parade

The Associated Press ("CHINA HOLDS 1ST HONG KONG MILITARY PARADE", 2004-08-02) reported that thousands of rifle-toting PRC soldiers, bolstered by armored vehicles and helicopters, marched in Hong Kong on Sunday, an unprecedented display of Beijing's military might in the former British colony. PRC officials say they staged the parade to strengthen Hong Kong's relations with the People's Liberation Army. But it comes at a time of tension over the expected victory of pro-democracy candidates in September elections. The parade "displays the army's strength and determination to maintain Hong Kong's prosperity and stability," said Wang Jitang, commander of the PLA's Hong Kong garrison.

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21. Illegal Exports to the PRC

The Associated Press ("FEDS INDICT DUO OVER EXPORTS TO CHINA ", 2004-07-30) reported that the president of an exporting company and his wife were indicted Thursday on federal charges of illegally exporting defense components to state-sponsored research institutes and factories in the PRC. Teng Fang Li, 63, and his wife, Nei-Chien Chu, 58, were charged with conspiracy, and multiple

counts of export violations and money laundering. Li, president of Universal Technologies, was among seven people arrested July 1 following an investigation targeting his company and another Mount Laurel firm. Prosecutors allege Li and the others were involved in a scheme to sell components used in defense weapons systems such as radar, smart weapons and warfare communications.

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22. PRC Intellectual Property Law

The Associated Press ("BOGUS CLINTON BOOK ON SALE IN CHINA", 2004-08-01) reported that Alfred A. Knopf, publishers of Bill Clinton's best-selling "My Life," say they haven't yet sold the Chinese-language rights to the PRC. So the PRC's copyright thieves have struck again, concocting their own versions. One 438-page paperback version called "Wode Shenghuo" ("My Life") sells for 10 yuan (\$1.20) at a temple book fair and carries the former president's photo on the cover, just like the 957-page original. But it's not the same photo. The book lists "Clinton, HR" as the author, and just about all of it is lifted verbatim from the Chinese-language version of her memoir.

The Associated Press ("CHINA, U.S. POLICE ARREST 6 FOR DVD PIRACY ", 2004-07-31) reported that U.S. and PRC authorities in Shanghai have arrested six people, including two Americans, suspected of running an international counterfeit DVD smuggling ring, police said. The group is suspected of using the Internet to sell about 100,000 counterfeit DVDs, which were shipped to buyers in 25 countries. About 20,000 copies were sold to customers in the US, said Gao Feng, deputy director of Shanghai's Economic Crime Investigation Department. "The successful crackdown shows that piracy of intellectual property is a global issue, with no national boundaries," Gao told reporters Friday.

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23. PRC Trade Relations

Reuters ("EUROPE LAUDS WTO DEAL; CHINA COMPLAINS ", 2004-08-01) reported that European economic giants Germany, Britain and France warmly welcomed a deal Sunday to salvage world trade talks but the PRC complained developing countries were not satisfied and an environmental group hit at "empty promises." Trading powerhouse the PRC was more stinting in its praise. "Generally speaking, the framework (agreement) is not bad, though the developing countries are not fully satisfied," the official Xinhua news agency quoted Sun Zhenyu, the PRC's ambassador to the WTO, as saying. Sun, who spoke in Geneva where the accord was worked out on Saturday, did not elaborate, but said the PRC had played a positive role in promoting the negotiations. The agreement holds out hope for a final pact that would cut tariffs on agricultural and industrial goods, slash farm subsidies in rich countries and make it easier for financial and service industry firms to work across borders.

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24. PRC AIDS Issue

The Associated Press ("2 CHINESE VILLAGERS ARRESTED IN AIDS MARCH", 2004-08-01) reported that two villagers in central PRC have been arrested for leading a group of HIV-infected protesters to break into a hospital, an AIDS activist said Sunday. Fan Zhenbang and Pan Zhongfeng, from Shuangmiao in Henan province, were taken into custody on July 8 and will be detained for 30 days

for "assembling a crowd to stir up trouble," said Li Dan, a Beijing-based activist. Tens of thousands of villagers in Henan were infected by an unsanitary blood-buying industry in the 1990s, making it the country's hardest-hit province. The group had appealed to a local court to investigate their infections, but the court refused, he said. "The villagers were trying to get the government to admit that they had been wronged and hoped that they would get a fair answer to what had happened to them," said Li, who set up a charity helping AIDS orphans.

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25. PRC Media Control

The Washington Post ("IN CHINA, AN EDITOR TRIUMPHS, AND FAILS ", 2004-08-01) reported that it was past 9:30 p.m. when the reporters finished writing the next day's issue of the Southern Metropolis Daily. But when the night editor read their story -- an investigative report about a young college graduate who had been detained by local police and beaten to death in custody -- he hesitated. The article, published April 25, 2003, spread quickly on the Internet, and newspapers across the country reprinted it. Reporters dug deeper, exposing abuses in a nationwide network of detention camps that purchased and sold inmates like slaves. Put on the defensive by rising public outrage, Beijing ordered the camps closed and abolished a decades-old law that gave police sweeping powers to imprison people at will. It was a landmark victory for the PRC press; never before had reporters influenced national policy in such a dramatic fashion. But in March, Cheng was arrested and two of his colleagues were sentenced to long prison terms in a corruption probe that party sources said was an act of retaliation by local officials.

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26. PRC Pipelines

Moscow Times ("CHINA KEEPS UP PIPELINE PRESSURE ", 2004-08-02) reported that PetroChina, the PRC's largest oil producer, said Friday it will not invest in a proposed plan to pipe Siberian oil to Russia's Pacific port of Nakhodka unless it includes a branch to the PRC's northeastern city of Daqing, China Oil, Gas & Petrochemicals reported, citing a company official it did not identify. Siberian oil piped to Nakhodka would be more expensive than imports from the Middle East, the report cited the official as saying. The proposed Nakhodka pipeline would allow Japan, the world's second-largest oil importer, to tap Siberian oil reserves and reduce dependence on supplies from the Middle East. The Nakhodka route is competing with a proposal from the PRC to divert the pipeline to Daqing.

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27. PRC Drought

The Washington Post ("CHINESE RAINMAKERS COMPETING FOR CLOUDS", 2004-08-02) reported that with water increasingly scarce in its parched and heavily populated northeastern plain, the PRC has become the world's leading rainmaker, using aircraft, rockets and even anti-aircraft guns to seed the clouds for precious moisture. The hunt for rain has become so intense that rival regions sometimes compete for clouds sailing across the sky. Provincial, county and municipal governments in 23 of the country's 34 provinces have set up what they call weather modification bureaus assigned to regularly bombard the heavens with chemicals in hopes of squeezing out more rainfall for demanding farmers and thirsty city dwellers among the PRC's 1.3 billion residents. As the practice spread, the PRC central government in March 2002 handed down a directive regulating weather

modification. Mainly, it mandated cooperation and information-sharing by provinces, counties and cities, and barred cloud seeding by unofficial groups.

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28. Japan Arms Trade

The Japan Times ("KONO HITS KEIDANREN ARMS TRADE PUSH", 2004-07-22) reported that Japan's House of Representatives Speaker Yohei Kono blasted on July 21 the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) over its suggestion that the government should lift its ban on arms exports. "We can't lightly tolerate proposals that call for exporting weapons," Kono said at a lecture in Tokyo, referring to the stance of Japan's largest business lobby. Federation officials on the previous day cited concerns that the domestic defense industry will languish amid the continuing contraction of the nation's defense budget. Nippon Keidanren's proposal states that "while respecting the concept (of the export ban), it is necessary to re-examine arms export management in consideration of the national interests, instead of a blanket ban." In line with the so-called Three Principles on Arms Exports policy guideline, Japan has refrained from exporting arms.

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29. Japan-PRC Territorial Dispute

The Japan Times ("ANGER BUILDS OVER EEZ VIOLATIONS", 2004-07-22) reported that the Japanese government was planning to lodge a stronger protest with Beijing over the repeated presence of Chinese survey ships in Japan's exclusive economic zone, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said on July 21. In February 2001, Japan and the PRC agreed to give each other two months' prior notification with regard to maritime scientific research activities in waters around the two countries.

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30. Japan-PRC Yasukuni Shrine Problem

The Japan Times ("KONO CHINA VISIT SEEN AS BID TO DOUSE YASUKUNI IRE", 2004-07-23) reported that Japan's House of Representatives Speaker Yohei Kono will make a six-day visit to the PRC from Sept. 20 at the invitation of Beijing, according to sources close to the parliamentary leader. Plans are under way for Kono to hold talks with Chinese President Hu Jintao and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, the sources said. Political analysts said the PRC hopes to meet Kono, known as one of the leading doves among Japanese lawmakers, given that relations between Tokyo and Beijing have soured due to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's repeated visits to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo.

The Japan Times ("JAPAN IN 'NO RUSH' TO RESUME NORMALIZATION TALKS WITH NORTH", 2004-07-22) reported that Japan is in "no rush" to resume normalization talks with the DPRK, even though the conditions for returning to the negotiating table have been met, government sources said. "If we resume talks, we will have to talk about North Korea's nuclear program and missile development," a Foreign Ministry official said. "But those issues cannot be resolved only through bilateral talks when six-party talks are still ongoing." Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told a news conference on July 20 that the conditions necessary to resume normalization talks have "almost" been met. Pyongyang is positive toward resuming the talks, he said. Hosoda's remark contradicts a comment by Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiken Sugiura earlier this month that the

"obstacles to resuming talks with North Korea have been removed."

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31. Japan-DPRK Normalization Talks

The Japan Times ("JAPAN TO DEMAND UPDATE ON FATE OF 10 ABDUCTEES", 2004-07-23) reported that Japan will demand that the DPRK issue an interim report next month regarding the fate of eight Japanese abductees Pyongyang says are dead and two others it says never entered the country. The government plans to propose a bilateral working-level meeting in August via a diplomatic channel in Beijing, seeking to receive the report from North Korea on that occasion. Japan expects Song Il Ho, a deputy bureau chief in the North Korean Foreign Ministry, to take part in the working-level meeting, along with Akitaka Saiki, deputy director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau.

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32. US Bases in Japan Realignment

The Japan Times ("NAGO PLAN QUICKEST IF WORK STARTS", 2004-07-22) reported that the US was told last week that an offshore airport designed to be the relocation site for the US Marine Corps Futenma Air Station in Okinawa would take 9 1/2 years to build, not including land reclamation work, Japanese officials said. A senior official at the Defense Facilities Administration Agency said the joint military-civilian airport's main facilities, off the Henoko district of Nago, northern Okinawa, would be finished in the period. The official's comment was seen as emphasizing that the relocation to Nago would be the quickest plan to realize amid growing calls from the US to move part of the base's helicopter operations to Kadena Air Base in central Okinawa. A drilling survey aimed at studying the environmental impact of the construction in Nago was planned at the end of April. It was delayed, however, after local residents launched a protest.

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33. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch

The Asahi Shimbun ("UNMANNED CHOPPERS TO HELP PROTECT GSDF", 2004-07-22) reported that the Japan's Defense Agency planed to send several unmanned surveillance helicopters to Iraq as early as next month to help protect Japanese ground troops now virtually helpless against mortar attacks. Mortar attacks "cannot be prevented" because the shells are shot from several kilometers away in a high, arching trajectory, said a senior Defense Agency official. The troops are already equipped with night-vision equipment, so the unmanned helicopters will not require a change in the government's basic plan and other programs for the SDF missions in Iraq, sources said.

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34. CanKor # 174

The ROK authorities airlift two groups of nearly 460 North Korean refugee/ defectors to Seoul, reportedly from Vietnam, a popular escape route. According to experts, the number does not indicate an increase in the flow of people out of North Korea, which may have diminished. The DPRK Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland accuses Seoul of working with the US House of Representatives, which last week passed the North Korean Human Rights Act, one day

after two DPRK representatives to the UN paid an unusual visit to Capitol Hill to reiterate the DPRK's willingness to give up its nuclear weapons program if the USA dropped its "hostile attitude" to the DPRK. On the same day, Prime Minister Koizumi tells ROK President Roh that Japan could normalize relations with the DPRK before his term ends in two years. This week's FOCUS is devoted to CanKor's biannual Summary of Events related to the DPRK. <http://www.cankor.ca>

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-m-nday-august-2-2004/>

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