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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("ENVOYS OF FOUR MAJOR REGIONAL PLAYERS CALL FOR N. KOREA TO REJOIN STALLED NUCLEAR TALKS", 2006-09-18) reported that despite the DPRK's intransigence, the envoys of the US, the PRC, Japan and Russia said Monday their countries are ready to advance terms for Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons program. In a luncheon meeting with Kim Geun-tae, chairman of the ROK's ruling Uri Party, the envoys based in Seoul agreed that a joint declaration issued a year ago by six nations involved in the DPRK nuclear disarmament talks is still effective.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA INSISTS NO DEAL UNTIL U.S. LIFTS SANCTIONS", 2006-09-18) reported that the head of the DPRK's parliament has repeated Pyongyang will not return to six-party talks on its nuclear program unless the US lifts sanctions against it. The remarks were made by Kim Yong-nam, the president of the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly, on Friday during the Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which brought together Washington's bitterest critics in Havana, Cuba. Kim also blasted the US as a threat to world peace. "The United States, far from complying with the six-party commission's agreements, has continued to impose unilateral sanctions, bringing the talks to a standstill and dragging the situation to an unpredictable point," Kim said. The DPRK "has been left with no other option but to possess nuclear weapons as a self-defensive deterrent." [\(return to top\)](#) JoongAng Ilbo ("URI CITES SOFTER POSITION BY U.S. ON NORTH KOREA", 2006-09-18) reported that Alexander Vershbow, the US ambassador to Seoul, was quoted yesterday as saying the US government would be willing to talk directly to the DPRK if Pyongyang said conclusively that it was willing to return to the six-party nuclear talks. Mr. Vershbow met the Uri Party chairman, Kim Geun-tae, yesterday; Woo Sang-ho, Uri's spokesman, briefed the press on the talks. The US Embassy said the conversation was private and declined comment. But Mr. Vershbow also sounded pessimistic about the DPRK's intentions; Mr. Woo quoted him as reflecting sadly on defiant remarks in Havana by the DPRK's head of state, Kim Young-nam, who said Pyongyang would not return to the six-way talks as long as US financial sanctions remained in place. "I wonder if North Korea has any intention of returning," Mr. Woo quoted the US envoy as saying. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. International Sanctions on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("SEVERAL COUNTRIES TO SLAP SANCTIONS ON N.KOREA", 2006-09-18) reported that several countries will slap sanctions on the DPRK in line with the UN Security Council resolution condemning the DPRK's July 5 missile tests, with Japan first to go on Tuesday. The Japanese Cabinet looks set to approve additional sanctions in a meeting on the day, banning any withdrawals and overseas remittances from accounts by organizations and individuals suspected of links to the DPRK and freezing DPRK assets. The measure targets some 10 individuals and organizations including the Korea Mining Development Corporation (KOMID) and Tanchon Commercial Bank already sanctioned by the US.

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3. Japan on DPRK

Japan Times ("N. KOREA SEEN AS JAPAN'S 'BIGGEST THREAT'", 2006-09-18) reported that Japan should give priority to dealing with the DPRK's nuclear weapons and missile development as they are the "biggest threat" facing the nation, a former top negotiator with the DPRK said prior to the anniversary of a landmark bilateral summit in 2002. As part of efforts to resolve the DPRK problem, Japan should work to mend its strained ties with the PRC because Beijing's influence on Pyongyang is as important as that of the US, Katsunari Suzuki said during a recent interview. "North Korea's nuclear weapons and its development of (ballistic) missiles (to deliver them) have been the biggest threat to Japan," he said. "We should deal with these issues as a priority matter." Suzuki, 68, said it is "reasonable" for Japan to impose sanctions on the DPRK and consider tightening them in reaction to the launch of seven missiles including a long-range Taepodong-2 on July 5.

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4. US on DPRK Drug Trafficking

Yonhap ("U.S. REMAINS CONCERNED ABOUT N.K. DRUGS TRAFFICKING DESPITE ABSENCE OF ACTIVITIES", 2006-09-18) reported that the White House on Monday said it remains concerned about the DPRK's state-directed narcotics trafficking despite the absence of seizures or apprehensions since 2004. President George W. Bush, notifying the Congress of major drug transiting and producing countries for fiscal year 2007, identified 20 nations on the "Majors List." The named countries are Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela.

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5. Kim Jong-il's Climbing of Kumgang

JoongAng Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL REPORTED TO BE CLIMBING KUMGANG", 2006-09-18) reported that the DPRK's leader, Kim Jong-il, was thought to be heading to Beijing, but he seems to have gone in the opposite direction. The Korean Central News Agency reported yesterday that Mr. Kim paid a visit to Mount Kumgang, near the country's southern border. ROK observers here noted the conspicuous timing of the release of the report late night report. "I think the North was trying to send a political message to Hyundai and the South Korean government during the Roh-Bush summit," said Chon Hyun-joon, a senior researcher with the Korea Institute of National Unification. Nam Sung-sook, professor of DPRK studies at Korea University, said Mr. Kim was showing his determination to "defend Mount Kumgang," a major source of foreign currency.

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6. Inter-Korean Cultural Cooperation

JoongAng Ilbo ("SOUTH KOREAN TO CONDUCT IN NORTH", 2006-09-18) reported that ROK maestro Chung Myung-whun will conduct the DPRK's orchestra in Pyongyang next month in a joint festival commemorating the renowned composer Yun Isang, organizers here said yesterday. The two Koreas will mark the 89th birth anniversary of Yun, who was born in the ROK and spent most of his life in Germany, with the Oct. 18-20 festival, they said. The joint event comes amid the prolonged stalemate of inter-Korean exchanges due to the DPRK nuclear and missile issues. The DPRK cancelled most joint events after it test-fired missiles in July and experienced heavy flood damage. "We hope this will make a breakthrough," said Seo Jeong-won, of the Isang Yun Peace Foundation, which organized the festival with the DPRK.

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7. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("BANGKOK DETAINS 7 N. KOREANS DEMANDING REFUGEE STATUS", 2006-09-18) reported that Thai police on Monday took seven DPRK defectors into custody for 30 days, denying their demands to be granted refugee status, informed sources said. The DPR Koreans turned themselves in to Thai authorities earlier in the day to demand refugee status after arriving in the southeast Asian country, according to a Tokyo-based civic activist group working with the alleged defectors.

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8. Suicide of Kim Jong-il's Niece

JoongAng Ilbo ("KIM'S NIECE KILLS HERSELF IN PARIS ", 2006-09-18) reported that a 29-year-old DPRK woman committed suicide in Paris, France last month; intelligence sources have confirmed that she was a niece of Kim Jong-il, the DPRK leader. Jang Kum-song, who was studying in Paris, was found in August by her chauffeur and her maid two days after her death at a villa in Paris. Ms. Jang was the only child of Jang Song-thaek, first vice department director of the DPRK's Workers' Party, and Kim Kyong-hui, the party's light industry department director and younger sister of Kim Jong-il. Another source said the cause of her death was an overdose of sleeping pills. She reportedly committed suicide because her parents opposed her marriage to a suitor and had pressed her to return to Pyongyang.

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9. ROK on Atomic Tech Sharing

Yonhap ("S. KOREA WILLING TO SHARE ATOMIC ENERGY TECHNOLOGY: SCIENCE MINISTER", 2006-09-18) reported that the ROK's top science policymaker on Monday expressed the country's willingness to share its atomic energy technology and knowhow on running nuclear power facilities, government officials said. Science and Technology Minister Kim Woo-shik made the remarks in a keynote address at the 50th general conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) held in Vienna. He said the plan is based on Seoul's desire to repay past assistance from other countries, according to the officials.

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10. ROK Spent Fuel Rod Monitoring

People's Daily ("IAEA TO MONITOR S. KOREA'S SPENT FUEL ROD STORAGE WITH UNMANNED CAMERAS", 2006-09-18) reported that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has started to use unmanned cameras to monitor the ROK's spent reactor fuel rod storage process instead of sending observers, the ROK government said Monday. According to the Ministry of Science and Technology of the ROK, the cameras began to operate on Sept. 1 over the Wolseong Nuclear Power Plant in North Gyeongsang Province. The Wolseong plant operates four pressurized heavy water reactors. The spent fuel rods can be used to make atomic weapons.

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11. ROK-Britain IT Cooperation

Korea Herald ("KOREA, BRITAIN STRENGTHEN IT TIES", 2006-09-18) reported that the ROK and Britain agreed yesterday to expand cooperation in the information and technology field. Rho Jun-hyong, the ROK's Minister of Information and Communication, and Margaret Hodge, Britain's Minister of State for Industry and the Regions, Department of Trade and Industry, re-signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen IT ties.

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12. ROK Suicide Rate

Korea Times ("KOREA'S SUICIDE RATE HIGHEST IN OECD IN 2005", 2006-09-18) reported that the number of suicides rose to an all-time high of 12,000 last year as more people took their own lives amid economic hardship, recording the highest suicide rate among the 30 member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). According to the National Statistical Office (NSO) yesterday, suicide was the fourth-largest cause of death in the ROK for two years in a row with 26.1 out of 100,000 people killing themselves, up 2.2-fold from 11.8 ten years ago. Some 25.2 out of 100,000 people took their own lives in 2004.

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13. USFJ Troop Realignment

Mainichi Daily News ("LINGERING LOCAL OPPOSITION THREATENS PLAN FOR U.S. MILITARY REALIGNMENT IN JAPAN", 2006-09-18) reported that more than a third of Japanese provincial governments which would be affected by a proposed military realignment of US troops in Japan are opposed to the plan, possibly blocking the move, a news agency reported Monday. A tally by Japan's Defense Facilities Administration Agency found that 21 of the 55 affected local governments are still opposed to the realignment plan agreed on by the two countries in April, Kyodo News agency reported late Sunday. Crime, noise and accidents associated with military bases are among the chief grievances of the local governments.

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14. Japan Party Presidential Election

Japan Times ("A SURE-WIN GUARDS HIS CARDS ", 2006-09-18) reported that it is a foregone conclusion that Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe will win the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's presidential election Wednesday. He is then likely to be named prime minister at an extraordinary Diet session a week later and to launch a new Cabinet. Abe, with "open conservatism" as the theme of his policy agenda, has expressed determination to make a new start from the "postwar regime." Specifically, he is advocating constitutional amendments and more assertive diplomacy for Japan. The reforms launched by Koizumi are only half-finished, and Abe's announced policy agenda for his administration is only a broad outline so far. Among the first challenges the new government will face are reforming the social security system, balancing the budget and mending Japan's strained diplomatic relations with its Asian neighbors -- to offset the negative part of Koizumi's legacy.

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15. Japan on PRC Steel Output

Associated Press ("JAPAN SAID TO SEEK CHINESE STEEL CURBS", 2006-09-18) reported that Japan's senior trade official has demanded the PRC cut its steel production capacity amid concerns that sharp rises in Chinese output may cause global prices to fall, which could hurt Japan's economy, a major newspaper reported Monday. Tetsuhiro Hosono, director general of Japan's Trade Ministry, made the request to Liu Tienan, director of the Industry Department of China's National Development and Reform Commission, during their talks in Beijing last Tuesday, according to the Yomiuri newspaper's online edition Monday.

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16. PRC-US Economic Summit

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SET TO WELCOME OLD FRIEND: NEW US TREASURY CHIEF PAULSON ", 2006-09-18) reported that new US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson comes to the PRC this week well versed in the ways of doing business here which may just make him the man Beijing can negotiate with over the tricky issue of the yuan. The PRC will welcome the ex-Goldman Sachs chief on his first visit to the country since he succeeded John Snow in July with a series of key meetings that begin Tuesday and culminate with a lunch hosted by President Hu Jintao. During his four-day trip Paulson is unlikely to persuade the Asian giant to offer up new changes to its current economic policy, analysts say, but his wealth of PRC experience could help improve Sino-US economic ties. "As a whole, the assignation of the new treasury chief will have a positive impact on Sino-US relationships," said Wang Yong, assistant professor with the school of international relations at Beijing University. "He has a deep understanding of China's situation, and has a huge network of business and political contacts as well.

[\(return to top\)](#) Forbes ("US TREASURY CHIEF BACKS STRONG DOLLAR, URGES CHINA REFORMS", 2006-09-18) reported that US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson Monday backed a strong dollar and said the nation's massive current account deficit reflected its appeal for foreign investors. 'A strong dollar is clearly in our nation's interest,' he told reporters following annual talks of the Group of Seven countries and the International Monetary Fund here. 'And I believe that if foreign governments and foreign investors choose to buy US securities, they've got confidence and they know they're getting the best risk-adjusted rate of return,' he said. Some US manufacturers would be happy with a weaker dollar to prop up their exports and so help bring down the US trade deficit, which hit a record 68 bln USD in July owing in large part to Chinese imports. [\(return to top\)](#)

17. PRC Voting Power in IMF

Agence France-Presse ("IMF MEMBERS BACK OVERHAUL GIVING CHINA LOUDER VOICE: GERMANY", 2006-09-18) reported that member governments of the International Monetary Fund overwhelmingly approved a plan to give more voting power to the PRC, the ROK, Mexico and Turkey, the German finance minister said. The radical overhaul was backed by 90.6 percent of the vote, Finance Minister Peer Steinbrueck said, describing the outcome as "an important and a very good result," ahead of an official announcement expected later Monday. Despite its growing stature as a global economic powerhouse, the PRC currently has less voting clout than Belgium and the Netherlands combined.

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18. PRC-Canada Relations

Globe and Mail ("CHINA KEEN ON CANADIAN TIES", 2006-09-18) reported that Canada and the PRC have a strong economic future together provided the two can "properly handle their differences," the Asian nation's ambassador to this country told a business audience yesterday in a speech that talked up the importance of "mutual respect." "As the five fingers of different lengths make a perfect fist, the differences between us should not become obstacles to a strong relationship," Chinese ambassador Lu Shumin told the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's annual meeting in Saskatoon. Mr. Lu's carefully worded speech comes amid growing concern that Ottawa might be tilting away from the PRC under the Stephen Harper government. It's believed a significant portion of the Tory caucus is reluctant to make relations with the PRC a priority because of Beijing's human rights record. But Mr. Lu told the Chamber audience that the Chinese plan to continue their accelerated rate of development and consider themselves and Canada, with its "rich natural resources," an "ideal pair of partners for mutually beneficial co-operation."

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19. PRC Peacekeeping Forces in Lebanon

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO BOOST UN PEACEKEEPERS IN LEBANON TO 1,000: WEN", 2006-09-18) reported that the PRC will bolster its peacekeeping forces in Lebanon to 1,000, Premier Wen Jiabao has said. Analysts said the move was an attempt to reinforce Beijing's role in international affairs. Beijing would also give Lebanon 40 million yuan (five million dollars) in humanitarian assistance, including 20 million yuan that has already been sent, Wen said Monday.

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20. PRC Space Program

Xinhua ("CHINA PLANS TO SEND SPACECRAFT TO STUDY ASTEROIDS", 2006-09-18) reported that the PRC's space scientists plan to develop spacecraft to study asteroids in the near future, according to experts at the annual conference of the China Association for Science and Technology. The Beijing Morning Post on Monday quoted an unnamed expert with the China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp. as saying the study of asteroids or comets had been listed on the PRC's space program. The Chinese spacecraft would probably land on the asteroids or crash into minor planets, similar to the Deep Impact mission of NASA, said the expert.

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