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1. DPRK on Relations with US

International Herald Tribune ("NORTH KOREA SIGNALS DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE", 2005-09-23) reported that the DPRK said on Friday that it was willing to negotiate with the US in a new round of six party talks and that it welcomed the prospect of a visit by US envoy Christopher Hill. A trip by Hill would carry a lot of symbolism for the DPRK regime, which regards high-level direct contacts as a sign of US willingness to negotiate. The latest DPRK overture, advanced by the deputy foreign minister, Choe Su Hun, was the clearest sign yet that the country remains committed to six party talks. "All these issues can be discussed at the forthcoming talks," Choe told a group of reporters at the United Nations in New York, referring to his government's disputes with the US.

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2. DPRK-US Relations

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA SEEKS VISIT BY BUSH", 2205-09-23) reported that according to Yonhap News, the DPRK is seeking a visit from President Bush or other prominent US figures in an effort to improve ties between the two countries. Kim Jong-il personally mentioned the names of President Bush, his father, the former president George Bush, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as US figures who would be welcomed in the DPRK. “The DPRK seems to seek visits by incumbent or former US presidents, or the current secretary of state, in order to pursue normalization of ties and resolve the nuclear dispute," said an unidentified ROK source.

(return to top) Agence France Presse ("US NUCLEAR ENVOY LEAVES OPEN POSSIBILITY OF NORTH KOREA VISIT", 2005-09-24) reported that US envoy Christopher Hill left open the possibility of a trip to the DPRK, but would not commit to a visit. "I'm sure I'll be doing some traveling in the future but we have not made any decisions as to where," Hill told Japanese network ANN, a day after the DPRK invited him to come to Pyongyang. On Friday, the DPRK said no conditions would be attached to a visit by Hill. ANN also reported Hill saying it was too early for President Bush to visit the DPRK, although the envoy did not rule out the possibility of a presidential tour. (return to top) The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA WOULD ‘DETER’ PROVOCATION", 2005-09-25) reported that the DPRK warned on Sunday that it had a powerful "deterrent" against a US nuclear attack, criticizing moves in Washington to authorize pre-emptive use of atomic weapons against states or terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction. The DPRK government did not elaborate on the deterrent, but a commentary in the DPRK’s official Minju Joson newspaper said that "nuclear weapons are no longer the monopoly of the U.S." "The army and people of (North Korea) are proud of having built such a self-defensive deterrent, strong enough to protect the national dignity and security from the U.S. nuclear threat," stated the commentary published by the KCNA. (return to

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3. US Military Exercises Against DPRK

The Korea Times ("US PREPARED NUCLEAR ATTACK ON NK: DOCUMENTS", 2005-09-25) reported that the US military conducted a simulation training exercise for a preemptive nuclear attack on the DPRK in 1998, according to US Air Force documents obtained by a ruling party lawmaker. The declassified documents released by Representative Choi Sung of the ruling Uri Party on Sunday also say that the US deployed strategic nuclear weapons to a US base in Chunchon, Kangwon Province, in 1987. Choi said he received the documents from the Nautilus Institute, which obtained the documents from the US government through a Freedom of Information Act request. “The contents of these secret documents prove how hardliners in the U.S. government, dubbed “Neocons,” have prepared a preemptive strike against North Korea in a precise manner,” Choi said. It is also the first time that a specific location where tactical nuclear weapons deployed by the US military has been confirmed.

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("PYONGYANG LOOKS FORWARD TO MASS VISIT FROM SOUTH", 2005-09-23) reported that nearly 10,000 RO Koreans, mostly from aid organizations, could pour into the DPRK from the end of this month until the middle of October. The Unification Ministry said on Friday that some 4,700 members of the Kyeore Hana aid organization, 1,500 members of Good Neighbors International, and 1,000 members of the Hankyoreh Foundation for Unification and Culture, plus members from some 22 other organizations will be touring sites in the DPRK. It is expected that most organizations will take the opportunity to visit the various aid projects with which they are involved. Some in the organizations say Pyongyang approved the mass influx at least in part to garner bigger audiences for the spectacular “Arirang” performance opening on August 16 to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the DPRK.

(return to top) Yonhap News ("N. KOREA WARNS OF RENEWED TENSION IF GNP TAKES POWER", 2005-09-24) reported that the DPRK warned on Saturday that inter-Korean relations will take a turn for the worse if the conservative Grand National Party (GNP) takes power in the ROK. Citing a column by the Rodong Shinmun, the KCNA claimed that the GNP is a source of anti-unification activities that would push the country to war. The report added that if the party it described as a puppet of US warmongers came to power, the long history of confrontation that prevented progress in inter-Korean relations would begin again. (return to top)

5. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

The Korea Times ("UNIFICATION MINISTER TO MEET HYUNDAI CHAIRWOMEN", 2205-09-23) reported that Hyundai Group chairwoman Hyun Jeong-eun is expected to meet with Unification Minister Chung Dong-young to find a solution to the stalled inter-Korean tourism projects. During the meeting, Chung, who met DPRK officials last week, may deliver Pyongyang’s message to Hyun and ask for Hyundai’s cooperation to normalize the joint projects. “The meeting between Chung and Hyun is expected to be a major turnaround in easing the friction between Hyundai and North Korea,” a Hyundai official said. “Chung and Hyun will discuss various matters and set a date for a meeting between Hyun and Ri Jong-hyuk, vice chairman of the North’s Asia-Pacific Peace Committee.” The Asia-Pacific Peace Committee governs the tour business with the ROK.

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6. ROK on DPRK Economic Integration

The Korea Herald ("N. KOREA SHOULD JOIN GLOBAL BODIES, FINANCE MINISTER SAYS", 2005-09-24) reported that while advising international bodies to adapt to a changing Northeast Asian order, ROK Finance Minister Han Duck-soo said that the DPRK should be encouraged to join their ranks. "It would benefit all those concerned to have North Korea committed to the global trade regime," Han told reporters in Washington D.C. The Finance Minister arrived in Washington D.C. on Thursday to participate in the annual International Monetary Fund/World Bank meeting during September 24-25.

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7. Opposition to DPRK in APEC Summit

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA UNLIKELY TO BE ASKED TO APEC SUMMIT", 2005-09-25) reported that the DPRK is unlikely to sit in on November's APEC summit in Busan due to opposition from the US, Japan, and others. Seoul had proposed inviting the head of the DPRK's Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, Kim Young-nam, to the meeting. A high-ranking government official said on Sunday that major APEC member states like the US and Japan were wary of the move. "It appears it will be difficult for Kim to participate," he said. Unification Minister Chung Dong-young said on Thursday that Seoul would sound out Washington and other APEC members about inviting "the supreme authority of the North" to the summit.

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8. ROK on DPRK Military

The Korea Herald ("NORTH'S MILITARY ENHANCES ELECTRONIC INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY", 2005-09-24) reported that the DPRK military has enhanced its electronic surveillance systems and is capable of tapping military intelligence signals throughout the ROK, according to a representative from the Grand National Party. Representative Song Young-sun said on Friday that the DPRK Army is operating an intelligence regiment and four battalions with dozens of electronic warfare bases. Song raised the claim during a parliamentary inspection of the Defense Ministry, claiming that the DPRK installed radio wave jamming equipment on its Russian-made AN-24. Meanwhile the Defense Ministry denied a report by the Dong-a Ilbo news agency that said the ministry suspected the DPRK is constructing a uranium-enrichment facility to produce nuclear bombs.

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9. DPRK-Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("N. KOREAN OFFICIAL SAYS ABDUCTION ISSUE FULLY RESOLVED", 2005-09-23) reported that a DPRK official reiterated his country's stance on Friday that the issue of DPRK abductions of Japanese citizens has been "fully resolved." Jong Thae Hwa, a former top negotiator in bilateral normalization talks with Japan, told reporters that except for the return to the DPRK of the ashes of one of the abducted Japanese, the DPRK will no longer cooperate in investigations and the provision of materials.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("KOIZUMI PROMISES TO IMPROVE TIES WITH N. KOREA", 2005-0-

-26) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi promised on Monday to push ahead with the normalization of ties with the DPRK and settle once and for all thorny issues like the DPRK's abduction of Japanese citizens. In his address to a joint session of the upper and lower houses of the Diet, Koizumi stopped short of outlining any specific course of action. Turning to Japan's relationship with its other neighbors the ROK and PRC, Koizumi said, "By enlarging spheres of cooperation we can increase mutual understanding and trust, which can serve as a foundation for more future-oriented, amicable relations." He did not comment on his repeated visits to a shrine housing memorials to convicted war criminals, which have angered regional neighbors. (return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN'S GSDF NOTES POSSIBLE ATTACK BY N. KOREA AND CHINA", 2005-09-26) reported that Japan's Ground Self Defense Force (GSDF) has prepared a contingency plan to counter possible attacks from the DPRK and PRC in case diplomatic ties with the two Asian countries deteriorate. Japan's GSDF has maintained a low profile under a pacifist constitution, but the Japanese daily Asahi Shimbun reported on Monday that the contingency plan suggests a shift toward a more aggressive role. The latest contingency plan deals with DPRK missile attacks on US military bases or key government and business facilities in Japan in case relations between the DPRK and US deteriorate further. (return to top)

10. Energy Aid to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL'S TENTATIVE ENERGY AID PLAN FOR PYONGYANG", 2005-09-26) reported that Seoul has hammered out a possible blueprint for providing electricity aid to the DPRK. The tentative framework calls on the five member nations of the six party talks to begin supplying the DPRK with the elements necessary to operate its thermal plants once the country reinstates its obligations to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. At the same time, the ROK is to launch construction work for relevant facilities to allow the transmission of electricity from the ROK to DPRK. The DPRK's completion of its dismantlement process will pave the path for direct transmission of electric power to replace the shipments of fuel oil to the country. The project involving the light-water nuclear reactors will commence following this. Once energy is generated by the reactors, the DPRK will be required to pay for the transmission of power from the ROK if needed.

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11. Food Aid to DPRK

The Associated Press ("U.N. AGENCIES, N. KOREA HOLD FOOD TALKS", 2205-09-23) reported that several UN agencies are in talks with the DPRK on how to overcome differences over emergency food aid after Pyongyang demanded that all such help be terminated and changed into development assistance, UN officials said Friday. DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Choe Su Hon said on Thursday that his government had informed the UN it wants all emergency humanitarian assistance from international organizations to stop by the end of the year, partly because of what it called political interference from the US. "This is a very sensitive issue," said Elisabeth Byrs, spokeswoman for the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. "There are discussions with the North Korean government at the moment ... in order to continue the humanitarian programs. The World Food Program said it is negotiating with the DPRK to find ways to change its food aid into development programs, but stressed that the government had not asked the UN agency to leave the country.

(return to top) Bloomberg News ("NORTH KOREA'S PLAN TO END FOOD AID COULD KILL 125,000, UN SAYS", 2005-09-23) reported that according to the head of UN emergency relief operations, the DPRK's plan to halt food aid programs by the end of the year could cause the deaths of about 125,000 children and needs to be altered. UN Assistant Secretary-General Jan Egeland told

reporters on Friday that he is trying to convince DPRK officials to “phase out” the aid programs during a longer period and broaden the definition of development programs that could continue. “We are very concerned because we think this is too abrupt,” Egeland said. “They have had a good harvest, after a total collapse of their farming in the mid-1990s, but they will not be able to have enough food unless aid programs continue.” (return to top) The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA SEEKS LESS DEPENDENCE ON AID", 2005-09-25) reported that the DPRK’s demand that food aid be terminated and changed into development assistance underlines the regime's desire for a long-term strategy for feeding its people and becoming less dependent on foreign help, experts on the country say. Analysts stress that the DPRK is not asking for a halt to food assistance, but for programs that will grant more independence — central to its guiding national ideology of "juche," or self-reliance. "North Korea has survived a life-and-death situation where people starved to death and there is now some stability, albeit at a minimum level," said Paik Hak-soon of the Sejong Institute in Seoul. "They now want a long-term survival strategy." DPR Koreans would want development assistance rather than "aid that can be consumed and simply disappear," Paik said. (return to top)

12. DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL LAWYERS DEBATE N. KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS", 2005-09-23) reported that the Seoul Bar Association held a landmark symposium on DPRK human rights on Friday, calling on the country to improve its dismal record. The group rejected silence about human rights for the sake of economic cooperation or to avoid upsetting the DPRK, and affirmed its belief that only international cooperation and active efforts to improve human rights in the DPRK can lead to peaceful unification. It added the Bar Association’s 5,000 members prayed that DPR Koreans will soon see an end to public executions and forced labor camps. Friday’s symposium was a milestone in the Seoul Bar Association’s transformation into a human rights group and advocate of the rights of DPR Koreans.

(return to top) The Korea Herald ("STATE PANEL TO DISCUSS N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD TODAY", 2005-09-26) reported that the National Human Rights Commission of Korea will discuss DPRK human rights issues during today’s regular committee meeting, the first time the matter has been put on its official agenda, the state panel said on its website. The commission is expected to clarify its position ahead of a National Assembly audit due October 5. The state human rights watchdog has been criticized by opposition parties and civic organizations for remaining silent upon human rights abuses in DPRK. The body commissioned Dongguk University's DPRK research center to research the current state of human rights in the DPRK last month but failed to make public the results, inviting criticism from conservative groups. (return to top)

13. DPRK Defections

Yonhap News ("FIFTEEN SOUTH KOREANS DETAINED IN CHINA FOR AIDING N.K. DEFECTORS", 2005-09-23) reported that the ROK government said on Friday that 15 ROK citizens remain in custody in the PRC on suspicion of aiding DPRK defectors. A total of 64 RO Koreans have been arrested by the PRC authority for helping DPR Koreans escape from their country since 2001, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said in a report to the National Assembly.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("MUTILATED N. KOREAN SEEKS REFUGEE STATUS IN THAILAND", 2005-09-25) reported that a DPRK man who had his feet amputated during torture by the DPRK’s secret services after a failed attempt to defect is being interviewed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Bangkok, Thailand. The man, identified by his family name Park, arrived with his 19-year-old son in Thailand on Wednesday via the PRC, Myanmar, and Laos. Radio Free Asia reported on Sunday that Park was unable to stand unaided but looked otherwise healthy. He and his son are

now in a detention center in Bangkok and seeking refugee status from the UNHCR. (return to top)

14. IAEA Leadership

Deutsche Presse Agentur ("ELBARADEI CONFIRMED AS NUCLEAR WATCHDOG CHIEF FOR FOUR MORE YEARS", 2005-09-26) reported that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Mohamed ElBaradei was confirmed in office for a further four years by acclamation at the agency's general assembly on Monday. The third term of office for the 62-year-old Egyptian citizen was made possible during the summer when the US dropped its objections to him.

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15. Japan on Missile Defense System

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN FRETS AS COST OF MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM WITH US TRIPLES ", 2005-09-26) reported that the US has told Japan it will cost nearly three times more than previously estimated to develop a joint missile defense system against a possible attack by the DPRK, a report says. The Japanese government may try to renegotiate its contribution to the next-generation project, now estimated to cost a total of three billion dollars, the Yomiuri Shimbun said.

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16. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Agence France Presse ("KOIZUMI LIKELY TO VISIT WAR SHRINE BY YEAR-END: CLOSE AIDE ", 2005-09-26) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will likely visit a controversial war shrine by the end of the year despite opposition by the PRC, a close aide said. "I do not know the date but I think he will pay homage to Yasukuni Shrine within this year," said Taku Yamasaki, former vice president of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and close aide to Koizumi.

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17. Sino-Japanese Relations

Reuters ("JAPAN PLAN NOTES RISK OF ATTACK BY CHINA - PAPER", 2005-09-26) reported that Japan's military has drawn up a defence plan that refers to the possibility of an invasion by the PRC, the Asahi Shimbun national daily said. In one scenario, drawn up at a time of tense relations between Tokyo and Beijing, the PRC occupies the disputed islands known as the Senkakus in Japan and the Diaoyu islands in the PRC. In another, the plan refers to the possibility of an attack by the PRC on US or Japanese military facilities in Japan in the event of a war between the PRC and Taiwan, the newspaper said.

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18. Russia on Nuclear Disarmament

Itar-Tass ("RUSSIA SETS UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF REAL NUKE DISARMAMENT", 2005-09-26) reported that Russia's slashing of excessive nuclear arsenals set an unprecedented example of real nuclear disarmament and consolidation of nonproliferation mechanism, the Director of the Russian Atomic Energy Agency, Alexander Rumyantsev said Monday. Rumyantsev said: "Action under a Russian-U.S. agreement on the use of high-enriched uranium taken out of nuclear weapons -- the so-

called HEU-LEU agreement -- set a vivid example of how Russia follows the path of curtailing nuclear arsenals."

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19. Russia-PRC Gas Pipelines

Vladivostok News ("GAZPROM CONSIDERS TWO PIPELINES TO CHINA", 2005-09-26) reported that Gazprom, national power grid Unified Energy Systems, is currently discussing the possible construction of two gas pipelines to run to the PRC with several PRC companies, Alexander Medvedev, general director of Gazexport told a press conference in Beijing on Wednesday. "Gazprom is considering the possibility of constructing two gas pipelines, one eastern, one western, to China and is holding negotiations with Chinese companies," Medvedev announced.

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20. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN TO BOOST SUBMARINE FORCE: JANE'S", 2005-09-26) reported that Taiwan plans to equip its two Dutch-built submarines with Harpoon anti-ship missiles that could be used to attack key PRC naval bases, Jane's Defense Weekly says. If all goes smoothly, the two Sea Dragon diesel electric submarines would be armed with UGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles, the defense weekly said in an article to be published Wednesday.

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21. Macao Elections

The Los Angeles Times ("PRO-DEMOCRACY GROUP LEADS IN MACAO ELECTION", 2005-09-26) reported that a moderate pro-democracy group was the biggest winner in Macao's legislative election, provisional results showed. The New Democratic Macao Assn. of Ng Kuok Cheong won 18.2% of the vote and two seats, allowing him and his running mate, Au Kam San, to retain their places in the legislature.

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22. Hong Kong Elections

The New York Times ("CHINA PLANS TO ALLOW HONG KONG A BIGGER VOICE IN CHOOSING ITS LEADERS", 2005-09-26) reported that, with unexpected support from Beijing, the government in Hong Kong is preparing to move a step closer to fully democratic representation with an election plan to be announced next month. The proposal involves giving a greater role to neighborhood councilors - most of whom are elected by Hong Kong voters - in choosing the chief executive and 6 of the 70 members of Hong Kong's legislature.

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23. PRC Leadership

The New York Times ("CHINA'S LEADER, EX-RIVAL AT SIDE, SOLIDIFIES POWER ", 2005-09-26) reported that three years after becoming the PRC's top leader, Hu Jintao has solidified his grip on

power and intimidated critics inside and outside the Communist Party with the help of the man once seen as his most potent rival. Mr. Hu and Zeng Qinghong, vice president and the man in charge of the party's organizational affairs, have tackled the most delicate domestic and foreign policy issues as a team, governing as hard-liners with a deft political touch, former PRC officials and scholars with leadership connections said.

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24. PRC Internet Censorship

The New York Times ("CHINA TIGHTENS ITS RESTRICTIONS FOR NEWS MEDIA ON THE INTERNET", 2005-09-26) reported that the PRC on Sunday imposed more restrictions intended to limit the news and other information available to Internet users, and it sharply restricted the scope of content permitted on Web sites. The rules are part of a broader effort to roll back what the Communist Party views as a threatening trend toward liberalization in the news media. The measures amount to a stepped-up effort to police the Internet, which has become a dominant source of news and information for millions of urban Chinese.

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25. PRC Currency Reform

The New York Times ("CHINA LOOSENS LIMITS ON TRADING AGAINST OTHER CURRENCIES BUT KEEPS REIN ON DOLLAR", 2005-09-26) reported that the PRC made a technical but important adjustment Friday to its currency trading rules that underlined the country's reluctance to permit the yuan to rise significantly in value against the dollar.

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26. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S NEXT SPACE MISSION ON OCT. 13 ", 2005-09-26) reported that the PRC announced plans to launch its second manned space mission on Oct. 13 and return five days later. The launch of Shenzhou VI is scheduled for 11 a.m. at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Base, in the Gobi desert in northern PRC, the state-run China News Service reported on Sunday.

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