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I. United States

1. US - DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("MAINICHI SHIMBUN REPORT: FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO KOREA SECRETLY VISITS N. KOREA", 2004-08-12) reported that Japan's Mainichi Shimbun reported in a Washington dispatch on Thursday that former U.S. Ambassador to Korea Donald Gregg secretly visited the DPRK last week. According to the paper, in response to its request to confirm his visit to the DPRK, Gregg said, "I do not want to talk about my visit to the North," but foreign officials have raised the possibility that he may have met with key DPRK leaders and been asked to convey the DPRK's messages concerning six-way talks to the U.S. The paper also said that Gregg arrived in Pyongyang via Beijing on August 2 and returned home on August 7.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. SENATOR SAYS NEXT PRES. SHOULD HEED N. KOREA THE MOST", 2004-0--12) reported that U.S Senator Richard Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Wednesday that in pursuit of policies to reduce the weapons of mass destruction around the world, the next U.S president should heed the DPRK the most. Lugar said during a press conference hosted by the National Press Club in Washington D.C. that the next president should concentrate on the US' political and diplomatic abilities on making progress in 12 steps to reduce the weapons of mass destruction. The first step is the DPRK's complete, verifiable and irreversible discarding of its nuclear programs, the senator said. He emphasized that the heart of an agreement to scrap the DPRK's nuclear weapons is a thorough verification method. He does not expect that the DPRK will immediately accept forced inspections and a nuclear weapons discard program, added Lugar.

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3. US - DPRK Informal Talks

Reuters ("NUCLEAR NEGOTIATORS HOLD INFORMAL TALKS ON N.KOREA", 2004-08-12) reported that DPRK and US negotiators met in New York at a foreign policy conference but did not try to reach a consensus on resuming talks about the DPRK's nuclear programs, the ROK's Yonhap news agency said on Thursday. Ri Gun, Pyongyang's deputy chief negotiator at the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear problem, was in New York for a conference hosted by the nongovernmental National Committee on American Foreign Policy. Officials from five of the countries involved in the talks, including deputy US chief delegate Joseph DeTrani, also attended. "The discussions were interesting and frank," Ri was quoted by Yonhap as telling reporters after the second day of meetings on Wednesday. "But it was just an exchange of opinions."

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4. Libya on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Korea Times ("LIBYA OFFERS SEOUL TIPS ON NUKE ISSUE", 2004-08-12) reported that the ROK's Foreign Affairs-Trade Minister Ban Ki-moon discussed the DPRK nuclear issue with Mohammed Sayala, visiting deputy foreign minister of Libya, whose model the US has urged the DPRK to follow for nuclear disarmament. The two officials discussed the DPRK nuclear standoff and other issues of bilateral concern, including economic cooperation, a ministry official said after their meeting in the afternoon. "What your government did last year is a great lesson for the North Korean leadership. We must advise them to follow your model," Ban told Sayala in the initial part of their meeting open to media. While in Japan, the Libyan diplomat urged the DPRK to abandon its nuclear arms programs, saying: "Now is the time for economic development, peace and security to be pursued."

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5. Japanese - DPRK Abductee Talks

Reuters ("JAPAN, NKOREA TALKS END WITH NO PROGRESS", 2004-08-12) reported that Japan and the DPRK failed to make progress toward diplomatic ties at talks on Thursday after officials of the secretive communist state offered no new details about Japanese missing citizens believed abducted decades ago. The simmering dispute over 10 Japanese who Tokyo believes were kidnapped by DPRK agents in the 1970s and 1980s to be used to train spies for the North dominated the second and final day of talks between the two sides in Beijing. "We have not received any detailed explanations of the 10 Japanese unaccounted for," a Foreign Ministry official told reporters and he quoted the Korean side as saying they had yet to finish their investigation. "What North Korea provided contained nothing new," he said. "In a concrete sense there was no progress," Japan's top government spokesman, Hiroyuki Hosoda, said in Tokyo.

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6. Japanese Humanitarian Aid to the DPRK

UNICEF Press Release ("JAPAN DONATES $5 MILLION TO IMPROVE HEALTH AND NUTRITION CARE FOR CHILDREN IN NORTH KOREA", 2004-08-12) reported that the Japanese Government has announced the donation of $5 million to support UNICEF's work in the DPRK. This generous donation will help provide children and women in the DPR Korea with access to the most essential primary health and nutrition care services, as well as access to clean water for families in large

urban areas. About 15 million people, including 1.3 million children under five years of age, will benefit. This is the single largest donation given in response to UNICEF's appeal for the DPR Korea in this year's consolidated appeal. The $5 million donation is urgently needed to help meet some of the basic survival, health and nutritional needs of children and women in the DPR Korea.

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7. Japanese - DPRK Relations

Asahi Shimbun ("NORTH KOREA WANTS TO BE PAID FOR TV CLIPS", 2004-08-12) reported that the question in the air, or more precisely the airwaves, is whether Japanese TV stations should pay for the use of state-run broadcaster KRT's images in the absence of diplomatic ties. Yes, says the DPRK, now that Pyongyang is a signatory to the Berne Convention for international copyright protection. But Tokyo says a flat no. The Cultural Affairs Agency says there is no need because the two countries don't have full relations. Thus, it argues, DPRK copyrights are not protected.

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8. DPRK Train Accident

Yonhap ("REBUILDING OF RYONGCHON IN FINAL STAGE, NORTH KOREAN REPORT SAYS", 2004-08-12) reported that the reconstruction of Ryongchon, a DPRK city almost flattened by a massive explosion about four months ago, is now in its final stage, the state's official news media said Thursday. About 1,650 houses and 30 public buildings were almost rebuilt, and 5,500 other houses and 40 public buildings were in the final stage of repair work, the Korean Central News Agency said.

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9. DMZ Propaganda

Yonhap ("N. KOREA RESUMES DISMANTLING PROPAGANDA FACILITIES ALONG LAND BORDER", 2004-08-12) reported that the DPRK has resumed dismantling its propaganda facilities along the heavily-armed border with the ROK, a key measure the former battlefield foes agreed to take to reduce tension, a government official said Thursday. The DPRK had suspended taking down its propaganda loudspeakers and signboards after it boycotted inter-Korean military contacts in protest of the ROK's firing of warning shots at an intruding DPRK ship on July 14.

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10. Inter - Korean Relations

Yonhap ("CURRENT INTER-KOREAN IMPASSE LIKELY TO BE RESOLVED NEXT MONTH: OFFICIAL", 2004-08-12) reported that the latest standoff in inter-Korean relations over the mass defection of hundreds of DPRK defectors to the ROK is expected to be resolved next month when the DPRK is set to mark its 56th anniversary of its foundation, a presidential committee official said Thursday. "The North would think that it is not desirable to continue the impasse, considering its losses and gains," Moon Jung-in, chairman of the presidential Northeast Asian Era Committee, said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency.

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11. Inter - Korean Athletics

Korea Times ("TWO KOREAS TO HAVE JOINT TRAINING AT ATHENS", 2004-08-12) reported that the table tennis teams of the ROK and the DPRK will hold a joint training session at the Galatsi Olympic Hall in Athens on Thursday, for the first time at the Olympics. Nine players of the ROK's team are expected to have practice matches with an undetermined number of North Koreans at the venue of the table tennis events. The joint training has significance as the beginning of inter-Korean cooperation during the Athens Games. Lee Yun-taek, president of the Korean Olympic Committee, will meet his DPRK counterpart Moon Jae-deok to begin discussions about forming a unified team for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

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12. ROK - US Relations

Yonhap ("US MILITARY IN SOUTH KOREA COMPLETES TRANSFER OF 3,600 TROOPS TO IRAQ", 2004-08-12) reported that the US military has ended its 10-day airlift operation to shift its 3,600 troops from the ROK to Iraq, an official said Thursday. The final planeload of troops from the 2nd Brigade of the 2nd US Infantry Division departed from a US air base in Osan, outside Seoul, on Wednesday, said Chae Yang-to, a spokesman for the US division. The realigned US troops, dubbed the "Strikeforce", is currently stationed in Kuwait, where they will pick up tanks, Humvees and other combat equipment before driving them into Iraq for a one-year deployment, according to press reports. Chae declined to say exactly when and where the US troops will be deployed in Iraq.

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13. US - ROK Trade Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA POISED TO BEGIN RICE TALKS WITH UNITED STATES", 2004-08-12) reported that delegates from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry are poised to meet with US trade representatives in the US to discuss possible adjustments to Korea's rice import policy. Under the current quota system imports of rice are limited to just four-percent of the domestic market. US officials are urging for an end to the protectionist guidelines and for the government here to employ a tariff policy instead. The absence of quota restrictions will allow foreign rice to enter the Korean market freely. Much attention is being focused on the upcoming round of negotiations as many wonder how the government plans to draw up a fair deal with the US, while at the same time ease fears among Korean farmers who claim liberalizing the rice market would eventually drive them out of business.

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14. ROK in Iraq

Chosun Ilbo ("KURDISH PRIME MINISTER WELCOMES KOREAN TROOPS IN IRAQ", 2004-08-12) reported that Kurdistan Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, on visit to the ROK, said on Thursday, "We Kurdish welcome the dispatch of Korean troops to the northern Iraqi city of Arbil and recognize its importance. Thus, we prioritize the safety of Korean troops and people over anything else." He made this remark during a meeting with Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-woong at the Defense Ministry building, adding, "We think highly of the Korean troop dispatch in our region, Arbil, and appreciate their efforts to help our people." He also emphatically said, "Our people in Arbil think of

Korean troops not as guests but as part of our community."

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15. ROK Capital Relocation

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA PLANS TO RAISE A NEW CAPITAL, AWAY FROM NORTH", 2004-08-12) reported that the ROK has decided to shift the seat of its capital from Seoul to a rural area further south from the tense border with the DPRK. Prime Minister Lee Hai-chan on Wednesday unveiled a $39.2 billion plan to build the new capital in the Yeongi-Gongju area, 100 miles south of Seoul. During his election campaign in 2002, President Roh Moo-hyun vowed to build a new capital to take pressure off the overcrowded Seoul and "for balanced development of the nation." Work to build the new capital will begin in 2007. The government plans to relocate most of its agencies to the new capital by 2014.

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16. Japanese Nuclear Accident

The Associated Press ("JAPAN ORDERS NUCLEAR PLANT SAFETY CHECKS", 2004-08-12) reported that Japan has ordered safety checks at the country's 52 nuclear plants and 800 non-nuclear power stations to prevent the type of accident that killed four people at a reactor this week, government officials said Thursday. Government investigators kept up searches and questioning Thursday at the plant at Mihama, 200 miles west of Tokyo, where a cooling pipe exploded Monday. The operator, Kansai Electric Power, is under suspicion of negligence. The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency ordered Kansai Electric and six other Japanese utility companies to review inspection records of cooling pipes at nuclear power plants to check for signs of erosion, agency official Koichi Shiraga said Thursday. The agency also ordered operators to check inspection records at their non-nuclear, thermoelectric power stations.

The New York Times ("RUST AND NEGLECT CITED AT JAPAN ATOM PLANT", 2004-08-11) reported that a section of steam pipe that blew out Monday, killing four workers at a Japanese nuclear power plant, had not been inspected in 28 years and had corroded from nearly half an inch to a thickness little greater than metal foil, authorities said Tuesday. "To put it bluntly, it was extremely thin," Shoichi Nakagawa, Japan's minister of the economy, trade and industry, said Tuesday after touring the power plant, in Mihama, about 200 miles west. "It looked terrible, even in the layman's view." Although the carbon steel pipe carried 300-degree steam at high pressure, it had not been inspected since the power plant opened in 1976. "We thought we could postpone the checks until this month," Akira Kokado, the deputy plant manager, told reporters at Mihama. "We had never expected such rapid corrosion."

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17. Jenkins Case

Reuters ("REPORT: GI JENKINS TO DISCUSS PLEA BARGAIN IN TOKYO", 2004-08-12) reported that a US Army sergeant accused of deserting to the DPRK in 1965 and now hospitalized in Japan will soon move to a US air base in Tokyo to begin talks on a plea bargain, a Japanese newspaper said on Thursday. Charles Robert Jenkins, 64, was brought to Japan for medical care last month after being reunited with his Japanese wife, Hitomi Soga, and their two daughters in Jakarta on July 9. The US has said it wants him to face court-martial but has held off seeking custody while he is in

hospital. The daily Nihon Keizai Shimbun said that Jenkins could move to Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo this week to attend a preliminary hearing ahead of a court-martial. But an official with the U.S. military in Japan denied the report and a source familiar with the case said it was too early for such a development.

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18. Japanese - ROK Relations

Tass ("KOREANS TOILING FOR JAPAN BEFORE 1945, GO TO SKOREA FROM SAKHALIN", 2004-08-12) reported that a total of 1,500 Koreans who had been engaged in hard labor for the Japanese before 1945, went to the ROK from Sakhalin for permanent residence. They had been brought to Sakhalin by force at the time when the south of the island had belonged to Japan between 1905 and 1945. Spokesman of the Sakhalin Koreans Association Nikolai Pak told Tass that an understanding was reached with ROK authorities that Sakhalin Koreans who went to the Korean Peninsula would be able to go to Sakhalin once in two years and to live with their children and grandchildren for three months. Pak said that the resettlement of 1,500 Sakhalin Koreans to the ROK was footed by Japan which had left their Korean subjects in Sakhalin over 50 years ago. Japan built for them houses with all conveniences in the ROK city of Ansong.

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19. Goguryeo Historical Revisionism

Korea Herald ("WHY HASN'T KOREA GONE HARD-LINE WITH CHINA?", 2004-08-12) reported that when Japan glossed over its colonization of Korea in history textbooks in 2001, the Korean government threatened all possible diplomatic means to correct the problems. Three years later, another bitter historical dispute has erupted - this time with the PRC - but Korea's response falls short of its barrage against Japan. Despite the PRC's continuing claim to the ancient Korean kingdom of Goguryeo, the government has failed to apply diplomatic pressure on Beijing, saying only it would resolve the controversy through joint research on the history of the kingdom with the PRC and Japan. "There seem indeed to be differences in the government's attitudes toward Japan and China. Private Japanese sources say the Korean government is maintaining a lower profile toward China and have expressed discontent," said Lee Myeon-woo, a Northeast Asia expert at the private Sejong Institute.

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20. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN COULD FEND OFF CHINA ATTACK FOR 2 WEEKS -PAPER", 2004-08-12) reported that Taiwan could withstand an attack from the PRC for two weeks, military sources told the China Times, in comments seen aimed at assuaging fears raised by a computer simulation showing that Taipei could be captured in six days. A computer-simulated exercise showed the PRC's People's Liberation Army (PLA) could take the island's capital in just six days, Taiwan media reported on Wednesday. But the mass-circulation China Times quoted "authoritative military sources" as saying the computer had made certain assumptions -- such as no help from the US -- and it did not mean Taiwan would be defeated so quickly. "Under these circumstances, Taiwan can hold on for two weeks in the event of a war in the Taiwan Strait."

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21. Sino - US Relations

Reuters ("U.S. PROTESTS TREATMENT OF CITIZEN IN CHINESE JAIL", 2004-08-12) reported that the US has protested to the PRC over the maltreatment in detention of a Chinese-American academic held incommunicado for several days on suspicion of espionage, the US embassy said on Thursday. The American consulate in Shanghai, where state security agents arrested professor Fei-ling Wang on July 25, also protested that the PRC had taken 10 days to notify the US of the detention, violating a 1980 agreement to give notice of such arrests within four days. Wang, an associate professor at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology, was released on August 8 and allowed to return to the US, an embassy spokesman said.

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22. PRC Foreign Trade

The Washington Post ("CHINA COULD RULE TEXTILE MARKET AFTER 2005 STUDY SEES IMPENDING INDUSTRY SHAKE-UP", 2004-08-12) reported that the PRC is poised to dominate the more than $400 billion global market in clothing, and India will also significantly increase its clothing exports starting in 2005, when import restrictions are eliminated in the US and other rich nations, according to a World Trade Organization study released yesterday. But the report said that while many developing countries will suffer significant losses amid stiff new competition from the PRC and India, a number of nations such as Mexico and Turkey should be able to maintain their positions as major clothing exporters because they are geographically close to the big markets of the US and the European Union. The countries that are most likely to lose "are those located far from the major markets," the report said. Other losers will include the high-cost local producers in the US, E.U. and Canada.

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23. PRC Product Piracy

The Associated Press ("CHINA UNDER FIRE OVER PRODUCT PIRACY", 2004-08-12) reported that the PRC could face sanctions by the US and other governments if it fails to stamp out "epidemic levels" of product piracy that deprive foreign firms of potential sales of up to $50 billion in everything from heart medicine to golf clubs, a US envoy said Thursday. The PRC's leaders appear committed to enforcing foreign patents and copyrights, but they have yet to stop local officials who protect pirates, said William Lash, a US assistant commerce secretary. He said Washington is pressing Beijing to imprison violators who now are usually only fined, if they are punished at all. The PRC is driving a worldwide trade in pirated goods, despite signing commitments as long ago as 1995 to crack down, Lash said.

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24. PRC Domestic Economy

The Washington Post ("MANUFACTURING COMPETITION PRIVATE SECTOR HIT HARDEST IN CHINA'S EFFORTS TO SLOW GROWTH ", 2004-08-11) reported that only a few months ago, the privately owned Jiangsu Tieben steel plant seemed an archetype of the PRC's emerging entrepreneurialism. Now it is an abandoned void, its half-finished smokestacks standing idle under the summer glare as weeds creep across the grounds and a security guard dozes on a bench in front

of locked gates. The shutdown of Tieben, along with the slowing of other private projects around the country, has called into question just how far the PRC is willing to go in allowing private capital to compete with state-run enterprises, and how far its central bureaucrats are willing to step back from their traditional role of picking who succeeds economically. As the government tries to cool an overheated economy, it is tightening credit and cracking down on the sort of corrupt financial and land trading that has been an everyday part of doing business during the PRC's period of swift growth. But the burden of these new policies appears to be falling disproportionately on private entrepreneurs.

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25. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA BEGINS MANNED SPACE FLIGHT COUNTDOWN", 2004-08-12) reported that PRC astronauts are in the final stages of preparing for a manned space mission that will orbit the globe 14 times before returning to Earth, a state-run newspaper reported Thursday. The launch, expected sometime this month, will initially send a manned craft, the Shenzhou 5, into an oval orbit that at its closest will be 125 miles from Earth, the Liberation Daily reported, citing "relevant channels." On Wednesday, state-run television and other media, citing senior officials in the PRC's space program, reported that the PRC would send its first person into space on Oct. 15 for a single-orbit, 90-minute flight.

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26. PRC Earthquake

Reuters ("CHINA QUAKE CRACKS RESERVOIRS, 47,000 PEOPLE IN DANGER", 2004-08-12) reported that more than 125,000 people were left homeless after an earthquake in southwest PRC killed four, injured nearly 600 and cracked walls in reservoirs posing a threat to villages downstream, Xinhua news agency said Thursday. The quake, measuring 5.6 on the open-ended Richter scale, rocked the county of Ludian in Yunnan province Tuesday, collapsing more than 18,000 houses and damaging 45,000 others. The State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters issued a notice "requiring comprehensive check-ups to all reservoirs within the earthquake-affected areas, around-the-clock safety patrols and timely resident relocation," it said. "About 47,000 residents living downstream of the reservoirs are endangered," the news agency said, without giving details.

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27. PRC Typhoon

The Associated Press ("TYPHOON KILLS 22 ON CHINA'S SE COAST ", 2004-08-12) reported that Typhoon Rananim slammed into the PRC's southeastern coast late Thursday, killing 22 people and injuring more than 1,000, official media reported. The typhoon, the strongest of the season, roared ashore south of Shanghai after killing one person in Taiwan. By 9 p.m., 22 people in coastal Zhejiang province were reported dead and more than 1,000 injured - 100 of them seriously, according to the Web site of the main Communist Party newspaper, People's Daily.

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28. PRC Gender Gap

Reuters ("CHINA OFFERS PERKS TO STOP ABORTING BABY GIRLS", 2004-08-12) reported that rural families in the PRC, where there is a traditional bias for boys, are being offered cash incentives to stop aborting baby girls and help correct a sex imbalance, the China Daily said on Thursday. Under the "Care for Girls" pilot program, girls would be exempted from paying school fees, insurance would be given to households until their daughters grow up and families with just one daughter would enjoy housing, employment, education and welfare privileges, the newspaper said. In the PRC, an average of 117 boys are born to every 100 girls. Authorities are aiming to bring the number of boys down to an average of between 103 and 107. In 1982, the birth gender ratio was relatively normal at about 108 boys for every 100 girls. In southern provinces such as Hainan and Guangdong, the ratio is now up to 130 boys per 100 girls, officials have said.

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29. Hiroshima 59th Anniversary of A-Bombing

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI GETS COOL RECEPTION IN HIROSHIMA", 2004-08-07) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi received boos and weak applause Friday after his speech at the annual atomic bombing memorial ceremony in Hiroshima. The response was apparently over local disapproval of moves by the government and the Liberal Democratic Party to revise the pacifist Constitution. In sharp contrast to the warm reception given to Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba and other speakers, the prime minister received only a lukewarm welcome. Koizumi appeared irritated and made his address quickly and in a low voice. At a news conference in Hiroshima after the ceremony, Koizumi said: "I think discussions on revising Article 9 should be conducted on the premise of pacifism and respect for fundamental human rights."

Kyodo ("HIROSHIMA MAYOR AGAIN LAMBASTES U.S.", 2004-08-07) reported that Hiroshima Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba hit out Friday at the "egocentric worldview" of the US as well as moves in Japan to revise the country's pacifist Constitution. "Ignoring the United Nations and . . . international law, the United States has resumed research to make nuclear weapons smaller and more usable," Akiba said during this year's Peace Declaration at a memorial service marking the 59th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the city. "The Japanese government, as our representative, should defend the peace Constitution, of which all Japanese should be proud, and work diligently to rectify the trend toward open acceptance of war and nuclear weapons that is increasingly prevalent at home and abroad," Akiba said.

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30. Japan Nuclear Cycle

The Japan Times ("NUCLEAR FUEL PLANT NOT BIZ AS USUAL", 2004-08-10) reported that despite safety concerns and local anger over allegations raised in July that the government hid a report showing that reprocessing spent atomic fuel costs more than burying it, officials at Rokkasho say they hope to begin uranium testing soon in preparation for the opening of the reprocessing plant in 2006. As of the end of May, construction of the plant was 95 percent completed. Officials at Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd., which will operate the plant, say plans call for the Rokkasho facility to reprocess 800 tons of spent nuclear fuel from Japan's reactors. But safety concerns at Rokkasho have long been an issue. Critics say the reprocessing plant is a hodgepodge of different blueprints originally used for reprocessing plants in Europe and that Rokkasho has severe design flaws. In addition, since the Rokkasho plant alone cannot handle all the spent fuel to be produced in Japan and a large

amount would still have to be shipped overseas for reprocessing, the overall cost of Japan's nuclear fuel reprocessing program would be much higher than in an estimate by the Federation of Electric Power Companies, the critics say.

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31. US Bases in Japan Realignment

The Japan Times ("MAYOR SEEKS U.S. BASE HOUSING TRADEOFF", 2004-08-06) reported that Yokohama Mayor Hiroshi Nakata told the Defense Agency that he might accept construction of additional US military housing units in Kanagawa Prefecture if the US reduces the number to be built and returns more facilities to Japan. But the Defense Agency said these are "very tough demands." Nakata, like Zushi Mayor Kazuyoshi Nagashima, has strongly opposed the plan, saying the return of these US facilities should be unconditional since a law stipulates that the US must return land and facilities to Japan when they are no longer being used by its forces.

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32. US - Japanese Relations

The Associated Press ("THREE SHIPS JOIN TERROR CAMPAIGN", 2004-08-10) reported that two Japanese destroyers and a supply vessel left Monday for the Indian Ocean, where they will assist the US-led anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan. The three ships were to help with non-combat logistics and ferry supplies and fuel for coalition forces trying to restore order in Afghanistan and hunt down militant leaders, including al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, said Maritime Self-Defense Force spokesman Kazuro Yamada. The ships -- the 7,250-ton Kirishima and 4,650-ton Takanami destroyers and the 8,150-ton support vessel Hamana -- are expected to reach the Indian Ocean in three weeks.

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33. Sino - Japanese Relations

The Japan Times ("CHINA CHIDED OVER SOCCER OUTBURSTS", 2004-08-10) reported that Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi conveyed to Chinese ambassador to Japan on Monday disappointment over the angry outburst by Chinese fans after Japan defeated the PRC in the Asian Cup soccer finals. Speaking to Wu Dawei during a meeting at the Foreign Ministry, Kawaguchi specifically referred to the smashing of the rear window of a Japanese Embassy car by angry Chinese fans and the burning of the Japanese flag after the game, a Japanese official said. "But we believe the Chinese government did its utmost" to ensure the safety of Japanese officials, players and fans, she said. Wu expressed regret that the Chinese government could not prevent such incidents from occurring. "The acts of some of the fans were very unpleasant," Wu was quoted as saying.

The Japan Times ("NO HURRY TO SOOTHE CHINA", 2004-08-06) reported that the recent jeering of Japanese by Chinese soccer fans in the Asian Cup soccer tournament in the PRC has not prompted Japan to speed up talks over a proposed secular war memorial, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said. "We don't see it as an opportunity to do that. We would rather wait and hear the public's opinion," Hosoda told a news conference when asked whether Tokyo would pursue such a memorial to help soothe anti-Japanese sentiment in the PRC. Meanwhile, Kong Quan said some elements of the Japanese media have played up the anti-Japanese behavior of some Chinese fans. Unruly fans are commonplace at key international soccer matches and the Chinese government

"does not agree with such behavior," Kong was quoted as saying.

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34. Japan Yasukuni Shrine Issue

The Associated Press ("YASUKUNI NO CLOSER TO BEING OUT OF HARSH SPOTLIGHT", 2004-0--10) reported that a battle rages in Japan over whether to replace the controversial Yasukuni shrine with a new secular facility. "There was a promise during the war that if a soldier died in fighting, he would be enshrined at Yasukuni," said Makoto Numazawa of the Japan Bereaved Families Association, a powerful lobbying group that represents relatives of the war dead. "We should stick to that promise." Japanese officials tend to agree. "It isn't clear right now whether the public wants a new facility," said Shinji Ogawa, an adviser to the Cabinet Office. After a year of meetings, the panel's final position was neither for nor against the creation of a new facility. The issue has since been put on a back burner.

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