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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Program

The New York Times ("KOREAN MISSILE SAID TO ADVANCE; U.S. IS UNWORRIED", 2004-08-05) reported that the DPRK appears closer to deploying a new mobile ballistic missile that is a worrisome increase in that nation's military capacity, but American government officials stressed Wednesday that the weapon could not reach the continental US. The new missile is based on designs of a Soviet-era submarine-launched weapon, known in the West as the SSN6, which has an estimated maximum range of just over 2,600 miles. American officials first disclosed the DPRK's efforts to develop the variant of the Soviet missile in September 2003. The DPRK does not have a submarine capable of carrying the missile to within striking range of the continental US. "There is no way this can hit the mainland," an American government official said Wednesday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The Independent ("RUSSIA DENIES IT HELPED N KOREA TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR MISSILES THAT COULD HIT US", 2004-08-05) reported that Russian military experts with close links to the government poured scorn yesterday on claims that Moscow has helped the DPRK develop two new ballistic missile systems capable of hitting mainland America with nuclear warheads. The authoritative journal Jane's Defense Weekly pointed the finger at staff from the VP Makeyev Design Bureau in the Siberian city of Chelyabinsk, whom it claimed had made an unspecified number of trips, along with other defense specialists, to the DPRK since 1992, under the cover of helping to develop a space-launch vehicle. The magazine also suggested that the DPRK had obtained further vital missile intelligence from its 1993 purchase of 12 decommissioned Russian Foxtrot and Golf II-class submarines. But Eduard Baltin, the former commander of Russia's Black Sea fleet, yesterday described the claims as "absurd". Insisting there was no way such sensitive missile technology would have been transferred from Russia to the DPRK, he said the R-27 missiles had been painstakingly dismantled when withdrawn from service.

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2. Five Nations Meet on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Korea Times ("5 NATIONS TO MEET OVER NK NUKES", 2004-08-05) reported that delegates from five of the six nations involved in the DPRK nuclear talks will meet in New York next week for unofficial discussions on ways to resolve the protracted standoff. It will be the first time representatives of the countries have met since the third round of six-party talks closed inclusively in June. Gathering on the sidelines of an international conference organized by the nongovernmental National Committee on American Foreign Policy, high-level officials from the two Koreas, the US,

Japan and the PRC are expected to seek agreement over a framework for future talks. The meeting is likely to occur on Tuesday or Wednesday.

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3. PRC and ROK on DPRK Nuclear Standoff

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINESE ENVOY IN SEOUL TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR STANDOFF", 2004/08/02) reported that a senior PRC official is in ROK to discuss preparations for another round of six-party talks about DPRK's nuclear ambitions. Ning Fukui arrived in Seoul Sunday and will meet with ROK officials before departing Tuesday for similar talks in Tokyo. Mr. Ning met with his U.S. counterpart Joseph DeTrani on Thursday. Mr. DeTrani said U.S. remains flexible, but will not change its stance that Pyongyang's nuclear programs must be addressed to end the standoff on the Korean Peninsula.

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4. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("DEFECTORS TO ENTER RESETTLEMENT CENTER THIS MONTH", 2004-08-05) reported that some 150 DPRK defectors are scheduled to enter a resettlement center in the middle of this month to receive basic training aimed at helping them adjust to life in capitalist ROK, officials said. The northern defectors underwent questioning about their identities and motives for defection since their arrival last week and are set to undergo education at the resettlement center, called Hanawon, starting Aug. 17. The center in Anseong, about 80 kilometers south of Seoul, provides housing and two months of training to help defectors adapt to ROK society.

Chosun Ilbo ("FOR DEFECTORS, S. KOREA A 'A WHOLE NEW WORLD': TIME", 2004-08-05) reported that the U.S. current events magazine TIME reported in its most recent edition that as 468 DPRK defectors arrive in Seoul -- the largest number to enter since the Korean War -- it is highlighting the problems defectors have in settling into South Korea's highly competitive society. TIME noted that the number of DPRK defectors who came to Korea this year is 1,300, four times more than the previous year, but the majority of them do not find a proper jobs and end up in low-wage professions like cleaners and manual laborers. TIME introduced a survey, conducted in 2001, that showed that 20 percent of DPRK defectors in the ROK are unemployed and 32 percent have temporary occupations.

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5. Women Workers in the DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("WOMEN RAIL WORKERS KEEP THINGS RUNNING AT PYONGYANG TRAIN STATION ", 2004-08-05) reported that people are talking about a train station in Pyongyang run entirely by women. In the July 30 edition of the DPRK's Rodong Sinmun, it was written, "West Pyongyang Station, a train station run by women, was given its very meaningful place in our country by the Great Leader (late Chairman Kim Il-sung) himself... This one station, which guarantees the transportation of our nation's passengers, has been run for decades pure the strength of women." West Pyongyang Station, in which only women work, has not had a signal accident in about 20 years, the paper said. Station manager Kim Sin-ok said, "People look at how we women run the station without asking for anyone's help, and they and say we're tenacious, extraordinary."

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6. Japanese - DPRK Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO SEND $47M IN AID TO N. KOREA ", 2004-08-05) reported that Japan will send $47 million in food and medical supplies to the DPRK, the first batch of humanitarian aid promised by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi when he visited the DPRK in May, the government said Thursday. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said Tokyo will monitor whether the aid gets to the country's neediest. A second shipment may be arranged in the latter half of the fiscal year, which ends in March 2005, he said. Tokyo has said the aid is being sent at the request of international organizations. Critics say Koizumi has been too willing to supply food and medical aid to the DPRK before it settles claims that its agents kidnapped Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 80s and moves to establish formal ties. The two countries have never had diplomatic relations.

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7. Australian - DPRK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIAN MINISTER TO VISIT NORTH KOREA ON PEACE MISSION ", 2004-08-05) reported that Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer will pay a rare visit to the DPRK this month hoping to build on progress in efforts to convince the volatile state to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions. Downer said he would travel to DPRK on August 17 and 18 after a two-day stop in Beijing for talks with senior Chinese leaders. While in Beijing, Downer will also meet with US National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice about his peace mission to Pyongyang, The Australian newspaper reported.

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8. Inter - Korean Relations

Yonhap ("N.K. REFUSES TO ALLOW S. KOREAN SHIPS TO PICK UP NORTHERN SAND ", 2004-0--05) reported that the DPRK has prevented two ROK ships from bringing northern sand to the ROK amid recent signs of a rupture in inter-Korean relations, shipping industry sources said Thursday. Another ship, which was supposed to return Tuesday at the latest, has been out of contact with its ROK business partner, they said.

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9. Inter - Korean Olympic Team

Arirang TV ("NORTH KOREA'S OLYMPIC SQUAD ARRIVES IN ATHENS", 2004-08-05) reported that the first batch of DPRK athletes arrived in Athens on Wednesday. Around 50 DPRK athletes and Olympic officials touched down at Eleftherios Venizelos Airport in Athens on Wednesday ready to take part in the international sporting gala. Headed by Lee Dong-ho, the DPRK's number two sports official, the delegation headed straight to the athlete's village upon arrival. Athletes from the two countries are set to march into the stadium together under one flag, during the opening and closing ceremonies of the games.

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10. US - ROK Joint Military Exercises

Yonhap ("S. KOREA, U.S. TO HOLD WAR GAMES AMID N. KOREAN NUCLEAR STANDOFF ", 2004-08-05) reported that the ROK and the US will hold an annual joint military exercise later this month, a drill that the DPRK routinely condemns as a rehearsal for a northward invasion, the U.S. military command in Seoul said Thursday. The allies will conduct the Ulchi Focus Lens, mostly computer-simulated war games, from Aug. 23 to Sept. 3 to strengthen their war deterrence against the DPRK, the U.S. command said in a statement.

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11. US Troop Trransfer

Agence France-Presse ("AIRLIFT OF US TROOPS FROM SOUTH KOREA TO IRAQ BEGINS IN EARNEST ", 2004-08-05) reported that hundreds of US soldiers left here for Kuwait Thursday, the first major airlift in the planned redeployment of US troops from the ROK to Iraq, US military authorities said. Some 600 soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division departed this US airforce base, 70 kilometers (44 miles) south of Seoul, to help bolster the US military presence in the war-torn country. The airlift forms part of the redeployment of 3,600 troops from South Korea to Iraq announced in May by the US Department of Defense.

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12. PRC - ROK Historical Revisionism

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA ERASES ALL PRE-1948 KOREAN HISTORY FROM MINISTRY WEBSITE", 2004-08-05) reported that the PRC removed all accounts of pre-1948 Korean history, including Goguryo history, from the website of the PRC Foreign Ministry on Thursday. The PRC government, having received strong protests from the Korean government concerning distortions of Goguryo history, decided on this course of action Monday and informed the Korean government through diplomatic channels. The PRC government, however, is not acceding to strong Korean demands that it restore the section on Goguryo history back to the description of Korean history on the PRC Foreign Ministry website (www.fmprc.gov.cn), and it's latest response measure of deleting all Korean history prior to the foundation of the ROK on August 15, 1948 is being condemned as an attempt to "evade the truth."

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13. ROK - Russian Pipeline Deal

Donga Ilbo ("DETAILS MATERIALIZING FOR SIBERIAN PIPELINES THROUGH EAST SEA ", 2004-08-05) reported that the possibility of bringing Siberian gas into the country through the East Sea instead of the West Sea has become greater. A Russian source in the energy field reported on August 4, "Gas pipelines will be built to head towards the East Sea via Far Eastern Nakhodka, and a new plan to supply gas to Korea is being discussed with the country." The Russian state-run Gazprom and the Korea Gas Corporation are known to have recently discussed this matter in Moscow. This source said, "The former business plan, which Korea, Russian and China signed last November after the feasibility study, has actually been dropped." If a pipeline comes to the East Sea, the route will not go through the PRC, and so the PRC will be excluded from the business plan, leaving only the ROK and Russia.

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14. IAEA on Nuclear Research

Donga Ilbo ("IAEA SEEKS RESTRICTION ON ATOMIC ENERGY FOR RESEARCH", 2004-08-05) reported that nuclear powers such as the U.S, Europe, and Japan are pushing for a restriction of "sovereignty in nuclear development" regarding nuclear energy not only for military use but also civilian use, according to a Nihon Keizai Shimbun report on August 5, quoting an IAEA source. According to the IAEA, these nuclear powers are preparing an "international management system for nuclear fuel" which will allow the production, storage, and disposal of nuclear fuel in a few designated spots on each continent, with nations in need of the energy for research or electricity generation being supplied to them from these spots. The outline of the new management system is to limit the production of highly enriched uranium, the storage and final disposal of spent nuclear fuel rods, and the extraction and reprocessing of plutonium to a few designated spots on each continent.

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15. Jenkins Case

Yomiuri Shimbun ("GOVT DENIES KOIZUMI GUARANTEED JENKINS' SAFETY IN N. KOREA", 2004-08-05) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi never offered Charles Jenkins, the husband of repatriated abductee Hitomi Soga, a guarantee of his personal safety, contrary to earlier reports, government sources said Wednesday. According to the sources, when Koizumi met Jenkins immediately after talks with DPRK leader Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang on May 22, Mitoji Yabunaka, director general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanic Affairs Bureau, passed a note to Jenkins that was written in English and promised "best efforts" to ensure his safety, but no guarantee. At this time, Koizumi reportedly told Jenkins, "I'll do my very best to allow you, your wife and your daughters to live together in Japan."

The Associated Press ("JENKINS MEETS WITH MILITARY COUNSEL", 2004-08-05) reported that accused US Army deserter Charles Jenkins met with an American military attorney Thursday to discuss his legal case and options, news reports said. Jenkins, 64, is accused of deserting his Army platoon in the ROK in 1965 and defecting to the DPRK. He has been hospitalized in Japan since last month. Officials have said Jenkins asked to talk with a US military lawyer. Kyodo News service reported the attorney visited Jenkins at the hospital after arriving from a U.S. Army base in the ROK. The lawyer is legally obligated to tell Jenkins about his options, which include facing a court-martial or seeking a plea-bargain.

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16. Hiroshima Bombing Anniversary

Kyodo News ("HIROSHIMA TO MARK 59TH ANNIVERSARY OF ATOMIC BOMBING FRIDAY", 2004-08-05) reported that Hiroshima will mark the 59th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of the city on Friday, with the mayor expected to criticize the US for continuing to develop nuclear weaponry in defiance of international regulations, city officials said Thursday. The Hiroshima city government had asked seven nuclear weapon nations -- Britain, the PRC, France, India, Pakistan, Russia and the US -- as well as the DPRK to send government representatives to the ceremony. The DPRK had made no response as of Thursday, while the other countries except Russia and Pakistan declined the invitations.

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17. East Asian Community

Financial Times ("CHINA, JAPAN AND MALAYSIA BACK FRESH MOVE TO CREATE 'EAST ASIAN COMMUNITY'", 2004-08-05) reported that when Mahathir Mohamad first proposed his controversial idea of an "east Asia" caucus of regional leaders in the early 1990s, the then Malaysian leader's prickly advocacy put many potential participants off. Dr Mahathir's push for an Asians-only political grouping in the region was dubbed the "caucus without Caucasians", reflecting the idea's overly edgy racial profile that helped ensure it died a quiet death. The PRC and Japan are backing the EAC, as is Malaysia, which has offered to host the first meeting in 2005. Indonesia and Vietnam, among other ASEAN countries, have yet to sign on to the EAC plan, which they feel could relegate their influence and subject regional forums to eventual dominance by the PRC.

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18. Sino -Pakistani Relations

Hindustan Times ("CHINA, PAK SIGN CONTRACT FOR CHASHMA NUKE PLANT", 2004-08-05) reported that the PRC will supply to Pakistan key equipment for the second phase of the Chashma nuclear power station, state media reported today. The plant will be constructed on the banks of the Indus River, around 170 miles south of Islamabad, next to the first plant that the PRC helped build. The UN nuclear watchdog has confirmed the operation of the power station to be safe and accords with international standards, Deputy General Manager of China National Nuclear Corporation, Huang Junguo, said yesterday. The project would be worth about USD 600 million and take at least six years to complete, analysts said.

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19. PRC Health Issues

Agence France-Presse ("UNSAFE INJECTIONS CAUSE OF 390,000 PREMATURE DEATHS IN CHINA", 2004-08-05) reported that unsafe injections have led to a total of 390,000 premature deaths in the PRC, the health ministry said. The massive death toll came about as people were injected with unclean needles and contracted diseases such as HIV /AIDS and hepatitis B, the Xinhua state news agency reported Thursday. Xinhua did not say how many years it took for fatalities to reach this number. The PRC economy has also lost a total of 6.9 million years of productive labor as people were forced to stop work after becoming infected, the agency said. The PRC performs a total of three billion injections every year, often under extremely unhygienic conditions.

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20. PRC Internet Policy

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TO LAUNCH NATIONWIDE CRACKDOWN AGAINST ONLINE COMPUTER GAMES", 2004-08-05) reported that the PRC is gearing up for a nationwide crackdown on online computer games, including those with sensitive political content, officials said. The operation is the latest attempt by the PRC to rein in what it perceives as the harmful influences of the Internet in a country where usage has exploded in recent years, with 87 million users. A three-month pilot campaign was conducted from April to June, mainly in Beijing, which found 56 games either contained "unhealthy" content, had never been registered and approved by authorities or

were pirated.

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21. Armitage on Japanese Constitution

Kyodo News ("ARTICLE 9 HINDERING U.S. TIES, BID FOR UNSC SEAT: ARMITAGE", 2004-07-23) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told a Japanese lawmaker that the war-renouncing Article 9 of Japan's Constitution is becoming an obstacle to strengthening the Japan-US alliance. Armitage indicated Japan must revise the Constitution and play a greater military role for international peace if it wants to become a permanent UN Security Council member, Hidenao Nakagawa, chairman of the Diet Affairs Committee of the governing Liberal Democratic Party, told reporters after meeting with Armitage. Armitage communicated the ideas as his personal opinion and said the Japanese people should decide on the issue of constitutional revision, Nakagawa said.

The Japan Times ("ARMITAGE WRONG TO LINK UNSC BID WITH REFORM OF ARTICLE 9, OFFICIALS SAY", 2004-07-24) reported that Japanese government officials dismissed advice by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and said Japan will not revise its Constitution to gain a seat on the UN Security Council. "I don't think there is a direct link between (the war-renouncing) Article 9 (of the Constitution) and Japan gaining permanent membership," Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba told reporters. "I think Japan has been contributing to world peace and stability under the current Constitution, which prohibits the exercise of the right to collective defense," he said. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi also tried to play down the impact of Armitage's remarks, saying, "Japan maintains a good relationship with the US under the current Constitution."

The Asahi Shimbun ("ARMITAGE'S REMARKS PUZZLE LAWMAKERS", 2004-07-26) reported that Japan's officials in the ruling coalition as well as the opposition camp clearly were caught off-guard by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's remark that war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution is becoming an obstacle to strengthening the Japan-US alliance. Shinzo Abe, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), was stunned by Armitage's remark. Earlier, he said, "I have never heard of such a contention." Opposition members also were critical of Armitage for pressing Japan to revise the Constitution. Hirohisa Fujii, secretary-general of the Democratic Party of Japan, told reporters, "It is hard to believe that Article 9 as it is currently interpreted is a source of hindrance to the Japan-US alliance." Mizuho Fukushima, leader of Social Democratic Party, was aghast, too. "There is no reason for someone from another country to have anything to say about our Constitution." Meanwhile, US Undersecretary of State John Bolton told reporters at the American Embassy in Tokyo: "There's no question that the subject of amending the Japanese Constitution is a pragmatic example of the exercise of national sovereignty, and that is a matter entirely for the people of Japan. ... I can safely say that a decision by Japan to modify the Constitution would be welcomed and accepted by the United States."

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22. Japan Constitutional Revision

The Japan Times ("KEIDANREN EYES CHANGE", 2004-07-24) reported that Japan's largest business lobby will propose changes to the war-renouncing Article 9 of the Constitution "as soon as possible," said Hiroshi Okuda, chairman of the Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren). "Personally, I think Article 9 is written in unbeautiful Japanese," Okuda said at a news conference following a two-day Nippon Keidanren forum, which was attended by some of the nation's most powerful business leaders. "The wording is also vague and subject to multiple interpretations." He added, however,

that the issue was "a very difficult one" and that their proposal won't be made until well into 2005.

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23. Sino - Japanese Energy Dispute

The Japan Times ("JAPAN, CHINA URGED TO COOPERATE ON ENERGY", 2004-07-24) reported that Japan and the PRC must find ways to cooperate over energy resources, Japanese business leaders said during an annual Japan Business Federation (Nippon Keidanren) forum. "As two fellow importers of energy resources, we should be able to cooperate" with China, said Fumiaki Watari, president of gasoline and oil producer Nippon Oil Corp. The PRC and Japan continue to clash over rights to an estimated 200 billion cu. meters of natural gas reserves in a disputed area of the East China Sea. "It's pointless to squabble, like it's a winner-takes-all situation," Watari told The Japan Times after the discussion. Bickering over energy sources will only push up prices, he added. Business has suffered due to the lack of a comprehensive state strategy toward the PRC and other neighboring economies, as well as the failure of PRC and Japanese politicians to build mutual trust, executives said.

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