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1. UN-PRC Summit on DPRK

China Post ("U.N.'S ANNAN TO VISIT BEIJING FOR TALKS ON NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM", 2006-05-11) reported that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan will visit Beijing next week for talks on the DPRK's nuclear program, the PRC's Foreign Ministry said Thursday. Annan is to meet with President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and other PRC leaders, ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. "The two sides will exchange views on important issues. The North Korean nuclear issue is an important one, and I believe it will be discussed," Liu said.

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2. Annan on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("ANNAN HOPES KIM JONG-IL WILL VISIT UN", 2006-05-11) reported that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has expressed hope that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il will find a way to visit the UN some day. Annan said he had sent an invitation to the reclusive leader last year for the UN Millennium Summit but said Kim did not make the trip.

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3. Inter-Korean Relations

Associated Press ("S. KOREAN PRESIDENT SAYS HE WILL AID NORTH", 2006-05-11) reported that South Korea's president said he plans to make many concessions to the DPRK and provide it with unconditional aid in an effort to build trust, his office said Wednesday. Roh Moo-hyun made the announcement as his predecessor, Kim Dae-jung, prepared to visit the DPRK to meet with its leader, Kim Jong Il, in hopes that the trip might lead to a breakthrough in stalled six-nation talks on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

(return to top) JoongAng Ilbo ("ROH DRAWS FIRE FOR NORTH POLICY", 2006-05-11) reported that the ROK's conservative political opposition has jumped on remarks by President Roh Moo-hyun in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, as evidence that Mr. Roh was trying to make political capital in the May 31 local elections by playing the DPRK card. On Tuesday, Mr. Roh told a Korean audience there that his administration was ready to defer to the DPRK in matters that did not involve national pride. "We will not concede in matters of fundamental validity," he said, referring to the ROK's status as a nation, "but will provide unconditional support in systems and goods." The Grand National Party attacked at once. Its spokesman, Lee Ke-jin, noted that the Roh administration had repatriated DPRK prisoners here but, he said, had denied that ROK prisoners of war and kidnap victims were still in the DPRK. (return to top) Dong-a Ilbo ("WILL PRESIDENT ROH MEET KIM JONG IL?", 2006-05-11) reported that president Roh Moo-hyun consistently said that there will be no second round of inter-Korean summit talks unless the DPRK's nuclear issue is resolved. In other words, he maintained his "nuclear issue resolution first, inter-Korean summit next" policy. That is why Cheong Wa Dae responded, "The South Korean government does not have any plan for a summit," whenever it was asked about a meeting between the leaders of the two Koreas. (return to top)

4. US on Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("WASHINGTON EXPRESSES SUPPORT FOR INTER-KOREAN DIALOGUE", 2006-0--11) reported that the US State Department says it supports ROK President Roh Moo-hyun's proposal to hold talks with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. The Yonhap news agency reports that a senior US State Department official said Washington supports engagement between the two Koreas.

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5. Inter-Korean Railway Cooperation

Yonhap ("KOREAS BEGIN TALKS ON LINKING CROSS-BORDER RAILWAYS ", 2006-05-11) reported that officials from the DPRK and the ROK opened a new round of discussions Thursday on ways to open the countries' linked railways. ROK officials were hoping the sides would reach an agreement for the opening of the railways in time for a planned visit by the country's former President Kim Dae-jung to Pyongyang, but analysts remained highly doubtful of any significant progress.

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6. Inter-Korean Red Cross Cooperation

Yonhap ("SEOUL'S RED CROSS CHIEF TO VISIT PYONGYANG WITH ASSISTANCE", 2006-05-11) reported that the head of the ROK's National Red Cross is to visit the DPRK capital Pyongyang later this month to discuss enhancing medical cooperation between the divided Koreas, Red Cross officials said Thursday. Red Cross President Han Wan-sang is to be accompanied by 40 officials including hospital heads and 13 officials from the Korean Hospital Association, on his five-day trip to the DPRK from May 26, the officials said.

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7. DPRK Defector Issue

Associated Press ("MORE NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES MAY COME TO U.S.", 2006-05-11) reported that six DPR Koreans granted refugee status in the US last week could be the first of many more to arrive on US shores, a lawmaker said Wednesday. "This is, I hope, just the beginning," said Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., who spoke by telephone Wednesday with some of the refugees. "In a few years, or even less, you will find these six free refugees leading free and productive lives in the United States."

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8. DPRK Food Aid

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA, WFP AGREE TO SCALED BACK AID PLAN", 2006-05-11) reported that the DPRK has agreed to accept aid from the World Food Programme months after it said it no longer wanted handouts, but the agency said on Thursday the scaled back program will leave millions vulnerable to hunger. Under the $102 million plan, agreed on Wednesday after months of negotiations, the WFP will provide food to 1.9 million people from some 6 million it was helping previously, with 75,000 tonnes of grain annually compared to more than 500,000 tonnes before.

(return to top) Washington Post ("AID REDUCTION IN NORTH KOREA WORRIES WFP ", 2006-0-

-11) reported that millions of needy DPR Koreans will continue to face a "very difficult situation" under a scaled-back resumption of World Food Program deliveries of food to the hunger-stricken nation, the UN agency said Thursday. Andrew Natsios, former chief of the US Agency for International Development, told National Public Radio the agreement "violates most of the international norms that are followed in every country in the world." "It's a lot less monitoring in the current agreement than there was before and what they had before was grossly inadequate," he said. (return to top)

9. ROK Energy Deal

Joongang Ilbo ("ROH, IN AZERBAIJAN, TAKES FIRST STEP TO GET CASPIAN OIL", 2006-05-11) reported that on his second day in the capital of Azerbaijan, President Roh Moo-hyun yesterday worked on energy diplomacy in this oil-rich country on the Caspian Sea. Mr. Roh met President Ilham Aliyev yesterday; the two presided over a flurry of signings of agreements on energy, construction and trade. The most important of those documents was a memorandum of understanding that committed the ROK to participate in the development of Azerbaijan's Inam oil field, where reserves are estimated at 2 billion barrels.

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10. Annan on PRC-ROK-Japan Relations

BBC News ("ANNAN CALLS FOR E ASIAN DÉTENTE", 2006-05-11) reported that UN chief Kofi Annan has urged Japan, the PRC and the ROK to overcome their past and reach "harmonious relations". "You don't choose your neighbours. You are bound to live together," he said, ahead of a visit to all three countries starting this weekend. Mr Annan urged them to face history, not try to sweep it away.

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11. USFJ Base Relocation

Kyodo ("INAMINE EFFECTIVELY ACCEPTS JAPAN-U.S. BASE RELOCATION PLAN", 2006-05-11) reported that the Japanese government and Okinawa Prefecture took a step forward in realizing the relocation of a US military base, with Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine agreeing to continue discussions based on the latest Japan-US accord to transfer the airfield of the US Marine Corps' Futemma Air Station to the coastal area of Camp Schwab in Nago, Okinawa.

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12. PRC on PRC-Japan Relations

Kyodo ("CHINA SAYS 'GOOD ATMOSPHERE' NEEDED FOR MINISTERIAL TALKS WITH JAPAN ", 2006-05-11) reported that the PRC believes "a good atmosphere" is needed before it would accept Japan's request to resume talks between the two countries' foreign ministers later this month, a senior PRC diplomat said. PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei also told Kyodo News in an interview that the PRC cannot accept Japan's proposal for solving a bilateral dispute over oil and gas exploration rights in the East China Sea, ahead of talks on the topic scheduled for next week.

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13. US on Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US OFFICIAL SAYS TAIWAN'S INDEPENDENCE MEANS WAR FOR AMERICA ", 2006-05-11) reported that a top US administration official has warned that if Taiwan declares independence, the US would be drawn into a war between the island and China. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick gave the warning as he defended the US government against lawmakers' complaints that it had snubbed Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian by not allowing him to make a stopover in a US city this week.

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14. US-PRC Military Relations

Reuters ("CHINA AND US COMMANDERS UPGRADE MILITARY TIES", 2006-05-11) reported that the PRC and the US have agreed to upgrade military exchanges after commanders from the two often wary military powers met in Beijing, PRC state media reported. The commander of the US Pacific naval force, William Fallon, and PRC Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan agreed on Wednesday to "step up military exchanges at all levels," Xinhua News Agency reported.

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15. PRC Environment

Reuters ("CHINA, INDIA ARE FAST-GROWING POLLUTERS: WORLD BANK ", 2006-05-11) reported that Greenhouse gas pollution from the PRC and India rose steeply over the last decade, but rich countries, including the US, remain the world's World Bank official said. The US accounts for nearly a quarter of all emissions of carbon dioxide but the PRC and India are catching up.

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16. US on PRC Currency Reform

BBC News ("US ATTACKS CHINA OVER YUAN REFORM", 2006-05-11) reported that the US Treasury has criticised the PRC for making "too little progress" in reforming its exchange rate. But its latest bi-annual report did stop short of accusing Beijing of manipulating its currency. Although he stopped short of accusing Beijing of illegal practices, Treasury Secretary John Snow did say he was "extremely dissatisfied" with the pace of the PRC's currency reform.

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17. PRC Foreign Capital

Xinhua ("YANGTZE RIVER DELTA USES NEARLY HALF OF CHINA'S FOREIGN CAPITAL", 2006-0--11) reported that urban centers along the Yangtze River Delta, one of the PRC's three major city clusters, has absorbed nearly half of the country's total foreign capital. The region has used 47.8 percent of the total foreign capital in the PRC, according to officials and experts at an ongoing forum on economic development along Yangtze River in Nanjing, capital of east the PRC's Jiangsu Province.

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