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I. United States

1. ROK Nuclear Program

The Wall Street Journal ("UN WATCHDOG: S KOREA EXPERIMENT PRODUCED ENRICHED URANIUM", 2004-09-02) reported that the United Nation's International Atomic Energy Agency said that a secret ROK experiment resulted in uranium enrichment after UN and ROK officials announced Thursday their ongoing investigation of the incident. The UN nuclear watchdog is investigating a secret nuclear fuel experiment conducted in early 2000 by ROK scientists, the officials said. The ROK reported that its "laboratory scale" experiment "involved the production of only milligram quantities of enriched uranium," the IAEA said in a statement posted on its Web site. Highly enriched uranium can be used to make nuclear warheads. But the ROK said Thursday it has no intention of building nuclear bombs. It said that a small group of scientists conducted the unauthorized experiment on their own initiative. An IAEA investigating team arrived Sunday in the ROK to conduct a weeklong probe into the program.

Reuters ("S.KOREA SAYS IT ENRICHED URANIUM FOUR YEARS AGO", 2004-09-02) reported that the ROK has told the International Atomic Energy Agency that government scientists carried out nuclear experiments to enrich uranium four years ago, Seoul said Thursday. "This is enrichment of uranium," a government official told Reuters by telephone. Other government officials had earlier said the experiments did not go as far as enriching uranium. "Whether it is a violation of IAEA safeguards measures, that's a question for the IAEA inspectors to answer," the official said, referring to agreements between the IAEA and governments to ensure that use of nuclear technology is limited to peaceful purpose. But the experiments clearly did not constitute a violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty because they were not an attempt to build nuclear weapons, the official said. The ROK government learned of the experiments while drawing up its first ever report to the IAEA, submitted this month, the statement said.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

BBC ("US ENVOY URGES NORTH KOREA TO GIVE UP NUCLEAR PROGRAM UNCONDITIONALLY", 2004-09-02) reported that the top US diplomat to the ROK Thursday 2 September urged the DPRK to make a final decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, according to a ROK lawmaker. Christopher Hill, the new US ambassador to the ROK, said the US fully supports the six-party talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis, but that it is now time for Pyongyang to make the fundamental decision to give up its nuclear program before any compensation, according to Representative Yoo Jay-kun of the ruling Uri Party. Hill's remarks came at a closed-door meeting with ROK legislators affiliated with a study group on parliamentary diplomacy.

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3. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Agence France Presse ("CHINA HOLDS OUT HOPE FOR SIX-PARTY TALKS IN SEPTEMBER", 2004-09-02) reported that the PRC expressed hope Thursday that six-party talks aimed at resolving the nuclear crisis in the Korean peninsula would go ahead this month as scheduled. "To ensure a nuclear-free Korean peninsula through peaceful negotiations is in the interest of all sides and is conducive towards the region's stability," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said at a regular briefing. "We hope that all parties can, according to the consensus reached at the third six-party talks, hold the next talks and the working group meeting before the end of September," he said. "To ensure that, all parties must show a certain level of pragmatism and flexibility."

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4. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

TASS News Agency ("RUSSIA PREPARING FOR NEW ROUND OF TALKS ON NKOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE ", 2004-09-02) reported that Russia is preparing for a new round of six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear issue, expecting it to be held in later September, a high-ranking Russian expert in problems of the Korean Peninsula told Itar-Tass on Thursday. He said Moscow "has readiness for participating in the new meeting of the 'six' at the level of deputy foreign ministers". "We consider necessary observance of accords of the previous round on holding a new round of the talks in September in a six-party format. With consideration for complexity of the discussed problems, the negotiation process should not be interrupted," the expert said. Commenting on the PRC's recent contacts with representatives of the DPRK, the US and other participants in the talks, the source said a "date of the conduction of the round has not been determined yet".

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5. Sino - DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY OFFICIAL TO VISIT N. KOREA THIS MONTH", 2004-09-02) reported that a senior PRC Party official plans to visit the DPRK later this month for talks with DPRK government officials on Pyongyang's nuclear programs and bilateral economic cooperation, diplomatic sources said Thursday. Li Changchun, member of the Standing Committee of the PRC Communist Party and ranked eighth in the party hierarchy, will take a group of representatives for the trip. The visit is likely to take place for about four days from Sept. 10, the sources said. PRC economic experts are also expected to take part in the trip, the sources said, making it likely that the

two sides will discuss economic relations, including the DPRK's call for PRC investments into the country and the PRC's assistance for the DPRK's economic reforms.

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6. Inter - Korean Relations

BBC News ("LAWMAKERS FROM TWO KOREAS TO ATTEND ASIAN POLITICAL PARTY MEETING IN BEIJING", 2004-09-02) reported that a group of leading lawmakers from the ROK's ruling and opposition parties left Thursday for Beijing to attend an Asian political party conference, the National Assembly said Thursday. The delegates to the third International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), which will be held from 2-5 September, include Lee Bu-young, chairman of the ruling Uri Party, and Kim Hyong-o, secretary-general of the main opposition Grand National Party. Several ranking officials from the DPRK's Worker's Party (KWP) are scheduled to attend the meeting, raising hopes for impromptu talks between lawmakers from the two sides. No schedule for an official meeting has been set.

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7. Inter - Korean Political Talks

Yonhap ("LABOR PARTY LAWMAKERS ENTER N. KOREA FOR POLITICAL TALKS ", 2004-09-02) reported that delegates of a ROK political party arrived in the DPRK Thursday for talks aimed at arranging the first meeting between political parties from the two countries since the Korean War more than half a century ago. During their three-day stay at Mount Geumgang, a scenic resort on the DPRK's east coast, three members of the opposition Democratic Labor Party are expected to work out the details of the proposed meeting with the DPRK's Social Democratic Party slated for late this month or early next month.

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8. Inter - Korean Sea Border Rules

Korea Times ("MILITARY LOOSENS SEA BORDER RULES AGAINST NK", 2004-09-02) reported that amid a right-wing backlash from within, the ROK military has loosened its operation rules in handling the DPRK's possible violations of the western sea border, the Defense Ministry said Thursday. Considered an olive branch, the revised rule calls on the Navy to refrain from firing warning shots at DPRK patrol boats and commercial and fishing vessels if they are deemed to have erroneously intruded across the poorly-marked maritime border, or Northern Limit Line (NLL). "To stave off accidental armed clashes on the high-tension maritime border, warning gunshots are restrained in case of unintentional NLL intrusions by Northern boats during storms and other unavoidable circumstances," a ministry insider said.

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9. KEDO LWR Project

The Wall Street Journal ("JAPAN WARY ABOUT RESUMING KEDO NUKE REACTOR PROJECT", 2004-09-02) reported that Japan's top government spokesman expressed caution Thursday on resuming a suspended multinational project to provide the DPRK with light-water reactors, as the US is considering scrapping the project altogether, Kyodo News reported. "We are still just in the

middle of discussions," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told a news conference. Alluding to the US, he added "There is one country among those in the six-nation talks that believes there should be no discussions on resuming the KEDO project before the North Korean nuclear arms issue is resolved." The ROK hopes to restart the project after extending the suspension for another year.

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10. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Arirang TV ("KOREA-U.S. FIND SOLUTION TO KAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ", 2004-09-02) reported that while the two Koreas make headway on creating a joint industrial complex in the DPRK city of Kaesong, Washington recently voiced concerns of ROK high-tech equipment possibly being abused by Pyongyang which is listed by the US as a state sponsor of terrorism. In the latest talks between the ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young and US Undersecretary of Commerce Kenneth Juster, the two sides managed to settle the issue. Mr. Juster said he understands the significance of the joint inter-Korean industrial park in Kaesong, DPRK and hoped the project will be successful.

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11. Sino - DPRK Economic Relations

Yonhap ("N. KOREA, CHINA AGREE TO DEVELOP SINUIJU-DANDONG BELT: SOURCES ", 2004-09-02) reported that the DPRK and PRC have agreed to link special economic zone projects in their respective border cities -- Sinuiju and Dandong in the northeastern PRC province of Liaoning, informed PRC sources said Thursday. The DPRK recently embarked on preparations to restart the project to transform Sinuiju into a special administrative zone, as soon as the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program is settled, the sources said.

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12. ROK National Security Law

Yonhap ("SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS NATIONAL SECURITY LAW, WIDENING CONTROVERSY ", 2004-09-02) reported that the debate over the controversial National Security Law took another twist this week with the country's highest court upholding the anti-DPRK law in a Monday ruling. In the ruling, the Supreme Court accused the leadership of the ruling Uri Party of trying to strip the country of its last defense measures against the DPRK, court officials said Thursday.

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13. ROK on US Human Rights Law

United Press International ("S.KOREA LAWMAKERS PROTEST US BILL ON NORTH", 2004-09-02) reported that a group of ROK lawmakers Thursday issued a protest over a US bill seeking to improve human rights in the DPRK. The 27 lawmakers from the ruling Uri Party delivered a joint statement to the US Embassy in Seoul, expressing concern over the North Korean Human Rights Act, which is aimed at promoting respect for democracy and protecting human rights in the DPRK. "In the statement, we asked for the Senate's careful consideration in making their decision regarding the human rights bill," said Rep. Chung Bong-ju, who delivered the joint statement. The lawmakers said the bill could have a negative impact, slowing the fragile reconciliation process between the two

Koreas.

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14. US - ROK Military Relations

Donga Ilbo ("BUSH: 'KOREA REQUIRES A STRONG MILITARY PRESENCE'", 2004-09-02) reported that George W. Bush, President of the US, announced on September 1, "there is an increasing need to place a strong military presence in South Korea in order to insure security on the Korean Peninsula." When asked the question: "Senator John McCain stated that the plan to reduce the US military presence in Korea is by far the most dangerous thing to do after the end of the Korean War. What do you think of this statement?" Bush replied, "I do not agree with his statement," also emphasizing, "I will refrain from doing anything to weaken our presence. I know that I have the obligation to keep a strong military presence in the Korean Peninsula not only for the benefit of South Korea but also for increased security of the region."

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15. US - ROK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. AMBASSADOR STRESSES SUPPORT FOR 6-PARTY TALKS", 2004-09-02) reported that in connection with the US presidential election new US Ambassador to Seoul Christopher Hill said that regardless of who is elected as US president, wide-scale support for the six party talks would continue. When independent lawmaker Chung Mong-joon asked, "The Republican Party recently categorized Korea as a democratic ally while Japan as a key partner. I'm worried whether it's OK for the US to constantly do this," ambassador Hill replied that it is a clear fact that the ROK is a key country for the US and the ROK is a key ally regardless of what adjectives are used to describe it. In regards to the trade issue between the ROK and the US, the ambassador said that in Korean-US relations, economic issues are as important as security matters.

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16. US Troops in the ROK

The Associated Press ("U.S. SOLDIER FOUND DEAD IN SOUTH KOREA", 2004-09-02) reported that the US military said Thursday that it is investigating the death of an American soldier found dead in his barracks near the ROK capital. U.S. Army Spc. Dean G. Todd-Eckard, 21, from Canyon County, Calif., was found dead in his room in Camp Carroll north of Seoul on Tuesday morning, the 8th US Army said in a statement. Todd-Eckard served in a communications-electronics maintenance section of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 307th Signal Battalion, 1st Signal Brigade.

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17. Ryongchon Rebuilding

Yonhap ("N. KOREA TRAIN BLAST SCHOOL REOPENS ", 2004-09-02) reported that the DPRK elementary school devastated by a train explosion in April, a symbol of the tragedy, has reopened in a new building, its official media said Thursday. According to the Korean Central News Agency, the primary school at Ryongchon began classes on Wednesday in time for the new semester from September.

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18. Jenkins Case

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. DEFECTOR TELLS OF ABUSE, FEAR IN NORTH KOREA", 2004-09-02) reported that 64-year-old Charles Robert Jenkins, the USFK sergeant who defected to the DPRK in January 1965 and lived nearly 40 years in the DPRK, said he was advised by Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro to leave together with the prime minister to Japan when he visited the DPRK in April, but high-ranking DPRK Foreign Ministry officials had pressured him into refusing the previous day. He said he was told that the room where he would meet Koizumi was bugged, and that if he accepted the prime minister's offer, he would have been returned to where he used to live and killed.

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19. DPRK Defectors

Agence France-Presse ("FATE OF 29 REFUGEES WHO RUSHED JAPANESE SCHOOL IN CHINA UNDECIDED", 2004-09-02) reported that the fate of 29 refugees who rushed a Japanese school in Beijing hung in the balance as Japanese consular officials interviewed them to find out who they were and what they wanted. "We are still trying to find out who they are," Japanese embassy spokesman Keiji Ide told AFP. "They claimed they are North Koreans but we should be careful." The 11 men, 15 women and three children were "more relaxed" after sleeping in the Japanese embassy Wednesday night, he said. Ide said that as far he knew the refugees had not been in contact with ROK or PRC officials. A senior foreign ministry official in Seoul said the group would be accepted if they wanted to come to the ROK while Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged that they would be treated "in a humanitarian way".

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20. Canada on DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("CANADA SUPPORTS SIX-PARTY TALKS, 'COMPASSIONATE' APPROACH TO N.K. DEFECTORS", 2004-09-02) reported that Canada supports six-party talks as a way to solve the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear program, and will deal with DPRK defectors in a "compassionate way" if they seek asylum there, the country's new envoy to the ROK said Thursday. "We hope the six-party dialogue will continue and come to a resolution that brings more security and more confidence to South Korea and to the region," Marius Grinius, 55, Canadian Ambassador to the ROK, said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency. He arrived in Seoul on Aug. 14 and took office Wednesday.

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21. Bird Flu

Agence France-Presse ("STUDY LINKS MIGRATING DUCKS TO DEADLY BIRD FLU IN KOREA", 2004-09-02) reported that a nine-month probe has linked migrating ducks to the deadly bird flu outbreak in the ROK earlier this year. Researchers at the National Veterinary Quarantine Service said ducks and other migratory birds were the most likely source of the outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of avian influenza among poultry in the ROK. "By comparing with other likely sources such as imported poultry meat and travelers, we have identified migrating birds, mostly ducks, as the most likely source for bringing the virus to this country," said Wi Sung-Hwan, a senior researcher at the state agency.

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22. Japanese - Russian Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TALKS TOUGH WITH RUSSIA OVER ISLANDS", 2004-09-02) reported that revving up for the 59th anniversary of the Soviet occupation of several tiny, frozen islands in the North Pacific, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has been talking tough with Russia. Occupied or not, he says, the southern Kuril Islands are an "integral part of Japan." And if Moscow ever wants to sign a peace treaty to formally end World War II - and open the door to more Japanese money - it needs to understand Japan's position. In a statement, Russia's foreign ministry said Monday that the plan was motivated chiefly by domestic political considerations. It added that "it is difficult to imagine that such steps could be aimed at bringing a constructive element into bilateral Russian-Japanese relations."

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23. PRC Domestic Politics

The New York Times ("CHINA'S 2 TOP LEADERS SQUARE OFF IN CONTEST TO RUN POLICY", 2004-09-02) reported that as the PRC's leaders prepare to gather for a national planning session, the country's two top officials, Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin, are engaged in an increasingly pointed power struggle that has begun to create cracks in the one-party system, PRC officials and analysts say. Tension between Mr. Jiang, the country's semi retired senior leader who still heads the military, and Mr. Hu, who replaced Mr. Jiang as Communist Party chief and president nearly two years ago, has begun influencing debates on issues like slowing the overheated economy, fighting corruption and assigning jobs, these people say. Broadly speaking, Mr. Hu is seen as embracing the idea that the PRC needs to focus more on populist social problems, while Mr. Jiang has often spoken about the importance of maintaining a high rate of economic growth as the first priority. Several people also said that Mr. Hu and Mr. Jiang have also begun to diverge subtly on foreign policy, with Mr. Hu working to forge closer ties to European nations, and Mr. Jiang emphasizing the relatively cordial relationship he built with the US in the late 1990's.

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24. PRC Technology Standards

The Associated Press ("U.S. URGES CHINA ON TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS", 2004-09-02) reported that the PRC should let its companies choose the technology standards they use, a US official said Thursday, renewing Washington's campaign against moves by the PRC government to set its own national telecommunications standards. "By eliminating government mandates, we can eliminate problems that divide us," said David Gross, US coordinator for Science and Technology Policy. He specifically mentioned new PRC-developed wireless encryption standards known as WAPI that were the subject of a dispute this spring over a PRC plan to require manufacturers to use the new technique. That conflict was shelved when the PRC pledged during trade talks in April to postpone the plan, which foreign suppliers said would block access to the PRC market.

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25. Sino - US Nuclear Technology Trade

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA, US CLOSE TO DEAL ON NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TRADE:

REPORT", 2004-09-02) reported that the PRC and the US have nearly settled a dispute over nuclear technology, a move that would allow US companies to sell nuclear reactors to the PRC. The deal could mean billions of dollars for US companies that have lobbied hard to get the US and PRC to reach agreement, the Wall Street Journal reported Wednesday. "This is happening," a US State Department official told the Journal on condition of anonymity. He said sanctions, export controls and most other barriers to sales have been removed. A US-PRC agreement to allow cooperation on nuclear energy signed in 1985 was put on hold after the US imposed sanctions on the PRC for using force to quell the Tiananmen Square democracy demonstrations in 1989.

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26. RNC on the PRC

The Associated Press ("GOP PLATFORM REFLECTS CHANGING TIMES", 2004-09-02) reported that four years ago, Republicans distrusted the PRC. What a difference a new convention makes. The PRC was dealt with firmly in the 2000 platform, which declared that "China is a strategic competitor of the United States, not a strategic partner," and said that the PRC would not be the center of the administration's Asia policy. The new platform has a far more subdued approach, criticizing the PRC's military build-up but praising its new-found prosperity. Those changes have more to do with America's shifting alliances than they do with changes in the PRC, said John Pike, director of defense think-tank Globalsecurity.org. "It's basically: 'If you sign up for the global war on terrorism we're not too worried about what else you do,'" said Pike.

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27. PRC Energy Supply

The Associated Press ("CHINA, PHILIPPINES SIGN DEAL ON JOINT SURVEY FOR OIL AND GAS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA", 2004-09-02) reported that the PRC hopes to expand trade with the Philippines, Premier Wen Jiabao told visiting Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Thursday, as major oil companies signed a deal on joint surveying in the South China Sea for oil and natural gas deposits. "It will be a pre-exploration study solely to collect, process and analyze seismic data. No drilling or development is covered under the study," said Perez, who was visiting Beijing as a member of Arroyo's delegation. Premier Wen told Arroyo that the PRC hopes for more cooperation and expressed satisfaction with the rapid expansion of trade, the PRC's official Xinhua News Agency reported.

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28. Sino - Japanese Relations

Interfax ("EXPERT: CHINA SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS OVER JAPAN'S MOVES IN

29. PRC Separatism

Reuters ("CHINA ARMY DRILLS TO CURB SEPARATISM IN XINJIANG", 2004-09-02) reported that

the PRC has conducted military exercises in its remote northwestern region of Xinjiang to stifle separatism in the restive, predominantly Muslim area, state media said on Thursday. Many of the Turkic-speaking ethnic Uighurs who make up the majority of Xinjiang's 19 million people dream of establishing an independent state which they would call East Turkestan. The exercises, which took place in mid-August in the Tianshan mountains, were dubbed "Controlling East Turkestan", the People's Liberation Army Daily said. "They practiced surround-and-annihilate tactics and field operations, 10 strategies for controlling East Turkestan and increasing the army's strength," it said.

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30. PRC Space Program

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S SECRET CAPE CANAVERAL A SPRAWLING CITY OF 15,000", 2004-09-02) reported that under a giant portrait of Mao Zedong emblazoned with the words "We, too, must have a man-made satellite", the heart of the PRC's space program -- an entire city built for the sole purpose of reaching the cosmos -- spreads out along its perch at the edge of the Gobi desert. In a rare visit organized by the authorities, foreign journalists were allowed a peek into life at Jiuquan, the PRC's Cape Canaveral, which shot to world fame last October when it launched astronaut Yang Liwei into orbit. The center of the PRC's secretive space program, Jiuquan is conveniently located in splendid isolation in the country's arid northwest straddling the border of Gansu province and Inner Mongolia region.

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31. PRC to Launch Weather Satellites

Reuters ("CHINA WILL LAUNCH 3 WEATHER-MONITORING SATELLITES", 2004-09-02) reported that the PRC will launch three weather monitoring satellites to help detect forest fires and sandstorms and monitor climate change, the China Daily said Thursday. The PRC suffers widespread flooding and drought each year, causing huge loss of life. Sandstorms whip up from the north in the spring and typhoons roar in from the south in the summer. The PRC Aerospace Science and Technology Corp. had completed an appraisal of the first of the locally developed satellites, Fengyun-2 batch two (FY-2 02), which would be launched atop Long March 3A rockets, the newspaper said.

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32. Cross Strait Investment

Associated Press ("CHIP GIANT TAIWAN SEMICONDUCTOR ASKS FOR RELAXED POLICY ON CHINA INVESTMENT", 2004-09-02) reported that Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. has asked Taiwan's government to relax regulations on what kind of production technology the company can use in its Shanghai chip plant, a spokesman said Thursday. Taiwan tightly restricts what kind of technology the island's companies can use in its plants in the PRC because the PRC is Taiwan's biggest security threat.

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33. Japan Constitutional Revision

Kyodo ("DON'T JUNK ARTICLE 9: KONO", 2004-08-18) reported that Yohei Kono, speaker of the

House of Representatives, suggested that Japan should maintain rather than revise the war-renouncing Constitution in its bid to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. "Japan can choose to abandon its bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and pursue its role as a UN member," Kono said, warning against the growing calls at home and abroad for a revision of the Constitution.

The Japan Times ("OZAWA ASSERTS PEACEKEEPING IS OK", 2004-08-23) reported that Veteran lawmaker Ichiro Ozawa of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) reiterated that Japanese troops can participate in UN peacekeeping activities, which could involve the use of force, without revising the Constitution. Ozawa, former deputy leader of the opposition DPJ, is apparently disagreeing with comments by party leader Katsuya Okada, who revealed a conflicting view during a trip to the US from late July to early August. Okada indicated that Japan needs to revise the Constitution to enable the use of force in UN-authorized activities.

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34. US Forces in Japan Realignment

Kyodo ("ZUSHI PROTEST OVER U.S. UNITS IN VAIN", 2004-08-24) reported that Japan's defense authorities turned down a plea by the city of Zushi, Kanagawa Prefecture, to scrap the central government's plan to build additional housing units for the US military in the Ikego forest area. Zushi Mayor Kazuyoshi Nagashima said the response from the Defense Facilities Administration Agency was regrettable, indicating the city will take the case to court.

The Japan Times ("PULLOUT OF U.S. FORCES COULD SKIP JAPAN", 2004-08-18) reported that despite the US announcement that it will withdraw up to 70,000 service members from Asia and Europe over the next decade, America's military presence in Japan might not be part of that scenario, according to Japanese government officials. At a high-level meeting in San Francisco in July, Richard Lawless, deputy defense undersecretary for Asian and Pacific affairs, reportedly presented several force realignment proposals to Japanese officials. They include relocating the command functions of the U.S. Army I Corps, based in Washington State, to US Army Camp Zama in Kanagawa Prefecture; integrating the 13th Air Force Command on Guam and the 5th Air Force Command, based at the U.S. Yokota Air Base in Tokyo; and redeploying some marines in Okinawa to other parts of Japan. If these movements come about, Japan would become a US frontline Asia-Pacific command post, according to Hiromichi Umabayashi, president of Yokohama-based disarmament think tank Peace Depot and an expert on the US military in Japan. "The message is more political than quantitative," he said. "By concentrating command functions in Japan, the level of cooperation between the Self-Defense Forces and the US military would increase."

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35. US Helicopter Crash in Okinawa

Kyodo ("OKINAWA GOVERNOR CALLS AGAIN FOR BAN ON FLIGHTS", 2004-08-22) reported that Okinawa Gov. Keiichi Inamine again urged the US to suspend all military flights at the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture. "I strongly request the suspension of all flights until we can confirm the introduction of measures that can effectively prevent a recurrence" of accidents, Inamine told Lt. Gen. Robert Blackman, Okinawa area coordinator for the US military, referring to the crash of a helicopter from the air station on Aug. 13 at a local university campus. During the meeting, Blackman apologized for the accident, but added that "the requirement to fly was operationally driven." Inamine also requested the US military release the outcome of its

investigation into the cause of the accident, but Blackman did not respond.

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36. Japan Iraq Troops Deployment

Kyodo ("TROOPS RETURN FROM IRAQ, VOICE FEAR OVER ATTACKS", 2004-08-23) reported that about 100 ground troops returned to Japan from Iraq on Aug. 22, with some voicing concern over deteriorating security in the southern city of Samawah where they were stationed. It is the first homecoming for personnel in the 470-strong Ground Self-Defense Force unit dispatched to Samawah in May for three months to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

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37. Japan New Defense Program Outline

The Japan Times ("ANNUAL TROOP, EQUIPMENT GOALS TO END", 2004-08-23) reported that the Japan's Defense Agency will discontinue drawing up a target list for Self-Defense Force (SDF) personnel and equipment levels when it compiles a revised defense strategy by the end of this year, according to agency sources said. The move is aimed at ensuring flexibility in the nation's defense capability amid changes in global and regional security conditions, including a planned massive realignment of US forces, the sources said. Personnel and equipment levels will instead be specified in the buildup program that is revised every five years, the sources said. The agency plans to set aside funds for the missile system, estimated to cost about 1 trillion yen, by cutting frontline equipment. The list attached to the current defense strategy, which was revised in 1995 to meet the changing situations in the post-Cold War era, sets the number of the Ground Self-Defense Force troops at 160,000 and tanks at 900. It sets the number of destroyers at about 50 and submarines at 16 for the Maritime Self-Defense Force and about 300 fighters for the Air Self-Defense Force.

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