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I. United States

1. DPRK Missile Test Threat

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("SIGNS INDICATE N. KOREA PREPARING TO LAUNCH RODONG MISSILE", 2004-09-23) reported that indications that the DPRK is preparing to launch a Rodong ballistic missile, which has the range to cover most of the Japanese archipelago, have been observed, government sources reported Wednesday. The Defense Agency dispatched an Aegis-equipped Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyer, another destroyer and an EP-3 electronic surveillance aircraft to the Sea of Japan to increase its early warning and surveillance abilities in the area, the sources said. The sources said Tokyo and Washington detected the signs Tuesday afternoon. DPRK military vehicles, soldiers and missile engineers have been converging on several Rodong missile bases mainly in the eastern part of the nation, they said. Missile experts say it would several days to two weeks to prepare for an actual launch.

The New York Times ("NORTH KOREA TEST FEARED", 2004-09-23) reported that the US and Japan have detected signs that the DPRK is preparing to launch a ballistic missile with a range capable of hitting almost all of Japan, Japanese government sources said Thursday. "At this stage we don't think North Korea's missile launch is imminent," one source told Reuters on condition of anonymity. "But we still don't know whether North Korea is serious about missile launches."

Korea Times ("SEOUL ALERT FOR POSSIBLE N. KOREAN MISSILE TEST", 2004-09-23) reported that the ROK has detected the movements of missile units in the DPRK but believes they are part of routine exercises, the Defense Ministry said Thursday. "While South Korean intelligence officials, as well as their U.S. counterparts, have 'partially' discerned missile-related movements in the North, there seems to be annual military exercises going on," ministry spokesman Brig. Gen. Nam Dae-youn said at a news conference. In response, Japan deployed an Aegis-guided destroyer and some intelligence planes, including EP-3, to the East Sea between Japan and the Korean peninsula, according to the paper.

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2. PRC on DPRK Missile Test Threat

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA URGES EFFORTS TO AVOID 'COMPLICATING' NKOREA SITUATION ", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC Thursday urged all parties to avoid "complicating" the situation on the Korean peninsula, amid reports that the DPRK might be preparing to test-fire a missile. "What I want to emphasize is that we need to make efforts to avoid complicating the situation on the Korean peninsula, so we can prepare for the next round of talks as soon as possible," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said.

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3. Japan on DPRK Missile Test Threat

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI SAYS N. KOREA UNLIKELY TO TEST-FIRE MISSILE", 2004-09-23) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Thursday that the DPRK is unlikely to test-fire another ballistic missile. "I think the possibility of launching one is low," Koizumi told reporters outside his official residence.

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4. US, ROK on DPRK Missile Test Threat

Kyodo ("N. KOREA'S MISSILE-RELATED MOVES LIKELY PART OF MILITARY DRILLS", 2004-09-23) reported that the ROK's Defense Ministry believes signs of DPRK activities related to its missiles, detected recently by Seoul and Washington, are "highly likely to be part of annual military drills," a ministry spokesman said Thursday. "We reached the assessment that North Korea's missile activities are part of annual military exercises," Brig. Gen. Nam Dae Yeon said in a report by the South's Yonhap News Agency. He added, however, "(South) Korea and the US will stay in close touch in tracking down any signs related to North Korea's possible missile launch because actual missile launch is possible when things develop."

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5. DPRK Japan Threat

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO TURN JAPAN INTO "NUCLEAR SEA OF FIRE" ", 2004-09-23) reported that the DPRK threatened Thursday to turn Japan into a "nuclear sea of fire" if it comes under attack from the US. "If the United States ignites a nuclear war, the US military bases in Japan would serve as a detonating fuse to turn Japan into a nuclear sea of fire," the DPRK's ruling party newspaper Rodong Sinmun said in a Korean-language article monitored by ROK's Yonhap news agency. In an English-language article published by Pyongyang's official KCNA news agency, Rodong accused the US of converting Japan into "strategic vantage points" for a pre-emptive attack on the DPRK.

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6. DPRK Nuclear Program

Joong Ang Ilbo ("NORTH IS CALLED ABLE TO TEST ", 2004-09-23) reported that the DPRK has been prepared since 1993 to conduct underground nuclear tests, Hwang Jang-yop, the highest-ranking DPRK defector, told National Assembly lawmakers yesterday. "When I was working as the secretary of international affairs, a Soviet official warned me personally to stop any nuclear arms development, and I briefed Kim Jong-il, chairman of the National Defense Commission, about it,"

said Mr. Hwang, former secretary of DPRK's Workers' Party. "Mr. Kim ordered me to ignore the warning." In 1996, the DPRK succeeded in manufacturing enriched uranium with the help of another country, Mr. Hwang said.

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7. ROK Minister for DPRK Nuclear Issue

Donga Ilbo ("NEW DEPUTY MINISTER POST CREATED TO HANDLE NUCLEAR ISSUES ", 2004-0--23) reported that it was reported on Thursday that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade is creating a new post, tentatively named "the Planning Officer for Peaceful Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula," at the deputy minister level. The new planning officer will take over the post of chief representative of the six-party talks, which had been taken by Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck. A top-ranking government officer revealed the new plan, saying, "This will be a meaningful step. Since the deputy foreign minister, who also serves as chief representative of the six-party talks, has not been able to deal with other general affairs, this measure will solve that problem and also hasten the process of resolving North Korea's nuclear issues."

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8. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Kyodo ("JAPAN TO RAISE NUCLEAR ISSUE AT TALKS WITH N. KOREA: KAWAGUCHI", 2004-0--23) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi told her Group of Eight counterparts Wednesday that Japan plans to raise the DPRK nuclear issue at upcoming bilateral talks with the DPRK on its abduction of Japanese nationals, a Japanese official said. But the DPRK is unlikely to respond to the nuclear issue at the working-level meeting scheduled to start in Beijing on Saturday because its main topic will be the abductions, Kawaguchi was quoted as saying at an informal G-8 working dinner.

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9. Japanese - DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("JAPANESE PREMIER ASKS N. KOREAN OFFICIAL TO RELAY MESSAGE TO KIM JONG-IL ", 2004-09-23) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi asked the DPRK's vice foreign minister Wednesday (22 September) to relay his message to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il about the normalization of bilateral ties and the six-party talks on Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, a Japanese official said. Koizumi talked briefly with Choe at a reception hosted by Japanese Ambassador to the United Nations Koichi Haraguchi for foreign delegates to the annual UN General Assembly session.

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10. ROK Nuclear Experiment

Joong Ang Ilbo ("EX-LEADER DENIES ATOM RESEARCH REPORT ", 2004-09-23) reported that following an interview with former President Kim Young-sam, a Japanese newspaper reported yesterday that he said past presidents must have known about the ROK's nuclear experiments. Mr. Kim, president from 1993 to 1998, denied the report yesterday. Yesterday's Mainichi Shimbun said Mr. Kim claimed, "The past presidents of Korea could not have been unaware of nuclear experiments

during their tenures." According to the newspaper, Mr. Kim suggested that he himself was aware of nuclear research while in office. "The Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute had diverse research projects in a queue. I had to know about them for reasons of governmental budget distribution," the Mainichi quoted Mr. Kim as saying.

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11. Russia on ROK Nuclear Experiment

Agence France-Presse ("RUSSIA RAPS SOUTH KOREA ON NUCLEAR EXPERIMENTS", 2004-09-23) reported that Russia rapped the ROK over its recently disclosed secret nuclear experiments, calling on Seoul to cooperate fully with international experts investigating them. In a statement, the Russian foreign ministry said the atomic experiments in the ROK as recently as four years ago were discussed in a meeting of diplomats on the sidelines of President Roh Moo-Hyun's visit to Russia. "The Russian side stressed our interest in ensuring that the Republic of Korea cooperates in an open and transparent manner with the IAEA" in its investigation of the experiments, the statement said.

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12. DPRK Defectors

Chosun Ilbo ("RETURNED NORTH KOREANS UNDERGO BRAINWASHING ", 2004-09-23) reported that quoting testimonials of some DPRK refugees, the Japanese daily Tokyo Shimbun reported Thursday that DPRK authorities lock up in concentration camps those who, in a failed attempt to escape the DPRK, are forced to return after being denied asylum in another country, and instill in them the so-called "code of silence." According to first-hand accounts, these detainees are exploited for hard labor after going through an inspection by the national security and preservation agency. They also receive a strict education in ideology, such as being forced to read over and over again the "code of silence" every morning and evening, which reads something like: "I shall not tell anybody of the things I have heard or seen in my time abroad."

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13. ROK National Security Law

Korea Times ("3 PARTIES TO SCRAP SECURITY LAW", 2004-09-23) reported that the ruling Uri Party and two minor oppositions, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP), agreed Thursday to jointly submit a bill to abolish the National Security Law. "We share the basic principle of wanting to eliminate the National Security Law," Rep. Lee Jong-kul of the Uri Party, standing along with his counterparts from the two small opposition parties, said in a press conference. "We'll closely consult with each other to abolish the law during the ongoing regular session of the National Assembly." With the majority Uri Party joining forces with the two other minor parties, the move to scrap the controversial legislation will likely pick up pace, despite desperate opposition by the nation's main opposition, the Grand National Party (GNP).

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14. ROK Maritime Border Violation

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREAN BOAT CROSSES NLL, NO RADIO RESPONSE ", 2004-09-23) reported that the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said a small DPRK patrol boat crossed the West Sea Northern

Limit Line 0.7 miles in the sea 3.6 miles northeast off Yeonpyeong Island at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, but returned 10 minutes later. The ROK Navy sent a warning message by radio, but the patrol boat did not respond. A JSC official said, "The North Korean boat was small one stationed on the shore. It seems that the boat crossed the NNL while controlling Chinese fishing ships engaging in illegal operations." It has been learned that at the time six PRC fishing boasts were working around the NLL northeast off Yeonpyeong Island.

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15. Sino - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA, CHINA SIGN AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION IN HYDROLOGY ", 2004-09-23) reported that the DPRK and PRC signed an agreement on hydrological cooperation related to the Amrok and Tuman rivers in their shared border area, the DPRK's official news agency reported Thursday. "The agreement was inked by Ko Il-hun, director of the Hydro-Meteorological Service of the DPRK and E Jingping, vice-minister of Water Resources of China who is heading a delegation of the Chinese Ministry of Water Resources," the Korean Central News Agency said.

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16. DPRK on Koguryo Historical Revisionism

Yonhap ("PYONGYANG SAYS KOGURYO KINGDOM IS MODEL FOR UNIFIED KOREA ", 2004-09-23) reported that the ancient kingdom of Koguryo is part of Korean history and is a good model for a unified Korea, the DPRK's official media said in a report that arrived here Thursday. The Minju Chosun, a newspaper published by the DPRK Cabinet, reported last week that Koguryo was a regional superpower with developed politics, economy and culture during its existence from 37 B.C. to 668 A.D.

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17. US Troop Realignment

The Associated Press ("U.S. TO CLOSE 35 PERCENT OF OVERSEAS BASES", 2004-09-23) reported that over the next decade, the US military will abandon 35 percent of the Cold War-era bases and buildings it uses abroad, even as it seeks to expand a network of bare-bones sites in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Eastern Europe to help fight terrorism. The most widely noted aspect of the plan, which was announced in broad terms last month by President Bush, is the withdrawal of 70,000 US troops and 100,000 of their family members from bases in Germany and the ROK. Less well understood is that even while troops will return to the US from Germany and the ROK, the Pentagon will be building up its network of "forward operating sites," sometimes called "lily pad" bases.

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18. ROK on US Troop Realignment

Chosun Ilbo ("DEFENSE MINISTRY ASKS U.S. TO PREPOSITION EQUIPMENT IN KOREA ", 2004-09-23) reported that the Ministry of Defense has officially asked the US side to preposition the equipment of a heavy brigade -- including tanks and armored vehicles -- on the Korean Peninsula and make it so that US re-enforcements are deployed to the Korean Peninsula as soon as possible in the event of an emergency. On the other hand, the US has virtually agreed to push back the withdrawal

of a battalion of Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS), originally scheduled for the end of next year, to after 2006. Based on an agreement in this round of talks, both sides plan to reach a final agreement on the size and timing of USFK reductions in the SCM talks to be held in Washington on Oct. 22.

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19. ROK Sex Trade

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA CRACKS DOWN ON SEX TRADE TO IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL IMAGE", 2004-09-23) reported that the ROK launched a crackdown on the sex industry as a new law targeting brothel owners, prostitutes and their clients went into force. Some 3,000 police raided red-light districts in Seoul and other major cities, hauling in 138 violators including sex workers, brothel owners and customers, the National Police Agency said. Police said the crackdown to enforce the new legislation would last for a month, but women's groups and experts said it would take more than that to eradicate a culture of male exploitation.

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20. Cross Strait Relations

Kyodo ("TAIWAN MILITARY DEFENDS HUGE ARMS BUDGET DESPITE STRONG OPPOSITION", 2004-09-23) reported that the Taiwan military on Thursday reiterated the need to purchase more advanced weapons from the US, the island's main arms supplier, as a group of retired military officers vowed to take part in an anti-arms procurement rally slated for Saturday. "It is necessary for us to buy more military equipment with the cross-strait military balance falling more and more out of balance," Political Warfare Department Director General Chen Pan-chih told reporters. "Arms acquisitions will help allay public fears of China's rapid military buildup and safeguard Taiwan's democratic achievements," Chen added.

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21. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

The Associate Press ("CHINA "STRONGLY OPPOSES" MULTIBILLION DOLLAR ARMS DEAL BETWEEN U.S. AND TAIWAN", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC said Thursday that it "strongly opposed" a weapons deal worth billions between Taiwan and the US, calling it a breach of a long-standing agreement between the PRC and the US. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said that the US$18 billion (euro 14.5 billion) package sends "wrong signals to Taiwan." "The Chinese position is very clear-cut," Kong said at a regular briefing. "China is strongly opposed to any sale of arms to Taiwan because this is not in alignment with international laws and it contradicts the joint communiqués between China and the United States."

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22. Cross Strait Extradition

The Associated Press ("CHINA EXTRADITES TAIWANESE CRIMINALS ON THE ISLAND'S MOST-WANTED LIST", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC extradited two of Taiwan's most-wanted convicts Thursday, police said, in a rare display of cooperation by the rivals. Hsueh Chiu and Chen Yi-hua - wanted for high-profile kidnappings in Taiwan - were arrested in southern PRC two months ago,

police said. PRC police took the two men to the outlying Taiwanese island of Matsu by boat and handed them over to local officials, police said. Taiwan and the PRC worked out an agreement to repatriate criminals and illegal immigrants a decade ago, but the practice is often stalled amid icy relations.

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23. Sino - Russian Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINESE PREMIER DUE IN MOSCOW FOR TALKS", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC's prime minister arrived in Moscow on Thursday to discuss Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organization and the PRC's efforts to secure a steady supply of Russian oil for its booming economy. Wen Jiabao also was expected to discuss anti-terrorism cooperation and other issues with Russian President Vladimir Putin. A Hong Kong newspaper with close ties to Beijing reported this week that Wen also will discuss possible PRC investment of up to $12 billion in Russian energy industries. Talks on Russia's efforts to join the World Trade Organization also are on the table for Wen's visit.

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24. Sino - Russian Energy Trade

The Associated Press ("RUSSIA: CHINA WILL PAY FOR OIL DELIVERIES", 2004-09-23) reported that the head of Russia's state-owned railroad network said Thursday that a PRC oil company would cover the embattled Yukos oil company's rail transport bills for October, the Interfax news agency reported. Earlier this week, Yukos announced it would cut 100,000 barrels per day of crude supplies to PRC National Petroleum Corp., as the beleaguered Russian company fights to pay down crippling back tax bills of some $7 billion. The announcement alarmed the PRC, which has sharply increased its oil imports from Russia in recent years as it tries to meet the needs of its surging economy. After meeting with his PRC counterpart Thursday, Russian Railways chief Gennady Fadeyev said an unnamed PRC company would pay for Yukos's deliveries next month.

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25. Shanghai Cooperation Organization

The Associated Press ("CHINA, RUSSIA AND FOUR CENTRAL ASIAN NATIONS AGREE TO BOOST ECONOMIC COOPERATION TO STRENGTHEN FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM", 2004-09-23) reported that leaders from the PRC, Russia and four Central Asian countries agreed Thursday to boost economic cooperation to strengthen joint efforts in the fight against terrorism. "I believe that our organization can and has to be active in the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism which are becoming more alike," Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov said at a summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, or SCO, in the Kyrgyz capital Bishkek. The prime ministers of the PRC, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan along with the deputy prime ministers of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan approved bilateral trade and economic cooperation among SCO members.

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26. US on PRC Export Violation

The Associated Press ("U.S. SANCTIONS CHINESE WEAPONS SUPPLIER", 2004-09-23) reported

that the US has imposed sanctions on a PRC government weapons supplier that it says exported missile technology in violation of efforts to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, the US Embassy said Thursday. The US announcement didn't identify what country the latest company, Xinshidai or PRC New Era Group, was accused of dealing with or what it exported. The US government concluded the company "contributed materially" to another country's efforts to make missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, an embassy spokesman said, reading from a statement by the State Department's Bureau of Nonproliferation.

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27. PRC on PRC Export Violation

United Press International ("CHINA CALLS U.S. SANCTIONS 'WRONG'", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC reacted strongly on Thursday to the US decision to impose sanctions on a trading company accused of exporting missile technology, calling it "wrong." Foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan questioned the legality of the US move saying "it's wrong to cite domestic laws and apply them in international issues." "China has been very sincere and strict on the laws related to the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction; we are strongly opposed to any type of activities that will spread such weapons and will investigate and prosecute any persons engaged in this action," Kong added.

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28. Sino - US Trade Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA WARNS U.S. OVER TEXTILE IMPORTS", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC is warning the US against blocking imports of PRC textiles after a three-decade-old agreement that limits trade in the industry expires this year. A Commerce Ministry spokesman quoted Thursday by state newspapers called on the US and other World Trade Organization members to allow free trade in textiles. "If the U.S. government is to review the request (of industry groups), that would brazenly breach the WTO rules ... and seriously hurt the confidence of Chinese firms and public in the global trade environment," the main PRC newspaper People's Daily quoted the spokesman as saying.

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29. PRC Currency Policy

Washington Post ("CHINA TO DISCUSS CURRENCY POLICY WITH G-7 NATIONS", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC will participate in a special meeting with the Group of Seven industrialized countries on Oct. 1, the US Treasury said yesterday, an announcement that could herald the PRC's eventual membership in the elite economic club. John B. Taylor, the undersecretary of the Treasury for international affairs, said one major purpose of the meeting will be "high-level engagement" with the PRC on their currency policy, which has become a politically charged issue in the US.

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30. Hong Kong Elections

The Associated Press ("CHINA WILL INVITE SOME HONG KONG LAWMAKERS TO BEIJING FOR NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS", 2004-09-23) reported that the PRC will invite some newly elected Hong Kong lawmakers to Beijing's National Day celebrations, an official said Thursday, and at least

one pro-democracy politician was on the guest list. Opposition Democratic Party member Sin Chung-kai who recently won re-election as a lawmaker confirmed that he has received an invitation from the PRC's representative office here to receptions on Sept. 30 in Beijing. Sin said he was the only Democrat invited so far and that he would attend the events, where state leaders will meet with the delegation led by Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa.

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31. PRC Fuel-Economy Standards

The New York Times ("CHINA SETS ITS FIRST FUEL-ECONOMY RULES", 2004-09-23) reported that brushing aside concerns from the auto industry, the PRC government has set fuel-economy standards on new cars, sport utility vehicles and vans for the first time, people with copies of the new rules said on Wednesday. The regulations represent a broad effort by Beijing to address its soaring dependence on imported oil, a dependence that has helped lift oil prices around the world as producers have struggled to keep pace with rising demand. The new regulations are more stringent than US standards, but less strict than the semi-voluntary standards that the auto industry has adopted in Europe to head off regulations there.

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