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I. United States

1. ROK on Multilateral Talks

Yonhap ("SIX-WAY WORKING GROUP "DELAYED" BY N KOREA "FOOT-DRAGGING" - SOUTH OFFICIAL", 2004-08-17) reported that the DPRK's foot-dragging is dimming the outlook for the fourth round of six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear programs, DPRK watchers said Tuesday 17 August. The five other members of the six-party talks have been pushing to hold a working group meeting as soon as possible to set the agenda for the fourth round of talks in Beijing in September. An official at the ROK's Foreign Ministry said the working group meeting has been delayed by the DPRK's foot-dragging. "As seen in previous six-way talks, the North seems to hold the key to the schedule for working group meetings," he said. The ROK wishes to hold the working group meeting during September at the latest, but the possibility of holding it together with the main meeting can not be ruled out, he said.

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2. PRC on Multilateral Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA TALKS STILL ON, CHINA TELLS DOWNER", 2004-08-17) reported that the DPRK's refusal to take part in working-level talks on the nuclear crisis prompted a diplomatic flurry on Tuesday with the PRC, the host of the talks, at the heart of efforts to keep the process on track. Beijing said no date has been set for the talks on dismantling the DPRK's nuclear programs but gave no indication that the meeting had been canceled, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer told a news conference. "The message I had from the Chinese was that ... no scheduled time has been determined for that meeting, not that the meeting has been canceled," Downer said.

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3. Russia on Multilateral Talks

Korea Herald ("6-WAY NUKE TALKS TO START SEPT. 25 ", 2004-08-17) reported that despite the DPRK dragging its feet over resolving the nuclear standoff, Russian media reported on Monday that the next round of six-party talks are likely to start on Sept. 25. Citing conference sources, the Interfax news agency said the fourth round of six-party talks aimed at finding a peaceful solution to the prolonged nuclear impasse will likely be held in Beijing for several days from the last Saturday of September. "The six nations also plan to hold preliminary working-group talks to lay the groundwork for the plenary session," it added.

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4. US - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("N.K. RAPS U.S. OVER CONGRESSIONAL REPORT ON ITS DRUG TRAFFICKING ", 2004-08-17) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday accused the US of cooking up a political conspiracy over drug trafficking to impose sanctions on the DPRK. In a dispatch from Pyongyang, the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) claimed the growing accusations by the US against the North are designed to isolate and stifle it, and urged the US to change its hostile policy against the DPRK. The KCNA also accused the US of seeking to disarm the DPRK by spreading false allegations about drug trafficking along with its nuclear weapons program, calling the U.S. actions a "foolish delusion." The state news agency instead argued that it is the US that is engaged in the production and trafficking of drugs, calling it the largest proliferator of drugs.

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5. Japanese - DPRK Relations

Yomiuri Shimbun ("LACK OF INFO FROM NORTH KOREA PREVENTING NORMALIZATION TALKS", 2004-08-17) reported that normalization talks with the DPRK are unlikely to resume in the near future because Pyongyang has not provided realistic information on the whereabouts of 10 missing Japanese abductees, according to Senior Vice Foreign Minister Ichiro Aisawa. "Given the current circumstances, we aren't in a situation where we could soon begin normalization talks," Aisawa said Sunday on a TV Asahi program. "I can't understand why it is taking so much time (for the DPRK to reinvestigate the circumstances surrounding the abductees)," he said. "There may be an internal conflict, discord or an evasion of responsibility within the North Korean administration. But it's obvious that North Korean special agents were involved in abducting the Japanese nationals," he added.

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6. DPRK - PRC Relations

United Press International ("N. KOREA BUYS MORE CHINESE CRUDE OIL", 2004-08-17) reported that the DPRK bought 301,000 tons of crude oil from the PRC in the first half of this year, ROK officials said Tuesday. The impoverished nation paid \$70 million for PRC crude for the six months, up 7 percent over a year ago, the ROK's Unification Ministry said in a report. A total of \$58 million worth of crude oil arrived in Pyongyang after DPRK leader Kim Jong Il traveled to the PRC in April, indicating the visit was largely aimed at securing energy aid from his ally. The DPRK brought in crude oil worth \$45 million in May. The PRC's oil delivery to the DPRK has averaged around \$10 million monthly, officials said. The DPRK's grain imports from the PRC totaled \$6 million in the first six months, down 75.4 percent from the same period last year, due to the DPRK's diversification of grain import markets, the report said.

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7. Australia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Associated Press ("AUSTRALIA'S FOREIGN MINISTER TO URGE NORTH KOREA TO STOP BUILDING NUCLEAR WEAPONS ", 2004-08-17) reported that Australia's foreign minister said en route to the DPRK on Tuesday that he would dangle the prospect of more economic aid for the impoverished country if it agrees to stop building nuclear weapons. Australia is one of the few

countries to have diplomatic relations with the DPRK's secretive government. Downer said he would use his visit Tuesday and Wednesday to try to nudge Pyongyang toward the international mainstream. "If North Korea were to abandon its nuclear programs, then obviously that would lead to a very substantial increase in Australia's economic engagement with North Korea," Downer said. That engagement would be "certainly in terms in aid but I think too in terms of broader trade and investment activities," he said.

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8. DPRK on US-ROK Joint Military Exercises

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("PYONGYANG BODY CRITICIZES UPCOMING SOUTH KOREA, US JOINT MANEUVERS", 2004-08-17) reported that the Secretariat of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland Monday regards the Ulji Focus Lens-04 joint military exercise to be staged by the US imperialists and the ROK war hawks. The exercise is, to all intents and purposes, a very dangerous nuclear war drill against the DPRK to carry out the "Operation Plan 5027-04" aimed at mobilizing task forces with precision guided weapons and ultra-modern equipment and concluding a war against the DPRK through blitz warfare. The US imperialists and the ROK military seek to verify through a computer mock exercise simulating a real war the effectiveness and feasibility of the "Operation Plan 5027-04" which has been revised and supplemented from a new angle to step up the preparations for a war against the DPRK in real earnest behind the scene of "reduction" of the US forces in the ROK, "transfer of their military bases" and their "relocation".

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9. US Troop Realignment

The New York Times ("BUSH ANNOUNCES PLAN TO REALIGN THOUSANDS OF TROOPS ", 2004-08-16) reported that President Bush announced that American military strength in Europe and Asia would be reduced by 60,000 to 70,000 people over the next decade in the biggest realignment of forces since the cold war. "Over the coming decade, we'll deploy a more agile and more flexible force, which means that more of our troops will be stationed and deployed from here at home," Mr. Bush told the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Cincinnati, in a talk that had much to do with domestic politics as well as military strategy.

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10. ROK on US Troop Realignment

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREAN GOV'T REQUESTS 1 YEAR DELAY IN U.S. TROOP REDUCTIONS ", 2004-0-17) reported that the Korean government has decided to officially request that the US government extend the time period in which it would reduce USFK by 12,500 men by at least a year. The government believes that if the reduction were forced through as originally scheduled, it could negatively influence the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. A high-ranking Korean official said Tuesday, "A Joint Chiefs of Staff investigation into how the withdrawal of U.S. troops and core equipment like the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) by the end of 2005 might influence our security resulted in an evaluation that the withdrawal would result in a hole in our security, so we've decided to officially request to the U.S. that it extend the time limit for USFK reductions."

Korea Times ("SEOUL DISMISSES CONCERNS OVER US TROOP PULLOUT", 2004-08-17) reported

that the ROK has dismissed fears of a security vacuum on the Korean peninsula after US President George W. Bush on Monday confirmed his plan to withdraw 70,000 US troops from around Europe and Asia, including 12,500 stationed in the ROK. Ban Ki-moon, minister of foreign affairs and trade, said Tuesday the troop reduction plan is nothing new for the ROK and the government is working out measures to ensure the nation's security is not compromised. "The South Korean government has been well aware of this plan, as Washington notified us of it some time ago," Ban told reporters before entering a Cabinet meeting.

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11. Japan on US Troop Realignment

The Associated Press ("AMERICAN ALLIES EMBRACE U.S. MILITARY PLAN", 2004-08-17) reported that American allies Japan and Australia embraced a new U.S. plan to restructure its forces abroad, while Russia said it was not concerned by the proposal. But Germany, home to 70,000 U.S. soldiers, said any withdrawal from the former Cold War frontier may hurt its economy. The plan, announced Monday by President Bush, centers on U.S. forces based in Europe and was not expected to lead to major changes in American troops in Asia. The US bases some 50,000 troops in Japan and another 37,000 in the ROK, where they counter the DPRK's large military. "Japan welcomes the review of the U.S. military framework that will better suit the global security environment and further contribute to peace and stability," the Japanese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

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12. US - Japanese Relations

Reuters ("U.S. HANDLING OF HELICOPTER CRASH IRKS OKINAWA", 2004-08-17) reported that cities in Okinawa expressed outrage at the U.S. military on Tuesday for refusing to allow Japanese police investigate the wreckage of a Marine helicopter that crashed in the grounds of a university there last week. Three crew members were injured when the CH-53D Sea Stallion transport helicopter crashed and burst into flames on the grounds of Okinawa International University last Friday. Some 20 employees were in the building at the time but none was injured. Local police asked the U.S. military to carry out a joint on-site investigation including checks of the wreckage, but the U.S. side turned down the request on Tuesday.

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13. Inter-Korean Economic Development

The New York Times ("NEW HOTEL A 'BUBBLE' WHERE OUTSIDERS CAN MEET NORTH KOREANS", 2004-08-17) reported that the opening of the 12-story Mount Kumgang Hotel on July 2 would have been unremarkable if not for the fact that 288 of its employees, almost its entire staff, are DPRK citizens. After the DPRK allowed the ROK to build a resort here in this city on the Sea of Japan six years ago, it insisted that guests stay at a floating hotel docked at a pier and that all workers be foreigners, fearing DPRK citizens would be contaminated by capitalist visitors. The resort is still a bubble outside of which ROK and other visitors are not permitted to venture -- into the real DPRK. But DPRK citizens are increasingly going in and out of the bubble. In the last year, DPRK citizens have opened three restaurants and two gift shops. When tourists hike up Mount Kumgang, DPRK photographers, wearing "Kodak Film" vests, hawk photos for \$7 a shot, and saleswomen push handkerchiefs for \$2 -- bargaining allowed.

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14. DPRK Agricultural Production

Yonhap ("KIM JONG-IL INSPECTS NORTH KOREA'S MILITARY FARM: REPORT", 2004-08-17) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il recently inspected a military farm to encourage increases in agricultural production, Pyongyang's state-run radio station said Tuesday. The Korean Central Broadcasting Station said Kim, also supreme commander of the DPRK's People's Army, visited a farm operated by army unit 534 and encouraged the soldiers to "realize the long-held wish of (former leader Kim Il-sung) to feed the people with rice and meat stew" through advanced farming.

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15. DPRK Defectors in the ROK

Yonhap ("GROWING NUMBER OF N.KOREAN DEFECTORS INVOLVED IN CRIME IN S.KOREA ", 2004-08-17) reported that a growing number of DPRK defectors are exposed to involvement in crime in the ROK due mainly to their failure to successfully adapt to the capitalist lifestyle, according to statistics from the National Police Agency. The number of crimes involving DPRK defectors rose to 216 in 2003 from 206 in 2002 and 127 in 2001, the figures, released Tuesday to Rep. Kim Jae-kyung of the major opposition Grand National Party, showed.

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16. Inter-Korean Archeological Excavation

Joongang Ilbo ("GAESEONG DIGS YIELD RICHES", 2004-08-17) reported that the Gaeseong industrial complex, designed to stimulate manufacturing in the DPRK through investment from the ROK, is taking on the appearance of an archeological treasure trove. According to Korea Land Corp., in the first joint excavation between DPRK and ROK scholastic institutions in June, a large number of historical artifacts dating back as far as the Stone Age, have been extracted at the site. The discoveries, however, are not hampering the development of the large industrial complex, located 70 kilometers (43 miles) from Seoul. The artifacts will be displayed at Gaeseong Museum, but a historic housing site will not be preserved as it was heavily damaged in the Korean War and previous conflicts, said an official at the Land Corp.

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17. DPRK on the Olympics

Yonhap ("OLYMPICS HOT IN NORTH KOREA, NEWSPAPER REPORTS ", 2004-08-17) reported that the heat and passion of the Olympic Games are flowing to the DPRK, as the country started its first legal broadcast of the world event this month, a Tokyo-based DPRK organization said Tuesday. "World attention is on Athens over the opening of the 28th Summer Olympics, and public interest is also high in Pyongyang, the capital of (teh DPRK), over the Olympics," the Chosun Shinbo, the official newspaper of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, said in its Internet edition.

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18. Japanese - DPRK Relations at the Olympics

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA CLAIMS JAPANESE REF ROBBED JUDOKA OF GOLD MEDAL", 2004-0-17) reported that "Japan stole Kye Sun-hui's gold medal!" The DPRK has raised suspicions of biased officiating by a Japanese referee during Monday's gold medal match in women's 57 kg judo between DPRK judoka Kye Sun-hui and German Yvonne Boenisch. Kye, who scored 1 yuko, fell to Boenisch, who scored 1 yuko and koka, and will have to return to the DPRK with the silver medal. The DPRK team claims, however, that this was because of biased officiating by Japanese referee Endo Sumio.

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19. Japanese Nuclear Safety

Asahi Shimbun ("AGENCY TO TIGHTEN PIPE EROSION CHECKS; A FATAL LEAK SHOWS THE NEED FOR NEW TECHNICAL SAFETY STANDARDS", 2004-08-17) reported that in the wake of a pipe rupture that killed four at a nuclear power plant last week, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency pledged to set new technical standards for predicting pipe corrosion. The accident's investigation panel found that impacts from rapidly imploding bubbles in high-speed flows of coolant water had likely eroded the pipe in a phenomenon called cavitation, officials said. Current inspections do not check for such problems, the panel said. The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency plans to introduce new standards for checking secondary cooling systems, including checks for corrosion.

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20. Russia and Japanese Population Decline

The Associated Press ("REPORT: JAPAN, RUSSIA TO LOSE POPULATION", 2004-08-17) reported that many of the world's largest industrialized nations will lose population between now and 2050 as low birth rates, struggling economies and curbs on immigration stifle growth, says the author of a world population report. The annual study by the private Population Reference Bureau found that, while the world's population will increase nearly 50 percent by mid-century, Japan will lose 20 percent of its population in the next 45 years, while Russia, Germany and Italy will also see declines. The PRC, currently the world's most populous nation at 1.3 billion, would see an overall 10 percent increase between now and 2050 to over 1.4 billion in 2050, but its peak population is anticipated to be reached by 2025 with declines thereafter.

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21. Fisher Case

The Associated Press ("FISCHER TRIES NEW MOVES IN EFFORT TO AVOID CHARGES", 2004-0-17) reported that former chess champion Bobby Fischer announced plans Monday to marry a leading Japanese chess official and appealed to Secretary of State Colin L. Powell to help him renounce his US citizenship, the latest in a series of moves to block attempts to deport him to the US. Fischer, 61, wanted in the US for violating international sanctions by playing a match in Yugoslavia in 1992, was detained in Japan last month while trying to travel on a revoked U.S. passport. Fischer's lawyer, Masako Suzuki, said the former world champion and the president of the Japan Chess Association, Miyoko Watai, had signed marriage papers that would be submitted later Monday.

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22. Koguryo Historical Revisionism

Chosun Ilbo ("HK TEXTBOOK DEPICTS NORTHERN HALF OF KOREA AS CHINESE TERRITORY ", 2004-08-17) reported that a freshmen middle school history textbook in Hong Kong describing ancient Chinese history depicts the northern half of the Korean Peninsula as belonging to China, highlighting the controversy over historical distortions. As the Korean government makes clear its firm diplomatic position concerning intentional PRC distortions of Koguryo history that have ignited a Sino-Korean "history war," it has now been discovered how even a Hong Kong middle school history textbook has depicted Koguryo as Chinese territory.

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23. Sino - US Relations

Voice of America ("BEIJING WANTS 22 MUSLIM DETAINEES IN GUANTANAMO BAY RETURNED TO CHINA", 2004-08-17) reported that the PRC has expressed displeasure with a US decision not to return to the PRC a group of Chinese Muslims, known as Uighurs, who might soon be freed from detention in Guantanamo Bay. A PRC foreign ministry statement says Beijing hopes Washington will handle the issue of the detainees "cautiously" so as not send the wrong signals to terrorist forces. The PRC wants 22 Chinese from the Uighur Muslim group being held in Guantanamo Bay sent back to the PRC, if they are freed. The men were captured in 2002 during U.S. anti-terror raids in Afghanistan after the US. They are being held as possible enemy combatants. Secretary of State Colin Powell last week implied that the men might be freed soon, saying the Uighurs would not be sent back to the PRC. He said the US government is looking for a third country willing to take them.

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24. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN OFFERS COMPROMISE ON DIRECT CHINA LINKS", 2004-08-17) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian proposed on Tuesday to define direct transport links with rival PRC as cross-Strait routes, in a bid to bypass a longstanding political dispute, but Beijing is likely to ignore him. The PRC has insisted that if air links were to be established between the arch-rivals, the routes should be classified as "domestic" and not "international" -- in keeping with Beijing's view that Taiwan is a renegade province unworthy of statehood. "The government has proposed to use 'cross-Strait' route to discuss the issue, rather than defining it as 'international' or 'domestic'," Chen told a group of business leaders in Taipei, the semi-official Central News Agency said.

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25. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA TESTS NEW GUIDED MISSILE AMID TAIWAN TENSIONS", 2004-08-17) reported that the PRC has successfully tested a new guided missile it says is highly accurate, state media said on Tuesday amid rising tensions with arch-rival Taiwan. "Several days ago, a new model of a guided missile developed and built by China was tested and achieved satisfactory success," the China News Service quoted project researcher Feng Dawei as saying. "The missile accurately hit its target with a high degree of precision." The agency did not give any details about the missile's range or payload, saying only that it was developed by the PRC Aerospace Science and Industry Corp. and that

Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan attended and praised the test.

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26. PRC Corruption Complaint

The Washington Post ("WHISTLE-BLOWER FEELS BACKLASH IN CHINA", 2004-08-17) reported that a Communist Party whistle-blower who attracted national attention in the PRC by publicly accusing his superiors of tolerating official corruption has been condemned for breaking party rules and ordered to "do a complete self-examination," authorities announced. The official People's Daily over the weekend removed from its Web site a lengthy open letter in which Huang Jingao, a previously obscure party secretary in southern PRC's Lianjiang county, had made the allegations. In addition, the party's national publicity department, which is in charge of official censorship, ordered newspapers and broadcasters not to report anything more on the subject, Beijing journalists said. Huang had suggested that reform-minded senior Communist Party leaders would correct the wrongs he was pointing out if they were aware of them.

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27. PRC Espionage Charges

The Associated Press ("PROFESSOR SAYS CHINA DETENTION BASELESS", 2004-08-17) reported that a Georgia Tech professor detained by PRC authorities who accused him of spying said Monday that the PRC's actions were "punishment for his noncooperation." Fei-Ling Wang, an associate professor at the university's Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, said his arrest was an example of "persecution by suspicion," but would not elaborate, saying he wanted to wait to speak to the media. "At some point, I would tell the world what really happened, but right now, I'd just say that the charges are totally fabricated," Wang said. The PRC has denied allegations that it mistreated the Chinese-born professor, while a U.S. embassy spokeswoman called the PRC's treatment of Wang "harsh and inappropriate."

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28. PRC Economic Development

The New York Times ("CHINA'S BUILDINGS: IN PINK, AND IN THE RED", 2004-08-17) reported that the PRC has a serious problem these days, and the color of the problem is pink. Pink and similar hues - from rose-tinged brick to tangerine and even magenta - have been popular in the last few years with PRC developers, who have also proven partial to tinted, highly reflective glass and rooftops in the shape of lotus blossoms. The result is an extraordinary number of garish apartment buildings, office buildings, industrial parks and houses, especially here in southeastern PRC. But the big problem for the PRC is not so much that these new buildings are hideous, though many are, but that an extraordinary number of them are empty. A sixth of the luxury residential real estate in Shanghai is vacant, a quarter in Beijing and a third near here in Shenzhen. In the next several years, the number of unoccupied buildings is expected to increase considerably.

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29. PRC Pro-Democracy Movement

Agence France-Presse ("JAILING OF HK DEMOCRAT IN CHINA 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED'", 2004-

08-17) reported that Hong Kong democrats accused the PRC of jailing one of their members on trumped-up prostitution charges in a bid to disgrace a political movement Beijing has been feuding with for seven years. Ho, a 46-year old rag-trade salesman, was on a business trip when he was awoken in his hotel room by public security officers Friday morning, Li said. They dragged him from bed and beat him before planting women's underwear and condoms in his room. Officers then produced a woman they claimed was a prostitute, Li said. Li said he and party officials believed Ho's detention was politically motivated.

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