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1. Russia on DPRK Peace and Security Working Group

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIAN ENVOY SAYS TALKS ON N. KOREA HELPED STRENGTHEN TRUST", 2007-08-21) reported that six-nation working group talks on Peace and Security concluded in Moscow.

Ambassador at Large Vladimir Rakhmanin, representing Russia at the talks, said they provided a valuable forum for improving mutual trust.

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2. US on Removal of DPRK from Terror List

Associated Press ("REMOVAL OF N. KOREA FROM US TERROR LIST COULD SOUR US-JAPAN TIES, ENRAGE US HAWKS", 2007-08-21) reported that President George W. Bush faces a delicate task: Fulfill a pledge to remove the DPRK from a U.S. list of countries accused of sponsoring terrorism without alienating ally Japan and American conservatives. The DPRK has not been tied directly to terrorism since its agents planted a bomb on a commercial jetliner in 1987. But for Japan, the top U.S. ally in Northeast Asia, the terror designation is linked closely to its demands that Pyongyang account for Japanese citizens abducted in the 1970s and 1980s. U.S. hawks fear the administration would be sending a dangerous signal to a country that exploded a nuclear bomb and test-fired missiles last year.

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3. Relief for DPRK Flood Victims

Xinhua ("RED CROSS LAUNCHES EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR DPRK FLOOD SURVIVORS", 2007-08-21) reported that the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies appealed for about 5.5 million U.S. dollars to help 3.7 million flood survivors in the DPRK. One of the main objectives of the appeal is to provide basic emergency medicines in the two worst-affected provinces, South Hamgyong and South Phyongan, and in the city of Kaesong, following serious damage to the health infrastructure, the Geneva-based relief agency said in a statement.

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4. ROK - US Joint Military Excercise

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, U.S. START JOINT SIMULATION EXERCISE", 2007-08-21) reported that the ROK and the U.S. began an annual joint military exercise called the Ulchi Focus Lens at 6 a.m. Monday. The UFL is a computer-based command post exercise of the two militaries simulating the allies' joint war scenario with a minimum deployment of troops and combat equipment.

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5. Japan-India Relations

BBC ("JAPAN SEEKS WIDER DEFENCE NETWORK", 2007-08-21) reported that trade, bilateral relations and other economic issues will figure prominently in Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to India, but underlying his talks with Indian leaders will be the changing geo-strategic map of Asia and the desire of some countries - with Japan a prominent player - to forge a new network of relationships; if not to contain the PRC, then at the very least to create a counter-weight to the region's rising giant.

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6. Japan's Emergency Energy Measures

Thomson Financial ("JAPAN PREPARES EMERGENCY PLAN TO MEET POWER DEMAND", 2007-0--21) reported that Japan's largest power company said it is preparing to take emergency measures to address an imminent power shortage due to the suspension of a giant nuclear plant following an earthquake. Temperatures last week hit a record high in Japan. Demand is soaring this week as factories and offices resume operation following summer holidays, adding to the burden caused by air conditioning. Tokyo Electric Power Co.(TEPCO), the world's largest private power company, said it was ready to revive a hydraulic power plant in western Tokyo under an emergency plan written in contracts with big corporate customers.

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7. Japan - Indonesia Energy Deal

Jakarta Post ("INDONESIA, JAPAN SIGN ENERGY DEALS", 2007-08-21) reported that to coincide with the signing of the economic partnership agreement (EPA) between Indonesia and Japan on Monday, firms from both countries have signed off on energy deals worth a total of US$6.13 billion in value. Over half the agreements were made in a signing witnessed by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, which saw a number of Indonesian and Japanese companies ink agreements on four energy projects worth $3.97 billion in total investment.

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8. PRC-US Military Relations

International Herald Tribune ("U.S. NAVAL CHIEF TOURS DEFENSE FACILITIES IN CHINA", 2007-08-21) reported that amid repeated calls from the Bush administration for the PRC to be more transparent about its military buildup, a visiting senior U.S. naval commander praised his Chinese counterpart for allowing a revealing tour of defense facilities and exercises. The U.S. chief of naval operations, Admiral Mike Mullen, said he had organized a comprehensive visit to the United States in April for the Chinese naval chief, Admiral Wu Shengli.

(return to top) Xinhua ("U.S. NOT TO SUPPORT TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE, REAFFIRMS U.S. NAVAL CHIEF", 2007-08-21) reported that visiting U.S. Chief of Naval Operations Mike Mullen reaffirmed here on Tuesday that the United States will not support Taiwan independence and will adhere to the one-China policy. (return to top)

9. PRC Pollution

Voice of America ("CHINA'S POLLUTION TEST PROVES SUCCESSFUL", 2007-08-21) reported that there are conflicting reports about whether a test run of traffic controls in Beijing less than one year before the 2008 Summer Olympics has been effective in improving air quality in the Chinese capital. Chinese state media reported that the city's overall air quality improved during the four-day test, which removed more than one million cars from Beijing's roads each day. The Beijing Environmental Protection Monitoring Center said the air quality was classified as "fairly good" during the four days. The government's own statistics showed the air quality over the four days rated among the top 10 worst days of the month so far - slightly worse that the same period a year ago.

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