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1. DPRK Missile Test

Associated Press ("S. KOREA TO CHINA: USE INFLUENCE ON NORTH", 2006-06-27) reported that the ROK's foreign minister urged the PRC to use its influence to dissuade the DPRK from testing a long-range missile, but Western diplomats on Tuesday questioned Beijing's influence over the reclusive state. The ROK's Ban Ki-moon and PRC counterpart Li Zhaoxing met for about an hour, discussing strategies to sway Pyongyang not to test-launch a missile and to resume six-nation talks on its nuclear weapons program.

(return to top) JoongAng Ilbo ("CHINA, KOREA CALL FOR DIPLOMACY TO HALT NORTH'S MISSILE TESTING", 2006-06-27) reported that the PRC's foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing, told his ROK counterpart, Ban Ki-moon, that Beijing has conveyed to Pyongyang its concerns about apparent preparations to test-fire a long-range missile. Mr. Li also stressed the need to dampen tensions through diplomacy, apparently a reference to US growls about a pre-emptive strike on the missile site or attempts to down the missile in flight, according to Lee Hyuk, an official accompanying Mr. Ban at the meeting. (return to top) Yonhap ("SENATOR SUGGESTS N.K. MISSILE LAUNCH MAY NOT BE IMMINENT", 2006-06-27) reported that the DPRK has not yet taken all necessary steps for a missile launch, suggesting that the test-firing may not be so imminent, Sen. John Warner (R-Virginia) said Tuesday after a closed-door intelligence briefing. "There are certain steps that would have to be taken if it were imminently to be launched, and those steps, as yet, have not taken place," he told reporters after the briefing. (return to top)

2. ROK Presidential Advisor on US DPRK Policy

Yonhap ("U.S. HARD-LINE POLICY ON N. KOREA IS LIKELY TO FAIL: PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR", 2006-06-27) reported that the US' tough policy on the DPRK could fail in both its intention and effect as it is inconsistent and pointless, a chief advisor to ROK President Roh Moo-hyun insisted Tuesday. Lee Su-hoon, the chairman of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperative Initiative, also said the stalled six-party talks aimed at ending the DPRK's nuclear weapons program are not a high-priority concern for the US government.

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3. US Visit to Kaesong Industrial Complex

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA APPROVES US ENVOY'S VISIT TO FACTORY PARK", 2006-06-27) reported that the DPRK has approved a visit by the US envoy for human rights in the DPRK to an investment park that has sparked tensions between Seoul and Washington, a ROK official said on Tuesday. The envoy, Jay Lefkowitz, could visit the Kaesong Industrial Park as early as next month.

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4. US Ambassador on Kaesong Industrial Complex

Yonhap ("VERSHBOW CALLS FOR DIRECT PAYMENT OF WAGES FOR N. KOREAN WORKERS IN KAESONG", 2006-06-27) reported that the US hopes that inter-Korean joint ventures like the Kaesong industrial complex will lead to a change in the DPRK economy, but such a project should be conducted transparently, Washington's top envoy in Seoul said on Tuesday. US Ambassador to the ROK Alexander Vershbow stressed that the direct payment of wages for DPRK workers is a prerequisite for the success of the inter-Korean industrial complex in Kaesong.

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5. Inter-Korean Aid

Korea Times ("CIVIC AID TO N. KOREA ON STEADY INCREASE ", 2006-06-26) reported that more civic organizations have begun to provide humanitarian aid to the DPRK since the country's food crisis in the late 1990s. The aid ranges from agricultural assistance to medical services and services targeting children or the disabled. Drawing from the Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund, the ROK government has also increased the subsidies it provides civic organizations helping the DPRK. This year, the government set aside some 11.5 billion won for that purpose, up 1.1 billion from last year.

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6. UN Narcotics Delegation's DPRK Visit

Yonhap ("DELEGATES FROM U.N. DRUG WATCHDOG ARRIVE IN PYONGYANG", 2006-06-27) reported that a delegation dispatched by the UN's narcotics watchdog arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday, according to the DPRK's state-run news agency. The DPRK government held a banquet in honor of the delegation led by Dr. Hamid Ghodse, former president of the UN's International Narcotics Control Board, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. The KCNA gave no further details about their visit, but they are expected to make an on-site visit to drug-related facilities there and discuss the country's possible membership to the UN drug control agency, according to analysts.

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7. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation

Yomiuri Shimbun ("U.S. REVEALS PAC-3 PLANS FOR OKINAWA FACILITIES", 2006-06-26) reported that the US government notified Japan at a June 17 working-level meeting in Hawaii about missile defense that it will deploy Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) missiles at the Kadena Air Base or the US Air Force's Kadena Ammunition Storage Area in Okinawa Prefecture by the end of the year, government sources said Sunday. The deployment will be the first time the surface-to-air missiles have been installed to defend US forces in Japan from the perceived threat of DPRK ballistic missiles.

(return to top) Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN, US SIGN PACT OVER JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE ", 2006-06-27) reported that Japan and the US have expanded their agreement over missile defense programs to include joint development and production of related materials. The two nations Friday signed the agreement which would allow them to jointly develop an advanced capability missile interceptor for the ballistic missile defense system, the Japanese foreign ministry said in a statement. (return to top)

8. Japan Territorial Disputes

The Associated Press ("JAPAN IN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES ON ALL SIDES ", 2006-06-27) reported that the battle-ready Coast Guard cutter Hateruma has just pulled into port after 10 days at sea protecting Japanese territory from PRC encroachment. The islets in question are obscure, guano-encrusted outcroppings. But the PRC and Taiwan also claim ownership, and history, pent-up nationalism, fishing rights and oil and gas make even the smallest speck of land a potential flash point in the seas surrounding Japan.

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9. Taiwan Leadership

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN LEADER SURVIVES BID TO RECALL HIM ", 2006-06-27) reported that Taiwanese leader Chen Shui-bian on Tuesday survived an opposition-led bid to recall him over allegations some of his relatives engaged in insider trading, an issue that has hijacked his presidency in recent weeks. Only 119 lawmakers in the 221-member Legislature voted for the recall measure — far short of the two-thirds majority — or 148 ballots — needed to pass the motion calling for a referendum of Taiwanese voters on whether to oust Chen.

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10. PRC-India Territorial Dispute

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA AND INDIA KICK OFF FRESH TALKS ON BORDER DISPUTE ", 2006-06-27) reported that the PRC and India opened their eighth round of talks aimed at resolving a decades-old border dispute that led to a brief war more than 40 years ago, the Indian embassy said. India's National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan and Dai Bingguo, the PRC's executive vice foreign minister, are meeting over two days in Beijing on the dispute which led to the conflict in 1962, an embassy official said on Monday.

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11. PRC Unrest

The New York Times ("CHINA COVERS UP VIOLENT SUPPRESSION OF VILLAGE PROTEST", 2006-06-27) reported that when the police raked a crowd of demonstrators with gunfire last December in the seaside village of Dongzhou, a few miles from this city, PRC human rights advocates denounced the action as the bloodiest in the country since the killings at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, in 1989. Villagers said at the time that as many as 30 people had been killed, and that many others were missing. The authorities have said little or nothing about the episode, concentrating instead on preventing any accounts of it from circulating widely in the country.

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12. PRC Press Freedom

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PLANNING TO FURTHER RESTRICT MEDIA'S REPORTING OF EMERGENCIES ", 2006-06-27) reported that the PRC is planning to further tighten controls over the media's coverage of emergency incidents, with the introduction of fines for reporting unauthorized information, state media has said. A draft law stipulates that news media which breach the PRC's various vaguely defined censorship rules by reporting such incidents without approval may be fined up to 100,000 yuan (12,500 dollars), the Beijing News said.

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