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I. NAPSNet

1. US on Six Party Talks

Associated Press ("U.S. AMBASSADOR SAYS WASHINGTON OPEN TO 'NEW APPROACHES' ON N KOREA NUCLEAR ISSUE", 2006-09-26) reported that Alexander Vershbow, US ambassador to the ROK, said the United States is prepared to pursue new approaches to resolve its standoff with the DPRK. He didn't elaborate on what those approaches would be, but said the US can meet bilaterally with the DPRK if Pyongyang promises to resume the Six Party Talks. The remark follows a series of recent apparently conciliatory gestures by US officials. Vershbow said last week that US nuclear envoy, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, could even visit Pyongyang if the DPRK expresses its willingness to return to the dialogue table.

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2. Armitage on DPRK Nuclear Test

Reuters ("REUTERS: N. KOREA MAY LOOK PAST BUSH FOR NUCLEAR DEAL: ARMITAGE", 2006-09-26) reported that the DPRK may wait for the Bush administration to go before implementing a deal to end its atomic ambitions, despite the hardship the wait would bring the impoverished country. "I think the North Koreans are of the opinion that we are mired down in Iraq and Afghanistan and Iran, that we can't be very innovative and flexible with them." Richard Armitage, an Asia expert who left his post last year as US deputy secretary of state, said in an interview with a small group of reporters. Speaking earlier during his visit to Seoul, he speculated that as part of the process of escalating tensions the DPRK may test a nuclear weapon before the end of the year.

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3. ROK Opposition on Plan to Build Up DPRK Infrastructure

Yonhap News Agency ("GOV'T TO GIVE INFRASTRUCTURE AID IF N KOREA RETURNS TO SIX-WAY TALKS: LAWMAKER", 2006-09-25) reported that the ROK government has established a plan to build up the DPRK's infrastructure if the country returns to the Six Party Talks. The lawmaker of the main opposition Grand National Party (GNP), Rep. Kwon Young-se, said that 2 million kilowatts of electricity and oil are included in the proposal, along with plans to build roads and railways. He said the plan also outlines building a telephone exchange system in the DPRK. In addition to returning to the Six Party Talks, the DPRK would have to freeze its atomic program for Seoul to offer the assistance, the lawmaker said. The two Koreas, the United States, Japan, PRC and Russia are all participants in the initiative.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Ties Strained

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA BLOCKS ENTRY OF SOUTH KOREAN OFFICIALS", 2006-09-26) reported that the DPRK banned RO Korean officials from entering the country for a business ceremony amid strained relations over the missile tests. A dozen government officials and lawmakers were prevented from attending the ceremony marking the opening of an inter-Korean joint venture firm, an official at Seoul's unification ministry told AFP on condition of anonymity. Some 300 people from both sides marked the setting up of the 50-50 joint venture established by ROK's Taerim Industrial and the DPRK's state-run Kaeson General Trading. Taerim had invited an ROK government delegation to the ceremony but the invitation was rejected by Pyongyang. The 2.95

million dollar factory is capable of producing 80,000 tonnes of stone products annually. It is located outside an industrial complex at Kaesong, just north of the heavily fortified border.

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5. Economic Growth at Kaesong

Yonhap News Agency ("OUTPUT OF KAESONG COMPLEX EXCEEDS US\$50 MLN", 2006-09-24) reported that RO Korean companies operating in Kaesong have produced more than US\$50 million worth of products and exported about one-fifth of them since they opened shop there in 2004. The industrial complex in Kaesong currently houses 13 garment, kitchenware and other labor-intensive plants, hiring about 8,500 DPR Korean workers. Official data suggests that as of the end of August, the cumulative production of the Southern firms there reached US\$54.6 million and their total exports came to US\$11.3 million. Their monthly output reached its highest level in August with US\$6.8 million, up 24 percent from the previous month and 6 times more than the amount in the same period last year, the figures showed.

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6. Musharraf on DPRK Nuclear Technology

New York Times ("IN BOOK, MUSHARRAF EXPANDS ON NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR LINK", 2006-09-25) reported that Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf wrote in a memoir published Monday that he now believes that the equipment sent to the DPRK several years ago by Pakistan's nuclear chief included some of Pakistan's most technologically advanced nuclear centrifuges. The assertion deepened the mystery about how much progress the DPRK had made in what is often called its second, and very secret, nuclear program. Mr. Musharraf has been promoting the new book, "In the Line of Fire" (Free Press), everywhere from the East Room of the White House to appearances on the morning talk shows. The timing is significant, because it was not until more than three years later, in 2002, that the United States said it gathered solid evidence that the DPRK was trying to enrich uranium, a step toward producing nuclear fuel for weapons that requires centrifuge technology. But Mr. Musharraf, who took over as president in 1999 in a coup, apparently never shared his suspicions with the United States. "It's a significant admission," one senior American intelligence official said, "since the Pakistanis spent years denying that there was any evidence of dealings with North Korea and telling us, 'No problem here.'" The official would not agree to let his name be used and said he had not had time to read the book closely.

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7. CNN Founder On Koreas

Chosun Ilbo ("CNN FOUNDER SEEKS MEETINGS WITH ROH, KIM JONG-IL", 2006-09-25) reported that CNN founder Ted Turner is pushing for private meetings with the leaders of both Koreas. Last year, Tuner visited with Donald Gregg, a former U.S. ambassador to the ROK, Curt Weldon, vice chairman of the U.S. House Armed Services and Homeland Security Committees, on a chartered plane to both Koreas. At the time, Turner gave US\$150,000 to aid in the development of farming technology. The former chairman of CNN established the Turner Foundation to support environmental preservation in 1990 and launched a campaign to protect plants and animals. Since 1997, he has been engaged in the global denuclearization movement.

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8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. WILLING TO RETHINK TROOP CONTROL TRANSFER: GNP LAWMAKER", 2006-09-26) reported that the US is willing to rethink the transfer of wartime operational control of ROK troops to Seoul, opposition party lawmaker Chun Yu-ok said. According to Chun, State Department officials said a refusal to hand over troop control would likely fan anti-American sentiment in the ROK and strain bilateral ties.

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9. Japan Elections

Reuters ("NEW JAPAN PM ABE VOWS MUSCULAR DIPLOMACY, REFORM", 2006-09-26) reported that Japan's new prime minister, Shinzo Abe, pledged to boost his country's role in global affairs while trying to improve relations with the PRC. The hawkish Abe also said he wanted to push ahead with the economic reforms begun by Koizumi and revive respect at home for Japan's traditional values and culture.

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10. US on Japan Elections

Agence France-Presse ("UNDER ABE, JAPAN LIKELY TO MOVE CLOSER TO CHINA: RICE", 2006-09-26) reported that under just-appointed conservative Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan will likely "start to move" closer to the PRC, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said. "I think that you will see Prime Minister Abe try to make some improvements and I think the Chinese will be receptive to that," Rice told The New York Post.

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11. PRC-Japan Relations

Kyodo ("JAPAN, CHINA END TALKS WITHOUT AGREEMENT ON NEAR FUTURE SUMMIT", 2006-09-26) reported that Japan and the PRC wrapped up their subcabinet-level talks on Tuesday without having agreed on an early resumption of summit talks under Japan's incoming administration of Shinzo Abe. "There were some points we could not agree on," Foreign Ministry officials said, apparently alluding to the prospects of a near Japan-PRC summit.

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12. Japan Defense Policy

Kyodo ("DEFENSE CHIEF KYUMA SEEKS DEBATE ON JAPAN'S COLLECTIVE DEFENSE RIGHT", 2006-09-26) reported that newly appointed Defense Agency Director General Fumio Kyuma called for discussions in terms of reviewing the Japanese government's interpretation of the right to collective self-defense to reflect the current times. "There has long been a certain concept of the right to collective self-defense under government policy, but I believe there are various thoughts such as the one which questions the current interpretation 60 years after the war," Kyuma said just after being named defense chief by new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

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13. US-PRC Military Cooperation

The Associated Press ("U.S. SAYS COOPERATION WITH CHINA BETTER ", 2006-09-26) reported that after decades of secrecy about its military programs, the PRC is holding talks with the US on "transparency," said Hill, the State Department official who oversees US policy in Asia. "We are beginning to work with China on seeing what each other is doing," Hill said. US Adm. William J. Fallon, the commander of all US forces in the Pacific and Asia, told reporters last week that he was encouraged by the PRC navy's willingness to participate in a search-and-rescue exercise with the US Navy off the coast of California.

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14. US on Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US REMINDS TAIWANESE LEADER NOT TO BREAK COMMITMENTS ", 2006-09-26) reported that the US reminded Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian to keep his commitment not to raise sovereignty issues that could anger the PRC, as the leader pushed for a new constitution for the island. Chen, under pressure to resign over corruption scandals, raised the issue of a new constitution at a seminar Sunday sponsored by his independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), a move likely to irk the PRC which regards the island as its territory.

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