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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo ("U.S. MAY SEEK 6-WAY TALKS IN LATE NOV. IF BUSH REELECTED: OFFICIAL", 2004-1--13) reported that the US will seek to hold another round of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear arms program in late November if US President George W. Bush is reelected in the Nov. 2 election, a senior US administration official said. "We'll have to wait and see for the election," the official told Kyodo News on condition of anonymity. "If Bush wins, I think something in late November might be possible."

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("CHINA CALLS FOR 'SINCERITY, FLEXIBILITY, PATIENCE' TO CONVENE NEW NUCLEAR TALKS", 2004-10-13) reported that a senior PRC official on Wednesday called for "sincerity, flexibility and patience" from participants in the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program to revive the stalled process aimed at ending the two-year dispute. Ambassador Ning Fukui, Beijing's special envoy for Korean Peninsula affairs, made the appeal at a meeting with his ROK counterpart, Cho Tae-yong.

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3. PRC and ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("CHINESE ENVOY TO VISIT SEOUL FOR TALKS ON NORTH KOREA", 2004-10-13) reported that the PRC will send an envoy to the ROK Wednesday for talks on salvaging the stalled process aimed at ending the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear arms program, an official said Tuesday. Ambassador Ning Fukui, Beijing's special envoy for Korean Peninsula affairs, will stay here

until Thursday before flying to the US, the official at the Foreign Ministry said on customary condition of anonymity.

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4. PRC and Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

TASS ("PUTIN, HU TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM - AMBASSADOR ", 2004-10-13) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin and PRC Chairman Hu Jintao "will closely discuss ways to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem" at the forthcoming summit in Beijing, Russian Ambassador to the PRC Igor Rogachev said at a Sunday press conference. Putin will pay an official visit to China on October 14-16. Russia and the PRC think it necessary to give security guarantees to Pyongyang and "create conditions for the successful social and economic development of the region," Rogachev said.

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5. Sino - DPRK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("CHINESE REINFORCE BORDER NEAR NORTH ", 2004-10-13) reported that the PRC has dispatched thousands of additional soldiers to its border region with the DPRK, prompting an alert among intelligence officials in the ROK and the US, according to a diplomatic source here. "Based on the US satellite photos and South Korea's human intelligence, the two countries concluded that China has recently deployed 10,000 elite troops to the North Korean border," the source in Washington said Tuesday. "China already has two divisions of troops guarding the border. Seoul and Washington are now analyzing why China had to send another division of its best-trained troops to the area."

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6. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("ARMITAGE: NEED TO KEEP CHINA ENGAGED ON N.KOREA CRISIS", 2004-10-13) reported that the PRC's role is vital to resolving the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear arms program, a senior US official said Wednesday, adding that the US and its allies must not let the DPRK think they are getting "nervous." "I think the most effective way to deal with North Korea is a continuance of what we've been doing, that is, do our best, Japan and the United States, to keep China well in the game, and I believe China is keen for continuing her efforts," US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told a news conference.

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7. Japan on DPRK Abductees

The Associated Press ("JAPAN ACCUSES NORTH KOREA OF "LACKING SINCERITY" IN TALKS OVER ABDUCTION VICTIMS, SAYS WILLING TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS", 2004-10-13) reported that Japan on Wednesday accused the DPRK of being insincere during talks aimed at resolving a dispute over Japanese nationals abducted by the communist nation's spies, and said Tokyo stands ready to impose economic sanctions. "North Korea lacked sincerity during the senior-level meeting in September," Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura told supporters and families of Japanese abduction victims. "The next meeting will be very important."

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8. Russia on UNSC and the DPRK Nuclear Issue

Russia-Interfax ("RUSSIA AGAINST TAKING N. KOREA PROBLEM TO SECURITY COUNCIL", 2004-10-13) reported that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yury Fedotov said on Wednesday that putting the DPRK nuclear problem before the UN Security Council "would mean undermining the process of its solution, which has barely started." Russia's position "remains unchanged," Fedotov told Interfax. "We stand for the continuation of six-party negotiations on the settlement of the North Korea problem," he said.

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9. Russian - DPRK Relations

Korea Times ("NK, RUSSIA AGREE TO MODERNIZE RAILROAD LINK", 2004-10-13) reported that Pyongyang and Moscow have agreed to modernize the railroad between Rajin, the DPRK's northeastern-most port city, and Hasan, the final stop on the Trans-Siberian Railroad (TSR), the Unification Ministry said Monday.

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10. DPRK Missile Issue

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA SAYS ITS MISSILES ARE FOR SELF-DEFENSE", 2004-1--13) reported that the DPRK said Tuesday that it has the right to test and deploy missiles, as the DPRK vowed to increase its "self-defense" capabilities against the US. "Our tests, development and deployment of missiles are of self-defensive nature and do not pose a threat to anyone," KCNA said. "As long as the United States tries to strangle us, we will boost our military deterrent force in all possible manners."

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11. ROK Navy on DPRK Submarine Threat

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREAN NAVY STAGES SECRET HUNT FOR NKOREAN SUBMARINES", 2004-10-13) reported that ROK navy ships launched a massive operation this week off the east coast to search for DPRK submarines, military officials said. The operation began on Sunday after intelligence was received that two suspected DPRK submarines were sailing in the area, the defense ministry said.

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12. ROK Naval Accident

Donga Ilbo ("NAVAL VESSEL SINKS TWO DAYS AFTER "NK SUBMARINE" INTELLIGENCE ", 2004-10-13) reported that four naval officers who were on a special training naval vessel are now missing as the vessel sank on its way back to the base from a drill. According to the report given by the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff a special training vessel from the ROK Fleet Command sank around 11:52 p.m. 20 miles east of Ulsan on its way back to the base after completing "joint exercise on land, water, and air" in the East Sea.

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13. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA'S HYUNDAI GROUP TO BUILD GOLF COURSES IN NORTH KOREA", 2004-10-13) reported that the ROK's Hyundai group plans to build an 18-hole golf course in the DPRK in hopes that it could attract more tourists to the DPRK, officials said Wednesday. When completed by late 2005, the golf course will be the second 18-hole golf course in the DPRK. The first 18-hole course was built in the mid-1980s near Pyongyang.

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14. Inter - Korean Relations

Reuters ("S.KOREA MAY DENY FERTILISER AID TO NORTH-RED CROSS", 2004-10-13) reported that the ROK may reject a request from impoverished DPRK to donate 100,000 tons of fertilizer due to the current chill in their relationship, the ROK's Red Cross said on Wednesday. "Considering the current relationship between South and North Korea, we cannot guarantee we will send fertilizer to the North as usual," an official at the ROK's Red Cross said.

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15. KEDO LWR Project

Korea Times ("NK REACTOR PROJECT TO BE KEPT AFLOAT", 2004-10-13) reported that with the multilateral talks on the DPRK's nuclear standoff still in a stalemate, an international consortium's project to build light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK is likely to be suspended for another year. "The nuclear reactor project will likely be kept afloat for one more year as Seoul and Tokyo are quite determined to extend the suspension period," a ROK Unification Ministry official said Monday.

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16. ROK Envoy to the DPRK

Yonhap ("GOV'T HAS NO IMMEDIATE PLAN TO SEND ROH'S SPECIAL ENVOY TO N.K. ", 2004-1--13) reported that the government has no immediate plan to dispatch a special envoy to the DPRK to help resolve the DPRK nuclear issue and ease inter-Korean ties in the midst of the nuclear standoff, the presidential spokesman said Wednesday. "We've never considered nor talked about such a plan," Cheong Wa Dae spokesman Kim Jong-min said.

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17. DPRK on US Troop Realignment

Yonhap ("N. KOREA CRITICIZES U.S. TROOP CUT DELAY ", 2004-10-13) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday criticized a decision by the US to delay the planned reduction of its troops in the ROK, claiming it indicates the US is planning a military buildup. "The troop cut plan is actually a prelude to a second Korean war," the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland, an anti-ROK propaganda organization, said in a statement.

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18. ROK Nuclear Experiment

Korea Herald ("SEOUL'S 'REGRET' TOWARD TOKYO PUTTING TIES AT RISK", 2004-10-13) reported that skepticism by some in the international community about the ROK's experiments with nuclear substances was expected, but the suspicions expressed by neighbor and ally Japan have made Seoul steam. According to the report made public by Rep. Hong Jun-pyo of the Grand National Party, Japan holds 5,475 kg of plutonium within its borders and 35,168 kg outside. "It is nonsense that Japan, in possession of so much plutonium, is showing so much concern over South Korea's plutonium extraction experiments, which are far different from making nuclear weapons."

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19. ROK on Gando Convention

Chosun Ilbo ("GOV'T CONSIDERS GANDO CONVENTION NULL AND VOID: FOREIGN MINISTRY MATERIALS", 2004-10-13) reported that it has been revealed that the ROK government is taking the position that the 1909 Gando Convention, signed between the PRC and Japan, is null and void. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade revealed this government position in parliamentary inspection materials distributed to lawmakers on Tuesday, sparking concerns of diplomatic friction with the PRC.

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20. ROK Military Transparency

Korea Herald ("MILITARY SECRETS GENERATE CONFLICT ", 2004-10-13) reported that the Defense Ministry appears to be too sensitive in the way it is dealing with "state secrets," particularly on matters related to possible DPRK threats, some aides to legislators say. But military officials reject the charge, saying the military must be extremely vigilant about intelligence. That, say the officials, is one of their jobs.

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21. Japan's Role in Afghanistan

Washington Post ("JAPAN'S WIDE ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN", 2004-10-13) reported that Japan's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hatsuhisa Takashima, said here last week that his country had been active in the rebuilding of Afghanistan. Takashima said in an interview that Japan had dispatched a team of 10 people to monitor Afghanistan's presidential election over the weekend.

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22. Japan's Role in Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("JAPANESE PM SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO IRAQI PEOPLE FOR BACKING WAR: OPPOSITION", 2004-10-13) reported that the leader of Japan's main opposition party demanded Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi apologize to the Iraqi people for backing the war after inspectors found no weapons of mass destruction. "Prime Minister Koizumi, you were too rash," Katsuya Okada, who heads the opposition Democratic Party, told parliament.

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23. Japan on US Troop Realignment

Kyodo News ("KOIZUMI SEEKS U.S. FORCES' REALIGNMENT WITHIN SECURITY PACT", 2004-1--13) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Wednesday he will pursue the realignment of US forces in Japan within the scope of the Japan-US security treaty that limits the bilateral alliance to operations in what is termed in the pact "the Far East." Koizumi clarified the point amid worries that the reported US plans would require Japan to host US forces for operations across a wider area, including near the Middle East -- a scope far beyond that of the treaty, which is the basis for the US military presence in Japan.

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24. US - Japan Trade Relations

Agence France-Presse ("WHOEVER WINS US ELECTION, JAPAN'S ECONOMIC REFORM POLICY SEEN ON TRACK", 2004-10-13) reported that whoever wins the US presidential election, Japan will stay on its reform path as cooperation between the world's two largest economies has grown increasingly close, analysts said. PRC exports to the US market have now outpaced those from Japan, also cooling off US-Japan trade rows.

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25. Japan Suicides

The New York Times ("9 DIE IN JAPAN SUICIDES TIED TO WEB", 2004-10-13) reported that nine people were found dead on Tuesday in two rented cars with the windows sealed and charcoal burners at their feet in pacts that the police said were facilitated by Internet suicide sites. The group may have come together through a suicide message board on the Internet, Japanese news media quoted the police as saying.

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26. Sakhalin Energy

Financial Times ("SAKHALIN ISLAND, IN RUSSIA'S FAR EAST, HAS BEEN TURNED INTO A TINY CORNER OF JAPAN AS ITS BUSINESSMEN GO IN QUEST OF NATURAL RESOURCES.", 2004-1--13) reported that Japanese businessmen are here in Sakhalin for one reason: Russia in general, and Sakhalin in particular, is the Saudi Arabia of gas. "This is a world class resource," says Ian Craig, chief executive of Sakhalin Energy Investment Company (SEIC). From late 2007, gas extracted from offshore fields north-east of the island will be piped ashore and then overland to Prigorodnoye, in the island's south. In what was, until recently, a small village, it will be processed into LNG in one of the largest such plants in the world, before being shipped to markets in Japan, the ROK, the US and possibly the PRC.

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27. Taiwan Nuclear Experiment

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN CONDUCTED PLUTONIUM EXPERIMENTS", 2004-10-13) reported that Taiwan appears to have conducted experiments with plutonium - a key component of nuclear

weapons - up to the mid-1980s, diplomats said Wednesday, citing environmental tests taken by the UN atomic watchdog agency. The revelation appeared in line with reports that Taiwan in the 1980s briefly revived a nuclear weapons program that originated in the 1960s and was suspended in the 1970s, said the diplomats.

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28. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA SPURNS TAIWAN PRESIDENT'S PEACE OVERTURE", 2004-10-13) reported that the PRC spurned Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's peace overtures Wednesday, accusing him of merely paying lip service to easing tensions between the two arch foes. "When Chen Shui-bian says he wants to ease tensions, it is false. When he says he wants independence, it is true," Zhang Mingqing, a spokesman for Beijing's policy-making Taiwan Affairs Office, told a news conference.

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29. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWANESE PRESIDENT SHRUGS OFF CHINA'S REJECTION OF HIS PEACE OVERTURE", 2004-10-13) reported that Taiwan's president shrugged off the PRC's rejection of his overture to start peace talks, saying he was willing to be patient with the PRC. Chen added: "I also want to ease tensions and the unnecessary confrontation between the two sides. I also want to improve the relations and normalize them. My responsibility is extremely big."

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30. Sino - US Trade Relations

Washington Post ("TEXTILE MAKERS FIGHT FOR LIMITS WITH CAPS EXPIRING, U.S. INDUSTRY FEARS GLUT OF CHINESE IMPORTS", 2004-10-13) reported that the US textile industry said yesterday that it is formally asking the Bush administration to cap the PRC's shipments of trousers, shirts, sheets and other textile items to the US, warning that an expected flood of PRC imports next year will otherwise wipe out thousands of US jobs.

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31. Sino - Russian Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA-RUSSIA TRADE MAINTAINS HIGH GROWTH", 2004-10-13) reported that the trade between the PRC and Russia has maintained a fast growth in the first 8 months this year, totaling 12.87 billion US dollars, up 35.4 percent year on year, figures released Wednesday by the PRC Customs showed. Figures from the General Administration of Customs also indicated that Sino-Russian trade in 2003 hit 15.76 billion US dollars, up 32 percent year on year.

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32. PRC Hostages

The Associated Press ("HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS FAIL IN PAKISTAN", 2004-10-13) reported that tribal elders met Wednesday with an al-Qaida-linked militant chief whose men have kidnapped two

PRC engineers in a lawless region near the Afghanistan border, but the talks failed, tribal leaders said. Militant leader Abdullah Mehsud said negotiations for the release of the two PRC citizens could only start when five of his fighters, said Qayyum Sher, one of 24 elders at the meeting.

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33. Hong Kong Labor Legislation

The Associated Press ("HONG KONG PRO-LABOR LEGISLATORS PUSH FOR MINIMUM WAGE, MAXIMUM WORKING HOURS", 2004-10-13) reported that pro-labor legislators on Wednesday called on the Hong Kong government to implement a minimum wage and limit working hours, but opponents rejected the proposals as bad for business. Chan's motion didn't specify the minimum wage or work-hour limit she was seeking.

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34. PRC Domestic Dissent

The New York Times ("CHINA CRUSHES PEASANT PROTEST, TURNING 3 FRIENDS INTO ENEMIES", 2004-10-13) reported that since the PRC's peasantry began falling far behind the urban elite in the go-go 1990's, the countryside has been a font of unrest. Partly as a result, the PRC has learned to live with seething social discontent. It has become practiced at defusing confrontations that threaten one-party rule. The village of Wangying shows how the party operates: the three Mr. Wangs led a sustained protest that was forcibly put down in April 1994. The ringleaders were then intimidated or tamed, and ultimately turned against one another.

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35. PRC Economic Growth

The Associated Press ("CHINESE MINISTER SEES FAST ECONOMIC GROWTH", 2004-10-13) reported that the PRC's finance minister said economic growth of 9 percent this year would be acceptable, state television reported Wednesday, in the first acknowledgment by a senior official that growth might exceed the government's target of 7 percent. The PRC has been trying since last year to slow down its roaring economy, worried that rapid growth could ignite inflation and threaten the banking industry.

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36. PRC Oil Demand

Bloomberg News ("DEMAND FOR OIL EXCEEDS FORECASTS REPORT CITES SURGE LED BY U.S., CHINA", 2004-10-13) reported that oil demand is rising faster than predicted this year as OPEC pumps more low-quality oil in a failed bid to reduce record prices, according to International Energy Agency, an adviser to 26 industrialized nations. The agency cut its forecast for growth in consumption next year by almost one-fifth as record prices restrain economic growth and the PRC turns to other fuels, such as natural gas.

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