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1. Six Party Talks

The Japan Times ("JAPAN, CHINA GEAR UP FOR NEXT SIX-PARTY TALKS ", 2005-10-18) reported that the Japanese and the PRC chief delegates to the six party talks have agreed to cooperate closely in the next round, which is expected early next month, according to Japanese officials. "The agreement in the last round of talks describes the final goal (of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula), and its implementation is important," chief Japanese delegate Kenichiro Sasae told reporters after meeting his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei.

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2. Inter-Korean Unification

Chosun Ilbo ("NO ROLE FOR JAPAN IN INTER-KOREAN PEACE TALKS: SONG", 2005-10-19) reported that the ROK's chief delegate to the six party talks says the ultimate task of establishing a peace agreement between the two Koreas belongs to them. Deputy Foreign Minister Song Min-soon made the remark to reporters in the US in response to questions over a possible Japanese role in formulating a peace agreement on the peninsula. The prospect of the DPRK and the ROK signing a formal peace treaty to replace the armistice that ended the Korean War was raised in the last round of six party talks. But Seoul is wary of the influence factions in the US and Japanese governments could have in the push for a peace treaty.

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3. ROK Ideological Dispute Over DPRK

Yonhap News ("CHUNG FIRES SALVO AT OPPOSITION LEADER IN IDEOLOGICAL DEBATE ", 2005-10-19) reported that Chung Dong-young, ROK's point man on the DPRK and a presidential hopeful, on Wednesday echoed the RO Korean ruling party's criticism of opposition leader Park Geun-hye's "save-the-nation" campaign against the Roh Moo-hyun administration. "I am confused about her anarchistic remarks in denouncing the government's identity," Chung said during a forum in Seoul. "What the people want from politicians is discussions about the future."

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4. DPRK-US Relations

Xinhua ("DPRK ACCUSES US OF VIOLATING JOINT STATEMENT SPIRIT", 2005-10-18) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday slashed the US for doing things contrary to the spirit of the joint statement of the recent six party talks on the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. "If the United

States persists in its hostile acts against the DPRK contrary to the spirit of the joint statement of the six party talks, the DPRK will be left with no option but to take self-defense steps to cope with those acts," a spokesman of the DPRK's Foreign Ministry said. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that "the United States was putting into practice sanctions blocking the legitimate financial transaction of the DPRK."

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5. DPRK-PRC Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINESE ENVOY VISITS N. KOREA", 2005-10-19) reported that the PRC has sent a special envoy to the DPRK to discuss the country's nuclear program. Li Bin, a former Chinese ambassador to the ROK, will also visit the US from Oct. 24 and the ROK from Oct. 28. The PRC's foreign ministry says Li's agenda is conferring with officials involved in talks on the nuclear dispute and prepare for the next round of the six party talks next month.

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6. DPRK-Japanese Relations

Pravda ("NORTH KOREA CRITICIZES JAPANESE PM", 2005-10-19) reported that the DPRK's media on Wednesday criticized Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to a controversial war shrine, calling it an "indiscreet act." The report from the DPRK's Central Broadcasting Station was the first reaction by the DPRK to Koizumi's visit to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine on Monday. The visit has drawn criticism from neighboring countries, mostly the PRC and the ROK, which view such visits as an attempt to whitewash Japan's past.

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7. DPRK Human Rights

The Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. RIGHTS GROUPS URGE TOUGHER LINE ON N.KOREA", 2005-10-19) reported that US rights activists on Wednesday demanded Washington must link its DPRK policy to the country's human rights situation. 25 activists ranging in affiliation from Human Rights Watch to the National Association of Evangelicals adopted a declaration calling for the DPRK's human rights record to form part of the agenda at six party talks. They also urged the international community to pressure the PRC to stop repatriating DPRK defectors. The gathering at Washington DC's Brookings Institute adopted a draft by Tom Malinowski, the Washington Director of Human Rights Watch. In the 13-point declaration, the group stresses it respects DPRK's sovereignty and is against military action against the DPRK while acknowledging the importance of resolving the nuclear dispute.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Dong-A Ilbo ("RIGHTS GROUPS FORM NEW COALITION", 2005-10-19) reported that the so-called "New Rights" groups, which support sound conservatism, have organized a federation to improve human rights in the DPRK, support prudent government, and liberalize education codes. A total of eight groups, including the New Right ThinkNet, Textbook Forum, the North Korea Democratization Network, the Healthcare and Society Forum, and the Alliance for Liberalism held a press conference on Tuesday at the Cecil Restaurant in Jung-gu, Seoul and announced the start of the "New Right Network." The network is planning to focus on a campaign to cap off the budget and improve human rights in the DPRK. [\(return to top\)](#)

8. Repatriated RO Korean

The Korea Herald ("ABDUCTEES TO N.K. UNHAPPY BACK HOME", 2005-10-20) reported that, according to Jin Jung-pal, who was abducted by DPRK and was recently repatriated, life in the ROK is not much better than life in the DPRK. Jin claims that the ROK government's indifference towards him and hundreds of its citizens abducted by the DPRK has had a negative impact on his new life in the ROK. "It's not like I can get a job here at my age or receive government subsidies to support the family I abandoned for over 30 years," Jin said. "I disappeared when my sons were very young. I don't make money. I couldn't and can't be a normal father to them."

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9. DPRK Pledge for Peace

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA VOWS CONTRIBUTION TO GLOBAL PEACE AT UNESCO MEETING", 2005-10-19) reported that the DPRK has pledged to join the international effort for world peace and stability during an ongoing general conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). DPRK's chief delegate to UNESCO's 33rd general conference, held in Paris, said during a speech that his country would strengthen cooperation with the UN body and its member nations in accordance with the principles of sovereignty, peace, and friendship.

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10. DPRK Tourism

BBC News ("EYEWITNESS: US TOURIST IN NORTH KOREA", 2005-10-18) reported that US tourists have recently been given a rare chance to visit the DPRK, usually out of bounds to US citizens for the huge annual Arirang festival. Carol Rueckert, one of those who took up the opportunity, describes her experiences. "The first thing our English-speaking tour guide did was introduce us to the North Koreans on our bus - including a cameraman "who will be observing all of your behaviours. Other than our tour guides, waitresses and store clerks, we didn't get much of a chance to speak with local Koreans. Obviously there was a language barrier, and the local people were also somewhat hesitant in speaking to us. That's not to say that they weren't friendly, though. If we waved and smiled, they would wave and smile back. Having been,[to the DPRK] I highly recommend that others take any opportunity they can to go and see for themselves what Pyongyang is like - as soon as they can, as it won't be the same forever."

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11. ROK Stem Cells

The Los Angeles Times ("SOUTH KOREANS TO OFFER STEM CELLS TO THE WORLD", 2005-10-19) reported that the ROK researcher who was the first to clone human embryos for the creation of stem cells plans to establish a worldwide stem cell bank to make the technology available to other scientists. The World Stem Cell Foundation, to be unveiled today in Seoul, intends to produce about 100 new cell lines each year and make them available to scientists, particularly those in the US who have been stymied in their research by federal funding restrictions.

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12. Japan Quake

Agence France Presse ("NUCLEAR REACTOR SHUT DOWN BY JAPAN QUAKE ", 2005-10-19) reported that an earthquake measuring 6.2 on the Richter scale rocked Tokyo and the surrounding area, automatically shutting down an experimental nuclear reactor. The experimental nuclear reactor in Tokai Mura, near the epicenter, shut down on impact as it is programmed to do, a spokesman for the government-backed Japan Atomic Energy Agency said.

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13. DPRK-UK Economic Cooperation

Joong ang Ilbo ("TOBACCO FIRM HAS PYONGYANG PLANT", 2005-10-18) reported that British American Tobacco has been secretly operating a factory in the DPRK for the past four years despite Britain's position that it will not officially support investment in the country due to Pyongyang's nuclear aspirations. BAT initially produced an inexpensive brand called Kumgansan, named after a mountain in the east of the country, and is now producing brands that are known as Craven A and Viceroy," the report said. Asked about its apparent reluctance to make public the existence of its DPR Korean operation, the British tobacco firm said it was not obliged to inform investors about the small-scale investment.

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14. ROK on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Bloomberg ("S. KOREA'S BAN WON'T GO TO JAPAN AFTER SHRINE VISIT", 2005-10-19) reported that the ROK's foreign minister said he will not travel to Japan at the end of this month after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Oct. 17 visited Yasukuni shrine, which includes memorials to convicted war criminals. "It's inappropriate to pursue a visit to Japan given current circumstances," Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki Moon said at a briefing in Seoul.

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15. USFJ Troop Repositioning

Kyodo ("JAPAN EYES INTERIM REPORT ON U.S. REALIGNMENT BY NEXT WEEK", 2005-10-19) reported that Japan and the US are likely to agree by early next week on an interim report on US military realignment in Japan, a top-ranking Japanese Foreign Ministry official indicated Wednesday. The official said he sees the interim report including a plan to relocate heliport operations of the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture -- a key point of contention in the bilateral realignment talks.

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16. Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN-CHINA FRICTION TO KEEP SHAKING ASIA: ANALYSTS", 2005-1-19) reported that with the PRC growing in stature on the world stage, diplomatic friction between Tokyo and Beijing is likely to continue as the two powers vie for regional leadership and clash over war-time memories, analysts say. Analysts say the latest friction has put a spotlight on fierce rivalry

between Tokyo and Beijing that has intensified as the PRC's economy booms while Japan struggles to break out of a decade of economic stagnation.

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17. US-PRC Relations

The New York Times ("RUMSFELD WARNS YOUNG CHINESE ON ISOLATIONISM", 2005-10-19) reported that Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld urged the next generation of the PRC's Communist leadership on Wednesday to become "a major player" in the global economy by taking steps to strengthen the system and not just reap the financial rewards, and he warned against erecting "another type of Great Wall" restricting free expression and choice.

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18. US-PRC Military Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA, US AGREE TO IMPROVE MILITARY TIES ", 2005-10-19) reported that the PRC and the US agreed to improve military ties after US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld warned that a rapid and secretive military buildup was sending "mixed signals" about the PRC's intentions, US officials said. President Hu Jintao told Rumsfeld that although the military relationship had improved over the years there was still room to expand, senior US defense officials told reporters.

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19. PRC on Military Strength

The Associated Press ("CHINA DEFENSE CHIEF DISMISSES U.S. CLAIMS ", 2005-10-19) reported that it would be "simply impossible" for the PRC to increase its military spending on the vast scale claimed by Pentagon officials because the PRC's top priority is fighting domestic poverty, the nation's defense chief said Wednesday. Gen. Cao Gangchuan denied that the PRC's defense budget this year is far more than the \$29 billion it has stated publicly, and he said the PRC government is eager to pursue better relations with Washington.

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20. PRC Income Disparity

The Associated Press ("CHINA FOCUSES ON EASING RURAL POVERTY ", 2005-10-19) reported that the PRC's leaders have issued an economic plan that calls for developing the poor countryside in an effort to narrow the growing and politically explosive gap between rich and poor, state media said Wednesday. It pledges to maintain "fast and stable growth" and to carry out more reforms of the PRC's banks and financial industries and development of oil and gas resources to meet surging energy needs, the government's Xinhua News Agency and other media reported.

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21. PRC Communist Party

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SIGNALS CONTINUED COMMUNIST DOMINANCE ", 2005-10-19)

reported that the PRC has issued its first white paper on democracy, indicating that it was not prepared to compromise at all on the Communist Party's dominance over the political system. "China's democracy is a people's democracy under the leadership of the CPC," it said. "The leadership of the CPC is a fundamental guarantee for the Chinese people to be masters in managing the affairs of their own country."

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22. PRC-Russian Trade Relations

Vladivostok Times ("RUSSIAN-CHINESE TRADE CENTER OPENS IN DONGNING ", 2005-10-19) reported that the biggest Russian-PRC border trade center of 220,000 square meters was opened in the PRC city of Dongning, Heilongjiang Province, on Tuesday, Vostok Media reported. The center, named 'Chinese-Russian trade zone Dongning-Poltavka', was opened within the program of the six-day PRC-Russian trade fair that started in Dongning on Monday.

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23. Hong Kong Electoral Reform

Agence France Presse ("HONG KONG PROPOSES MODEST ELECTION REFORMS ", 2005-10-19) reported that Hong Kong has unveiled modest measures to reform the southern the PRC territory's electoral system, but stopped short of demands to set a timetable for full democracy. By the next leadership election in 2007, the 800-member Beijing-backed committee of elites tasked with selecting the political leader will be doubled to 1,600. The Legislative Council will see its membership increase from 60 to 70, with the addition of five directly elected seats and five more selected from District Councils, the lowest level of government here.

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24. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

The Associated Press ("CHINA: 2,600 BIRDS DEAD OF BIRD FLU ", 2005-10-19) reported that some 2,600 birds have been found dead of bird flu in northern the PRC's grasslands, the government said, amid reports of new outbreaks in Europe and Russia. If confirmed, the discovery in the Tula region, 125 miles south of Moscow, would mark the first time the lethal strain has appeared in European Russia, west of the Ural Mountains.

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