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I. United States

1. PRC, ROK on US- DPRK Relations

The New York Times ("DISCORD ON NORTH KOREA AS POWELL FINISHES EAST ASIA TRIP", 2004-10-27) reported that a trip to East Asia by Secretary of State Colin L. Powell aimed at forging a united front on the DPRK ended Tuesday on a discordant note, with Mr. Powell rebuffing a suggestion by the PRC and ROK that they all show greater flexibility in pressing for an end to the DPRK's nuclear program. There was some confusion over Mr. Ban's remarks, because the English translation omitted his statement questioning the US approach. Afterward, ROK journalists said the interpreter had left out the call for a more "creative and realistic" approach.

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2. PRC, ROK on US - DPRK Relations

Washington Post ("S. KOREA JOINS CHINA IN CRITICIZING U.S. ON N. KOREA", 2004-10-27) reported that the ROK joined the PRC on Tuesday in expressing concern that the Bush administration had not been sufficiently creative or willing to compromise in stalled negotiations over ending the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. The ROK's foreign minister, Ban Ki Moon, told reporters after meeting with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell that he suggested to Powell that the US and its allies "must come up with a more creative and realistic proposal" to lure the DPRK back to the talks "as soon as possible." PRC officials in Beijing told Powell on Monday that the Bush administration should be more open to compromise in the six-nation talks. Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing told him that the PRC wished "the US side would go further to adopt a flexible and practical attitude," the official New China News Agency reported.

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3. PRC Plague Issue

The Associated Press ("PLAGUE IN CHINA'S NORTHWEST KILLS EIGHT", 2004-10-27) reported that eight PRC villagers have died of plague in the country's northwest, most of them infected after killing or eating wild marmots, the government said Wednesday. Nineteen people fell ill with the disease in early October in Xiligou, a village in Qinghai province, the official Xinhua News Agency said, citing provincial health authorities.

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4. PRC on DPRK Defectors

The Associated Press ("BEIJING POLICE DETAIN NORTH KOREANS", 2004-10-27) reported that PRC police detained 65 DPRK asylum-seekers in Beijing, ROK activists said Wednesday, accusing the PRC of carrying out "hardline measures" to round up refugees from its ally the DPRK. Two ROK human rights activists also were detained in the raid Tuesday on two houses on the PRC capital's east side, the ROK's Yonhap news agency reported.

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5. US on Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("POWELL COMMENTS UPSET TAIWAN", 2004-10-27) reported that Secretary of State Colin L. Powell was in the PRC less than 24 hours this week, but that was enough to stir up a diplomatic tempest with some unorthodox and apparently unintended remarks about US policy on Taiwan. Powell, in a pair of television interviews Monday in Beijing, said the US holds there is only one China and that Taiwan is not an independent nation. Alarmed, Taiwan's leaders immediately cried foul, accusing Powell of springing an unfair surprise with a major policy shift.

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6. US - Taiwan Trade Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN READY TO RESUME U.S. BEEF IMPORTS", 2004-10-27) reported that pending a final round of inspections, Taiwan has agreed to resume imports of US beef and beef products, which were suspended because of concerns over mad cow disease, the Agriculture Department said Tuesday. "Our goal is a return to normal beef trade as quickly as possible," said Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman in a statement.

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7. US - Japanese Trade Relations

Washington Post ("JAPAN WARNS OF DELAYS FOR U.S. BEEF", 2004-10-27) reported that Japanese opposition leaders and consumer groups this week criticized a tentative agreement to lift a ban on US beef imports, calling it a political gift from Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to President Bush before the US election. The Bush administration announced the accord over the weekend and hailed the resumption of some US beef shipments to Japan in "a matter of weeks," but some Japanese officials said imports are unlikely for at least six months.

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8. Japan Hostage Case

The Associated Press ("KOIZUMI SAYS JAPAN WILL STAY IN IRAQ", 2004-10-27) reported that Japan's prime minister, a staunch US ally in Iraq, refused on Wednesday to withdraw Japan's troops from the country, taking a tough stance in the face of demands by militants threatening to behead a Japanese hostage unless the soldiers leave.

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9. ROK on DMZ Incursion

Reuters ("S.KOREA PROBES DMZ BUT SOME DOUBT DEFECTOR FLED", 2004-10-27) reported that the ROK conducted a follow-up investigation Wednesday into holes cut in fences in the Demilitarised Zone border, but diplomatic sources questioned whether a civilian defected to the DPRK as the ROK has said. But diplomatic sources and analysts who track developments at the border said they were puzzled by this explanation. "It's not the route I would have taken," said one of the sources. The border between the DPRK and PRC is much easier to cross.

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10. DPRK Missile Program

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA MIGHT TEST MISSILES", 2004-10-27) reported that the US, Japan and ROK have boosted their monitoring of a missile base in the DPRK as military intelligence indicates that the DPRK might be preparing to test missiles, a ROK newspaper reported Wednesday. Beginning two or three days ago, "North Koreans began making moves at the Jeongju base, such as moving mobile missile launch stations," the mass-circulation daily Chosun Ilbo said, citing a senior ROK government official. "We are monitoring the movements to see whether this was part of their training or they actually intend to launch a missile."

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11. Japan Quake

Los Angeles Times ("THREE FOUND ALIVE IN QUAKE RUBBLE", 2004-10-27) reported that braving unstable ground, rescuers digging frantically with shovels and bare hands found a woman and her two small children alive today in a van that was buried under an avalanche of rock in Saturday's earthquake in central Japan. The weekend quake and its aftershocks have killed at least 31 people and injured about 2,500.

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12. PRC Mine Blast

Los Angeles Times ("DEATH TOLL IN MINE EXPLOSION RISES TO 122", 2004-10-27) reported that rescuers pulled more bodies from a coal mine in central PRC, raising the confirmed death toll from a massive gas explosion to 122, with 26 miners still missing, the government said. The toll makes the explosion the PRC's deadliest mine accident since 2000, when a blast killed 162 people in a coal mine in the southern province of Guizhou.

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13. PSI Drill

The New York Times ("U.S.-LED NAVAL EXERCISE SENDS CLEAR MESSAGE TO NORTH KOREA", 2004-10-27) reported that orange smoke flares burned in waters south of Tokyo Bay as black-clad sailors rappelled Tuesday from a Japan Coast Guard helicopter, landing on the foredeck of a ship adorned with a skull-and-crossbones flag. Part training exercise, part political theater, this international naval interdiction drill, code-named Team Samurai, had a clear audience: DPRK.

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14. US on PRC Criticism of PSI Drill

Agence France-Presse ("US ENVOY TELLS CHINA TO DROP RESERVATIONS ABOUT ARMS CONTROL DRILL", 2004-10-27) reported that top US arms control official John Bolton called on the PRC to join non-proliferation efforts after Beijing stayed away from a US-sponsored drill in Japan on seizing smuggled weapons. "We have tried at various times to answer questions that China has had about PSI. China has said it still has questions about PSI," said Bolton, US under secretary of state for arms control and international security. "We have more work to do with China, which itself is a country that engages in proliferation.

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15. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("SENIOR U.S. ENVOY NAMES NORTH KOREA, IRAN AND SYRIA AS "STATES OF PROLIFERATION CONCERN"", 2004-10-27) reported that the top US envoy for arms control named the DPRK, Iran and Syria among the worst proliferators of weapons of mass destruction Wednesday, and called for shipments to the countries to be monitored more closely. Bolton's reserved his harshest words for the DPRK. "Without a doubt, North Korea remains the world's foremost proliferator of ballistic missiles and related technology to rogue states and hostile regimes," he said.

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16. Hong Kong Election Probe

The Associated Press ("HONG KONG OPPOSITION LAWMAKERS CALL FOR INDEPENDENT PROBE INTO ELECTION IRREGULARITIES", 2004-10-27) reported that Hong Kong's opposition on Wednesday urged the government to launch an independent investigation into irregularities in last month's legislative elections. Election officials are investigating, but say the polls were fair. But pro-democracy lawmaker Margaret Ng introduced a nonbinding motion in the legislature Wednesday calling for an independent probe.

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17. ROK on Japan Quake

Kyodo News ("S. KOREA TO DONATE \$100,000 TO JAPAN FOR QUAKE RELIEF", 2004-10-27) reported that the ROK government has decided to donate \$100,000 to help the victims of quake-devastated Niigata Prefecture, the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry said in a statement

Wednesday. "Our government and people wholeheartedly hope that earthquake victims quickly recover from grief and sorrow, and return to normal life," the statement said.

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18. US, ROK, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA, U.S., RUSSIA TO SEEK 6-NATION TALKS BEFORE YEAR-END", 2004-10-27) reported that the ROK, the US and Russia agreed Wednesday to seek the resumption of stalled six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear arms development program before the end of this year at the latest, a senior ROK Foreign Ministry official said. "It would be problematic if (the nuclear talks) miss the end of this year," Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo Hyuck was quoted by Yonhap News Agency as telling reporters after a meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alekseyev.

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19. PRC on SARS Patients

The Associated Press ("HONG KONG SARS PATIENTS SUFFERED MENTAL DISORDERS AS SIDE-EFFECT OF STEROIDS TREATMENT, STUDY SHOWS", 2004-10-27) reported that fifteen SARS patients in Hong Kong suffered mental disorders as a side-effect of the high dosage of steroids they were treated with, according to a new study. "When the psychosis was severe and the patient displayed disruptive behavior that posed harm to himself or others, physical restraint and sedation were necessary," Hong Kong researchers said in the study, obtained by The Associated Press Wednesday.

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20. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA REJECTS POWELL'S PLEA TO TALK TO TAIWAN, CRITICIZES U.S. ARMS SALES", 2004-10-27) reported that the PRC on Wednesday rejected US Secretary of State Colin Powell's appeal to resume dialogue with Taiwan but welcomed his comment that the self-ruled island isn't independent. A spokesman for the mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said Beijing doesn't see any basis for talks until Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian agrees to its "one-China principle," which says the two sides are one nation.

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21. PRC SARS Issue

The Associated Press ("CHINA ORDERS LOCAL OFFICIALS TO TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT NEW SARS OUTBREAK AS WINTER APPROACHES", 2004-10-27) reported that the PRC is ordering local health officials to isolate patients suspected of having SARS amid worries the deadly disease could resurface as colder weather approaches. Officials were told to pay a "high level of attention" to preventing respiratory diseases through the winter, state media said Wednesday.

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22. ROK DMZ Incursion

Joongang Ilbo ("EX-SOLDIER SUSPECTED AS PENETRATOR AT DMZ ", 2004-10-27) reported that the mystery of who cut through tightly guarded security fences between the two Koreas deepened yesterday, following a military briefing in which officials offered conjecture that the person might have been a former ROK service member. Breaches in three fences and some barbed wire separating the two Koreas were found Tuesday and prompted a high security alert. After questioning residents in the area, the military and police said a person made a report about a suspicious man in his 30s. The man reportedly said his father was from South Hamgyeong province in the North and that he wanted to go to the region.

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23. ROK National Security Law

Joongang Ilbo ("TRIP TO NORTH LANDS MAN IN SECURITY LAW TROUBLE ", 2004-10-27) reported that in the midst of growing controversy surrounding the Uri Party's pledge to abolish the National Security Law, a man was recently arrested for illegally entering the DPRK. According to the National Intelligence Service and the prosecutors, a 34-year-old man, whom the press did not identify, was found to have secretly entered the DPRK and was later deported to the PRC, from where he returned to the ROK. His actions, however, would not constitute a crime under the Uri Party's plan to abolish the National Security Law.

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24. ROK - Japanese Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("URI CHAIRMAN HITS JAPAN FOR REJECTING ITS HISTORY ", 2004-10-27) reported that Lee Bu-young, chairman of the governing Uri Party, criticized Japan's "lukewarm attitude" toward its past atrocities visited on neighboring countries during World War II. He was speaking at a press conference at Japanese journalists' club in Tokyo. "The approval of a distorted history textbook, Japanese senior government officials' visit to the Yasukuni Shrine, and its claim to Tokto island open the wounds of the Korean people once again while Koreans are trying to heal the wounds," he said.

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25. NYTimes Ad. on DPRK Policy

Chosun Ilbo ("PRO-N. KOREAN GROUPS IN U.S. PLACE FULL PAGE AD IN NYT ", 2004-10-27) reported that several pro-DPRK and progressively-minded Korean-American organizations placed a full page advertisement in the form of an open letter in the special election section of the New York Times on Tuesday calling on US voters to cast their ballots for peace, change and a return to American values. The groups slammed US President George W. Bush's foreign policy, saying, "Many Koreans believe that US foreign policy dealing with the Korean peninsula in the past three years is flawed. It is flawed in that it is devoid of consistency, lacks relevant historical perspective, is insensitive to cultural nuances, and is based on an arrogant stance, best described as 'Might is Right.'"

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26. DPRK Food Aid

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA, CUBA, PALESTINE, SUDAN VIOLATE RIGHT TO FOOD ", 2004-1-27) reported that Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA) reported Tuesday that the UN has announced DPRK citizens, Cubans, Palestinians and Sudanese are deprived of the right to have food, a major human rights concern. The report disclosed tens of thousands of DPRK people have died of a ?silent famine? over the last decade. Due to a halt in economic aid from Russia and severe restrictions on freedom of movement, over one million people continuously suffer from chronic malnutrition.

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27. US - ROK Security Relations

Korea Herald ("S KOREA, US SIGN YONGSAN RELOCATION AGREEMENT", 2004-10-27) reported that the ROK and the US signed an agreement on Tuesday to relocate the US military command out of Seoul by 2008 to an area south of the ROK capital, the Defense Ministry said. ROK Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung and Leon J. LaPorte, chief of the US forces in the ROK signed the accord at a ceremony that was held at the ministry building in downtown Seoul.

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28. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Donga Ilbo ("TASK FORCE FOR THE NORTH KOREAN DEFECTOR ISSUE ", 2004-10-27) reported that it was reported on October 27 that the government had embarked on reviewing countermeasures, including establishing a task force to address comprehensively the issue of DPRK defectors, in response to the recent successive cases of DPRK asylum-seekers entering foreign compounds or schools in the PRC and Beijing?s hard-line stance over the issue. A government official said on that day, ?There?s a growing consensus within the government on the urgent need for a comprehensive ?control tower? for North Korean defector issues.?

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29. ROK on DPRK Defectors in the PRC

Yonhap ("S. KOREA PESSIMISTIC ABOUT FATE OF ARRESTED N.K. ASYLUM SEEKERS ", 2004-1-27) reported that the ROK expressed pessimism Wednesday about the fate of 65 DPRK asylum seekers reportedly arrested in Beijing while preparing to seek refuge in a foreign diplomatic mission. If the report is found to be true, the government will ask Beijing to treat the asylum seekers in a humanitarian manner and grant their wish, a Foreign Ministry official said on condition of anonymity.

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30. DPRK Military

Yonhap ("N.K. LEADER MAKES 580 VISITS TO MILITARY SITES IN LAST 10 YEARS: REPORT ", 2004-10-27) reported that the DPRK's reclusive leader Kim Jong-il made 580 on-site inspection trips to military installations over the past 10 years, Pyongyang's official news agency reported Wednesday. The Korean Central News Agency said in a report monitored in Seoul that Kim could

increase national power through his ruling mantra "songun," or military-first policy.

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31. DPRK Economic Reform

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT HELP: POLISH DIPLOMAT ", 2004-10-27) reported that there are only limited changes and signs of economic recovery in the DPRK despite the country's two-year efforts to reform its economy and there may be little chance of a real economic recovery, the Polish ambassador to Pyongyang said Wednesday. "I don't see the changes and I don't see the chances for real economic recovery," said Wojciech Kaluza in a news conference held at the Polish Embassy in downtown Seoul.

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32. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("NUMBER OF N. KOREAN DEFECTORS RISES 72 PCT YEAR-ON-YEAR ", 2004-10-27) reported that the number of DPRK defectors to the ROK jumped to 1,511 in the first nine months of this year, up 72 percent compared with the corresponding period of 2003, the Unification Ministry said Wednesday. Of them, men account for 500 and the rest are women, it said, adding that people in their 30s account for the largest portion with 520, followed by 398 in their 20s and 203 in their 40s.

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33. US on Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA REJECTS POWELL CALL FOR DIALOGUE WITH TAIWAN", 2004-10-26) reported that the PRC on Wednesday rejected Secretary of State Colin Powell's call to resume dialogue with Taiwan, saying Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian's overtures were meaningless and no grounds existed for talks. "It does not matter who calls for the resumption of peace talks, the problem is not with us," Zhang Mingqing, a spokesman for the policy-making Taiwan Affairs Office.

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34. US on DPRK Nuclear issue

Associated Press ("BUSH SAYS NATIONS AGREE ON KOREA", 2004-10-27) reported that pledging flexibility in trying to get DPRK to end its nuclear weapons programs, the Bush administration on Wednesday said there was "a remarkable similarity of views" among nations joined with the United States in the effort. "The differences are being exaggerated," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said of reports of discord with the ROK and PRC over tactics being used in trying to reopen joint negotiations with the DPRK.

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