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I. United States

1. US - DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREAN COLONEL WARNS OF 'CALM BEFORE THE STORM'", 2004-09-01) reported that "the situation in Panmunjeom is like the unsettling calm before the storm." In an article on the Internet edition of the Choson Sinbo, published by the pro-DPRK General Association of Korea Residents in Japan, an official with the DPRK People's Army mission to Panmunjeom described the situation at the truce village, drawing attention. 37-year-old Lt. Col. Kim Sang-joon said, "We can feel the crises within this peaceful scenery. On the eve of a war, small-scale clashes could break out as military equipment increases, but with modern wars employing pre-emptive attacks using state-of-the-art weapons, it's different." About the armistice agreement, the official said, "The Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission is simply titular. Even if military clashes were to occur along the MDL, it wouldn't be able to do its job." Following this, he said in a raised voice, "As the US military plan to strengthen its fighting strength in Korea currently being pushed is a reckless scheme that disregards the reality of the cease-fire situation, North Korea -- which is engaged in hostilities with the United States -- has no choice but to take appropriate measures in response."
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2. US Elections and the DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("BUSH, IF REELECTED, COULD SANCTION NORTH KOREA: DONALD GREGG ", 2004-0--01) reported that US President George W. Bush, if reelected in November, is expected to implement strong sanctions against the DPRK if progress is not made in six-nation talks on its nuclear ambitions, a former US ambassador to the ROK was quoted as saying Wednesday. Donald Gregg said in a meeting with Rep. Hong Joon-pyo of the main opposition Grand National Party in New York Tuesday that sanctions could include a naval blockade, according to Hong's aides.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("U.S. SEEKS TO RESOLVE NUKE DISPUTE REGARDLESS OF ELECTION ", 2004-09-01) reported that a top US official said Tuesday that Washington will seek to resolve its dispute with Pyongyang over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program regardless of the timetable of the upcoming US presidential election. In a meeting with visiting South Korean Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, US Secretary of State Colin Powell stressed the importance of producing an outcome in resolving the nuclear row by holding a fresh round of six-way talks before September as scheduled, according to ROK officials Powell's remark came as top nuclear negotiators from the US, the ROK and Japan prepared to hold a strategy session to prepare for the next six-party talks.

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4. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS WON'T HELP NORTH KOREA WITH NUCLEAR POWER", 2004-09-01) reported that the PRC's top nuclear official said on Wednesday Beijing cannot contemplate cooperating with the DPRK in the field of atomic energy because of the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear arms programs. "We will not consider it because we are in favor of the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and take into consideration the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula," said Zhang Huazhu, chairman of the PRC Atomic Energy Authority. "To realise this goal, China must play an active part, so there is no discussion of cooperating with North Korea now," said Zhang, also vice minister of the Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defense. The comments offered a glimpse at the limits of the PRC's friendship with its isolated neighbor and showed one of the areas outside of diplomacy in which the PRC is applying pressure on the DPRK to keep it from developing nuclear weapons.

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5. DPRK on US - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA CONDEMNS U.S. FOR ALLEGED AERIAL ESPIONAGE", 2004-09-01) reported that the DPRK accused the US of committing 180 acts of aerial espionage last month over its military facilities near the military demarcation line separating the two Koreas, Pyongyang's state-run news agency, said Wednesday. The Us aircraft involved in the missions included a U-2 reconnaissance aircraft and various spy planes, the Korean Central News Agency, monitored here, quoted unidentified military officials as saying.

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6. ROK on DPRK Human Rights Bill

Yonhap ("LAWMAKERS DELAY PROTEST AGAINST U.S. BILL ON N.KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS ", 2004-09-01) reported that ruling party lawmakers against a bill on DPRK human rights awaiting US Senate approval decided Wednesday to indefinitely postpone the delivery of a letter of protest to the US Embassy in Seoul. "We decided to put off our plan to deliver the letter today as there have been requests from the party leadership and those who endorsed the letter to move cautiously on the matter," Rep. Chung Bon-ju of the governing Uri Party said.

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7. US - ROK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("UNIFICATION MINISTER MEETS WITH U.S. WHITE HOUSE HEAVYWEIGHTS ", 2004-09-01) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, on visit to Washington, met the US foreign policy and security lineup Tuesday. Chung met with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of State Colin Powell. They talked about solving the DPRK nuclear problem and promoting the Kaesong Industrial Complex. Although the details of the meetings have not been fully disclosed, Chung explained the results in diplomatic language. At a press conference with news correspondents after the meetings, Chung said, "The United States expressed support for the position of South Korea to harmoniously drive forward the settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue and intra-Korean economical cooperation."

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8. Inter Korean Summit

Korea Times ("RULING PARTY CALLS FOR SOUTH-NORTH SUMMIT", 2004-09-01) reported that Uri Party chairman Lee Bu-young said Wednesday the ruling party will push for a second inter-Korean summit meeting in order to defuse the protracted standoff over North Korea's nuclear weapons programs. "The Uri Party will push for a second summit by using all possible channels, including civilian ones," Lee said during an interview with an SBS radio program. The comments come amid rampant speculation that the government is seeking to persuade DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to agree to a follow-up to the June 2000 summit. Seoul officials have been quick to deny persistent media reports. But Lee said: "Maybe the Seoul government is paying attention to holding a second summit and pondering the best timing to hold it."

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9. Death of Koo Young He

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN LEADER'S WIFE DIED AROUND MAY OR JUNE: SOURCE", 2004-09-01) reported that contrary to earlier reports, the wife of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il died several months ago, a diplomatic source said Wednesday. Ko Yong-hi, who was 51, died around May or June, the source said, asking not to be identified.

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10. US on DPRK - Vietnamese Relations

VOA News ("VIETNAM DENIES ROLE IN MASS DEFECTION OF NORTH KOREANS ", 2004-09-01) reported that Vietnam is denying allegations that it played a role in the airlifting of hundreds of DPRK asylum seekers to the ROK in July. A Vietnamese Foreign Ministry spokesman told reporters Wednesday that such accusations are, in his words, "groundless." The DPRK accused Vietnam of conspiring with the ROK in the July airlift. Pyongyang reportedly recalled its ambassador from an unnamed Southeast Asian country, believed to be Vietnam, in protest.

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11. DPRK - Vietnamese Relations

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA SENDS CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE TO VIETNAM", 2004-09-01) reported that the DPRK sent a congratulatory message to Vietnam on the occasion of the 59th anniversary of the Southeast Asian country, the DPRK's media reported Wednesday. Kim Yong-nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, who serves as the North's ceremonial head of state, sent the message to Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

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12. DPRK Defectors

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREANS ASYLUM SEEKERS ENTER SCHOOL", 2004-09-01) reported that a group of 29 people claiming to be DPRK asylum-seekers forced their way into a

Japanese school in Beijing on Wednesday. The 11 men, 15 women and three children broke in around 10:30 a.m., said a Beijing-based, Japanese official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. He said students were told to stay in their classrooms. In Tokyo, the top government spokesman said it was "highly likely" they were defectors from the DPRK who want to leave for a third country. "But we were also told it may take some time to identify who they are," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda. He would not comment on the fate of the group or how they managed to get into the school.

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13. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Korea Herald ("DEFECTORS FACE DOUBLE STANDARD", 2004-09-01) reported that ROK citizens from the government down to people in the street warmly welcome defectors from the DPRK when they arrive, but the honeymoon doesn't last long and leaves most refugees with shattered dreams of a comfortable life. Food company director Yoon Sung-chul is one of a handful of defectors to forge a breakthrough, but it has been far from easy. "The label of North Korean defector is a kind of scarlet letter," he told The Korea Herald. Yoon said he personally knew of eight or nine DPRK defectors who could not adapt to working for Korean companies because the system in the ROK and DPRK differ so greatly. "North Korean defectors cannot avoid the serious culture shock," he said. "For them to overcome their confusion, the government must help them to be independent in their new environment."

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14. DPRK Defectors in the US

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS TO VISIT THE U.S. ", 2004-09-01) reported that three DPRK defectors in the ROK will visit the US next week to testify on the condition of human rights in the DPRK, a human rights group official said Wednesday. Ahn Hyuck, president of Democracy Network against North Korea Gulag said he, Kim Sung-min, president of 'Free North Korea Internet Radio', and a man named Ji Hae-nam will make the visit from Sept. 9-15.

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15. Jenkins Case

Reuters ("ACCUSED U.S. DESERTER JENKINS TO REPORT TO MILITARY", 2004-09-01) reported that an American soldier accused of deserting to the DPRK in 1965 and now in hospital in Tokyo said Wednesday he was willing to report to the US military in Japan to face charges. The statement by Charles Robert Jenkins marked a step toward resolving a diplomatic standoff between Tokyo and Washington. "When I stepped on to the plane that carried my family and me from Indonesia to Japan, it was my full intention to voluntarily report to the US Army base in Japan to face the allegations that have been charged against me," Jenkins said in a statement released through the Japanese government. He said he would report voluntarily to the army base west of Tokyo "to begin the process that will bring closure to my pending legal situation."

Far Eastern Economic Review ("FOUR DECADES IN NORTH KOREA", 2004-09-01) reported that in Jenkins' first interview since taking flight from the DPRK in July, "When I got on the airplane in Indonesia coming to Japan my intentions was to turn myself in to the military for the simple reason I would like to put my daughters with their mother, one thing. Another thing: I'd like to clear my

conscience." Jenkins presents a starkly different picture than of a deserter who enjoyed living in the DPRK and supported the regime by acting in propaganda movies. It's of a man-and family-who scraped by while DPRK officials watched their every move. According to Jenkins' discharge request, which was written on his behalf by his military attorney, Capt. James D. Culp, Jenkins and the three other men tried to escape. "In 1966, Sgt. Jenkins even risked his life to leave North Korea by going to the Russian embassy and requesting asylum. Obviously, the Russian government denied the request." During the 1960s, according to another revealing passage in the discharge request, Culp writes that contrary to rumors, "Sgt. Jenkins had no interaction of any kind with any American sailor taken captive during the USS Pueblo incident." Now that he's left the country, Jenkins no longer disguises his bitterness at the DPRK regime. His legal defense is based in part on the notion that he learned to feign fealty to a regime he despised to avoid death and keep his family together.

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16. ROK - Japanese Relations

Yonhap ("SEOUL ACCUSES JAPAN OF HISTORY DISTORTION IN TEXTBOOKS", 2004-09-01) reported that the ROK's foreign minister on Wednesday accused Japan of distorting history in its textbooks and said there is "only a single truth in historical facts." Ban Ki-moon called on Japan to face history as it is and develop forward-looking bilateral relations with the ROK, adding that the right recognition of history is the basis for ties between the two neighbors. "The Japanese government should be mindful of the recognition that the two countries should address history issues in a way that promotes forward-looking development," he said. "The history issue has always been an obstacle to further development of bilateral ties," Chun said. The textbook that the Tokyo authorities adopted Thursday is a revised version that is said to be worse than the earlier one in not correctly describing Japan's wartime crimes, such as sex slavery, forced labor and human experiments.

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17. ROK - Taiwan Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, TAIWAN RESUME REGULAR AIR SERVICE", 2004-09-01) reported that the ROK and Taiwan signed a civilian air traffic pact Wednesday. Accordingly, regular air service between the ROK and Taiwan, which has been suspended since November 1992, would resume and airliners would be permitted to enter each other's airspace. According to the Construction and Transportation Ministry, the ROK-Taiwan aviation pact that was abrogated in 1992 in accordance with the establishment of diplomatic ties between the ROK and PRC in that year would be reborn Wednesday with the signatures of the head of the ROK mission in Taipei and head of the Taiwanese mission in Seoul. According to the pact, Korean and Taiwanese airlines would operate passenger flights 18 times a week (within 4,500 seats) and freely open additional lines according to demand.

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18. Japan Volcano

The Associated Press ("VOLCANO ERUPTS IN JAPAN; NO ONE INJURED ", 2004-09-01) reported that Mount Asama, one of Japan's largest and most active volcanoes, erupted Wednesday night, spewing lava and smoke into the air. No injuries or damage were reported. Television footage shown by public broadcaster NHK showed a red glow lighting up the night sky from the eruption. Volcanic rock and ash has spread about a mile from the crater, the Japanese news agency Kyoto reported.

Tremors were continuing, the Japan's Meteorological Agency said. The Meteorological Agency lifted its activity rating for Mount Asama to 3 from 2, meaning that a small- to medium-sized eruption had occurred.

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19. US on Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("U.S. WELCOMES STEPS BY CHINA AND TAIWAN", 2004-09-01) reported that the State Department welcomed on Tuesday steps by the PRC and Taiwan to ease tensions by curtailing long-planned military exercises. Taiwan canceled a major live-fire military exercise shortly after Beijing reportedly called off massive war games near Taiwan. "We welcome and encourage all these steps that are being taken by Taiwan and the People's Republic of China to reduce tensions," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said. He said the US has consistently encouraged both sides to engage in dialogue to resolve differences. Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian made the announcement while en route to Latin America.

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20. PRC on Sino-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS US ARMS SALES TO TAIWAN ARE KEY OBSTACLE IN RELATIONS", 2004-09-01) reported that US arms sales to Taiwan are the main obstacle to developing Sino-US relations and should be re-examined if ties are to make progress, a senior PRC official was quoted as saying. Vice-Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong said other obstacles are the "politicization" by the US of human rights issues and its interference in Hong Kong's internal affairs. "These issues have created impediments to the growth of Sino-US relations," the China Daily quoted Zhou as telling 70 experts and scholars from the PRC and the US at a forum here. He also said the US presidential election had complicated the momentum of Sino-US relations, without specifying what he meant.

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21. PRC Energy Supply

Australian Broadcasting Corporation ("CHINA SEEKS NUCLEAR ANSWER TO POWER SHORTAGE", 2004-09-01) reported that the PRC is to build another 27 nuclear power plants by 2020 to match the country's soaring demand for energy. The PRC has the fastest growing economy in the world, but its infrastructure is struggling to meet demands. The PRC has announced an expansion plan to meet power shortages that have caused blackouts in a number of major cities this summer. Twenty-seven new 1000-megawatt nuclear power plants will be built by 2020. The PRC already has nine nuclear power plants, which account for just 1.4 per cent of the nation's total power supply.

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22. PRC Space Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA SHOWCASES SPACE PROGRAM", 2004-09-01) reported that the PRC, a rising space power, provided a rare look into its top-secret launch center Wednesday, promoting the military-funded project as a lure for foreign investment and a key to the nation's growing prosperity. A police car with flashing lights led busloads of international journalists across

northwestern PRC's vast Gobi Desert to the Jiuquan space center, past armored patrol vehicles and a sign, in English: "Foreigners are not allowed to enter without permission." It was the first time the PRC let foreign journalists enter, although officials forbade photographs of the command-and-control center with its rows of computer screens or the mammoth assembly hall where workers built the spacecraft that lifted the PRC's first astronaut into orbit last October. "We welcome foreign cooperation in the fields of aerospace and aviation," Hao said. "We would also like to provide launch services to foreign companies."

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23. Sino-Philippines Relations

BBC News ("ARROYO SET TO WOO CHINA ON TRADE", 2004-09-01) reported that Philippines President Gloria Arroyo has left for a three-day visit to the PRC in her first foreign trip since she was re-elected in May. President Arroyo's visit highlights the importance of economic ties with a booming PRC. The PRC, with its thriving economy and vast market, is increasingly important to the Philippines. Last year, the PRC was its sixth biggest trading partner and fastest growing market in many export sectors. During her visit to Beijing, President Arroyo will meet her PRC counterpart, Hu Jintao, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and former President Jiang Zemin. A broad range of issues, including security, trade and investment, is on the agenda.

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24. PRC Natural Disasters

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS FLOODS, TYPHOONS KILL 800 SO FAR THIS YEAR", 2004-09-01) reported that floods and typhoons in the PRC this year have killed at least 800 people and caused billions of dollars in economic losses, state media and government officials said Wednesday. "Landslides triggered by floods and also typhoons are the major disasters in July and August and caused the death toll," one official at the National General Headquarters for Flood Prevention and Drought Control told Reuters. Citing the department's figures, state television said 98 million people had been displaced by the disasters and economic losses due to this year's floods totaled $6.33 billion. The flood season had now passed, state television said. Major waterways such as the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers did not flood during the wet season, it said.

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25. PRC Olympic Athletes

Los Angeles Times ("MEDALS BECOME A GOLD MINE FOR CHINESE ATHLETES", 2004-09-01) reported that national glory isn't the only thing being heaped on the PRC's Olympic athletes, who are returning from the Athens Games with a record 32 gold medals. Like some of their counterparts in the West, they're being showered with cash. Gold medallists such as hurdler Liu Xiang stand to pocket hundreds of thousands of dollars in payments, gifts and endorsements from a grateful government, an adoring public and a handful of companies eager to leave their mark on 1.3 billion potential customers in the PRC. Some say the financial outpouring underscores a collective sigh of relief that the PRC has finally dispelled the idea that it is a nation of athletic wimps. For years, the country has lived with the taunts of Pacific Rim rivals, namely the Japanese, that Chinese are the "sickly men from East Asia." The money - which is split among the athlete, the coach and the government-run sports federation - doesn't hurt, either, in a nation where the per-capita income is about $1,000.

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