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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Japan Elections

Associated Press ("N. KOREA: U.S. TORPEDOING NUCLEAR TALKS", 2006-09-27) reported that the DPRK reacted to Shinzo Abe's election as Prime Minister of Japan with a harsh denunciation at the UN General Assembly's ministerial meeting. The United States is "torpedoing six-party talks", said the statement, and Japan's conservatives are attempting to turn Japanese society to the right and rearm. A nationalist and proponent of a robust alliance with the United States, Abe has called for a more assertive military and an overhaul of Japan's pacifist constitution. Deputy Foreign Minister Choe Su Hon rejected Japan's push for a permanent seat on the Security Council, saying this should never be allowed to happen, and he criticized the Security Council itself as "irresponsible, unrepresentative and unfair".

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2. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News Agency ("SOUTH KOREAN JOURNALISTS INVITED TO VISIT N KOREA NEXT MONTH", 2006-09-26) reported that a group of 150 ROK senior journalists will visit a Kaesong city next month at the invitation of the DPRK. The ancient Korean capital is where the armistice agreement was negotiated to end the Korean War in 1953. The invitation comes as inter-Korean relations remain strained.

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3. Change of DPRK Representation to the UN

("NORTH TO REPLACE NO. 2 UN ENVOY ", 2006-09-28) reported that the DPRK will replace its second-ranking diplomat at the UN, Han Song-ryol. Kim Myong-gil, a senior researcher at Pyongyang's Institute of Disarmament and Peace, will take his place. Mr. Han has been at his post since 2001. In the absence of US-North Korea diplomatic ties, the deputy chief of Pyongyang's UN mission generally handles bilateral matters with Washington. Saying he had little further information, an UN source said he understood that Pak Kil-yon, the DPRK's ambassador to the United Nations, would stay on. Other sources said the change appeared to be routine, noting Mr. Han's long tenure there.

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4. UN Special Rapporteur on DPRK Human Rights

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA RIGHTS ABUSES RAMPANT: U.N. EXPERT", 2006-09-27) reported that, when reporting to the newly-formed UN Human Rights Council, Vitit Muntarbhorn, UN Special Rapporteur on DPRK Human Rights, described numerous rights abuses, including repression of political dissidents, censoring of news media, restriction of movement within the country and alarming conditions in prisons. Choe Myong Nam, counselor of the DPRK mission to the UN in Geneva, "categorically and resolutely" rejected the report, saying the mandate of the UN monitor "is an outcome of conspiracy by such forces as the United States, Japan and European Union constantly perpetrating hostilities against DPRK for more than half a century," and the "domination of the whole Korean peninsular remains a prerequisite of the US strategy toward Asia."

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5. DPRK International Film Festival

Variety ("N. KOREAN FESTIVAL DRAWS INT'L CROWD", 2006-09-25) reported that the 10th Pyongyang Int'l Film Festival opened this month. US citizens were barred, but a significant number of foreigners attended. The 72-title program was a mixture of new and older films. German films included "Bern," "Napola," "Sophie Scholl: The Final Days," "Shadows of Time" and Hitler saga "Downfall." The UK ("Bride and Prejudice," "Bean" and "Nanny McPhee") and France fielded three features each; other Euro attendees included Sweden (vampire pic "Frostbite"), Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Poland and Czech Republic. Russia fielded five titles and Asia was repped by product from China ("You and Me," "A Time to Love"), Indonesia ("Joni's Promise"), Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore, India and Sri Lanka. One major hit was the Hong Kong extended version of Stephen Chow's "Shaolin Soccer," which had locals "rocking in their seats". There were no US or ROK films shown. Only two new DPRK features played at the fest: Jang In-hak's "The Schoolgirl's Diary" and Phyong Kwang's anti-Japanese period actioner "Pyongyang Nalpharam."

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6. Japan Constitution Revision

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S NEW PM DETERMINED TO REWRITE PACIFIST CONSTITUTION", 2006-09-27) reported that Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has put rewriting the US-imposed pacifist constitution at the top of his agenda, a move that could lead to a more active military role overseas but alarm neighboring countries. Abe, Japan's first prime minister born after World War II, has been vague on much of his platform but has passionately vowed to revise the constitution, saying he wanted to "write it with my own hand."

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7. Sino-Japanese Relations

Reuters ("JAPAN WANTS SUMMIT WITH CHINESE LEADER IN OCT: ASO", 2006-09-27) reported that Japan wants to hold a leaders' meeting with the PRC in October, Foreign Minister Taro Aso said, adding that a visit to Beijing by new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was one option. In an interview with Reuters and other media organizations, Aso said the change in Japan's government provided a chance to resume the summits. "We'd like to hold it sometime in October," said Aso.

[\(return to top\)](#) Reuters ("CHINA WARNS JAPAN'S ABE OVER SHRINE VISITS: PAPER ", 2006-0-27) reported that an official PRC newspaper warned that new Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ambiguous stance regarding official visits to a controversial war shrine could block improved ties with Beijing. The People's Daily, the mouthpiece of the PRC's ruling Communist Party, said in a commentary, "We can say that the obstacles to political relations between China and Japan have not been cleared, and the direction of Japan's relations with its Asian neighbors continues to hold disturbing concerns and perils." [\(return to top\)](#)

8. Japan-ROK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("NEIGHBORS WARILY EYE BETTER TIES UNDER ABE", 2006-09-27) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon yesterday welcomed the election of Shinzo Abe as prime minister of Japan, saying Seoul was willing to consider a meeting between President Roh Moo-hyun

and Mr. Abe. But, he said, there were conditions attached. "We sincerely hope that Prime Minister Abe will ... squarely address the issue of our historical legacy. Then we are prepared to have many kinds of high level exchanges and meetings, including summit meetings."

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9. Japan-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN'S ABE, BUSH AGREE TO MEET SOON ", 2006-09-27) reported that Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President George W. Bush agreed to meet soon to maintain their countries' close alliance, the premier's office said. Bush congratulated Abe in a phone call and invited him to visit the US, said a spokesman for the prime minister's Office. "It would be great if we can meet in Hanoi," Abe told Bush, referring to the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit scheduled in Vietnam in November.

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10. US-ROK Security Alliance

Donga Ilbo ("FEWER U.S. TROOPS AVAILABLE FOR KOREA", 2006-09-27) reported that the US Department of Defense is undertaking the task of reorganizing American forces by decreasing ground armies and increasing air power for the coming period that the ROK army takes over wartime operational control from the US. According to US Army sources, the Pentagon now plans to deploy new fighters in Osan Air Base in a few years and also plans to establish AFKOR WFHQ with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) such as Predator.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("NATO 'TAKES DIM VIEW OF SEPARATE KOREAN COMMAND'", 2006-09-27) reported that NATO believes separate operations by the ROK and the US would be ineffective in case of a war on the Korean Peninsula, the former Grand National Party chairwoman Park Geun-hye said. Speaking during a Europe trip, she reiterated it would not be too late to discuss the transfer of wartime operational control of ROK troops to the ROK after the DPRK nuclear problem is resolved. [\(return to top\)](#)

11. ROK Missile Command

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA ESTABLISHES DESIGNATED MISSILE COMMAND", 2006-09-27) reported that the ROK will open its own missile command to counter the threat posed by the DPRK's 170 mm and 240 mm long-range artillery and missiles. The Army said it set up the command to efficiently command and control tactical surface-to-surface missiles (ATACMS) and standard Hyunmoo missile battalions, and so it can more effectively counter the threats posed by any enemy.

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12. UNSG Candidates

The Associated Press ("AP: RACE FOR U.N. CHIEF SAID STILL OPEN", 2006-09-27) reported that Shashi Tharoor, the Indian candidate for U.N. secretary-general, acknowledged that ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon was "the man to beat." "I think it's still very early days in terms of intentions," Tharoor said in an interview, though he added: "If (Ban) consolidates his position in the next ballot, then of course it could well be all over or close to it."

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13. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA WARNS TAIWAN ON PERCEIVED INDEPENDENCE MOVE", 2006-09-27) reported that the PRC blasted Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian for a plan to change the constitution and rename the island, moves Beijing would consider a formal declaration of independence of territory it claims as its own. Chen's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) is studying constitutional changes to name the island the "Republic of Taiwan," instead of "Republic of China," and redefine its national territory.

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14. PRC Wind Energy

International Herald Tribune ("INDIA AND CHINA CATCH THE WIND ", 2006-09-27) reported that wind power may still have an image as something of a plaything of environmentalists more concerned with clean energy than saving money. But it is quickly emerging as a serious alternative not just in affluent areas of the world but in fast-growing, energy-starved countries like India and the PRC.

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