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United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Crisis

US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said on Monday that the world should learn from the DPRK crisis and work hard to prevent other countries from secretly developing nuclear weapons. "We must deal immediately and effectively with any state seeking to exploit the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to its own advantage," he told delegates at an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) conference in Vienna. "We have seen what happened when (North Korea) took this route," he said. "We need to look at why North Korea was able to make so much progress on its weapons program in the first place. It makes clear that the (DPRK) precedent is unacceptable, and the non-proliferation regime can withstand serious challenges, when member states are prepared to take firm and necessary action," he said.

"US on DPRK Nuclear Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

2. US on DPRK Nuclear Consortium

US President George W. Bush indicated he would spend 3.72 million dollars to finance an international consortium charged with implementing a now-defunct 1994 anti-nuclear deal with the DPRK. Bush said in a memorandum to Secretary of State Colin Powell that the money, already earmarked in 2003 spending bills, was vital to US national security interests. But the cash will cover "administrative expenses only" of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) which represents the US, European Union, the ROK and Japan. The Bush administration has requested no money for KEDO in its 2004 fiscal year budget currently being debated in Congress, officials said.

"US on DPRK Nuclear Consortium" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

3. US Senate on Bush Nuclear Weapons Plan

The US Senate on Tuesday rejected an effort to block President Bush's plans to study new types of small nuclear weapons, which critics say may spur a new arms race and heighten the risk of nuclear war. The Senate voted 53-41 against including the ban in a \$27 billion measure funding energy and water programs next year, including the US nuclear stockpile. It later voted 92-0 to pass the annual spending bill. A similar effort also failed in May, when the Senate voted to lift a decade-old prohibition on the study and development of so-called mini nukes -- although it did require Bush to get congressional approval before building any.

"US Senate on Bush Nuclear Weapons Plan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

"US Democrats on Bush Nuclear Bomb Plans" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

4. US on Anti-Terrorism Connections

US Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said Tuesday he had no reason to believe that Iraq's Saddam Hussein had a hand in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US. In an appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," Vice President Dick Cheney was asked whether he was surprised that more than two-thirds of Americans in the Washington Post poll would express a belief that Iraq was behind the attacks. "No, I think it's not surprising that people make that connection," he replied. Rice, asked about the same poll numbers, said, "We have never claimed that Saddam Hussein had either direction or control of 9-11."

"US on Anti-Terrorism Connections" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

5. US on DPRK Food Aid

The US warned it was considering whether to go ahead with a new 60,000 metric ton food shipment to the DPRK amid concern the DPRK may be preventing aid from reaching those in most desperate need. The US has already delivered most of a 40,000 metric ton donation to North Korea promised this year, but was considering a further offering of 60,000 tons, Ereli said. But the donation is contingent on the extent to which food aid is proven to reach those in need, he said.

"US on DPRK Food Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

"US DPRK Food Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

6. US Jet Anti-Missile System

The Bush administration plans to spend about \$100 million to develop an anti-missile system for commercial planes, more than originally discussed, reflecting concern that terrorists might try to use shoulder-fired rockets to shoot down an aircraft. The Homeland Security Department has told defense contractors it is seeking proposals. Congressional budget negotiators on Wednesday agreed to give the Homeland Security Department \$60 million in 2004 to start developing the technology. The Bush administration has been criticized by some lawmakers who say it has not taken the missile threat seriously enough. Under pressure, the administration last spring said it would need about \$60 million to develop anti-missile technology, but never specifically asked for the funds. The latest proposal calls for spending \$100 million over two years.

"US Jet Anti-Missile System" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)

Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Six-Way Talks

The DPRK has agreed in principle to hold a second round of multilateral talks on its nuclear weapon development program in Beijing in early November, a Japanese news agency reported Thursday. Quoting unidentified diplomatic sources in Moscow, Kyodo News said DPRK gave notified Russia and other regional players involved in the first round of nuclear talks. The other four countries were ROK, U.S., PRC and Japan.

"DPRK Six-Way Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, ROK)

2. DPRK Nuclear Plant Temporary Halt

The DPRK recently appeared to have halted reprocessing nuclear fuel rods at its Yongbyon complex, North Pyeongan Province, major news agencies reported, citing U.S. high-ranking government officials. Japanese Kyodo News said Friday that U.S. intelligence satellites have failed to capture the steam coming out of the nuclear fuel rods at a Yongbyon complex and the U.S. government has decided that DPRK stopped operating the nuclear reprocessing facility, citing sources from the U.S. congress. A senior official of the State Department was known to have told this before an unofficial hearing of the Senate.

"DPRK Nuclear Plant Temporary Halt" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, ROK)

3. ROK Domestic Politics

ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun sacked his home affairs minister who had been targeted in a no-confidence motion in parliament over his handling of anti-US protests. Roh bowed to opposition demands to accept the resignation of trusted ally Kim Doo-Kwan, a 44-year-old former dissident, whose ministry controls the ROK national police. Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Suh Sung-Kwan will replace him, the president's office said. The National Assembly voted two weeks ago to oust Kim, the youngest member in the cabinet formed in February when Roh took office.

"ROK Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

4. ROK on Iraq Troop Deployment

The ROK will send a survey team to Iraq next week before deciding on a US request to deploy combat troops, the defense ministry said on Wednesday. The US asked the ROK this month to provide a Polish-style contingent to help the US-led operation in Iraq, a government official said on Monday. "It will be light infantry but its purpose will be maintaining security, not for fighting," Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan told reporters, referring to the US request. ROK media have reported anything up to 10,000 ROK soldiers could be sent, but officials say nothing has been decided. The Polish contingent in Iraq is 2,400 strong. The ROK already has 700 engineering and medical troops in Iraq.

"ROK on Iraq Troop Deployment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)

"ROK US Iraq Troop Request Review" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

5. DPRK Response to US Economic Sanctions

The DPRK on Thursday accused the US of trying to "stifle" it after Washington announced economic sanctions on the DPRK for alleged human trafficking. The US last week said it will impose the sanctions on the DPRK, Myanmar and Cuba for failing to take steps to stop human trafficking practices, such as forcing people to work or engage in sexual acts against their will. The DPRK's Rodong Sinmun wrote, "The US imperialists (want to) frighten the army and the people of the DPRK and isolate and stifle it by sanctions."

"DPRK Response to US Economic Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)

6. US ROK Anti-Missile System

The US, at loggerheads with the DPRK over its nuclear weapons aims, has deployed an anti-missile system in the ROK that can hit ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and aircraft, the US army said Tuesday. It said the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) system was part of an \$11 billion plan to enhance US defenses in the ROK where 37,000 US troops are stationed to help deter any DPRK attack. "The upgraded Patriot system will bring enhanced defensive capabilities to the peninsula as well as contribute to the overall deterrence US forces bring to the alliance (with South Korea)," the 8th US Army said in a statement.

"US ROK Anti-Missile System" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

7. ROK on DPRK Humanitarian Aid

The top opposition leader in the ROK called yesterday for tightening a noose around the DPRK by restricting food and energy aid to the DPRK if six-party talks aimed at ending Pyongyang's nuclear arms program fail. "It would be great if we could find a solution just through dialogue, but the nuclear issue is not one we can just drag on," Choe Byung-yul, chairman of the Grand National Party (GNP), said during a breakfast meeting with editors and reporters of The Washington Times. "They are too obsessed with the fact that they need to find a solution to this nuclear program issue only through negotiations and talks." Choe also blamed former ROK President Kim Dae-jung's government of indirectly funding the DPRK's arms program.

"ROK on DPRK Humanitarian Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

8. US on DPRK Drug Links

The US is "increasingly convinced" that the DPRK has a direct role in international drugs production and trafficking. "We are deeply concerned about heroin and methamphetamine linked to the DPRK being trafficked to East Asian countries," Bush said in his annual report to Congress on drugs producing countries. US officials were "increasingly convinced that state agents and enterprises in the DPRK are involved in the narcotics trade," Bush said. The US leader noted that reliable information on opium poppy cultivation in the DPRK was unavailable, but said there were "clear indications that the DPRK traffic in, and probably manufacture, methamphetamine."

"US on DPRK Drug Links" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

9. DPRK Market Economy

Second-hand bicycles, bustling open-air markets and roadside kiosks that peddle cigarettes, snacks and bottles of beer are hardly the stuff of revolution. But some recent visitors to the DPRK say they are unambiguous symbols of a shift from the grip of the command economy under which it has operated for 55 years. Grassroots market-oriented economic activity has taken off since the isolated, impoverished country launched a sweeping overhaul of its price and salary system 14 months ago to try to revive its moribund economy, they say. How the domestic reforms might affect the overall economy is hard to say because the DPRK's troubles run so deep. But aid workers and others who have spent time there say they see the economic changes altering how people think and live.

"DPRK Market Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)

10. DPRK on US-led Naval Drill

The DPRK on Tuesday denounced a US-led multi-national naval drill held off Australia to stop trade in banned weaponry as "a prelude to a nuclear war" targeting the communist state. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) warned Pyongyang would "further increase its nuclear deterrent force" to cope with what it called the US blockade strategy. The US, Japan, Australia and France conducted the maneuvers featuring a simulated seizure of a vessel carrying weapons in the Coral Sea off Australia's east coast over the weekend in a veiled warning to the DPRK.

"DPRK on US-led Naval Drill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

"US-Multilateral Arms Interception Exercises" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

"Joint Maritime Drill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, Japan)

11. ROK Typhoon Disaster

The ROK said Monday the most powerful typhoon to hit the country caused at least \$1 billion in damage and killed at least 89 people when it carved a path of destruction through vital industrial areas. Rescue workers were hunting for 26 people still missing three days after Typhoon Maemi howled into the country on Friday with 134 mph winds in the middle of the five-day "Chusok" thanksgiving holiday. The typhoon crumpled giant container cranes, heaved an evacuated ocean liner onto a beach, sank scores of vessels and plunged more than a million homes into darkness in the southeast industrial heartland. Thousands of homes were still without electricity on Monday.

"ROK Typhoon Disaster" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC on PRC Troops at DPRK Border

The PRC dismissed on Tuesday reports that its troops had massed at the border with the DPRK, where thousands of refugees from the hermit country have slipped across in recent years. "PRC troops have indeed not massed at the PRC-DPRK border," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a news conference. Kong said on Monday he had not heard of any deployment of up to 150,000 troops on the PRC's border with the DPRK, as Hong Kong newspapers have reported in recent weeks.

"PRC on PRC Troops at DPRK Border" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

"PRC Soldiers on DPRK Border" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

2. PRC-Japan Relations

More than one million PRC have signed an online petition demanding that Japan compensate victims poisoned by recently unearthed World War II-era chemical weapons and apologize, organizers said on Wednesday. The signature drive, launched by seven PRC Web sites and signed by 1.12 million people within a month would likely fuel anti-Japanese sentiment and give Beijing more leverage when dealing with Tokyo. Six activists planned to present the petition to the Japanese embassy in Beijing on Thursday, Zhou Wenbo, a spokesman for the group, said, adding that the signature response was unprecedented in the PRC's online history.

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

3. PRC on Japan Chemical Weapons Disposal

The PRC government has urged Japan to speed up the disposal of chemical weapons abandoned by its forces at the end of World War II, state media said. "The Japanese government should provide overall statistics on its abandoned chemical weapons in China to the PRC government," Ge Guangbiao, a chemical weapons expert employed by the PRC foreign ministry, told the China Daily. He said the Japanese information should cover the locations, numbers and categories of the chemical weapons left in the PRC during the chaotic last months of the war. Under the Chemical Weapons Convention, Japan has until 2007 to destroy all chemical weapons found in the PRC, the paper said.

"PRC on Japan Chemical Weapons Disposal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

4. US-PRC on DPRK Military Technology

James Kelly, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, said Sept 11 that the U.S. and PRC governments have been working on measures to prevent DPRK from obtaining military technologies needed to produce nuclear weapons and missiles from other countries. U.S. official gave a detailed explanation on the Sino-U.S. bilateral relations to a U.S. Senate committee for foreign relations on that day. "The two governments have been exchanging opinions on how to block DPRK from obtaining technologies needed to build nuclear weapons, missiles, and weapons of mass destruction from other countries," he said.

"US-PRC on DPRK Military Technology" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, ROK)

5. US on PRC WTO Commitments

The PRC must improve upon "uneven and incomplete" adherence to market-opening obligations demanded by its entry to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the US Chamber of Commerce said Tuesday. In a new report, issued as anger mounts here at the PRC's currency and trade policies, the Chamber did however compliment Beijing on taking initial steps to comply with the long list of WTO requirements. And it praised Beijing for not using the damaging SARS outbreak, or generational changes in the leadership of the Communist Party, as an excuse to slow compliance to WTO rules.

"US on PRC WTO Commitments" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

6. PRC-US Trade Surplus Issue

US President George W. Bush's administration bluntly attacked the PRC for shutting out US exporters, dragging its feet on free trade promises, and undervaluing the yuan. Commerce Secretary Donald Evans delivered some of the harshest criticism of the PRC yet by the Bush administration, which has prided itself on tightening political ties with Beijing. The US trade deficit with the PRC, which grew 13 percent in July from the previous month to a staggering 11.3 billion dollars, is an increasing political embarrassment ahead of November 2004 presidential elections.

"PRC-US Trade Surplus Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

7. PRC Domestic Labor Force

Women are now the main power in agricultural production in China, accounting for more than 60 percent of the rural workforce. Statistics from the State Development and Reform Commission (SDRC) show that women have accounted for over 50 percent of laborers in agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and fishery since the 1990s and the proportion is increasing, the Xinhua news agency said. In 1990, women made up 52.4 percent of the agricultural workforce. In 2000, the figure rose to 61.6 percent, according to the SDRC. Despite the massive flows of rural laborers to the cities, 90 percent of female farmers have not left their crops or turned to other jobs, SDRC research shows.

"PRC Domestic Labor Force" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

8. PRC City Water Pollution

The PRC's rapidly growing cities are not only short of water but are polluting their scarce water supplies and costing the economy dearly, the China Daily reported. Beijing, for example, discharges 1.2 billion tons of sewage, almost half of which are untreated, into the city's waterways each year, the report said. With higher living standards, however, urban dwellers are demanding a cleaner environment, and local governments are beginning to invest in protecting their local water resources. By 2008, Beijing will have built 30 sewage treatment plants to process over 90 percent of sewage before discharge, according to Liu Hanguai, director of the Urban Committee of China Hydraulic Engineering Society.

"PRC City Water Pollution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

9. US Falun Gong Jiang Zemin Lawsuit

A US district judge has tossed out a lawsuit accusing former PRC president Jiang Zemin of torture and genocide on the grounds that he enjoys diplomatic immunity from prosecution. In a ruling filed Friday, Judge Matthew Kennelly of the northern district of Illinois tossed out the civil suit filed in October 2002 on behalf of six unnamed Falun Gong members, saying the court recognized Jiang's head-of-state immunity. The judge also dismissed claims of human rights violations against the notorious Falun Gong Control Office, otherwise known as 6/11, saying it did not have jurisdiction over the agency.

"US Falun Gong Jiang Zemin Lawsuit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

10. PRC Self-Immolation Protest

A disgruntled PRC farmer who tried to set himself on fire this week was the second person in three weeks to resort to the extreme protest over a controversial government eviction scheme, state media said. Zhu Zhengliang, 45, from eastern Anhui province, suffered light injuries after he tried to ignite himself Monday close to a famous portrait of former leader Mao Zedong near central Beijing's Tiananmen Square, police said. The People's Daily website on Wednesday said the incident was preceded by a similar protest three weeks ago.

"PRC Self-Immolation Protest" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

11. PRC-US Relations

PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan on September 10 that PRC strongly opposes the US side allowing the Dalai Lama to visit the US and its leaders' meeting with him. Kong made the remark in reply to a reporter's question about the Dalai Lama's visit to the US from September 4 to 24, his meeting with US Secretary of State Colin Powell and his possible meeting with President George W. Bush. PRC has lodged representations with the US on the Dalai Lama's US visit and its leaders' meeting with him, calling for the US side to keep its promise that it acknowledges Tibet as part of China and does not support the "independence of Tibet," Kong said.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, PRC)

12. PRC-Russian Ties

PRC Vice-President Zeng Qinghong met on September 10 with the Russian members of the China-Russia Friendship Committee for Peace and Development (CRFCPD) which was headed by Leonid Drachevsky, the CRFCPD's chairman on the Russian side. During his visit to Russia last May, PRC President Hu Jintao and Russian President Vladimir Putin reached the consensus of creating a new situation for the development of the PRC-Russian relations, which is of vital significance to the development of bilateral ties in the new century, Zeng said.

"PRC-Russian Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, PRC)

Japan

1. Japan Domestic Politics

Backed by strong public support, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is set to win the leadership election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) this weekend but the expected easy victory is no guarantee of a smooth path ahead, analysts said. Saturday's election is crucial as the party's three-year-term presidency effectively confers the premiership, given the LDP's parliamentary majority. Opinion polls show Koizumi, 61, with an overwhelming lead among grass roots LDP members over his three rivals in the race, which is decided by votes from the 357 LDP lawmakers, and 300 votes allocated to party chapters representing 1.4 million members.

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

"Japan Snap General Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 15, 2003, US)

2. Japan on Troops in Iraq

Japan is ready to bear "a due share" in contributions to reconstruct Iraq, a top government official said, as a report claimed Tokyo was considering a one-billion dollar initial payout. Japan plans to have a framework for its financial contribution ready in time for US President George W. Bush's visit to Japan on October 17 for summit talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, it said.

"Japan on Troops in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)

3. DPRK-Japan Relations

One year after the DPRK and Japan moved to bring an end to decades of hostility with a historic summit, the goodwill has evaporated and relations are marked by suspicion and hostility. "Nothing is more insincere than their (DPRK) attitude," said Toru Hasuike, whose brother Kaoru, 45, was among five Japanese kidnapping victims permitted their first homecoming in 24 years last October after the summit. "I thought the summit was a new start ... but I greatly regret there has been no progress since the five returned home," Hasuike told the Japan Broadcasting Corp.

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 17, 2003, US)

4. Japan DPRK Sanctions

The Yomiuri reported on September 15 that the Japanese government is determined to take steps to apply sanctions on DPRK, such as limiting personnel interchanges and prohibiting remittance, should DPRK test its nuclear weapons. Sanction measures prepared by the Japanese government include; at the first phase, limiting personnel interchanges by disapproving entrance of DPRK ships and crew in Japanese ports; second, suspending all remittance to DPRK through Japanese financial institutions; third, playing a leading role in the UN Security Council in criticizing DPRK and applying economic sanctions. At present, Japan is against putting economic sanctions through UN resolutions on DPRK, but it is now claiming that it could ask for the UN to apply sanctions on DPRK, since the nuclear testing would go beyond the extent to which Japan could tolerate.

"Japan DPRK Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, ROK)

5. 4-Nation Maritime Exercise

Japan played the starring role in a four-nation maritime exercise to intercept and board vessels suspected of smuggling weapons of mass destruction (WMD) over the weekend. Participating in the one-day exercise Saturday in the Coral Sea was a Japan Coast Guard patrol ship and naval ships from the US, France and Australia, plus observers from seven other members of the US led-Proliferation Security Initiative. . Some 800 personnel, ships and aircraft participated in a drill to intercept a cargo ship-dubbed Tokyo Summer-that according to the exercise scenario was carrying materials for weapons of mass destruction and traversing international waters.

"4-Nation Maritime Exercise" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, Japan)

6. Japan Domestic Economy

The Bank of Japan upgraded its economic assessment in its monthly report by one notch, saying exports -- the engine of the nation's economy -- appear to be improving. "Economic activity still continues to be virtually flat as a whole, although signs of improvement have been observed in such areas as the environment for exports," the central bank said in the report Tuesday. Last month, the central bank said "economic activity remains virtually flat" as private consumption and housing investment remained weak.

"Japan Domestic Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 16, 2003, US)

7. Japan Aum Cult Member Death Sentence

A Japanese high court upheld a death sentence to a former Aum Supreme Truth sect member and martial arts expert for his part in 10 murders including victims of a 1994 nerve gas attack. Presiding judge Atsushi Semba turned down the appeal by Satoru Hashimoto, 36, at Tokyo High Court, rejecting the argument that his mind had been under control of Aum guru Shoko Asahara.

"Japan Aum Cult Member Death Sentence" (NAPSNet Daily Report, September 5, 2003, US)
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