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United States

1. DPRK on US Nuclear Proposal

The DPRK said at the weekend that it would consider the US offer of a written security assurance in return for dismantling its nuclear program, raising hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough in the year-old stand-off. The statement was in response to President George W. Bush's proposal last week of a multilateral security agreement involving a written promise from the US and other countries not to attack the DPRK.

"DPRK on US Nuclear Proposal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

2. US Congress DPRK Visit Delay

A US congressional delegation seeking to ease nuclear tensions with the DPRK has delayed a trip to the DPRK because of White House opposition, the lawmaker heading the delegation said on Sunday. Rep. Curt Weldon, a Pennsylvania Republican set to head the bipartisan delegation, gave no indication when the trip would be rescheduled, but said talks were continuing. Late on Sunday, the official Korean Central News Agency reported that Weldon's delegation had been scheduled to visit the Yongbyon nuclear complex where Pyongyang has said it has reprocessed fuel rods as part of its atomic arms program.

"US Congress DPRK Visit Delay" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

3. Top DPRK US Defection

The DPRK's highest-ranking defector Hwang Jang-yop told US congressmen on Thursday that "the [DPRK] regime, albeit it takes great pains to show us it is stable, is in fact profoundly unstable." Hwang is the former confidant of Kim Il-Sung, the DPRK's late leader, and a mentor to Kim's son and successor, Kim Jong-il. Hwang this week is making his first visit to Washington since escaping the DPRK six years ago. Hwang was critical of President Bush's offer of a security guarantee to the DPRK: "Perhaps you can say, 'Kim Jong-il, we'll leave you alone if you stop your nuclear program.' ... I don't think there is righteousness in that. On top of that, I don't think any promise that is made by Kim Jong-il would be of any significance." He continued, "I don't understand how we can guarantee the continued existence of a dictator that abuses human rights and how that can actually be democratic."

"DPRK Defector: DPRK Regime Unstable" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

"Former DPRK Defector returned to DPRK Re-entered ROK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

"Top DPRK US Defection" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

"Former Secretary of DPRK's Ruling Worker's Party US Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

4. US President on APEC

US President George W. Bush forced the war on terror to the heart of a Pacific Rim summit on October 20, despite the resentment of some Asian nations which want it to stick to freeing trade. More talks will be held today and Bush, seeking practical as well as diplomatic support for his campaign against terror, made it the centerpiece of a statement drafted for issue at the end of the two-day meeting. The draft calls for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, a clear reference to the nuclear ambitions of the DPRK, which was another major focus of Bush's talks in Bangkok.

"US President on APEC" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, PRC)

Republic of Korea

1. Six-Way Talks Are Likely to Begin Soon

The DPRK expressed on October 25 that it is willing to consider the "multilateral security assurance" plan proposed by US President George W. Bush during the ROK-US summit on October 20 last week. Replying to the inquiry from DPRK Central News Agency, DPRK Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman said, "President Bush recently suggested us (DPRK) a written assurance of non-aggression during the APEC summit in Thailand and asked for reopening the six-way talks." He added, "We are willing to take President Bush's remark into consideration if it is on the basis of a co-existing strategy and seeks for a positive influence to realize an overall settlement based on the principle of simultaneous action."

"Six-Way Talks Are Likely to Begin Soon" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

"DPRK-US Relations on Nuke Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, PRC)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks in December

The DPRK is softening its stand on the dispute over its nuclear weapons development and there are hopes that another round of crisis talks will be held in December, top officials in the ROK stated. ROK Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun cited the DPRK's new willingness to consider President Bush's offer of multilateral security assurances in return for dropping its nuclear programs. Separately, ROK Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan said he hoped another round of talks on the nuclear crisis will be held in December.

"ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks in December" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

3. DPRK Third Missile Test Fire?

The DPRK may have test-fired a short-range missile into the Sea of Japan on Saturday for the third time in a week, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported. It quoted Japanese Defense Agency sources, citing unconfirmed information, as saying the surface-to-ship missile was believed to be an improved Silkworm with a range of roughly 100 km (60 miles). The sources said the apparent missile firing, which took place on Saturday afternoon, did not pose any threat to Japan's security, Kyodo reported.

"DPRK Third Missile Test Fire?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

"DPRK Fired Short-Range Missile Again" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

4. DPRK Domestic Politics

Kim Yong-Sun, the DPRK's top official in charge of inter-Korean relations, has died in hospital following a traffic accident, Pyongyang's official news agency announced. "Kim Yong-Sun ... died on October 26, (2003) at the age of 69," the Korean Central News Agency said. He was considered as Kim Jong-Il's right hand man for exchanges with the ROK and was seen sitting next to the strongman during the summit. Three months later, Kim Yong-Sun visited Seoul as Kim Jong-Il's special envoy.

"DPRK Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

"DPRK's Point Man for DPRK-ROK Affairs died of Traffic Accident" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

5. ROK DPRK Condolences for Kim Yong-sun

The ROK government is considering expressing condolences to Pyongyang after the death of Kim Yong-sun, the DPRK's point man for inter-Korean affairs, who reportedly died on Sunday of injuries from a traffic accident in June. "I think we should express our condolences considering Kim's role in inter-Korean relations," presidential National Security Adviser Ra Jong-yil said on Monday in a meeting with reporters. Ra said that the condolences could be offered through a working-level channel when a funeral is held in the DPRK. The expression of sympathy would be the first of its kind offered from the ROK for any DPRK figure.

"ROK DPRK Condolences for Kim Yong-sun" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

6. ROK Hopeful of New Round of Talks

The DPRK's agreement to new 6-party talks "greatly enhances the prospects for a diplomatic resolution of the nuclear issue." The ROK foreign minister acknowledged that there was skepticism about the North's reliability in negotiations and its willingness to disarm, but said he believed a multilateral offer could succeed.

"ROK Hopeful of New Round of Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 31, 2003, US)

"ROK Regards DPRK's Reactions as A Nod on US Proposal" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, ROK)

7. ROK Al Qaeda Ship Tip

The ROK said on Thursday it had been tipped off that a cargo ship heading for one of its major ports could be carrying members of Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda group. On Wednesday, the Munhwa Ilbo newspaper quoted unidentified military sources as saying the US military had tipped ROK officials about the ship. Officials say it is scheduled to reach the west-coast port of Kunsan with its timber cargo on Thursday between 0900 GMT and 1100 GMT and stay for a week or 10 days. "It is true that the authorities received a tip about possible al Qaeda members, and we're prepared just in case," a spokesman for the National Intelligence Service stated.

"ROK Al Qaeda Ship Tip" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

8. ROK Warning Shots at DPRK Ship

The ROK navy fired warning shots on Thursday after a DPRK patrol boat entered ROK waters, the ROK military said. The DPRK navy patrol boat sailed 990 yards into waters controlled by the ROK, but turned back after 10 minutes when a ROK warship fired four warning shots, when the two ships were about eight miles apart. The two sides had no more hostile exchanges, the spokesman said. ROK officials suspected that the DPRK patrol boat crossed the poorly marked sea borderline while chasing off several PRC fishing boats poaching in the area. On Wednesday, the DPRK accused ROK navy ships of repeatedly violating its western sea border in recent days. ROK rejected the claim as groundless. "The South Korean military authorities should not act rashly, mindful that such infiltration into the territorial waters is a dangerous adventure which may spark a new "West Sea skirmish," the DPRK official news agency said.

"ROK Warning Shots at DPRK Ship" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

9. Kim Jong-il Hails DPRK-PRC Ties

DPRK leader Kim Jong-il hailed his nation's ties with the PRC at the end of a three-day official Chinese mission to Pyongyang to rejuvenate stalled nuclear talks. Kim, who emerged from more than 40 days of self-imposed media isolation last week, also vowed to deepen his state's links with its chief ally.

"Kim Jong-il Hails DPRK-PRC Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 31, 2003, US)

10. UN for More DPRK Food Aid

The World Food Program appealed Thursday for more food aid for the DPRK, saying the country faces a shortfall in its harvest and that supplies to feed children and pregnant women are running out. "This year's harvest of wheat and other grains should be the best since the mid-1990s but it's still 20 percent less than North Korea's 20 million people need," said Rick Corsino, the WFP director for the country. The UN agency, which feeds about 6.5 million DPRK citizens, will have to cut programs for children, pregnant women and the elderly if it doesn't get another 150,000 tons of food soon, Corsino said at a news conference in Beijing. "UN for More DPRK Food Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

11. DPRK-ROK Maritime Border Violation

The DPRK dismissed claims that one of its patrol boats had violated ROK waters in the Yellow Sea. Thursday, a ROK navy ship fired warning shots at one DPRK boat, which crossed the Northern Limit Line (NLL). "This is a sheer fabrication," a spokesman for the Navy Command of the (North) Korean People's Army told the state-run KCNA. "We make it clear that no patrol boat of the KPA Navy was active in those waters at that time." The ROK said the patrol boat returned to the DPRK after 10 minutes in the ROK waters of Yeonpyeong Island. "DPRK-ROK Maritime Border Violation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 31, 2003, US)

12. DPRK Business Report on Kaesong Exports

An industrial complex for ROK firms in the DPRK city of Kaesong is unlikely to serve as an export base, because under rules of origin practices, products manufactured in [the DPRK] face hefty tariffs when entering other countries. The ROK's Hyundai Asan Corp. is constructing the industrial park just north of the DMZ, to house over 1,000 small- and medium-sized garment, footwear and other labor-intensive factories. The project began under an agreement signed during the inter-Korean summit in Pyongyang in June 2000. "DPRK Business Report on Kaesong Exports" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 31, 2003, US)

13. ROK-DPRK Private Investment

The ROK's cumulative private-sector investments in the DPRK amounted to 1.15bn US dollars as of August, a government document showed Tuesday. According to data released by the Ministry of Unification, a total of 25 local companies have invested 1.15bn dollars in the DPRK since 1996, when the now-defunct Daewoo Corp. set up a 5.12m-dollar textile plant near Pyongyang. Among the investments, a Korea Electric Power Corp.-led project to build two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK accounted for 83 per cent, or 954.6m dollars, the data found. The Hyundai Group was the second-biggest investor in the DPRK, with Hyundai Merchant Marine, Hyundai Engineering and Construction and Hyundai Asan spending 144.8m dollars on the Mt Kumgang tourism program and relevant development projects over the past five years. "ROK-DPRK Private Investment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

14. Inter-Korean Economic Talks

The ROK and DPRK will hold a new round of economic talks 5-8 November in Pyongyang, the Ministry of Unification said Tuesday (28 October). The talks, the seventh of its kind, will check progress on three major inter-Korean economic projects, including the cross-border railway reconnection, said ministry officials. Kim Gwang-lim, vice minister for finance and economy, will lead the ROK delegation, while the DPRK will be represented by Choe Yong-gon, vice minister of construction and building-materials industries.

"Inter-Korean Economic Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

15. DPRK on Inter-Korean Railroad Meeting

The 7th working contacts for reconnecting rail and road links between the DPRK and the ROK were held in Kaesong on 27 and 28 October. At the contacts both sides adopted an agreement after having an exhaustive discussion on practical issues. Both sides decided to make mutual visits to the places of the two sides where projects of reconnecting rail and road links are expected to take place with a view to ensuring more smooth progress of them and hold the eighth working contact in the near future. It was agreed to decide on the date, venue and method depending on the agreement to be reached at the seventh meeting of the North-South Committee for the Promotion of Economic Cooperation.

"DPRK on Inter-Korean Railroad Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

16. ROK Anti-US Activism

ROK police said that 15 student activists have been detained for staging an illegal protest against a request from the US to send troops to Iraq. Police said the students erected a tent Saturday night for an anti-US protest on the sidewalk near the US embassy. The students were among 2,000 anti-war activists who marched in downtown Seoul Saturday to protest against the decision to accept the US request. The ROK has yet to decide on the nature, timing and size of the force to be sent.

"ROK Anti-US Activism" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC and DPRK Agree to New 6-Way Talks

PRC envoy Wu Bangguo is heading home after securing the DPRK's agreement "in principle" to continue the six-party negotiations, a move welcomed by the US and the UN. Asked about DPRK security demands, spokesman Scott McClellan said that US officials "want to work through the multilateral framework on providing some sort of security assurance." Kim also dropped his demand that Japan be excluded from any further talks having failed to win support from any of the other participating nations.

"PRC and DPRK Agree to New 6-Way Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 31, 2003, US)

"PRC and DPRK Agree to New 6-Way Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

"PRC-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

"DPRK on 'Unpredictable' Nuclear Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

"PRC-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, PRC)

2. Powell and PRC-US Relations

US Secretary of State Colin Powell is to attend a major academic conference on relations between the US and the PRC being held next week in Texas, the State Department said. Powell will speak to the conference at Texas A and M University on November 5 immediately on his return from a trip to three Latin American countries, Panama, Nicaragua and Honduras, it said in a statement.

"Powell and PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

3. US Military Program in Taiwan

The Bush administration has quietly embarked on an ambitious effort to restructure Taiwan's military and improve the island's ability to defend itself against the PRC. But the US plan is foundering because Taiwan's leaders are reluctant to foot the enormous bill and force change upon the island's highly politicized and conservative military, US and Taiwanese officials said. "China will not tolerate a de facto alliance," said a senior PRC official, speaking on condition of anonymity. PRC defense minister, Gen. Cao Gangchuan, is in Washington for talks that will focus in part on Taiwan.

"US Military Program in Taiwan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

4. Cross-Straits Relations

The PRC slammed a political rally by Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) as a "separatist action" that would bring disaster to the island territory claimed by Beijing.

"Taiwan independence activities have directly damaged the basic interests of Taiwan people and are a disaster for Taiwan," an unnamed spokesman for the State Council told the China Daily. Saturday's rally in which Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian called for a referendum on a new constitution "was a separatist action" manipulated by the DPP and other separatist organizations, the spokesman for China's Taiwan Affairs Office said.

"Cross-Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

5. PRC-Japan Relations

Premier Wen Jiabao and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi marked the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Japanese treaty of peace and friendship with congratulatory messages on October 22. In his telegram to Koizumi, Wen said the 1978 treaty signed by the older generation of Chinese and Japanese leaders provides a solid political basis for bilateral relations. He said Sino-Japanese ties are now going through an important stage of development and the two countries shoulder great responsibility for maintaining peace and promoting development.

"PRC-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, PRC)

6. PRC-US Relations

PRC Minister of National Defense Cao Gangchuan left Beijing on October 24 for an official goodwill visit to the US. Cao was invited by the US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. During his visit, Cao will meet US governmental and military leaders, exchange views on international and regional security and other issues of common concern.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, PRC)

7. PRC-US Foreign Exchange Situation

The PRC escaped censure Thursday for fixing the value of the yuan in a key report to Congress by President George W. Bush's administration. But pressure mounted on Beijing to adopt a more flexible exchange rate, blamed for tipping the US trade deficit with the PRC to 103 billion dollars last year, nearly a quarter of the global US shortfall.

"PRC-US Foreign Exchange Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 30, 2003, US)

"US-PRC Economic Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

8. PRC-US Market Dispute

US Commerce Secretary Don Evans said he warned the PRC premier Tuesday that Washington will "vigorously enforce" its trade laws if Beijing fails to move faster on meeting commitments to open its markets. Evans said he also pressed Premier Wen Jiabao to strengthen efforts to protect movies and other intellectual property, saying Washington is frustrated at the PRC's failure to stop rampant piracy. "We put a white-hot light on it and said, this is something we're going to watch very closely," Evans told reporters.

"PRC-US Market Dispute" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

9. PRC Space Program

The next time the PRC launches a manned space craft it will carry three astronauts on a seven-day mission in orbit, state media said Tuesday, citing a leading space engineer. The PRC's second manned space flight will take place within two years, but the launch could be moved up, the Chengdu Evening News cited Xu Dazhe, vice general manager of China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, as saying. His remarks seemed to contradict statements by the chief engineer of the Shenzhou V rocket, who said the PRC would launch two astronauts into orbit next time.

"PRC Space Program" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

10. DPRK-PRC Economic Trade

The PRC's trade with the DPRK rose in the first nine months of the year, as it bought larger quantities of minerals and metals from the DPRK, PRC state media said. In the period from January to September, the PRC's imports from the DPRK via the border station of Dandong increased 12.3 percent to 112.2 million dollars, the Xinhua news agency reported. Imports were boosted by larger amounts of minerals and base metals, the agency said. Meanwhile, PRC exports to the DPRK, mainly crude oil, chemical goods and farm products, rose 10.6 percent to 232.3 million dollars, Xinhua said.

"DPRK-PRC Economic Trade" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

Japan

1. Japan General Election

Official official campaigning started for Japan's November 9 general election, the first chance for voters to pass judgment directly on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi since he took office in 2001. The prime minister was the first to hit the campaign trail, speaking at a Tokyo train station, to push for his reform agenda and highlighting early indications that the economy is on the up-swing. Koizumi argued that his reform initiatives should be implemented under a stable government led by his Liberal Democratic Party. By early afternoon, 1,156 candidates had registered with the central and local election commissions to contest the 480 seats in the lower house of the Japanese parliament.

"Japan General Election" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

2. Japanese Woman Seeking Asylum in DPRK

A Japanese woman in her 20s is seeking asylum in the DPRK after swimming across a river from the PRC, government sources said Tuesday. The DPRK has told Japan that a Japanese woman had entered the DPRK seeking "asylum," the Japanese Foreign Ministry said Tuesday 28 October, confirming a report by the (Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). Ministry officials said the DPRK notified Japan of the situation Monday through diplomatic channels in Beijing.

"Japanese Woman Seeking Asylum in DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 28, 2003, US)

3. Japan Domestic Politics

Makiko Tanaka, Japan's popular ex-foreign minister, turned her back on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, whipping up a political storm in the run-up to next month's general election. Tanaka, who backed maverick Koizumi in his rise to power in April 2001, criticised the premier for being manipulated by bureaucrats, despite his slogan of reform, and rival factions in his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). "Nothing has changed. I feel very sorry about him and he seems so pitiful," said the feisty 59-year-old Tanaka, who gave up her seat in the House of Representatives in August last year over an alleged fraud scandal.

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

4. Japan-PRC Russia Energy Competition

Energy-hungry PRC and Japan are locked in a fierce struggle for supplies of Russian crude, allowing Russia to bargain hard as it chooses where to build a pipeline from its Siberian oil fields. After a decade of patiently courting Russia to build a 2.5-billion-dollar, 2,400-kilometre (1,440-mile) pipeline from Angarsk to the northeastern PRC city of Daqing, the PRC is facing a determined last-ditch challenge from its neighbor. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pushed Tokyo's case for a more expensive 4,000 kilometre route to the Russian Pacific port of Nakhodka, on the Sea of Japan, when he met Russian President Vladimir Putin last week on the sidelines of the APEC summit in Bangkok.

"Japan-PRC Russia Energy Competition" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 27, 2003, US)

5. Dalai Lama in Japan

Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama has arrived for a 12-day visit, which is likely to anger the PRC. Kyodo News said that a PRC diplomat in Tokyo visited a lawmaker from the Tibet group in August to urge him to scrap the invitation, saying it was undesirable for Japan-PRC relations to invite the Dalai Lama. The lawmaker rejected the request, Kyodo said.

"Dalai Lama in Japan" (NAPSNet Daily Report, October 31, 2003, US)

[\(return to top\)](#)

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