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I. United States

1. DPRK Working-Level Talks

Reuters ("North Korea working-level talks may open June 21", 2004-06-03) Arrangements are being made to reopen six-nation "working-level" talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions for two days from June 21, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported on Thursday. Quoting unspecified sources in Washington, Kyodo said the PRC was proposing to hold working-level talks and a third round of full-fledged six-party discussions in the fourth week of June. Japanese officials were not immediately available to comment on the report.

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2. ROK Military Budget

Agence France-Presse ("South Korean military wants bigger budget to deter North Korea ", 2004-0-11) The ROK defense ministry called for 21.4 trillion won billion dollars) for next year's defense budget, up 13.4 percent from this year. The proposed spending would account for 2.9 percent of the ROK's gross domestic product, up from this year's 2.8 percent, it said. Military officials said a sharp rise in spending was inevitable because of US troop realignment on the peninsula. "Following the relocation of US troops in South Korea, the Defense Ministry presented a vision for self-reliant defense," Major General Won Jang-Hwan, a top procurement officer, told Yonhap news agency. South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun has advocated building up an independent defense capability without reliance on the US. The ROK would need to spend more than three percent of GDP on the military to achieve that goal, analysts say. The ministry wants more money for airborne reconnaissance, new surface-to-air missiles and upgraded communications surveillance equipment. Other projects include the acquisition of new fighter jets, advanced armored vehicles, Aegis-equipped destroyers and integrated weapons systems to counter DPRK artillery targeting Seoul. ROK officials said the announcement was no more than an initial proposal.

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3. ROK on DPRK Energy Aid

Yonhap news ("South Korea considers energy aid to North in return for nuclear dismantling", 2004-06-11) The ROK is considering renewing its energy assistance proposal to North Korea at the upcoming six-party nuclear talks as an incentive for the communist state to commit to a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of its nuclear programme, an official said Friday 11 June . In the previous round of nuclear talks in February, the ROK offered to provide energy aid to the DPRK if it agrees to abandon its atomic ambitions. The PRC and Russia supported the initiative and agreed to chip in. The US and Japan expressed "understanding" although they stopped short of committing themselves to the plan. The proposal was ultimately scrapped as the DPRK did not agree to give up its nuclear programme in a manner demanded by the US and other countries. Now, the ROK government wants to try to persuade the DPRK with a new energy assistance offer at the forthcoming nuclear talks. "We're considering presenting North Korea with an extraordinary energy assistance programme in which some countries will also take part, so that the North can accept the CVID principle," an official said on condition of anonymity. CVID refers to the US demand for a "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of the DPRK's nuclear programme. "At first, we will voice the need (for the energy assistance offer) to the US and Japan," he said. The three countries are scheduled to hold a strategy session on Sunday and Monday to fine-tune their positions ahead of the third round of six-party talks tentatively set for 23-25 June. The countries' chief nuclear negotiators will attend the session.

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4. G-8 On Japan's DPRK Posture

The Japan Times ("G-8 leaders back Japan's posture on North Korea", 2004-06-10) Leaders of the Group of Eight major nations expressed support Thursday for Japan's efforts to comprehensively resolve the issue of Japanese abducted by the DPRK and the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear programs. "We support the six-party talks as well as efforts by all concerned parties to achieve a comprehensive solution by diplomatic means to the DPRK nuclear issue and to other security and humanitarian issues, such as the abductions," the G-8 leaders said in the chairman's summary,

released after their annual summit, held this year on Sea Island, Ga., ended.

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5. DPRK Missile Engine Test

Agence France-Presse ("North Korea tested new missile engine in early May", 2004-06-10) The DPRK, accused by the United States of being a leading global proliferator of weapons of mass destruction, tested the engine of a ballistic missile last month, an ROK newspaper reported. Engine testing was conducted successfully in early May at the DPRK's Musudan missile complex in North Hamgyong province, the JoongAng newspaper said, citing diplomatic sources. The experiment was aimed at developing Taepodong-2 missiles with a range of up to 6,000 kilometers (3,600 miles), it said. Engine testing is often the last step before an actual flight test of a missile. "US intelligence agencies think that the size of the combustion trace and the amount of liquid fuel used, hint that the test is part of an experiment to develop the Taepodong-2 missile," a diplomat source was quoted as saying.

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6. US on DPRK Missile Program

The Associated Press ("Powell expresses his concern about North Korea's nuclear program", 2004-06-11) Secretary of State Colin Powell has expressed concern about the DPRK's nuclear program with a PRC official who's in Washington for Ronald Reagan's funeral. Powell's meeting with the PRC's foreign minister (Li Zhaxing) was the first in a series of meetings before talks are expected to resume with the DPRK. Six-way talks on the issue are expected to begin soon.

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7. ROK Iraq Troop Deployment

The Associated Press ("South Korea to send troops to Iraq by late August", 2004-06-11) The ROK plans to deploy 3,600 troops to an area around Irbil in northern Iraq by late August, a Defense Ministry official said Friday, as pressure mounted on the government to reconsider the long-delayed dispatch. Speaking at a meeting with members of the ruling Uri Party, Lt. Gen. Kwon Ahn-do, the ministry's main policy coordinator, said his ministry has forwarded the plan to the National Security Council for formal approval, expected next week. "The actual deployment will take place in August," Kwon was quoted as saying by his ministry. Although the government has repeatedly confirmed its troop commitment to Iraq, some liberal Uri members have demanded that the dispatch plan be reconsidered. "We must reach a decision on the troop dispatch within next week," Hong Jai-hyung, Uri's key policy-maker, said during Friday's meeting. "The government and the president must keep their promise, and (the dispatch) is necessary for the South Korea-U.S. alliance and the country's international credibility."

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8. DPRK Foreign Minister ASEAN Meeting Attendance

Kyodo News ("North Korean Foreign Minister to attend ASEAN Meeting ", 2004-06-11) DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun will attend the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Regional Forum (ARF) this year, an Indonesian official said Friday. "Before attending the forum,

tentatively, the North Korean foreign minister is set to hold bilateral talks with Indonesian Foreign Minister Hasan Wirayudha on the 29th (of June)," Marty Natalegawa, director-general of ASEAN cooperation at Indonesia's Foreign Ministry, said. Marty did not elaborate on other schedules for Paek, who is expected to arrive in Indonesia on 28 June. in Bangkok in 2000 with the presence of its foreign minister, but since then it has only sent senior officials to the annual ARF meetings, which cover Asia-Pacific security concerns.

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9. US on DPRK Uranium-Program

Kyodo ("US to pursue DPRK uranium-program issue, despite China's doubt", 2004-06-11) The US will continue to pursue the complete dismantlement of North Korea's nuclear programs, including uranium enrichment, although the PRC doubts US allegations that the DPRK has a program to enrich uranium for weapons, a senior US administration official said in a recent interview. The US made an assessment in the summer of 2002 that the DPRK "moved from a small research and development program in terms of uranium enrichment to a large-scale program," the official, who requested anonymity, told Kyodo News. The interview was conducted during the three-day Group of Eight summit on Georgia's Sea Island. The US official also said Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan 'very recently has said he provided assistance to that highly enriched uranium program.'

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