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I. United States

1. PRC-DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Korea Times ("N. KOREA ASKS FOR `FACE-SAVING EXIT' FOR NUKE TALKS", 2005-04-04) reported that a high-level DPRK official visiting the PRC showed Pyongyang's strong will to return to the six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program, while asking for a "face-saving exit" from the other nations in the disarmament talks, diplomatic sources said. First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju and four other DPRK officials are said to be on a secretive visit to Beijing since last Saturday to discuss ways to reopen the stalled negotiation as soon as possible with senior PRC officials.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA AGREES IN PRINCIPLE TO RESUME NUKE TALKS", 2005-04-04) reported that the DPRK has in principle agreed to the restart of six-party nuclear disarmament talks, diplomats said. They said the DPRK's First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju, on a secret visit to the PRC, agreed to restart talks in discussions with PRC officials. "Vice Foreign Minister Kang arrived in China on Saturday and is discussing the restart of the six-party talks with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei," a diplomatic source in Beijing said. "I understand that in ongoing discussions, the two have agreed in principle to restart the six-party talks." [\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

International Herald Tribune ("NORTH KOREA SEEKS BROADER TALKS", 2005-04-04) reported that the DPRK's Foreign Ministry has requested that talks to end its nuclear weapons program be transformed into regional disarmament negotiations that also address US deployments in Northeast Asia. The DPRK said a US buildup in the region was a threat to its survival and had prompted it to develop nuclear weapons. An unidentified ministry spokesman said, "Now that the DPRK has become a full-fledged nuclear weapons state, the six-party talks should be disarmament talks where the participating countries negotiate the issue on an equal footing."

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3. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("JAPANESE SAY PYONGYANG BLAMES U.S. FOR NO TALKS", 2005-04-04) reported that the DPRK said it would not break away from the six-nation talks, repeating its demands that the US change its hardline policy toward Pyongyang, Japanese scholars who recently visited the DPRK said yesterday. Japanese scholars attributed the remarks to Pak Hyon-jae, deputy head of the DPRK Foreign Ministry's Institute for Disarmament and Peace. Academics, including Haruki Wada, professor emeritus at Tokyo University, visited Pyongyang from Wednesday through Saturday.

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4. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("US AGAIN URGES END TO NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR PROGRAM", 2005-04-04) reported that the US believes the DPRK should abandon its nuclear ambitions, the White House spokesman said, implicitly rejecting the latest conditions Pyongyang set out for talks to resume. "We have a proposal that we put forward at the last round of talks. We believe it's important for North Korea -- we, along with our partners in the region, believe it's important for North Korea to come back to the six-party talks so that we can talk about how we move forward on that proposal," spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters. "It's -- North Korea needs to make a strategic decision, and that decision is to abandon their nuclear weapons ambition."

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5. DPRK on Outpost of Tyranny, Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA WANTS EXPLICIT U.S. APOLOGY BEFORE TALKS", 2005-03-31) reported that the DPRK wants an open and explicit US apology for calling it an outpost of tyranny as a precondition for returning to nuclear talks, its senior envoy to the UN was quoted as saying on Friday. "The conditions and justification for the six-party talks must be set up correctly, and that is for the United States to sincerely apologize for the 'outpost of tyranny' comment and withdraw it," the DPRK's deputy UN ambassador Han Song-ryol was quoted as saying by Yonhap news agency.

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6. US on Outpost of Tyranny, DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("U.S. ENVOY DISMISSES LAST N. KOREA DEMAND", 2005-04-01) reported that the main US envoy involved with the DPRK dismissed Pyongyang's conditions for returning to disarmament talks and called for the DPRK to return to the stalled negotiations. His comments followed a statement by a senior DPRK diplomat who reaffirmed that his nation would abstain from talks until the US apologizes for labeling the DPRK an "outpost of tyranny." US Ambassador to the ROK Christopher Hill said a statement from the DPRK "was not helpful." "Serious problems should not be dealt with ... sarcastic statements," said Hill.

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7. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Interfax ("REGIONAL SITUATION WOULD WORSEN IF N. KOREA OBTAINED NUKES - MOSCOW", 2005-04-01) reported that the appearance of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula would complicate the situation in the region, says a statement from the Russian Foreign Ministry released on Friday. "As before, Russia thinks that the appearance of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula would only make it harder to look for ways to strengthen security and stability in the region," the statement says.

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8. DPRK on Japan Role in DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA WANTS JAPAN OUT OF NUCLEAR TALKS", 2005-04-04) reported

that the DPRK said it remains committed to international negotiations on ending its nuclear weapons program, but demanded Japan withdraw from the six-nation talks. The DPRK said the Japanese government should not be a part of the talks because of what it called Japan's "cunning and vulgar" intention to exploit the process for its self-interest. "Japan's participation in the six-party talks only complicates the problem more and leads to a failure of coming to a resolution," the DPRK's state-run Minju Joson newspaper said in a commentary.

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9. ROK Trip to US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN OFFICIAL LEAVES FOR WASHINGTON FOR TALKS ON NORTH KOREA", 2005-04-04) reported that a senior ROK official left for the US on Monday for talks on the DPRK, officials said. During his seven-day trip, Vice Unification Minister Rhee Bong-jo will meet US officials including Evans Revere, the acting assistant secretary of state for East Asian affairs, and Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns. Rhee will explain the ROK's policy toward the DPRK, it said.

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10. ROK-PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREAN DEFENSE CHIEF SAYS CHINA "CONFIDENT" ON NEW SIX-WAY TALKS", 2005-04-04) reported that the ROK's defense chief, back from a trip to Beijing, said the PRC was "confident" about resuming six-way talks aimed at ending the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs. But Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-Ung, in the PRC last week for military talks, said Beijing was concerned about impatience building in Seoul and Washington. "They said South Korea and the United States were hurrying too much. They said it would take time to resolve the nuclear issue just like a piece of ice neither freezes nor melts all at once."

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11. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA FACES SANCTIONS IF SIX-PARTY TALKS COLLAPSE", 2005-04-04) reported that Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon on Friday held out little hope for the success of six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program after the DPRK said the talks must deal with the disarmament of all participants. If the six-party talks collapse as Ban expects, the US is likely to take the dispute to the UN Security Council immediately.

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12. DPRK on ROK Role in Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("N. KOREA AWAITING S. KOREAN LEADER'S "SIGNAL" DURING GERMAN VISIT", 2005-04-04) reported that the DPRK is awaiting a "signal" by ROK President Roh Moo-hyun to lead a new breakthrough in inter-Korean relations when he visits Germany on April 10, local media reports said Monday. Harmut Koschyk, chairman of the ROK-German lawmakers association, is expected to deliver the DPRK's expectation to the ROK government, newspapers here said.

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13. Japanese Quiet Sanctions on the DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH SHIP VISITS TO JAPAN DROP", 2005-04-04) reported that nearly 400 DPRK-registered freighters arrive here on the east coast of southern Honshu island every year, delivering crabs in exchange for Japanese bicycles and refrigerators. But that was before Japan enacted a new ship insurance law last month blocking uninsured freighters from entering Japanese ports. Only 2.5 percent of the DPRK ships are insured, and port authorities expect the amount of DPRK goods imported this year will drop to a quarter of last year's amount.

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14. DPRK Economic Reforms

Reuters ("REFORMS MAKE HOLE IN N.KOREA; SYSTEM CLINGS TO EDGE", 2005-04-04) reported that tentative reforms and tenacious refugees are tearing a growing hole in DPRK society but the ROK's top expert on the DPRK's economy says that does not mean the communist system is about to disappear into it. "We might say there is a violent wind, a great hole in North Korean society," said Kim Young-yoon, director of the Center for the North Korean Economy at the government-funded Korea Institute for National Unification, whose team has just published the most up-to-date assessment of the DPRK's economy. "The hole is getting bigger," Kim told Reuters. "But we have to separate that from North Korea collapsing."

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREA LAUNCHES CURRENCY TIME DEPOSITS", 2005-04-04) reported that the DPRK's Foreign Trade Bank recently created a stir among Pyongyang's expatriates by launching foreign currency time deposit accounts with preferential interest rates, the Tokyo Shimbun reported. Quoting an official familiar with the DPRK this was the first time in its history the DPRK handled foreign currency deposits. The DPRK streamlined and expanded financial businesses under its July 2002 economic reform, as part of which the deposit accounts were launched, the report added. [\(return to top\)](#)

15. DPRK Assembly Session

Reuters ("N.KOREA SETS DATE FOR PARLIAMENT AFTER DELAY", 2005-03-31) reported that the DPRK on Friday set a date for its rubber-stamp parliament to meet, after the DPRK announced in an unprecedented move last month it would postpone its regular meeting of the Supreme People's Assembly. The official KCNA news agency said in a one-sentence report the third session of the 11th Supreme People's Assembly would meet on April 11, without offering an explanation for the delay. The regular session of parliament was originally set for March 9.

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16. Russia on Japanese WW II POWS

Mainichi Shimbun ("RUSSIA RELEASES NAMES OF JAPANESE POWS SENT TO NORTH KOREA", 2005-04-01) reported that the Japanese Embassy here has received a list of some 27,000 Japanese people detained in Siberia and later sent to the DPRK after World War II. The list of the 27,000 Japanese people handed over by the Russian State Military History Archive is the first official document that underscores the sending of Japanese detainees to the DPRK after the war.

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17. DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

Kyodo ("N. KOREA BIRD FLU UNLIKELY TO BE DEADLY H5N1: FAO EXPERT", 2005-04-04) reported that the first bird flu outbreaks in the DPRK were unlikely to have been caused by the deadly H5N1 strain of the virus, a top infectious disease expert at the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization said Monday. "The indication is that it is not (a virus of subtype) H5," Juan Lubroth of the FAO Animal Health Service told Kyodo News. "But what it is has yet to be confirmed."

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18. DMZ Fire

Yonhap ("DMZ FIRE SPREADING TO SOUTH", 2005-04-04) reported that another fire crossed over the eastern section of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) Monday after a similar incident last week, and it is fast spreading into ROK territory, officials said. ROK soldiers on the frontline are struggling to bring the blaze under control as it gain momentum from strong winds, they added.

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19. US-ROK Military Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("USFK BOMBSHELL 'SHOWS WASHINGTON MIFFED AT SEOUL'", 2005-04-04) reported that senior officials in the ROK read the announcement last week that the US Forces in Korea are laying off 1,000 ROK workers as a signal of more profound discontent in the US with the way the ROK is doing its bit for the alliance. Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung told a press conference "In future, content or discontent during negotiations on sharing forces upkeep cost will be openly expressed," implying the US was expressing its discontent outside the negotiations. The USFK told its ROK union representatives that canceling the planned layoffs would mean reopening cost-sharing negotiations with the ROK government. This suggests the US could be using the threat of a layoff as a way of gaining leverage in the negotiations.

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20. Sino-ROK Military Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA STEPS UP MILITARY COOPERATION WITH CHINA", 2005-04-04) reported that military exchanges between the ROK and PRC will intensify to a level similar to those between the ROK and Japan, the defense ministry said Monday. "China, more than any nation, wishes for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, so we plan to strengthen our military exchanges with China, including making defense minister meetings a regular occurrence," Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung told reporters. Yoon's comments appear to confirm whispers of greater Sino-ROK cooperation following President Roh Moo-hyun's comments that the ROK will act as a stabilizer between opposing forces in Northeast Asia.

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21. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA REACHES OUT TO TAIWANESE OPPOSITION PARTY", 2005-04-01) reported that a senior Communist Party official called for a resumption of formal talks with Taiwan

in a meeting with a leader of the island's opposition Nationalist Party. Jia Qinglin, the fourth-ranked leader in the Communist hierarchy, also extended a public invitation to the Nationalist Party chairman, Lien Chan, to visit the mainland "at any time he thinks appropriate."

[\(return to top\)](#) Reuters ("CHINA WELCOMES TALKS WITH TAIWAN, BUT ON CONDITION", 2005-04-04) reported that the PRC would welcome dialogue with Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party, but only on the condition it abandon its pro-independence leanings, the mainland's Taiwan Affairs Office said on Friday. "So as long as the Democratic Progressive Party abandons its Taiwan independence platform and stops Taiwan splittist activities, we are willing to make a positive response and have contact and associations with the DPP," Chen Yunlin, minister of China's Taiwan Affairs Office, said in a statement. [\(return to top\)](#)

22. Taiwan Yasukuni Shrine Visit

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN OPPOSITION LEADER TO VISIT JAPAN WAR SHRINE AMID CRITICISM", 2005-04-04) reported that Su Chin-chaing, head of a hardline pro-independence Taiwan opposition party, was to visit a war shrine during a visit to Tokyo, a top aide said as the visit sparked criticism at home. Su heads the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) and is on a four-day visit to Japan. He was to visit the Yasukuni Shrine dedicated to Japan's war dead, TSU spokesman Chen Chien-ming told AFP. "Su will pay his respects to about 28,000 Taiwanese soldiers enshrined there ahead of Tomb Sweeping Day," Chen said, referring to a PRC holiday.

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23. PRC on Japan UNSC Bid

Reuters ("REPORT: CHINA PROTEST AT JAPAN U.N. BID TURNS VIOLENT", 2005-04-04) reported that protesters smashed a local Japanese supermarket's windows after a demonstration in the PRC against Japan's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council turned violent, Kyodo news agency reported Sunday. Protesters in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, in southwest PRC broke the windows of Japanese-owned supermarket Ito-Yokado on Saturday, Kyodo said. Domestic PRC media said last week that millions of Chinese had signed an online petition to oppose Japan's bid for a permanent seat.

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24. US on PRC Arms Ban

Reuters ("U.S. WARNS EU ON CHINA ARMS EMBARGO", 2005-04-03) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said if the EU ended a ban on selling arms to the PRC it would affect its transatlantic defense trade with the US. "It would certainly affect our transatlantic defense trade because the types of arrangements that we have had with defense firms in Europe would be upset," Zoellick said in Latvia during an official visit to the Baltic state.

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25. PRC Technology Transfer

The New York Times ("U.S. BLOCKS USE OF MAPPING SYSTEM IN CHINA", 2005-04-04) reported that the Australian mining company BHP Billiton said Friday that the US Defense Department was blocking it from using an advanced mapping technology to search for mineral deposits in the PRC.

BHP Billiton has a license to use the so-called Falcon system, which was originally intended for use on US nuclear submarines. In a meeting this week with analysts in Australia, the head of BHP Billiton's business in the PRC, Clinton Dines, said plans to use Falcon technology in the PRC had been rejected by the US Navy, according to a report published in The Australian, which was confirmed by BHP Billiton in Melbourne.

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26. PRC Labor Supply

The New York Times ("HELP WANTED: CHINA FINDS ITSELF WITH A LABOR SHORTAGE", 2005-04-04) reported that the pipeline that pours young, eager workers into the PRC's manufacturing juggernaut begins in the country's interior at vocational schools like Hunan Top Software. So it is here in Ningxiang, a 10-hour drive from the factories on the southern coast, that clues can be found to a problem once thought inconceivable: The world's most populous nation, which has powered its stunning economic rise with a cheap and supposedly bottomless pool of migrant labor, is experiencing shortages of about two million workers in Guangdong and Fujian, the two provinces at the heart of the PRC's export-driven economy.

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