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I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Test

The Los Angeles Times ("U.S. LOOKS TO CHINA TO REIN IN NORTH KOREA", 2005-04-23) reported that concerned about increasingly threatening statements from the DPRK, the US has asked the PRC to emphasize to Pyongyang that a nuclear weapons test would be unacceptable, US officials confirmed Friday. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity, stressed that they have no new or conclusive evidence to indicate that the DPRK is acting on threats to produce additional plutonium for nuclear warheads or to conduct a nuclear arms test. Instead, the officials indicated that the US delivered a message to the PRC Foreign Ministry on Thursday asking that Beijing stress the need for the DPRK to tone down their rhetoric and not act on any of their threats.

(return to top) Wall Street Journal ("U.S. WARNS CHINA NORTH KOREA MAY TEST BOMB SOON", 2005-04-24) reported that the US hopes new warnings that the DPRK could be preparing to test a nuclear weapon will spur the country's neighbors to take a harder line against Pyongyang's atomic ambitions. The US sent an "emergency" diplomatic communication to the PRC late last week, saying recent DPRK words and actions indicate Pyongyang could be trying to expand its nuclear arsenal and moving toward a test, according to a US official. The message asked the PRC to urge the DPRK to desist. It said the US believes the DPRK nuclear program is advanced enough that a test could come with little or no warning, the official said. (return to top)

2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Test

Agence France Presse ("CHINA'S POSITION ON NKOREA UNCHANGED, DESPITE NUCLEAR TEST REPORT", 2005-04-23) reported that the PRC said on Saturday that its position on resolving the DPRK's nuclear issue through dialogue remained unchanged, despite US reports that Pyongyang was preparing to test a nuclear weapon. "Our position on the issue remains unchanged," a foreign ministry spokesman told AFP. "We call on all sides to display sincerity, patience and flexibility and make efforts to restart the six party talks at an early date."

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Test

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA SAYS NUCLEAR TESTS BY NORTH KOREA WOULD FURTHER ISOLATE THE COMMUNIST STATE", 2005-04-25) reported that the ROK warned the DPRK against conducting a nuclear test, saying one would further isolate the DPRK and undermine its security. The ROK's foreign minister, Ban Ki-moon, said in a speech on Monday that the DPRK "cannot have its future guaranteed" if it conducts a nuclear test. "Nuclear weapons can never guarantee North Korea's security and will only bring about and worsen the isolation of its politics and economy," Ban said, according to the ROK's Yonhap news agency.

(return to top) Yonhap ("NO EVIDENCE OF N. KOREA PREPARING NUCLEAR TEST: URI PARTY CHIEF", 2005-04-25) reported that the ROK's ruling party chairman claimed on Monday that there have been no signs of the DPRK preparing a nuclear weapons test. "According to the latest intelligence reports that I know of, including those by the intelligence agencies and the government, there is no clear evidence that the North is preparing to test a nuclear weapon," ruling party chief Rep. Moon Hee-sang said in a news conference with local and foreign press here. (return to top)

4. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Korean Central News Agency ("DPRK TO STEADILY BOLSTER ITS NUCLEAR DETERRENT FOR SELF-DEFENSE", 2005-04-24) reported that the army and people of the DPRK will never remain a passive onlooker to the US moves to isolate and stifle it but steadily bolster its nuclear deterrent for self-defence to cope with the enemies' reckless moves for military invasion. Chief of the General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA) Vice Marshal of the KPA Kim Yong Chun said: our army and people are immensely proud of having built up a war deterrent force strong enough to promptly and mercilessly beat back any aggression by the imperialists despite so great difficulties by channeling utmost efforts into increasing the military power under the banner of Songun.

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5. DPRK on Nuclear Issue

Kyodo News ("NUCLEAR ISSUE CAN BE SOLVED IF N KOREA'S SOVEREIGNTY RESPECTED", 2005-04-22) reported that no. 2 DPRK leader Kim Yong Nam said the nuclear impasse between his country and the US will be resolved if the US shows respect for DPRK sovereignty and choice. "The nuclear issue between the DPRK and the United States will be resolved only when the United States respects the DPRK's sovereignty, replaces its hostile policy with the one for peaceful coexistence and eliminates fundamentally all nuclear weapons and nuclear threats in and around the Korean Peninsula," Kim told delegates to the Asian-African Summit in Jakarta.

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6. US, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Kyodo News ("U.S., JAPAN EYE NPT ACCORD URGING N. KOREA TO RETURN TO 6-WAY TALKS", 2005-04-23) reported that the US and Japan are aiming at assembling an international agreement criticizing the DPRK for its nuclear ambitions and urging it to immediately return to the six-party nuclear talks, a senior US official and a Japanese diplomatic source said. The two nations will make a pitch for such an agreement during an international conference from May 2 in New York to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, they said. The US official said the US intends to raise the issue

of the DPRK's withdrawal from the NPT two years ago and call for the DPRK to return to the six-party talks as "the best way to proceed" to peacefully resolve the tension over Pyongyang's nuclear development program.

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7. US, ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Korea Times ("ALLIES AGREE ON BEST TACTICS FOR N. KOREAN NUKES", 2005-04-25) reported that the ROK and the US reached an agreement on the "best tactics" to resolve the DPRK nuclear standoff, top negotiators from the two allied powers said after talks in Seoul on Monday. Christopher Hill, US assistant secretary of state on East Asia-Pacific affairs, said he reached a "complete agreement" with his ROK counterpart, Deputy Foreign Minister Song Min-soon, on how to deal with the nuclear-ambitious DPRK amid the escalating tension. He added, though the top negotiators discussed a wide variety of measures, they basically focused on diplomatic options rather than any punitive steps such as the much-talked-about option of bringing the case to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

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8. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Donga Ilbo ("GOVERNMENT TO SUGGEST “GIVING UP TALKS” FOR FIRST TIME", 2005-04-25) reported that the government’s approach to the DPRK nuclear issue is gradually changing. In short, the government seems to be setting up a contingency plan for a possible breakdown of the six-party talks. It has been focusing on diplomatic efforts to resume the six-party talks, stressing the principle of a “peaceful and dialogue-based resolution.” However, it was reported that measures in case the DPRK never returns to the negotiating table were discussed in a series of meetings on April 25 by Christopher Hill, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs and the top US negotiator in the six-way talks, Deputy Foreign Minister Song Min-soon and Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon.

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9. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Bloomberg ("U.S.'S HILL SAYS NORTH KOREA MUST RETURN TO TALKS", 2005-04-25) reported that the DPRK must return to the six- nation talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear program, US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said today at a briefing in the ROK's capital, Seoul. Hill told reporters it was "unacceptable" for the DPRK to stay away from the talks. He is in Seoul for talks with the ROK on finding ways to bring the DPRK back to the multilateral talks.

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10. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap news ("NK’S NO. 2 MAN MEETS HU JINTAO", 2005-04-25) reported that the DPRK's No. 2 leader Kim Yong-nam met PRC president Hu Jintao last week on the sidelines of a summit of Asian and African leaders in Indonesia, the DPRK's media reported Sunday. "Chairman Kim Yong-nam conveyed the greetings of great leader Kim Jong-il to President Hu," the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency said, adding that the meeting in Jakarta took place on Friday. In the Jakarta meeting,

Hu asked Kim Yong-nam to convey his greetings to the DPRK leader, the KCNA report said. The report did not provide further details. It remained unclear whether the PRC leader discussed the international tension over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. the PRC says it is trying to get Pyongyang back to the dialogue table on the issue.

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11. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Itar-Tass ("RUSSIA URGES NKOREA TO RETURN TO SIX-PARTY TALKS - DM", 2005-04-25) reported that the DPRK must return to the six-party talks as soon as possible, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said after negotiations with his visiting South Korean counterpart Yoon Kwang-ung. “Russia is unequivocally for the nuclear status of the Korean Peninsula. We should do our utmost to secure North Korea’s return to the format of six-party talks. All countries, in the first place, those bordering on this conflict-risky region are interested in this,” he said.

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12. US on UN Sanctions on the DPRK

The New York Times ("WHITE HOUSE MAY GO TO U.N. OVER NORTH KOREAN SHIPMENTS", 2005-04-25) reported that the Bush administration, facing a series of recent provocations from the DPRK, is debating a plan to seek a UN resolution empowering all nations to intercept shipments in or out of the country that may contain nuclear materials or components, say senior administration officials and diplomats who have been briefed on the proposal. The resolution envisioned by a growing number of senior administration officials would amount to a quarantine of the DPRK, though, so far at least, President Bush's aides are not using that word. But, said several American and Asian officials, the main purpose would be to give the PRC political cover to police its border with the DPRK, the country's lifeline for food and oil. That border is now largely open for shipments of arms, drugs and counterfeit currencies, the DPRK's main source of hard currency.

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13. DPRK on UN Sanctions

Yonhap news ("NORTH KOREA SAYS SANCTIONS MEAN DECLARATION OF WAR", 2005-04-25) reported that the DPRK warned Monday that it would take UN sanctions against it as a "declaration of war." "If the U.S. so much wants to take the nuclear issue to the U.N. Security Council, it can do so," a spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry said in a report by the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency. "But it needs to be clear that we would consider sanctions to be a declaration of war."

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14. Inter-Korean Talks

Asia Pulse/Yonhap ("LEADERS OF TWO KOREAS AGREE ON RESUMING TALKS", 2005-04-25) reported that the ROK's prime minister and the DPRK's No. 2 leader met Saturday on the sidelines of the African-Asian summit in Jakarta, sharing the need to resume inter-Korean dialogue. The meeting between Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan and Kim Yong-nam, chairman of the DPRK's Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, took place at Jakarta Convention Center at 11:40 a.m. "On the principle of (South-North) co-existence, it is North Korea's unwavering position to bring

inter-Korean dialogue to reality," Kim was quoted as saying by Lee Kang-jin, spokesman for the ROK prime minister.

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15. DPRK Energy Shortage

Joongang Ilbo ("LIFE AT THE TOP IN NORTH MEANS HIKING, PEDALING", 2005-04-25) reported that power shortages in Pyongyang, according to the Unification Ministry, mean residents in high-rises there must walk up to 30 floors, face problems getting running water and have trouble conserving fragile medical supplies in warm conditions. The ROK has been sending to the DPRK small power generators for homes and solar-powered refrigerators. According to Ko Young-koo, chief of the ROK's National Intelligence Service, DPRK power supplies amount to only 45 percent of the country's needs.

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16. DPRK Economy

Financial Times ("WORLD URGED TO ASSIST PYONGYANG'S ECONOMY", 2005-04-25) reported that the international community should support the DPRK's transition from a command economy to a more market-driven one as a way to push Pyongyang towards more acceptable international conduct, a leading think-tank will advise today. Although meaningful resources should not be transferred to the DPRK regime before the nuclear crisis is resolved, the International Crisis Group says preliminary steps could make Pyongyang more aware of what it has to gain from striking a nuclear deal and what it would lose if it does not do so. "North Korea will not and should not receive significant international development assistance until it gives up its nuclear weapons, but it would be worthwhile trying already to develop a better understanding of the country's economy and what it will require in the way of help," the Brussels-based group says in a report to be published today.

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17. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo ("KAESONG-MADE GOODS GARNER EXPORT ORDERS", 2005-04-25) reported that according to a Unification Ministry official, goods produced at the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the DPRK are ready for export to Mexico. The official said yesterday that products worth $57,000, produced by the ROK kitchen appliances producer Living Art, are expected to be shipped at the beginning of next month. The official said Mexico has asked for $120,000 worth of kitchen supplies, including frying pans and pots. Another batch of orders from the Netherlands is reportedly in the pipeline.

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18. DPRK Bird Flu Outbreak

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA CONTAINS BIRD FLU OUTBREAK – FAO", 2005-04-25) reported that the DPRK has contained an outbreak of bird flu and the virus was not directly related to a deadly strain which can jump from birds to humans, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) said. The FAO said the bird flu outbreak in reclusive DPRK was caused by an H7 strain of the virus which causes severe disease in chickens but is not directly related to the H5N1 strain circulating in

other parts of Asia. "The virus appears to have been eliminated from the three infected farms by combining culling of 218,000 infected chickens, vaccination of unaffected birds in unaffected poultry houses and strict biosecurity measures," FAO consultant Les Sims said in a statement released in Rome.

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19. DPRK on ROK Fire Across the DMZ

Agence France Presse ("NORTH KOREA ACCUSES SOUTH KOREAN TROOPS OF FIRING ACROSS BORDER", 2005-04-25) reported that the DPRK has accused ROK troops of firing a shell across the inter-Korean border. Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), citing military sources, said ROK troops have fired at a DPRK post in the eastern sector of the inter-Korean border. "The shell dropped just near a post of the Korean People's Army (KPA), posing a grave threat to the lives of KPA servicemen on a routine guard duty," it said. A ROK defence ministry spokesman said authorities were investigating the allegation.

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20. Abductee Issue

BBC News ("JAPAN PROTESTERS DENOUNCE N KOREA", 2005-04-25) reported that about 6,000 people have rallied in Tokyo demanding sanctions against the DPRK over its abduction of Japanese people more than 20 years ago. Pyongyang has admitted kidnapping 13 Japanese men and women during the 1970s and 80s to train its spies in Japanese language and customs. Several were carrying banners bearing the slogan: "Economic sanctions now".

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21. Konrad Adenauer Foundation's DPRK Work

Korea Times ("NK PUTS GERMAN THROUGH WRINGER", 2005-04-25) reported that Thomas Awe, representative of Germany's Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Seoul, returned from a five-day visit to Pyongyang on April 2 feeling shaken, frustrated and increasingly skeptical of his organization's ability to engage with the DPRK. But after a few weeks of reflection and a bit of good news, he's back in the saddle and looking for new ways to open exchanges between Germany and the DPRK. Awe's main purpose for visiting the DPRK this time was to finalize plans for a scholarship trip to Germany by a female violinist and her male conductor. An hour into his meeting with the DPRK organizers, however, they informed him the exchange would be impossible. "It really is a pity," he said. "But these things take time, and you have to open up step by step." Finally, though, Awe has got some good news: the DPRK's tentative agreement for two constitutional law experts to attend an international conference in Bangkok on May 28 under the auspices of his foundation. "This could be a breakthrough," he said. "With every failure, there is a success, so in the end I think it is worth being engaged."

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22. Kim Dae-Jung Visit

Korea Herald ("KIM DAE-JUNG LEAVES FOR U.S.", 2005-04-25) reported that former President Kim Dae-jung left for the US yesterday to attend academic forums on the DPRK and other regional

issues. During his weeklong trip, Kim will deliver speeches at several conferences hosted by the Asia Foundation, the University of San Francisco and Stanford University, said Choi Kyung-hwan, an aide to Kim. Kim will focus on the Seoul-Washington alliance and the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, he said.

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23. ROK-Russian Military Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, RUSSIA AGREE TO DEVELOP ARMS ", 2005-04-25) reported that Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung and his Russian counterpart Sergei Ivanov agreed on Friday to conclude a memorandum of understanding on transfer and joint development of weapons technology. In a Moscow meeting, they also agreed to set up a hotline to swap aviation information. "The MOU goes beyond the current Russian arms imports that put priority on completed products and sets as its goal joint weapons development," a Defense Ministry official at the talks said. The ROK Defense Ministry said it pushed the agreement because Russian guided anti-air missile technology was necessary to develop a K-MSAM medium-range surface-to-air missile by 2008.

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24. ROK Missile Command

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA MULLING CENTRAL MISSILE COMMAND", 2005-04-25) reported that military authorities want to set up the ROK's first centralized missile command, a military source said. "Our military currently has Korean-made Hyunmoo and American-made ATACMS missiles," the source said. He said their number had increased to the point where there are now calls for a centralized command structure, "so we are thinking of setting up a missile command next year." The ROK has stationed 100 Hyunmoo missiles with 180 km and 300 km ranges near the DMZ as well as 110 ATACMS Block 1 missiles (165 km range) and 110 ATACMS Block 1A (300 km range) missiles. One ATACMS missile can incinerate an area equal to two or three soccer fields.

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25. Sino-Japanese Relations

Washington Post ("KOIZUMI, HU MEET TO ADDRESS TENSIONS", 2005-04-25) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao urged Japan to translate its remorse over wartime atrocities into "actual action" during a much-anticipated meeting here Saturday that both sides said they hoped would ease dangerously heightened tensions between the two countries. Hu and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reached no substantive agreements in their 46-minute talk, which analysts said could be a starting point for improved relations. "I would like you to recognize history correctly, and I would like you to translate your remorse into actual action," Hu told Koizumi during the meeting.

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26. Japan on Sino-Japanese Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN CRITICIZES CHINA HISTORY TEXTBOOKS", 2005-04-25) reported that Japan opened a new front in its dispute with the PRC on Sunday by sharply criticizing Beijing's history textbooks, signaling continued friction between the Asian powers despite high-profile diplomatic moves to quell tensions. Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura refuted PRC

claims that Japanese textbooks gloss over Tokyo's World War II-era atrocities, firing back in a TV talk show Sunday that the PRC's schools indoctrinate their students with an unbalanced take on the past. "There is a tendency toward this in any country, but the Chinese textbooks are extreme in the way they uniformly convey the 'our country is correct' perspective," Machimura said, echoing Sunday's editorial in Japan's largest newspaper accusing the PRC of nationalistic education.

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27. Japan on Sino-Japanese Relations

Washington Post ("JAPAN HONORS WAR DEAD AND OPENS NEIGHBORS' WOUNDS", 2005-04-25) reported that inside the hallowed cedar halls of this city's vast Yasukuni Shrine, 168 Japanese lawmakers and aides gathered on Friday, clapping their hands twice in traditional reverence to the deified souls of Japan's fallen warriors. Many of the nation's top lawmakers bowed and offered Shinto prayers to the divine spirits of the shrine -- including a list of more than 1,000 convicted World War II criminals topped by Japan's wartime prime minister, Gen. Hideki Tojo. The observance was central to the roiling dispute over history that has engulfed Japan and its primary wartime victims, the PRC and the ROK.

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28. PRC on Sino-Japanese Relations

Los Angeles Times ("LETTING PASSIONS BURN MAY BACKFIRE ON CHINA", 2005-04-25) reported that the PRC's ruling Communist Party, backed by a sophisticated Internet filtering system, an army of cyber-cops, a vigilant public security apparatus and an extensive informant network, is quick to shut down the slightest hint of a political movement. Yet it has allowed Patriots' Alliance and other anti-Japan groups to galvanize the nation, leading to an outpouring of rage that has brought tens of thousands of PRC into the streets and has prompted attacks on Japanese companies, embassies and consulates. Behind Beijing's apparent acquiescence was a belief that it could harness public protests to serve its own aims, analysts say. But some PRC experts warn that party leaders are taking a risk: public resentment, once unleashed, can be difficult to contain.

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29. Sino-Japanese Gas Dispute

Bloomberg ("JAPAN, CHINA WILL HOLD TALKS ON GAS DISPUTE IN MAY ", 2005-04-25) reported that Japanese and the PRC government officials will hold talks next month about gas drilling in a disputed area of the East China Sea, said Japanese Foreign Ministry Press Secretary Hatsuhisa Takashima. "The Chinese side has agreed to official level consultations in May," Takashima said in a press conference in Tokyo today. A date and venue for the talks has yet to be agreed, he said.

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30. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN OPPOSITION LEADER TO VISIT CHINA ", 2005-04-25) reported that the leader of Taiwan's biggest opposition party would have once been jailed or executed for what he plans to do Tuesday: fly to rival PRC for a weeklong tour that's supposed to climax in a handshake with the PRC president. Lien Chan's trip will be the first time in 56 years that the leader

of his once staunchly anti-Communist Nationalist Party sets foot in the PRC — just 100 miles west of this leaf-shaped island.

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31. PRC Limits on Civil Liberties

Washington Post ("HU TIGHTENS PARTY'S GRIP ON POWER", 2005-04-25) reported that more than two years after taking office amid uncertainty about his political views, PRC President Hu Jintao is emerging as an unyielding leader determined to preserve the Communist Party's monopoly on power and willing to impose new limits on speech and other civil liberties to do it, according to party officials, journalists and analysts. Some say Hu has cast himself as a hard-liner to consolidate his position after a delicate leadership transition and could still lead the party in a more open direction. There is a growing consensus inside and outside the government, however, that the 62-year-old former engineer believes the party should strengthen its rule by improving its traditional mechanisms of governance, not by introducing democratic reforms.

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32. PRC Judicial Reform

Agence France Presse ("CHINA PREPARES FOR FIRST-EVER JURY TRIALS", 2005-04-25) reported that around 27,000 jurors will report for duty in the PRC next week, state media said, as the country introduces jury trials in an attempt to reform a system widely criticized for its lack of independence. The jurors will start work on May 1 helping decide both criminal and civil cases, sitting on a panel of three with judges, the China Daily reported. While the PRC already has jurors, they are largely hand-picked by a court or approved by court officials after they received recommendations from local authorities.

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33. US on Hong Kong Pro-Democracy Movement

Agence France Presse ("CHINA MUST LISTEN TO HONG KONG'S RESIDENTS: US ENVOY", 2005-04-25) reported that Washington's outgoing envoy to Hong Kong urged the PRC to pay more attention to the political aspirations of the southern territory, stressing that its citizens should be given more say over their future. US Consul General James Keith issued the parting shot as top leaders in Beijing began debate on the city's electoral law, a move widely condemned as an erosion of the city's autonomy. "One of the key lessons learned in our country's history is that the aspirations of the people ought to be taken into consideration," Keith told a luncheon meeting of US businessmen.

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34. PRC Wind Power

Reuters ("CHINA EYES TURBINES AT SEA TO BOOST WIND POWER", 2005-04-25) reported that wind turbines stationed up to 30 miles offshore and in waters up to 120 feet deep could be a key part of the PRC's renewable energy program in two or three decades, a senior industry official said. The sea-based farms would be ideally situated to supply clean power to the populous and booming east coast area, without competing for space wanted for farming or urban development. "Offshore wind

sites are close to the main electricity load centers in eastern China, so offer great potential for future energy supply," Shi Pengfei, vice-chairman of the Chinese Wind Energy Association, told a conference.

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