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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. Inter-Korean Meeting

Korea Times ("KIM JONG-IL SAYS NK WILLING TO REJOIN 6-PARTY TALKS IN JULY", 2005-06-17) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il said on Friday that his country is willing to rejoin the six-party talks in July, if the US "recognizes and respects" his regime. "Kim said the six-party nuclear talks could be held as early as July if the United States recognizes and respects North Korea. Kim, however, said that further consultations would first be needed with the U.S.," said Unification Minister Chung Dong-young. According to Chung, Kim also expressed willingness to give up his country's nuclear arsenal in exchange for a security guarantee from the US.

(return to top) Reuters ("NORTH KOREA'S KIN SAYS MIGHT GIVE UP MISSILES-SOUTH", 2005-06-20) reported that Kim Jong-il told Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, the DPRK will give up its missiles if the US establishes diplomatic ties. (return to top) Reuters ("SEOUL SEES BREAKTHROUGH FROM TALKS WITH NORTH'S KIM", 2005-06-19) reported that, according to ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, DPRK Leader Kim Jong-Il said his country was willing to end its boycott of six-party nuclear talks and return to the negotiating table in July. Kim has reportedly said the DPRK was willing to "give up everything" if it received security guarantees. "The meeting made a positive breakthrough in inter-Korean relationships," the ROK's Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon was quoted as saying. (return to top)

2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Joong Ang Ilbo ("SOUTH SEEKS TO AVOID RILING NORTH ", 2005-06-20) reported that, according to ROK officials, the ROK has asked for US support to keep relations with the DPRK calm. Christopher Hill, US assistant secretary of state in charge of the six-party nuclear disarmament talks has agreed to the request. "The key is to maintain the right atmosphere for the talks," ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon said. "The countries involved in the talks should give thoughtful consideration that trivial remarks and actions do not destroy the mood. I told Mr. Hill that it is critical to maintain a positive tone when making remarks toward North Korea for a while, and he completely agreed to it."

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3. ROK on Inter-Korean Meeting

Korea Times ("MOST SOUTH KOREANS THINK HIGHLY OF KIM JONG-IL'S REMARKS", 2005-0--19) reported that, according to a survey conducted by Seoul-based private firm Global Research, more than 67 percent of ROK citizens believe that last week's talks between their Unification

Minister Chung Dong-young and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il will help ease tension on the Korean Peninsula. 67.2 percent of 500 men and women aged 20 or more believe that the Pyongyang meeting was productive, while about 31.2 percent said the talks achieved nothing.

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4. US on Inter-Korean Meeting

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. WANTS ACTION, NOT WORDS FROM N. KOREA", 2005-06-19) reported that after Friday's meeting between DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, the US said it is looking for action, not words, from the DPRK on its return to the six-nation nuclear talks. The US says it will not accept any preconditions in getting the DPRK to return to stalled nuclear talks. According to an unnamed US spokesperson, "The important thing to keep in mind is that until we have a date, we don't have a date. What we are looking for - the real issue for us - is getting back to the talks. But more than that, engaging seriously and substantively on our proposal and on discussions to end North Korea's nuclear program and address the threat that faces the Korean Peninsula."

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5. US on DPRK's Return to Talks

Xinhua ("US READY TO RESPECT DPRK IN SIX PARTY TALKS: US NEGOTIATOR ", 2005-06-20) reported that, according to Christopher Hill, US assistant secretary of state, The US is ready to respect and treat the DPRK as an equal partner once it rejoins the six-party nuclear talks. "When we begin these negotiations, we will conduct them in an attitude of mutual respect to all the parties and also with the sense of equality that a good negotiation should have," Hill said. "We are prepared to work on the basis of equality and on the basis of mutual respect to put together a package that will address many of [the DPRK]'s needs," he continued, "So the first step in all of this is to get a date."

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6. Rice on DPRK's Return Nuclear Talks

Washington Post ("RICE: NORTH KOREA DREADS RESUMING TALKS", 2005-06-19) reported that, according to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Sunday, the DPRK fears resuming international talks because of inevitable confrontation over nuclear weapons and peace on the Korean Peninsula. "The North Koreans love to make excuses for why they can't come to the six-party talks," Rice told "Fox News Sunday" from Jerusalem during a Middle East and European trip. "They don't like facing China and Russia and Japan and South Korea and the United States telling them in a concerted fashion that it's time to get rid of their weapons, their nuclear weapons."

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7. ROK Consultations on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Guardian ("SOUTH KOREA ENVOYS TO HOLD CONSULTATIONS", 2005-06-18) reported that ROK envoys will fly to Washington, Moscow and Beijing for consultations after the DPRK's leader raised hopes of resuming international talks on curbing its nuclear programs. However, Washington promptly dismissed the Kim's overture on Friday, saying Kim needed to set a date and make a more concrete commitment to nuclear negotiations.

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8. Inter-Korean Activities

Korea Herald ("FLURRY OF INTER-KOREAN ACTIVITIES IN COMING WEEKS", 2005-06-19) reported that since the meeting between DPRK Leader Kim Jong-il and ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, a flurry of inter-Korean activities have been organized: starting off with a Cabinet-level meeting in Seoul tomorrow, the Koreas have agreed to revive military talks, family reunion events and to hold maritime discussions. The Koreas have also agreed that a high-rank DPRK delegation should be sent to Seoul for the joint celebration of Liberation Day on Aug. 15.

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9. Inter-Korean Eye Clinic

Yonhap News ("EYE CLINIC DONATED BY LIONS CLUBS OPENS IN PYONGYANG", 2005-06-20) reported that an ophthalmic hospital donated by the Lions Clubs International Foundation opened in Pyongyang last weekend after more than two and a half years of construction. Lions Clubs will provide personnel training and medical equipment for the hospital, while the DPRK government will be in charge of day-to-day management of the facility.

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10. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("FIRMS OPERATING IN N. KOREA TO BE EXEMPT FROM INVESTMENT RULES", 2005-06-20) reported that ROK companies whose DPRK operations account for more than half of their sales will be exempt from the country's equity investment limit rules, the Fair Trade Commission (FTC) said Monday. "The rules are primarily aimed at facilitating investment in North Korea by making an exception for restrictions that exist here," an FTC press release said.

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11. ROK Red Cross to DPRK

Yonhap News ("HEAD OF S. KOREAN RED CROSS TO VISIT N. KOREA THIS WEEK", 2005-06-20) reported that Han Wan-sang, the head of ROK's National Red Cross is to embark on a trip to the DPRK this week to invite his DPRK counterpart to the general assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross in Seoul later in the year. Han Wan-sang said he will visit Pyongyang with a group of four or five officials from his organization on Friday.

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12. DPRK Fertilizer Aid

Reuters ("N.KOREA SEEKS 150,000 TONNES FERTILISER AID - SEOUL", 2005-06-20) reported that the DPRK, suffering a chronic food shortage, has asked the ROK for a massive supply of fertiliser. The ROK Red Cross said it had received the request from its counterpart in the DPRK and planned to ask the government to accept the request on humanitarian grounds. If accepted, the request for 150,000 tonnes in addition to the 200,000 tonnes shipped to the DPRK last month would push total supply so far this year beyond the 300,000 tonnes in annual fertiliser aid in recent years. The DPRK's

weak agricultural sector desperately needs fertiliser, and aid agencies say 6.5 million people are most vulnerable out of a population of 23 million to food shortages.

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13. DPRK Defector-Refugees to ROK

Korea Times ("3 NORTH KOREANS DEFECT TO SOUTH", 2005-06-17) reported that, according to the ROK military on Friday, three DPRK citizens, including an active-duty soldier, have crossed the heavily fortified inter-Korean border in separate defection attempts. After an initial investigation, the JCS said it identified the DPRK soldier as Lee Yong-su, a 20-year-old private who has been serving an anti-air artillery unit in Pyongyang. The other two defectors, one male and one female, arrived at the ROK island of Paengnyong off the west coast aboard their small motorless vessel.

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14. ROK-Japan Summit

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA, BILATERAL TIES TO TOP AGENDA AT SOUTH KOREA-JAPAN SUMMIT", 2005-06-20) reported that Japan and the ROK tried to heal ties wounded by their spat over islands and Tokyo's wartime history with a leaders' summit Monday in Seoul that also focused on the international standoff over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. "It's a waste to stop friendly ties just because there are disagreements about some things," Japanese President Koizumi said after his arrival in Seoul for a one-day visit. "It's important that both Japan and South Korea want to promote friendly relations for the benefit of the entire region."

(return to top) Kyodo ("KOIZUMI, ROH REMAIN APART OVER YASUKUNI VISITS ", 2005-06-20) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and ROK President Roh Moo Hyun on Monday failed to bridge their differences over the Japanese leader's visits to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine, although they confirmed Japan's plan to consider setting up a new national war memorial as urged by the ROK. The two leaders also confirmed solidarity on the international front, agreeing to continue working toward the resumption of the stalled six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear programs. (return to top)

15. ROK, Japan on DPRK's Return to Talks

Forbes ("JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA CALL FOR SWIFT RESUMPTION OF NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS ", 2005-06-20) reported that Japan and the ROK have called for a swift resumption of stalled talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme after Pyongyang said it could return to the dialogue in July if the US shows it "respect". "We have agreed that an early resumption of the six-way talks is the best solution to peacefully resolve North Korea's nuclear issue," Koizumi said at a joint news conference. "Toward that goal, we have agreed on cooperation among Japan, the US and South Korea."

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16. Documentary of the Megumi Yokota Abduction

Korea Times ("CAMPION MAKING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT NK ABDUCTION ", 2005-06-20) reported that the Academy Award-winning director Jane Campion of "The Piano" and National Geographic film makers Patty Kim and Chris Sheridan are making a documentary about the DPRK's

abduction of a Japanese schoolgirl. The film will be completed this year, and a special short preview and fundraising for "ABDUCTION The Megumi Yokota Story" will be held on June 29 in Washington D.C.

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17. ROK-Japan Relations

The New York Times ("SEOUL AWAITS JAPAN'S CHIEF WITH COMPLAINTS IN MIND", 2005-0--20) reported that after months of strained relations over disputed territory and Japan's militaristic past, President Roh Moo Hyun of the ROK and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan will hold what is likely to be a tense summit meeting here on Monday. Mr. Roh is expected to state his objections to Mr. Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine, where 14 war criminals are deified, and urge Tokyo to build a separate war memorial. That would intensify pressure on Mr. Koizumi, whose pledge to keep praying at the shrine has also brought Japan's relations with the PRC to their lowest state in years.

(return to top) The Associated Press ("JAPAN, S. KOREA FAIL TO SETTLE DISPUTES", 2005-06-20) reported that the leaders of Japan and the ROK failed Monday to make progress on mending ties damaged by a territorial dispute over islands in the Sea of Japan and a flap over Tokyo's militaristic past during a tense summit. ROK President Roh Moo-hyun held two-hour talks with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that mostly focused on Koizumi's visits to a controversial war shrine and history textbooks that critics say whitebr Japanese military aggression in the early part of the last century. "There were efforts to understand each other and in some areas there was understanding, but there was no agreement," Roh told reporters outside the presidential Blue House, where the two leaders spoke in somber tones and refused to take questions. (return to top) Joong Ang Ilbo ("KOIZUMI RECONSIDERING YASUKUNI", 2005-06-20) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan told President Roh Moo-hyun yesterday that his country would consider establishing an alternative memorial to the Yasukuni Shrine, where Japanese war dead, including several high-ranking former officials who were tried and executed as war criminals, are interred. Mr. Koizumi made no promises to end his visits to the shrine. (return to top)

18. US-Japan on Missile Defense

Agence France Presse ("US ASKS JAPAN FOR 545 MILLION DOLLARS FOR MISSILE DEFENSE", 2005-06-20) reported that the US government has asked Japan to pay more than half a billion dollars for a joint missile defense system being developed that would be capable of warding off a possible attack by the DPRK, but Tokyo finds the sum too high, a news report said. Washington estimates it will spend some 545 million dollars on the high-tech defense project between the 2006 and 2011 fiscal years and has requested Japan make an equal contribution, the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper said without specifying sources. But, the Yomiuri said, Japan planned to negotiate with the US for a significant cut in the cost as Tokyo has been trying to slash defense spending amid mixed signals on the direction of the economy.

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19. US on UNSC Expansion

Agence France-Presse ("US BACKS EXPANSION OF UNSC", 2005-06-18) reported that the US said it favored adding at least two permanent members, including Japan, to the UN Security Council, and proposed specific criteria for candidate nations. Washington opposed giving a resolution veto to the

newcomers but said it also wants up to three additional non-permanent seats in the Security Council. Outlining for the first time the US position on the council's expansion, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns said Thursday it "will likely support adding two or so permanent members" and "two or three" additional non-permanent seats to the council. Aside from Japan, he did not indicate a US preference for new membership but the New York Times quoted an administration official as saying a second US-backed candidate would come from the developing world.

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20. Japan on UNSC Expansion

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN STILL BACKS WIDER EXPANSION OF UN SECURITY COUNCIL AFTER US NOD", 2005-06-20) reported that Japan says it continues to support wider expansion of the UN Security Council after the US threw its weight only behind Tokyo for an enlargement limited to two countries. "America made a proposal but Japan cannot go along with it," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, one of US President George W. Bush's closest international allies, told reporters. He said Japan was determined not to break up a joint bid with Brazil, Germany and India, dubbed the Group of Four or G4, which are seeking permanent seats on the powerful UN organ. "We cannot say 'that's right' and jump on to the US proposal as we have been in the G4 campaign," said Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura.

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21. Sino-Japanese Relations

Xinhua news ("CPC OFFICIAL CALLS FOR IMPROVING SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS ", 2005-0--20) reported that a senior Communist Party of China (CPC) official urged statesmen of both the PRC and Japan to enhance exchanges to improve and further develop bilateral relations. Wang Jiarui, head of the International Department of the CPC Central Committee, made the remarks during a meeting with visiting former Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Secretary General Koichi Kato in Beijing on Monday. Wang said the key to resolving the difficulties in present Sino-Japanese relations hinges on how the Japanese side treats history issue properly.

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22. PRC Web Censorship

The Los Angeles Times ("AS CHINA CENSORS THE INTERNET, MONEY TALKS", 2005-06-20) reported that PRC bloggers using a new Microsoft service to post messages titled "democracy," "capitalism," "liberty" or "human rights" are greeted with a bright yellow warning. "This message includes forbidden language," it scolds. "Please delete the prohibited expression." The restrictions were agreed upon by Microsoft and its PRC partner, the government-linked Shanghai Alliance Investment. Computer users often find that filters on servers and search engines, including Yahoo's, prevent them from accessing pages, posting blogs or receiving e-mails on topics deemed sensitive by the Communist Party. Repeated violations can elicit a visit by police, leading in extreme cases to imprisonment on charges of threatening national security.

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23. PRC Rural Governance

The New York Times ("CHINA'S NEW FRONTIERS: TESTS OF DEMOCRACY AND DISSENT", 2005-06-20) reported that with his smart clothes, blow-dried hair and speech peppered with references to Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu, Jiang Zhaohua, the young Communist Party secretary for this prosperous township, bears little resemblance to the usual PRC politician. Under his leadership, Mr. Jiang's township of 110,000 people recently embarked on a novel experiment in governance, allowing citizens' preferences to determine, after detailed consultations over the pros and cons, which major projects will go ahead, and how their money will be spent. If unique in form, Zeguo's experiment takes place against a backdrop of a broad effervescence of democratic ideas bubbling up into local politics all over the PRC. By one estimate, there will be 300,000 village committee elections in the PRC's 18 provinces this year alone. In many areas, officials are making efforts to involve ordinary citizens in local decision making.

(return to top) Washington Post ("AN UNUSUAL SORT OF DEMOCRACY", 2005-06-20) reported that Li Fuzeng was busy making pancakes, he recalled, when an acquaintance stopped by his little snack shop on the morning of May 19 and unexpectedly handed him the equivalent of $50. The money was a significant sum in the economy of this farming village in eastern PRC, and Li knew something would be expected in exchange. He was right. The quid pro quo, Li recounted later, was his and his family's votes in village elections the next day. "My friend said, 'Vote like this,' " Li said, "and he handed me a list of candidates." Li's account of what happened that morning has become part of a bitter struggle between the local Communist Party apparatus and a group of discontented farmers who want new leadership for their village. The vote-buying at Li's pancake stand, the farmers allege, was but one episode in a campaign during which thousands of dollars were spent to make sure that people in tune with party leaders would be elected to the seven-member council.
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24. Arms Sales to the PRC

Agence France Presse ("ISRAEL BIDS TO DEFUSE CHINESE ARMS SALES ROW WITH US", 2005-06-20) reported that Israel sought to defuse a row with chief ally Washington over a controversial PRC arms deal ahead of a visit by the PRC's top diplomat, saying it regretted any possible damage to US interests. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice -- by coincidence in Israel on the same day as PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing -- appeared to accept the apology, saying she was confident the two "partners" would overcome the rift. Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom insisted Israel had "acted in good faith" amid continued fallout from a deal to upgrade Harpy Killer drones which Israel sold to the PRC.

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25. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

Washington Post ("BIRD FLU DRUG RENDERED USELESS", 2005-06-20) reported that PRC farmers, acting with the approval and encouragement of government officials, have tried to suppress major bird flu outbreaks among chickens with an antiviral drug meant for humans, animal health experts said. International researchers now conclude that this is why the drug will no longer protect people in case of a worldwide bird flu epidemic. "It's definitely an issue if there's a pandemic. Amantadine is off the table," said Richard Webby, an influenza expert at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis. Health experts outside the PRC previously said they suspected the virus's resistance to the medicine was linked to drug use at poultry farms but were unable to confirm

the practice inside the country.

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26. PRC AIDS Issue

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA AND WHO TO PROVIDE AIDS INTERVENTION FOR HOMOSEXUALS", 2005-06-20) reported that the PRC and the World Health Organization (WHO) will run a joint project to help homosexuals protect themselves against AIDS in the central province of Hunan beginning this year, state media said. Beijing-based WHO expert Zhao Pengfei, quoted by Xinhua news agency, said the program would involve spending four million dollars to reach out to homosexual groups in eight areas of Hunan province by 2007. The program is unusual since homosexuality is still considered a taboo subject in the PRC and the PRC's AIDS prevention programs rarely target homosexuals. The program will also cover six other cities in Hunan by monitoring AIDS/ HIV infections among homosexuals and providing medical treatment and psychological counseling.

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