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I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Test

Washington Post ("N. KOREAN OFFICIAL: NUCLEAR TEST 'INDISPENSABLE' STEP", None) reported that a DPRK official told a delegation of Japanese academics visiting Pyongyang last week that a nuclear test was an "indispensable" step toward proving the nation's military capabilities to the world, and suggested the government might conduct one soon. Another expert, Yasuhiko Yoshida, a noted DPRK specialist at Osaka University for Economics and Law, held two discussions on May 3rd with the deputy director Pak Hyon Jae at the DPRK Institute for Disarmament and Peace. Pak, according to Yoshida, said a DPRK nuclear "test is indispensable," adding, "you'll find that out soon." Yoshida added, "It is important that this official at a government think-tank admitted that nuclear testing was necessary."

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Test

Bloomberg ("US WARNS NORTH KOREA AGAINST TESTING NUCLEAR WEAPON", None) reported that the US warned the DPRK that a nuclear-weapons test would be considered a "provocative act that would further isolate it from the international community," after reports suggested the DPRK may be ready to conduct its first test. Koh Yu Hwan, professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University in Seoul, added another perspective: "It may be part of North Korea's strategy to make it seem like they're ready for a nuclear test, thereby strengthening their position." He continued, "At the same time, it's hard to confirm North Korea's moves. Whether it can and will go ahead and test nuclear weapons is a totally different matter."

[\(return to top\)](#) International Herald Tribune ("CHAIR OF SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE BELIEVES NORTH KOREA IS PREPARING NUCLEAR TEST", None) reported that Senator Pat Roberts, the chairman of the US Senate Intelligence Committee, said he believed DPRK appeared to be preparing a nuclear test explosion, even as the head of the IAEA said he believed the DPRK had five or six nuclear weapons in its possession. John McLaughlin, a former acting director of the CIA, said that he, like Mr. Roberts, would not be surprised if the DPRK tested a weapon. As alarming as that would be, he said, "the more alarming development here would be if they were to couple that with the next step" - to test a longer-range missile. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Test

Reuters ("U.N.: WORLD PRESSURE NEEDED TO STOP N. KOREA NUKE TEST", None) reported that signs that the DPRK may be planning to test a nuclear weapon prompted the IAEA head, Mohamed ElBaradei, to call upon all leaders in contact with Pyongyang to use their influence to stop

the DPRK from detonating a nuclear bomb. "I hope every leader who has contact with North Korea is on the phone today with North Korean authorities to dissuade [them] from a test," ElBaradei told reporters on the sidelines of the NPT conference. "You don't know what you don't see because they are a closed society. So you see holes. You see them putting dirt back over the holes. But did anybody see anything [a bomb] go in it? Why didn't we see it?"

[\(return to top\)](#) British Broadcasting Corporation ("NORTH KOREA 'MAY HAVE SIX BOMBS'", None) reported that IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei has said DPRK could possess several nuclear bombs. Speaking on US television, he said Pyongyang had enough plutonium to make five or six nuclear weapons. The country also has the necessary infrastructure to convert the plutonium into weapons, ElBaradei added. However, IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming told the BBC there was no way the agency could know for sure whether the DPRK had six bombs. [\(return to top\)](#)

4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Test

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL CAUTIOUS ON REPORT NORTH PREPARES FOR TEST", None) reported that, in response to the US report that the DPRK appears to be preparing for a nuclear weapon test, ROK officials acknowledged that unusual construction work was being done in [Kilju], but refused to link the activity with a possible test. According to an ROK military intelligence official, "a significant number of residents live in Kilju, and that puts a lot of limitations on building a nuclear facility there." Meeting with journalists, ROK Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung responded carefully, saying no one can make an accurate prediction about the possibility of a DPRK nuclear test.

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5. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Test

Xinhua ("JAPAN HAS NOT CONFIRMED NUKE TEST PREPARATION OF DPRK: FM", None) reported that, according to Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura at the ASEM, Japan has not confirmed that the DPRK is preparing a nuclear weapons test.

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6. DPRK on Bilateral Talks with US

People's Daily ("DPRK: NO TALKS WITH US OUT OF SIX-PARTY FRAMEWORK", None) reported that, according to the DPRK Foreign Ministry, Pyongyang has no intention of holding bilateral talks with the US separate from the framework of the six-party talks. "We have never requested the DPRK-US talks independent of the six-way talks," he said. "We had already clarified our stand that we cannot have any form of talks with the US nor can we deal with it as long as the DPRK is branded as 'an outpost of tyranny'." He also reiterated the DPRK's stand on establishing a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula through negotiation.

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7. PRC, ROK on Six-party Talks

China Daily ("CHINA, S. KOREA WORK TO RESUME 6-WAY TALKS", None) reported that, according to an ROK official, the foreign ministers of the PRC and ROK agreed Friday to make efforts for the early resumption of the stalled six-nation talks aimed at resolving the dispute. PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said restarting the talks early "would be of benefit to all parties concerned and lead to

denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and peace and stability" in the region.

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8. ROK on PRC Role in Six-party Talks

Donga Ilbo ("ROH URGES STEPPED-UP CHINESE EFFORTS IN BRINGING PYONGYANG BACK TO TALKS", None) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun, in a summit meeting on Sunday in Moscow with his PRC counterpart President Hu Jintao, agreed to work in concert to bring DPRK back to the six-party talks on the earliest date possible. During the hour-long meeting, the two leaders shared the view that Pyongyang's continued insistence on bypassing the talks would incite heightened calls from the international community to sanction the DPRK, thereby aggravating the nuclear standoff further still. The two agreed to push the DPRK into making a strategic step to move the stalled dialogue forward. During the occasion, Roh reiterated his request for the PRC to step up their efforts to bring Pyongyang back to the negotiating table.

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9. Moscow Summit on DPRK Talks

Korea Herald ("TALK OF ALTERNATIVES TO SIX-PARTY TALKS GAINS MOMENTUM AT MOSCOW SUMMITS", None) reported that, during the gathering for the World War II Anniversary in Moscow, one-on-one summits between visiting leaders bubbled with a recurring theme on the DPRK nuclear standoff: disappointment over the tedious stalemate in the six-party talks and hints that next-step measures may be imminent. Although most of the conversations were not disclosed to the media, the leaders made the most of the opportunity to clarify their positions and prepare the groundwork to try to engineer a development in solving the DPRK's adamant nuclear weapons project. Analysts noted the summit emphasis on denuclearization, rather than the revival of the six-party talks, and saw this as meaning the time is coming for alternative plans.

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10. ROK, Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("ROH, PUTIN PLEDGE CLOSE COOPERATION ON N.K. NUKE", None) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun and Russian President Vladimir Putin met briefly on the sidelines of the Moscow World War II victory celebrations and reaffirmed their cooperation for a peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear crisis, emphasizing that six-nations talks must resume soon.

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11. DPRK Reporting on Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("RUSSIA URGES RESUMPTION OF NUCLEAR TALKS: KCNA", None) reported that, the DPRK news agency KCNA carried an article stating Russian Diplomat Andrei Karlov as wanting the six-country talks to resume. "I am convinced that all the regional issues including the nuclear issue should be peacefully settled in view of the security of your side and in the interests of its economic development". Russia offered strong support for Pyongyang's initiative for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, Karlov was quoted as saying.

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12. ASEM on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Japan Times ("ASIA-EUROPE CONFERENCE WRAPS UP DIVIDED ON NORTH KOREA, MYANMAR", None) reported that the ministers in attendance at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) concluded with sharp differences over the DPRK's nuclear program, including disagreement between Japan and ROK over whether to deal with DPRK through other means, such as the UNSC. Despite pressure from the US and Japan, ROK opposed the move while pushing for diplomatic means to solving the nuclear issue. The ASEM ministers agreed that the six-party talks, which involve DPRK, ROK, Japan, PRC, Russia and the US, should be restarted without further delay.

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13. ASEM on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("ASEM URGES NKOREA BACK TO TALKS", None) reported that Asian and European foreign ministers urged the DPRK yesterday to return to talks as concerns grew that Pyongyang was preparing for a nuclear test. "[The ministers] strongly urged the DPRK to return to the negotiating table of the six-party talks without any further delay, and to make a strategic decision so as to achieve the denuclearization of the [Korean] peninsula in a peaceful manner through dialogue," said a chairman's statement issued at the end of a two-day Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEM, one of the few international groupings not to include the US, comprises 38 countries.

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14. Japan on UNSC Sanctions on the DPRK

Associated Press ("JAPAN THREATENS TO TAKE NUCLEAR ISSUES TO THE U.N. ", None) reported that Japan threatened on Friday to put the issue of DPRK's nuclear weapons program before the UNSC next month unless six-party talks on the dispute show progress. The DPRK reaffirmed on Friday that it would stay away from talks unless the US dropped what it called its 'hostile policy.' DPRK also fiercely opposes taking the issue to the UNSC, saying they would consider such actions a 'declaration of war'.

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15. PRC on DPRK Oil Embargo

Washington Post ("CHINA REJECTED U.S. SUGGESTION TO CUT OFF OIL TO PRESSURE NORTH KOREA", None) reported that PRC officials rebuffed the suggestion made by US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill of cutting off DPRK's supply of oil as a way of pressuring the government to return to disarmament talks. PRC officials refused saying it would damage their pipeline. PRC officials suggested that cutting off food deliveries would have the greatest impact on Pyongyang, and indicated Beijing was considering expanding a ban on certain imports to DPRK. With relations between Washington and Pyongyang at a nadir, US officials are increasingly turning to the PRC to help bring DPRK back to the negotiating table.

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16. DPRK Nuclear Issue

Financial Times ("WORLD WAITS TO SEE IF N. KOREA BLUFFING OVER WEAPONS", None) reported that the suspense about whether DPRK is preparing to conduct a nuclear test neatly encapsulates the difficulties of dealing with Kim Jong-il's regime: is the DPRK bluffing about having weapons, or is it real? The consequences of calling his bluff - and being wrong - are potentially so catastrophic that analysts and governments alike assume that the DPRK does, as it says, have nuclear weapons. "North Korea definitely seems to be preparing for a test and they have ample motivation to go through with it," said Kim Tae-woo, a nuclear expert at the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses in Seoul. "Will they do it? It depends on the result of the dialogue between the US and China."

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17. ROK Military Capability

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL TO BOOST DEFENSE BUDGET FOR INDEPENDENT DETERRENT", None) reported that the ROK government and ruling Uri Party want to increase the defense budget by an annual 9-10 percent for the next five years to boost an independent defense as US forces return home. A plan to increase government contributions to a fund promoting intra-Korean economic cooperation by 30 percent was also on the agenda at the Monday government-party meeting. The Unification Ministry reportedly asked for government contributions to be increased from W500 billion to W650 billion next year as the joint North-South Kaesong Industrial Complex is fully up and running.

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18. Experts on US Military Capability

Korea Times ("US STRIKE ON N. KOREA 'UNFEASIBLE'", None) reported that, according to experts, a military option against the DPRK can be held as a possible card to keep the nation from joining the nuclear club, but it seems impossible at the moment for the US to launch a preemptive attack or surgical strike. American television network NBC said on Friday the US military has drawn up plans for a possible preemptive attack against the DPRK should it appear ready to test an atomic weapon. Without citing sources, however, it added that US allies in the region strongly oppose the military option. "A main stumbling block, first of all, would be the controversy over the legitimacy of the attack which can hardly be given without a resolution of the UNSC," said Baek Seung-joo of the Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA).

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19. US on Military Capability

Reuters ("US SAYS HAS DETERRENT AMID NORTH KOREA FEARS", None) reported that the US said on Saturday it had a "robust" ability to deter the DPRK in the face of worries that the country might be planning to test a nuclear weapon. "We have a robust deterrent capability and no one should mistake what our capability is," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters. "We are working with our partners in the region to get North Korea to come back to the talks and be prepared to move forward in a serious way," he said.

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20. UN on US Role in NPT

Boston Globe ("NATIONS SAY US SHIRKS ITS ARMS VOWS", None) developing countries, stating that Washington itself has backtracked on commitments to reduce its nuclear arsenal. Washington is hoping to build a consensus for enforcement measures that could eventually result in sanctions against Iran and DPRK, such as a series of unilateral actions to stem proliferation including an initiative to intercept ships believed to be carrying nuclear supplies. However, the US efforts have been frustrated by a block of developing countries, led by Egypt, that have insisted the gathering should also address US disarmament pledges.

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21. DPRK Food Rations

Chosun Ilbo ("PYONGYANG RESIDENTS' FOOD RATIONS STOPPED", None) reported that it has now emerged that Pyongyang residents, normally a relatively privileged class of DPRK citizens, have had their special food rations suspended since early April. This is the first time since the height of the DPRK food crisis in 1998 that residents in the capital have had their rations cut. According to Dr. Seo Jae-jin of the Korea Institute for National Unification, one reason for the shortage is that international food aid to DPRK has been on hold since the beginning of the year. But he said it was also possible that rations were suspended "to eliminate the privileges of Pyongyang residents and end discrimination against people in the provinces."

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22. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("SOUTH KOREAN MAYOR EYEING N.K. VISIT TO PROMOTE EXCHANGES", None) reported that, according to municipal officials on Monday, the mayor of Incheon, is pushing to visit DPRK to discuss various friendship and cooperation programs. Should the trip materialize, the ROK delegation will negotiate plans to build a road between Incheon and Kaesong, and discuss ways to export industrial goods produced at Kaesong's ROK industrial park via Incheon's air or sea port. Given the current diplomatic tension mounting through the region over the issue of DPRK's nuclear program, a successful parley by the municipal delegation could be viewed as a breakthrough for inter-Korean relations.

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23. Japanese NGO on DPRK Defector Issue

Yomiuri Shimbun ("NGO TO AID PLIGHT OF RETURNEES FROM NORTH KOREA", None) reported that a former Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau director plans to launch an NGO to support Korean residents and Japanese who migrated to DPRK, but later returned to Japan. Asking the public for help, he said, "It's the duty of Korean residents in Japan to face the problem of the violation of human rights of returnees to North Korea." While about 80 defectors from the DPRK are living in Japan, the government has not come out with policies to actively support them, he said.

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24. FIFA Qualifier Relocation

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA TO PLAY JAPAN IN BANGKOK SAYS REPORT", None) reported that DPRK's politically charged World Cup qualifier against Japan next month will be played in Bangkok. FIFA ordered the June 8 match to be played in a neutral country behind closed doors following crowd trouble after DPRK's 2-0 defeat by Iran on March 30. FIFA punished DPRK after angry fans hurled bottles, rocks and other projectiles in protest at a late sending-off in the game against Iran at Kim Il-sung Stadium. Neutral observers have questioned the severity of FIFA's punishment.

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25. Sino-Japanese Relations

Reuters ("JAPAN, CHINA AGREE TO BETTER TIES, STUDY HISTORY", 2005-05-09) reported that Japan and the PRC agreed on Saturday to try to improve strained ties and meet soon to discuss a disputed gas field, but the two Asian giants remain at odds over their wartime past, a Japanese official said. Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura met his PRC counterpart, Li Zhaoxing, after a meeting of Asian and European foreign ministers in the Japanese city of Kyoto. The talks followed last month's summit where Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and PRC President Hu Jintao pulled ties back from the brink after a rare public apology by Koizumi for suffering caused by Japan's past military aggression.

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26. Japan on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

The Associated Press ("JAPAN'S KOIZUMI TO VISIT WAR SHRINE", 2005-05-09) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will again pay respects this year at a Tokyo war shrine honoring the country's war dead, a senior ruling party lawmaker said Sunday. The Yasukuni Shrine honors 2.5 million Japanese war dead, including convicted war criminals, among them wartime Prime Minister Hideki Tojo. "I think Koizumi will visit the shrine again this year, while carefully considering the timing," Hidenao Nakagawa of the Liberal Democratic Party told a TV talk show.

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27. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("CHEN TESTS PATIENCE OF LOYALISTS IN TAIWAN", 2005-05-09) reported that President Chen Shui-bian's new willingness to reconsider his long-standing drive for Taiwanese independence has provoked charges of betrayal and risked alienation of his core supporters. Following his election five years ago, Chen consistently encouraged loyalists' hopes that he would one day turn Taiwan, which the PRC still claims, into a fully independent country. Now, with his praise for recent visits by two political rivals to the PRC mainland, he has muted and perhaps relinquished that aim in favor of seeking a negotiated peace -- an end to the state of war that has gripped the Taiwan Strait for more than a half-century. Disillusionment with Chen is especially evident in this tropical southern city, the president's home town and a governing party stronghold, where some suggest he has abandoned the cause of self-determination.

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28. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN'S PREMIER CALLS FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITH CHINA", 2005-05-09) reported that Taiwan Premier Frank Hsieh called on Monday for direct negotiations with the PRC, saying that would be preferable to the diplomatic battles that the two rivals fight all over the world for recognition. Hsieh said Beijing continued to try to isolate Taipei in the international community, recently focusing its efforts in South America, where changes of government create opportunities for a switch in ties. "I think Taiwan's biggest problem is China so we should have direct negotiations with China, rather than fight battles with it all over the world. That's too tiring," Hsieh told a news conference for foreign media in Taipei.

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29. PRC Criminal law

The New York Times ("ISSUE IN CHINA: MANY IN JAILS WITHOUT TRIAL", 2005-05-09) reported that for a PRC government that regularly promises its citizens a society governed by the rule of law, the case of a neatly dressed man named Li is a reminder of what still remains outside the law. Mr. Li, 40, spent two years in a prison called Shandong No. 2 Labor Re-education Camp. Mr. Li, who spoke on condition that only his surname be used, and other followers of the banned spiritual group Falun Gong have been jailed here despite never having a lawyer or a trial - rights granted under the PRC's criminal law. That is because Shandong No. 2 is part of a vast penal system in the PRC that is separate from the judicial system. In a nondemocratic country like the PRC, such abuse of legal rights might not seem surprising. But this system is presenting a dilemma for a modern Communist Party that faces pressure at home and abroad to change the system yet remains obsessed with security and political control. The government this year is expected to begin privately considering whether, and how, to change the system.

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