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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Reuters ("TOP NORTH KOREA OFFICIAL ALLOWED TO VISIT JAPAN - SOURCE", 2006-04-06) reported that the DPRK's chief negotiator for six-party talks on the state's nuclear arms programme has been granted permission for a rare visit to Japan that could provide a chance to persuade Pyongyang to return to the stalled negotiations. DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan would join officials from all the countries taking part in the six-way talks aimed at preventing a nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula. "Although this is a private forum, it could give us a good chance to pave the way for resolving North Korea's nuclear programmes," a senior Japanese government official said on Wednesday, on condition of anonymity.

[\(return to top\)](#) Associated Press ("CHINESE NUCLEAR ENVOY TO MEET DELEGATES TO SIX-NATION N. KOREA TALKS IN TOKYO", 2006-04-06) reported that the PRC's top nuclear envoy will meet delegates to the six-nation DPRK talks on the sidelines of a privately sponsored security conference in Tokyo next week, the PRC Foreign Ministry said Thursday. Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei will visit Japan during the April 10-11 conference but has no plans to attend the meeting, ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. Wu "will have contact with other heads of the delegations to exchange views with them about the six-party talks," Liu said at a regular briefing. "This meeting will be a good opportunity for heads of the delegations to the six-party talks to exchange their views ... to ensure an early resumption of the six-party talks through negotiations," Liu said [\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("TOKYO MEET OFFERS RAY OF HOPE FOR NUCLEAR TALKS ", 2006-04-06) reported that Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok on Thursday pointed to "several occasions" in April that would offer an opportunity to work for a resumption of the six-party talks, especially the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue (NEACD) that starts in Tokyo on April 9. "It is highly likely that we will have dialogue about the issue at the Tokyo meeting, and I think this is the result of efforts made by many countries via various communication channels," the minister said. The DPRK's delegation head Kim Kye-gwan arrived in Beijing on Thursday en route to Tokyo. "We take the Tokyo meeting seriously," the vice foreign minister told reporters. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. Russia on Six Party Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA URGES U.S., NORTH KOREA TO RESUME SIX-PARTY NUCLEAR TALKS ", 2006-04-06) reported that a Russian deputy foreign minister said Thursday that the US and the DPRK should look for a compromise to resume six-nation talks on the country's controversial nuclear program. "Mutually acceptable compromises between the U.S. and North Korea will help the resumption of six-nation nuclear talks, even if these are small steps toward each other," Alexander Alekseyev said at a briefing in Tokyo. When asked whether Russia believed the resumption of talks was impeded by the US sanctions, Alekseyev said his country did not consider it appropriate to blame any party for the long break in the negotiating process.

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3. DPRK Landmines

Korea Times ("NK EXPORTS MINES TO AFRICAN NATIONS", 2006-04-05) reported that the DPRK is believed to have produced a ``substantial'' number of antipersonnel landmines and exported them

to African nations, an international landmine monitor group said Wednesday. In its Land Mine Report 2005, the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines (ICBL) said, ``North Korean mines have been found in Angola and Sudan, but there are no reports of recent transfers.”

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4. DPRK-BDA Missile Connection

Yonhap News ("BDA CLIENTS INCLUDED MISSILE AND INT'L DRUG TRAFFICKERS: TREASURY", 2006-04-06) reported that one of the clients of Banco Delta Asia (BDA), a bank the US accused last year of laundering money for the DPRK, was a key financial facilitator of the state's ballistic missile program, a senior US counter-terrorism official revealed Thursday. Stuart Levey, the Treasury's undersecretary, said the department's 2007 fiscal year budget includes resources to monitor and update US efforts against such proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

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5. US Asia Expert on Kaesong Project

Yonhap News ("KAESONG IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD FOR SEOUL: PETER BECK", 2006-04-06) reported that the joint industrial complex at Kaesong in the DPRK is at once the best hope for inter-Korean cooperation and one of the biggest potential points of conflict between the ROK and the US, an US expert in Seoul said Thursday. Peter Beck, Northeast Asia project director at the International Crisis Group (ICG), stressed that the ROK's ambition to expand Kaesong undermines the US efforts to squeeze the DPRK financially.

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6. US on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("MORE U.S. PRESSURE ON N.KOREA OVER HUMAN RIGHTS ", 2006-04-06) reported that the US claims the plight of DPRK refugees is a matter of particular concern, according to an annual report released Wednesday by the US State Department describing its US\$1.5 billion worth of efforts to support human rights and democracy in 95 countries. The report said the US has worked with other governments in the region to urge the protection of DPRK refugees and to facilitate their permanent resettlement. It said the US remains especially concerned about the repatriation of those refugees from the PRC.

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7. DPRK-Japan Relations

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA SLAMS JAPAN FOR LAYING CLAIM TO SOUTH KOREA-HELD ISLETS", 2006-04-05) reported that the DPRK lashed out at Japan on Thursday for laying claim to a group of ROK-held islets, accusing Tokyo of harboring ambitions of aggression and territorial expansion. The statement by the DPRK's Foreign Ministry comes about a week after the Japanese government said it had ordered schoolbook publishers to state clearly in their texts that the volcanic islets, called Dokdo in Korea and Takeshima in Japan, belong to Japan. "It admits of no argument that the islet belongs to Korea's territory from the historical point of view and in the light of international law," said the statement, carried by the KCNA.

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8. ROK on DPRK Defector

Yonhap News ("SEOUL DISMISSES CLAIMS BY FORMER N. KOREAN DEFECTOR IN U.S.", 2006-04-06) reported that the ROK Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok on Thursday blasted a former DPRK defector seeking asylum in the US, claiming he has fabricated stories for his own personal gain. The unusually strong reaction follows reports that a 40-year-old former DPR Korean, who defected to the ROK in 2000, has filed for refugee status in the US on the grounds that he was being politically prosecuted in the ROK. "South Korea is a democratic society. How would that even be possible? I don't know whether he is doing this to win refugee status in the United States, but it is disrespectful to the (South Korean) government and the people," Lee told a press briefing.

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9. US East Asia Strategy

Kyodo ("TOP WHITE HOUSE AIDE OUTLINES 3-PRONGED EAST ASIA STRATEGY", 2006-04-06) reported that US President George W. Bush is promoting an East Asian strategy under "three basic insights," White House National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley said Wednesday. The three are maintaining ties with "traditional" allies like Japan and the ROK, working with "partners" to deal with regional and global issues, and encouraging the PRC to become a "responsible stakeholder" in the international system, Hadley said in a speech at a private forum.

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10. USFK Realignment

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA TO PAY US\$5.5 BILLION TOWARD USFK RELOCATION", 2006-04-06) reported that the cost of relocating the US Forces Korea headquarters along with US Second Division will total US\$9-10 billion, with the ROK government covering some \$5.5 billion and the US picking up the rest, a Defense Ministry official says.

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11. USFJ Realignment

Kyodo ("JAPAN, U.S. END REALIGNMENT TALKS, SPLIT ON GUAM COST", 2006-04-06) reported that Japan and the US ended talks on the realignment of the US military presence in Japan on Wednesday, one day earlier than scheduled, with the two sides remaining divided over the cost of relocating US Marines from Okinawa to Guam, negotiation sources said.

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12. ROK-Japan Relations

Donga Ilbo ("MEMO REPORTS STRAIN KOREA-JAPAN TIES ", 2006-04-06) reported that in response to media reports of an internal Japanese Foreign Ministry document claiming that President Roh Moo-hyun will maintain an anti-Japanese stance in order to avoid being labeled a lame duck president, Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday that the government would take "stern countermeasures." "The government has asked for a confirmation or denial of the report

through the Japanese embassy in Seoul," Ban said at a press briefing.

[\(return to top\)](#) Bloomberg ("JAPAN DECLINES TO CONFIRM OR DENY REPORT ON SOUTH KOREA'S ROH", 2006-04-06) reported that Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe said he could neither confirm nor deny the existence of a government report criticizing ROK President Roh Moo Hyun of fostering anti-Japan sentiment. "I have to withhold comment as I can't verify whether a particular report exists or not," Abe said at a regular press conference. "Of course, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs examines international conditions. If such a report did exist, it's common sense that we wouldn't make it public." [\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN 'COUNTING ON U.S. BACKING TO SEIZE DOKDO'", 2006-04-06) reported that a leading expert on the territorial niceties surrounding the Dokdo islets has suggested the Japanese government is trying to exploit a widening rift in the ROK-US alliance to wrest control of the rocks from the ROK. Shin Yong-ha, an honorary professor at Seoul National University, told a seminar, "The Junichiro Koizumi administration in Japan is trying to dispossess South Korea of Dokdo when the right time comes, thinking it has the steadfast support of the US." [\(return to top\)](#)

13. Hamas FM Visit to PRC

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS NO PLAN YET TO RECEIVE VISIT BY HAMAS FM ", 2006-0-06) reported that the PRC said Thursday it had no plans yet to receive Palestinian foreign minister Mahmud al-Zahar, two days after the Hamas politician announced he would visit the Asian giant. "As for the issue of foreign minister Zahar leading a Hamas delegation to China, as far as we know, China at the present stage does not have such a plan yet," the PRC foreign ministry said.

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14. US-PRC Relations

The New York Times ("CHINESE ON BUYING TRIP IN U.S. SEEK TO PAVE WAY FOR LEADER", 2006-04-06) reported that PRC leaders, eager to improve relations with the US ahead of the maiden visit there by President Hu Jintao this month, have dispatched a large delegation of business and economic officials to display the PRC's buying power and to cool protectionist sentiment in Congress, PRC officials said. The buying mission reflects Beijing's view that it may be easier to try to lower economic tensions than to satisfy some other US demands, like doing more to help curtail nuclear programs in Iran and the DPRK and reducing human rights abuses at home.

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15. US on Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("LAWMAKER PRODS TAIWAN ON DELAYED ARMS SALE ", 2006-04-06) reported that a political wrangle in Taiwan that has delayed a \$12 billion US arms sale is raising questions about the island's commitment to its own defense, an American lawmaker warned. Connecticut Rep. Rob Simmons, a pro-Taiwan Republican whose district includes General Dynamics Electric Boat shipyard which builds submarines for the US Navy, says if the deal failed, he would seriously doubt whether the Taiwanese still had the will to defend their island.

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16. Russia-PRC Energy Pipeline

Xinhua News Agency, translated by China Digital Times ("RUSSIA TO SIGN GAS EXPORT AGREEMENT WITH CHINA - XINHUA", 2006-04-06) reported that an official with Russia's Natural Gas Export Company said on April 4 in Moscow that his country will sign a governmental agreement late this year to kick off exports of natural gas to the PRC, after a memorandum of understanding signed off by President Putin during his visit to the PRC earlier this year. Russia will export 60-80 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year to the PRC through two pipelines, the company official said. According to the MOU signed by Putin, the first pipeline will be put in use by 2011 and cost \$10 billion to build.

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