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I. United States

1. US, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Test

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, US SEE 'NO IMMINENT SIGNS' OF N. KOREA NUKE TEST", 2005-06-01) reported that Japan and the US agreed Wednesday that they see "no imminent signs" that the DPRK will conduct a nuclear test, while agreeing to take a "flexible approach" if Pyongyang returns to the six-party talks on its nuclear ambitions. The two top negotiators - Kenichiro Sasae, director general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau, and US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill - also reaffirmed the need to step up diplomatic efforts, especially by the PRC, to convince the DPRK to return to the table, while also discussing other options" to take if Pyongyang continues to boycott the talks.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Test

Chosun Ilbo ("US REPUBLICANS FEAR SEOUL COULD ALLY WITH PYONGYANG", 2005-06-02) reported that a US Senate Republican Policy Committee report says a nuclear test by the DPRK could be followed by the formation of an ROK-DPRK confederation and demands for US troops to leave the Korean Peninsula. In the report entitled, "Anticipating a North Korean Nuclear Test: What's to Be Done to Avert a Further Crisis," the Republican Party envisages two possible scenarios: in the first, Seoul will join intense diplomacy with involved nations and could deploy its army to block a North Korean attack. But in a second scenario, the ROK would judge it safer to form a kind of alliance with Pyongyang. A link to the report can be found on the front page of the US Senate Republican Policy Committee homepage .

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3. US Stealth Fighters in ROK

Joonang Daily ("STEALTH FIGHTER DISPATCH PIQUES INTEREST IN PLANE", 2005-06-02) reported that with Washington's deployment of F-117A Nighthawk stealth fighters to the ROK, and with the DPRK's demands to remove the planes, interest in the aircraft is rising. One of the main reasons Pyongyang has been sensitive to the deployment of these planes is the strategic importance the Nighthawk provides. It is a single-seat fighter jet and has a unique design that enables it to absorb or scatter radar energy that is beamed from radar stations on the ground, reducing its radar signature. The plane carries its weapons and fuel internally. Because it can be refuelled in mid-air, it technically has an unlimited operational range.

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4. DPRK on US Stealth Fighters in ROK

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA DEMANDS US WITHDRAW RECENTLY DEPLOYED STEALTH FIGHTERS FROM SOUTH KOREA", 2005-06-02) reported that the DPRK on Thursday demanded that the US withdraw F-117A Nighthawk stealth fighters recently deployed to the ROK, saying Washington planned to use them in a preemptive nuclear attack. The statement marked the second time this week that the DPRK has condemned the deployment of the stealth fighters to the ROK as a prelude to war.

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5. DPRK on Cheney

Reuters ("N.KOREA CALLS US'S CHENEY A 'BLOODTHIRSTY BEAST' ", 2005-06-02) reported that the DPRK called US Vice President Dick Cheney a "bloodthirsty beast" on Thursday, in response to Cheney saying the DPRK leader Kim Jong-il was irresponsible and ran a police state. A DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted as saying "Cheney is hated as the most cruel monster and bloodthirsty beast, as he has drenched various parts of the world in blood."

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6. DPRK Disbands its MIA Search Team

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA HALTS HELP TO RECOVER REMAINS OF US SOILDERS MISSING IN KOREAN WAR", 2005-06-02) reported that, in a statement issued late Wednesday night, the DPRK's military said it has decided to disband a unit which has helped US officials recover the remains of US soldiers. However, the US decision to halt its search, along with its move to reinforce its military presence in the ROK, appears to have deepened the DPRK's suspicion that Washington may be planning a preemptive military action against its nuclear facilities.

(return to top) Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA CRITICIZES US DECISION TO SUSPEND MISSIONS THERE TO RECOVER WAR DEAD", 2005-06-01) reported that the DPRK army on Thursday called the US "foolish" for suspending missions there to recover remains of missing US war dead and said it would disband its own search unit, warning that the fates of thousands of soldiers might never be known. "The rude action taken by the present US administration has totally blocked the way of confirming the identification of more than 8,000 US soldiers reported missing in action during the Korean War," said an unnamed spokesman from the DPR Korean People's Army mission in the truce village of Panmunjom. The US Defense Department said last week it would suspend the missions out of fears for soldiers' safety while in the DPRK. (return to top)

7. DPRK Cyber-terror Capability

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREAN MILITARY HACKERS CONDUCT WAR IN CYBERSPACE", 2005-06-02) reported that it has been officially confirmed for the first time that the DPRK is using military hacking units to gather information in the ROK. Lt. Gen. Song Yong-keun, commander of the ROK Defense Security Command, said in an opening address of a Conference on National Defense Information Protection that, "On orders from National Defense Commission chairman Kim Jong-il, North Korea is operating a crack unit of hackers, and is strengthening its cyber-terror capabilities, collecting information from South Korean national bodies and research institutions through hacking."

(return to top) Korea Herald ("N.K. HACKING ABILITY MATCHES THAT OF CIA, ANALYST SAYS", 2005-06-02) reported that, according to Byun Jae-jung, researcher at an ROK state-run Agency for Defense Development, the DPRK has hundreds of well-trained cyber soldiers and its intelligence warfare capabilities are believed to have reached the level of the US CIA. "Our electronic warfare simulation indicates that North Korea's capability has reached a substantial level, unlike what is generally known to the outside world," Byun told the Defense Information Security Conference 2005 held yesterday at Korea University in Seoul. According to him, the DPRK since 1981 has been training about 100 hackers through an elite electronic warfare academy known as Mirim College and now operates a crack contingent of 500 or 600 cyber soldiers. (return to top)

8. ROK on June 15 Celebration Preparations

Joonang Daily ("RED-FACED SEOUL SIZES UP PYONGYANG'S INTENT ", 2005-06-02) reported that Seoul officials tried yesterday to play down the embarrassment caused by an abrupt notice from Pyongyang that the ROK needed to cut the number of participants in the anniversary celebration of the June 15 summit. ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young said in a meeting between party and government officials that the large size of the delegation must have been too much for the DPRK: "[The North] has closed its doors for 10 months, but opening up to a visiting delegation of 1,000 was a heavy burden." Outside opinion on Pyongyang's demand, meanwhile, was divided. Analysts have said the move was a typical strategy employed by Pyongyang to gain an upper hand in negotiations.

(return to top) Korea Times ("KOREAN `PEACE MARCH' SHOULD GO ON: PARK JAE-KYU", 2005-06-02) reported that Park Jae-kyu, president of Kyungnam University, stressed that the ROK peace and cooperation policy toward the DPRK should be continued for peace on the peninsula, co-prosperity and, eventually, reunification of the two Koreas. (return to top)

9. Top Defense Chiefs Meeting in Singapore

Agence France Presse ("TERRORISM, NORTH KOREA TO TOP DEFENSE CHIEFS MEET IN SINGAPORE ", 2005-06-02) reported that Asia Pacific defense ministers and their allies from the major powers will meet in Singapore for three days from Friday to discuss security issues such as terrorism and the DPRK nuclear standoff. The London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), which organizes the event, has said "close to 20" defense ministers, including Donald Rumsfeld of the US, are expected to attend the gathering. Apart from host Singapore, there will also be official delegations from Australia, Brunei, Cambodia, Canada, the PRC, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, the ROK, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Britain and Vietnam, it said.

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10. ROK Ex-Minister on US-DPRK Relations

Korea Times ("US SHOULD MEET HALFWAY WITH N. KOREA: EX-MINISTER", 2005-06-02) reported that, according to Park Jae-kyu, a main architect of the June 15, 2000 inter-Korean summit, the DPRK and the US could resolve their nuclear standoff peacefully through dialogue if both sides made a few concessions. Park urged President Roh Moo-hyun to persuade US President George W. Bush at the next week' summit to show greater flexibility so the DPRK could rejoin the six-party talks. He also called for the ROK and PRC to induce both the DPRK and US to the negotiation table with more creative proposals, thereby serving as facilitators of mutual trust and dialogue.

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11. US as Balancer in East Asia

Korea Times ("US IS ULTIMATE BALANCER IN EAST ASIA", 2005-06-01) reported that next week's ROK-US summit is expected to focus more on mending their alliance than the DPRK nuclear issue. The two sides have faced some knotty issues, such as US doubts about Seoul's "balancer" strategy in Northeast Asia. Top officials have begun smoothing matters in advance of the summit, just a day after President Roh Moo-hyun ascribed his balancer strategy to a "militarized Japan." Chun Young-woo, deputy foreign minister for policy planning, said yesterday that it is the US that will play the role of "ultimate balancer" in Northeast Asia. Chun said the ROK policy "is not contradictory at all to the strategic interests of the US".

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12. DPRK Landscape

Christian Science Monitor ("ON NORTH KOREA'S STREETS, PINK AND TANGERINE BUSES ", 2005-06-02) reported the existence of increased modernization in Pyongyang. After two years of modest economic reforms and heftier trade with the PRC and ROK, more vendors hawk their wares, more stylish clothes are imported from the PRC, and a new fleet of Chinese double-decker buses cruise the streets. "There is apparently more money circulating around this society," said a foreign teacher based in Pyongyang, mentioning more cars, better clothes, and even more baby strollers.

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13. ROK on Aid to DPRK

Yonhap News ("SEOUL TO PUSH FOR US$9 MILLION IN AID TO N. KOREA THIS YEAR", 2005-0--02) reported that the ROK Unification Ministry and private aid groups agreed to seek 9.2 billion won ($9 million) worth of aid programs to help the DPRK. The aid ranges from housing improvement, medical infrastructure and welfare programs for children under the age of 5, pregnant women and nursing mothers, to clean drinking water. The aid programs will be finalized after a report to the National Assembly and deliberations of a government body on inter-Korean exchange and cooperation, said officials.

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14. Joint Korean Asian Games Bid

Yonhap News ("INCHEON, PYONGYANG AGREE TO CONDUCT JOINT BID TO HOST 2014 ASIAN GAMES", 2005-06-02) reported that, according to Incheon City Mayor Ahn Sang-soo on Thursday, the Koreas have agreed to conduct a joint bid to host the Asian Games in 2014. "Incheon and Pyongyang have agreed to bid to co-host the 2014 Asian Games," Ahn said upon arriving at Incheon International Airport after a visit to the DPRK.

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15. DPRK Counterfit Goods

Wall Street Journal ("NORTH KOREA'S COUNTERFIT GOODS TARGETED", 2005-06-02) reported

that an interagency team inside the Bush administration, the North Korea Working Group, is working with East Asian governments to curb what US officials say is Pyongyang's booming trade in counterfeit cigarettes, pharmaceuticals and currency. The Secret Service also is pursuing a criminal investigation of DPRK entities for their alleged involvement in making counterfeit dollars in Asia, according to an official close to the investigation. If a case goes forward, it would mark the first time a DPRK entity would be charged in a US court with dealing in illicit businesses.

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16. ROK-Japan Maritime Standoff

Reuters ("S.KOREA, JAPAN END HIGH SEAS SHOWDOWN", 2005-06-02) reported that the ROK and Japan said on Thursday they reached a deal to end a two-day, high seas standoff where coast guard vessels from both countries had lashed themselves to a wayward ROK trawler. The showdown involving 13 ROK and Japanese vessels off the east coast of the ROK was the latest incident in a string of rows that have soured Seoul-Tokyo ties in recent months. Under the deal, the trawler's skipper will issue a statement saying his boat violated Japan's maritime economic exclusion zone, did not respond to questioning and fled the scene, ROK and Japanese officials said. In exchange, a Japanese coast guard vessel tied to the trawler will release itself and other Japanese coast guard ships will withdraw from the scene, the officials said.

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17. Japan on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI AGAIN TAKES ISSUE WITH 'INTERFERENCE' OVER YASUKUNI", 2005-06-02) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi again voiced his opposition Thursday against "interference from other countries" to his visits to the war-related Yasukuni Shrine but avoided calling the issue an internal affair. Despite the cancellation last week of a meeting with PRC Vice Premier Wu Yi over the Yasukuni issue, Koizumi also repeated he "will decide appropriately when to go" to the shrine and that his visits are not meant to honor war criminals. "I think other countries should not interfere with the visits paid not as a duty of prime minister but out of my personal belief," Koizumi said in a House of Representatives Budget Committee session. "It's a matter of my heart."

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18. Hong Kong Chief Executive

The Assocaited Press ("BEIJING OKS HONG KONG CANDIDATE'S CAMPAIGN", 2005-06-02) reported that the PRC approved Donald Tsang's resignation as acting chief executive of Hong Kong, clearing the way for the front-runner on Thursday to launch his bid to be the territory's leader. Wearing his trademark bow tie, Tsang told reporters, "My campaign for the office of the chief executive has formally begun." Beijing's announcement has been long expected because Tsang is clearly the Communist leadership's favorite in the three-way race.

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19. Sino-Russian Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA AND RUSSIA SIGN BORDER AGREEMENT", 2005-06-02) reported

that Russia and the PRC signed a final agreement on their shared border, putting an end to 40 years of negotiations. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and his PRC counterpart Li Zhaoxing signed and exchanged an addition to their existing accord during talks in Russia's Far Eastern city of Vladivostok. The addition concerned the eastern end of the joint border, defining two percent of the total 4,300 kilometers (2,700 miles) of the Sino-Russian frontier, stretching through several islands in the Khabarovsk region.

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20. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA FACES "SEVERE" ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS DUE TO DEVELOPMENT", 2005-06-02) reported that the PRC is facing "severe" environmental problems, including pollution in most of its rivers and lakes and worsening acid rain, the government said, blaming the booming economy and urban growth. "China is witnessing rapid economic growth, which has a major impact on the environment, intensifying environmental problems," said Wang Jirong, deputy director of the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), on Thursday. "Pollution is very severe in some places, which greatly impacts people's livelihood," said Wang Yuqing, also deputy director of SEPA. They were speaking at the presentation of an annual report on the state of the environment that painted a bleak picture.

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21. PRC Freedom of the Press

Agence France-Presse ("AUTHOR OF SECRET ZHAO MANUSCRIPT SAYS LEADER WANTED DEMOCRACY", 2005-06-02) reported that a secret manuscript that Beijing is trying to stop from being published outlines purged leader Zhao Ziyang's plea for the Communist Party to relinquish its absolute power and for the PRC to follow the path of democracy. It also airs former premier Zhao's opinion that the government blundered in its crackdown on the 1989 democracy protests that led to hundreds, if not thousands, of citizens being killed, the author told AFP in an interview. The sensitive manuscript -- now at the center of the arrest of Hong Kong-based Singapore Straits Times reporter Ching Cheong, detained while trying to obtain a copy of it, has yet to make its way out of PRC. PRC authorities have pressured author Zong Fengming, an old friend of Zhao's, to not publish it. "He [Zhao] believed China's economic reforms need democracy, otherwise they will not work," Zong said.

(return to top) The Assocaited Press ("PROSECUTORS TAKE CHINESE RESEARCHER CASE", 2005-06-02) reported that the case of a PRC researcher for The New York Times under investigation on suspicion of leaking state secrets has been handed over to prosecutors, the foreign ministry said Thursday. Zhao Yan, who worked for the newspaper's Beijing bureau, has been held since September on charges of revealing unspecified state secrets. His case was moved to the Beijing No. 2 People's Procuratorate on May 20 for "further investigation and prosecution," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. "The prosecutors are handling the case according to law," Kong said, without elaborating. Mo Shaoping, Zhao's lawyer, said he hadn't heard about the latest developments. (return to top) The Los Angeles Times ("THE TWO FACES OF CHINA'S LEADERSHIP", 2005-06-02) reported that two years after coming to power, PRC President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao have staked out a two-pronged strategy for political control: projecting a kinder, gentler image while cracking down on those disseminating unauthorized information. The news this week that a prominent Hong Kong journalist had been detained on spying charges, the third such case in nine months, is the latest entry on the hard side of the ledger, analysts say. Recent

months have seen a series of actions against the media, scholars, Internet users and dissidents. This contrasts with efforts by the Hu administration to burnish a down-to-earth image on other fronts, in part through such policies as cutting taxes for farmers and increasing local subsidies in hope of reducing the yawning gap between rich and poor. (return to top)

II. CanKor

22. CanKor #207

Direct Press Release to CanKor ("KCNA BLASTS US AMBITION FOR "UNIPOLAR WORLD"", 2005-05-25) In a KCNA editorial sent to CanKor by the DPRK Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, the USA is criticized for drawing up international black lists of "unstable states." The KCNA views these as hit lists for regime change. Countries included in these lists are either ideological opponents, or happen to be in regions of strategic interest to the goal of creating a unipolar world dominated by the USA.

(return to top) CanKor ("US NGO PLANS JULY CONFERENCE ON DPRK HUMAN RIGHTS", 2005-05-26) In one of the first efforts to come out of the US North Korea Human Rights Act, Freedom House, a US-based human rights think tank, will hold a conference in July to raise international awareness of human rights conditions in the DPRK. (return to top) CanKor ("SEOUL UNVEILS PLAN FOR DPRK DEVELOPMENT AID", 2005-05-26) The ROK has unveiled a plan for development aid to the DPRK by focusing efforts on two large cities and four smaller zones. These measures will help "prepare Koreans for the post-unification era," says Seong Kyoung-ryung, head of the Presidential Committee on Balanced National Development. (return to top) CanKor ("DPRK DENIES PLAN FOR NUCLEAR BOMB TEST", 2005-05-28) The DPRK officially denies that it has plans to test a nuclear bomb, while the Pentagon announces it is preparing for the possibility that the DPRK will abandon the six-party talks. Experts who argue the DPRK will not conduct a nuclear test say the mystery surrounding its nuclear capabilities is its greatest bargaining chip. Meanwhile, the UN World Food Programme warns that food is running out as new pledges of food aid fail to materialize. (return to top)

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