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I. United States

1. US on DPRK Official Visit to NY

Kyodo News ("U.S. APPROVES VISIT BY SENIOR N.KOREA OFFICIAL TO NEW YORK", 2005-06-15) reported that the US has approved a requested visit by a senior DPRK official to attend an unofficial forum on Asian security issues to be held in New York from June 30, a US administration official said Wednesday. The approval signaled a flexible stance over the DPRK as Washington had refused to issue an entry visa when the same official was invited to the same forum hosted by a private think tank last November.

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2. US Professors Visit DPRK

The Seattle Times ("PROFESSORS GET RARE LOOK AT LIFE IN NORTH KOREA", 2005-06-16) reported that Professors from the US and six other countries caught a rare glimpse of life inside the DPRK, during an unusual conference there last week. The two dozen academics met to discuss the DPRK's nuclear proliferation and the breakdown in six-party talks. Though the government allowed the foreign scholars to come in for a three-day visit, no DPR Koreans participated in the discussions.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Korea Herald ("CHUNG URGES 'STRATEGIC DECISIONS' BY N.K.", 2005-06-16) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young met the DPRK's nominal head of state, Kim Young-nam yesterday evening and urged the DPRK to make a "strategic decision" to return to negotiations. During a 40-minute discussion on the third day of the four-day summit celebrations, Chung explained possible economic benefits and security guarantees in return for the dismantling of the DPRK's nuclear arms program.

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4. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("U.S. MAY CONSIDER OTHER OPTIONS ON NORTH KOREA", 2005-06-16) reported that the US will examine other options than the stalled six-party talks aimed at ending the DPRK's atomic arms program if Pyongyang fails to return to the negotiating table. In a statement to the International Atomic Energy Agency's board of governors, a US official said Washington wanted diplomacy to be given a chance to work. "But for this to happen, the DPRK must do its part by returning to the table without preconditions and abandoning its pursuit of nuclear weapons," said Chris Ford, a senior US official and member of the US delegation to the IAEA.

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5. ROK on DPRK Return to Talks

The Korea Times ("CHUNG URGES NK TO RETURN TO NUKE TALKS", 2005-06-16) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young and the DPRK's nominal head of state, Kim Yong-nam, met on Thursday to resolve the nuclear standoff and other issues. Chung again urged the DPRK to return to the six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program, reaffirming Seoul's promise to present an "important proposal". It was unclear how Kim responded to Chung's remarks at the closed-door session. But, in opening remarks during a meeting with the Southern delegates the previous day, Kim argued there has been "no change in US hostile policies" toward the DPRK.

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6. US on DPRK Return to Talks

Agence France-Presse ("TOP US NUCLEAR OFFICIAL URGES SPEEDY RETURN TO NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR TALKS", 2005-06-16) reported that the top US nuclear negotiator, Christopher Hill, urged the DPRK again to return to talks on its nuclear programme, saying Washington was committed to the process but had set no deadline for Pyongyang's cooperation. Hill told journalists: "We are talking about a lot of different steps. But we still believe in the six-party process." He said Washington had set "no artificial deadline" for Pyongyang's return to the dialogue.

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7. Inter-Korean Summit Anniversary

Donga Ilbo ("TWO KOREAS HAVE DIFFICULTY DECIDING NAME FOR CELEBRATION DAY", 2005-06-16) reported that the ROK and the DPRK have reportedly had a difficult time reaching an agreement because they have had different views regarding whether the provision of the eradication of the threat of nuclear war should be inserted into the Joint Declaration, and the name for the celebration day. The DPRK has insisted on calling the day “a day between the two Koreas,” the ROK claimed that this name might be possibly interpreted as a political intention to exclude the US, which led to the agreement that they would use both countries’ proposed names for the celebration day.

(return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREA'S CIVILIAN DELEGATION MET WITH N.KOREA'S KIM YONG-NAM", 2005-06-16) reported that the civilian delegation from the ROK met with the DPRK's second-ranking leader Kim Yong-nam and held discussions regarding inter-Korean relations. (return to top) The Korea Herald ("SEOUL CALLS FOR SECOND INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT", 2005-06-16) reported that the ROK government and civil delegations called yesterday for a nuclear free

peninsula and a second summit as a four-day joint event in Pyongyang celebrating the fifth anniversary of the inter-Korean summit accord reached the halfway stage. At a morning event attended by more than 6,000 Koreans, civilian representatives from both Koreas made a five-point joint statement pledging to "work together to avert nuclear threats on the peninsula." (return to top) Yonhap News ("SEOUL OFFICIAL IN PYONGYANG CRITICIZED FOR SINGING N.KOREAN SONG", 2005-06-16) reported that an ranking ROK official taking part in a celebratory event in Pyongyang generated strong criticism at home Thursday by singing a DPRK song that praises the state's military. The main opposition GNP stopped short of accusing Yoo Hong-joon, head of the ROK's Cultural Heritage Administration, of treason and demanded the government dismiss the 57-year-old for what it called "inappropriate" behaviour from a government official representing the country. Yoo was later quoted as saying that "it was a small episode," but one that helped him understand how the sides can become closer through sharing their respective cultures. (return to top)

8. Japan Daily on Inter-Korean Summit

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN DAILY BEMOANS FAILURE OF JUNE 15 SUMMIT", 2005-06-16) reported that Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun on Thursday said a landmark 2000 summit between the two Koreas achieved quite the opposite of what its ROK proponents hoped it would. The summit between President Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-il “brought about no changes whatsoever in the DPRK regime. “South Korea has failed to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions even after offering Pyongyang the carrot of economic assistance." It said a new sense of inter-Korean brotherhood in the ROK meant the country lost the sense of a real and present danger posed by the DPRK.

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9. US on Inter-Korean Dialgoue

The Korea Herald ("'FULL WASHINGTON SUPPORT OF INTER-KOREAN DIALOGUE'", 2005-06-16) reported that Washington fully supports dialogue between the two Koreas officially and internally in light of revitalizing inter-Korean relations and despite the stalled six-party talks. "US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill expressed regret that some critics view the United States was reserved about the progress being made between the South and the North," Deputy Foreign Minister Song Min-soon told reporters after an hour-long discussion with Hill. "At least now, I know South Koreans are having some contact with North Korea. So I am looking forward to hearing what is going on," Hill told reporters on his way to his meeting with Song at the Foreign Affairs Ministry in central Seoul.

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10. US Senate on US DPRK Policy

Associated Press ("SENATORS CHALLENGE ADMINISTRATION ON KOREA POLICY", 2005-05-16) reported that US Senate Foreign Relations Committee members have criticized Bush administration efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament in the DPRK. "The administration policy has been a failure," said Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, the ranking Democrat, "confidence in our ability to ensure peace and stability in Northeast Asia has been shaken." Responding to the criticisms at a committee hearing, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said the administration believes that the six-party disarmament negotiation "is the way to go." Biden said that the administration, far from adopting a unified position, has been debating with itself over its DPRK policy. As examples of officials he said are not in step with officially stated policy, Biden cited Vice President Dick Cheney,

Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and U.N. Ambassador-designate John Bolton.

(return to top) Reuters ("'ONE WAY OR ANOTHER' N.KOREA TO LOSE NUKES - U.S.", 2005-06-16) reported that, under fire for what critics call a failed DPRK policy, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill expressed confidence on Tuesday that "one way or another" Pyongyang ultimately would give up its nuclear weapons. Leading opposition, Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware said the DPRK bore prime responsibility for the nuclear crisis, but "this administration has also made a series of poor choices, in my view, and has not ... pursued the policies that stand a realistic chance of mitigating and ultimately reversing North Korea's threat." On President Bush's watch the North "declared itself a nuclear power, produced enough plutonium to build at least six or eight nuclear weapons, and made vague threats about testing and on the verge of testing a weapon." Republican Richard Lugar of Indiana, the panel's chairman, expressed concern that US goals were being sabotaged by internal administration divisions over policy, confusing both Pyongyang and US allies. (return to top)

11. DPRK Human Rights and the Six-Party Talks

The Korea Times ("NK HUMAN RIGHTS NOT AGENDA FOR 6-WAY TALKS", 2005-06-16) reported that the DPRK's human rights issue is not an official agenda item in the six-party talks, though it could emerge in bilateral contacts between the US and the DPRK within the context of the six-party talks. In a press briefing on a meeting in Seoul earlier in the day between the chief nuclear negotiators from the ROK and the US, a senior RO Korean official said on condition of anonymity that the US also shares the view and understands the ROK's position on the DPRK's human rights problems.

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12. US on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS A 'NATURAL' TALKING POINT: HILL", 2005-06-16) reported that US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said Thursday it was natural for the US to address the DPRK's human rights record, which will be a point at issue if Washington is ever to normalize relations with Pyongyang. Hill told reporters that human rights were a universal matter of concern and nobody could expect his government to remain silent. But the US diplomat said he did not believe the issue would change the agenda of six-party talks.

(return to top) US House of Representatives ("HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 168, CONDEMNING NORTH KOREAN ABDUCTIONS", 2005-05-26) reported that it has passed a resolution condemning the DPRK for the abductions and continued captivity of citizens of the ROK and Japan as acts of terrorism and gross violations of human rights. (return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA NEVER FREED THOUSANDS OF POWs", 2005-06-16) reported that the DPRK held on to tens of thousands of ROK prisoners of war when the two sides exchanged POWs after the Korean War and forced many of them to serve in the DPR Korean People's Army. The disclosure that the DPRK never freed 13,094 POWs and pressed 6,430 into its army comes from a paper by Shen Zhihua, the director of Beijing's Center for Oriental History Studies, entitled "The Sino-North Korean Conflict and its Resolution during the Korean War." (return to top)

13. DPRK Construction of Nuclear Reactors

Kyodo News ("N.KOREA RESUMES CONSTRUCTION OF 2 NUCLEAR REACTORS", 2005-06-14) reported that the DPRK told a visiting US scholar, Stanford University professor John Lewis, late last

month that it has resumed the construction of two nuclear reactors frozen under a 1994 accord with the US, information already conveyed to the US government, according to US administration sources Tuesday. The 50-megawatt and 200-megawatt reactors located in the Yongbyon nuclear complex would be capable of producing about 280 kilograms of plutonium, or enough to manufacture about 50 nuclear bombs, if they are completed and begin operations, according to U.S. nuclear experts.

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14. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Warheads

BBC ("RUSSIA CHECKING NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR CLAIMS", 2005-06-14) reported that Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told Interfax that Russia is checking thoroughly reports alleging that the DPRK has several nuclear warheads and after it has done so will be able to assess the possible threat it poses to Russia's security.

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15. DPRK Food Shortage Crisis

BBC ("NORTH KOREA FOOD SHORTAGES MOUNT", 2005-06-15) reported that food rations have been cut, economic reforms have sent prices soaring, and as a nuclear crisis grinds on, the DPRK's main donors - the US, ROK and Japan - have given nothing so far this year. "It is very much a crisis already... Of much bigger proportions than we have had in recent years," said Gerald Bourke, spokesman for the UN's World Food Programme. The DPRK struggles to feed itself due to a mixture of geography and economic policy. The DPRK is mostly rugged mountain terrain, and only about 18% is arable. It is dependent on fertilizer and machinery to make that land productive, both of which are expensive. To make matters worse, market reforms, instituted in 2002, have sent food prices soaring at a higher rate than wages.

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16. Kaesong Medical Facilities

Yonhap ("S KOREA TO SET UP MEDICAL FACILITY IN N KOREA'S KAESONG", 2005-06-15) reported that the ROK has pushed ahead with a plan to establish a medical facility at an industrial complex in Kaesong. The plan calls for the construction of the facility to provide medical services for RO Korean employees at the industrial park. RO Korean employees there currently lack medical facilities and the proposal will ensure they will have access to medical care covered by their health insurance. The proposed facility, if opened, will not immediately be available to DPR Korean employees of the complex due to health insurance issues which the ministry says it will seek a solution to with the authorities in Pyongyang.

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17. Live Satellite Phone Interview from DPRK

Yonhap News ("S.KOREAN RADIO STATION CONDUCTS 1st LIVE ", 2005-06-16) reported that an ROK radio station interviewed live an ROK writer in Pyongyang via satellite phone on Wednesday. The radio station will attempt to conduct a second live interview with sibling ROK female singers Yang Hee-eun and Yang Hee-kyung in the DPRK on Friday morning.

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18. UK Display of DPRK Propaganda Controversy

Chosun Ilbo ("BRITISH MUSEUM IN N.KOREAN PROPAGANDA 'ART' GAFFE", 2005-06-16) reported that the Korea Foundation is upset by a display of DPRK propaganda posters outside the British Museum's Korea Room under the theme "Contemporary Korean Art". The posters bear such bellicose slogans as, "Bear this in mind, world. Those who mess with our great undertaking will become our target." The foundation, which gave 1.2 million pounds in 2000 to establish the Korea Room, wrote to the British Museum on Wednesday expressing concern that the warlike propaganda posters were placed right in front of the Korea Room. The National Museum of Korea, which has loaned about 20 Korean artefacts to the museum, also plans to write to the British Museum saying the posters do little to elucidate Korean art and may harm a mood of reconciliation between the two Koreas.

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19. PRC-DPRK Trade Infrastructure

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA, CHINA TO BUILD NEW BRIDGE ACROSS THE YALU", 2005-06-16) reported that the DPRK and PRC have agreed to build a new bridge across the Yalu River below the railway bridge connecting the two countries, an official from the PRC border city of Dandong revealed Thursday. "Because the current Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge is limited in its ability to cope with rising traffic, we need to build another bridge across the Yalu River," the vice head of the Dandong Development and Reform Committee said during the first ever North-South Transport Forum in the city on Thursday. "North Korea has also agreed," The official said. "The plan is being carried out not by Dandong but by the central government." He said no concrete plans for the new bridge have been decided, "but the location will be downstream from the Sino-Korean Friendship Bridge, between the towns of Anmin and Donggang." The bridge will have four to six lanes depending on the budget. The official named no specific figure but said ROK help with financing could speed up construction.

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20. US-ROK Diplomatic Dialogue

The Korea Herald ("SEOUL, WASHINGTON TO FORM REGULAR DIPLOMATIC DIALGOUE", 2005-06-16) reported that Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon said yesterday that Seoul and Washington are discussing establishing a regular cabinet-level diplomatic dialogue. "I am discussing with U.S. Secretary of State Rice setting up regular talks between the foreign affairs ministers," Ban said in a weekly news briefing at the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Foreign Ministry officials said that although the ministers of the two countries meet with each other once or twice a year, making the meeting regular would allow more effective discussion.

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21. US Military in ROK

The Korea Times ("US LAUNCHES INTEGRATED COPTER UNIT", 2005-06-16) reported that the US military launched a multi-purpose aviation brigade Thursday incorporating all helicopter assets in the ROK, an official said. The launch of the Multi-Functional Aviation Brigade, or MFAB, is part of

Washington's broader plan to streamline its military installations worldwide, said Kim Yong-kyu, a spokesman at the US military command in Seoul. "The MFAB's formation is related to the US Army's transformation plan," focusing more on greater agility and sophisticated weapons systems, rather than the level of troops, Kim said. Washington plans to cut its troop strength in the ROK to 25,000 by 2008. US officials said their $11-billion program to equip American forces with modern weapons by 2006 will offset the troop pullback plan.

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22. ROK Forces in Iraq

Joongang Ilbo ("KOREAN FORCES TO PROTECT UN IN NORTH IRAQ", 2005-06-16) reported that US and ROK defense officials from Washington and Seoul said yesterday they expect ROK troops in Iraq to assume guard duties for a UN relief agency office in the northern Kurdish city of Irbil, starting in September. The United Nations asked Korea's Zaytun unit, which has been stationed in Irbil since last year, for a protection force. The UN's office is situated near the Zaytun base. Officials from the ROK and the US confirmed the UN request and expect Seoul to approve the step. "We believe the mission fits the troops' peace and reconstruction activities," said Yoon Kwang-ung, the ROK's defense minister.

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23. Japan - ROK on Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN PM READY FOR 'FRANK' TALKS ON WAR SHRINE WITH SKOREAN LEADER", 2005-06-16) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is ready for "frank" talks on his visits to a war shrine when he meets ROK President Roh Moo-hyun next week amid tensions over history. "I have been candid about this issue," Koizumi told reporters when asked if he would discuss his repeated visits to Yasukuni shrine with South Korea, which says his pilgrimage condones Japan's past militarism. "I want to seek understanding through frank dialogue on the issues that are brought to the table," he said. Asked if he will visit the shrine again this year, Koizumi gave his usual non-committal response, saying: "I will make an appropriate decision after hearing" from Roh.

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24. PRC-Japan Gas Field Dispute

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SOON TO APPROVE TEST-DRILLING IN GAS FIELD DISPUTED WITH CHINA", 2005-06-16) reported that Japan plans to grant a Tokyo-based firm test-drilling rights for a gas field contested with the PRC as early as next month in a move that could further strain ties with Beijing, according to a press report. Teikoku Oil applied to test-drill one of the potentially huge fields in the East China Sea, which Tokyo in April opened to private exploration, and will likely get approval next month or later, the Tokyo Shimbun said. "The move is likely to prompt China to heighten its protest, even though the possibility of the company actually starting test-drilling is low as with bilateral talks stalled there is no safety guarantee for the work," the daily said, quoting an anonymous trade ministry official.

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25. Sino-Russian Trade

Xinhua news ("CHINA-RUSSIA BORDER TRADE PROMISING ", 2005-06-16) reported that PRC Vice-Premier Wu Yi Thursday urged the PRC and Russia to improve border trade in an effort to push forward their bilateral economic and trade relations. Wu said the PRC's northeast areas and Russia's far-east region and Siberia enjoy distinct geographic advantages and are complementary in industrial structure and economic development. "Since borderline trade was resumed, it has kept on expanding and playing an increasingly important role in bolstering bilateral trade and economic relations," Wu said in a speech at the opening ceremony of a Russian Business Day on the sideline of the 16th China Harbin Fair for Trade and Economic Cooperation.

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26. Sino-Australian Uranium Deal

The Age ("CANBERRA SET ON CHINA URANIUM DEAL", 2005-06-16) reported that the Federal Government is poised to allow mining companies to begin exporting uranium to the PRC, a move that would at least double Australia's annual revenue from the resource to $1 billion. Resources Minister Ian Macfarlane is determined to dramatically expand Australia's exploitation of the resource and is seeking to sell more to existing markets, as well as getting the PRC into the mix. He told The Age Australia risked losing billions of dollars of export revenue if it did not lift the ban of uranium sales to the PRC, a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Australia is seeking a safeguard agreement with the PRC before exports start, giving Australia the ability to monitor the end use of its uranium.

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27. PRC on UN Reform

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA STEPS UP OPPOSITION TO HASTY UN REFORM", 2005-06-16) reported that the PRC has stepped up its opposition to any hasty expansion of the United Nations Security Council, and vowed to fight for increased representation by developing countries. State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan, the former foreign minister, said the purpose of any reform must be to strengthen rather than weaken the United Nations. "Any plan must take the opinion of most countries as a basis and have broad consensus, which is the most pure manifestation of democracy in international relations," he said at a meeting of the Chinese-Arab Cooperation Forum here. "It will inevitably intensify the conflict among many countries if an immature plan is put to the vote or adopted.

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28. PRC Energy Security

Xinhua news ("CHINA FOCUS: ENERGY CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTED AT LEVEL OF NATIONAL STRATEGY", 2005-06-16) reported that it is a 33-centigrade summer day, but Gao Fei, a young man working for the PRC's Foreign Affairs Ministry in Beijing, did not go for the air-conditioner remote control when coming into the office. Instead, he opened the window. The ministry's office building did not experience blackout. Gao is inspired by the "experiencing power crunch" program, themed in the ongoing Energy-Saving Week that ends on June 18. The PRC set up a national energy leading group early this month, headed by Premier Wen Jiabao. One of the main responsibilities of the group

is to promote "energy development and conservation". Will the PRC be a threat to world energy security? In response to the question, Ma Kai, minister in charge of the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), the PRC's economic planning agency, said that the PRC will hinge on domestic supplies to solve its energy problem. "In 2004, 94 percent of China's energy consumption came from domestic supplies, "he said. "China does not, and will not pose a threat to the world energy security," said Ma.

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29. PRC AIDS Issue

The New York Times ("CITY EMERGES AS MODEL IN CHINA'S EFFORT TO REVERSE AIDS RECORD", 2005-06-16) reported that the storefront looks like just another downtown shop. But inside, health workers offer tests for H.I.V. and dispense methadone to drug users. Upstairs, a nonprofit group offers counseling and support for anyone with H.I.V. or AIDS. Not far away, another group has opened a drop-in center for parents of drug users to exchange information about how to prevent H.I.V. In another office, the city's more than 1,000 prostitutes can receive free condoms, tests for H.I.V. or advice on how to avoid becoming infected. Here in mountainous southwestern PRC, where heroin begat AIDS and AIDS begat death, discrimination and official denial, Gejiu is emerging as a model of how the PRC is trying to reverse its once abysmal record on AIDS. In the last 18 months, the PRC's top leaders have made AIDS a national priority and introduced a host of policies, some contentious even by Western standards.

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30. PRC Dissenter Trial

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PLANS SECRET TRIAL FOR DISSIDENT ON SUBVERSION CHARGES: RIGHTS GROUP", 2005-06-16) reported that a dissident writer arrested in January after he tried to mourn the death of deposed leader Zhao Ziyang is to be tried in secret next week on subversion charges, a rights group says. Zhang Lin will be brought before the Intermediate People's Court of Bangbu in the eastern province of Anhui on Tuesday in a trial that will be closed to the public, New York-based Human Rights in China (HRIC) said. HRIC said Zhang has gone on hunger strike twice to protest his detention. His lawyer, Mo Shaoping, has been denied access to him.

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31. PRC Freedom of the Press

The Assocaited Press ("CHINA: IMPRISONED SCHOLAR IN GOOD HEALTH", 2005-06-16) reported that the PRC said Thursday a jailed US-based PRC political activist is in good health, following an appeal for his release by 40 US senators who say he has been tortured. A letter signed by the senators said Yang Jianli has been beaten and tortured with electric rods while serving a five-year sentence on charges of spying for rival Taiwan and entering the PRC illegally. The letter said he suffered a stroke last year. "He is in good health," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said at a regular news briefing. "He is able to do things that he likes, such as reading novels and participating in activities organized by prison authorities." Liu said Yang's case has been handled "according to law."

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32. Hong Kong Executive

Los Angeles Times ("HONG KONG RACE MAY BE OVER", 2005-06-16) reported that career civil servant Donald Tsang announced Wednesday that he had secured nominations from most members of the Beijing-backed election committee, assuring that he will become Hong Kong's next leader. Tsang said he had received nominations from 710 of the 796 voters from the panel, which had been scheduled to name a new territorial leader next month. An official announcement confirming his selection was expected as early as today. Tsang's two rivals had already dropped out of the race, failing to receive the minimum 100 nominations required to run. "The process was very smooth," Tsang told reporters at his campaign office. "I'm very excited."

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