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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Talks / Missile Program

KCNA news agency ("MEMORANDUM OF DPRK FOREIGN MINISTRY", None) reported that the US is paying no heed to this just demand of the DPRK, insisting that it come out to the six-party talks without preconditions. The DPRK is left with no justification to sit at the negotiating table with the US for the six-party talks or bilateral talks. The basic key to the solution of the nuclear issue between the DPRK and the US is for the US to make a switchover from its hostile policy towards the DPRK to a policy of peaceful co-existence. In September 1999, the period of the previous US administration, we announced the moratorium on the missile launch while dialogue was under way but the DPRK-US dialogue was totally suspended when the Bush administration took office in 2001. Accordingly, we are not bound to the moratorium on the missile launch at present.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Asia Pulse ("N.KOREA WANTS US MEETING, LESS HOSTILE POLICY TO RESUME TALKS", 2005-03-03) reported that the DPRK is demanding a bilateral meeting with the US and also an end to that nation's hostile stance against the DPRK as preconditions for resuming the six-nation negotiations regarding its nuclear programs, The Nihon Keizai Shimbun learned Wednesday. The DPRK's demand for a less hostile US policy is seen by the PRC and other officials as a tactic to gauge the US's willingness to remove the DPRK from the list of nations supporting terrorism, lift economic sanctions, and provide energy assistance.

(return to top) Korea Herald ("N.K. STEPS UP PRESSURE FOR U.S. POLICY CHANGE", 2005-0--03) reported that amid the increasingly brisk diplomatic contacts to restart the six-party nuclear talks, Pyongyang appears to be stepping up pressure on Washington to make reconciliatory gestures so that it can rejoin the negotiations without any loss of face. Experts believe the DPRK's

memorandum is aimed at clarifying conditions for attending a fourth round of six-party talks with the ROK, the US, PRC, Japan and Russia. (return to top)

3. DPRK on Missile Program

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO TEST MISSILES", 2005-03-03) reported that the DPRK demanded Wednesday that the US apologize for designating the DPRK an "outpost of tyranny" and it threatened to resume long-range missile tests. The memorandum - which was summarized in an English-language dispatch by the DPRK's official news agency, KCNA - said DPRK no longer felt bound by its 1999 moratorium on missile tests, according to the ROK's Yonhap news agency. "Dialogue between the United States and North Korea has been completely blocked since Bush took office in 2001," Yonhap quoted the memorandum as saying. "As a result, we see no binding force on the missile moratorium."

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4. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("US TOP NEGOTIATOR: NO INTENTION TO INVADE DPRK", 2005-03-03) reported that the US top nuclear negotiator reiterated Thursday that the US does not intend to invade the DPRK and is ready to meet Pyongyang over the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula. The US has absolutely no intentions of invading DPRK, said Christopher Hill, US ambassador to the ROK and US head delegate to the six-party nuclear talks, in a discussion session at the Asian Leadership Conference.

(return to top) Yonhap ("U.S. HAS NO INTENTION OF INVADING NORTH KOREA: U.S. AMBASSADOR", 2005-03-03) reported that the US does not intend to invade DPRK and is ready to meet Pyongyang's demands for abandonment of its nuclear weapons programs, US Ambassador to Seoul Christopher Hill said Thursday. "The United States has absolutely no intentions of invading North Korea," said the US diplomat in a discussion session at the Asian Leadership Conference.
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5. US on DPRK Missile Program

Yonhap ("PYONGYANG'S MISSILE THREATS NOT CONSISTENT WITH SIX-WAY TALKS: WASHINGTON", 2005-03-03) reported that the DPRK's threats to resume missile launches undermine the framework of the six-way talks aimed at ending Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, a spokesman at the Bush administration said. "As far as threats to undertake tests or other military activity, that certainly is not helpful and doesn't serve a useful purpose. And I think it's not consistent with the spirit of the six-party talks," Adam Ereli, deputy spokesman at the Department of State told reporters.

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6. US, PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("CHINESE ENVOY ON N KOREAN NUCLEAR ISSUE MEETS US ENVOY IN SEOUL", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC's chief negotiator on DPRK's nuclear program met his US counterpart in Seoul Thursday. PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and US Ambassador to Seoul Christopher Hill "had a good meeting and constructive exchange of views," an official at the US embassy said. "Both sides expressed a desire to get the six-party talks moving... and agreed that the Korean Peninsula must be denuclearized and that the six-party talks are the best way to achieve this goal,"

the embassy official said on condition of anonymity.

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7. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("CHINA ENVOY RELAYS VIEWS OF KIM JONG-IL", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC's senior delegate to the six-party talks, Wu Dawei, has reported that the DPRK's leader, Kim Jong-il, wants the US to take two steps before his government commits to return to the negotiations on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, Seoul officials said yesterday. Mr. Wu said Mr. Kim told a visiting PRC delegation led by Wang Jiarui, a top Communist Party official, last month that the US must explain why it had characterized the DPRK as an "outpost of tyranny." Mr. Kim also told the PRC delegation that US should recognize Pyeongyang as a partner with an equal footing in the negotiations, Seoul officials said.

(return to top) Korea Times ("CHINA URGES US FLEXIBILITY ON NK", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC yesterday made efforts to persuade the US to show more flexibility in coaxing the DPRK back to the talks on its nuclear weapons program. In a Foreign Ministry memorandum quoted by its official news agency Wednesday night, the DPRK reiterated that it would resume talks "any time" if the US showed a "trustworthy and sincere attitude." "It appears to be aimed at clearing away the uncertainty resulting from media speculation over Kim Jong-il's comments on conditions," a senior government official said. "They are telling the US to clarify their political willingness to coexist peacefully." (return to top)

8. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("JAPAN BELIEVES N KOREA EXPLORING WAYS TO RETURN TO SIX-WAY TALKS", 2005-03-03) reported that Japan believes the DPRK is exploring ways to return to the six-party talks on its nuclear program while setting conditions and threatening to resume long-range missile tests, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said. "It is hard to understand its real intentions. It may be trying to take advantage for future negotiations at the six-way talks by making various remarks," Hosoda, the government's top spokesman, said in a press conference.

(return to top) Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN THINKS NKOREA NEAR RETURNING TO TALKS AFTER APOLOGY DEMAND", 2005-03-03) reported that Japan said it expected the DPRK to return soon to talks on its nuclear program as Pyongyang's fresh demand for a US apology was consistent with its past behavior before resuming dialogue. "North Korea is coming closer to being persuaded by other nations," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda, the Japanese government spokesman. "I expect a resumption of the six-nation talks will be decided soon," he told a news conference. (return to top)

9. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France Presse ("UN ATOMIC AGENCY CALLS ON NORTH KOREA TO RETURN TO NUCLEAR SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2005-03-03) reported that the UN atomic agency called on the DPRK to return to six-party talks on its nuclear program. The statement "urged particularly the DPRK to agree to the resumption of the six-party talks... without preconditions." It also "urged the DPRK to completely dismantle any nuclear weapons program under credible international verification." The board "emphasized the importance of continued dialogue to achieve a peaceful and comprehensive resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue and attached great importance to the crucial role played by the six party talks in this regard."

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10. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Asahi Shimbun ("HINTS OF SECRET NUKE PLANT IN N. KOREA", 2005-03-03) reported that US spy planes flying near the DPRK have detected traces of a radioactive gas emitted during the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel rods, which could be a possible sign of a secret nuclear facility, sources here said. US intelligence analysts are still trying to determine the significance of finding krypton 85, a radioactive isotope that is a byproduct of reprocessing nuclear fuel rods to extract plutonium, in the atmosphere near the DPRK last December. Krypton 85 was also detected in July 2003 when the DPRK announced it had completed the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel rods.

(return to top) Choson Ilbo ("U.S. DETECTS SIGNS OF SECOND N. KOREAN NUCLEAR FACILITY", 2005-03-03) reported that Japan's Asahi Shimbun reported Thursday that US planes detected a radioactive gas emitted during the extraction of plutonium from spent fuel rods in atmospheric samples collected near DPRK airspace in December. The Asahi said quoting sources the re-appearance of krypton 85 after a year and half gave rise to concern in the US that the DPRK may have been secretly operating a second nuclear facility. With the redetection of krypton 85 more than a year leader, analysis within the US government points to either a separate, previously unknown nuclear facility. (return to top)

11. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Los Angeles Times ("N. KOREA, WITHOUT THE RANCOR; A BUSINESSMAN SPEAKS HIS MIND ABOUT THE U.S., THE 'NUCLEAR CLUB' AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES", 2005-03-03) reported that a North Korean, an affable man in his late 50s who spent much of his career as a diplomat in Europe, has been assigned to help the DPRK attract foreign investment. In an effort to clear up misunderstandings, he expounded on the DPRK view of the world in an informal conversation. He said better relations with the US were key to turning around his nation's economy, which has nearly ground to a halt over the last decade amid famine, the collapse of industry and severe electricity shortages. Yet he voiced strong enthusiasm for his country's recent announcement that it had developed nuclear weapons. The declaration, which jarred US officials, was not intended as a threat, he said, but merely a way to advance negotiations. "Now that we are members of the nuclear club, we can start talking on an equal footing. In the past, the U.S. tried to whip us, as though they were saying, 'Little boy, don't play with dangerous things.'"

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12. Conference on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Chosun Ilbo ("ASIAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE OPENS WITH CALLS FOR UNITY", 2005-03-03) reported that about the DPRK nuclear issue, US Ambassador to Korea Christopher Hill said the DPRK needed to understand the six-party talks were the only means leading to the future and only path to receiving help from the international community. Harvard University Professor Ashton Carter, who served as undersecretary of defense under the Clinton administration, said the six-party talks were complete failures that turned up no real results. He said the DPRK's continuous development of nuclear weapons was the responsibility of the ROK, US and PRC governments.

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13. US-DPRK Joint MIA Recovery

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S., NORTH TO MEET OVER WAR REMAINS", 2005-03-03) reported that the US and DPRK are scheduled to hold a meeting today at the truce village of Panmunjeom to prepare for the resumption of efforts to recover more remains of US soldiers who died in the Korean War. In an interview with Radio Free Asia, Larry Greer, spokesman for the US Department of Defense for the Joint POW-MIA Accounting Command, said the joint recovery operations will take place from next month until October in the DPRK's South Hamgyeong and North Pyeongan provinces. Ten separate recovery operations are scheduled to take place, Mr. Greer said. This year the US is to pay the DPRK $5 million in return for continuing this year's work to find missing Americans.

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14. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREA TO MAINTAIN PLANNED INCREASE TO INTER-KOREAN FUND", 2005-03-03) reported that the ROK government will maintain its plan to increase its donation to the Inter-Korean Economic Fund by 300 per cent from a year earlier, a government official said Thursday. "To support, facilitate and complete businesses with the North, we decided not to change the total contribution, 500bn won (496m US dollars), to the fund," an official of the Planning and Budget Ministry said. The government is to use 142bn won to complete the linkage of railroads on the west and east coasts this year, according to the plan. The government will spend an additional 28.5bn won this year on a project for the Kaesong industrial complex.

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15. UN Envoy on Sanctions on the DPRK

Kyodo News ("U.N. ENVOY ON HUMAN RIGHTS DOUBTS SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2005-03-03) reported that Japan can work within a multilateral framework to exert "constructive influence" on the DPRK over the issue of abductions before unilaterally imposing economic sanctions on the DPRK, a UN human rights envoy indicated Thursday. "My perspective, my approach is to work through the multilateral framework, particularly of the United Nations," Vitit, also a professor of law at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, told reporters.

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16. UN Envoy on DPRK Human Rights

The Associated Press ("U.N. INVESTIGATOR URGES NORTH KOREA TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ABDUCTIONS", 2005-03-03) reported that a special UN investigator on human rights in the DPRK urged Pyongyang on Thursday to address Tokyo's claims that there are still Japanese kidnap victims alive in the DPRK. "Various uncertainties remain and they need to be dealt with satisfactorily," said Vitit Muntarbhorn, a human rights lawyer appointed by the United Nations to investigate reports of violations in the communist country. He urged the DPRK to "respond effectively and expeditiously to Japan's claims."

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17. DPRK on Defectors

Yonhap ("N. KOREA EXECUTES 2 HUMAN TRAFFICKERS IN PUBLIC: ONLINE RADIO", 2005-0--03) reported that the DPRK shot two human traffickers to death in public in late February for smuggling DPRK women into the PRC, a ROK online radio service reported Thursday. The public execution took place in the DPRK city of Hoeryeong, close to the border with the PRC, on Feb. 28, Free NK (www.freenk.net) said.

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18. DPRK Science Award

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN FEMALE SCIENTIST WINS UNESCO RESEARCH AWARD", 2005-03-03) reported that a female DPRK scientist won a prestigious award and grant from the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) here on Thursday, along with 13 other scientists. The award, sponsored by French cosmetics giant L'Oreal SA, honors distinguished female scientists under the age of 36 every year, and the grant is worth about US$20,000.

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19. DPRK on ROK-Japanese Territorial Dispute

Yonhap ("N. KOREA RAPS JAPAN'S CLAIM TO DOKDO", 2005-03-03) reported that the DPRK criticized Thursday Japan's claim to a group of islets in the East Sea as an excuse to reinvade the Korean Peninsula. "Japan's claim to Dokdo is a prelude to reinvasion," the DPRK Korean Central Broadcasting Station said in a commentary monitored here.

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20. Death of ROK Pastor

Yonhap ("KOREAN-AMERICAN PASTOR FEARED DROWNED IN MYANMAR", 2005-03-03) reported that a Korean-American pastor who went missing earlier this year in Myanmar is presumed dead, a ROK civic activist claimed Thursday. The pastor, identified as Jeffrey Bahk, was swept away by strong currents while trying to swim across the Mekong River on Jan. 2, said Chun Ki-won, director of Seoul-based Durihana Missionary Foundation. Bahk, 63, appeared to have drowned while attempting to cross the river from Myanmar to Laos with six DPRK defectors he reportedly met in Jilin and Yanji, PRC, in November.

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21. Russo-ROK Defense Cooperation

Itar-Tass ("SOUTH KOREAN MILITARY DELEGATION CALLS FOR BROADER DEFENSE COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA", 2005-03-03) reported that a ROK military delegation has ended a visit to Russia's Far Eastern Military District. As the ROK delegation met with Commander of the Far-Eastern district, Army General Yuri Yakubov, their discussion focused on further military cooperation. Gen Yakubvov said he did not rule out a possible Russian-ROK Army drill.

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22. ROK Energy Supply

Korea Herald ("NEW GAS RESERVES FOUND IN EAST SEA", 2005-03-03) reported that additional gas reserves near the Donghae-1 gas field off the ROK's east coast have been found, officials at Korea National Oil Corp. said yesterday. The state-run company estimates the new reserves hold about 800,000 metric tons of natural gas worth $280 million. The new reserves are located about 5 kilometers southwest of the Donghae-1 gas field, the ROK's first offshore gas field 58 kilometers off the industrial city of Ulsan.

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23. Jenkins Case

The Associated Press ("U.S. ARMY DESERTER TO APPLY FOR PASSPORT", 2005-03-03) reported that Charles Robert Jenkins, who spent nearly 40 years in the DPRK after abandoning his US Army unit in 1965, visited the US Embassy in Tokyo on Thursday to apply for an American passport. Embassy officials refused to comment because of privacy laws, but officials in his Japanese wife's hometown said earlier he would make the visit to apply for a passport. Jenkins, 64 and frail, has said he has no plans to return permanently to the US but would like to visit his home in North Carolina with his wife, Hitomi Soga, and their two DPRK-born daughters.

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24. Japanese Historical Revisionism

Choson Ilbo ("JAPAN PUTS OUT REVISED 'WHITEWASH' TEXTBOOK", 2005-03-03) reported that a revised version of a controversial Japanese history textbook is tipped to ignite an even bigger storm than the original. When the textbook was released in 2001, it led to outcries in the ROK, PRC and other Asian countries for whitebring Japanese wartime atrocities. Ehime University Professor Konno Hideharu said Thursday that "lies fabricated to condemn Japan" such as the Nanjing Massacre, forced relocations of Korean laborers and impressment of "comfort women" were excluded from the Fusosha text.

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25. Japanese Aid to the PRC

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN TO TERMINATE AID TO CHINA BY 2008 BEIJING OLYMPICS", 2005-03-03) reported that Japan plans to terminate its main form of aid to the PRC by 2008 when Beijing is to host the Olympic Games given its neighbour's growing economic and military power, a report said. Tokyo will gradually reduce the amount of low-interest yen loans, which account for some 90 percent of Japanese aid to the PRC, and phase them out completely by the 2008 Olympics, the Yomiuri Shimbun said, quoting government sources.

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26. Sino - Japanese Relations

International Herald Tribune ("HEADING OFF A JAPAN-CHINA CONFLICT", 2005-03-03) reported that perhaps it is time that Asian countries expressed concern about the rising temperature in the

East China Sea. Animosity between the PRC and Japan has deep historical roots, but until recently the assumption was that the heat of cooperative economic activity was warding off the chill of mutual suspicion. While some Asian governments may initially welcome this development as a move by the US to check and contain the PRC's rise, over the longer term they may regret a reinvigorated US-Japan alliance aimed at the PRC. With the PRC's currency set to appreciate in value, the PRC's economy will become an even more crucial component of regional prosperity.

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27. PRC on US Human Rights

Reuters ("CHINA TAKES TIT-FOR-TAT SWIPE AT U.S. ON RIGHTS", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC took a tit-for-tat swipe at the US on Thursday for abusing Iraqi prisoners of war and other human rights violations in a report released days after Washington criticized the PRC's rights record. China's State Council, or cabinet, issued its own report for the sixth year in a row, citing atrocities by US troops against Iraqi prisoners of war which "exposed the dark side" of the human rights record of the US. The report made no mention of President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld condemning the abuses and then Secretary of State Colin Powell apologizing to the victims.

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28. PRC Defense Spending

Agence France Presse ("CHINA TO INCREASE MILITARY SPENDING BY 12.6 PERCENT IN 2005", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC is expected to increase its military expenditure by 12.6 percent this year, sources said, as it boosts its capability of using force to reunify rival Taiwan. The rise in spending comes with Washington voicing concern that the PRC's military build-up could tilt the strategic balance with Taiwan and also threaten US forces in Asia. In his budget report to the upcoming annual session of the National People's Congress, Finance Minister Jin Renqing is expected to propose raising military spending in 2005 to 244.65 billion yuan (29.5 billion dollars), sources said.

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29. PRC on Anti-Secession Law

The Associated Press ("CHINA PLANS TO PASS ANTI-SECESSION LAW", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC's plan to codify for the first time its determination to unify with Taiwan, by force if necessary, has generated concern in Taiwan that it could be used as a pretext for military action or to move against its supporters in the PRC. Beijing hasn't disclosed the details of the "Anti-Secession Law" that Communist Party leaders plan to present at the annual session of the National People's Congress, which begins Saturday. It still isn't clear what the law's effect will be.

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30. Hong Kong Executive Resigns

The New York Times ("EXPECTED EXIT OF HONG KONG'S PRO-BEIJING CHIEF STIRS WARY HOPES", 2005-03-03) reported that the expected resignation of Tung Chee-hwa, Hong Kong's unpopular chief executive, may gratify some pro-democracy protesters but is far from a victory for

democracy, politicians and experts said. In fact, they say, it may be just the opposite. By stepping down now, 28 months before his term expires at the end of June 2007, Mr. Tung could make sure that his successor is chosen by essentially the same 800-member Electoral Committee of Beijing supporters who selected him twice for five-year terms. The five-year terms of the current Electoral Committee members will expire July 13. Newly elected committee members after July 13 could prove less amenable to Beijing's dictates than the current members, although a pro-Beijing majority remains fairly likely.

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31. PRC on Tourism in Tibet

Agence France Presse ("CHINA PLANS TO MAKE TIBET A TOP TOURIST DRAW", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC is planning to promote tourism to Tibet, unveiling an ambitious 15-year plan to make it one of the world's leading tourist destinations, state media said. The Tibet tourism development plan, covering 2005 to 2020, aims to vigorously promote the "the roof of the world" to boost the local economy and kick start the region's "urbanization", Xinhua news agency said.

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32. PRC on Illegal Construction Projects

Agence France Presse ("CHINESE PREMIER ORDERS ILLEGAL POWER PROJECTS STOPPED", 2005-03-03) reported that the PRC Premier Wen Jiabao has again ordered the government to clean up and put a stop to illegal construction of power projects around the country, state press reported. At a State Council meeting, the country's cabinet, Wen demanded that all districts and related departments move to stamp out the reckless construction of projects without government approval, the China Securities Journal said. "All unqualified power plant projects must be cancelled and illegal projects should be sorted out in accordance with regulations," the meeting chaired by Wen was told, according to the report.

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II. CanKor

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CANADA-KOREA ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICE ("DPRK SETS FOUR CONDITIONS FOR NUCLEAR TALKS", 2005-03-03) Newly appointed chief delegates to the six-party talks, US ambassador to Seoul Christopher Hill, ROK Deputy Foreign Minister Song Min Soon, and Sasae Kenichiro, director-general of the Japanese Foreign Ministry's Asia-Oceania bureau, meet to decide a common strategy on how to respond to the latest round of Chinese diplomacy. Chinese officials explain that Pyongyang's four conditions for returning to the six-party talks have more to do with abstract requests such as a pledge of "no hostile intent" on the part of the USA, rather than material rewards for compliance. www.cankor.ca

(return to top) CANADA-KOREA ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICE ("THREE LITTLE WORDS BUSH HAS AVOIDED: "NO HOSTILE INTENT"", 2005-03-03) The three-word phrase "no hostile intent" that Kim Jong Il is waiting to hear from the lips of US President Bush is getting considerable

airtime. The Bush administration prefers to assure North Korea that the USA has "no intention of invading" the DPRK. Glenn Kessler explains the difference between these two concepts in a Washington Post article found in this issue of CanKor. www.cankor.ca (return to top) CANADA-KOREA ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICE ("REPORT ON DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO DPRK, JULY - DEC 2004", 2005-03-03) This week's FOCUS is on the second half of 2004, with CanKor editor Erich Weingartner's biannual summary of events related to the DPRK. www.cankor.ca (return to top)

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