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I. United States

1. Inter-Korean Cabinet Meetings

Agence France Press ("NORTH KOREAN DELEGATES IN SEOUL AMID HOPES OF EASING NUCLEAR STANDOFF", 2005-06-21) reported that a high-level delegation from the DPRK arrived for talks with the ROK amid hopes for progress in bilateral ties and the stalemate over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. Four days after DPRK leader Kim Jong-il said six-party talks on the nuclear standoff could resume as early as next month, a DPRK plane carrying a five-member team led by Kwon Ho-Ung, a senior cabinet councillor, landed at Incheon Airport, west of Seoul. Kwon, the most senior DPRK delegate to visit the ROK in more than a year, is to hold talks with Unification Minister Chung Dong-Young, who heads the ROK team. "Please watch it with expectation," a smiling Kwon said when asked about prospects for the talks. The four-day ministerial meeting will focus on getting the DPRK back to the nuclear talks and boosting inter-Korean exchanges.

(return to top) Reuters ("TWO KOREAS AGREE TO TALK BUT DISAGREE ON ISSUES", 2005-06-21) reported that senior officials from both Koreas began four days of talks on Tuesday, reviving bilateral dialogue after a year of deadlock but still differing sharply over what they want from the meeting. The ROK will push the DPRK for a firm commitment to return to stalled six-party talks, but the DPRK's top priority will probably be winning more farm aid to feed its people, according to an ROK official. "There may be mention of the nuclear issue, but there is not going to be a major development," said Huh Moon-young of the Korea Institute of National Unification think-tank. Agreeing to meet at the ministerial talks hosted by ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young may indicate the DPRK will return to the six-country talks in the next few months, Huh said. (return to top)

2. DPRK Delegation Faced with ROK Protests

Associated Press ("N. KOREAN DELEGATION ANGERED BY PROTESTS", 2005-06-21) reported that a high-level delegation from the DPRK arrived in Seoul for bilateral talks Tuesday and was immediately confronted by demonstrators who angered the visitors by displaying posters of their leader, Kim Jong Il, tied up in ropes. The DPRK delegates complained after their motorcade encountered the protesters on a road near the airport as they headed to a hotel for talks with the ROK government.

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3. ROK on US Rhetoric

Joongang Ilbo ("BAN DECRIES U.S. RHETORIC TOWARD NORTH", 2005-06-22) reported that ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon issued a strong appeal to the US yesterday to tone down the way it talks about the DPRK. "High-ranking U.S. officials' recent characterization of North Korea as an outpost of tyranny does not help at all the current atmosphere of inter-Korean reconciliation and the efforts to resume the stalled six-nation nuclear disarmament talks," Mr. Ban said. "It is very regretful." A DPRK official at the United Nations told Younhap News Agency Monday that his

country would return to the negotiation table if the United States ends its harsh rhetoric. "If the word tyranny is not used for at least a month, I think the six-nation talks will resume in July," the official was quoted in the report. But almost simultaneously at a seminar in Washington, Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky again called the DPRK, along with Zimbabwe and Cuba, outposts of tyranny.

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4. Former US Envoy on DPRK Return to Talks

Reuters ("FORMER U.S. ENVOY ON N. KOREA OPTIMISTIC ABOUT TALKS", 2005-06-21) reported that former US point man on the DPRK, James Kelly, said Tuesday he is guardedly optimistic about the chances of resuming six-party talks. Kelly, who led US negotiators at the last round of talks in June 2004, also said that while he believes the DPRK has nuclear weapons, he thinks it is unlikely that the DPRK will conduct a nuclear test. DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il told the ROK's unification minister last week his country would return to the talks in July if the US showed respect. The US said the DPRK was just making excuses. "The meeting of the unification minister with Mr. Kim Jong-il in North Korea is a generally encouraging matter," Kelly said in a speech at a seminar organized by a Tokyo think tank on international affairs. But Kelly also warned that restarting the talk was just one step in a long, hard process.

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5. PRC on Inter-Korean Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA PLEASED WITH OUTCOME OF MEETING BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH OF KOREAN PENINSULAR", 2005-06-20) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said the PRC is pleased with the outcome of the recent meeting between the Koreas. "China supports the efforts made by the north and south of the Korean Peninsula to improve their relations and to safeguard peace and stability on the peninsula," Liu acknowledged.

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6. ROK-PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("S. KOREAN PM LANDS IN CHINA, SEEKS SUPPORT ON N. KOREA", 2005-06-21) reported that ROK Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan arrived in the PRC on Tuesday amid a flurry of diplomatic exchanges aimed in part at drawing the DPRK back into six-party talks. Lee met PRC Premier Wen Jiabao on Tuesday and told him ending the DPRK nuclear stalemate and improving inter-Korean ties with a rail link would benefit ROK-PRC relations. Wen told Lee that in talks on regional and international issues "our views were very much in agreement". Lee was scheduled to meet President and Communist Party chief Hu Jintao on Wednesday.

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7. US-EU on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Forbes ("US, EU RENEW CALL FOR NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT", 2005-06-20) reported that the US and the EU jointly called on the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear weapons and reaffirmed support for the six-nation talks on its nuclear program. "The DPRK (North Korea) must comply fully with its non-proliferation obligations, and dismantle its nuclear weapons and nuclear

weapons programs in a permanent, transparent, thorough, and verifiable manner," they said in a joint statement after the annual US-EU summit.

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8. ROK Bill on DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap News ("SOUTH KOREAN OPPOSITION DRAFTS BILL ON NORTH KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS", 2005-06-21) reported that an ROK legislator is working to put together an ROK version of the US law on DPRK human rights that calls for government efforts to improve dismal conditions in the DPRK. The envisioned bill for improving human rights and providing humanitarian support for DPRK residents was distributed to other lawmakers Friday for endorsement, according to Rep. Hwang Jin-ha of the main opposition Grand National Party (GNP), author of the bill. The bill seeks to establish a committee at the ROK's Unification Ministry that would work specifically to improve human rights conditions in the DPRK. The legislation, called the North Korean Human Rights Act in short by the author, comes at the end of what the GNP legislator called an "intolerable silence" by the ROK government on the issue.

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9. Inter-Korean Red Cross Meeting

Yonhap News ("HEAD OF SOUTH KOREAN RED CROSS TO VISIT NORTH", 2005-06-21) reported that the head of the ROK National Red Cross was to leave for the DPRK on Tuesday to invite his counterpart there to the general assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross in Seoul later in the year. Han Wan-sang was scheduled to visit Pyongyang on a chartered DPRK flight which will touch down at Inchon International Airport west of Seoul later in the day bearing the five-member DPRK delegation for this week's cabinet-level talks. Han had originally planned to travel to Pyongyang on Friday via Beijing but his schedule was brought forward so as to use the chartered flight. Han is expected to discuss ways to jointly hold the Seoul meeting of the International Federation of Red Cross on 11 to 18 November by inviting DPRK Red Cross officials. Also on the agenda is the matter of constructing a permanent reunion centre for families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War.

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10. ROK Aid to the DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("S. KOREA GAVE NORTH US$3.5 BILLION SINCE 1995", 2005-06-21) reported that the ROK gave the DPRK a total of US$3.493 billion in assistance, including fertilizer and food aid, between 1995 and 2004. That was roughly three years' worth of DPRK exports, which totalled $1.066 billion in 2003. The report, which was prepared by the Congressional Research Service, said ROK aid for the DPRK remained at a yearly average of $25 million from 1996 to 1999, after soaring to $240 million during the DPRK famine of 1995. After the inter-Korean summit of 2000, the annual average skyrocketed to $590 million. Total ROK aid until 1998 totalled $306.2 million, including Seoul's contribution to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. But when the Kim Dae-jung administration took office, aid to the DPRK increased to $706.5 million in 2000 and $584.9 million in 2002. Since the start of the Roh Moo-hyun administration, annual aid to the DPRK has been in excess of $500 million.

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11. Jenkins Apology

Associated Press ("DESERTER APOLOGIZES FOR DEFECTING TO NORTH KOREA", 2005-06-21) reported that US Army Deserter Jenkins said his decision to defect to the DPRK in 1965 was wrong at a news conference Monday. "I let my soldiers down. I let the US Army down. I let the government down, and I made it very difficult for my family in the United States to live," Jenkins said. The 65-year-old Jenkins said he lived in harsh conditions in the DPRK. While there, he thought he would never again see his mother, Pattie. They were reunited last week. Jenkins was a 24-year-old sergeant with the US Army's 1st Calvary Division when he left the squad he was leading on patrol in the Demilitarized Zone and walked into the DPRK on July 5, 1965.

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12. Probe into DMZ Shooting

Korea Times ("ADDITIONAL PROBE STARTS OVER SHOOTING RAMPAGE", 2005-06-21) reported that the ROK Defense Ministry has begun an additional probe into the shooting incident that occurred on Sunday at a frontline unit, as part of efforts to dispel remaining suspicions surrounding the tragedy. Pfc. Kim Dong-min, 22, tossed a grenade inside his barracks at a guard post in the Demilitarized Zone in Yonchon, 70 kilometres north of Seoul, as 25 soldiers slept, and went on a shooting rampage. The incident left eight soldiers dead and two others injured. "The ministry has decided to form a special 30-member investigation team at the instruction of Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung," Brig. Gen. Shin Hyun-don, spokesman for the ministry, told reporters.

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13. ROK-Japan Relations

Los Angeles Times ("SOUTH KOREA, JAPAN REMAIN AT ODDS ON PAST", 2005-06-21) reported that the leaders of Japan and ROK wrapped up a meeting here Monday with what was at best an agreement to disagree about how Japan is handling the legacy of its occupation of the Korean peninsula. The past dominated the present during the meeting between Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and the ROK President Roh Moo-hyun. The leaders spent more than an hour and a half discussing historical accounts in Japanese textbooks of the 1910-45 occupation period and 10 minutes on the more immediate problems of the day, such as the DPRK's development of nuclear weapons. The only modest achievement the leaders could point to was creation of a working-level committee on historical issues.

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14. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

The New York Times ("JAPAN'S LEADER UNDER PRESSURE ON WAR SHRINE", 2005-06-21) reported that President Roh Moo Hyun increased the pressure on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan on Monday to stop visiting the Yasukuni Shrine to Japan's war dead, urging Mr. Koizumi to build an alternative facility. During a meeting here between the two men, Mr. Roh said Mr. Koizumi's visits to the shrine, which deifies 14 top war criminals and tries to justify Japan's wars in Asia, were the "core" of the history-related problems between the countries. The meeting made little progress in resolving Yasukuni and other historical issues that have caused Japan's relations with the ROK, and with the PRC, to deteriorate sharply in recent months. "We had a very candid and

serious dialogue and made efforts to understand each other," Mr. Roh said. "But this failed to yield any agreements."

(return to top) Joongang Ilbo ("KOIZUMI RECONSIDERING YASUKUNI", 2005-06-21) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told ROK President Roh Moo-hyun yesterday that his country would consider establishing an alternative memorial to the Yasukuni Shrine, where Japanese war dead are interred. Visits by Japanese leaders to the shrine have infuriated Asian countries that suffered Japanese aggression during World War II. Mr. Koizumi made no promises to end his visits to the shrine. After the two hours of talks at the Blue House, Mr. Roh indicated that the discussion had fallen short on a number of issues. The president said "very low-level agreements" had been reached over a dispute involving how each country looks back on their troubled history together. At a press conference following the talks, Mr. Koizumi said, "I confirmed that it is important for Japan to reflect on what it should do for the advancement of the two countries' friendship and mutual trusts. I also told President Roh that Japan should not launch a war ever again." (return to top)

15. Sino-ROK Nano-Tech Agreement

Korea Times ("S. KOREA, CHINA TO SIGN NANO-TECH ACCORD", 2005-06-21) reported that the ROK and PRC agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding to establish a joint research network for nano-technology next month, officials in Seoul said yesterday. The agreement was made in a meeting between ROK Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan and his PRC counterpart Wen Jiabao. Lee is on a three-day visit to Beijing at the official invitation of the PRC premier. The governments of Seoul and Beijing will further cooperate in developing cutting-edge technology to boost both countries' industrial and technological competitiveness, according to the agreement.

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16. US - ROK Shared Military Costs

Korea Times ("ASSEMBLY DELAYS APPROVING GOVERNMENT DEAL ON US MILITARY COSTS", 2005-06-21) reported that Parliamentary ratification of the ROK's share of the US Forces Korea (USFK) spending has been delayed to next Monday. The delay came as Rep. Kwon Young-ghil of the progressive Democratic Labor Party (DLP) called for a more in-depth review of the share, which he claims has drastically increased from previous years. "The outcome of negotiations with the US is awkward, as it did not even consider the planned reduction of troops," Kwon said. "The nation's burden to maintain the USFK for the fiscal 2006 has increased about $58 million, or 9.3 percent."

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17. Japan on Whaling

Los Angeles Times ("JAPAN PLANS TO EXPAND KILLING OF MINKE WHALES", 2005-06-21) reported that Japan told the International Whaling Commission in Ulsan, ROK, that it would dramatically expand its research whaling, doubling the number of minke whales it kills annually for scientific study. Japan said it would begin culling as many as 935 minke whales annually — up from 440 this year. Japan says it kills whales to study them before selling the meat. That's allowed under commission rules, but critics say it amounts to commercial whaling in disguise.

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18. Japan - Taiwan Territorial Dispute

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN SENDS FRIGATES TO DISPUTED ISLANDS", 2005-06-21) reported that Taiwan sent two warships Tuesday to protect fishermen who have repeatedly been chased by Japanese patrol boats away from rich fishing grounds near disputed islands in the East China Sea, a decision likely to raise diplomatic tensions. The frigates — carrying Taiwan's defense minister and 15 lawmakers — made no contact with the Japanese vessels during their hour-long patrol near the uninhabited islands north of Taiwan, which are known in Japan as Sakashima and in Taiwan as Hsientao. Both Tokyo and Taipei claim the islands fall within their exclusive economic zones.

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19. Hong Kong Chief Executive

Los Angeles Times ("CHINA APPOINTS NEW LEADER OF TERRITORY", 2005-06-21) reported that the PRC's State Council today appointed veteran civil servant Donald Tsang as Hong Kong's next leader, the official New China News Agency said. The agency said PRC Premier Wen Jiabao had signed a decree that Tsang would assume his office today and that his term would expire by June 30, 2007. Last week, Tsang won about 85% of the nominations from a 796-member election committee that picks the leaders in this former British colony. The election panel is dominated by members loyal to Beijing.

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20. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

Washington Post ("U.N. PRESSES CHINA ON BIRD FLU DRUG", 2005-06-21) reported that UN officials pressed their concerns with the PRC government Monday over the reported use of an influenza drug for humans to treat bird flu in poultry, which would violate international guidelines. Henk Bekedam, the World Health Organization's chief representative in Beijing, sought information about the practice from the PRC Health Ministry, UN officials said, adding that WHO experts planned to hold more discussions with PRC officials in coming days. A representative of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization in Beijing also contacted the PRC Agriculture Ministry seeking details about the practice, UN officials said.

(return to top) Washington Post ("CHINA SAYS FLU MEDICINE NOT FOR BIRDS", 2005-06-21) reported that the PRC's agriculture ministry denied that the government had encouraged farmers to use a human influenza drug to treat bird flu in poultry, a practice that researchers say has made the drug ineffective in fighting outbreaks in people. In a prepared statement, the ministry said the PRC's strategy for addressing avian influenza in chickens centered on the use of a preventive vaccination rather than anti-viral drugs. "This is groundless and isn't in accordance with the truth," the ministry statement said. "Amantadine is an anti-virus medicine for humans," it added. "The Chinese government has never permitted farmers to use amantadine to treat bird flu or other virus-related disease." (return to top)

21. Sino-Venezuelan Fuel Trade

The Associated Press ("VENEZUELA BEGINS EXPORTING FUEL TO CHINA", 2005-06-21) reported that Venezuela has begun exporting fuel to the PRC under a trade agreement aimed at boosting trade between the oil-rich South American nation and Asia's energy-hungry, economic powerhouse.

Venezuela's state-run oil company, Petroleos de Venezuela S.A., sent an initial shipment of 1.8 million barrels of fuel to the PRC last week, according to information posted Monday on the company's Web site. PRC firms will also build railroads in Venezuela while the PRC pledged a credit line of $40 million for Venezuelan agriculture and to help Chavez's administration launch a satellite.

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