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I. United States

1. Multilateral Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA CRISIS TALKS DELEGATES TO DISCUSS FREEZE ", 2004-06-22) reported that negotiators at six-party talks in Beijing this week will discuss a freeze of the DPRK's nuclear programs and inspections leading to their dismantling, a ROK official said Tuesday. It was unclear whether progress toward ending the 20-month-old crisis over the DPRK's nuclear programs could be made but Japan urged the DPRK to be more forthcoming and stop "buying time." "For the DPRK (North Korea), there is a great opportunity to signal this commitment to a full-scale denuclearization," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said on arrival in Beijing. "When they do, this will open up all kinds of things politically, economically and diplomatically." Protagonists the US and DPRK have given little sign of budging from their widely divergent positions. "There was a consensus that at the plenary talks there should be specific discussions on a nuclear freeze accompanied by inspection as the first step of dismantlement," the ROK official told reporters after the working-level talks closed. "We believe that there will be authoritative and substantive discussions on elements of a freeze and other issues at the plenary talks," he said. "The representatives of the countries agreed that nuclear dismantlement is the ultimate goal."

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Freeze

Kyodo News ("N KOREA OFFERS DETAILS ON NUCLEAR PROGRAM FREEZE", 2004-06-22) reported that the DPRK has offered to provide details of its proposed freeze of nuclear programs, including affected facilities, ways to verify the plan and when to do so, in full six-nation talks on the nuclear standoff starting Wednesday, a source at the meeting told Kyodo News Tuesday. At stake is how the DPRK will proceed with the proposed freeze and whether the other five participants will be persuaded to provide compensation, Japanese delegation sources said. Host the PRC is aiming at extracting as much concrete offers regarding "freeze and compensation" issues and compile them into written agreement documents, conference sources told Kyodo.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Crisis

The Associated Press ("U.S. PREPARES OFFER OF AID TO NORTH KOREA", 2004-06-21) reported that, with Secretary of State Colin Powell promising a "spirit of flexibility," the US and its negotiating partners are working on a plan to offer economic aid jointly to the DPRK if it agrees to end its nuclear weapons program. The US has helped the DPRK with massive food shipments over the years, but it would not provide economic assistance under the proposal being prepared for the

talks, a senior Bush administration official said Monday. Japan and the ROK would provide aid to the government in stages if the DPRK would agree at last to end its nuclear weapons program, said the official, who has been engaged in the so-far unsuccessful effort to overcome what U.S. intelligence considers a major threat to the area. The US also would join with other nations to assure the DPRK it would not be attacked. In comments Monday, Powell made no reference to any possible solution being drafted to present to North Korean negotiators. "We will enter these talks as we have entered previous talks: with flexibility and with an attitude of trying to resolve this problem," Powell said. He was responding to persistent reports that the PRC and the ROK had urged the Bush administration to ease its tough line and accept a step-by-step compensation program to entice the DPRK to start a phased-in process of ending its nuclear program. "We are not prepared to compensate North Korea somehow for not doing something that they never should have done to begin with," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

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4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("KOREAS REPORTEDLY TO MEET SEPARATELY PRIOR TO MAIN NUCLEAR TALKS", 2004-06-22) reported that the ROK and DPRK will hold a separate meeting Wednesday 23 June on the sidelines of the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear program, an official said. The meeting will take place "in the morning" before the opening of the nuclear talks, scheduled for 3 p.m. local time; 0700 gmt , the official said, adding that the exact time has yet to be fixed. He asked not to be identified. The ROK's delegation is led by Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-hyuck, while the DPRK's is headed by Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan. Ahead of the inter-Korean meeting, the ROK will also hold a meeting with Russia on Wednesday, the official said.

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5. DPRK on Multilateral Talks

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA DEMANDS U.S. NOT LINK NUCLEAR TALKS TO ELECTION ", 2004-0--22) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday called on the US not to link this week's six-party nuclear arms talks to its presidential election in November. "We will not take corresponding measures even if the United States makes a conciliatory gesture for the continuation of six-nation nuclear talks and that proves to be another tactic to protract time," the Chosun Shinbo, a pro-North Korean newspaper in Japan, said in its Internet edition. The paper serves as the mouthpiece of the North's government.

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6. DPRK on HEU Program

Yonhap News ("NORTH KOREA DENIES EXISTENCE OF HEU PROGRAM ", 2004-06-22) reported that the DPRK has insisted that it has no nuclear arms program using highly enriched uranium at this week's working-level six-party talks, an official said Tuesday. "I think I heard the North Korean side saying once during the working-level talks that they have no HEU program," the official said on condition of anonymity.

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7. DPRK Industrial Complex

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN BANKS TO SUPPORT FIRMS IN N. KOREAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ", 2004-06-22) reported that the ROK's banks plan to support domestic small- and medium-sized companies that will set up shop in a future industrial complex in the DPRK, bank officials said Tuesday. On the same day, the state-run Industrial Bank of Korea (IBK) took the initiative by signing a cooperation agreement with the Korea Technology Credit Guarantee Fund (KOTEC) on financial assistance to ROK firms that will find their way into the complex.

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8. ROK - DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("HYUNDAI ASAN TO START OVERLAND TOURS TO N. KOREA ", 2004-06-22) Hyundai Asan Co. said Tuesday that it will start one-day overland trips to Mount Geumgang on the eastern coast of DPRK from July 3. The company, which is in charge of tourism projects in the DPRK, is an affiliate of Hyundai Group, a ROK conglomerate.

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9. Kaesong Industrial Park

Yonhap News ("HEAD OF AGENCY TO RUN KAESONG INDUSTRIAL PARK TAPPED ", 2004-06-22) reported that a career technocrat was named Tuesday as the first chief of an envisioned agency to run a huge industrial complex being built in the DPRK border town of Kaesong, ROK builders of the industrial park said. Kim Dong-keun, president of Korea Industrial Complex Corp., will take the helm at the management agency when it is set up, Hyundai Asan Corp. and state-run Korea Land Corp. said.

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10. ROK Iraq Hostage

The Associated Press ("IRAQI MILITANTS BEHEAD KOREAN HOSTAGE ", 2004-06-22) reported that an Iraqi militant group has beheaded its ROK hostage, Al-Jazeera television reported Tuesday. The ROK foreign ministry issued a statement confirming the report. The pan-Arab station said it had received a videotape showing that Kim Sun-il had been executed. Kim, 33, worked for a ROK company supplying the U.S. military in Iraq and was abducted last week, according to the ROK government. Kim was shown in the videotape kneeling, blindfolded and wearing an orange jumpsuit similar to those issued to prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The tape showed five hooded men standing behind Kim, one reading a statement and gesturing with his right hand. Another captor had a big knife slipped in his belt. The video as broadcast did not show Kim being executed. Al-Jazeera said the video claimed the execution was carried out by the al-Qaida-linked group Monotheism and Jihad.

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11. ROK Iraq Evacuation

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA TO EVACUATE BUSINESSMEN FROM IRAQ ", 2004-06-22)

reported that the ROK said Tuesday it will evacuate all of its nationals doing business in Iraq. The Commerce, Industry and Energy Ministry said the evacuation affects the last 22 businessmen still in Iraq, and that it will be finished by early next month. Most of the men work for ROK companies that supply the U.S. military, Minister Lee Hee-beom said. Fearing attacks in other countries, ROK conglomerates such as Hyundai Corp. and Daewoo International Corp. have also stepped up security at overseas branches and ordered employees to avoid dangerous areas, Yonhap reported.

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12. US on PRC Trade Relations

Reuters ("US URGES CHINA TO WAGE WIDER WAR ON FAKES ", 2004-06-22) reported that the US urged the PRC to wage a wider war against rampant patent and copyright piracy as it sought ways to reduce a growing trade imbalance that has become an election issue in the US. The PRC needed to do much more to battle counterfeiting, which had seriously harmed US firms and workers, U.S. Commerce Secretary Don Evans told reporters during a four-day visit to the PRC. "There needs to be much more efforts, much more resources put into the protection of intellectual property rights across the country," Evans told reporters during a visit to a factory in a Beijing suburb. The Chinese authorities needed to do more at the provincial and city levels, he said, two months after Chinese Vice Premier Wu Yi pledged during meetings with Evans in Washington to intensify a crackdown on counterfeiting. The PRC's own State Council has estimated the market value of counterfeit goods in the PRC at about $19 billion to $24 billion annually. The bogus trade affects a wide range of U.S. products, including films, music, publishing, software, pharmaceuticals, information technology and automotive parts.

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13. PRC on US Trade Relations

Reuters ("CHINA ACCUSES U.S. OF PROTECTIONISM ", 2004-06-22) reported that the PRC, increasingly the target of U.S. anti-dumping duties, urged the US to settle trade disputes through negotiations instead of resorting to trade protectionism. The U.S. Department of Commerce placed preliminary anti-dumping duties of up to 198 percent on $1.2 billion of wooden bedroom furniture imported from the PRC last week. "The Chinese side hopes that whenever any differences or contradictions arise, they should be resolved through discussion and negotiation and not the immediate adoption of anti-dumping measures," PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue told a news conference. "Anti-dumping measures are a form of trade protectionism that does not benefit the healthy, smooth development of Sino-U.S. trade relations," she said. "China's consistent position has been that it puts great emphasis on maintaining healthy, normal trade relations with the United States and hopes the two countries can move forward in developing their trade relations."

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14. PRC Domestic Economy

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S WEN CONFIDENT OF ECONOMIC MEASURES ", 2004-06-22) reported that PRC Premier Wen Jiabao expressed confidence that the PRC's efforts to rein in its surging economy can be carried out without causing a sharp slowdown that could threaten other Asian economies. The PRC's growth is expected to top 9 percent for the first half of this year, leading to worries that it could cause inflation and financial problems. The PRC has tried to slow growth by restricting bank lending and new investment in factories and other projects. "China's

national economy has maintained steady and rapid growth," Wen said in a speech to a meeting of foreign ministers from 22 Asian nations in this northeastern Chinese city. "We are fully confident of achieving the goal of a soft landing of our macroeconomy." Wen, the PRC's top economic official, said the government's "prompt and resolute" measures had already "yielded noticeable results."

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15. Japan Earthquake

The Associated Press ("EARTHQUAKE SHAKES NORTHERN JAPAN", 2004-06-22) reported that a moderate earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.1 shook northern Japan on Tuesday. There were no reports of injuries or damage. The 11:17 a.m. quake was centered about 20 miles beneath the sea bed, to the southeast of Japan's northernmost island of Hokkaido, Japan's Meteorological Agency said. The quake was not felt on Japan's main island of Honshu. There was no danger of tsunami, the powerful ocean waves caused by seismic activity, the agency said. An earthquake of magnitude 5 or higher can cause damage to homes and buildings if it hits a populated area.

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16. US - ROK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US, SOUTH KOREA TO RESUME TALKS ON TROOP REALIGNMENT NEXT WEEK", 2004-06-22) reported that the US and the ROK will resume talks next week on the realignment of US forces away from the heavily fortified inter-Korean border, reports said. Yonhap news agency quoted Foreign Minister Ban Ki-Moon as saying the two countries plan to hold talks on June 28 in Seoul on the realignment of 37,000 troops in the ROK. Broad agreement was reached earlier on the removal of US forces away from the border with the DPRK to locations south of Seoul and also the removal of US military headquarters from the capital to a new base 70 kilometers (40 miles) further south. The realighment talks, however, have been disrupted by differences over who pays for the relocation and the size of the new facilties. "I hope the two sides will wrap up negotiations at an early date," Ban said on the sidelines of a regional security meeting in Qingdao, China, according to Yonhap.

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17. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch

The Japan Times ("KOIZUMI'S IRAQ PLEDGE SIGNALS NEW CHAPTER FOR SDF", 2004-06-11) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's pledge to keep the Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops deployed in Iraq after a scheduled end-of-June transfer of power to an interim government will open a new chapter for the SDF. "That would be a deviation from the government's traditional interpretation of the Constitution that has guaranteed the nonuse of force when (the SDF) participates in UN-backed peacekeeping missions," said Tetsuo Maeda, a security expert and professor at Tokyo International University. The problem for Japan will be how to make sure that the SDF, as part of a multinational force, will not be involved in the use of force. The new resolution authorizes the US-led multinational force to maintain security and stability "under unified command," but a special Japanese law enacted last year for the SDF dispatch to Iraq only allows the SDF to engage in humanitarian and noncombatant missions. "When you become part of a certain framework, you have to follow its practices," said Admiral Toru Ishikawa, Chairman of the SDF's Joint Staff Council. "But I understand that each force will carry out its mission under the orders of its government."

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18. Japan-RF Relations

The Japan Times ("PUTIN AGREES TO VISIT JAPAN IN EARLY 2005", 2004-06-11) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that he would visit Japan in early 2005, a Japanese official said. Koizumi welcomed Putin's plan to visit Japan at the beginning of 2005, when the two countries commemorate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the bilateral treaty of friendship, the official said. During a meeting held on the sidelines of the Group of Eight summit, the two leaders also reaffirmed that the two countries must resolve a decades-old territorial dispute and accelerate talks on a bilateral peace treaty, the official said. Putin said that the territorial dispute has always been an important bilateral issue and that he has no intention of avoiding discussions on the topic. In Tokyo, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda welcomed the agreement on Putin's visit, saying it will be "a big chance" to settle the territorial row and conclude a peace treaty with Russia. During the talks, Koizumi also urged Putin to take the initiative so that the Russian parliament can quickly ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol on global warming. Putin was quoted as saying that, while ratification of the pact is a difficult issue, the Russian government is discussing it with the parliament.

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19. Japan-DPRK Normalization Talks

Kyodo News ("CHONGRYUN MEMBER TO JOIN TALKS", 2004-06-11) reported that a senior member of a pro-DPRK Korean residents' group in Japan has been informally appointed to the North Korean delegation for normalization talks with Japan, a DPRK government source said on June 10. Nam Sung U, deputy chairman of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryun), will be the first group member to be named as a negotiator for the North in the bilateral negotiations. Chongryun approved the plan during its general meeting held in Tokyo in late May and appointed two other members as councilors in charge of Japan-DPRK negotiations to support Nam, the source said. In past bilateral negotiations, senior members of Chongryun were part of DPRK's delegation, but only in the capacity of supporting negotiators on issues involving the rights of Korean residents of Japan.

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20. Japan-DPRK Abduction Cases

The Associated Press ("MALAYSIA OFFERS TO HOST SOGA REUNION", 2004-06-12) reported that Malaysia is prepared to host a reunion between repatriated abductee Hitomi Soga and her husband, a former US soldier accused of deserting to the DPRK 40 years ago, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said on June 11. Japan is trying to arrange for Jenkins, 64, and his family to be reunited in a third country where he would not be at risk of being sent to the US to be court-martialed as a deserter.

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21. DPRK-US Relations

The Japan Times ("KIM TOLD KOIZUMI HE IS EAGER FOR TALKS WITH U.S", 2004-06-13) reported that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il told Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Pyongyang last month

that his country desperately wants to hold talks with the US, sources familiar with the meeting said on June 12. Kim was also quoted as telling Koizumi that he wants other participants in the six-nation talks "to play music" for both the DPRK and the US so they can "dance well." Koizumi is believed to have briefed Bush at G8 summit on last month's talks and directly forwarded Kim's remarks. But Bush told Koizumi the US plans to settle issues involving the DPRK within the six-way framework.

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22. Japan DPRK Ship Ban

The Japan Times ("PORT-CALL BAN PASSED", 2004-06-15) reported that the Japan's Diet enacted by a large majority on June 14 a law to enable Japan to ban port calls by ships deemed to pose a security threat. The law, specifically targeting the DPRK vessels, serves as a second legal tool to pressure the reclusive state. Government officials have denied that Japan has plans at the moment to impose sanctions on the North.

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