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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. Inter-Korean Dialogue on Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("TWO KOREAS RESUME HIGH-LEVEL TALKS AMID NUCLEAR ROW", None) reported that, according to Seoul officials, ROK promised Monday to make a new "important" proposal to help resolve the growing tension over DPRK's nuclear weapons program if the DPRK returns to the dialogue table. "We told the North Korean side that if it comes out to the dialogue table, we'll make important proposals for practical gains in talks aimed at resolving the nuclear issue," the chief ROK delegate, Rhee Bong-jo, told reporters after a series of talks with DPRK officials.

(return to top) Agence France-Presse ("TALKS BOG DOWN AS SOUTH KOREA PRESSES NORTH KOREA", None) reported that inter-Korean talks are deadlocked over the nuclear standoff after DPRK sidestepped a new proposal from ROK to jump start six-party talks. ROK Vice Unification Minister Rhee Bong-Jo made what he described as an "important offer" to entice DPRK back to the six-party talks on Monday, but received no word in reply as the two-day session drew to a close. According to Rhee, "efforts have been made to find common ground, but more discussions will be needed on the nuclear issue." (return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("TWO KOREAS TALK, BUT AGREEMENT PROVES ELUSIVE ", None) reported that the ROK and DPRK held a second day of vice-ministerial talks in Kaesong on Tuesday, but final agreement proved elusive. Seoul wants the text of an agreement to include a date for fresh ministerial-level talks, a commitment to denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, and a quick return by Pyongyang to six-party talks. The DPRK was reportedly open on the first point, but regarding the nuclear issue, said only it would convey the ROK position to the relevant DPRK authorities. ROK and DPRK did agree that an ROK delegation will attend a ceremony marking the fifth anniversary of the June 15, 2000 Joint Declaration that marked the beginning of an on-again, off-again thaw on the peninsula, to be held in Pyongyang next month. (return to top) Chosun Ilbo ("MINISTER CHUNG SEEKS TO VISIT NK", None) reported that the ROK proposed a ministerial delegation’s visit to Pyongyang before June 15, marking the fifth anniversary of the 2000 inter-Korean summit in an effort to normalize their soured relations. The visit is being arranged despite the reported refusal by the DPRK to include any words related to the nuclear issue in the written agreement which the chief delegates are to sign during the vice ministerial talks. (return to top)

2. US on Inter-Korean Nuclear Dialogue

Xinhuanet ("US URGES DPRK TO RETURN TO SIX-PARTY TALKS", None) reported that, on Monday, the US expressed its support for the meeting between the DPRK and ROK, and urged the DPRK to return to the six-party talks. According to US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher, "we welcome the fact that even in those bilateral discussions that concentrate mainly on fertilizer, that they are indeed raising these issues of the importance of getting back to the six-party talks, the importance of North Korea coming seriously back to those talks and eliminating its nuclear weapons programs."

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3. US on Six-party Talks

Yonhap News ("US ENVOY HILL TALKS OF OTHER OPTIONS TO DEAL WITH PYONGYANG", None) reported that, in a series of meetings with top ROK officials, Christopher Hill expressed cautious optimism Monday on inter-Korean talks that resumed earlier in the day. "We are doing everything to get this six-party process going, and we really want to, but that does not mean we are not going to look eventually at other options," Hill told ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon. Hill was responding to Ban's optimism that the vice-minister-level meeting between the ROK and DPRK will create a favorable atmosphere for international efforts to resolve the nuclear crisis.

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4. EU Participation in Six-party Talks

Associated Press ("EU EXPRESSES INTEREST IN JOINING MULTINATIONAL DIALOGUE ON NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM", None) reported that, according to an anonymous Japanese Foreign Ministry official, a delegation of sixteen EU lawmakers told Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that the EU was interested in joining the multinational talks seeking an end to the DPRK's nuclear program. Koizumi welcomed their interest, but said he would have to consult with other member countries.

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5. ROK on Incentive Package to the DPRK

The Korea Times ("SEOUL WOOS N.KOREA WITH ECONOMIC AID", None) reported that the current focus around the DPRK nuclear issue is the mysterious proposal to be offered to the DPRK by the ROK. "We didn't explain the details to the North," said Vice Unification Minister Rhee Bong-jo, ROK chief delegate to the two-day inter-Korean talks. "We will spell it out at the negotiation table after consultations with relevant nations." Other officials in Seoul have indicated the proposal would be a comprehensive one that gives the DPRK a firm security guarantee and large-scale economic assistance. However, the proposal will not see the light of day unless the DPRK returns to the six-party talks, they said.

(return to top) Yonhap News ("GNP CALLS FOR PUBLIC CONSENT ON 'IMPORTANT PROPOSAL' FOR N.KOREA", None) reported that the ROK's main opposition Grand National Party (GNP) said that the government should obtain parliamentary approval before making any serious proposals to DPRK. "[The ROK government] says it is willing to present an important proposal for the North if it returns to the six-party talks... There must first be public consensus on what the proposal may be," said Rep. Kang Jae-sup, floor leader of the GNP. (return to top)

6. Presse Reports DPRK Requests Visit by Rice

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA ASKS CHINA TO ARRANGE VISIT BY US'S RICE: REPORT", None) reported that, according to the Japanese Nihon Keizai Shimbun daily newspaper, the DPRK has asked the PRC to arrange a visit by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Pyongyang in a bid to reach a breakthrough on nuclear and missile issues. The paper added the very fact the DPRK had requested such a visit was "an indication that the increasingly beleaguered nation wants to find peaceful resolutions to the current diplomatic impasse."

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7. PRC Denies Report on DPRK Request for Rice Visit

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA DENIES REPORT NORTH KOREA ASKED IT TO ARRANGE VISIT BY RICE", None) reported that the PRC denied a report that the DPRK had asked it to arrange a visit by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Pyongyang in a bid to reach a breakthrough on nuclear and missile issues. "This report is full of imagination but groundless in terms of fact," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a regular briefing. Japan's Nihon Keizai Shimbun newspaper said earlier that the PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing had conveyed the DPRK's request to Rice when the two spoke over the phone last Friday.

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8. Denies Report on DPRK Request for Rice Visit

The Korea Times ("US DENIES RICE INVITED TO PYONGYANG", None) reported that Washington denied a news report that the DPRK has invited US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to Pyongyang for discussions on the deepening dispute over its nuclear weapons programs. Washington made this statement in response to a report by a Japanese Business Daily that the DPRK has asked the PRC to arrange a visit by Rice to Pyongyang.

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9. Japan on US-DPRK Talks

Kyodo News ("JAPAN SEES BILATERAL U.S.-N.KOREA TALKS AS UNLIKELY", None) reported that, according to Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda, The US is unlikely to accept a reported call from the DPRK for bilateral talks on its nuclear development programs. Hosoda said during a news conference that the US "has flatly denied" a report that DPRK has asked US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for an early visit to Pyongyang.

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10. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Test

The New York Times ("SOUTH KOREA SAYS IT DOUBTS THAT THE NORTH PLANS AN A-TEST", None) reported that the ROK said Monday that it saw no clear evidence that the DPRK was preparing to explode a weapon. Officials in the ROK said they had not changed their position toward the DPRK, rejecting, for now, harsher punitive actions sought by Washington. Song Min Soon, the deputy foreign minister and ROK's lead negotiator on the DPRK nuclear issue, said in an interview that the possibility of a nuclear test "can range from one-tenth of 1 percent to 99 percent, and it looks as if Hadley's remark was made taking into consideration the most extreme circumstance."

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11. PRC on US-DPRK Talks

Associated Press ("CHINA APPEALS TO U.S., NORTH KOREA TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT TO RESTART NUCLEAR TALKS", None) reported that the PRC appealed to the US and the DPRK on Tuesday to have direct contacts in order to restart six-party talks, and criticized a Japanese suggestion to hold talks without Pyongyang. "China hopes these two countries can have contacts so

they can build mutual trust and understanding," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan. "Such contacts conducted anywhere and any time would receive our congratulations." The US says any contacts between it and the DPRK must take place within the framework of the six-party negotiations, suggesting that the overall talks must resume before there would be bilateral possibilities.

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12. ROK-PRC Talks on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("MAIN OPPOSITION LEADER TO VISIT CHINA OVER N.KOREAN NUKE ISSUE", None) reported that ROK's main opposition party leader, Chairwoman Park Geun-hye of the Grand National Party (GNP), is to visit the PRC next week for meetings with PRC officials over the DPRK nuclear standoff, party officials said Tuesday. "The chairwoman will discuss ways to solve the stalemate in six-party talks while also working to improve diplomatic relations with China," said Kim Young-in, an official at the GNP's public relations department.

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13. DPRK on Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap News ("N.KOREA ACCUSES BUSH OF BLOCKING INTER-KOREAN RECONCILIATION", None) reported that DPRK accused the US Tuesday of blocking inter-Korean reconciliation, saying "tragedy" began for Korean people when US President George W. Bush took power. The DPRK's main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, made the criticism as senior officials from the two Koreas met for a second day of talks in the DPRK's border city of Kaesong.

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14. UN on DPRK Chemical Weapons

Associated Press ("REPORT: UN SAYS NORTH KOREA, 25 OTHERS YET TO SIGN TREATY BANNING CHEMICAL WEAPONS", None) reported that, according to a quotation from a senior UN official, the DPRK and some Middle Eastern nations are among 26 countries that have yet to outlaw the use of chemical weapons, which remain a major concern in combating terrorism. The UN's Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is also worried that 80,000 metric tons of chemical weapons still exist worldwide. Rogelio Pfirter, the agency's director-general, said chemical weapons remain a global security threat, particularly with the rise of international terrorism.

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15. US-DPRK Historical Relations

Yonhap News ("NORTH KOREA CLAIMS US MASTERMINDED KILLINGS IN GWANGJU IN 1980", None) reported that the DPRK blamed the US for the killings of citizens of Gwangju who rose up against ROK's military junta in 1980, as the ROK city prepared for the 25th anniversary of the incident. "The protest was the explosion of rage and regret against the US colonial occupation [on ROK] and its fascist military rule," the DPRK Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland said. An investigation is still underway to verify accounts of the government-ordered crackdown, and to determine who was responsible for the incident. A number of key records are currently being withheld by the prosecution.

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16. DPRK on World Cup Qualifier

Yonhap News ("N.KOREA TO COMPLY WITH FIFA'S RULING: JAPANESE MEDIA", None) reported that, according to a DPRK official, the DPRK has decided to accept a recent punishment by football's world governing body FIFA. The DPRK had lodged an appeal with FIFA and the Asia Football Confederation on May 3, but the appeal document arrived on May 9, four days after the deadline of May 5. Last Tuesday, FIFA confirmed that the DPRK's match against Japan will be held June 8 in a third country, Thailand, at Supachalasai National Stadium in Bangkok, without spectators, as punishment for mob violence at the match in Pyongyang on March 30.

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II. CanKor

17. Report #205

CanKor ("WHAT ARE DPR KOREANS UP TO? US AGENCIES CAN'T AGREE", None) US satellite photos capture “suspicious activity” near the DPRK northeast coast town of Kilju. Intelligence agencies struggle to reach a consensus on the actual significance of the activity detected. Part of the problem is matching up what satellites see with speculation about the DPRK’s true intentions. Is the DPRK preparing for a nuclear test, bluffing or issuing a plea for help?

(return to top) CanKor ("DPR KOREANS CLAIM TO EXTRACT FUEL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS", None) The DPRK announces that the remaining spent fuel rods have been removed from the Yongbyon nuclear power plant. (return to top) CanKor ("PLEA TO RESTART SIX-PARTY TALKS", None) IAEA Chief, Mohammed ElBaradei, calls the DPRK’s conduct “a cry for help” and urges the US to adjust its “hard-line stance” in order to allow the six-party talks to resume. (return to top) CanKor ("NATIONS SOFTEN TO SAVE SIX-PARTY TALKS", None) As tensions rose during recent heated rhetoric, nations involved in the six-party talks adopt a more conciliatory stance. In response to the DPRK’s insistence that the US “drop its hostile policy” and give security assurances, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reports to CNN that the US “recognizes that [the DPRK] is sovereign” and has no intention of invading. (return to top) CanKor ("CHINA SAYS US IMPEDED DPRK ARMS TALKS", None) Reflecting a growing Chinese frustration with the Bush administration, Yang Xiyu, a senior Foreign Ministry official and China's top official on the DPRK nuclear talks, blames the US for undermining efforts to revive the six-party talks. (return to top) CanKor ("RUSSIA TO PROPOSE TRILATERAL TALKS WITH TWO KOREAS", None) The six nations involved are divided on how to proceed. While Japan and the US talk of taking the issue to the UN Security Council, China, Russia and the ROK urge patience and calm, even as they seek alternatives to the six-party format. (return to top)

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