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I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Deterrence

Yonhap News ("N.K. SAYS ITS NUCLEAR POWER GUARANTEES PEACE IN ASIA", None) reported that the DPRK claimed on Tuesday that its nuclear capability serves as a deterrent and a fundamental guarantor of peace and stability in Northeast Asia, including the Korean Peninsula. "Our possession of nuclear weapons is the best option to safeguard our sovereignty and dignity from the escalating US nuclear manoeuvre to crush the Republic and realize a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula," the DPRK said in a commentary carried by the KCNA.

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2. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Test

Reuters ("CHINA SEES NO SIGN OF N.KOREA NUCLEAR TEST ", None) reported that, according to PRC Assistant Foreign Minister Shen Guofang, the PRC has no evidence to suggest the DPRK will conduct a nuclear test, adding that the next six weeks would be critical for returning to stalled multilateral talks. "If there would be such a nuclear test, it is a serious issue. If it does happen, China will make corresponding responses, but up to now there is no sign that it is conducting such a test," Shen said. When speaking of US-DPRK relations over the nuclear issue, "the key is the lack of mutual trust between the two sides, which is increasing over the years," Shen said. "It's like a hard iceberg -- it takes a long time to melt."

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3. PRC on Nuclear DPRK

Yonhap News ("CHINA WILL NOT TOLERATE N.K POSSESSING NUCLEAR WEAPONS: OFFICAL", None) reported that the PRC is making its best efforts to reopen six-party talks, but will not tolerate the DPRK's possession of atomic weapons. A PRC official said that the PRC will not oppose taking the DPRK to the UNSC should the multilateral talks fail.

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4. US Republicans on PRC DPRK Policy

Donga Ilbo ("US WARNS OF POSSIBLE NUCLEAR DOMINO EFFECT IN NORTHEAST ASIA", None) reported that the US senate Republican policy advice plan has been recently made public. In order to resolve the DPRK nuclear crisis, the plan calls for the PRC to choose between cooperating with the US and facing the possibility of a nuclear-armed neighbour. The report specified "Chinese cooperation" as actively participating in the quarantine against the DPRK's nuclear proliferation; approving Japan, Korea, and Taiwan's participation in the US-led Missile Defense (MD) plan; and not pressuring the ROK to take the initiative in forming an inter-Korea confederation.

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5. PRC on Six-Party Talks

Korea Times ("CHINA PESSIMISTIC ON RESUMING NUKE TALKS", None) reported that, according to ROK party officials visiting Beijing, the PRC President Hu Jintao said that a deep distrust between DPRK and the US is making it difficult to resume multilateral talks over the nuclear issue. Hu said

that the PRC will keep pushing for the DPRK to return to the six-party nuclear negotiations, but appeared pessimistic about achieving a breakthrough in the near future.

(return to top) Joonang Daily ("HU DOUBTS EARLY 6-PARTY REVIVAL", None) reported that, in a meeting with ROK's opposition party leader Park Geun-hye, President Hu Jintao of the PRC expressed pessimism yesterday about an early resumption of the six-nation talks. However, he pointed to some positive steps taken by Pyongyang and Washington that could break the nuclear stalemate. "North Korea and the United States have exchanged messages actively in the last few days," Mr. Hu reportedly said. "That is evidence that the two sides have not completely shut the door to dialogue and negotiation." At the meeting, Ms. Park appealed to Mr. Hu for the PRC to play an active role as a mediator in persuading the DPRK to give up its nuclear programs and return to the six-party talks. (return to top)

6. US on Six-Party Talks

Reuters ("US SIGNALS IMPATIENCE ON N KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS", None) reported that Christopher Hill, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State confirmed the US is committed to resuming six-way talks but would pursue other avenues if efforts failed. "At some point we are going to have to sit down and work out what the way forward is," he told a conference in Brussels. "At present we have a situation where North Korea does not seem to be interested [in talks]. We have a number of options. One option we do not have is to walk away."

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7. US-DPRK Bi-lateral Talks

Bloomberg Press ("US IS URGED BY FORMER N. KOREA ENVOY TO ACCEPT TWO-WAY TALKS ", None) reported that former DPRK Policy Coordinator under President Bill Clinton's administration, Wendy Sherman, said the US government should hold direct talks with the DPRK and avoid name calling to break an impasse in the nuclear issue. "The US ought to indicate that it's time for serious negotiations that include bilateral discussions within the context of six party talks as all other parties have done", Sherman said.

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8. ROK on US-DPRK Bi-lateral Talks

Associated Press ("S. KOREA URGES NORTH TO RESPOND TO US ", None) reported that Kim Sook, director-general of the ROK foreign ministry's North American affairs bureau, urged the DPRK to quickly respond to Washington's recent recognition of the country's sovereignty, saying it could lead to a turning point in the standoff over Pyongyang's nuclear programs. Kim told KBS Radio "How North Korea will respond will become a watershed in the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue."

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9. DPRK on DPRK-US Relations

The Globe and Mail ("N. KOREA WON'T RULE OUT PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK", None) reported that the DPRK poured out anti-American rhetoric -- a tactic it has used in the past before entering negotiations -- by claiming that Washington's “hostile policies” led it to develop nuclear weapons as

a deterrent and warning against any attack to dislodge its leadership. "The United States should be aware that the choice of a pre-emptive attack is not only theirs," the DPRK's official news agency quoted the cabinet newspaper Minju Joson as saying. The DPRK indicated a willingness Sunday to return to the talks -- involving the two Koreas, the United States, Japan, China and Russia -- but said it is waiting for Washington to clarify conflicting statements on US policy.

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10. ROK-US Summit

Korea Herald ("ROH, BUSH TO HOLD TALKS JUNE 10 IN US ", None) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun and US President Bush will meet in Washington on June 10 to discuss the DPRK nuclear standoff. The June summit is expected to be a watershed to the continuing nuclear standoff concerning DPRK nuclear ambitions and its boycott of the six-party talks. Roh has been making active diplomatic moves recently in regards to DPRK's nuclear problem, consecutively meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin and PRC counterpart Hu Jintao earlier this month.

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11. US on ROK-US Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("HILL CONFIDENT SOUTH KOREA WILL STICK TO US ALLIANCE", None) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Hill has indicated that ROK President Roh Moo-hyun's plans for an ROK balancer in Northeast Asia will in the long run take a backseat to the nation's need for a powerful friend in the US. "If I were a South Korean looking into the future, I would be saying to myself, 'I want a special relationship with a distant power,'" Hill told the New York Times. The NYT said Hill attributed little significance to differences in opinion with other nations in six-party talks. "We're in pretty good contact with all these governments," it quoted him as saying. "We're working pretty well and we don't want to see a situation where this very tough problem causes difficulties in these relations." However, the NYT concluded, "for Seoul, managing its growing ties with the North and its alliance with an American administration hawkish on North Korea has become increasingly delicate."

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12. Japan on ROK-US Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREAN LAWMAKERS GET EARFUL FROM ALLIED HARDLINERS ", None) reported that Japan's Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi reportedly had harsh words for the ROK during a recent visit of ROK lawmakers to Tokyo. He said Seoul had been neglecting its alliance with Washington, despite the fact that unity between the ROK, US and Japan was key to solving the DPRK nuclear dispute. He told the members of the National Assembly's Defense Committee that Tokyo would not accept a new role ROK sees for itself as a power balancer in Northeast Asia.

(return to top) Yonhap News ("SEOUL REFUTES JAPAN'S COMMENT ON INFORMATION SHARING ", None) reported that, according to Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi, Japan is cautious about sharing DPRK-related intelligence with the ROK since the US, a key intelligence provider for Tokyo, does not have sufficient trust in its ROK ally. Lee Kyu-hyung, a spokesman for the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasized Tuesday that Japan is not in a position to make a comment on information exchanges between Seoul and Washington. (return to top)

13. US on UNC Contingency Plan

Korea Times ("US COMPLAINS ABOUT CONTINGENCY PLAN LEAK ", None) reported that, according to an official of the ROK presidential National Security Council (NSC), the US recently lodged a complaint with the ROK over the leakage to the local media of the discussion of contingency operation plans by the two countries in the event of emergency situations in DPRK. "The operation plan is a military secret whose release can damage not only inter-Korean relations but also the relationship between South Korea and the United States," the NSC official said.

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14. Chongryon Mark 50 Years in Japan

Chosun Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN GROUP MARKS 50 YEARS IN JAPAN", None) reported that 2,000 members of the pro-Pyongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan - generally known by the abbreviation Chongryeon in Korean - rallied in Tokyo on Tuesday to mark the group's 50th anniversary. The group's popularity in Japan is at low ebb due to the DPRK nuclear dispute and resurgent anger over Pyongyang's kidnappings of Japanese nationals.

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15. Japan-Chongryon Relations

Kyodo News ("KOIZUMI SEEKS COOPERATION FROM PRO-PYONGYANG GROUP ON N. KOREA", None) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi sought cooperation Tuesday from a pro-Pyongyang residents group in urging the DPRK to resume dialogue involving its abduction of Japanese and its nuclear ambitions. Koizumi made the remarks in a message to a reception in Tokyo commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan.

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16. June 15 Celebration Preparations

Joonang Daily ("MINISTRY DEFENDS VISIT TO NORTH BY ACTIVISTS", None) reported that officials in Seoul defended the decision to let dozens of members of a banned pro-DPRK activist group attend an inter-Korean meeting of University students. About 400 ROK students and 100 DPRK students met to plan for the June 15 celebration in Pyongyang of the fifth anniversary of the inter-Korean Summit which will be attended this year by delegation of high-level ROK officials.

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17. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Joonang Daily ("SOUTH KOREAN FIRM TO MINE FOR NORTH ORE ", None) reported that Park Yang-soo, president of the Korea Resources Corp., told the Joongang Ilbo yesterday that it has agreed to join a PRC company in developing several DPRK iron mines. The sites to be explored are known as the Musan Iron Ore Mine, a 1,000-meter (3,281 feet) mountain that is composed entirely of ore veins. Although the deposits are large, the DPRK has been unable to make use of the resources because of its power shortage since the 1990s. Details on the joint venture haven't been

set yet, such as how much money the two companies will invest. Mr. Park also didn't disclose the name of the PRC company.

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18. IISS on Security in Asia

Forbes ("NORTH KOREA ASIA'S BIGGEST SECURITY ISSUE, TAIWAN A CONCERN - IISS ", None) reported that the International Institute for Strategic Studies said the DPRK's nuclear ambitions remain the 'most daunting security issue' facing Asia, while the risk of a Sino-US confrontation over Taiwan has increased.

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