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1. Six Party Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA AGREES TO RETURN TO NUCLEAR TALKS", 2006-10-31) reported that the DPRK agreed to return to six-party talks, prompting a cautious welcome from international powers that roundly condemned its first nuclear test three weeks earlier. Envoys from the DPRK, the US and PRC met in Beijing and agreed to restart the stalled talks in the near future, the PRC Foreign Ministry said on its Web site, promising an end to a year-long hiatus in the negotiations. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. US on Six Party Talks

Voice of America ("BUSH HAILS AGREEMENT ON NORTH KOREA TALKS", 2006-10-31) reported that roughly three weeks after it staged its first nuclear test, DPRK agreed to return to negotiations. In Washington, President Bush hailed the news. "I'm pleased, and I want to thank the Chinese for encouraging the meeting that got the agreement to get the six-party talks restarted," he said. Mr. Bush acknowledged the path ahead will not be easy, and stressed there is plenty of work to do. But he left no doubt he considers the announcement to resume the six-party talks to be a major development. "I've always felt like it is important for the United States to be at the table with other partners when it comes time to addressing this important issue," he said. [\(return to top\)](#), International Herald Tribune ("U.S. SAYS NORTH KOREA NUCLEAR TALKS COULD BE IN NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER", 2006-10-31) reported that US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said Tuesday that six-party talks on DPRK's nuclear program could resume as early as November or December. Hill said the exact date was up to all six nations participating. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. Japan on Six Party Talks

USA Today ("DEAL REACHED ON NORTH KOREA TALKS", 2006-10-31) reported that DPRK has agreed to return to six-nation. But Japan said it cannot accept the DPRK's return to the talks unless Pyongyang first renounces its nuclear weapons. [\(return to top\)](#)

4. Russian on Six Party Talks

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIAN DELEGATION HEAD SEES CHANCE TO RESUME NORTH KOREA TALKS", 2006-10-31) reported that the consent of all sides to resume the six-party talks offers a chance for the negotiators to reach a deal, a deputy Russian foreign minister said Tuesday. "The October 31 meeting in Beijing of representatives of China, the U.S. and the DPRK, and the consent of all sides to continue talks in the format of six countries, means that the six-party process has a chance," Alexander Alexeyev, who heads the Russian delegation, said. Previously, Russian President Putin had said that diplomacy should be the only way for the international community to dissuade DPRK from further nuclear tests. "The only way out of the current situation is the resumption of the six-nation talks," he said. [\(return to top\)](#)

5. IAEA on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("IAEA CHIEF SAYS HE WANTS TO ENSURE N.K. NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES ARE PEACEFUL", 2006-10-30) reported that the head of the international nuclear watchdog agency said Monday he wants to work with the DPRK to ensure that the country's nuclear activities are solely for peaceful use. Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), urged a negotiated solution to Pyongyang's nuclear crisis and said his agency is also ready to discuss the DPRK's security and other concerns. The DPRK immediately spurned his demand, saying the IAEA should stay away from the DPRK nuclear issue. [\(return to top\)](#)

6. ROK on Inter-Korean Summit

Yonhap News ("UNIFICATION MINISTER SAYS INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT NEEDED DESPITE NUCLEAR TEST", 2006-10-30) reported that the ROK's point man on DPRK affairs said he believes a second inter-Korean summit could help ease the tension sparked by DPRK's recent nuclear test, but stopped short of saying whether the government was pushing for a meeting between the leaders of the divided Koreas. "I believe an (inter-Korean) summit is a very useful means for dismantling North Korea's nuclear weapons and (improving) North-South relations," Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok told the parliamentary committee on unification, foreign affairs and trade. [\(return to top\)](#)

7. ROK Poll on DPRK Threat

Korea Times ("ECONOMIC SLUMP MORE SERIOUS THAN NUKES", 2006-10-31) reported that RO Koreans believe the most serious problem facing the country is an economic slump rather than security threats from the DPRK, a survey said yesterday. A majority of young people dislike Japan and the US more than DPRK even after its nuclear test on Oct. 9, according to The Korea Times poll. Of the 1,000 adults polled across the nation, 22.3 percent chose the economic slowdown as the country's most serious problem, followed by political problems (14.5 percent) and socio-economic polarization (13.1 percent). Those who picked security threats accounted for 12.2 percent. [\(return to top\)](#)

8. ROK on Radioactive Contamination

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA CONFIRMS RADIATION LEVEL NORMAL FOLLOWING PYONGYANG'S NUKE TEST", 2006-10-30) reported that the ROK confirmed that there has been no contamination by radioactive materials on the nation's mainland since the DPRK conducted a nuclear weapon test earlier this month. The Ministry of Science and Technology said the current level of domestic radioactivity is 10-20 microrentgens per hour, which indicates a normal state. [\(return to top\)](#)

9. Japan on Nuclear Program

Bloomberg News ("JAPAN WON'T DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS, ABE SAYS IN CNN INTERVIEW", 2006-10-31) reported that according to Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in an interview with CNN that the country will not develop nuclear weapons in response to DPRK's atomic bomb test. [\(return to top\)](#)

10. Expert on Factionalism in DPRK

Korea Herald ("FACTIONAL WARLORDS COULD EMERGE IN N.K.", 2006-10-31) reported that US expert says Kim Jong-il's alliance with military could destabilize regime in the future. Ken E. Gause, a researcher at the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College said that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's alliance with the military has been a "key buttress" of his rule for the last decade, but has the possibility of destabilizing the regime in the future. "As the North Korean economy has deteriorated under Kim Jong-il, many elites have been forced to compete for privileges and access like never before," Gause said in the 68-page report. "If the regime loses its ability to placate the elite through goods and services, there is a real chance for the creation of factions. If the situation persists, this factionalism could transform itself into centers of opposition to the regime." [\(return to top\)](#)

11. DPRK Defectors

Korea Times ("NORTH KOREAN DEFACTORS TO REACH 10,000 NEXT YEAR", 2006-10-29) reported that the situation is getting worse for DPR Korean defectors. The ROK government expects the total number of DPR Korean defectors, which stood at 8,541 last June, to hit 10,000 next year. Humanitarian aid groups have claimed there are at least 100,000 more DPR Koreans who wander PRC and other East Asian nations while seeking asylum in ROK or the US. Life is getting more challenging for DPR Koreans arriving in the ROK. According to a survey of 550 DPR Korean defectors by a graduate department at Seoul National University earlier this year, 66 percent replied they would return to their country from the ROK, if allowed. Some 70 percent said they wish to go to the US. Of the respondents, 61 percent were found to be unemployed, while only 16 percent had full-time jobs. Around 65 percent said they were making less than 1 million won (\$950) per month, which is insufficient to live comfortably in Seoul. [\(return to top\)](#)

12. DPRK-PRC Economic Relations

Globe and Mail ("IN IMPOVERISHED NORTH KOREA, CHINA'S CHARITY ISN'T ENOUGH", 2006-10-31) reported that DPRK soldiers are better fed and better sheltered than most of their compatriots, yet they are still so impoverished that they suffer the humiliation of accepting cheap gifts, often from gawking PRC tourists who toss them over or hand them across the border from tour boats passing near the shore. The gifts are a kind of metaphor for DPRK's growing dependence on PRC goods -- including official exports, donated food and fuel, and even a black-market smuggling business along the border. But with other countries cutting off aid because of their outrage at Pyongyang's nuclear program, PRC assistance is not enough. Relief workers are warning that DPRK is facing its harshest winter in years. Malnutrition, already at frighteningly high levels, could grow worse over the next winter and spring, according to the UN World Food Program. [\(return to top\)](#)

13. PRC-ASEAN Economic Cooperation

Xinhua ("THIRD CHINA-ASEAN BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT SUMMIT OPENS", 2006-10-31) reported that the Third PRC-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit opened on Tuesday in Nanning, PRC Premier Wen Jiabao signed a package of proposals at the summit aimed at deepening bilateral economic exchanges, expanding trade of high-value-added products, and boosting two-way investment. "China has a trade deficit with ASEAN. But we are still committed to further opening market and increasing import from ASEAN," he said. [\(return to top\)](#)

14. PRC-Malaysian Economic Cooperation

BBC News ("CHINA AND MALAYSIA SIGN GAS DEAL", 2006-10-31) reported that Malaysian state oil company Petronas has agreed a 25-year deal to supply gas to PRC firm Shanghai LNG. PRC is frantically pursuing energy deals around the world to support its rapid economic growth, at a time when its current gas reserves are dwindling. In recent years, it has agreed deals to import gas from Australia, Indonesia, Iran, Russia and Turkmenistan. [\(return to top\)](#)

15. PRC Tariffs

China Daily ("RENEWED FOCUS OF TRADE", 2006-10-31) reported that the adjustment of customs duties that is to take effect tomorrow marks a significant change in the way PRC prioritizes its trade sector. As a fast-developing economy, PRC has benefited tremendously from its export-led growth during most of the past quarter of a century. However, no longer will the country put trade growth before everything. The Ministry of Finance recently announced that the country decided to impose temporary tariffs on 110 exported goods and cut tariffs on 58 imported products since the beginning of November. [\(return to top\)](#)

China Daily ("TARIFFS TO REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION", 2006-10-31) reported that temporary tariffs on 110 export categories of products which are energy-guzzling or resource-intensive have been hailed by experts as a major step towards optimizing the national energy structure. "It is a very positive move, which is designed to enhance energy efficiency, optimize the national energy structure and rationalize energy- and resource-intensive sectors," Zhou Dad, director of the Energy Research Institute affiliated to the National Development and Reform Commission, told China Daily. [\(return to top\)](#)

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Nautilus Institute

2342 Shattuck Ave. #300, Berkeley, CA 94704 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org