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I. United States

1. Multilateral Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA CRISIS TALKS OPEN IN BEIJING", 2004-06-23) reported that negotiators from six countries opened talks on the DPRK nuclear crisis Wednesday, but few expect progress in bridging the gulf between the US and the DPRK despite a report of U.S. plans to offer incentives. Four days of talks began at the exclusive Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing, where two previous rounds of talks on the crisis that has simmered since October 2002 ended inconclusively.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Crisis

The Associated Press ("ENVOY: PYONGYANG WILLING TO GIVE UP NUKES", 2004-06-23) reported that the DPRK is willing to give up efforts to develop nuclear weapons "in a transparent way" if the US ends its "hostile policy" toward the DPRK, the North's envoy said as six-nation talks on his government's nuclear program began Wednesday. The comments appeared to be a reference to the DPRK's demand for a guarantee that it won't be attacked by the US if it agrees to abandon its nuclear weapons development. The DPRK will submit a proposal to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for aid and the US's withdrawal of its demand for a complete dismantling of the program, said Kim Gye Gwan, a DPRK vice foreign minister. "Our trying to possess nuclear weapons ... is intended to protect ourselves from the US nuclear weapons threat," Kim told his U.S. and other counterparts during the opening session of the talks at a PRC government guesthouse. "Therefore, if the United States gives up its hostile policy toward us by (real) actions, we are prepared to give up in a transparent way all plans related to nuclear weapons," Kim said. Diplomats said the DPRK agreed earlier this week to discuss a "verifiable freeze" of its nuclear program as a step toward dismantlement. If the United States withdraws its demand for a complete and irreversible dismantling of the program "and accepts our compensation demands, we are prepared to submit specific proposals concerning freezing the nuclear program at this talks in order to break the current stalemate and to reinvigorate the six-party talks," Kim said.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Crisis

Reuters ("U.S. BRINGS PROPOSAL TO N.KOREA CRISIS TALKS ", 2004-06-23) reported that the US will offer a "proposal" at the six-party talks in Beijing on the DPRK nuclear crisis, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said in an opening statement Wednesday. "We are prepared for serious discussion and we have a proposal to offer," Kelly said at the exclusive Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in Beijing. "A focus on the common objective, and practical and effective means to attain it, will lead in a very positive direction with new political, economic and diplomatic possibilities," he

said. Kelly gave no details. The New York Times said Wednesday that U.S. negotiators would offer the DPRK new but "highly conditional" incentives to give up its nuclear weapons at the talks, including a provisional guarantee not to invade. The newspaper quoted U.S. officials as saying President Bush had authorized negotiators to offer the incentives in what would be the first significant, detailed overture to the DPRK since he took office more than three years ago. Under the proposal, aid would begin flowing to the DPRK once its leader, Kim Jong-il, had made a commitment to dismantle his plutonium and uranium weapons programs, it said.

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4. US - DPRK Relations

Reuters ("U.S. OFFERS CARROT, N.KOREA SAYS DROP THE STICK ", 2004-06-23) reported that the US offered a proposal to try to resolve the DPRK nuclear crisis at six-party talks in Beijing while an entrenched DPRK urged the US to soften its stance. Chief negotiators from the six parties opened discussions on the 20-month nuclear crisis at the exclusive Diaoyutai State Guesthouse as Japan warned that the credibility of the talks would be on the line if no progress was made. Progress in two previous rounds has been glacial, and few expect major breakthroughs despite the U.S. proposal, which the New York Times said contained incentives for the North to abandon its nuclear weapons program. "We are prepared for serious discussion and we have a proposal to offer," U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly said in an opening statement. "A focus on the common objective, and practical and effective means to attain it, will lead in a very positive direction with new political, economic and diplomatic possibilities," he said. Kelly gave no details. "No positive results can be expected from the third round of the six-party talks if the U.S. again raises its old brigandish demand at the talks that will start today," the DPRK's Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary.

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5. US Proposal at Multilateral Talks

Reuters ("TIMES: BUSH TO OFFER N.KOREA NUCLEAR INCENTIVES ", 2004-06-23) reported that U.S. negotiators will offer the DPRK new incentives to give up its nuclear weapons in talks in Beijing this week, including a provisional guarantee not to invade, The New York Times said Wednesday. The newspaper quoted U.S. officials as saying President Bush had authorized negotiators to offer the "highly conditional" incentives in what would be the first significant, detailed overture to the DPRK since he took office more than three years ago. Under the proposal, aid would begin flowing to the DPRK once its leader Kim Jong-il made a commitment to dismantle his plutonium and uranium weapons programs, it said. The Times said that once Kim offered the commitment, the US would begin direct talks about lifting a broad array of economic sanctions and providing longer term energy aid and retraining of nuclear scientists. It said Kim would have three months to seal and shut DPRK nuclear facilities, comparing the process to Libya's agreement late last year to end its chemical, biological and nuclear warfare programs. Continuation of the oil shipments and the talks would depend on the DPRK giving international inspectors access to suspected nuclear sites and meeting a series of deadlines for disclosing the full nature of its facilities, as Libya did.

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6. ROK - DPRK Relations

Yonhap News ("TWO KOREAS HOLD MEETING AHEAD OF SIX-PARTY TALKS ", 2004-06-23)

reported that top nuclear negotiators from the two Koreas met one-one-one Wednesday and exchanged views on how to ease tension over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, ROK officials said. The ROK's chief delegate Lee Soo-hyuck and his DPRK counterpart, Kim Kye-kwan, discussed "nuclear dismantlement" and "freeze-for-compensation" during a 90-minute meeting at Beijing's Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, they said.

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7. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap News ("OVER 800 NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS HELD IN CHINA: CIVIC GROUP ", 2004-06-23) reported that the number of DPRK defectors held in PRC detention centers has risen to several hundreds as of Wednesday, a civic group in the ROK said. The group said about 340 DPRK defectors are detained in a camp in the Chinese town of Yanji, Jilin province, which borders with the North, 219 in Tumen, 183 in Lungjing and 92 in Hunchun.

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8. ROK - DPRK Industrial Park

Yonhap News ("AGENCY OF KAESONG INDUSTRIAL PARK TO START OPERATIONS IN JULY ", 2004-06-23) reported that an agency tasked with running an industrial complex being built in the DPRK border town of Kaesong will be launched in July, a state-run land corporation said Wednesday. "A committee to prepare for the establishment of the management agency will be set up on June 29," the Korea Land Corp. said. "We plan to launch the agency by July at the latest." The agency will initially be manned by around 20 ROK staffers, but this will be increased, depending on the progress of work, the land corporation said.

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9. PRC on HK Democracy Movement

Agence France-Presse ("PRO-BEIJING CAMP SEEKS TO TAKE STING OUT OF HK DEMOCRACY RALLY", 2004-06-23) reported that PRC officials in Hong Kong are playing down and trying to distract attention from a huge march for democracy next month designed to send a critical hands-off message to the PRC's communist leaders. Some 300,000 people are expected on the streets on July 1 for the rally, organized partly in protest at the PRC's April intervention in a spiraling row over the timing of democratic reforms. Fearful that the event will be as embarrassing to authorities as one last year when half a million people turned out in support of democratic causes, Chinese officials have begun an early damage limitation exercise. In a move unusual for the PRC's military detachment, Hong Kong's garrison of the People's Liberation Army will throw open its doors for a rare open day on the same morning.

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10. US - ROK Troop Repositioning

Agence France-Presse ("US SAYS TROOP PULLOUT FROM SOUTH KOREA PART OF GLOBAL CHANGES", 2004-06-22) reported that the planned withdrawal of thousands of US troops from the ROK is part of a global restructuring of Washington's armed forces and more changes can be expected, a top US officer said. "You're going to see a fair amount of change not only in the region

but globally over the next few years as we try to transform our posture to deal with a changed world," Admiral Thomas Fargo, commander of US forces in the Pacific, told a news briefing during a visit to Malaysia. The US told the ROK earlier this month that it wanted to pull a third of its 37,000 troops out of the peninsula by the end of 2005, triggering alarm in a country gripped by uncertainty over the DPRK's nuclear weapons drive. The ROK, which is still technically at war with the North, wants the timeframe to be pushed back to between 2007 and 2113 to allow for the upgrade of its own military forces. Fargo said, however, that the withdrawal of 12,500 troops from the ROK "makes great sense" and could be done with "minimal risk", while stressing that any shuffling of forces would be carried out in close cooperation with US allies. The military capabilities of "our friends and partners have vastly improved over the last 15 years," he said. "Certainly no place is this more true than in South Korea, where you have a very professional army that numbers some 20 divisions of active forces and they fly a very modern capable aircraft. "They've got a very solid and improving maritime capability. Their capability is vastly improved to take over a larger share of their own defense."

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11. US - PRC Trade Relations

Reuters ("EVANS: REFORM KEY TO CHINA MARKET ECONOMY ", 2004-06-23) reported that the US said the PRC needed to sell more state assets and roll back wide-ranging government controls before gaining coveted market economy status. The PRC has lobbied hard for its trading partners, especially the US and Europe, to grant it such status in the hope of cutting the number of anti-dumping cases brought against it. In a speech praising the PRC for its economic progress to date, U.S. Commerce Secretary Don Evans said the export giant that has sparked controversy in a U.S. election year needed to cooperate more on such issues as rampant piracy and its fixed currency regime. "China must significantly reduce government micromanagement of its economy and introduce a far higher level of transparency -- among other changes -- before it can achieve a full transition to a market-driven economy," Evans said in a speech to the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing.

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12. PRC Boat Accident

Agence France-Presse ("43 MISSING AS BOAT CAPSIZES IN CHINA ", 2004-06-22) reported that a tourist boat overturned in high winds on a reservoir in central PRC, killing at least one person and leaving 43 missing, state media reported Wednesday. The boat was carrying 129 people on an excursion in the Xiaolangdi Reservoir in Henan province when it capsized at about 10:00 p.m. Tuesday night, according to the Xinhua News Agency said. More than 500 people were searching for survivors, including military units equipped with river boats. Darkness, water depths of 130 feet and a lack of rescue equipment were hampering the search, the report said. The China News Service reported that 26 people were rescued by about 2 a.m., and one had died on the way to the hospital. Another was hospitalized with serious injuries, it said. No information was given on the condition of other passengers.

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13. ROK Embassy Relocation

Donga Ilbo ("FOREIGN EMBASSIES TO RELOCATE TO NEW CAPITAL ", 2004-06-23) reported that

the government is planning to relocate foreign embassies to the new administrative capital along with its executive, legislative and judiciary branches. On June 23 during a public hearing in the Korean Press Center at Tae Pyung-ro, Chung-gu, Seoul, the Committee on the Administrative Capital said, "In order to make the new capital truly functional, we are planning to relocate all the crucial parts of the government, including political and administrative functions," adding, "We are also supporting the construction of a diplomatic complex [in the new capital] and a convention center to attract diplomatic and international organizations." The Committee also mentioned, "To make the city self sufficient, we would like to attract various functions such as cultural and educational facilities. However, we will limit the relocation of factories or manufacturers from the Metro Seoul Area." Lee Chun-hee, the vice chairman of the committee, promised, "for the foreign embassies relocating to the new capital, we will provide help in every possible way, such as choosing a site, though discussions with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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14. ROK on Iraq

Agence France-Presse ("S. KOREA LEADER APOLOGIZES IN HOSTAGE CASE ", 2004-06-23) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun apologized to the ROK after the beheading of a South Korean hostage in Iraq but said Seoul's troop dispatch was needed there to help rebuild the country. "I am very sorry and deeply regretful that this tragedy happened, although all the people and the government wished and prayed for the safe return of Mr. Kim Sun-il," Roh said in a brief speech carried live on television. The president also condemned terrorism as a "crime against humanity" and pledged his government's "determination to deal sternly with it together with the international community." Roh rejected the kidnappers' accusation that the ROK's plan to send 3,000 additional troops to Iraq would hurt Iraqis. The captors had threatened to kill Kim Sun-il, a 33-year-old South Korean working in Iraq, if Seoul did not cancel the deployment ?a demand that the ROK rejected. "The South Korean plan to send troops to Iraq is not to engage in hostilities against Iraqis or other Arab people but to help reconstruction and restoration in Iraq," he said.

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15. US - Japanese Relations

Agence France Presse ("KOIZUMI VOWS TO REDUCE US MILITARY BASES ON OKINAWA", 2004-06-23) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi vowed to reduce US military presence on Okinawa as the island marked the 59th anniversary of the most fierce Pacific battle of World War II. Koizumi was among more than 7,000 people who attended an official ceremony at the Peace Memorial Park in the Okinawan city of Itoman under the scorching sun to honor more than 200,000 military and civilian victims killed in the 1945 battle. "A deep sorrow over the loss of many valuable lives will never leave Okinawan people's mind," Koizumi said in a speech. "It is our responsibility not to cause war again while passing the story down to the future generations." While noting the sub-tropical island rose from the ashes of war, Koizumi acknowledged that "US military facilities concentrated on Okinawa heavily burdens Okinawan people." "The government will make sincere efforts to reduce the burden," he said. Okinawa hosts about two-thirds of the 40,500 US troops in Japan.

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16. Asian Energy Security

South China Morning Post ("REGION UNITES IN PACT ENHANCING ENERGY SECURITY; INCREASED CO-OPERATION WILL PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT IN ALL COUNTRIES", 2004-06-23) reported that foreign ministers and senior officials of 22 Asian nations yesterday affirmed the need for regional co-operation and launched an initiative searching for energy security. At the end of a one-day meeting of the third Asian Co-operation Dialogue (ACD), the ministers published the Qingdao Initiative. The pact includes a series of measures to explore ways to ensure a sustained and stable energy supply and its distribution and consumption, which are essential for economic development in the member countries. "Enhanced energy co-operation is necessary to safeguard Asian energy security and promote economic development in all countries," Premier Wen Jiabao said in a speech to the conference yesterday. "We stand ready to conduct dialogue and co-operation with other countries in Asia and the world."

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17. Japan Iraq Troops Dispatch

The Japan Times ("IRAQI ACTIVIST SUES JAPANESE MAGAZINE", 2004-06-16) reported that an Iraqi democracy activist filed a damages suit on June 15 against a weekly magazine over an article alleging that he made a secret deal with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi for the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to do work in Samawah, Iraq, in exchange for protection. Abdul Al-Rekaby, in his 50s, filed the suit at the Tokyo District Court, demanding 10 million yen in compensation and an official apology from Shogakukan Inc., publisher of The Weekly Post, over an article in the Feb. 6 edition of the magazine. In the article, the magazine claimed that Al-Rekaby, who came to Japan in December at the invitation of the government, promised Koizumi that local tribes would protect SDF units in Samawah in exchange for Japanese help in rebuilding local infrastructure. However, Al-Rekaby claims that he opposed the SDF dispatch during his meeting with Koizumi, warning that it would only endanger the lives of SDF members and jeopardize Japan-Iraq relations. His lawyers said that the article gives the impression that their client had promised the safety of SDF troops in exchange for money, and could thus damage his reputation as democratic activist or could possibly endanger his life if he returns to Iraq.

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18. Japan Military Emergency Legislation

The Asahi Shimbun ("AT LONG LAST, LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN PLACE TO DEAL WITH INVASION, ATTACK", 2004-06-16) reported there were some defects and omissions in Japan's legislation package to deal with foreign military attacks. The package lacks any penalties for US military personnel who violate provisions of the laws. Japan will use its relationship of trust with the US as the basis for seeking American compliance with the laws. The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) on June 14 submitted a supplemental resolution that calls for heightening transparency in Japan-US cooperation by seeking a guarantee that the US military would respect Japanese laws to the greatest extent possible. The DPJ plan also seeks a comprehensive re-examination of the Status of Forces Agreement with the US. In addition to the laws preparing for a military attack, the DPJ reached an agreement with the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and coalition partner New Komeito to establish a legal framework for dealing with large terrorist attacks as well as natural disasters. Specific measures concerning such situations will be included in a bill the three parties plan to submit to the Diet next year.

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19. US on Human Trafficking in Japan

Kyodo ("JAPAN BLASTED OVER HUMAN TRAFFICKING", 2004-06-16) reported that the US said that Japan is not doing enough to fight human trafficking, putting it on a special watch list of countries that are on the verge of falling into the worst category. In its annual report on human trafficking, the US State Department urged Japan to employ all resources and boost efforts to combat the problem, including increasing investigations, prosecutions and convictions of trafficking crimes and providing better assistance to victims. "Japan is a destination country for Asian, Latin American and Eastern European women and children trafficked for the purposes of forced labor and sexual exploitation," the report says. "Japan's trafficking problem is large and Japanese organized crime groups that operate internationally are involved." John Miller, director of the State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, said at a news conference, "We believe that there has been a tremendous gap in Japan that has a huge problem with slavery, particularly sex slavery, a tremendous gap between the size of the problem and the resources and efforts devoted to addressing the problem." Colombian Ambassador to Japan Francisco Sierra, who also attended the news conference, said 4,000 women from his country have been trafficked to Japan for sexual exploitation and other purposes, urging the Japanese government to tackle the problem.

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20. Japan's Wartime Poison Gas in PRC

The Asahi Shimbun ("HAZARD TEAM TO CLEAN WARTIME MUSTARD-GAS MESS IN CHINA", 2004-06-15) reported that an emergency disposal team on June 16 will start work in Qiqihar in the PRC's Heilongjiang province on the latest cache of mustard-gas and other toxic weapons left by the Japanese Imperial Army, Cabinet Office officials said. The Japanese government's step is apparently intended to avert the rising tide of negative public sentiment in the PRC toward Japan that swelled last summer over a fatal chemical-weapons leak. Then, one man died and 43 others were sickened after being exposed to toxic liquid that leaked from abandoned weapons at a construction site in Qiqihar. It triggered a surge of anti-Japan protests. Japan paid about 300 million yen in medical and other expenses. Disposal work started on that site in November. In the latest discovery, hundreds more weapons are believed to be buried. Nearby residents were evacuated. The PRC government asked Japan to help retrieve the weapons, warning that unless swift action is taken to dispel residents' concerns, anti-Japanese sentiment could again flare. Under the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, Japan is obliged to dispose of all discarded chemical weapons in the PRC by 2007.

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21. Wartime Comfort Women in Japan

The Japan Times ("WARTIME 'COMFORT WOMEN' RULINGS UNCOVERED", 2004-06-16) reported that prosecutors have kept documents on court rulings convicting 10 Japanese in 1936 of kidnapping 15 Japanese women to force them to work as "comfort women" at a military brothel in Shanghai, a quarterly journal showed on June 15. The case is known as the only one in which convictions were made against people involved in sending comfort women to frontline brothels during wartime. The 10 Japanese, none of whom were military personnel, were sentenced to up to 42 months in prison on Feb. 14, 1936. A higher court upheld the ruling that September but reduced the prison terms, according to the documents. The existence of documents on a Supreme Court ruling against the 10 people -- eight men and two women -- has already been confirmed. But those on lower court rulings,

which describe the details of the case, had yet to be found. Ryukoku University professor Etsuro Totsuka found the documents at the Nagasaki District Public Prosecutor's Office and made them available in the latest issue of the Quarterly Journal on the Study of War Responsibility, published by the Center for Research and Documentation on Japan's War Responsibility.

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