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I. NAPSNet

1. US on Six Party Talks

Reuters ("US ENVOY RULES OUT "FAVORS" FOR N.KOREA", 2006-05-03) reported that the US will not ease its crackdown on the DPRK's illicit financial activities or offer bilateral talks to entice the DPRK back to nuclear talks, the US envoy to the talks said on Tuesday. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill said it is the DPRK that must end its six-month boycott of talks aimed at halting Pyongyang's nuclear arms programs and helping the state join the global community. "We are not prepared to try to just sit outside the six-party process and allow North Korea to boycott the process and look for favors in order to bring them back," said Hill.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA 'LOSING MILLIONS A WEEK FROM TALKS BOYCOTT'", 2006-05-03) reported that the US chief nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill says the DPRK is losing tens of millions of dollars each week by staying away from multilateral talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear weapons program. Hill used the figure to persuade the DPRK to come back to the dialogue table. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. ROK on US DPRK Policy

Reuters ("US PRESSURE ON N.KOREA MAY NOT BE EFFECTIVE: SEOUL", 2006-05-03) reported that US pressure on the DPRK can squeeze its finances but may not reform Pyongyang, the ROK's top policy maker on the DPRK said on Wednesday in comments that highlight recent friction with Washington. Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok said the US crackdown has dealt a painful blow to the DPRK, but its long-term effectiveness in making the DPRK behave more responsibly was questionable. "I agree that, when it comes to having an impact on the North, it has been a very strong tool," Lee said. "But it is an entirely different question whether the tool will be effective, from a strategic viewpoint, in leading the North to reform, ease tension and establish peace," Lee told a forum of senior journalists in Seoul.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("UNIFICATION MINISTER COMES TO KIM JONG-IL'S DEFENSE ", 2006-05-03) reported that speaking at the Kwanhun Club, an association of senior journalists, Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok said Wednesday "The Bush administration of the U.S. is fundamentalist in nature, and it has been raising questions about drugs and human rights abuses since it took office." Lee also said he was "definitely opposed to any attempts" to topple the DPRK regime. Lee told his audience DPRK leader Kim Jong-il is a man Seoul can do business with, being "one of the figures in the North we can get agreement from and who can make proper decisions." [\(return to top\)](#)

3. DPRK Defectors

Korea Times ("SEOUL WANTS US TO EXPLAIN GRANT OF POLITICAL ASYLUM TO NK DEFECTOR", 2006-05-03) reported that Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday he expects Washington to explain a US court's recent decision to grant political asylum status to a DPRK defector who had already received ROK citizenship.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS GET ADMITTANCE", 2006-05-03) reported that five or six DPRK defectors currently staying at US embassies in Southeast Asian

countries are soon expected to be allowed to enter the US with refugee status, US officials here said Tuesday. [\(return to top\)](#)

4. Inter-Korean Red Cross Aid

Yonhap ("S. KOREAN RED CROSS HEAD TO VISIT NORTH TO DELIVER MEDICINE", 2006-05-03) reported that the head of the ROK Red Cross will visit the DPRK to deliver medicine and medical equipment as part of the body's humanitarian assistance, his office said Wednesday. Han Wan-sang, president of the Republic of Korea National Red Cross, will donate 2.5 billion won (US\$2.7 million) worth of drugs and equipment to the Red Cross Hospital in Pyongyang, it said.

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5. Inter-Korean Economic Talks

Yonhap ("KOREAS OPEN TALKS ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMID NUCLEAR STALEMATE", 2006-05-03) reported that ROK and DPRK officials on Wednesday began talks on ways to increase economic cooperation between the divided countries despite the prolonged deadlock in international negotiations on ending the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. The talks between working-level officials of the Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation Promotion Committee opened at the joint committee office in the DPRK's border town of Kaesong.

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6. Inter-Korean Religious Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("N.K. PLAN FOR JOINT VATICAN VISIT BAFFLES SEOUL CATHOLICS ", 2006-05-03) reported that the Catholic Association of the DPRK has made a mysterious proposal to the Seoul Archdiocese's National Reconciliation Committee for a joint visit to the Vatican and an audience with the pope. Mgr. Thomas Aquinas Choi Chang-hwa, who led a 61-member group from the committee in a landmark visit to the DPRK last month, said Wednesday the association made the proposal during a dinner on April 28. "But the North never made clear what the objective of such a visit would be," Choi added. "I said, 'You'll have to show at least one priest living in North Korea and demonstrate that there is religious freedom and freedom to spread God's message for such a visit to be possible,'" Choi recalled.

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7. Inter-Korean Cultural Cooperation

Yonhap ("FIRST ALBUM OF N. KOREAN COPYRIGHTED SONGS DUE IN SEOUL NEXT MONTH", 2006-05-03) reported that a cover album of DPRK pop songs featuring ROK singers will be released in Seoul next month based on an unprecedented musical copyright contract between the two Koreas, promoters in Seoul said Wednesday. Some DPRK songs have gained popularity in the ROK, where they have been circulated illegally.

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8. DPRK Abduction Issue

Yonhap ("N.K.'S EFFORTS ON JAPANESE ABDUCTION ISSUE 'DOWNPLAYED': MINISTER", 2006-

05-03) reported that the ROK's point man on the DPRK on Wednesday said the DPRK's efforts to resolve the decades-old issue of Japanese citizens abducted by the communist state are being "underestimated," or unappreciated, by Japan. Speaking before an organization of senior ROK journalists, the Kwanhun Club, Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok said Japan should review its approach to the issue to see whether it should resolve the issue through campaigns, diplomacy or a combination of both. "Considering that (the North) is approaching the issue with Chairman Kim Jong-il admitting (the abductions of Japanese citizens), I think Japan's evaluation underrates (the North's efforts)," Lee said.

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9. DPRK Media Censorship

Washington Times ("STUDY: N. KOREA'S PRESS MOST MUZZLED", 2006-05-03) reported that the DPRK has the most heavily censored press in the world, according to a new ranking by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), although Burma, Cuba, Equatorial Guinea and Belarus aren't far behind. "North Korea is the world's deepest information void," said CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper, whose group prepared the list to coincide with World Press Freedom Day today. Not only do all journalists work for the Korean Central News Agency, she said, but all radios in the country are made so they can only pick up government-run stations.

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10. Japan-Russia Terrorism Drill

ITAR-TASS: News Agency ("RUSSIAN, JAPANESE COASTGUARDS TO HOLD JOINT ANTITERRORIST EXERCISE", 2006-05-03) reported that Russian and Japanese coastguards will begin a joint tactical exercise in Peter the Great Bay. Taking part in the drill for Russia are patrol boats, aircraft and the Primorye coastguard vessel. Japan is sending a helicopter and a patrol boat of the 9th coastguard district.

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11. USFJ Realignment

BBC News ("AGREEMENT ON US-JAPAN TROOP DEAL", 2006-05-02) reported that Japan and the US have sealed a plan to restructure the US military presence in Japan after months of negotiations.

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12. Japan-US Security Agreement

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("NUKAGA EYES REPLACING '97 GUIDELINES", 2006-05-03) reported that Defense Agency Director General Fukushima Nukaga proposed a new framework for security cooperation between Japan and the United States to replace the 1997 Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation. "I told them [U.S. officials] it's time to discuss the purposes and philosophy of the Japan-U.S. alliance that will replace the current [decades old] bilateral guidelines."

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13. PRC-Vatican Relations

The International Herald Tribune ("IN CHINA, 2ND NEW BISHOP NAMED", 2006-05-03) reported that Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, a group set up by Mao Zedong to control the Catholic Church in the PRC, arranged for the consecration of Liu Xinhong as bishop of Wuhu in Anhui Province. The PRC has two Catholic hierarchies, the government-authorized church and an underground church of bishops and other priests loyal to Rome.

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14. PRC-Africa Relations

The Asahi Shimbun ("CHINA OUTSTRIPPING JAPAN IN DIPLOMATIC RACE TO WOO AFRICA", 2006-05-03) reported that Africa's support may be vital for Japan in its bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat, but recently a familiar rival, the PRC, is gaining the upper hand in influence there.

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15. PRC-Vietnam Travel

Xinhua ("TRAVEL IN CHINA WINS FAVOUR OF VIETNAMESE TOURISTS", 2006-05-03) reported that nearly 4,000 Vietnamese tourists have passed by Pingxiang, the border city of south Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and entered the PRC for sightseeing in the first two days of the week-long holiday. In order to cope with the sharp increase of foreign visitors, Guangxi's Friendship Pass, linking the PRC and Vietnam, has set up two more passageways, and further noting that the passageways may be increased with the constantly soaring number of foreign visitors.

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16. PRC Living Standards

The International Herald Tribune ("CHINA MAKES MAJOR GAINS IN REDUCING CHILD HUNGER", 2006-05-03) reported that the PRC has made huge strides in reducing malnutrition among children over the past 15 years, while India recorded only modest progress and eastern and southern Africa made no gains at all, according to UNICEF.

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17. PRC Finance

Xinhua ("CHINA'S PENSION FUND ALLOWED TO INVEST ABROAD", 2006-05-02) reported that the PRC's State Security Fund Council is seeking trustees to help its overseas investment operations, which involves up to 1.1 billion US dollars this year. The eligible trustees should have more than 5 billion US dollars in capital or equivalent of currency during the immediate fiscal year, or 500 billion US dollars worth of capital under its trusteeship. Potential trustees' ratings must be given by internationally recognized rating institutions in the past three years and must be A or above. They should be established and registered outside the PRC to be eligible.

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18. PRC Petroleum Resources

Xinhua ("MOST OF CHINA'S OIL, GAS RESERVES WAIT TO BE VERIFIED", 2005-05-03) reported as much as 78% of the PRC's petroleum reserves and 93% of natural gas reserves still wait to be verified according to the Ministry of Land and Resources.

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19. PRC Nuclear Arsenal

Agence France Presse ("US EXPERTS CUT BY HALF SIZE ESTIMATE OF CHINA NUCLEAR ARSENAL", 2006-05-03) reported that the PRC's nuclear arsenal is about half the size previously estimated by US experts even as the Asian giant modernizes its atomic forces in a secret fashion. The PRC's nuclear stockpile appears to have leveled out at about 200 warheads compared with 400 as previously estimated.

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20. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("TAIWAN ACCUSES CHINA OF THWARTING PRESIDENT'S US TRIP, DENIES SNUB", 2006-05-03) reported that Taiwan has accused the PRC of thwarting President Chen Shui-bian's proposed US trip but denied Washington had snubbed the island which has a long-running diplomatic battle with Beijing for international recognition.

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21. Bird Flu

BBC News ("ACTION CALL AS JAPAN BANS POULTRY", 2006-05-02) reported that Japan has banned poultry imports from Britain after an outbreak of bird flu at three Norfolk farms.

[\(return to top\)](#) Crisscross News ("JAPAN, ASEAN STOCKPILE TAMIFLU", 2006-05-03) reported that ASEAN and Japan have launched an integration fund to stockpile flu drugs and medical equipment to cope with a possible bird flu pandemic. [\(return to top\)](#) The China Post ("BIRD FLU VIRUS HARDIER, LIVES FOR LONGER: EXPERTS", 2006-05-03) reported that leading influenza experts urged nations not to lower their guard against the deadly and hardy H5N1 virus, saying it now survives longer in higher temperatures and in wet and moist conditions. Scientists previously found the virus to be most active and transmissible among birds in the cooler months from October to March in the northern hemisphere, and many people were hoping for some respite in the coming summer months. [\(return to top\)](#) Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA GETS CHINESE AID TO FIGHT BIRD FLU ", 2006-05-03) reported that the DPRK received aid from the PRC to help its fight against bird flu which has hit the impoverished state in recent years. The PRC aid, which included test kits, "will help prevent the spread of bird flu in the country via its border and trading ports," the KCNA said. Early this year, a Japanese human rights activist said a DPRK woman had been infected in December. But Pyongyang has yet to confirm the case. [\(return to top\)](#)

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