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I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. OFFICIALS PUTTING CONSTANT PRESSURE ON NORTH KOREA", 2005-05-04) reported that amid the rising tension between the US and DPRK, high-ranking officials of the US administration once again raised the level of pressure on the DPRK in verbal statements. Joseph DeTrani, Special Envoy for Six-Party Talks from US Department of State, said, “During the six-party talks, we will not only deal with the nuclear issue, but also with North Korea’s exports of drugs and distribution of counterfeit notes.” During a Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) seminar held in Washington DC, DeTrani pointed out that “in order for US-North Korean relations to normalize, we also have to deal with criminal acts committed by North Korea, such as drug trafficking and counterfeiting, along with the nuclear problem, during the six-party talks.”

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Korea Times ("MINISTER DOWNBEAT ON 6-PARTY TALKS; NK NUKE ISSUE ENTERS CRITICAL STAGE", 2005-05-04) reported that efforts to end the standoff over the DPRK’s nuclear program through dialogue are entering a "critical phase" as the ROK - which has so far adhered to a softer line than the US - is now hinting at a possible turnaround in its approach. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki-moon in a fit of frustration, stated that his country is groping for measures "with every possibility in mind." "At the current stage, our position is to resolve the North’s nuclear issue in a peaceful manner," he said in a press briefing. "But recent developments have reached a level of considerable concern and the prospect of resuming the six-party talks is not bright."

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3. US, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN, U.S. SAY N. KOREA PROBLEM COULD GO TO U.N", 2005-05-04) reported that Japan and the US agreed that the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear programs should be taken up by the UN Security Council if the threat cannot be resolved through the framework of six-party talks. Agreement on this came during talks between visiting Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. When Rice said there was another option to six-party talks, Machimura noted that the process had indeed become bogged down. "We should not drag this out," he said.

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4. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Kyodo ("N. KOREA WANTS TALKS WITH U.S. BEFORE 6-WAY TALKS: SOURCES", 2005-05-04) reported that in a possible softening of its stance, the DPRK has recently demanded that Washington agree to two points through bilateral talks with Pyongyang as a precondition for returning to the stalled six-way negotiations on its nuclear programs, diplomatic sources said Wednesday. One point is US recognition of the DPRK as a sovereign state, and the other point is a US guarantee that Pyongyang would be treated as an equal in the six-country talks, according to the sources. According to the DPRK's demands, presented in mid-April, the bilateral talks must be held separately from the six-party framework, the sources said.

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5. DPRK Missile Test

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH'S MISSILE A MODIFIED SS-21", 2005-05-04) reported that the Defense Ministry briefed lawmakers yesterday on the new missile fired by the DPRK Sunday, saying that it was an upgraded version of its Soviet-era SS-21, with a longer range. The upgraded surface-t--surface missile reportedly has the capability to reach the locations south of Seoul where US military bases are to be relocated. According to members of the National Assembly's Defense Committee, ministry officials told them that the North had fired a KN-02 missile, a modification of the USSR-built SS-21. The improved missile has a range of up to 120 kilometers (75 miles); the officials said the DPRK test-fired the same type of missile in April of last year, but the test failed.

(return to top) Financial Times ("N KOREAN MISSILE SEEN AS PRESSURE ON US", 2005-05-03) reported that Seoul and Tokyo yesterday played down the DPRK's apparent missile launch into the Sea of Japan at the weekend, but analysts interpreted the move as a sign that Pyongyang was trying to force the US to take it more seriously. "North Korea's leadership is demonstrating that they have options to counter the pressures being imposed upon them at a time of spiralling tensions on the peninsula," said Paik Hak-soon, a DPRK expert at the Sejong Institute think-tank. "Since February 10, the US has deliberately not changed its assessment of North Korea, and the leadership is very much frustrated and is trying to show it will not shrink from taking action against the US," Mr Paik said. (return to top)

6. DPRK Nuclear Test

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA SITES WATCHED FOR NUKE TEST PREPARATIONS", 2005-05-04) reported that US satellite photos have detected mounds left from the digging of tunnels in Kilju in the DPRK's North Hamgyeong Province, where the DPRK may or may not be preparing for an underground nuclear test, the head of Joint Chiefs of Staff intelligence told lawmakers Wednesday. In a closed-door report to members of the National Assembly's Defense Committee, Kim Seong-il said six or seven other areas in the DPRK were also being monitored for signs of preparation for a test.

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7. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("S. KOREA URGES NORTH TO RETURN TO NPT AND GIVE UP NUCLEAR PROGRAMS", 2005-05-04) reported that a senior ROK nonproliferation official urged the DPRK on Tuesday to return to a global anti-nuclear weapons treaty and give up its nuclear arms program for good. Chun

Young-woo, deputy foreign minister for policy planning, made the appeal during a speech at a UN conference aimed at assessing the status of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). "While North Korea's return to the treaty...should be integral to any negotiated settlement of the North Korean nuclear issue, the fact is that such steps alone are far from sufficient for resolving our fundamental proliferation concerns," Chun said. "Nothing short of Pyongyang's strategic decision to abandon and dismantle once and for all its entire nuclear weapons program could bring about a breakthrough in the six-party talks," he said.

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8. Armitage on UNSC Sanctions on the DPRK

Kyodo News ("ARMITAGE DOUBTS BENEFITS OF TAKING N. KOREA TO UNSC: ABE", 2005-05-04) reported that former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage expressed doubt Tuesday about the benefits of referring the DPRK to the UN Security Council for possible economic sanctions for its nuclear program, a Japanese ruling party executive said. Armitage cited a high possibility of the PRC and Russia exercising their veto rights at the council, Liberal Democratic Party Acting Secretary General Shinzo Abe told reporters after his meeting with Armitage and former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly.

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9. US on Proliferation Security Initiative

Kyodo ("PSI FOCUSED ON N. KOREA'S POSSIBLE NUKE TRANSFER TO TERRORISTS", 2005-0--04) reported that some 60 nations taking part in a multilateral interdiction initiative are focused on stopping the DPRK's possible proliferation of nuclear materials to terrorists, a senior US administration official said Tuesday. The US-led Proliferation Security Initiative "is in place," said Joseph DeTrani, special envoy for the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions.

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10. DPRK Isolation

Newsweek International ("A FLOW OF INFORMATION FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS CHANGING THE HERMIT KINGDOM", 2005-05-09) reported that the Hermit Kingdom, it's now clear, is no longer hermetic. Quietly the DPRK, long one of the world's most isolated societies, has grown vulnerable to the flow of information from the outside world. North Koreans are watching Western movies on hidden video players and tuning in to Korean-language broadcasts from the ROK on illicit radios. In the border regions, mobile phones are ubiquitous, meaning that some defectors can keep in touch with their families back home. Much of this information is making clear to North Koreans that there is a vast prosperity gap between their society and the ROK's.

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11. DPRK Cult of Personality

International Herald Tribune ("CULT OF KIM COMPLICATES NUCLEAR DISPUTE ", 2005-05-04) reported that Park Jae Gun, a DPRK official, was driving his car when he saw a house across a field going up in flames. What he did after that made him an exemplary comrade and a national hero. Undeterred by flames and smoke, the official rushed into the house, groped along the walls and

saved the most precious thing in every house in DPRK: the portraits of the leader, Kim Jong Il, and Kim's parents. Only then did he hear two children crying inside, dash back in and save them as well, according to the DPRK's Workers Party newspaper. Stories like this can be read almost daily in the DPRK's newspapers, all state-controlled, and on the DPRK's radios, all pre-tuned to government channels. True or not, they show how pervasive a personality cult prevails in the DPRK and why the regime reacts emotionally to President George W. Bush, who called Kim a "tyrant" last week. Such an exchange between protagonists in a conflict over the DPRK's nuclear weapons programs makes other countries wonder whether the sides were drifting farther away from a negotiated settlement.

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12. Sino-ROK Summit

Joongang Ilbo ("SUNDAY TALKS IN MOSCOW BETWEEN ROH, HU CONFIRMED", 2005-05-04) reported that the Blue House confirmed yesterday that President Roh Moo-hyun will meet with PRC President Hu Jintao in Moscow Sunday to discuss the DPRK nuclear crisis. "This will be an opportunity for the two leaders to engage in a frank talk concerning not only the nuclear issue, but the relationships between South Korea, China and Japan and the overall situation in Northeast Asia," said Blue House diplomatic adviser Jeong Woo-seong. Both heads of state will be in Russia for Monday's ceremony to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe.

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13. DPRK Religious Organizations to Visit US

Korea Times ("NK MAY SEND MISSION TO US: REPORT", 2005-05-04) reported that representatives of religious organizations within the DPRK might visit the US June 20, Yonhap News Agency reported. The agency reported that ROK and US religious groups are jointly arranging the participation of the delegation from Pyongyang, quoting an unidentified source in Seoul. "At this moment, we can not know for sure whether they will be able to come to the United States or not," the source said. "They have been requesting extreme security on dialogue over the possible visit."

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14. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Chosun Ilbo ("GOV'T TO AID N.K. DEFECTORS TO GET JOBS", 2005-05-04) reported that DPRK defectors trying to settle down in the ROK embrace many opportunities but also have to overcome challenges. In many cases, they find it hard to find jobs that they like due to a biased view by some companies. To ease this problem, the government held the first seminar for companies to send out the message that hiring DPRK defectors can be good for their business. Benefits include the government sponsoring 50 percent of the wages given to DPRK defectors in the first year of employment and up to 70 percent the following year.

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15. US on Japan UNSC Bid

Yomiuri Shimbun ("RICE CAUTIOUS OVER EXPANDING UNSC", 2005-05-04) reported that Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura and US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice agreed Monday to pursue reform of the UN, but Rice remained cautious about Japan's proposal for expanding

permanent membership of the UN Security Council. Rice, in her response to Machimura's report that Japan and three other nations plan to submit a resolution calling for an expanded Security Council, said the US and Japan should thoroughly discuss the issue, according to Japanese officials. Rice, in her discussion with Machimura, expressed a "desire to see broad reform in the United Nations," US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

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16. US on Japanese Militarization

The Associated Press ("U.S. WOULD WELCOME INCREASED JAPANESE MILITARY PRESENCE", 2005-05-04) reported that in Washington, it's called "interoperability" and it's a top military priority. With its own forces engaged in Iraq and elsewhere, the US needs to strengthen its alliances and draw on its friends for whatever support it can get. "Japan is America's only reliable partner in Asia, and Washington wants Japan to make a big contribution in its efforts in the region," said Takehiko Yamamoto, professor of international relations at Tokyo's Waseda University. Yamamoto said the political constraints on Japan's military posture have eased. "Collective security used to be seen as unconstitutional. But it seems the Japanese government believes it need only reinterpret — not change — the constitution to justify its policy shifts." The Defense Agency announced plans in 2001 to buy a 13,000-ton destroyer with a flight deck for anti-submarine helicopter operations. Opponents called it a mini-aircraft carrier.

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17. Japanese Iraq Role

San Jose Mercury News ("REPORT: JAPAN TO WITHDRAW 550 TROOPS", 2005-05-04) reported that Japan will withdraw its 550 soldiers from their non-combat mission in Iraq in December, according to a media report Wednesday. Tokyo will notify other countries participating in the peacekeeping mission in Iraq as early as September and then shift its contribution to financial assistance, Kyodo News agency said, quoting sources it did not identify. Japan has dispatched troops to southern Iraq for non-combat missions since early 2004, and about 550 Japanese soldiers are currently based in Samawah purifying water, rebuilding infrastructure and offering medical aid.

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18. Japan Fusion Project

Reuters ("JAPAN WEIGHS REACTOR DEAL", 2005-05-04) reported that Japan may give up its bid to provide the site for the world's first nuclear fusion reactor, making it likely that the €10 billion experimental reactor will be built in France, a Japanese newspaper reported on Wednesday. Japan may make the concession because it believes it will obtain construction work and jobs even if the reactor is not situated in Japan, the Yomiuri Shimbun said, citing government sources.

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19. ROK-Japan Territorial Dispute

Reuters ("JAPAN PROTESTS AT S.KOREAN VISIT TO DISPUTED ISLES", 2005-05-04) reported that Japan lodged a formal protest on Wednesday against a ROK cabinet minister's visit to two islands at the heart of a bilateral row. Japanese authorities said an official from the ROK's embassy in Tokyo

had been summoned to the Foreign Ministry after the visit to the disputed islands on Monday. Kenichiro Sasae, a director general at the Tokyo Foreign Ministry, said the visit could fan an emotional confrontation between the people of the two countries. He strongly urged the ROK not to repeat such activities.

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20. Sino-Japanese Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINESE TROOPS GUARD JAPANESE EMBASSY", 2005-05-04) reported that a dozen busloads of riot troops guarded the Japanese Embassy in Beijing on Wednesday as the PRC marked a sensitive anniversary amid simmering public anger at Tokyo, but there was no sign of new anti-Japan protests. The government warned against holding demonstrations in advance of the anniversary of anti-Japanese protests in Beijing on May 4, 1919 that became a symbol of resistance to foreign domination. In Shanghai, police were stationed at every corner within a three-block radius of the Japanese Consulate. The street in front of the compound was closed, while police with riot gear waited in underground parking garages nearby.

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21. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("TAIWAN NATIONALIST CITES 'CONSENSUS' WITH CHINESE ON ENDING HOSTILITIES", 2005-05-04) reported that the leader of Taiwan's opposition Nationalist Party, wrapping up a historic visit to mainland PRC, said he had achieved a "fundamental consensus" with the country's Communist Party leadership to end hostilities that have enveloped the Taiwan Strait for more than half a century. Lien Chan, head of the Nationalist Party, or Kuomintang, said Tuesday in an interview with The Washington Post that the channel he opened puts pressure on Taiwan's pro-independence president to seek a compromise with the PRC. Lien, 68, also said his eight-day visit had unleashed a process of engagement that holds out the promise of peace, stability and increased trade.

(return to top) Los Angeles Times ("CHEN INVITES CHINA'S HU TO VISIT TAIWAN", 2005-05-04) reported that Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian on Tuesday invited the PRC President Hu Jintao to visit the island and see for himself whether it is a sovereign country. But Beijing told Chen that unless he recognized that Taiwan was part of the PRC, a meeting with him was out of the question. "Mainland China clearly lacks understanding about Taiwan, and that's why there has been misjudgment and misunderstanding," Chen said. "If [Hu] can visit Taiwan in person, I feel the misunderstanding can be avoided and misjudgment can be effectively reduced." (return to top) The Associated Press ("2ND TAIWAN OPPOSITION CHIEF TO VISIT CHINA", 2005-05-04) reported that the leader of Taiwan's second-largest opposition party said on Wednesday he will use his trip to rival PRC to increase the mainland's understanding of Taiwan — but not as an envoy of the island's government. James Soong, chairman of the People First Party, was set to leave Thursday on a nine-day trip to the PRC. The trip comes days after the leader of Taiwan's main opposition Nationalist party, Lien Chan, returned from a high-profile weeklong trip to the PRC. Both parties favor eventual unification with the PRC. (return to top)

22. PRC on Cross Strait Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA RAISES HURDLE TO TAIWAN NEGOTIATIONS", 2005-05-04) reported that PRC officials said that Taiwan's governing party must scrap its party platform and stop

its "separatist activities" before Beijing would talk with President Chen Shui-bian, dashing hopes that the recent thaw in relations would lead to two-way negotiations soon. The conditions, spelled out by Wang Zaixi, deputy head of the Communist Party's Taiwan affairs office, may signal that the PRC is content for now to talk with Taiwan's opposition parties, which favor closer ties with the mainland, while isolating the governing party.

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23. PRC Religious Freedom

Agence France Presse ("CHINA RELEASES SEVEN CATHOLIC PRIESTS DETAINED DURING RETREAT", 2005-05-04) reported that the PRC has released seven underground Catholic priests who were arrested near Beijing last week, days after the government said it was willing to improve relations with the Vatican under the new pope, a rights group said. The priests, all from Hebei province in northern PRC, were released on Tuesday, Joseph Kung, president of the Cardinal Kung Foundation, told AFP. They were detained on April 27 while holding a retreat near Shijiazhuang city in Hebei, the foundation said at the time. Kung said he did not have details of the priests' conditions or what happened to them while they were detained.

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