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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREAN NUKE TALKS NEGOTIATORS TO DISCUSS RESUMPTION", 2006-05-24) reported that there are signs that the stalled six-party nuclear talks may get back on track with news that the DPRK's Foreign Minister Paek Nam-soon will visit the PRC for seven days from May 30, right after a two-day trip to Beijing on Wednesday by US chief nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill. The PRC Foreign Ministry said Paek will meet with his PRC counterpart Li Zhaoxing for talks on the resumption of the six-way nuclear discussions and DPRK economic reforms.

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2. Inter-Korean Railway Test

Chosun Ilbo ("N.KOREA CANCELS CROSS-BORDER TRAIN TEST", 2005-05-24) N.KOREA CANCELS CROSS-BORDER TRAIN TEST reported that the DPRK on Wednesday unilaterally called off the planned test run of cross-border railways, a day before it was scheduled. The DPRK canceled the planned test run citing the absence of military guarantees of safe passage and "unstable conditions in the South," according to a Unification Ministry official. A government official said it appeared the DPRK's powerful military stubbornly opposed the plan.

[\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap ("CANCELLED RAIL TESTS BRING INTER-KOREAN TIES UNDER REVIEW", 2006-05-24) reported that the DPRK's abrupt cancellation Wednesday of scheduled tests of inter-Korean railways has raised questions about the country's willingness to cooperate with the ROK as well as the effectiveness of Seoul's policy to engage the state. Seoul had claimed Pyongyang's agreement to a trial run of the cross-border railways was a sign of the state finally putting its economic needs ahead of its ideology. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. Inter-Korean Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL COULD JOIN N.KOREAN SPECIAL ZONE PROJECT: OFFICIAL", 2006-05-24) reported that a senior government official says President Roh Moo-hyun was referring to measures that would help the DPRK develop, including the designated Shinuiju Special Economic Zone, when he promised "institutional and material support" if Pyongyang agrees to a summit. Lee Su-hoon, the chairman of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiatives, on Wednesday provided the belated gloss on the president's remarks in Mongolia earlier this month.

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4. US on PRC's DPRK Strategy

JoongAng Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN INSTABILITY COULD TEMPT CHINA: U.S.", 2006-05-24) reported that in an annual report to the US Congress on the PRC military, the Pentagon on Tuesday warned of Beijing's growing military power and a lack of transparency in PRC military doctrine about the uses that power might be put to. The report, a requirement levied by the Congress, suggested that Beijing would face a dilemma in choosing between a unilateral or multilateral response to regime-threatening instability in the DPRK, triggered perhaps by its ailing economy and no progress in the fits-and-starts negotiations over its nuclear programs.

[\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap ("CHINA NOT USING ALL AVAILABLE LEVERAGE ON N.K.: DOD REPORT", 2006-05-24) reported that the PRC is not using all its influence to rid the DPRK of nuclear weapons, a report from the Department of Defense said Tuesday. The annual report, titled "The Military Power

of the People's Republic of China," also said Beijing must weigh its response to a conceivable DPRK collapse. As in previous versions, the report reaffirms that the PRC publicly supports a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. But this year, the report adds, "China has not fully leveraged its close ties with Pyongyang to stem North Korean nuclear ambitions." [\(return to top\)](#)

5. Amnesty International on DPRK Refugees

Yonhap ("OTHER ASIAN NATIONS ALSO REPATRIATING N.K. REFUGEE: AMNESTY INT'L", 2006-05-24) reported that not only the PRC but Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are also repatriating DPRK refugees trying to reach the ROK, Amnesty International said Tuesday in its 2006 report. The ROK, the report said, has yet to take into account threats faced by asylum seekers in the country and has failed to ease discrimination against migrant workers.

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6. Joint Maritime Exercises

Reuters ("SIX COUNTRIES PLAN ASIAN NAVAL SECURITY DRILL", 2006-05-24) reported that six countries including Japan, PRC, the ROK and the US are to hold a series of joint maritime exercises, just weeks after Tokyo and Seoul were locked in a tense stand-off over some tiny disputed islands. Japan, the PRC, the ROK, the US, Canada and Russia will launch naval exercises in the Japan Sea and East China Sea to halt the spread of weapons of mass destruction, starting on Saturday, Japanese Coastguard officials said.

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7. PRC-Japan East Sea Gas Dispute

Kyodo ("CHINESE WARSHIPS TRAINED WEAPONS ON JAPAN'S SDF AIRCRAFT: PENTAGON", 2006-05-24) reported that PRC warships trained weapons on Japanese surveillance aircraft monitoring a disputed PRC gas field in the East China Sea in a weapons drill last fall, the US Defense Department said Tuesday in an annual report on the PRC's military capabilities. According to Japanese government sources last October, a PRC military vessel pointed a gun at a Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force PC-3 surveillance plane in early September near the site of the Chinese Chunxiao gas field, the subject of a dispute with Japan.

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8. US Embassy Threat

The Associated Press ("U.S. EMBASSY IN JAPAN GETS POSSIBLE THREAT ", 2006-05-24) reported that the US Embassy said Wednesday it had received a possible threat against US facilities in Japan and warned American citizens to be on guard against suspicious activities. The embassy, which remained open for business on Wednesday, would not say how or when the threat had been received.

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9. US on PRC Military

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA MILITARY UPGRADES A POTENTIAL THREAT TO US: PENTAGON

", 2006-05-24) reported that the pace and scope of the PRC's modernization of its strategic forces and other surprising military developments could pose a credible long-term threat to the US, the Pentagon warned. In an annual report to Congress, the Defense Department said the PRC's ability to sustain military power at a distance is limited, but it has the greatest potential of any nation to compete militarily with the US.

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10. PRC Environment

Agence France-Presse ("WORLD BANK FLAGS ENVIRONMENT IN NEW PLAN FOR CHINA", 2006-05-24) reported that the World Bank unveiled an ambitious plan of lending to the PRC that highlights environmental destruction and social inequality as "critical" challenges for the booming nation. The plan envisages annual assistance of 1.5 billion dollars for the next five years, making the PRC the global lender's biggest aid recipient along with India. The money would be devoted largely to the inland provinces that have lagged the breakneck growth enjoyed by coastal cities, in accordance with Beijing's own plan to spread the boom more widely.

[\(return to top\)](#) Reuters ("CHINA STRUGGLES TO STOP ITS LARGEST LAKE SHRINKING", 2006-0-24) reported that a decade ago, Longben Cairao would have been in deep water. Today he stands on firm ground on Erlangjian, a sandspit named after a mythical sword in a classical Chinese tale that curves about 2-1/2 miles out into Lake Qinghai, the PRC's largest expanse of inland water. Over the past three decades, water levels have dropped almost 13 feet and an area half the size of Singapore has been turned into dry land, according to state media. [\(return to top\)](#)

11. US Exports to the PRC

Financial Times ("US DEFENDS CURBS ON HIGH TECH EXPORTS TO CHINA", 2006-05-24) reported that the US says a planned expansion of its controls on the export of high-technology goods to the PRC will not be a burden for US companies, and has dismissed claims that its restrictions on high-tech exports are fuelling the trade deficit with the PRC. David McCormick, US undersecretary of commerce for industry and security, said in an interview with the Financial Times that the expanded controls would be handled in "in a very targeted way", and that the department was certain they would "not place a burden on industry".

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12. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA REPORTS TWO NEW AVIAN FLU OUTBREAKS AMONG MIGRATORY BIRDS ", 2006-05-24) reported that the PRC has reported two new outbreaks of avian flu among migratory birds, bringing to four the number of such cases recorded in the northwest over the past month. A total of 399 bar-headed geese and ruddy shelducks had died from the virus in outbreaks in Tibet's Naqu district and the Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in neighboring Qinghai province, the agriculture ministry said.

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