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[United States](#)

- 1. [DPRK Plutonium Reprocessing](#)
- 2. [US on DPRK Plutonium Reprocessing](#)
- 3. [PRC on DPRK Plutonium Reprocessing](#)
- 4. [US on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
- 5. [PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
- 6. [UK on DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)
- 7. [India on DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)
- 8. [Japan - DPRK Relations](#)
- 9. [DPRK Missile Program](#)
- 10. [DPRK Missile Test](#)
- 11. [DPRK Human Rights Bill](#)
- 12. [Inter Korean Relations](#)
- 13. [DPRK Chemical Weapons](#)
- 14. [Inter - Korean Travel](#)
- 15. [Korean Pastors on the DPRK](#)
- 16. [DPRK Defectors](#)
- 17. [Japan on DPRK Abductees](#)
- 18. [DPRK Food Aid](#)
- 19. [Japan Cabinet Reshuffle](#)
- 20. [IAEA in the ROK](#)
- 21. [ROK Energy Supply](#)

22. [Japan Energy Supply](#)
24. [Sino-Russian Energy Trade](#)
25. [Sino - ROK Technological Development](#)
26. [Cross Strait Relations](#)
27. [PRC Dalai Lama Visit](#)
28. [PRC Poverty](#)
29. [PRC Military](#)
30. [PRC Media Freedom](#)
31. [PRC Cultural Exchanges](#)
32. [PRC AIDS Issue](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. United States

1. DPRK Plutonium Reprocessing

Financial Times ("N KOREA SAYS IT 'WEAPONISED' SPENT PLUTONIUM ", 2004-09-29) reported that the DPRK claims it has "weaponized" all of its spent plutonium rods because the US's hostile policies towards Pyongyang leave it no choice but to develop a "nuclear deterrent". After making the claims to the UN general assembly in New York on Monday, Choe Su-hon, the DPRK's deputy foreign minister, said: "We have made clear that we have already reprocessed 8,000 wasted fuel rods and transformed them into arms."

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. US on DPRK Plutonium Reprocessing

Financial Times ("US TELLS N KOREA TO SPRING NO NUCLEAR SURPRISES", 2004-09-29) reported that the Bush administration urged the DPRK yesterday not to spring any nuclear surprises next month, ahead of the US presidential election, and warned that it would consider going back to the UN Security Council if denuclearisation talks remained stalled. A US official who asked not to be named said Mr Choe's remarks reflected what the DPRK had already told the US in private in the course of three rounds of six-nation talks hosted by the PRC. If the DPRK "continued to stonewall", Mr Bolton said, then the "next logical step" would be to refer the matter back to the UN Security Council.

Associated Press ("U.S. REACTS CALMLY TO NORTH KOREA SAYING IT CREATED NUCLEAR WEAPONS ", 2004-09-29) reported that the Bush administration responded calmly Tuesday to DPRK claims it has turned the plutonium from 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods into nuclear weapons. Senior administration officials said they were not abandoning the six-nation talks designed to halt the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, even as they acknowledged negotiations will not resume this month despite previous DPRK commitments to do so. "We take all their claims seriously," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Tuesday, but he also suggested a touch of theater in the DPRK diplomat's statement, saying Pyongyang "is bragging about violating its commitments and its promises."

[\(return to top\)](#)

3. PRC on DPRK Plutonium Reprocessing

Reuters ("CHINESE MINISTER DOUBTFUL ON N.KOREA NUCLEAR CLAIM", 2004-09-29) reported that PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing on Tuesday cast doubt on the DPRK's claim that it has boosted its nuclear weapons capability and expressed skepticism about reports that Pyongyang may be preparing a new missile test. Li, whose government is Pyongyang's closest ally and is playing a key role hosting the six-party talks said: "I have never ever heard about such news." In fact, he added, "The official news I've got from the DPRK side seems not to be exactly the same as what you have heard about."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("U.S. OFFICIAL SEES NO N.KOREA TALKS BEFORE U.S. VOTE", 2004-09-29) reported that the DPRK has apparently decided against holding six-party talks on dismantling its suspected nuclear arms programs until after the Nov. 2 US presidential election, a senior US official said on Tuesday. Under Secretary of State John Bolton also questioned the value of the slow-moving negotiations if the reclusive communist nation continues to "stonewall," raising doubts about how confident Washington is that the talks can work.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("CHINA BLAMES 'MUTUAL LACK OF TRUST' BETWEEN U.S. AND NORTH KOREA FOR IMPASSE IN SIX-NATION TALKS", 2004-09-29) reported that the PRC's foreign minister on Tuesday blamed the "mutual lack of trust" between the US and DPRK for the impasse in six-nation talks on resolving the dispute over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program. In an interview with news agencies at the PRC's U.N. mission, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said there had been "important progress" in three previous rounds of talks in Beijing. "There have been new complicating factors and difficulties. The main difficulty is the exceptional mutual lack of trust between North Korea and the United States," Li said. "The US side has been saying North Korea probably is deceiving the United States while the North Korean side is saying the same" about the US. Li urged both countries "to work together still harder" to build trust.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. UK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("BLAIR HOPEFUL ON IRAN, N. KOREAN COMPLIANCE", 2004-09-29) reported that British Prime Minister Tony Blair said on Wednesday the international community was closer than ever to making the DPRK and Iran accept its demands to halt nuclear programs. "A couple of weeks ago Libya finally wound up its WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) program. America has lifted sanctions. We have a better chance of getting Iran and North Korea into compliance than we have ever had," Blair told BBC radio.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. India on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("INDIA DENOUNCES PYONGYANG, ISLAMABAD FOR STATE-LEVEL NUKE DEAL", 2004-09-29) reported that India called for a new multilateral approach Wednesday to address international concerns over the DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions and denounced the DPRK and Pakistani governments for their involvement in the secret exchange of nuclear weapons and missile technology. "The revelations about the Pakistan-North Korea nexus and barter deal on nuclear and missile technology transfers have confirmed our assessment about the proliferation activity taking place in our neighborhood," India's Ambassador to Seoul, P.S. Ray, told Yonhap News Agency in an exclusive interview.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. Japan - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("NK DENOUNCES JAPAN'S ANTI-TERRORISM CONTINGENCY PLAN", 2004-09-29) reported that the DPRK blasted Japan Wednesday for developing a contingency plan to safeguard its nuclear and other key facilities against possible DPRK attack. Japan's Kyodo News Agency reported on Sept. 19 that the Tokyo government fears the DPRK might try to infiltrate as many as 2,500 commandos to attack 135 nuclear, oil and other key facilities in Japan.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. DPRK Missile Program

Washington Post ("N. KOREA IS USED TO JUSTIFY SYSTEM; BUT U.S. EXPERTS QUESTION EXTENT OF NATION'S MISSILE CAPABILITIES", 2004-09-29) reported that in justifying the accelerated deployment of a nationwide anti-missile system, the Bush administration has cited a growing missile threat, particularly from the DPRK. But the extent of North Korea's missile program is open to debate. "It would require a huge technological leap for them," said Joseph Cirincione, a specialist in weapons proliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "I don't see the evidence that they've made the necessary breakthroughs." Complicating any assessment is a shortage of reliable information about the DPRK's development effort, given the country's penchant for secrecy. If it has long-range missiles, it has yet to launch one.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. DPRK Missile Test

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN MISSILE PREPARATIONS COINCIDENTAL TO EXPLOSION ", 2004-09-29) reported that the Yomiuri Shimbun reported on September 27, quoting Japanese government sources, that the DPRK's preparations to launch a Rodong ballistic missile and the explosion observed in the northern part of the country earlier this month were coincidental. An official from the Japanese Defense Agency analyzed that the moves may have been part of a full-scale military exercise since the DPRK's army, navy, and air force had shown unusual levels of activity up to that point.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. DPRK Human Rights Bill

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. SENATE PASSES NK HUMAN RIGHTS ACT", 2004-09-29) reported that the US Senate unanimously passed the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, which was passed by the US House of Representatives in July, after making a couple of revisions. In the case of a bill that has been amended in the Senate, however, it must be returned to the House and be passed once again. The passing of the North Korean Human Rights Act by both the US House and Senate means that the US Congress and White House have adopted in earnest the issue of DPRK human rights.

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. TO SPEND \$100 MILLION ON NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS OVER NEXT FOUR YEARS ", 2004-09-29) reported that the North Korea Human Rights Act declares that the US government will provide financial aid to NGOs that help improve human rights in the DPRK, and that the US will give defectors the right to apply for exile or refugee status in the US. Under this newly passed act, the US government will allocate a budget of \$100 million over the next four years. From 2005 until 2008 starting on October 1 this year, the US government will back various activities related to the enhancement of human rights in the DPRK with a yearly budget of \$24 million. In detail, the US government is authorized to spend \$2 million annually to support efforts to democratize the DPRK and to improve the human rights situation there, another \$2 million in yearly subsidies for radio programs transmitted to the DPRK, and \$20 million per year to support NGOs helping DPRK refugees.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. Inter Korean Relations

Yonhap ("NK DENOUNCES SOUTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S UN SPEECH", 2004-09-29) reported that the DPRK denounced ROK's renewed demand for the dismantlement of its nuclear weapons program through a multilateral forum, calling it "an act of a thief wielding up a stick." In a speech at the UN General Assembly on Sept. 24, the ROK's Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon urged the DPRK to give up its nuclear ambitions and join the international community. In a broadcast, monitored in Seoul late Tuesday night, the DPRK's Pyongyang Radio Station lashed out at Ban, calling him "a US flunkey."

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. DPRK Chemical Weapons

Chosun Ilbo ("N. KOREAN CHEMICAL WARFARE WOULD KILL, INJURE 2.19 MILLION IN THE SOUTH", 2004-09-29) reported that the Ministry of Defense has predicted that should the DPRK use chemical weapons in a full-scale way, it would result in 2.19 million military and civilian casualties in the ROK within the first month of fighting. The Defense Ministry estimated that the DPRK would use 70t of chemical weapons in the Seoul area alone, killing or injuring 1.2 million people. Moreover, once chemical warfare began, one-third of the ROK's major battle equipment would suffer damage. The DPRK is currently estimated to possess 2,500~5,000t of 17 types of chemical weapons, including nerve, blistering, blood, asphyxiating and gas agents.

[\(return to top\)](#)

14. Inter - Korean Travel

Deutsche Presse-Agentur ("NORTH KOREA NEEDS MORE HOTELS TO RECEIVE SOUTH KOREAN

TRAVELERS", 2004-09-29) reported that the DPRK needs to build more hotels to accommodate a growing number of ROK travelers who flock to the DPRK, a Seoul travel agency manager said Tuesday. "You need to book as far ahead of the traveling date as possible if you want to visit Mount Gungang in the North before the peak season of autumn is over," said Joo Im-Sun, a junior manager at Gungangsan.com travel agency in Seoul. "Given the rising popularity (in traveling to the North), we have little time to waste to construct more new hotels there, if we are to bring all of South Koreans who want to visit the North and offer them affordable prices," said Yook Jae-Hee at Hyundai-Asan.

[\(return to top\)](#)

15. Korean Pastors on the DPRK

Los Angeles Times ("KOREANS SEEK REGIME CHANGE; AT A TWO-DAY CONFERENCE, 2,000 PASTORS CALL FOR AN END TO PUBLIC EXECUTIONS, CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND STARVATION UNDER NORTH KOREA'S KIM JONG IL ", 2004-09-29) reported that with tearful prayers and thunderous singing of "The Battle Hymn of Republic" in Korean, 2,000 Korean pastors from throughout the US and Canada met in Los Angeles this week to urge an end to the repressive regime of DPRK dictator Kim Jong Il. "We are your servants, Lord. Show us your miracle," said Rev. Peter Sohn, senior pastor of Bethel Korean Church in Irvine, praying for a united and democratic Korea. Sohn organized the event by meeting Korean Christian leaders around North America over the last year. In the keynote speech, Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) called DPRK citizens "the most helpless people in the world today ... trapped in the most brutal system of government the world has ever seen."

[\(return to top\)](#)

16. DPRK Defectors

Reuters ("ABOUT 45 N.KOREANS ENTER CANADA EMBASSY IN CHINA - MEDIA", 2004-09-29) reported that about 45 suspected DPRK defectors climbed over a wall into the Canadian embassy in Beijing on Wednesday, the latest in a rash of diplomatic mission break-ins by people seeking asylum outside the DPRK. A Canadian embassy spokesman said the group scaled the compound's wall, which is roughly three meters high and topped with a steel fence with sharp edges designed to keep people out. "We are just getting them calmed" and giving them water, he said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

17. Japan on DPRK Abductees

Jiji Press ("KEY JAPAN GOVT OFFICIAL ON ABDUCTION ISSUES SET TO RESIGN", 2004-09-29) reported that Kyoko Nakayama, a key Japanese government official in charge of supporting the families of victims of the DPRK's abductions, on Tuesday indicated her intention to step down from the position. "It's probably time for me to depart," Nakayama, 64, told Jiji Press. "The government can now deal with abduction issues better than before," she said. Nakayama, adviser at the cabinet secretariat, is expected to tender her resignation on Wednesday.

[\(return to top\)](#)

18. DPRK Food Aid

Kyodo ("JAPAN MULLS DELAYING FOOD AID TO NORTH KOREA", 2004-09-29) reported that the government is considering delaying its plan to provide further food assistance to the DPRK sometime within this fiscal year 2004 in the wake of a stalemate in bilateral talks on the abduction issue, government officials said Wednesday. The government may not deliver 125,000 tons of food aid in the latter part of fiscal 2004 if Pyongyang fails to produce in the next round of talks concrete findings from its reinvestigation of the whereabouts of 10 Japanese nationals Tokyo believes were abducted to the DPRK, the officials said. The fiscal year ends next March.

[\(return to top\)](#)

19. Japan Cabinet Reshuffle

The Japan Times ("YAMASAKI'S APPOINTMENT FUELS DOUBTS OVER DIPLOMATIC CHAIN ", 2004-09-29) reported that Monday's Cabinet reshuffle has breathed new life into a long-standing conundrum relating to the administration of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi: Who is in charge of diplomacy? In addition to the Cabinet shakeup, Koizumi appointed two people as his own special advisers - Yoriko Kawaguchi, who has just been relieved of her job as foreign minister, and Taku Yamasaki, a long-term Koizumi ally well-versed in defense issues. "The range of (Yamasaki's) authority is vague and he will have few staff. He could cause confusion because he is likely to send out messages (about government policy) without authority," said Takao Toshikawa, editor in chief of the Japanese political newsletter Insideline.

[\(return to top\)](#)

20. IAEA in the ROK

Joongang Ilbo ("ATOMIC AGENCY STAFF TAKES DATA, SAMPLES", 2004-09-29) reported that inspectors from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency have left the ROK after a week-long inspection. A Ministry of Science and Technology official said yesterday five inspectors visited the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute in Daejeon, the institute's former site in northern Seoul, and Gwesan, North Chungcheong province, during their stay. They left Sunday with 20 samples. Based on samples and data collected, the UN body plans to submit a report to its board in November.

[\(return to top\)](#)

21. ROK Energy Supply

Yonhap ("S. KOREA'S STATE OIL FIRM TO FURTHER INVEST IN VIETNAM OIL FIELD", 2004-0-29) reported that the ROK's state-run oil corporation, along with its partners in an international consortium developing oil fields in Vietnam, may invest an additional US\$300 million in the project, a company official said. The Korea National Oil Corp. (KNOC) is in talks with its international business partners over the investment for further exploration of the Su Tu Vang oil field, the official said, requesting anonymity.

[\(return to top\)](#)

22. Japan Energy Supply

International Oil Daily ("GULF EXPORTERS REASSURE JAPAN ON

23. PRC Energy Supply

The New Zealand Herald ("SINGLE BIDDER TIPPED FOR \$12B CHINA NUCLEAR DEAL", 2004-0-29) reported that a single foreign bidder may get the US\$8 billion (\$12 billion) contract to build four nuclear reactors for the PRC. Yu Jianfeng, a director at the PRC National Nuclear Corp, which operates the nation's reactors, said the PRC needed to add two reactors a year to meet a target of generating 4 per cent of its power from nuclear plants by 2020, from 1.7 per cent now. "It's an ambitious project for us," Yu said here during this month's World Energy Congress. "We can't finish the project on our own. We need help with expertise."

[\(return to top\)](#)

24. Sino-Russian Energy Trade

Interfax ("SINO-RUSSIAN ENERGY COOPERATION MAKES HEADWAY, SAYS

25. Sino - ROK Technological Development

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA AND CHINA CLOSE IN TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS ", 2004-09-29) reported that the technological gap between the ROK and the PRC in 99 next-generation industries designated by the government is only an average of 2.1 years, with the PRC close behind the ROK. This according to the Prospect for Korea's Future Industries and Government Measures as submitted to the National Assembly's Special Committee on Future Strategies by the Science Ministry on Wednesday. The report, which was written by the Korea Institute of Science and Technology Evaluation and Planning (KISTEP), said that US technological excellence in the 99 fields was benchmarked at 100, while the ROK's scored 65.1 and the PRC 52.5. This puts the ROK 5.8 years behind the US and only 2.1 years ahead of the PRC.

[\(return to top\)](#)

26. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN THREAT TO ATTACK SHANGHAI ANGERS CHINA", 2004-09-29) reported that the PRC accused Taiwan Premier Yu Shyi-kun on Wednesday of clamoring for war with threats to fire missiles at Shanghai if the People's Liberation Army (PLA) attacks the self-ruled island. Yu last week defended plans to buy weapons from the US, saying Taiwan needed a counter-strike capability

to hit the PRC's financial center of Shanghai with missiles if the PLA attacked the island's capital, Taipei, and the southern city of Kaohsiung. "Yu Shyi-kun's remarks are a serious provocation and clamoring for war," Li Weiyi, spokesman for the policymaking Taiwan Affairs Office, told a news conference.

[\(return to top\)](#)

27. PRC Dalai Lama Visit

Reuters ("DALAI LAMA AIDES MAKE SECRETIVE VISIT TO CHINA", 2004-09-29) reported that envoys of Tibet's spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, have been allowed to pay a secretive visit to the PRC that analysts say could lead to progress in resolving his decades-old exile. Lodi Gyari, a US-based representative of the Dalai Lama, and three colleagues have been in the PRC since Sept. 12 on a third, secrecy-shrouded visit by envoys in just over two years to discuss the future of the Himalayan region. "The last two visits were very much about confidence-building and for this visit there are hopes that there may be something more substantial."

[\(return to top\)](#)

28. PRC Poverty

Reuters ("CHINA SEEKS NEW MEASURES TO RELIEVE POVERTY", 2004-09-29) reported that the PRC issued a series of measures on Wednesday aimed at alleviating a growing gap between the country's rich and poor, urging local authorities to improve disaster relief and welfare systems. The measures were decided at a meeting of the State Council, or cabinet, presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao, who along with President Hu Jintao, has paid increasing attention to the wealth gap between booming coastal cities and the largely rural hinterland. The State Council also pledged strengthened support for poor farmers, including training in production methods and possible small loans to those short of capital, and more job training to laid-off workers, state television said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

29. PRC Military

Xinhua ("HU JINTAO PLEDGES TO MODERNIZE ARMY IN ALL-AROUND WAY", 2004-09-29) reported that Hu Jintao, chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), has pledged to revolutionize, modernize and standardize the PRC army by deeply studying and implementing the guidelines of the 4th Plenary Session of 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the enlarged meeting of the CMC. Hu made this pledge Wednesday, while observing a presentation of a military commanding information system and speaking with delegates to a meeting about the buildup of commanding headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

[\(return to top\)](#)

30. PRC Media Freedom

Los Angeles Times ("JOURNALIST'S DETENTION CALLED INTERNAL MATTER", 2004-09-29) reported that the PRC's detention of a local researcher for the New York Times in Beijing on suspicion of passing state secrets to foreigners is an internal matter and outsiders should not interfere, the Foreign Ministry said. Zhao Yan, a former reporter for the magazine China Reform, was suspected of helping to relay the sensitive news that former President Jiang Zemin planned to

give up his military post and retire from politics this month, sources familiar with the case said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

31. PRC Cultural Exchanges

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA EXPECTING RECORD NUMBER OF FOREIGN STUDENTS IN 2004", 2004-09-29) reported that the PRC is expecting a record number of students to enroll in its universities this year as foreigners seek to cash in on the country's booming economy by becoming proficient in Mandarin. Of the anticipated 86,000 foreign students, an overwhelming number will come from Asian countries with close economic, trade and cultural ties with Beijing. The major influx of students is largely pushed by China's phenomenal growth, but also reflects the nation's place as a cultural and historic center of Asia, says Chen Yinghui, director of the international students division of the Ministry of Education.

[\(return to top\)](#)

32. PRC AIDS Issue

Xinhua ("CHINA TO SET UP INTERVENTION TEAMS TO CURB AIDS TRANSMISSION", 2004-0-29) reported that the PRC will set up nationwide intervention teams to curb the transmission of HIV/AIDS, according to an official document released here Wednesday by the PRC Health Ministry. The disease prevention and control centers at all levels across the PRC should set up intervention teams for high risk populations, mainly injected drug users (IDU), sex workers and homosexuals, the Health Ministry said. The teams should be established no later than October this year, the ministry said.

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