

Assessing North Korea's nuclear position

North Korea is expected to return to six-party talks demanding to be treated "on an equal footing" as a nuclear power. It wants to ease pressure from China and end a freeze on North Korean bank accounts, according to U.S. nuclear scientists just back from the reclusive country



1 Nuclear test: October 9 test had low yield of 1-kiloton – less than 4-kilotons expected



2 Stockpiles: Estimated at 40-50kg of weapons-grade plutonium, enough for 6-8 bombs



3 Reactors: 5 megawatt reactor producing 6kg/year of plutonium. Construction on 50MW reactor – halted in 1994 – to be resumed



4 Plutonium reprocessing: Entire production cycle mastered

5 Uranium enrichment: Second route to weapons-grade fissile material now underway

6 Missiles: North Korea is still a long way from developing a missile-capable nuclear device

7 Security: No appreciation of security and safety issues related to possession of nuclear arsenal. Commitment to non-proliferation doubted

