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I. **United States**

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "NORTH KOREA RESOLUTE ON NUCLEAR PROGRAM," Seoul, 12/18/03) reported that the DPRK said Thursday it will never give up its nuclear weapons program unless the US provides economic aid and security assurances. The DPRK's official

newspaper Rodong Sinmun reiterated its demand that the US agree to a "simultaneous package solution" to the nuclear dispute. The DPRK wants to trade its nuclear weapons for economic aid and security assurances. US wants the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear weapons first, calling the nation's nuclear ambitions violations of international agreements. "The DPRK's stand to beef up its nuclear deterrent force will remain unchanged no matter what others may say, as long as the United States keeps pursuing a policy to threaten and stifle the DPRK ... while turning down its proposal for simultaneous package solution to the nuclear issue," Rodong said in a commentary. In the past week, the DPRK's state-run media have trumpeted the country's hard-line demands. Rodong's commentary, carried by the DPRK's official news agency KCNA, said the country has watched US strategies in Iraq and determined that it must "keep and steadily increase its nuclear deterrent force" against a pre-emptive US nuclear attack. "The U.S. used a huge amount of depleted uranium shells, a type of nuclear weapon, when attacking Iraq, a country with no strategic forces and with very weak military capacity in terms of latest weaponry," Rodong said. "It is self-evident that it will use nuclear weapons of higher performance when it invades the DPRK, a country with strong military power."

2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence-France Presse ("US INSISTS IT IS BEING PRAGMATIC, FLEXIBLE OVER NORTH KOREA," Washington, 12/17/03) reported that the US has insisted it was being pragmatic and flexible in its approach to the DPRK nuclear crisis talks, and again accused the DPRK of delaying the dialogue by establishing preconditions. A new six-nation crisis meeting had been expected to take place this week, but was put off until next year, as the US and DPRK failed to agree on the scope of the talks. "We'd be willing to work with the Chinese to plan the talks and to try to work hard on outcomes that could be expected from the talks," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. "But we were not setting up preconditions. Unfortunately, the North Koreans did." Deep divisions have reportedly emerged between the DPRK and the US on a draft statement to be adopted at talks also including the ROK, Japan, Russia and the PRC. The DPRK has demanded a legally binding security guarantee from the US in return for abandoning its nuclear ambitions. The US wants the nuclear program scrapped first. The PRC has now started pushing for a date for talks in Beijing in January. PRC foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said Tuesday that the PRC wanted to see "further flexibility from all parties" as it struggles to get a new date for talks. The US Monday blamed the DPRK "preconditions" for delaying talks on the 14-month-old crisis, while the DPRK's ruling Workers Party newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said Monday a US-backed proposal ignored the DPRK's own offer of "simultaneous actions" to resolve the issue, including a nuclear freeze in return for concessions from the US.

3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Crisis

Yonhap news agency ("S KOREA WORKING AGAINST US 'UNILATERAL DECISION' ON NORTH - PRESIDENT," Seoul, 12/18/03) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun said Thursday his government will not remain idle if the US tries to resolve the DPRK nuclear crisis "with fists". "We are making every effort so the United States will not make a unilateral decision on the North Korean nuclear issue without considering our position," Roh said in an interview with a group of journalists from North Chungchong Province. "It's because any decision by the United States (on the North Korean nuclear issue) should be a life and death problem for us, although the issue actually became a bilateral issue between North Korea and the United States, with North Korea demanding a security guarantee from the United States," Roh said. Despite the strong commitment not to lose his grip on the DPRK issue, Roh said his government will "maintain close ties with the United States to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue under the framework of the six-party nuclear talks". Roh

acknowledged the reality of the DPRK not responding to calls for political dialogue with the ROK despite bilateral economic and social exchanges. "We lack the leverage to make the North participate in political dialogue because North Korea thinks we are in no position to provide them with a security guarantee," Roh said. The president predicted any peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue will eventually allow the ROK to take the initiative in DPRK affairs. "I hope we will be able to gradually enhance economic and social exchanges with North Korea so we can have bigger leverage in North Korean affairs in the near future," he said. In addition, Roh said the administration of US President George W. Bush appears to have changed its stance on the nuclear issue, with hard-liners taking the initiative at one time and the doves taking it later. "However, I do not consider it bad because it is a due process in the course of a decision-making process," he said.

4. DPRK Industrial Zone

The Associated Press (Hans Grimel, "N. KOREA UNVEILS INDUSTRIAL ZONE RULES," Seoul, 12/18/03) reported that new regulations for the DPRK's much heralded Kaesong Industrial Zone were unveiled Wednesday by the official media, restricting everything from who can enter to what they can take out. While the rules appear esoteric and overwrought, they also underline the state's resolve in dabbling with free-market reforms. The litany of customs and immigration rules, adopted Dec. 11 by the Supreme People's Assembly, are envisioned as the next step in launching a joint North-South industrial park in what is now just a field outside the ancient Korean capital of Kaesong, a city of 400,000 a shade north of the no man's land dividing the countries. "It's what we were expecting from North Korea and it's what we need in order to work with them," a high level official at the ROK's Unification Ministry said on condition of anonymity. The DPRK is an unattractive place to invest because of its isolation, political uncertainty, decrepit infrastructure and a lack of legal guarantees. Yet some 900 ROK businesses, many of them textile and clothing makers, have applied for spots in the industrial zone, hoping to get a foothold in an untapped market and benefit from cheap labor. In the first phase of the industrial zone, the ROK government and Hyundai, one of the country's leading conglomerates, will invest \$184 million to develop 3.5 million square feet for some 300 businesses by 2007. A small pilot project is envisioned as starting early next year, the Unification official said. The DPRK tried to get things rolling with the latest raft of rules. Among the restrictions was a ban of entry to "international terrorists, drug addicts, lunatics," the DPRK's official state news agency, KCNA, reported Wednesday. The list of contraband not to be carried away from the zone included bullets, explosives, historical relics, secret documents and toxic chemical agents. It also restricted such business essentials as printed materials, cassettes, compact discs and photos. "Some of the items are a little awkward," the Unification Ministry official said. "But at least it will help us understand what will be required."

5. ROK - DPRK Relations

Yonhap news ("SOUTH KOREA SEEKS JURISDICTION OVER NATIONALS VISITING NORTH," Pyongyang, 12/18/03) reported that the ROK Thursday called for jurisdiction over its nationals staying at a mountain resort and industrial complex in the DPRK if they are involved in criminal and civil cases there. In the second day of economic talks underway, the ROK also demanded that DPRK authorities hand over ROK citizens to the South if they are involved in legal cases in the DPRK. "We will ensure the security of South Koreans staying in the North through inter-Korean agreement," a ROK official attending the four-day working-level economic talks. The DPRK, for its part, has allegedly taken the stance that it will handle cases involving ROK citizens and limit the ROK's interference, asserting it is a matter of sovereignty. Currently, an average of 940 ROK citizens per day stay in the DPRK, either at the scenic mountain Kumgang resort on the east coast or at suspended nuclear power plants in the remote northeastern coastal village of Kumho, according to

the ROK's Unification Ministry.

6. DPRK Defections

The Associated Press ("N. KOREAN DEFECTORS NUMBERS UP 10 PERCENT," Seoul, 12/18/03) reported that the stream of DPRK defectors entering the ROK is up 10 percent from last year and the numbers are likely to keep rising, the ROK's Unification Ministry said Thursday. By the end of November, 1,117 DPRK defectors had entered since January, 10 percent more than in the same period last year, the ministry said in its regular report on defections. Last year, a total of 1,140 DPRK defected to the ROK, up from 583 in 2001. "The increase in the number of North Koreans entering South Korea is likely to continue, considering the fact that considerable numbers of defectors are staying in China and third countries," the Ministry said.

7. ROK on Terrorism

LA Times (Barbara Demick, "SOUTH KOREA SAYS IT MAY BE TERRORIST TARGET; AGENTS LINKED TO AL QAEDA VISITED THE NATION TO SCOUT U.S. FACILITIES, ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS CITING A CLASSIFIED REPORT," Seoul, 12/17/03) reported that a number of agents connected to Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda terrorist network have visited the ROK to scout potential US targets for attack, officials here said. One of the more worrisome instances involved a Pakistani who arrived from Manila earlier this year and has since left the ROK, said Hahm Seung Hee, a member of the National Assembly's intelligence committee. Hahm cited a classified intelligence report that was presented to the committee this week by the National Intelligence Service. He said the agency also suspected that one or two ROK citizens might have assisted the suspected terrorists. "Our feeling is that these terror groups moved from the Middle East into western Asia and Southeast Asia and now into eastern Asia," Hahm said in a telephone interview Tuesday. "We have to strengthen security at our ports and [take] other counter-terrorist measures." He said another suspect believed to be connected with an Indonesian terrorist cell tried to enter the ROK this year but was turned back at the airport because of faulty travel documents. However, the man was believed to have had better luck operating in Japan, Hahm said. Kim Sung Soon, another assemblyman, said the ROK's decision to send 3,000 troops to join the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq could be a motivation for potential terrorists. "Al Qaeda is a threat to all countries, not just the United States. They are indiscriminate in their targeting," Kim said. The US Embassy had no comment. However, a US official said in a recent interview that the potential for an Al Qaeda attack in the ROK was relatively low because of the country's rigorous internal security, honed by decades of tensions with the DPRK.

8. ROK Mushroom Plant Fire

Reuters ("TWELVE S.KOREANS FEARED DEAD IN MUSHROOM PLANT FIRE," Seoul, 12/18/03) reported that a fire swept through an ROK mushroom processing plant, killing several people, possibly as many as 12, police said Thursday. A dozen workers were missing after Wednesday's fire at the three-story plant in Chongdo, 162 miles southeast of Seoul. Police said sparks from a welder apparently started the blaze. A police official said firefighters and rescue officials found a number of bodies on the third floor. "We found some bodies clustered together but for now we cannot confirm the number of the bodies," he said. An official at Chongdo police station said the 12 missing people were working on the third floor. "Search work began this morning but it might be difficult to identify the bodies immediately even if found," the second official said. Five employees were severely burned and sent to hospital, while the majority of the 162 mushroom growers working at the plant were

evacuated from the lower two floors.

9. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("CHINA APPOINTS AN AMBASSADOR TO HELP RESOLVE NORTH KOREA ISSUE," Beijing, 12/18/03) reported that the PRC has appointed an ambassador to help resolve the DPRK nuclear issue, a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman said Thursday. Ning Fukui, who took up the position about a week ago, is concentrating on "working with his colleagues in the Foreign Ministry to prepare for the next round of six-party talks," ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. "He will contact and consult with all parties extensively and coordinate the parties," Mr. Liu said at a regular briefing. "We hope that with the efforts of all parties the second round of talks can be held as soon as possible." Mr. Ning was deputy director of the ministry's Asian department from 1995 to 2000 and has been the PRC's ambassador to Cambodia since 2000, Mr. Liu said.

10. PRC on War on Terrorism

BBC News (Tim Luard, "CHINA'S CHANGING VIEWS OF TERRORISM," 12/18/03) reported that the PRC is stepping up its efforts to convince the outside world that there is a direct link between the US-led war on terror and its own fight against Muslim separatists. But many remain unconvinced by the PRC's latest claims against those accused of carrying out a series of bombings and assassinations in its biggest and most politically restive region. In the past, the PRC revealed as little as possible about the sensitive issue of separatist violence in the huge and remote western region of Xinjiang. Apart from anything else, it was highly embarrassed by the claims of local Muslim Uighurs that they were being oppressed and overwhelmed by outsiders in their own land. The Uighurs, who look and sound more like Turks than Han Chinese, enjoyed a brief period of independence in the 1940s, calling themselves the Republic of East Turkestan. But the PRC re-established control soon after coming to power and the Han Chinese population has since increased from less than 10% to almost 50% of the total. The PRC has waged a continuing battle against signs of rebellion against its rule, though human rights groups say many of those it has arrested may have done "little more than practice their religion or defend their culture". Since the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US, the PRC has not only intensified its crackdown in Xinjiang, but it has also felt bold enough to seek outside help. It now describes its once secret and sensitive private problem as an integral part of the war on global terrorism. It has already named more than 10 groups it accuses of being behind terrorist attacks aimed at creating an independent Islamic state. Now it has picked out four groups and 11 individuals it says are threatening not only the PRC's security but also that of other countries in the region. The PRC says they are all based abroad and therefore it needs international help in dealing with them. They include the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which the US and the UN agreed to ban last year after being heavily lobbied on the issue by the PRC. As well as ETIM, the groups named on the PRC's first ever "terrorist" list are the Eastern Turkestan Liberation Organization (ETLO), the World Uighur Youth Congress (WUYC) and the East Turkestan Information Center (ETIC). Although they both support the creation of a independent state for Xinjiang's Muslims, there is no sign of any evidence linking either of these groups to terrorism, said Michael Dillon, a specialist on Xinjiang at the University of Durham. Like many others, he is not convinced that the other two groups on the list even exist. "There are militant organizations, it is true, involved in some of these attacks inside Xinjiang, but whether they have links abroad or really are these two that are being named is open to doubt," Mr Dillon said. The US may have decided to back the PRC's original call for action against ETIM partly as a way of repaying the PRC's support for its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to some observers. At the same time, they say, Washington seems to have agreed to overlook PRC human rights abuses in Xinjiang.

11. PRC Farming Land

BBC News ("CHINA RENTS KAZAK LAND FOR FARMERS," 12/18/03) reported that around 3,000 Chinese farmers are expected to head west next year to start working the land in neighboring Kazakhstan, according to Chinese newspaper reports. An official in the PRC's Xinjiang province, which borders Kazakhstan, said that a deal had been signed under which the PRC would rent 70 square kilometers of farm land for 10 years. The PRC farmers are likely to arrive in Kazakhstan's Alakol county in the Spring to grow soya beans and wheat, and to breed animals. Observers say the PRC has been trying to allay world fears that, with its rapidly expanding population and economy, it is going to create huge demand for food and drain world supplies. Earlier this week the PRC's president Hu Jintao said, during a tour of rural areas, that it was essential to raise farmers' incomes and develop agriculture, in order to preserve a strong economy and preserve social stability. He urged officials to work on ways to improve investment in farming and boost job opportunities for laborers. Most of the farmers heading for Kazakhstan will be coming from Xinjiang's Yili Kazak prefecture, which has a surplus rural work force. By contrast, the area across the border is sparsely populated and has been largely deserted since the 1990s. The deal between the PRC and its former Soviet neighbor is the latest indication of a growing relationship between the two countries. President Hu visited Kazakhstan in June and both are members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which deals with Central Asian issues. According to the state-run People's Daily newspaper, trade between the two has risen by almost 80 % over the last year.

12. PRC on EU Arms Embargo

Agence-France Presse ("CHINA URGES EU TO LIFT ARMS EMBARGO," Beijing, 12/18/03) reported that the PRC has urged the European Union to remove restrictions on weapons sales to the PRC, days after a European Union summit agreed to review the embargo that has been in place since 1989. "The EU embargo against China on military sales does not conform with the good momentum in the development of relations between China and Europe," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. "We hope that the EU can at an early date adopt measures to eliminate this embargo." Last Friday at the European summit, leaders released a statement urging a reassessment of the restrictions imposed after the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989 and invited their foreign ministers "to re-examine the question of the embargo on the sale of arms to China". But the European Commission says talk of lifting the embargo is premature. "There has been a feeling that the Chinese would need to demonstrate very clearly the progress made in human rights before a lifting of the arms embargo can be considered," a spokeswoman for the EU's executive arm said last week. The embargo was imposed after the PRC authorities sent in army tanks to crush a pro-democracy movement on Tiananmen Square in central Beijing in June 1989, leaving hundreds dead.

13. US on Religious Freedom in the PRC and DPRK

Reuters (Arshad Mohammed, "U.S. SLAMS CHINA, SAUDI, EGYPT ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM," Washington, 12/18/03) reported that the US sharply criticized allies like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, adversaries like the DPRK and Iran and emerging partners like the PRC on Thursday for failing to respect religious freedom. The State Department's Annual Report on Religious Freedom cited numerous instances of religious persecution around the world and, in its executive summary, described significant improvements in only two countries: Kazakhstan and Laos. The report rapped the PRC, a growing US partner on the DPRK nuclear issue, by saying it continued to try to restrict religious practice to state-sanctioned groups while others suffered varying degrees of "interference and harassment." "Members of some unregistered religious groups were subjected to restrictions, leading in some cases to intimidation, harassment, and detention," the report said in its section on

"totalitarian or authoritarian attempts to control religious belief or practice." It also said that some local authorities undertook a selective crackdown on unregistered churches, temples and mosques while the central government did nothing to stop this. "Police closed underground mosques, temples and seminaries, as well as some Catholic churches and Protestant 'house churches,' many with significant memberships, properties, financial resources and networks," it added. In the DPRK, which the US accuses of seeking nuclear weapons, "genuine religious freedom does not exist," the report said, citing reports of executions, torture and imprisonment of religious persons in the country.

14. PRC on Capital Punishment

Agence-France Presse ("CHINESE COURTS PURCHASING MOBILE EXECUTION UNITS," Beijing, 12/18/03) reported that the PRC's supreme court has urged courts nationwide to equip themselves with special execution vans that can put to death convicted criminals immediately after sentencing, a judicial official said. The Beijing News daily said the high court of northeastern PRC's Liaoning province had recently bought such a vehicle for 400,000 yuan (48,300 dollars), a purchase confirmed by a court official. "Following recommendations by the supreme court, courts in many provinces have been buying these vehicles," an official in the court's department of police, which is in charge of executions, told AFP. "Many large cities have permanent execution grounds, but in smaller cities it is difficult to carry out death sentences, so this is why we have these mobile execution units." Seventeen intermediate courts in Yunnan province in the southwest had equipped themselves with such vans, the magazine said. The PRC is the world's leading country employing capital punishment, but the number of death sentences and executions are closely guarded state secrets. London-based rights group Amnesty International counted 1,060 publicly reported executions in the PRC last year, but stated that the actual number is far more. "Hands off Cain," an international group opposed to the death penalty estimated that more than 3,000 people were executed in the PRC last year. According to "Disidai", a recent book purportedly by a high-placed government source and published in the US, the PRC has executed up to 15,000 people a year during its four-year old "strike hard" campaign against crime.

15. PRC Allegations of Spying

BBC News ("CHINESE OFFICIAL 'SPIED FOR WEST'," 12/18/03) reported that a former top Chinese official in Hong Kong has been detained amid allegations he spied for the West, according to Hong Kong newspaper reports. Cai Xiaohong was head of the PRC's Hong Kong liaison office and held another senior post in the territory before Britain handed sovereignty to the PRC. The semi-official PRC News Agency said he had been detained while being investigated for selling state secrets. The agency did not say which countries were involved in the alleged spying. A report in Hong Kong's Oriental Daily said that Mr Cai had been detained by a mainland security department between July and August this year, and is being investigated in Beijing. Cai Xiaohong is the son of the PRC's former justice minister Cai Cheng. He had been in Hong Kong since 1989 - his various jobs over the years included the post of deputy director of the Xinhua news agency. He was Secretary General of the Central Liaison Office when he left the territory in the summer. Hong Kong newspapers have been speculating that Britain was the country given information by Mr Cai in the run-up to the handover. A minister from Britain's Foreign Office, Bill Rammell, who is visiting Hong Kong, declined comment on the allegations. "We never comment on intelligence matters regardless of the circumstances," he said.

16. SARS Outbreak

The Associated Press (Min Lee, "HONG KONG SCIENTISTS WORK ON SARS VACCINE," Hong Kong, 12/18/03) reported that Scientists said Thursday they have found a safer and cheaper way to seek a vaccine for SARS, by cloning parts of the virus' DNA rather than using live samples in labs. The perils of using live viruses were underscored this week when Taiwan announced that a medical researcher had caught SARS after working in a laboratory without the usual basic precautions, such as wearing gloves. Researchers from the Chinese University of Hong Kong said they have identified a promising method for developing a vaccine for the sometimes-fatal respiratory ailment that hit Asia hard earlier this year. After Taiwan reported its new case on Wednesday, Hong Kong went on alert and stepped up screening at the airport for any passengers who might be affected. There has been no indication the man in Taiwan has infected anyone else, however.

Reuters ("NO NEW SARS CASES; SINGAPORE, TAIWAN ON ALERT," Singapore, 12/18/03) reported that none of about 90 people feared to have been exposed to SARS in Taiwan and Singapore showed signs on Thursday of contracting the lethal virus, but they have been ordered to undergo regular checks, officials said. Authorities in Taipei were still trying to locate five more people who could have come into contact with a Taiwanese research scientist who tested positive for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome this week. Governments in the region have been on tenterhooks because of fears the disease, which killed more than 800 people and battered local economies earlier this year, could resurface in winter. The Taiwan man had flown to Singapore after contracting the virus in the laboratory where he worked and authorities in the city state have ordered 70 people who came into contact with him to be confined to their homes at least until Friday. By Thursday, none had shown symptoms of the virus, a Singapore health ministry official said. The quarantine orders continue until December 19, when a 10-day incubation period for the virus ends. Taiwan has ordered 25 people who came into contact with the scientist to have regular medical checks for the next 10 days. They include his family, colleagues and staff at a clinic where he initially sought treatment. The order also covers five foreign passengers aboard the China Airlines flight from Singapore to Taipei on which the scientist returned on December 10, but they have still to be located. They include three Americans, a Japanese and a Singaporean, officials said.

17. Taiwan on Meat Ban

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN LAWMAKERS BAN SELLING OF DOG MEAT," Taipei, 12/18/03) reported that Taiwan's lawmakers have banned the selling of dog meat and have introduced heavy fines for killing pets for food or fur. The new measure strengthened an existing ban on the slaughtering of pets for use of their meat and skin. Animal rights activists had protested that the original ban had not stopped the killing of the animals, and that a ban on trading was necessary to give the law more teeth. When they passed the law on Tuesday, legislators also introduced tougher fines for offenders. The new animal protection law included fines ranging from \$1,500 to \$7,300. The fines also were applicable to those illegally killing pets. In the original version of the law, the fines were limited to a range from \$58 to \$300.

18. Taiwan Earthquake

The Associated Press ("MODERATE EARTHQUAKE SHAKES TAIWAN," Taipei, 12/18/03) reported that a moderate earthquake shook southeast Taiwan on Thursday, the Central Weather Bureau said, but no damage or injuries were reported. A 4.8-magnitude earthquake was centered near the coastal city of Taitung, about 188 miles southeast of the capital, Taipei, the bureau said. Temblors frequently rattle Taiwan, but most are minor and cause little or no damage. The island's strongest earthquake this year - with a magnitude of 6.6 - hit an area just north of Taitung last week. A 7.6-magnitude earthquake four years ago in central Taiwan killed more than 2,300 people.

19. Japan on Chinese Accusations of Impropriety

BBC News ("JAPAN LAW FOR CHINA ORGY SUSPECTS," 12/08/03) reported that Japan has indicated it will not hand over to the PRC three men accused of arranging an orgy involving hundreds of Japanese tourists. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said Japan would deal with the three according to domestic law. The PRC has issued detention warrants through Interpol, but Japan does not have an extradition treaty with the PRC. The PRC on Wednesday sentenced two of its nationals to life in prison for their role, hiring 500 Chinese prostitutes. Twelve other Chinese people were given up to 15 years jail for the incident, which took place in Zhuhai in September. The PRC's Xinhua news agency has named the three alleged Japanese organizers of the event as Hirobe Isao, Takahashi Shunji and Fukunaga Koji, all employees of an Osaka-based construction company. "We cannot take them into custody simply on the basis of an Interpol request," Mr Fukuda said. "Japanese authorities will deal with the matter according to domestic law," he said. He did not elaborate. A spokesman at the National Police Agency said: "Japan has (extradition) agreements only with the US and the ROK. Generally speaking, Japan's basic policy is not to extradite Japanese nationals to other nations."

20. Japan on Missile Defense

Agence-France Presse ("JAPAN REVIEWING ARMS EXPORT BAN TO JOIN US MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM," Tokyo, 12/18/03) reported that Japan is reviewing its self-imposed ban on arms exports as part of efforts to develop missile defense systems with the US, government leaders say. The government is expected to lift the ban for parts that could be used by the US to produce missile defense-related equipment, the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper reported Thursday. Japan has been jointly researching with the US development of missile defense systems since 1999. "There is a debate on whether it is acceptable that we cannot exchange the results of our (joint) research," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a news conference. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi also told reporters: "Such a debate has been going on for a while and we will continue to study it." The export ban, in place since 1967, prevents Tokyo from exporting weapons to communist nations, those subject to UN-imposed arms embargoes and those involved in armed disputes. The policy was widened to ban all military exports in 1978. By the end of 2004, the government also plans to review the nation's basic defense framework adopted in 1976 and reviewed in 1995, as well as the current five-year defense program, the Yomiuri said. Under the review, the government will change the focus of defense programs from threats of Cold War-style foreign invasion to "new threats" such as terrorist attacks and ballistic missiles from other nations, it said. These plans will be completed at a meeting of the Security Council of Japan and at a cabinet meeting Friday, the paper said.

21. Fission in Japan

Reuters ("JAPAN FISHING VILLAGE HOPES FOR NUCLEAR PROJECT," Tokyo, 12/18/03) reported that Rokkasho, a remote fishing village in northern Japan, was quietly confident Thursday as it waited to hear whether it would become host to a \$12 billion experimental nuclear fusion reactor. The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) project, a joint venture involving the US, the PRC, Russia, the ROK, the European Union and Japan, is expected to announce its choice of site after a meeting in the US on Saturday. ITER aims to create the world's first sustained nuclear fusion reaction, which it is hoped will provide a clean, efficient source of power in an imitation of reactions that form the source of the sun's power. The two front runners to host the 30-year project are an EU-backed site at Cadarache in southern France and the village of Rokkasho, home to 12,000 people, mostly fishermen and farmers. "We have good solid ground, we are very near a port and we have plentiful supplies of both fresh and sea water," said Kiyoshiro Nozawa, a local official

overseeing the Rokkasho bid. "The French site is not so convenient for ports, so I think we are ahead in that respect," he added. Rokkasho, near the northernmost tip of the main island of Honshu, some 600 km (373 miles) north of Tokyo, is already the site of a uranium enrichment plant and a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant is scheduled to be completed by 2006.

22. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("JAPAN SAYS JOINT STATEMENT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT N KOREA SIX-WAY TALKS," Tokyo, 12/18/03) reported that Senior Vice Foreign Minister Masatoshi Abe said Thursday it may not be necessary to complete a joint statement for six-country talks on the DPRK's nuclear arms program before participants meet for the next round. The statement "should be discussed during the talks, and it may not be appropriate to agree on its content before the talks," Abe told reporters. The PRC, Japan, the DPRK and ROK, Russia and the US had sought to hold a second round of the talks this week, but finally failed to agree because of differences over a draft joint statement compiled by the PRC. The PRC, which will host the second round, hopes to adopt the statement at the second round as a major achievement. It wants the statement to give certain considerations to the DPRK's security concerns. But the US wants a statement that includes a call on the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program verifiably.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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