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Preceding NAPSNet Report

1. Chairman's Statement from Six Party Talks

Kyodo ("FULL TEXT OF CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT FROM 6-PARTY NUKE TALKS", 2006-12-22) reported the statement by PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei. The Second Session of the Fifth Round of the Six-Party Talks was held in Beijing from 18th to 22nd December 2006. The Parties reviewed changes and developments in the situation of the Six-Party Talks and reaffirmed their common goal and will to achieve the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through dialogue. They reiterated that they would earnestly carry out their commitments in the Joint Statement of 19 September 2005, and agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the Joint Statement as soon as possible in a phased manner in line with the principle of "action for action." The Parties held useful discussions on measures to implement the Joint Statement and on actions to be taken by the Parties in the starting phase and put forward some initial ideas. The Parties, through intensive bilateral consultations, had candid and in-depth exchange of views to address their concerns. The Parties agreed to recess to report to capitals and to reconvene at the earliest opportunity.

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2. Six Party Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NKOREAN NUCLEAR TALKS END IN DEADLOCK, FINGER-POINTING", 2006-12-22) reported that Six-nation talks aimed at persuading the DPRK to give up its nuclear arms program closed in deadlock, with the US and the DPRK blaming each other for the impasse. The negotiations snagged on the DPRK's refusal to engage in substantive discussions until the US lifted financial sanctions imposed last year which have frozen millions of dollars of DPRK funds in a Macau bank.

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3. DPRK on Six Party Talks

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA NUKE TALKS END WITHOUT DEAL", 2006-12-22) reported that the first talks on the DPRK's nuclear program since the DPRK tested an atomic device ended without an agreement on disarmament or a date for further negotiations. "The US is taking a tactic of both dialogue and pressure, and carrots and sticks," Kim Kye Gwan, the DPRK's envoy to the talks, told reporters. "We are responding with dialogue and a shield, and by a shield we are saying we will further improve our deterrent." "Since we are already a proud nuclear state, we have already announced that we will not threaten other countries with nuclear (weapons) and fully live up to our responsibility of preventing proliferation," Kim said.

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4. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo ("JAPAN'S RULING PARTY PROPOSES ADDITIONAL SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2006-1--22) reported that Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party drafted a set of additional punitive steps against the DPRK on Friday as the six-party talks recessed without progress the same day in Beijing, LDP lawmakers said. The proposal includes calls for tougher financial screening, broader financial sanctions, and further trade and port call bans. The requirement for financial institutions to report to the Japanese government remittances overseas of more than 300 million yen will be toughened for the DPRK to include amounts over 10 million yen.

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5. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("OUR NUCLEAR PROGRAM WILL NOT HARM S. KOREANS, N.K. OFFICIAL SAYS", 2006-12-22) reported that as the DPRK has developed nuclear weapons to defend itself from the US, South Koreans do not need to fear a possible attack from the DPRK, a ranking DPRK official said. "North Korea's nuclear programs will not harm the South because they are not for attacking (it)," Ri Chun-bok, a vice-president of the DPRK Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation, a channel for inter-Korean affairs, said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency.

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6. Inter-Korean Relations

Yonhap ("SEOUL TO SOON RESTORE TIES WITH PYONGYANG: UNIFICATION MINISTER ", 2006-12-22) reported that the ROK government may resume its humanitarian assistance to the DPRK in the near future as part of efforts to mend soured ties with the DPRK, the ROK's point man on the DPRK said Thursday. "The government has a principle to resume the North-South dialogue at the earliest date possible," Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung told reporters.

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7. ROK on US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("ROH LASHES OUT AT FORMER DEFENSE CHIEFS", 2006-12-22) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun fired a broadside at former defense ministers and chiefs of staff who oppose Seoul's early takeover of full operational control of its troops. "They took pride in being defense minister or chief of staff leading the nation's military when they couldn't even control its operations in wartime," he said. Roh said the government seeks the handover to prepare for any emergency in the DPRK. "Would we have anything to say to China and North Korea when we can't even control our own troops in wartime and can't decide whether to bomb a civilian facility in the North and which facility to target?" he asked.

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8. ROK Bird Flu Outbreak

Chosun Ilbo ("NEW BIRD FLU OUTBREAK IN S.CHUNGCHEONG PROVINCE", 2006-12-22) reported that a fourth outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza has been detected in Asan, South Chungcheong Province. The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry said Thursday investigation of the cause of decreased egg-laying at a duck farm in Asan reported on Dec. 11 revealed the reason was a highly virulent bird flu strain.

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9. PRC Aid to Zimbabwe

Agence France-Presse ("ZIMBABWE, CHINA TO NEGOTIATE TWO BILLION DOLLAR LOAN DEAL ", 2006-12-22) reported that Zimbabwe and the PRC are expected to begin negotiations for a two-billion US dollar loan agreement to help stabilise the economy, a state-run daily reported. "China's government is ready to negotiate with the government (of Zimbabwe) for a two-billion US dollars loan facility to help it fight inflation and other aspects of the economy," Zimbabwe's Ambassador to the PRC, Chris Mutsvangwa, said.

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10. PRC Elder Care

Washington Post ("IN CHINA, AGING IN THE CARE OF STRANGERS", 2006-12-22) reported that in the PRC only children often bear the burden alone of taking care of their parents, while the cradle-to-grave welfare associated with state-owned factories is becoming a thing of the past. Two or three decades ago, a more traditional way of life emphasized the Confucian ideal of respecting one's elders. Today, making good money is the slogan of choice. While the PRC has created opportunities for a younger, more affluent population, many older people have been left to fend for themselves.

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11. PRC Subversion Trial

The Associated Press ("REPORT: CHINA LAWYER'S SENTENCE SUSPENDED ", 2006-12-22) reported that a PRC activist lawyer was convicted of subversion for posting political essays on foreign Web sites and received a suspended three-year prison sentence, a state news agency reported. Gao Zhisheng was detained in August amid a crackdown on PRC lawyers who represent clients with grievances against the government regarding corruption, land seizures and other complaints.

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