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1. Six Party Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA SAYS MUST MEET US ENVOY BEFORE MORE TALKS", 2005-12-05) reported that the DPRK has told the US that it will not take part in any more six party talks until its chief negotiator can have a meeting with US envoy Christopher Hill, a Japanese newspaper said on Sunday. The DPRK has demanded high-level talks with the US on sanctions imposed by Washington against its financial assets, saying the discussions were necessary for progress in the nuclear talks.

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2. ROK on Six Party Talks

The Korea Times ("BANKING SANCTION SHOULDN'T IMPEDE NUKE TALKS: SEOUL", 2005-12-05) reported that, according to ROK Unification Minister Chung Dong-young, the US and the DPRK should not hold up the six party denuclearization process by skirmishing over bilateral issues. His remarks came as financial sanctions imposed by Washington on Pyongyang's businesses overseas are causing friction with the DPRK and seemingly destabilizing the six-party framework.

[\(return to top\)](#) China Daily ("SOUTH KOREA CALLS FOR DIRECT US-NORTH KOREA TALKS TO RESOLVE NON-NUCLEAR ISSUES ", 2005-12-05) reported that the ROK's top official responsible for relations with the DPRK urged the US on Monday to hold direct talks with the DPRK to resolve concerns over its missile development, human rights abuses and other non-nuclear issues, a report said Monday. The remarks by Unification Minister Chung Dong-young reflected concerns that a deepening row between Washington and the DPRK over US sanctions against the country could undermine six party talks. Non-nuclear complaints by the US against the DPRK "should be solved by bilateral talks between the two parties," Chung told a forum. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. Inter-Korean Relations

The Korea Times ("N. KOREA CHIDES CHUNG FOR PROPOSING 'VIETNAM MODEL'", 2005-12-05) reported that the DPRK has chided Unification Minister Chung Dong-young for expressing hope that the country would follow Vietnam's case of opening its doors and developing its economy. In what DPRK watchers in Seoul interpret as a rather ominous sign ahead of the 17th inter-Korean ministerial talks, an unnamed spokesman of the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland Thursday lashed out at Chung's remarks, through a question and answer session with the Korean Central News Agency.

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4. Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

The Korea Times ("SEOUL HELPS NK ECONOMIC EXPERTS", 2005-12-05) reported that the ROK government has recently started supporting DPR Korean economic experts, the Unification Ministry confirmed. A government body on inter-Korean exchange and cooperation held a meeting on July 29 and approved a project of supporting DPRK's economic experts, the ministry said. Accordingly, Seoul provided Pyongyang with 454 million won (\$378,000) through an international organization

free of charge, a ministry official said. "This project was designed to help North Korea enter international society," the official said.

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5. Inter-Korean Communication

Korea.Net ("S. KOREANS IN GAESEONG CAN CALL SOUTH AT 40 CENTS PER MINUTE ", 2005-12-05) reported that RO Koreans working in the inter-Korean industrial complex located in the DPRK border city of Kaesong will likely be able to call their homes in the ROK at 40 cents per minute before the year's end. According to Vice Unification Minister Rhee Bong-jo, direct phone link-ups between the ROK and the Kaesong Industrial Complex will open this month. "Once opened, we expect the direct telephone lines will greatly ease the difficulties of South Korean companies operating in the Kaesong Industrial Complex as well as the factory and construction workers stationed there," Rhee said.

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6. Kim Dae-jung To Visit DPRK

The Korea Times ("EX-PRESIDENT MAY VISIT NK IN SPRING", 2005-12-05) reported that ROK's former President Kim Dae-jung will likely make a visit to Pyongyang next spring, according to sources. Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan, who about a month ago met Kim at the Kim Dae-jung Library in Tonggyo-dong, Seoul, said that he thought the former head of state was planning to visit the DPRK when he fully recover his health. "I understand he wants to do something for inter-Korean reconciliation as a Nobel Peace Prize laureate," he said.

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7. DPRK-Russian Railway

RIA Novosti ("RUSSIA, NORTH KOREA COULD RESTORE CROSS-BORDER RAIL TRACK TOGETHER", 2005-12-05) reported that Russia's Transportation Minister said Monday that his country was willing to restore and operate the Khasan-Tumenjiang-Rajin cross-border rail track with the DPRK on a shared-cost basis. Igor Levitin, who is also co-chair of the intergovernmental commission for economic, scientific and technological cooperation, discussed the possibility of jointly restoring the 55-km track at a meeting with the DPRK Ambassador Pak Ui Chun. Transportation-related issues dominated the agenda. "The reconstruction by Russian engineers of this railroad section will be a practical step toward implementing agreements reached earlier between the heads of state of Russia, the Republic of Korea and the DPRK while also demonstrating Russia's support and willingness to continue participating in the project," Levitin said.

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8. US Food Aid to DPRK

The New York Times ("US DELAYING FOOD DONATION TO NORTH KOREA ", 2005-12-05) reported that the US is delaying the purchase of 25,000 tons of food it has promised to give the DPRK in response to the DPRK's announcement that it wants UN aid efforts to switch over from food aid to development assistance. "We cannot continue to supply food if we cannot even minimally assure that it will reach its intended recipients," the State Department continued.

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9. DPRK Defector

The Korea Times ("NK DEFECTOR CAPTURED BY CHINESE POLICE ", 2005-12-05) reported that a DPRK woman trying to defect to the ROK was taken into custody by PRC police in Beijing Friday after repeatedly failing to gain refuge at a ROK school there, a government official said. The ROK Embassy in Beijing also dispatched an official to the school when authorities there reported the attempted defection, but the DPRK women had already been forcibly removed before the diplomat arrived, the official said. He said the embassy is now trying to work for the release of the woman.

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10. Russian Nuclear Submarines

Vladivostok News ("NAVY CHIEF COMMANDER CALLS NUCLEAR FLEET PRIORITY ", 2005-12-05) reported that reinforcement of nuclear submarine forces is a priority for the Pacific Fleet, Russia's Navy Chief Commander Vladimir Masorin announced at a briefing in Vladivostok on Thursday finishing his working inspection in the Russian Far East. According to him, construction of new head submarines and ships is already in progress. The newly built vessels and subs will supplement the Pacific Fleet in the next few years.

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11. PRC Diplomacy

Newsweek ("THE U. S. CAN OUT-CHARM CHINA", 2005-12-05) reported that the PRC has used soft power only in the sense that it has exercised its power softly. It does this consciously to show that it is not a bully, unlike guess who. And it works. America remains unpopular among the peoples of Asia, even in countries like Japan, where the government is friendly with Washington. In most Asian elections in the last two years, being pro-American was a political liability. "Many would welcome an American role. But not one that tries to be the dominant power itself or simply balances China," says Tay. "We want an honest broker."

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12. Sino-Japanese Relations

BBC News ("JAPAN PM SHRUGS OFF CHINA SNUB ", 2005-12-05) reported that Japanese PM Junichiro Koizumi has shrugged off the PRC's postponement of annual talks allegedly triggered by his visits to a controversial war shrine. His comments came a day after the PRC said the December summit, which also involves the ROK, would be delayed.

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13. Hong Kong Democratization

The Los Angeles Times ("TENS OF THOUSANDS DEMAND DEMOCRATIC REFORM IN HONG KONG", 2005-12-05) reported that tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Hong Kong on Sunday to demand the right to vote for all their leaders and that the process of democratization be speeded up. Organizers estimated the turnout at 250,000, though police put the number at 63,000.

What drew the demonstrators out was a package of electoral reforms pushed by Hong Kong's chief executive and backed by Beijing that does not give a clear timetable as to when Hong Kong voters will be given universal suffrage.

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14. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN'S OPPOSITION GAINS", 2005-12-05) reported that the opposition Nationalist Party won an overwhelming victory in island wide municipal elections on Saturday, putting it in position to push its agenda of reunification with the PRC in the 2008 presidential campaign. The results constituted a huge vote of confidence in the Nationalist Party's chairman, Ma Ying-jeou, who was elected to office five months ago. He is now likely to head the party's ticket in the 2008 presidential poll.

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15. PRC Chemical Spill

The Associated Press ("ANOTHER CHINESE CITY SHUTS DOWN WATER PLANT AS TOXIC SPILL APPROACHES ", 2005-12-05) reported that a PRC city of 480,000 people has become the latest community to shut down a water plant as river-borne toxins from an industrial accident flowed toward it, an official said Saturday. The shutdown Friday in Jiamusi came as the PRC's chief environmental regulator resigned, taking the blame for the Nov. 13 spill of benzene in the Songhua River in the PRC's northeast. In Russia, the PRC delivered a 150-ton shipment of carbon Saturday for use in filtering water in Khabarovsk, a border city of 580,000 people that is bracing for the spill to arrive next Sunday.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Associated Press ("CHINESE SPILL PROMPTS SAFETY PLEDGES ", 2005-12-05) reported that the PRC's leaders say they will punish those responsible for a toxic spill in a major river. But there is no sign that they want to change what prompted the angriest criticism — a culture of secrecy that they consider not just a key political weapon but a legitimate way to deal with the PRC public. [\(return to top\)](#)

16. PRC Markets and Marxism

Washington Post ("CHINA CONFRONTS CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN MARXISM AND MARKETS", 2005-12-05) reported that the Communist Party has launched a campaign among political leaders and senior academics to modernize PRC Marxism, seeking to reconcile increasingly obvious contradictions between the government's founding ideology and its broad free-market reforms. The campaign involves the allocation of millions of dollars to produce new translations of Marxist literature and to update texts for secondary school and university students obliged to study the official philosophy, officials said. In addition, the campaign will promote more research on how Marxism can be redefined to inform the PRC's policies even as private enterprise increasingly becomes the basis of its economy, they explained.

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17. PRC Human Rights

The Associated Press ("TORTURE IS 'WIDESPREAD' IN CHINA, U.N. INVESTIGATOR SAYS", 2005-

12-05) reported that a high-level United Nations investigator condemned the "widespread" use of torture in PRC law enforcement and said Beijing must overhaul its criminal laws, grant more power to judges and abolish labor camps before it can end such abuses, according to a summary of his findings released Friday. The investigation, by Manfred Nowak, the special rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, said that "obtaining confessions" and fighting "deviant behavior" continued to be central goals of the PRC's criminal justice system.

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