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I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("US PRESSES FOR SWIFT RESUMPTION OF NKOREA NUCLEAR TALKS", 2004-12-13) reported that the US pressed for a swift resumption of the DPRK nuclear talks, firmly underscoring its commitment to the six-party format. "They (North Korea) have also said that they are not yet ready to return to talks at this time. It's our view that talks should resume as soon as possible," deputy State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said Friday.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("RECONSIDERING PARTICIPATION IN NUCLEAR TALKS", 2004-12-13) reported that quite contrary to what the US claimed, not even a button of a general officer's uniform, to say nothing of more than a hundred of general officers, has ever been found across the border. We do not know such a word as "defection". The system in the DPRK is politically stable and is as firm as a rock. Under this situation the DPRK is compelled to seriously reconsider its participation in the talks with the US, a party extremely disgusting and hateful.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Yonhap ("MULTILATERAL PEACE TREATY POSSIBLE IF N. KOREA CANCELS NUCLEAR PROGRAM, U.S. DIP", 2004-12-13) reported that the DPRK will be able to sign a multilateral treaty for peace on the Korean peninsula if the DPRK cancels its nuclear weapons programs, US Assistant

Secretary of State James Kelly said. In an interview with the Hankook Ilbo, a South Korean daily newspaper, Kelly said "If the North agrees to dismantle all of its nuclear programs, the DPRK can expect the current armistice agreement on the Korean peninsula to be replaced with a multi-party peace treaty and eventually hope for the normalization of relations."

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4. Harrison on US Policy Toward the DPRK

The Associated Press ("EXPERT: U.S. OVERSTATES NORTH KOREA THREAT", 2004-12-13) reported that the US government exaggerated the threat from the DPRK's nuclear programs, just as it manipulated intelligence about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, a US foreign policy expert said in an article published Friday. Selig Harrison wrote in the Dec. 17 issue of Foreign Affairs that the Bush administration by failing to distinguish between civilian and military uranium-enrichment capabilities, Washington greatly complicated the already complex efforts to eliminate the DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions.

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5. Eberstadt on US Policy Toward the DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA EXPERT SAYS SEOUL MUST END 'MASQUERADE' OF BILATERAL RELATIONS", 2004-12-13) reported that American Enterprise Institute (AEI) fellow Nicholas Eberstadt, who recently caused waves by advocating the DPRK's collapse, said Sunday (local time), regarding comments issued by Korean President Roh Moo-hyun during his recent tour of Europe, to the effect that he would oppose any form of sanctions or pressure on the DPRK, Eberstadt labeled such sentiments "a unilateral and pre-emptive attack on the United States... No matter what the U.S. government says officially, tension in the Korea-U.S. alliance is continuing to rise."

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6. DPRK - US Relations

Donga Ilbo ("THE KIM JONG IL REGIME FACES ENEMIES ON EVERY SIDE", 2004-12-13) reported that the International Herald Tribune (IHT) reported yesterday that the Kim Jong Il regime is facing enemies on every side due to the re-election of US President George W. Bush, followed by the fake remnants event of an abducted Japanese victim and an internal conflict concerning the successor problem. In his interview with the newspaper, American North Korea expert Michael Horowitz said, "Now, the terms 'North Korea' and 'Kim Jong Il regime' should be interpreted separately."

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7. ROK on Inter - Korean Relations

Yonhap news ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT WILL NOT ADOPT "RECIPROCITY" ON NORTH TIES", 2004-12-13) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun on Monday said his government will not resort to "reciprocity" in dealing with the DPRK despite criticism from hard-liners that the ROK has compromised too much to get the DPRK out of isolation. "It seems to me that we need to be more patient and take time before (the two Koreas) build trust," Roh told a meeting with a group of scholars, social dignitaries and other advisers on national unification.

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8. DPRK on ROK Nuclear Experiment

Reuters ("NO PEACE UNTIL S.KOREA ANSWERS ATOMIC TESTS - NORTH", 2004-12-13) reported that the DPRK will not dismantle its nuclear programs or improve ties with the ROK until questions about the ROK's nuclear experiments are clearly answered, Pyongyang said on Sunday.

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9. DPRK Reforms

Washington Post ("FOR NORTH KOREA, OPENNESS PROVES A TWO-WAY STREET; AS INCREASED TRADE AND COMMUNICATION BRING OUTSIDE WORLD IN, MORE CITIZENS ARE SPURRED TO LEAVE", 2004-12-13) reported that as the DPRK enters the 30th month of its experiment with free-market reforms -- including deregulating prices and increasing foreign trade -- diplomats, analysts, intelligence sources and recent defectors say that the once airtight lid on information in what is known as the Hermit Kingdom is gradually loosening.

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10. DPRK Economic Reforms

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA'S KIM YONG SOOL CONFIRMS "PRIVATE FARMING SYSTEM" FOR THE FIRST TIME", 2004-12-13) reported that Chosun Shinbo, the bulletin of the Pro-Pyeongyang General Association of Korean Residents in Japan, reported by quoting the DPRK's vice trade minister Kim Yong Sool on December 11 that the DPRK has introduced the "Fields Undertaking System," a type of private farming system in collective farms. This is noticeable due to the fact that a DPRK high-ranking official has, for the first time, confirmed that the DPRK is applying this system on a national scale.

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11. Inter - Korean Travel

Korea Times ("GOVERNMENT TO EASE RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL TO NORTH KOREA", 2004-1-13) reported that ROK civilians wanting to travel to the DPRK will likely see less difficulty in getting government approval to visit the DPRK next year, according to officials Saturday. The government is considering easing the requirements for cross-border travel in preparation for an expected boom in the inter-Korean human exchanges next year, the fifth anniversary of the historic first summit between the two Koreas, the officials said.

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12. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap ("FIRST PRODUCTS FROM INTER-KOREAN PROJECT DUE ON SALE IN SOUTH THIS WEEK", 2004-12-13) reported that DPRK-made iron pots are to hit department stores in Seoul on Wednesday (15 December) as the first products of an inter-Korean joint economic project to become available in the ROK, a government official said Monday.

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13. ROK on Kaesong

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREA TO SEEK PREFERENTIAL DUTIES FOR KAESONG PRODUCTS", 2004-1-13) reported that the government said Monday (13 December) that it will seek provisions in future free trade talks that will permit preferential duties for products from the Kaesong Industrial Complex in the DPRK so that they will be treated as if produced in the ROK.

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14. Sino - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("WINDS OF CHANGE IN NORTH KOREA EVIDENT IN CHINESE BORDER CITY", 2004-1-13) reported that ritualistically in the past week, a convoy of 50 or so empty DPRK trucks crawled into the PRC across a one-lane bridge every morning and returned home at the end of each day with cargoes of apples, second-hand TV sets, glass products and auto parts. "This has been going on for a while," Li Kyung-hwa, an ethnic Korean woman in her early 30s, said nonchalantly, scanning a handwritten shopping list handed her by one of the DPRK drivers. "I help them shop since they don't speak Chinese and have little time to buy things they need."

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15. Sino - DPRK Economic Relations

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN ECONOMIC DELEGATION DEPARTS FOR CHINA: REPORT", 2004-12-11) reported that a DPRK economic delegation left for the PRC by train Saturday, the North's official news agency said. The delegation, led by Foreign Trade Minister Rim Kyong-man, was seen off by vice-minister of foreign trade Ri Yong-nam and Wu Donghe, PRC ambassador to the DPRK, at the Pyongyang train station, the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

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16. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo News ("PM SAYS NORTH KOREAN ATTITUDE ON ABDUCTIONS "ABOMINABLE"", 2004-1-13) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Monday (13 December) branded as "abominable" the DPRK's attitude towards resolving the abduction issue but remained wary about a proposal to impose economic sanctions. "It is understandable that the public has reacted strongly to North Korea as the country has done unjust and abominable things," Koizumi told reporters, referring to North Korea's handing over of ashes it said were those of abducted Japanese national Megumi Yokota but which turned out not to be.

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17. Japan on DPRK Food Aid

Kyodo News ("JAPAN'S FOOD AID TO N. KOREA PROPERLY DISTRIBUTED, RESEARCH SHOWS", 2004-12-13) reported that food and medical aid Japan has provided to the DPRK are being distributed to needy people in the country, the Foreign Ministry said Monday. The supplies Japan gave were recognized by the general public as being from Japan because their containers carried

Japan's national flag, according to the mission.

[\(return to top\)](#) BBC News ("JAPAN FREEZES FOOD AID TO N KOREA", 2004-12-13) reported that Japan has frozen food aid to the DPRK in protest at Pyongyang's failure to co-operate in a probe into Japanese citizens kidnapped by the DPRK. Japan has yet to decide if it will take further measures, such as sanctions. [\(return to top\)](#)

18. ROK on DRPK Abductees

Chosun Ilbo ("ABDUCTEE ISSUE SHOULD NOT IMPINGE ON SIX-WAY TALKS: FOREIGN MINISTER", 2004-12-13) reported that Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon expressed his intention Monday of coordinating with the Japanese government to dampen the national furor building up over the DPRK's delivery of the false remains of a Japanese abductee, in the interest of progression in the six-way nuclear talks. Attention is being drawn to whether the issue will be taken up when President Roh Moo-hyun meets with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Kagoshima prefecture, Japan on Friday.

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19. Iraqi - DPRK Relations

Donga Ilbo ("HUSSEIN'S MISSILE CONTRACT WITH NORTH KOREA REVEALED", 2004-12-13) reported that it was confirmed that the DPRK promised Iraq missile technology worth \$10 million when Saddam Hussein was in power. An additional part of the Duelfer Report (CIA) was made available to the public on December 11 and says that the Hussein regime raised money through oil-for-food programs under the supervision of the UN to finance the 10 million dollar arms contract with the DPRK.

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20. ROK Spy Allegations

Yonhap ("OPPOSITION LAWMAKERS SUED FOR MAKING WRONG SPY ALLEGATION", 2004-1-13) reported that the ruling Uri Party filed defamation suits against three opposition lawmakers Sunday, accusing them of making "false" allegations that a Uri legislator was acting as a DPRK spy. The Uri Party also filed similar criminal suits against the publisher and a reporter of "Future Korea," a tabloid which identified Lee Chul-woo, a ruling party lawmaker, as a DPRK spy.

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21. US - ROK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("SOUTH KOREAN-U.S. TIES IMPROVE", 2004-12-13) reported that Foreign Ministry officials think that the year gone by has served as a catalyst in ROK-US relations, putting both countries on a more equal footing. "In the past the United States exercised the initiative in all areas while we reacted passively," said one official. "Honestly, there didn't exist a true sense of negotiation where each sides opinion was voiced."

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22. ROK - Uzbekistan Relations

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT MEETS VISITING UZBEK FOREIGN MINISTER", 2004-1-13) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun on Monday (13 December) met with Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister Sodiq Safoyev to agree to take measures to enhance bilateral trade and investment, Roh's spokesman, Kim Jong-min, said.

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23. ROK - Indian Relations

Asia Pulse ("S.KOREA-INDIA MEETING TO DISCUSS DEFENSE, TRADE, MARITIME ISSUES", 2004-12-13) reported that defense cooperation between the two countries, maritime naval joint action and trade, political and cultural issues of common interest will figure prominently during the third India-ROK Joint Commission meeting beginning here tomorrow.

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24. US on IAEA Leadership

The Australian ("DOWNER SOUNDED OUT ON NUKE JOB", 2004-12-13) reported that the US has approached Foreign Minister Alexander Downer as a candidate to replace International Atomic Energy Agency head Mohamed ElBaradei. But Mr Downer is believed to have refused to challenge Dr ElBaradei, who has headed the IAEA since 1997. The Bush administration now wants to remove the Egyptian diplomat from the UN body.

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25. Japan on Relations with DPRK, PRC

The New York Times ("JAPAN'S NEW MILITARY FOCUS: CHINA AND NORTH KOREA THREATS", 2004-12-13) reported that Japan adopted plans Friday to shift its military focus away from the cold-war threat of invasion from the Soviet Union to guarding against missiles from DPRK and PRC incursions around its southernmost islands. The new policy cuts tanks and artillery pieces by one-third, to about 600 of each, but greatly increases investment in missiles and forms a squadron of midair refueling planes to allow existing aircraft to attack DPRK missile sites and return home safely to Japan.

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26. Sino - Japanese Relations

Associated Press ("CHINA CRITICIZES JAPAN OVER GUIDELINES", 2004-12-11) reported that the PRC on Saturday criticized Japan for describing Beijing as a military threat and expressed unease about new Japanese defense guidelines that loosen a ban on weapons exports. "We are deeply concerned with the great changes of Japan's military defense strategy and its possible impact," PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue was quoted as saying by state media.

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27. Japan - Australian Relations

Asia Pulse ("AUSTRALIA, JAPAN SET TO STEP UP DEFENCE TIES", 2004-12-13) reported that Australia is moving to step up defense ties with Japan, with Defense Minister Robert Hill signaling he is keen to meet with Japan's new Defense Minister Yoshinori Ohno and possible joint defense exercises reportedly under discussion. But no agreement has been even considered at government level and the proposed joint exercises involving Japanese troops on Australian territory appear to be some years away.

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28. PRC, Indian, Russian Economic Cooperation

Donga Ilbo ("CHINA-RUSSIA-INDIA: "LET'S JOIN HANDS AGAINST THE US-EU"", 2004-12-13) reported that Russia first proposed a summit of three countries, the PRC, India and Russia two years ago. Since then, high-ranking officials of the three countries have frequently held meetings associated with the summit proposal and therefore it is highly likely that the proposal would turn into reality as early as next year. The three countries are mutually complementary in the economic aspect.

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29. Sino - Russian Military Relations

Reuters ("CHINA, RUSSIA TO HOLD MILITARY EXERCISE IN 2005", 2004-12-13) reported that the PRC and Russia will hold their first joint military exercises on PRC territory next year, the Interfax news agency quoted Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov as saying in Beijing on Monday. Ivanov met PRC Communist Party chief Hu Jintao, Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan Cao and Central Military Commission Vice-Chairman Guo Buoxiong to discuss cooperation between the RPC, a fast-rising military power, and its main arms and weapons-technology supplier.

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30. Taiwan Elections

Reuters ("CHEN UNDER PRESSURE TO WORK WITH TAIWAN OPPOSITION", 2004-12-13) reported that Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian is under pressure to find ways to work with an opposition-dominated parliament after his party suffered a surprise setback in weekend legislative elections. The main opposition Nationalist Party, which favors closer ties with the PRC, retained a slim majority of parliament's 225 seats in Saturday's poll and urged Chen to consult the opposition on naming a new premier.

[\(return to top\)](#) Washington Post ("CHEN DEALT SETBACK IN TAIWAN ELECTION", 2004-12-13) reported that Taiwanese voters Saturday decided not to give President Chen Shui-bian the legislative majority he had sought in a hard-fought campaign as reinforcement for his leadership and endorsement of his plans to edge the self-ruled island closer to independence. The election results, which surprised poll-takers and analysts, marked the first pause in what has been a decade of steady growth in support of independence among Taiwan's 23 million people. [\(return to top\)](#)

31. Cross Strait Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA'S SABER RATTLING: PAYING OFF?", 2004-12-13) reported that after an upset victory by the anti-independence camp in Taiwan's legislative elections on Saturday, Beijing is likely to conclude that its efforts to make war seem imminent are helping to reduce the risk of conflict, political analysts here said. The PRC's leadership has not yet commented on the election results. But officials here seem likely to take heart from the outcome, in which the Nationalist-led opposition parties held on to a slim majority in Taiwan's legislature.

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32. US, Japan on Cross Strait Relations

Kyodo News ("U.S. PROPOSES TALKS WITH JAPAN OVER TAIWAN STRAIT CONTINGENCIES", 2004-12-13) reported that the US has proposed to Japan launching a bilateral dialogue on possible joint cooperation in the event of conflicts developing between the PRC and Taiwan, Japanese government sources said Monday. The bilateral defense guidelines envisage a number of joint activities between Japan's Self-Defense Forces and US armed forces in the event of emergencies in areas surrounding Japan.

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33. Sino - US Trade Relations

The New York Times ("CHINA RELENTS, AND PROMISES TEXTILE TARIFFS", 2004-12-13) reported that the Commerce Ministry in the PRC announced Sunday night that it would impose tariffs on some textile exports, a step that could avert a trade war with the US and the EU over a new influx of low-cost PRC garments that had appeared likely to flood Western markets starting Jan. 1. The ministry's Web site, where the announcement was posted, did not specify the level of these export taxes or what textiles would be taxed.

[\(return to top\)](#) Washington Post ("U.S. IMPOSES NEW CURBS ON CLOTHING IMPORTS", 2004-1-13) reported that eighteen days before the end of a 30 year-old system restricting international trade in textiles and apparel, the Bush administration is imposing new barriers on imported clothing that is likely to curtail an expected flood of PRC imports in the first few months of next year. The administration's measures include an embargo that will be imposed throughout the month of January on some of the clothing shipped to the US during the final months of 2004. [\(return to top\)](#)

34. PRC Leadership

Reuters ("CHINA'S HU MOVES TO FURTHER CONSOLIDATE POWER", 2004-12-13) reported that the PRC's Communist Party chief, Hu Jintao, pulled a close political ally out of a problem-plagued province Monday in an apparent further consolidation of power after assuming the top job in the military in September. Li Keqiang was moved from his post of party chief of central Henan province to the same job in the northeastern rustbelt province of Liaoning, the official Xinhua news agency said.

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II. Japan

35. Japan Missile Defense Program

Japan Times ("MISSILE SHIELD PROJECT IGNITES BIDDING WAR", 2004-12-13) reported that Tokyo's decision last year to deploy an expensive US-developed defense system against the DPRK's ballistic missiles has triggered a heated race between the defense industries of Japan and the US to get the most out of the 1 trillion yen project.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo News ("MISSILE DEFENSE CONTROL BILL EYED FOR EARLY NEXT YEAR", 2004-12-13) reported that the Japan's prime minister should be given the power to activate its missile defense system without Cabinet and Security Council approval in case of an incoming missile attack, Defense Agency Director General Yoshinori Ono said. gWhen a ballistic missile is launched, it will be too late if the procedures to get Cabinet and Security Council approval are taken, h Ono told reporters accompanying him on his trip to the US. @He indicated that he plans to submit a bill to the Diet early next year to revise the SDF Law to allow the prime minister to skip seeking such procedures. [\(return to top\)](#)

36. Japan Arms Export Ban

Japan Times ("ARMS EXPORT SHIFT TURNS LOW KEY", 2004-12-01) reported that the Japanese government will not stipulate the planned lifting of its self-imposed ban on arms exports when it adopts a new basic defense policy. Instead, the new policy allowing weapons exports will probably be announced in a separate statement issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda when the Cabinet approves the new Defense Program Outline. The procedure to announce the lifting of the decades-old ban has turned low key because New Komeito, the junior coalition partner of the Liberal Democratic Party and backed by lay Buddhist organization Soka Gakkai, takes a cautious stance on the issue.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Asahi Shimbun ("FIRM EYES SALE OF SDF PLANE ABROAD", 2004-11-29) reported that anticipating a shift in Japanese government's policy on arms exports, a company is gearing up to sell to overseas buyers aircraft used solely by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF). ShinMaywa Industries Ltd. has been supplying the Maritime SDF with its US-1A short-takeoff-and-landing amphibian plane since 1974. An upgraded version of the search-and-rescue aircraft, the US-1A Kai, has drawn interest from overseas for its potential to be refitted to fight wildfires. [\(return to top\)](#)

37. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Kyodo ("COURT REJECTS YASUKUNI LAWSUIT", 2004-11-26) reported that the Chiba District Court rejected a damages suit disputing the constitutionality of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visit to Yasukuni Shrine in August 2001, but refused to rule on its legitimacy. Although the court ruled that Koizumi's visit to the Tokyo Shinto shrine was made in his official capacity, it refrained from ruling on its constitutionality pertaining to the separation of the state and religion. The plaintiffs called the ruling unjust and vowed to appeal.

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38. Japan's History Textbook

Japan Times ("EDUCATION MINISTER SLAMS TEXTBOOKS AS 'SELF-TORTURING'", 2004-11-28) reported that Japan's education minister Nariaki Nakayama said that history textbooks used in secondary schools contain passages that are extremely "self-torturing" and suggest "Japan has done nothing but bad things." Nakayama also said, "Every country's history has light and shadow. While we must reflect on bad deeds, we must not conduct education on the basis of a self-torturing historical perspective that everything that has been done was bad."

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