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I. United States

- 1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks
2. DPRK on Nuclear Program
3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program
4. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program
5. ROK on US Policy on the DPRK
6. US Policy on DPRK Nuclear Issue
7. ROK - EU on DPRK Nuclear Issue
8. DPRK on Human Rights
9. ROK on DPRK Human Rights
10. DPRK Energy
11. DPRK Food Supply
12. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation
13. DPRK Maritime Border Violation
14. ROK Maritime Accident
15. DPRK on ROK Maritime Border Violation
16. DPRK - Japanese Relations
17. ROK on Abductions
18. Japan on Abductees
19. DPRK Defectors
20. US - ROK Relations
21. ROK-Japanese Relations
22. Japan on Women's Fund

23. Japan Opposition Party
24. US on Sino-Japanese Relations
25. Japan on Cross Strait Relations
26. Taiwan Cabinet Reshuffle
27. US on PRC Arms Ban
28. Sino - Indian Relations
29. PRC on Tiananmen Square Legacy
30. PRC Land Dispute
31. PRC Hostages in Iraq

Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap News ("SOUTH KOREAN OFFICIAL SAYS NORTH TALKS LIKELY LATE FEBRUARY", 2005-01-24) reported that the DPRK will likely agree to another round of six-party talks on ending its nuclear weapons programs in late February or early March, a senior aide to President Roh Moo-hyun said Monday (24 January). Moon Jung-in, chairman of the presidential committee on the Northeast Asia era, told a radio program that: "I assume North Koreans will come out for the talks by then, because North Korea will (first) have to analyze the confirmation hearings of US Secretary of State-Designate Condoleezza Rice and President George W. Bush's inaugural speech and State of Union address in early February."

(return to top)

2. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Donga Ilbo (""DPRK, KIM KYE GWAN CONTEND THE POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS"", 2005-01-24) reported that it has been known that DPRK Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan said to a US congressional delegation that Congressman Curt Weldon (R-PA) led on a visit to the DPRK from January 11 to 14 that "North Korea possesses nuclear weapons." According to the report, Congressman Curt Weldon said, "Deputy Foreign Minister Kim declared to the US delegation that 'North Korea is a nuclear weapons possessing country, but this is only for defense purpose and we don't have an intention to possess nuclear weapons forever.'" Congressman Curt Weldon also said, in a meeting with DPRK Foreign Minister Paik Nam Soon, Minister Paik said that maintaining a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula is the goal of the DPRK, and that the process of giving up nuclear weapons will be continued in a thoroughly transparent way.

(return to top)

3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korean Times ("NK USES NUKE CLAIM AS BARGAINING CHIP", 2005-01-24) reported that the DPRK recently declared it possessed nuclear arms to US congressional delegates who visited there, a US radio station said Saturday. But experts said the claim seems aimed at enhancing the DPRK's

leverage ahead of the upcoming negotiations. Experts, however, do not attach much significance to the latest claim, saying it seems to be the result of the DPRK's strategy of strengthening its negotiating power ahead of the six-party talks. "North Korea wants to receive a security assurance, economic aid and the normalization of relations using its nuclear threat as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the US," a Seoul diplomat said. "The claim of nuclear deterrent should be understood in this way."

(return to top)

4. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Program

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINA ASKS N. KOREA TO ADMIT URANIUM PROGRAM", 2005-01-24) reported that the PRC has asked the DPRK to admit plans to develop nuclear weapons using enriched uranium, Japan's Nihon Keizai reported Monday. If confirmed, this would mark a substantial shift in policy in Beijing, which had previously faithfully relayed the DPRK's denials of any such program. The paper, quoting multiple officials connected with the six-party talks about DPRK's nuclear issue, said the change in the PRC position was the result of the US presenting the PRC with persuasive evidence of the uranium program.

(return to top)

5. ROK on US Policy on the DPRK

Yonhap News ("RICE SENATE HEARING POSITIVE MESSAGE TO N. KOREA: ACDPU", 2005-01-24) reported that Condoleezza Rice sent a positive message to the DPRK during her US Senate confirmation hearing, a top official for the ROK government's Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification (ACDPU) said here Saturday. Lee Jae-joung, the ACDPU's senior vice president, told reporters here that the new Secretary of State's remarks of a possible diplomatic settlement of the DPRK's nuclear ambitions was a good sign. He added that Rice seemed to be amendable to offering a "reward" to the DPRK the minute Pyongyang announces that it has renounced its nuclear ambitions.

(return to top)

6. US Policy on DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("NO SHIFT IN FOREIGN POLICY, BUSH SR. SAYS", 2005-01-24) reported that President Bush's inaugural address, with its emphasis on spreading democracy and eliminating tyranny throughout the world, was not meant to signal a new direction in US foreign policy nor to portray America as arrogant, his father said Saturday. How far will he go to challenge the nuclear ambitions of the DPRK and Iran? Some Asian nations have expressed suspicion that the inaugural speech pointed to a more aggressive foreign policy that could worsen global tensions.

(return to top)

7. ROK - EU on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap News ("SOUTH KOREAN MINISTER TO VISIT GERMANY, SWITZERLAND", 2005-01-24) reported that a ROK presidential envoy is scheduled to leave for Switzerland this week to join the annual World Economic Forum in Davos, officials said Monday (24 January). During the 27-31 January trip, Unification Minister Chung Dong-young will visit the Swiss city and deliver a keynote

speech Sunday that is expected to revolve around Seoul's foreign policy relating to the DPRK nuclear arms dispute.

(return to top)

8. DPRK on Human Rights

Yonhap News ("PRO-NORTH KOREAN PAPER DENOUNCES US FOR "OUTPOSTS OF TYRANNY" REMARK", 2005-01-24) reported that a pro-DPRK media outlet in Japan denounced US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Sunday (23 January) for listing the regime as an "outpost of tyranny" along with five other countries. Chosun Shinbo dismissed Rice's remark as a traditional US strategy of avoiding ruffling the feathers of powerful states while destroying "weak regimes of tyranny".

(return to top) Korean Times ("NK SLAMS US OVER HUMAN RIGHTS INTERFERENCE", 2005-0--24) reported that the DPRK has lashed out at the US for seeking to interfere in its handling of human rights. In a commentary carried by the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency just before US President George W. Bush delivered his inauguration speech, Pyongyang described Washington as a "wrecker of democracy" and a "graveyard of human rights." "(The U.S.) ruthlessly infringes upon the sovereignty of other countries and human rights of their people for the mere reason that they are different from it in ideology, system and religious belief," said the commentary. (return to top)

9. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Chosun Ilbo ("DON'T UNILATERALLY PRESS N. KOREA ON HUMAN RIGHTS: KIM DAE-JUNG", 2005-01-24) reported that former President Kim Dae-jung said Saturday that the DPRK should not be attacked unilaterally for its human rights abuses and dictatorial regime but should be helped to join the international community on its own. He was apparently alluding to US Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice's "outposts of tyranny" speech. Appearing on Japan's NHK satellite TV channel, Kim said the DPRK was now dreaming of becoming a "second China" and working hard to normalize relations with Japan.

(return to top)

10. DPRK Energy

Donga Ilbo ("WHY DID GAZPROM CHAIRMAN MILLER GO TO NORTH KOREA?", 2005-01-24) reported that that Alexey Miller, chairman of the world's largest gas company Gazprom visited the DPRK on January 20 and 21 and interest has focused on the background of his visit. Experts on Russia forecast that there had been discussion about the development of gas and petroleum fields in the DPRK, or a plan to provide Sakhalin gas by constructing gas pipelines linking the Russian Far East with the ROK via the DPRK.

(return to top) Moscow Times ("GAZPROM CHIEF SLIPS INTO N. KOREA", 2005-01-24) reported that Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller slipped into reclusive DPRK on a trip that analysts said was as much driven by Moscow's geopolitical diplomacy as by Pyongyang's desperate need for energy. The visit comes at a time of intensifying Russian energy politics in gas -starved Asia and talk of a Russian pipeline through the DPRK. A Gazprom statement on Friday said Miller had met Premier Pak Pong Ju in the DPRK, as well as industry and oil ministers, to discuss cooperation in the oil and gas sectors. Exploration work coordinated by the DPRK's Oil Ministry in 1997 had located seven promising offshore and onshore oil and gas fields, the statement said. Gazprom had been mulling various routes for pipeline options to supply the ROK and Japan with oil and gas, including a route

through the DPRK. (return to top)

11. DPRK Food Supply

BBC News ("NORTH KOREA SLASHES FOOD RATIONS", 2005-01-24) reported that the DPRK has cut food rations to just half the amount recommended by the World Food Program, the UN food agency says. WFP monitors say government handouts have been cut from 300g (10.5oz) of cereals a day to 250g. The UN says 16 million DPRK residents rely on the rations. Most of the worst-affected people are in the DPRK's cities, he told the BBC News website.

(return to top) Yonhap News ("N. KOREA NEEDS 270,000 CULTIVATORS FOR AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION: REPORT", 2005-01-24) reported that the DPRK will require 270,000 cultivators and the same number of power tillers, along with 51,000 tractors and 38,000 rice-planting machines and combines, to mechanize its farming sector, according to a report released by a government-invested research institute on Monday. The Korea Rural Economic Institute (KREI) made the calculation by dividing the total size of the DPRK's arable land by the area that an agricultural machine can cover. (return to top)

12. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap News ("SEOUL TO OK BUSINESS PLANS FOR LOCAL COMPANIES IN N. KOREA COMPLEX", 2005-01-24) reported that ROK plans to endorse plans this week by two local firms to move into a pilot industrial park being built in the DPRK border town of Kaesong, Unification Ministry officials said Monday. JY Solutec Co., an electronic parts maker, and JC Com, an optical communication equipment manufacturer, expect to receive the government's approval as early as Wednesday.

(return to top)

13. DPRK Maritime Border Violation

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA SEIZES TWO IN BOAT FROM THE NORTH", 2005-01-24) reported that the ROK on Sunday seized two DPRK crewmen after their boat drifted into southern waters, officials said. A ROK fishing boat discovered the small DPRK barge in the East Sea and reported it to the ROK maritime police, police said. Such incidents occur frequently along the Korean coast, and the ROK typically returns the boats and crews out of "humanitarian" concerns.

(return to top)

14. ROK Maritime Accident

Yonhap News ("S. KOREAN SHIP RETURNS BRIEFLY FROM SEARCH IN N.K. WATERS", 2005-0--24) reported that a ROK police ship returned from DPRK waters Monday afternoon after failing to find 13 crew members of a ROK boat that sank late last week, police officials said. The Sambong-ho will resume its search Tuesday after receiving food and fuel at the ROK eastern port of Donghae, they said.

(return to top)

15. DPRK on ROK Maritime Border Violation

Yonhap News ("N.K. DENOUNCES ALLEGED S. KOREAN INTRUSION INTO TERRITORIAL WATERS ", 2005-01-24) reported that the DPRK on Monday accused ROK warships of continuing to violate the disputed western sea border, thus stoking tension on the peninsula. The ROK military quickly disputed the claim, saying the DPRK's accusation is based on its unilateral demarcation of the maritime border.

(return to top)

16. DPRK - Japanese Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREAN SHIP DEMANDS FREE CALL AT JAPAN'S PORT", 2005-01-24) reported that the DPRK urged Japan to allow the DPRK's ferry to make port calls to the Japanese city of Niigata, a pro-Pyongyang newspaper reported on Monday. The DPRK accused Japan's Niigata Prefecture of violating various international maritime regulations, the Chosun Sinbo said.

(return to top)

17. ROK on Abductions

Chosun Ilbo ("S. KOREA ASKS CHINA TO RE-INVESTIGATE KIM ABDUCTION", 2005-01-24) reported that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said Monday it asked the PRC to reopen investigations after the Seoul Central Prosecutors' Office forwarded interrogation records of one of the kidnappers, Ryu Young-hwa. The PRC has repeatedly said that it is difficult to investigate the abduction because there is no concrete evidence.

(return to top)

18. Japan on Abductees

Kyodo News ("JAPAN RAPS N. KOREA FOR FAILURE TO RESPOND ON ABDUCTION ISSUE", 2005-01-24) reported that Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi on Monday criticized the DPRK for failing to respond to Japan's protests filed a month ago over Pyongyang's reinvestigation into the cases of 10 missing Japanese citizens. "It is extremely regrettable that it (North Korea) has not formally responded," Yachi told a press conference, reiterating that Japan may have to consider economic sanctions against the DPRK if it does not deal with the issue properly.

(return to top)

19. DPRK Defectors

The Associated Press ("N KOREANS SHELTER AT JAPAN EMBASSY IN BEIJING", 2005-01-24) reported that eight people believed to be from the DPRK were being sheltered at Japan's embassy in the PRC capital, an official said Monday. Five women, one man, and two girls ran into a Japanese school in Beijing shortly before 4 a.m., said Takeshi Ito, a press official at Japan's Foreign Ministry.

(return to top) The Los Angeles Times ("N. KOREANS SEEK ASYLUM IN JAPANESE SCHOOL", 2005-01-24) reported that eight DPRK defectors dashed into a Japanese school in Beijing early today in an apparent bid for asylum. Five women, one man and two girls ran into the school shortly before 4 a.m., said Takeshi Ito, a press official at Japan's Foreign Ministry. The principal called the

Japanese Embassy, which sent a bus to pick them up, he said. They are being sheltered at the embassy. (return to top)

20. US - ROK Relations

Joong Ang Daily ("SEOUL WANTS U.S. ENVOY'S RESIDENCE", 2005-01-24) reported that not only does the ROK government envision relocating the US Embassy to Camp Coiner, it also wants the current US ambassador's residence to be vacated. A Foreign Ministry official said yesterday that the ROK government is considering swapping the former Gyeonggi Girls' High School site, near Deoksu Palace, originally designated as the new US Embassy compound, and the nearby US ambassador's residence in Jeong-dong, both belonging to the US Embassy, in exchange for property that houses Camp Coiner and is owned by the ROK Defense Ministry in Yongsan.

(return to top)

21. ROK-Japanese Relations

Korea Herald ("CONTROVERSY OVER DIPLOMATIC RECORDS DISCLOSURE: WHY NOW, WHY THESE?", 2005-01-24) reported that the two main records that the ROK government released - on the 1974 assassination attempt on then President Park Chung-hee and another on the 1965 Seoul-Tokyo normalization accord - are both related to the administration of the late President Park and are also events that strongly influenced the ROK-Japan relationship in the 1960s and 70s. Because the late president is the father of the main opposition Grand National Party leader Park Geun-hye, the GNP accuses the government of attempting to bring down its leader, while helping the ruling Uri Party to form a stronger basis in its push for the bill on probing the past when parliament holds its February special session.

(return to top)

22. Japan on Women's Fund

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO DISSOLVE SEX SLAVES FUND IN 2007 ", 2005-01-24) reported that a private fund used to compensate Asian women forced into World War II brothels run by the Japanese army will be dissolved in March 2007, officials said Monday. Tomiichi Murayama, the president of the Asian Women's Fund and former prime minister, said that the fund will finish its ongoing projects by then. "By March 2007, all our compensation projects will be completed and we will dissolve the fund as of March 31 in that year," he said in a statement.

(return to top)

23. Japan Opposition Party

Agence France-Presse ("SLAP IN THE FACE TO KOIZUMI AS OPPOSITION WALKS OUT OF PARLIAMENT", 2005-01-24) reported that opposition lawmakers walked out of the Japanese parliament in an unusually strong rebuke to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, accusing him of vagueness on issues ranging from Iraq to economic reforms. Opposition chief Katsuya Okada, leader of the Democratic Party, led the walkout after demanding answers to questions about Koizumi's policy speech to parliament on Friday. Most lawmakers from the Democratic Party and Social Democratic Party left the session, according to a House official. The two parties have a combined 183 seats in the 480-seat chamber.

(return to top)

24. US on Sino-Japanese Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US ENVOY URGES JAPAN TO WORK WITH CHINA", 2005-01-24) reported that the outgoing US ambassador urged Japan to find a way to cooperate with the PRC, saying Tokyo's biggest challenge is how to handle its giant neighbor amid increasing friction. Howard Baker told a forum at the headquarters of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party that the PRC "is growing in economic and political interest." "Japan and China have a mutual responsibility, I think, to find ways to work together productively," he said.

(return to top)

25. Japan on Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PROTESTS AGAINST JAPAN'S PLAN TO WAIVE VISAS FOR TAIWANESE", 2005-01-24) reported that the PRC has protested against a Japanese plan to waive visas for Taiwanese tourists visiting during the 2005 World Exposition to be held in central Japan, a news report said. A high-ranking PRC National Tourist Office official told the Japanese transport minister that it was unacceptable for Japan to require visas for PRC nationals while exempting Taiwanese tourists, the Yomiuri Shimbun said. The protest was made when Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa visited the PRC last week, the Yomiuri said.

(return to top)

26. Taiwan Cabinet Reshuffle

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN'S CABINET RESIGNS EN MASSE AFTER RULING PARTY'S ELECTION DEFEAT", 2005-01-24) reported that Taiwan's Premier Yu Shyi-kun and his cabinet resigned en masse following the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) defeat in December's parliamentary election. The resignations will allow President Chen Shui-bian to reshuffle the cabinet, with the new line-up expected to be endorsed by the opposition-dominated parliament after it opens on February 1.

(return to top)

27. US on PRC Arms Ban

The Associated Press ("BUSH ADMINISTRATION FACES RELATIONS TEST", 2005-01-24) reported that President Bush's search for better relations with Europe in his second term faces an early test next week with a visit by an old ally, British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw. In the process, Straw will convey the unsettling message that the Europeans are united on wanting to sell weapons to the PRC. US arms sales to the Asian giant are banned. The Bush administration worries that European arms could be used against US armed forces should they be called upon to defend Taiwan.

(return to top)

28. Sino - Indian Relations

Reuters ("INDIA, CHINA BOOST TRUST THROUGH NEW DIALOGUE", 2005-01-24) reported that Asian giants India and the PRC agreed to broaden their budding friendship through a new security

and foreign policy dialogue they launched Monday and said this had boosted trust between the two sides. The talks between PRC Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran are the first in a series that will look beyond disputes between the one-time rivals and focus on regional and global security issues and growing economic cooperation.

(return to top)

29. PRC on Tiananmen Square Legacy

The New York Times ("FOR BEIJING STUDENTS NOW, PROTESTS AREN'T EVEN A MEMORY", 2005-01-24) reported that for years, the Communist Party has awaited Mr. Zhao's death with trepidation, Mr. Zhao became a martyr to a generation of Chinese for whom Tiananmen remains an indelible scar. But for many younger Chinese, who did not witness those events, he is a virtual nonentity, banished from history books and the state-controlled news media. At Beijing University his death scarcely seemed to register with the generation of students who were children when the massacre happened. Jiao Guobiao, an outspoken journalism teacher at Beijing University, said political speech was already tightly monitored long before Mr. Zhao's death, a fact that influenced the muted response by students. "It's not that they don't care," Mr. Jiao said. "It's that they don't dare care. Any student who shows a concern for politics will be discriminated against."

(return to top)

30. PRC Land Dispute

The New York Times ("A CHINESE COURT SENTENCES FARMERS WHO PROTESTED A LAND SEIZURE", 2005-01-24) reported that a court in northwest PRC has imposed stiff sentences on farmers who spent almost two years protesting and holding sit-ins in a vain effort to stop a government land seizure. The seizure of farmland by local officials for economic development has become one of the most contentious issues in the PRC countryside. Experts estimate that as many as 70 million farmers have been left without land. Tens of thousands of farmers have petitioned for help in Beijing, and top leaders have promised to protect farmers' rights.

(return to top)

31. PRC Hostages in Iraq

Reuters ("CHINA EAGER FOR RETURN OF FREED HOSTAGES", 2005-01-24) reported that eight PRC hostages freed by guerrillas in Iraq over the weekend are in good spirits and will return home soon, the state media said Monday. The eight, kidnapped this month after arriving in Iraq from the southeastern province of Fujian to search for work, met with PRC diplomats at a mosque in Ramadi, west of Baghdad. All eight are well, the official New China News Agency quoted the PRC Embassy as saying.

(return to top)

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