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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Talks

Korea Herald ("NO NUKE TALKS BEFORE BUSH INAUGURATION", 2004-12-16) reported that the government has pushed aside any notion of resuming the stalled six-nation talks on the DPRK nuclear standoff before US President George W. Bush begins his second term next month, officials here said. "The six-party talks in whatever kind of form are almost impossible before January 20 when the second Bush administration is inaugurated," the senior official told The Korea Herald.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Associated Press ("AMERICAN AMBASSADOR OFFERS NORTH KOREA LIMITED ONE-ON-ONE TALKS", 2004-12-16) reported that the Bush administration is willing to hold limited face-to-face talks with the DPRK and will continue to help feed the country, but it will not sweeten a proposed trade of economic concessions for a halt in development of nuclear weapons, the US ambassador to the ROK said Wednesday. Maintaining a tough line, Ambassador Christopher Hill said, "They have to come to the table and respond to the proposal," which includes guarantees the US will not invade the DPRK.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL CANCELS TRIP AIMED AT REVIVING 6-NATION TALKS", 2004-12-16) reported that in a sign the six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear arms program are unlikely to resume soon, the ROK's deputy foreign minister, Lee Soo-hyuck, abruptly cancelled a planned visit to the PRC this week that was scheduled with the aim of reviving the negotiations. A senior ROK government official said that under the current circumstances the government could see little benefit coming from Mr. Lee's visit.

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4. Japan on DPRK Sanctions

Associated Press ("JAPAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS TOKYO LIKELY TO SLAP SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA", 2004-12-16) reported that Japan's foreign minister said Thursday his country

would likely slap sanctions on the DPRK to punish it for neglecting Tokyo's request for a thorough investigation into Japanese kidnapping victims. "There is no doubt (economic sanction) is one likely option at some point," Nobutaka Machimura said. "But we have to think carefully whether to use it immediately or not."

[\(return to top\)](#) Reuters ("N. KOREA ECONOMIC SANCTIONS 'ONE OPTION'--JAPAN", 2004-12-16) reported that economic sanctions against the DPRK are "one option," but care is needed in deciding whether to take that step, Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura said, a day after Pyongyang warned Japan that imposing sanctions would be tantamount to war. Asked about the DPRK's remarks, Machimura said: "Japan has no desire to engage in war with any country and will try to resolve any problems through talks. This is Japan's basic stance, as you well know." [\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("KOIZUMI WARY OVER ISSUE OF SANCTIONS ON NORTH KOREA", 2004-1-16) reported that one day before a ROK-Japan summit, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi expressed caution on employing sanctions against the DPRK. "I understand that the Japanese people are outraged. There is an opinion that negotiations are no longer needed and that we should exercise pressure," said Mr. Koizumi in a press conference with ROK reporters. "Nevertheless, I believe we need to examine all circumstances and see how North Korea reacts." [\(return to top\)](#)

5. DPRK on Sanctions

Los Angeles Times ("ANY JAPAN ECONOMIC PENALTIES MEAN 'WAR,' N. KOREA SAYS", 2004-1-16) reported that the DPRK lashed out at the Japanese government Wednesday with a warning that any move to impose economic sanctions on Pyongyang would be seen as a "declaration of war." The statement by an unnamed Foreign Ministry spokesman reflected the hardening relations between the countries at a time when Japan and its allies are trying to woo Pyongyang back to talks over its suspected nuclear weapons program. The DPRK also said it might call for Japan to be removed from the six-party nuclear weapons talks.

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6. US on DPRK Sanctions

Agence France Presse ("US PRUDENT ON POSSIBLE JAPANESE SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA", 2004-12-16) reported that the US backed Japan's efforts to resolve a dispute with the DPRK over its abduction of Japanese nationals during the Cold War but stayed prudent about Tokyo's possible use of sanctions. "The Japanese government, the Japanese Diet (parliament), the United States government, all believe that North Korea needs to solve the abductee issue," the spokesman said. "What are the appropriate methods and means to pursue that issue is a decision for the Japanese government to make, but we're very supportive of their efforts."

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7. US on Inter Korean Economic Cooperation

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. CONCERNED KAESONG PROJECT MAY FEED N.K. MILITARY", 2004-12-16) reported that the US State Department said that while it supports the Kaesong Industrial Complex project between the two Koreas, the US remains adamant that its permission must be sought before any attempts are made to export to the DPRK any US-designated strategic goods. Diplomatic officials said that despite the US supporting the Kaesong project in principle, the US has significant complaints and concerns about the ROK government's separate pushing of intra-Korean economic cooperation while efforts to resolve the DPRK nuclear issue are stalled.

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8. DPRK on Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Times ("NK CASTS CHILL ON KAESONG EUPHORIA", 2004-12-16) reported that a high ranking DPRK official expressed strong discontent over the ROK's lackluster attitude toward the Kaesong Industrial Complex, just north of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). "The consensus here is that the South is responsible for breaking its pledge to complete production lines for 15 firms this year," claimed the DPRK official, who declined to be identified.

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9. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Donga Ilbo ("“NORTH KOREA HINTED AT ITS RETURN TO THE NPT THIS APRIL, THEN REVOKED”", 2004-12-16) reported that the Asahi Daily reported, quoting an informed Japanese government source, that the DPRK hinted that it was willing to return to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) this April during the prior consultation process for the DPRK-Japan summit. The newspaper conveyed, however, that the DPRK abruptly changed its attitude regarding its return to the NPT after Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's second visit to the DPRK was decided in the middle of May.

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10. US on DPRK Drug Trafficking

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. MAY CHALLENGE PYONGYANG'S DRUG TRAFFICKING: RFA", 2004-12-16) reported that Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported Thursday that more than 50 DPRK diplomats have been arrested on drug-smuggling charges over the last two decades, prompting the US administration to consider picking up on the issue shortly. RFA quoted a US official who requested anonymity as saying he was certain the DPRK government was funding its foreign embassies with narcotics-derived revenue.

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11. Mongolian - DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("N.K. INVITES MONGOLIAN LEADER TO PYONGYANG", 2004-12-16) reported that Mongolian President Natsagiin Bagabandi will soon make an official visit to the DPRK at the invitation of the DPRK's second-in-command and, President of the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly Kim Young-nam, revealed the state-run Korean Central News Agency. According to ROK government officials, given that Mongolian Foreign Minister Munkh-Orgil Tsend recently announced that his country would not repatriate DPRK defectors who came across the PRC border and maintain its current policy of accepting them, attention is drawn to whether Mongolia and the DPRK will discuss the issue.

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12. Russo - DPRK Relations

ITAR-TASS ("OFFICIAL SAYS NORTH KOREA LOOKING TO BOOST TRADE WITH RUSSIA", 2004-

12-16) reported that the level of trade between Russia and the DPRK does not correspond to the high level of political relations between the two countries, a department head of the DPRK Foreign Trade Ministry's third directorate, has said in an interview published by ITAR-TASS. The DPRK was very interested in modernizing and resuming the work of plants built with Soviet help that exported their products to the Soviet Union. These include the (?Taedong) battery factory and the (?Renson) ball-bearing factory. Mineral resources and energy were other potential areas of cooperation.

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13. Sino - DPRK Relations

Kyodo News ("CHINA HUNTS FOR OFFICIAL WHO GAMBLED \$334,000 IN N. KOREA", 2004-1-16) reported that authorities from northeast PRC are looking for a missing public official who gambled 2.77 million yuan in public funds at a casino in the DPRK, an official website said Thursday. From January through November this year, Cai spent the money at the Emperor Club Center Hotel in the city of Rason, an economic development zone just over the northeastern border in the DPRK, the statement says. Cai is now missing, the statement says.

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14. DPRK Energy Sector

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("POWER STATIONS IN MT PAEKTU AREA", 2004-12-16) reported that the Mt Paektu area in the northern tip of the DPRK has taken on new looks. In recent years five power stations have been constructed and an existing one reconstructed along the Rimyongsu Stream which has its origin at the foot of Jong Peak, a revolutionary battle site in Samjiyon County.

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15. DPRK Climate

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("ABNORMAL WINTER WEATHER", 2004-12-16) reported that the DPRK has been affected by abnormal weather in winter in recent years. The cycle of three cold days and four warm days, the inherent feature of the winter in the DPRK, has been rare. On the contrary, warm days continue and it often rains much. This year there was much rainfall around the beginning of winter as compared with other years.

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16. DPRK Defectors

Joongang Ilbo ("BEIJING KOREAN SCHOOL CLOSED AFTER DEFECTIONS", 2004-12-16) reported that a DPRK school in Beijing was shut down yesterday following a series of asylum bids by DPRK defectors. The front gate of the ROK International School in Beijing was closed after a Chinese school foundation, which owns the Korean school's building, barred students from entering. The Korean school leases a building inside the Chinese school's compound.

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17. Inter - Korean Family Reunions

Korea Times ("REUNION CENTER WILL BRING MORE FAMILIES TOGETHER", 2004-12-16) reported that "We will focus more on humanitarian efforts to foster reconciliation between the two Koreas," the new president of Korean National Red Cross (KNRC) said Thursday. In a press conference after the inaugural ceremony, KNRC president Han Wan-sang promised to endeavor to help more families separated during the 1950-53 Korean War meet their loved ones more easily.

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18. IAEA on ROK Nuclear Issue

Korea Times ("IAEA COMPLETES SPECIAL INSPECTIONS", 2004-12-16) reported that the UN nuclear watchdog has virtually finished its special inspections of the last three months into the ROK's past nuclear activities, officials said Thursday. According to the Science and Technology Ministry, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) informed the ROK in a meeting in Seoul last week of its plan to end its "special" inspections and return to "routine" checks.

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19. US Missile Defense Program

The New York Times ("DEFENSE MISSILE FOR U.S. SYSTEM FAILS TO LAUNCH", 2004-12-16) reported that an important test of the US' fledgling missile defense system ended in failure early Wednesday as an interceptor rocket failed to launch on cue from the Marshall Islands, the Pentagon said. After a rocket carrying a mock warhead as a target was launched from Kodiak, Alaska, the interceptor, which was intended to go aloft 16 minutes later and home in on the target 100 miles over the earth, automatically shut down because of "an unknown anomaly," according to the Missile Defense Agency of the Defense Department.

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20. US - ROK Military Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. CIVILIAN FROM YONGSAN IN COURT AT LAST", 2004-12-16) reported that after four years of refusing to face a guilty verdict from a ROK court in a pollution case, Albert McFarland, an American civilian employee of the US military, made his first appearance yesterday at an appeals hearing and offered an apology. Local prosecutors said Mr. McFarland, a former deputy head of the US 8th Army's mortuary at Yongsan Garrison, had ordered toxic chemicals discharged into the Han River in March 2001.

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21. ROK - Japanese Relations

Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO RELEASE DOCUMENTS WITH JAPAN", 2004-12-16) reported that diplomatic documents exchanged between the ROK and Japan decades ago while normalizing ties may be released to the public before the end of this year, Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon said yesterday. The ROK established diplomatic ties with Japan in 1965 accepting \$500 million in soft loans and grants as compensation for Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule over the Korean Peninsula. The

move drew severe criticism because Japan was not required to compensate individual victims of the colonial era.

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22. Japan - ROK History and Relations

Kyodo News ("2005 SHOULD BE MARKED AS CENTENARY OF JAPAN'S KOREA RULE: MACHIMURA", 2004-12-16) reported that Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura indicated Thursday the year 2005 should be recognized as the centenary of an effective start of Japan's rule of the Korean Peninsula but denied he tried to justify the Japanese conduct. "The year of 1905 is important as it marked the clear, first step" of Japan's rule of the peninsula, Machimura said in a speech in Tokyo.

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23. Japan Flag Law

The New York Times ("TOKYO'S FLAG LAW: PROUD PATRIOTISM, OR INDOCTRINATION?", 2004-12-16) reported that Japan long was ambivalent toward its flag and anthem, and it was only in 1999 that the government made them legal national symbols. Since 1990, public school teachers have been told they "should instruct" students to pay respect to both. But in October 2003, Tokyo made respect compulsory at graduation and enrollment ceremonies in public schools, and disobedience punishable. Board or school officials instruct sitting teachers to stand and sing - and take the names of those who refuse.

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24. US - Japan Troop Realignment

Kyodo News ("GOV'T TO CONTINUE LEASING OKINAWA LAND TO U.S. BASE UNTIL DEC. 2005", 2004-12-16) reported that the Japanese government will continue the compulsory leasing of some land in Okinawa Prefecture to a US military base through December next year, moving back by seven months the timetable for returning the land to its owners, the Defense Facilities Administration Agency said Thursday. The agency said the land will return to the owners at the end of April 2006, since it will take about four months for things to return to normal after the functions of the Sobe site are relocated to Kin.

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25. Sino - Japanese History and Relations

Donga Ilbo ("TOKYO HIGH COURT, "STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR CLAIM EXPIRED"", 2004-1-16) reported that the Tokyo High Court turned down a claim for compensation filed by those who had been forced to serve as "comfort women" for the Japanese army during WWII, while acknowledging and authenticating that the Japanese troops had set up a facility where those women served. Tokyo newspaper reported on December 16 that the court ruled on December 15 against four PRC ex-comfort women who filed a claim for 92 million yen in compensation and requested the Japanese government's apology.

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26. Sino - Japanese Maritime Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, CHINA AGREE ON FISHING BOAT OPERATIONS IN EEZS", 2004-12-16) reported that Japan and the PRC agreed Thursday to make more equal by 2007 the number of their fishing boats operating in each other's exclusive economic zone, Japanese officials said. As the first step, the number of PRC vessels that can operate in Japan's EEZ will be cut to 655 in 2005, down 245 from 2004, and that of Japanese boats in the PRC's EEZ to 570, down five, the officials said.

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27. Japan and Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN OKS VISA FOR EX-TAIWAN PRESIDENT", 2004-12-16) reported that Japan plans to issue a visa for former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui to visit this year, a government spokesman said Thursday, a decision that the PRC urged Tokyo to reconsider to avoid damaging ties between the two countries. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said the decision to allow Lee to visit wouldn't change Tokyo's policy of having diplomatic ties with the PRC but not Taiwan.

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28. Vanuatu and Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("VANUATU'S NEW GOVERNMENT SAYS IT HAS SCRAPPED AGREEMENT GIVING TAIWAN RECOGNITION", 2004-12-16) reported that Vanuatu's new government says it has scuttled a deal that the South Pacific nation's former prime minister made granting Taiwan diplomatic recognition. Vanuatu's new Foreign Minister Sato Kilman said late Wednesday that his government "has revoked all agreements made by Vohor with Taiwan." He added that diplomatic links with Taiwan were never formalized by the Vanuatu government.

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29. PRC Cultural Resurgence

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA EMBRACES TRADITIONAL WAYS AS IT THROWS OUT COMMUNIST IDEOLOGIES", 2004-12-16) reported that Confucian values such as loyalty, humility and filial piety have been the basis of Chinese culture for 2,000 years but some doctrines were condemned by the PRC as outdated and oppressive. But today Confucianism, together with many Chinese folk traditions and beliefs also regarded by the PRC authorities as backward superstitions, have seen a strong revival.

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30. PRC Workers Unrest

The New York Times ("WORKERS DEMAND UNION AT WAL-MART SUPPLIER IN CHINA", 2004-1-16) reported that Since Friday work has stopped inside the Uniden factory's walls here, where 12,000 workers, mostly young women from the PRC's poor interior provinces, make wireless phones, which the Japanese manufacturer supplies in large number to the giant American retailer Wal-Mart. The PRC's laws tightly proscribe public demonstrations, so the women found another way to vent

their anger over their wages, and what they said were many other abusive work conditions. They met secretly to draw up a list of demands, and then walked off the job.

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