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I. NAPSNet

- 1. [US on DPRK Counterfeiting](#)
- 2. [ROK on DPRK Counterfeiting](#)
- 3. [Expert on DPRK Counterfeiting](#)
- 4. [Inter-Korean IT Cooperation](#)
- 5. [DPRK-Japanese Bilateral Talks](#)
- 6. [ROK Anti-Communist Law Violation](#)
- 7. [DPRK Defectors](#)
- 8. [Japan on PRC Military](#)
- 9. [Japanese Whaling](#)
- 10. [PRC on Economy](#)
- 11. [PRC on Relations with US](#)
- 12. [PRC Energy Supply](#)
- 13. [PRC Chemical Spill](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

I. NAPSNet

1. US on DPRK Counterfeiting

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. ENVOY 'HAS EVIDENCE' OF N.KOREAN COUNTERFEITING", 2005-12-22) reported that US Ambassador to Korea Alexander Vershbow says there is evidence that a DPRK government agency is involved in counterfeiting US currency. He made the claim in an interview with broadcaster SBS to be aired on Sunday. "I even know some cases where North Korean government officials were caught attempting to deposit forged dollars," the ambassador said. "In charging North Korea, I have taken into account material, circumstantial and eyewitness evidence, and the evidence I got this time is very reliable."

[\(return to top\)](#)

2. ROK on DPRK Counterfeiting

The Korea Times ("SEOUL ASKS US TO DISCLOSE MORE ON NK'S ILLICIT ACTS", 2005-12-22) reported that the ROK has asked the US to release more information on the DPRK's counterfeiting to determine the facts of the matter, a diplomatic source said. "We think there should be more information disclosed about the bogus \$100 bills North Korea is believed to have circulated," the source said.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("OFFICIALS FRET OVER SEOUL COUNTERFEIT STANCE", 2005-1-22) reported that while Seoul is sticking to its official line that there is no conclusive evidence of the DPRK counterfeiting, some officials here worry that the government's fear of stirring up the DPRK and perhaps jeopardizing the six party talks has made its position with Washington untenable. A ROK intelligence official told the Joongang Daily yesterday that the DPRK's counterfeiting activities have been monitored since the early 1990s and that evidence gathered during that period is enough to give credibility to Washington's claim that Pyongyang has manufactured forged U. dollar bills. "With current government policies in place that want to keep the North's regime afloat, the government wants to delay acting on the issue as long as possible," the official said. "North Korean counterfeiting activities are nothing new, and they are a known lifeline for the North." [\(return to top\)](#)

3. Expert on DPRK Counterfeiting

Chosun Ilbo ("S.KOREAN EXPERTS AGREE BOGUS DOLLAR TRAIL LEADS NORTH", 2005-12-22) reported that ROK currency experts agree it is highly likely that intricately forged US\$100 bills are made in the DPRK, as Washington has maintained. The notes are made with paper almost identical to that used for official US currency. "What the U.S. uses in printing currency is highly classified, and because analysis of the materials is impossible, 100 percent exact replicas are also impossible," says Seo Tae-suk of the Korea Exchange Bank, an expert at spotting counterfeit banknotes. "But in these bills, the materials are so similar that the sense of touch cannot distinguish them, and in that regard the fakes are 90 percent identical to the official currency."

[\(return to top\)](#)

4. Inter-Korean IT Cooperation

Yonhap News ("S. KOREA EYES CLOSER COOPERATION WITH N. KOREA IN IT SECTOR ", 2005-12-22) reported that ROK policymakers and experts in the information technology industry held a forum Thursday on strengthening inter-Korean cooperation in the sector. They claimed the ROK has

to pursue close cooperation with the DPRK in fields where the communist country has competitiveness so both countries can benefit and narrow their ever-widening digital divide.

[\(return to top\)](#)

5. DPRK-Japanese Bilateral Talks

The Korea Times ("JAPAN, NORTH KOREA SET FOR TOUGH NEGOTIATIONS", 2005-12-22) reported that Japan appointed a special envoy to represent Tokyo at proposed working group talks with the DPRK. The Foreign Ministry in Tokyo named Tadamichi Yamamoto, who currently acts as a special ambassador on antiterrorism and Iraq issues, to cover the newly created post.

[\(return to top\)](#)

6. ROK Anti-Communist Law Violation

Yonhap News ("PRO-PYONGYANG PROFESSOR FACES INDICTMENT ", 2005-12-22) reported that a pro-DPRK professor in the ROK will be indicted without physical detention Friday for violating the country's anti-communist law after writing a series of columns and papers glorifying the 1950-53 Korean War and supporting the communist state, prosecutors said Thursday. Kang Jeong-koo, a sociology professor at Seoul's Dongguk University, has been at the center of an ideological rift in the country since he openly argued the fratricidal war was a justifiable civil war for reunification by the DPRK.

[\(return to top\)](#)

7. DPRK Defectors

Donga Ilbo ("CHINA LETS NORTH KOREAN DEFECTORS LEAVE", 2005-12-22) reported that according to the Tokyo Shimbun the PRC government has allowed the 16 DPRK defectors staying at the Japanese embassy in the PRC after making their way into a Japanese school in Beijing earlier this year to leave for a third country.

[\(return to top\)](#)

8. Japan on PRC Military

The New York Times ("CHILL GROWS AS JAPAN CALLS CHINA A MILITARY THREAT", 2005-12-22) reported that with diplomatic relations between Japan and the PRC already chilled by successive events this year, the Japanese foreign minister bluntly described the PRC's military build-up as a threat today, immediately drawing an angry response from Beijing. In a news conference, the Japanese foreign minister, Taro Aso, said the PRC was "a neighboring country with one billion people, nuclear arms, military spending that has shown double-digit growth for the last 17 years, with extremely little transparency." "It's becoming a considerable threat," Mr. Aso said.

[\(return to top\)](#)

9. Japanese Whaling

Reuters ("JAPANESE WHALERS, GREENPEACE IN OCEAN BATTLE", 2005-12-22) reported that a Japanese whaling fleet and Greenpeace environmental activists are involved in a stand-off in the

remote Southern Ocean near the coast of Antarctica with the two sides accusing each other of ramming their vessels. Two Greenpeace ships Esperanza and Arctic Sunrise launched inflatable boats on Wednesday to harass Japanese "catcher boats," positioning them between the whale and harpoon gun.

[\(return to top\)](#)

10. PRC on Economy

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SAYS ITS NEW ECONOMIC MIGHT NOT A THREAT TO ANYONE", 2005-12-22) reported that the PRC has once again reiterated its intentions to rise peacefully as a global power, insisting that its new found economic might would be beneficial to the world. "Building a harmonious world of sustained peace and common prosperity is a common wish of the people throughout the world as well as the lofty goal of China," said a central government paper.

[\(return to top\)](#)

11. PRC on Relations with US

Reuters ("CHINA PUNISHED GENERAL FOR TALK OF STRIKE AT U.S.", 2005-12-22) reported that a PRC general has been punished for telling reporters that the PRC could use nuclear weapons in the event of US intervention in a conflict with Taiwan, military sources said Thursday. Major General Zhu Chenghu received an "administrative demerit" recently from the National Defense University said the sources, who requested anonymity. "He misspoke," one source said. "But the punishment could not be too harsh or we would be seen as too weak toward the United States." An administrative demerit is the second lightest punishment on a scale of one to five, but still potentially damaging to an officer's career.

[\(return to top\)](#)

12. PRC Energy Supply

Agence France Presse ("CHINA AND OPEC START ENERGY DIALOGUE", 2005-12-22) reported that the PRC and the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) started an energy dialogue aimed at ensuring a steady supply for the world's fastest growing energy user, officials said. OPEC president Sheikh Ahmad Fahd al-Sabah, who is also Kuwait's energy minister, met PRC Vice Premier Zeng Peiyuan and Mai Kai, head of PRC's key economic planning body, the National Development and Reform Commission. In a joint statement, Beijing and OPEC said they had established a future cooperation framework and exchanged views on energy issues -- "in particular, the security of supply and demand, in order to enhance market stability."

[\(return to top\)](#)

13. PRC Chemical Spill

Agence France Presse ("CHINA OFFICIALS SAY WATER SAFE DESPITE CHEMICAL", 2005-12-22) reported that PRC officials have played down concerns of a toxic chemical slick floating toward a major city, saying emergency measures and water from other rivers would ensure safe drinking supplies. The cities of Guangzhou, close to Hong Kong, and Foshan had been put on alert over the spill of cadmium from a smelting works that has been flowing down the Beijiang river, PRC's second environmental crisis in weeks. "By releasing water from three reservoirs to dilute the pollution, the

cadmium level will meet safe levels by the time the water reaches Guangzhou city," said a spokesman surnamed Xiao at the government information office in Guangdong province.

[\(return to top\)](#) RIA Novosti ("TOXIC SLICK FROM CHINA REACHES KHABAROVSK SUBURBS ", 2005-12-22) reported that the massive toxic slick in the Amur River containing potentially lethal benzene reached the suburbs of the city of Khabarovsk at 1:00 p.m. Moscow time Thursday, the regional Emergency Situations Ministry said. Experts said the slick, which is 190 km (118 miles) long, is expected to move past the city of Khabarovsk by December 25 and could reach the cities of Amursk and Komsomolsk-on-Amur on January 2. The benzene concentration did not exceed 0.4% of maximum allowable levels, experts added. [\(return to top\)](#)

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