

# NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, December 23, 2004

---

## Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, December 23, 2004", NAPSNet Daily Report, December 23, 2004, <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-thursday-december-23-2004/>

---

# NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, December 23, 2004

NAPSNet Daily Report Thursday, December 23, 2004

1. [NAPSNet Schedule](#)

I. United States

- 2. [US-DPRK Relations](#)
- 3. [US on DPRK Nuclear Talks](#)
- 4. [ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)
- 5. [ROK-US Relations on DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)
- 6. [ROK-US Relations](#)
- 7. [ROK on USFK](#)
- 8. [Mongolia on DPRK Nuclear Issue](#)
- 9. [DPRK Combat Readiness](#)
- 10. [US Special Envoy to the DPRK](#)
- 11. [Inter - Korean Cultural Exchange](#)
- 12. [DPRK on Inter - Korean Relations](#)
- 13. [Inter - Korean Tourism](#)
- 14. [Inter - Korean Relations](#)
- 15. [Inter - Korean Food Aid](#)
- 16. [Japan on DPRK Sanctions](#)
- 17. [DPRK on Abductees](#)
- 18. [DPRK on DPRK - Japanese Relations](#)
- 19. [DPRK Defectors in the PRC](#)
- 20. [US on PRC DPRK Defector Policy](#)
- 21. [Protesters on DPRK Defectors](#)
- 22. [Vietnam on DPRK Defectors](#)

23. [DPRK Defectors in Russia](#)
24. [ROK on DPRK Defectors](#)
25. [Sino - DPRK Relations](#)
26. [ROK-Japanese Cultural Relations](#)
27. [Terror Alert for ROK Troops in Iraq](#)
28. [ROK on Stem Cell Research](#)
29. [ROK on Bird Flu Outbreak](#)
30. [Japan Bird Flu Outbreak](#)
31. [Japan on UNSC Bid](#)
32. [Sino - Japanese Relations](#)
33. [Russo - Japanese Relations](#)
34. [Russo-US Energy Cooperation](#)
35. [Russian Energy Security](#)
36. [Russia Yukos Auction](#)
37. [Sino - Russian Trade](#)
38. [Sino - US Relations](#)
39. [US on Cross Strait Relations](#)
40. [Sino - Indian Relations](#)
41. [Sino - Iraqi Relations](#)
42. [Sino - Venezuelan Relations](#)
43. [PRC Durg Trafficking](#)
44. [PRC Internet Crackdown](#)
45. [PRC Space Program](#)
46. [PRC Drought Forecast](#)

[Preceding NAPSNet Report](#)

## **I. United States**

### **2. US-DPRK Relations**

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. NOTIFIED NORTH KOREA OF "RED LINE" LAST YEAR", 2004-12-23) reported that according to US special envoy to the DPRK Jack Pritchard on December 23, the US notified the DPRK of the so-called "nuclear red line," which means that the US will take strong measures if the DPRK transfers nuclear materials to a third country in August last year. Mr. Pritchard also added, "It is obvious that the Bush administration does not care about North Korea's possession of a small amount of nuclear material."

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

### **3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks**

Kyodo News ("STATE DEPT. RAISES DOUBTS ABOUT DIALOGUE WITH N. KOREA IN REPORT", 2004-12-23) reported that the US State Department raised doubts in a recently issued annual report over pursuing dialogue with the DPRK if Pyongyang continues to reject resuming the stalled six-way talks on its nuclear ambitions. "Continuing stalemate could call into question utility of either bilateral or multilateral negotiations as a means to resolve the crisis," the department said in the

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

## **4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue**

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER VISITS U.S. TROOPS, CALLS ON NORTH KOREA TO ABANDON NUCLEAR WEAPONS", 2004-12-23) reported that the ROK's foreign minister on Thursday praised front-line US troops protecting the border with the DPRK, and called on the DPRK to abandon a quest for nuclear weapons that has raised tensions on the divided Korean Peninsula. "We firmly believe that now is the time for the North Korean leadership to make the strategic decision to give up its nuclear programs, including uranium enrichment programs, in a thorough and transparent manner," Ban said Thursday, according to Yonhap. "Along with the other countries, (the ROK) and the US will continue our efforts to convince the North Korean leadership of the wisdom of an early solution to this serious problem."

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

## **5. ROK-US Relations on DPRK Nuclear Issue**

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL, U.S. FAIL TO SEE EYE-TO-EYE ON NORTH: MINISTER", 2004-12-23) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young said on a visit to the PRC Thursday that recent statements from US administration figures concerning the collapse or modification of the DPRK regime diverged greatly from the position held by Seoul. During a discussion with reporters in Shanghai on Thursday, Chung explained that in the future, the ROK would deal with the DPRK nuclear issue in accordance with its own needs rather than American ideas.

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

## **6. ROK-US Relations**

JoongAng Ilbo ("RELATIONS WITH U.S. AT A HIGH POINT, MINISTER SAYS", 2004-12-23) reported that Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon said on Wednesday in an exclusive interview with the JoongAng Ilbo that the current ROK-US alliance is stronger than ever. Mr. Ban said his assessment is based on recent strides made on major issues. "The reduction of US forces, the relocation of Yongsan Garrison, the deployment of South Korean troops to Iraq - we have solved relatively smoothly important issues related to our alliance," said Mr. Ban during the interview at the Foreign Ministry. He said the ROK would seek to improve its ties with the US not only on security issues but also economic areas along with cultural exchanges.

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

## **7. ROK on USFK**

Chosun Ilbo ("FOREIGN MINISTER CONGRATULATES U.S. TROOPS' EFFORTS", 2004-12-23) reported that Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon paid a visit Thursday to Camp Red Cloud, headquarters of the US 2nd Infantry Division in Uijeongbu, Gyeonggi Province to express the ROK's gratitude for the role US soldiers have played in securing and maintaining peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula. During a luncheon with 80 rank-and-file troops and officers, the minister said that US soldiers' sacrifice and devotion have helped the ROK elevate itself from the ruins of war to become a democratic and capitalist power in the region and the world.

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

## **8. Mongolia on DPRK Nuclear Issue**

Agence France Presse ("MONGOLIAN LEADER URGES PEACEFUL END TO NUCLEAR IMPASSE DURING N KOREA TRIP", 2004-12-23) reported that Mongolian President Natsagiin Bagabandi has completed a rare visit to the DPRK after urging a peaceful solution to the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, reports said Thursday. "The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the preservation of its peace and security conform to the interests of the region and the rest of the world," Bagabandi said Tuesday.

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

## **9. DPRK Combat Readiness**

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREAN ARMY CHIEF ORDER TROOPS TO BE 'COMBAT READY'", 2004-12-23) reported that the DPRK's army chief on Thursday ordered his 1.1 million-strong military to be combat ready, saying the DPRK must be prepared for the US' imperialist designs. "All the servicepersons should firmly arm themselves with the indomitable anti-imperialist, anti-US fighting spirit ... and keep themselves in full combat readiness," said Kim, according to the official Korean Central News Agency.

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

## **10. US Special Envoy to the DPRK**

Donga Ilbo ("SPECIAL ENVOY OF HUMAN RIGHTS TO NORTH KOREA WILL PROBABLY BE A HARD-LINER", 2004-12-23) reported that the matter of who will be appointed as the first special envoy of human rights dispatched to the DPRK, which was effective from August 2003, is gaining much attention in the diplomatic sector. Among Washington's diplomatic services, the general consensus that the keyword in next year's Korean Peninsula policies will be "human rights" is being reached. The White House and the Senate are currently deliberating on the selection of the special envoy.

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

## **11. Inter - Korean Cultural Exchange**

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL MOVES TO CURB FALLOUT OF 'KOREAN WAVE,'" , 2004-12-23) reported that these days, in major DPRK cities such as Pyongyang, young people are freely using ROK speech mannerisms that have hitherto been unheard of in the DPRK. Observers interpret the adoption of informal gestures and vernacular changes prevalent in Seoul to a new association among the younger Northern generation of this behavior with high levels of education and culture. A former high-ranking official who recently entered the ROK as a defector said, "These days, among young North Koreans, South Korean culture is rapidly spreading." Commenting on these phenomena, the defector said, "They're due to the influence of South Korean dramas and movies."

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

## **12. DPRK on Inter - Korean Relations**

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA PRAISES INTER-KOREAN COOPERATION", 2004-12-23) reported that the DPRK's central news agency on Thursday praised the inter-Korean cooperation for reunification made this year. The Korean Central News Agency reported that various activities to pave the way for independent reunification were carried out under the banner of "the Korean-nation-first spirit" this year.

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

## **13. Inter - Korean Tourism**

Korea Times ("KNTO TO SET UP TOURISM CENTER IN KAESONG", 2004-12-23) reported that the Korea National Tourism Organization (KNTO) plans to set up a tourism center in Kaesong, a DPRK border town just north of the Demilitarized Zone, next year to promote inter-Korean travel. The state-run tourism agency revealed the plan at its building in central Seoul on Thursday, while announcing its projects for 2005. The plan will include not only development of the tourism complex, tentatively named "Peace Tourism Center," but also some safeguard measures to make sure tourism can continue without being influenced by any political developments in the divided Korean peninsula.

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

## **14. Inter - Korean Relations**

Yonhap ("S. KOREA SEEKS JOINT POSTAL STAMP ISSUE WITH N. KOREA IN 2005", 2004-12-23) reported that the ROK is seeking to conduct the first joint issue of postal stamps with the DPRK next year, the national postal agency said Thursday. Korea Post said it has submitted the plan to the Ministry of Unification for cooperation. The year 2005 will mark the fifth anniversary of the 2000 inter-Korean summit and the 60th anniversary of Korea's 1945 liberation from Japanese colonial rule.

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

## **15. Inter - Korean Food Aid**

Yonhap ("GOV'T READY TO DONATE 100,000 TONS OF CORN TO NORTH KOREA", 2004-12-23) reported that the government will ship 100,000 tons of corn it pledged to donate to the DPRK this year through the World Food Program, starting late this month, officials said Thursday. The state-invested Agricultural & Fishery Marketing Corp. is preparing to buy corn from the PRC and send it directly from a PRC port to the DPRK, officials at the Unification Ministry said.

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

## **16. Japan on DPRK Sanctions**

Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPANESE PREMIER SAYS PUBLIC FAVORS SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA", 2004-12-23) reported that on the evening of 22 December, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi gave the following comments on economic sanctions against the DPRK: "We have to think of both dialogue and pressure, including sanctions, comprehensively. I think the people's honest feeling

is that sanctions ought to be invoked," thus indicating that he will consider Japan's response, including the possibility of invoking sanctions, upon observing how the DPRK reacts to the abduction issue.

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

## **17. DPRK on Abductees**

Yonhap ("N. KOREA DEMANDS RETURN OF ALLEGED REMAINS OF JAPANESE ABDUCTEE", 2004-12-23) reported that the DPRK on Thursday demanded the return of remains it claims belong to a Japanese woman who was abducted to the DPRK several decades ago, and claimed DNA testing in Japan to verify the authenticity of the remains had been manipulated. The DPRK's Korea Central News Agency claimed the remains of Megumi Yokota, who was abducted by DPRK agents in 1977, were personally handed over to Japan by the abductee's DPRK husband, and demanded the remains and the test results be returned to her spouse.

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

## **18. DPRK on DPRK - Japanese Relations**

Yonhap ("N.K. MEDIA REPORTS GERMAN COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF NAZI REGIME", 2004-12-23) reported that a DPRK radio station reported Germany's additional cash compensation to Russian victims of the Nazi regime in a bid to pressure Japan to compensate Koreans for its colonial past. "The total amount of compensation to be paid this time is 92 million euros (about US\$124 million), according to the Russian fund for mutual understanding and reconciliation," the DPRK's Korean Central Broadcasting Station said.

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

## **19. DPRK Defectors in the PRC**

Associated Press ("44 NORTH KOREANS LEAVE EMBASSY IN CHINA", 2004-12-23) reported that forty-four DPRK defectors who spent three months in the Canadian Embassy here in the PRC's biggest known asylum bid to date have been allowed to leave the country, an embassy spokesman said Thursday. The group, which used ladders to scale the compound's spiked fence in September, was "recently released" and left for a third country, spokesman Ian Burchett said. He would not say when they left, where they were going or whether the third country was the final destination.

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

## **20. US on PRC DPRK Defector Policy**

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. SENATOR CONDEMNS CHINESE EMBASSY'S "ABUSE" OF POWER", 2004-1-23) reported that it was learned Thursday that US Senator Sam Brownback sent a letter to the PRC Ambassador to the US Yang Jiechi expressing regret in connection with a Dec. 9 call by the PRC Embassy in Seoul to Grand National Party lawmaker Hwang Woo-yea, warning him that his involvement in an international campaign to stop Beijing's forced repatriation of DPRK defectors would have unspecified consequences. According to the office of Rep. Hwang Woo-yea, Brownback said in his letter to the PRC ambassador that the warning issued by the PRC Embassy in Seoul was an abuse of embassy authority.

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

## **21. Protesters on DPRK Defectors**

Los Angeles Times ("WORLDWIDE PROTEST DRAWS ATTENTION TO PLIGHT OF NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES", 2004-12-23) reported that joining a one-day worldwide protest, human rights activists in Los Angeles rallied outside the PRC Consulate in Los Angeles on Wednesday to denounce Beijing's policy of repatriating DPRK refugees. "People who have escaped North Korea to seek food and shelter are forcibly taken back to North Korea, where they are thrown into jail, starved -- sometimes are killed," said Koreatown attorney William O. Kil. "If China wants to earn respect as a world leader, it has to earn the respect by upholding human rights and value for human lives."

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

## **22. Vietnam on DPRK Defectors**

Deutsche Presse-Agentur ("VIETNAM RESOLVING ISSUE OF NORTH KOREAN ASYLUM SEEKERS IN EMBASSIES", 2004-12-23) reported that Vietnam is working with the Swedish and French embassies in Vietnam's capital to try and resolve the issue of apparent DPRK asylum seekers who entered the two embassies in the last week, Vietnam's press spokesman said Thursday. "Now we are contacting with the parties concerned in order to address this issue in accordance with Vietnamese law as well as in accordance with international law and practices and on a humanitarian basis, and in line with the actual situation," Le Dung said Thursday.

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

## **23. DPRK Defectors in Russia**

Agence France Presse ("N KOREAN REFUGEE ARRIVES IN SEOUL FROM RUSSIA: REPORT", 2004-12-23) reported that a DPRK refugee, who entered the ROK's consulate in the Russian Far East last month, has arrived here to seek asylum, Yonhap news agency said Thursday. Hwang Dae-Soo, a 29-year-old DPRK translator, has been under questioning by ROK authorities since arrival in Seoul from Vladivostok on December 18, Yonhap said quoting an unnamed source. ROK officials refused to confirm the news report.

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

## **24. ROK on DPRK Defectors**

Donga Ilbo ("DRAMATIC PLUNGE IN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NORTH KOREAN DEFECTIONERS FROM 28 MILLION WON TO 10 MILLION WON", 2004-12-23) reported that from next year, the screening process for entering the ROK will be strengthened to prevent the entry of fake DPRK defectors, DPRK asylum seekers with criminal records, and refugees from the DPRK who have been living in the PRC for a long period of time (over 10 years). In addition, strict crackdown and punishment will be enforced against former DPRK defectors-turned-brokers who encourage so-called "planned defections," and the amount of financial support for DPRK defector settlement is expected to decrease significantly from the current 28 million won to 10 million won.

[\(return to top\)](#) Korea Times ("NK DEFECTIONERS FACE STRICTER SCREENING", 2004-12-23) reported that the ROK will intensify screening of DPRK defectors at its diplomatic missions abroad to thwart criminals' entry and false defections, the Ministry of Unification said Thursday. "From next

year, we will fortify the screening procedure to weed out murderers, criminals sought by international police and people disguising themselves as asylum seekers," Vice Unification Minister Rhee Bong-jo said at a news conference. "Even after their entry, those with criminal records will be punished according to domestic law." Seoul's strengthened measures will require diplomatic missions to carry out thorough background checks on all asylum seekers. [\(return to top\)](#)

## **25. Sino - DPRK Relations**

Kyodo News ("CHINA STEPS UP PROBE INTO LOCAL OFFICIALS' GAMBLING IN N. KOREA", 2004-12-23) reported that PRC disciplinary authorities looking for a local official suspected of gambling away millions in public funds in a DPRK casino have grilled other officials on whether they also have visited the same luxury gaming parlor, the PRC's official Xinhua News Agency reported Thursday. The news agency said government departments in Yanbian "had not paid attention" to Communist Party members crossing the border into the DPRK to gamble.

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

## **26. ROK-Japanese Cultural Relations**

The New York Times ("WHAT'S KOREAN FOR 'REAL MAN?' ASK A JAPANESE WOMAN", 2004-1-23) reported that fads come and go in Japan, but this one touches upon several deep issues in Japanese society and its relationship with the ROK. ROK pop culture has been drawing fans here in recent years, but the turning point came last year with the broadcast of "Winter Sonata." A miniseries about first love, lost memory and unknown family ties, its very corniness, or purity, was praised by older Japanese, who said it reminded them of simpler times at home.

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

## **27. Terror Alert for ROK Troops in Iraq**

The Associated Press ("REPORTS: SOUTH KOREAN TROOPS IN IRAQ ON HIGH ALERT AFTER BOMB THREAT", 2004-12-23) reported that ROK troops in Iraq went on high alert Thursday after receiving intelligence that insurgents may target them with car bombs, news reports said. The Kurdish autonomous government in northern Iraq has told ROK soldiers that Sunni Islamic militants may attack around Christmas or New Year's Day, the Yonhap news agency and other ROK media reported.

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

## **28. ROK on Stem Cell Research**

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TO ALLOW STEM-CELL RESEARCH", 2004-12-23) reported that the ROK will allow stem-cell research to find cures for 18 diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's and cerebral palsy, government officials said Thursday. Those guidelines were passed by the Cabinet on Thursday and will take effect on Jan. 1, said an official at the Ministry of Health and Welfare, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

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



## **29. ROK on Bird Flu Outbreak**

Asia In Focus ("S.KOREA SAYS IT IS FREE OF HUMAN INFECTION WITH THE BIRD FLU", 2004-12-23) reported that human infection with the bird flu virus has not occurred in the ROK, said the Korea Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The state health agency added that they had not found any person with avian influenza after examining blood samples from 88 people who were at risk of infection.

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

## **30. Japan Bird Flu Outbreak**

The New York Times ("TESTS IDENTIFY THE FIRST HUMAN CASE OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN JAPAN", 2004-12-23) reported that tests performed in Japan have identified that country's first human case of avian influenza and four other cases that are almost certainly the same ailment, a World Health Organization official said yesterday. The organization, a United Nations agency, has said it is deeply concerned about the possibility of the virus, A(H5N1) , mutating into a lethal new virus and causing an epidemic that, at worst, could rapidly sweep the world.

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

## **31. Japan on UNSC Bid**

Kyodo News ("JAPAN TO TAKE MULTIPRONGED APPROACH TO SECURITY COUNCIL BID", 2004-12-23) reported that Kenzo Oshima, Japan's chief ambassador to the United Nations, said Wednesday that he will pursue a multipronged approach in trying to win a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. He predicted that U.N. member states will closely follow "Japan's performance" as a nonpermanent member on the Security Council for two years from January as he directs Tokyo's bid for a permanent seat.

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

## **32. Sino - Japanese Relations**

Reuters ("CHINA AND JAPAN MISS THE BOAT TO BETTER TIES", 2004-12-23) reported that politics is never far below the surface of Sino-Japanese relations, and some analysts say the recent chill may be starting to take a toll on a historically warm economic relationship between Asia's first and second largest economies. Nevertheless, with the PRC preoccupied with stability and Japan focused on protecting the embers of its economic recovery, both countries will try to limit the damage while getting mileage domestically out of their differences, analysts say.

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

## **33. Russo - Japanese Relations**

Kyodo ("PUTIN DISMISSES JAPAN'S CLAIM FOR ALL DISPUTED ISLANDS", 2004-12-23) reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed on Thursday Japan's claim for sovereignty on all the four islands at the center of the territorial dispute between the two countries, stressing his position to seek resolution of the dispute through the return of two of the four islands in line with a 1956 bilateral declaration. The remark, made in a news conference, was apparently made to turn down

Japan's persistent claim over the four islands ahead of his visit expected next year.

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

## **34. Russo-US Energy Cooperation**

Kyodo ("CONOCOPHILLIPS, GAZPROM TO DEVELOP GAS FIELD IN NORTHERN RUSSIA", 2004-12-23) reported that US oil giant ConocoPhillips and Gazprom, Russia's state-affiliated natural gas monopoly, have agreed to conduct a joint study on the development of the Shtokman gas field in the Barents Sea. The Houston-based company said Wednesday that it and Gazprom have signed a memorandum of understanding to conduct the study that will include the evaluation of liquefied natural gas feasibility and transportation to the US and European markets.

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

## **35. Russian Energy Security**

Los Angeles Times ("ENRICHED URANIUM SENT BACK TO SECURE FACILITY", 2004-12-23) reported that about 13 pounds of highly enriched uranium was returned to Russia from a research facility in the Czech Republic, the Energy Department announced. The transfer was part of an international program to better secure material that terrorists could use in a weapon. The uranium was transported by plane from an airport near Prague, the Czech capital, to a secure facility in Dimitrovgrad, Russia, where it will be blended down so it is no longer suitable for weapons use.

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

## **36. Russia Yukos Auction**

Los Angeles Times ("BUYER OF YUKOS' CORE UNIT IS SOLD", 2004-12-23) reported that a state-owned oil company announced Wednesday that it had purchased the previously unknown firm that made the winning bid at a recent auction for beleaguered Yukos Oil Co.'s core production facility. The announcement that Rosneft, whose board chairman is a close aide to Russian President Vladimir V. Putin, has bought 100% of the shares in Baikalfinansgroup in effect nationalizes 11% of Russia's crude oil production.

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

## **37. Sino - Russian Trade**

Associated Press ("CHINA, RUSSIA TO EXPAND RAIL LINKS TO HANDLE INCREASED OIL SHIPMENTS", 2004-12-23) reported that Beijing and Moscow have agreed to improve railway links to handle an expected increase in Russian oil exports to the PRC and more trade over the next two years, the PRC Ministry of Railways says. Russia is expected to export 15 million tons (105 million barrels) of crude oil to the PRC in 2006, the ministry said on its website Thursday.

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

## **38. Sino - US Relations**

Wall Street Journal ("U.S. LEGISLATORS TARGET ASIA; ACTIVIST SENATORS FILL POLICY VACUUM LEFT BY FOCUS ON TERRORISM", 2004-12-23) reported that one area where Republican

lawmakers have become more subdued after a fellow Republican won the White House in 2001 is on policy toward the PRC and Taiwan. Today, many in Congress have "come to appreciate our need for closer cooperation with China" to press the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons, says Bonnie Glaser, a PRC specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She adds that many people in Congress have moderated their tone as they are concerned that independence activists in Taipei are "dragging us into a war in the Taiwan Strait."

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

## **39. US on Cross Strait Relations**

Reuters ("TAIWAN PLAYS DOWN CHINA-U.S. 'LAND MINE' REMARK", 2004-12-23) reported that Taiwan played down on Thursday remarks by a senior US official who described the island as the biggest land mine in Sino-US ties and said Washington was not required to come to Taiwan's defense if attacked by the PRC. The comments by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage raised suspicions in Taiwan that Washington may be leaning toward Beijing in the bitter dispute between the mainland and the island PRC claims as a renegade province. Premier Yu Shyi-kun and Foreign Minister Mark Chen tried to ease any anxiety, saying US policy was unchanged toward democratic Taiwan, which has aspirations for sovereignty but which the PRC has said it will invade if it declares independence.

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

## **40. Sino - Indian Relations**

Agence France-Presse ("INDIAN ARMY CHIEF IN RARE CHINA VISIT TO BOOST TIES", 2004-1-23) reported that India's army chief General Nirmal Chandra Vij was in Cthe PRC on a landmark week-long visit to improve relations -- the first such trip in a decade, diplomats said. "The aim of his visit is basically to promote bilateral relations further and to improve the friendly relations between both countries and the armed forces," a senior Indian diplomat told AFP.

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

## **41. Sino - Iraqi Relations**

Agence France Presse ("IRAQI FM IN CHINA FOR HIGHEST-LEVEL VISIT BY INTERIM GOVERNMENT", 2004-12-23) reported that Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari arrived in Beijing for the highest-level visit to the PRC by the interim Iraqi government since it was established in late June. Zebari is scheduled to meet with his counterpart Li Zhaoxing as well as Premier Wen Jiabao during the four-day visit, Iraqi embassy officials said. He will also meet with PRC businessmen, but diplomats said the trip, which follows a recent visit by Iraqi Oil Minister Thamer Abbas Ghadbane, would focus on political ties rather than economic cooperation.

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

## **42. Sino - Venezuelan Relations**

Agence France Presse ("VENEZUELA'S CHAVEZ ARRIVES IN CHINA WITH EYE ON OIL DEALS", 2004-12-23) reported that Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez arrived in Beijing for an official visit that aims to bolster his country's oil deals with the Asian giant, state media and officials said. During his five-day state visit, Chavez will meet with PRC leaders including President Hu Jintao to exchange

views on bilateral relations and international issues of common concern, the Xinhua news agency said. Before he departed Venezuela on his third trip to the PRC in the last five years, Chavez described himself as "an old friend of the Chinese people".

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

## **43. PRC Durg Trafficking**

The New York Times ("A CORNER OF CHINA IN THE GRIP OF A LUCRATIVE HEROIN HABIT", 2004-12-23) reported that the magic of the larger market that has lifted so much of the PRC out of poverty has bypassed most of this region, where peasants live as they have for generations, carrying firewood on their backs and farming the steep, terraced slopes by hand. But Banlao, otherwise lost in the shadows of tall mountains, where neighboring Myanmar, formerly Burma, looms visible in the distance, has another source of wealth. The authorities say 10 percent of the PRC's illegal narcotics traffic enters through the surrounding Lancang Prefecture and 85 percent of the arrests in this part of southwestern Yunnan Province are made in this one hamlet.

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

## **44. PRC Internet Crackdown**

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SHUTS DOWN 1,287 PORNOGRAPHIC AND CULT WEBSITES", 2004-12-23) reported that the PRC has shut down 1,287 websites which spread "harmful information" on religious cults, superstition and pornography, a government Internet watchdog said. Among those closed were 1,129 pornographic sites and another 114 "which promoted gambling, superstitious activities and cult propaganda," said the official Reporting Centre for Illegal and Harmful Information. The PRC often uses the word "superstition" to refer to religions.

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

## **45. PRC Space Program**

Agence France Presse ("CHINA'S SECOND MANNED SPACE FLIGHT TO BLAST OFF IN SEPTEMBER", 2004-12-23) reported that the PRC's second manned space flight will blast off next September with two astronauts circling the Earth for five days to reinforce the country's status as a major space power, state media said. "Shenzhou VI is scheduled to be launched in September next year," Huang Chunping, chief commander of the PRC's first manned spaceflight, was quoted as saying by the Beijing News.

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

## **46. PRC Drought Forecast**

Agence France Presse ("'CATASTROPHIC' DROUGHT FORECAST FOR CHINA NEXT YEAR", 2004-12-23) reported that the PRC is likely to experience a "catastrophic" drought next year, threatening water supplies and grain production, a leading water official warned in the state media. Wang Shucheng, minister of water resources, urged water supply authorities to prepare for the possible disaster to mitigate losses, the China Daily reported. "The shortage of water supply has, so far, not fundamentally turned for the better in the North," Wang said, adding that water authorities "must be ready to deal with a worsening situation next year."

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

---

View this online at: <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-thursday-december-23-2004/>

Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

[nautilus@nautilus.org](mailto:nautilus@nautilus.org)