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I. United States

1. DPRK Nuclear Program

Washington Post ("NUCLEAR EVIDENCE COULD POINT TO PAKISTAN", 2005-02-03) reported that the Bush administration's claim this week that the DPRK appears to have been the supplier of converted uranium to Libya is based on evidence that could just as easily point to Pakistan, a key US ally, as the source, according to analysts and officials familiar with the data. IAEA tests on the same container -- using samples taken at the same time the US took samples last spring -- did not indicate the presence of plutonium, and the US has not shared the results of its plutonium tests with the international agency. Moreover, the suspect container originated from Pakistan, officials said yesterday. The presence of plutonium indicates that it was in the DPRK but there is no way to know the origin of the contents of the cylinder, investigators said.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Program

Korea Times ("SEOUL QUESTIONS REPORT ON NK NUKE EXPORT TO LIBYA", 2005-02-03) reported that ROK officials on Thursday played down the significance of fresh reports that the DPRK has crossed the "red line" in nuclear proliferation by exporting processed uranium to Libya. While the Seoul government declined to comment openly on the new evidence of nuclear proliferation by Pyongyang, officials speaking on condition of anonymity questioned the reliability of the intelligence and suggested it might have been leaked by US officials to put pressure on Pyongyang. "The US wants to advance the stalled nuclear negotiations to a new phase by putting the spotlight on North Korea's activities," an official at the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry told The Korea Times.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Korea Herald ("BUSH'S RESTRAINT SENDS SILENT MESSAGE TO PYONGYANG", 2005-02-03) reported that in his State of the Union Address on Wednesday, US President George W. Bush said, "We're working closely with the governments in Asia to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions." Through what he did not say that day as much as through what he did, however, President Bush sent a message to Pyongyang. Bush mentioned the DPRK's nuclear issue but not its regime. His decision to mention one but leave out the other can be read in two ways. First, Bush's

restraint could be a tacit invitation to Pyongyang to quickly come back to the six-party talks. Another explanation is that the US judges the DPRK nuclear crisis to be so pressing that it must put the regime issue on the back burner.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("EXPERTS DOUBT TALKS WITH NORTH FRUITFUL", 2005-02-03) reported that experts voiced skepticism over the possibility of resolving the nuclear crisis with the DPRK through diplomatic efforts during a congressional hearing on Wednesday. They also aired strong concern over the danger posed by the DPRK's nuclear aspirations. James Woolsey, former CIA director, said the DPRK is a country that is extraordinarily difficult to deal with, adding that the country may transfer nuclear materials to third parties. Another expert on the panel, Kurt Campbell, showed concern about Washington's lack of a policy to handle the threat from the DPRK. Mr. Campbell was a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for Asia and the Pacific. [\(return to top\)](#) Reuters ("BUSH EMPHASIZES DIPLOMACY FOR IRAN, NORTH KOREA", 2005-02-03) reported that President Bush, who three years ago said Iran and the DPRK were part of an "axis of evil," on Wednesday emphasized diplomacy in dealing with the two countries. On the DPRK, Bush referred to the administration's aim of restarting the stalled nuclear talks involving the US, DPRK, ROK, PRC, Russia and Japan. [\(return to top\)](#)

4. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("BUSH ADDRESS REASSURING TO SEOUL OFFICIALS", 2005-02-03) reported that US President George W. Bush made only passing mention of the DPRK in his State of the Union Address yesterday ? but it was enough to convince officials in Seoul that the US is sending the message that it wants to solve the nuclear standoff with Pyeongyang peacefully. "We are working closely with governments in Asia to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions," said Mr. Bush in his only reference to the issue.

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5. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Xinhua ("CHINA CALLS FOR MORE SINCERITY TO PUSH FOR NEXT ROUND OF SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2005-02-03) reported that the PRC urged Thursday every nation in the six-party talks about the Korean Peninsular nuclear issue to show more sincerity, pragmatic attitude and flexibility in a bid to offer a relaxed atmosphere for the next round of talks. "At present, the six-party talks has met some difficulties," acknowledged Kong Quan, the PRC's Foreign Ministry spokesman, at a regular press conference. "We are convinced that the six-party talks mechanism, which was instituted with joint efforts of six nations, is the best way to resolve the Korean Peninsular nuclear issue effectively and peacefully," he said.

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6. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo ("TALKS ON N. KOREA TO RESUME SOON AFTER BUSH'S ADDRESS: JAPAN", 2005-02-03) reported that Japan on Thursday voiced hope that six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions will resume soon now that US President George W. Bush has reaffirmed his intention to resolve the issue peacefully. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters, "The basic (US) position of regarding the six-party talks as important will be unchanged" as Washington clearly hopes for peaceful settlement of the issue.

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7. US-Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("BUSH, KOIZUMI AGREE TO BRING NORTH KOREA BACK TO NUCLEAR TALKS", 2005-02-03) reported that US President George W. Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi agreed to try to bring the DPRK back to six-nation talks and remind the DPRK of world concerns about its nuclear ambitions. The two leaders reaffirmed their alliance on the key security issue in an eight-minute telephone conversation which followed President Bush's State of the Union address, the foreign ministry said in a press release. Bush and Koizumi agreed that "it is important to continue telling North Korea through six-nation talks how serious the world is with regard to the North Korean question," the statement said.

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8. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("N. KOREA MAY SOON RETURN TO SIX-PARTY TALKS: REPORTS", 2005-02-03) reported that the DPRK may announce next week its decision to return to the stalled six-party talks on its nuclear program, the Moscow-based Interfax News Agency forecast, citing diplomatic sources in Beijing. The DPRK may declare its agreement to resume the six-party nuclear conference as early as Feb. 7, following a positive signal from US President George Bush in Thursday's State of the Union address, said Interfax. It went on to predict that in the event of an agreement from the DPRK, the six-way talks could resume in late February.

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9. DPRK on Relations with the US

Yonhap ("N. KOREA DENOUNCES U.S. OVER "OUTPOST OF TYRANNY" REMARKS", 2005-02-03) reported that the DPRK criticized the US' newly appointed top diplomat's use of the "outpost of tyranny" phrase and likened it to the inflammatory "axis of evil" remark, a DPRK magazine said this week. Reminiscent of US President George W. Bush's "axis of evil" speech in 2002, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice labeled the DPRK an outpost of tyranny during her confirmation hearing last month.

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10. DPRK Leadership

Korea Times ("NK LEADER YON APPEARS IN PUBLIC", 2005-02-03) reported that Yon Hyong-muk, 74, vice chairman of the DPRK's National Defense Commission, appeared in public Feb. 2 for the first time since receiving medical treatment in Russia late last year. The DPRK's Central Television broadcast Yon sitting with other national leaders in the front row of a rally at the April 25 Culture Center in Pyongyang. It was the first time Yon had appeared in public since Oct. 26, when he attended a meeting of teachers from across the DPRK. Yon is a close confidant to DPRK leader Kim Jong-il.

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11. DPRK Food Supply

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA REDUCES FOOD RATIONS, U.N. AGENCY SAYS", 2005-02-03) reported that the DPRK has cut its provision of food rations to 250 grams per person a day, prompting cereal prices to surge in the market, a United Nations hunger relief agency said Thursday. According to the World Food Program, which provides food aid to the DPRK, the DPRK government reduced the rations in January to 250 grams, which falls short of half of a person's minimum need and the 575 grams that Pyongyang had set as a target amount. The reduced amount was the lowest since January 2001.

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12. Inter - Korean Relations

Korea Times ("KYONGGI GOVERNOR INVITES NK TO PEACE FESTIVAL", 2005-02-03) reported that Kyonggi Province plans to invite a DPRK delegation to a large-scale international peace festival to be held in August at Dorasan Station linking the ROK and DPRK. Governor Sohn Hak-kyu has revealed the plan to host the festivity in celebration of the 60th anniversary of liberation from Japanese colonial rule and "Visit Kyonggi Korea 2005." He said that the province has received a positive response from the DPRK about its intention to send a newly developed rice breed to the DPRK, although private sector exchanges between the ROK and the DPRK have recently dwindled.

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13. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Herald ("ASSETS IN NK RECOGNIZED AS COLLATERAL", 2005-02-03) reported that the government on Wednesday began to recognize ROK firms' assets in the DPRK as collateral, enabling them to get loans from financial institutions, the Ministry of Unification said. "This program is designed to alleviate South Korean firms' financial difficulties in operating their businesses in North Korea," a ministry official said during a press conference. Companies can borrow money from banks by mortgaging their buildings, machinery and the rights to use real estate in the DPRK.

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14. ROK Group on DPRK Human Rights

Korea Herald ("CONSERVATIVES ORGANIZE TO OPPOSE POLICY TOWARD N.K.", 2005-02-03) reported that a group of 100 prominent intellectuals announced yesterday they will form an organization to thwart the government's attempt to repeal the security law and to improve the human rights of people in the DPRK. "We should refuse any attempt to destroy the basic order of democracy and any challenge toward the denial of the nation's legitimacy," according to a statement read at a news conference by lawyer Kim Sang-chul, a key promoter of the group. They vowed to try to end DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's "tyranny" and to promote unification in a peaceful and democratic manner.

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15. Japan on DPRK Human Rights

Kyodo ("LDP TEAM PROPOSES BILL URGING GOV'T TO HELP ESCAPEES FROM N. KOREA", 2005-02-03) reported that a ruling Liberal Democratic Party task force compiled Thursday an outline of a bill on DPRK human rights calling for Japan to be proactively involved in protecting and supporting residents who flee the DPRK. The outline also urges the Japanese government to "play an active role" in the activities of nongovernmental organizations working to improve the DPRK's human rights situation, such as providing financial support and reinforcing cooperation with them.

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16. DPRK - Japan World Cup Match

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA, KUWAIT DRAW 0-0 IN SECRETIVE WORLD CUP QUALIFYING WARM-UP", 2005-02-03) reported that the DPRK were held to a goalless draw by Kuwait in a warm-up match played in the strictest secrecy ahead of World Cup qualifiers next week. The match was played Wednesday a day ahead of schedule and was not open to the public, officials said. "There were several Japanese television cameras outside the pitch so the North Koreans chose to play without numbers," Ahmad Al-Jeeran, a Beijing-based Kuwaiti diplomat, told AFP. "Neither side wanted the match to be open to the public and neither side wanted any cameras inside."

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17. US Ambassador to the DPRK

Joongang Ilbo ("SPECULATION RISING OVER NEW U.S. ENVOY", 2005-02-03) reported that sources in Washington said that Michael Green, senior director for Asia at the National Security Council, Richard Lawless, deputy assistant secretary of defense, and Richard Christenson, former deputy chief of mission to the ROK, are likely candidates to replace the ambassador to the ROK, Christopher Hill, if Mr. Hill, as expected, takes over James Kelly's post as point man to the six-party talks.

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18. US - ROK Military Alliance

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA, US START NEW TALKS ON THEIR ALLIANCE' FUTURE", 2005-02-03) reported that the ROK and the US opened new talks aimed at reshaping their half-century-old military alliance, moves that have sparked security jitters here. The talks addressed the sensitive issue of expanding the role of US troops stationed in the ROK from deterrence against the DPRK to a regional rapid redeployment force, Yonhap news agency said. The defense ministry said only that the talks focused on relocation of US bases here, US troop reductions and the ROK's increased responsibility for its own defense.

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19. ROK on Government Human Rights Abuses

Agence France-Presse ("SEOUL LAUNCHES PROBE INTO ALLEGED GOVERNMENT AGENT RIGHTS ABUSES", 2005-02-03) reported that the ROK launched a probe into allegations government agents committed human rights abuses in the 1970s and had a hand in a 1987 mid-air explosion of a Korean Airlines plane. A joint committee of government officials and human rights activists said it had selected seven cases as the first targets of a probe aimed at "finding the truth and achieving

national reconciliation." The seven cases include the 1973 kidnapping of then dissident Kim Dae-Jung, who later became president of the ROK, the crackdown on an alleged underground subversive group in 1974, and the disappearance of a former head of the ROK spy agency.

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20. Russian Chemical Weapons

Itar-Tass ("CANADA FINANCIALLY TO HELP RUSSIA ELIMINATE CHEM WPNS", 2005-02-03) reported that Russia and Canada intend to cooperate in the elimination of chemical weapons and in the scrapping of decommissioned nuclear-powered submarines, as well as in the stocktaking, control, and physical protection of nuclear materials and radioactive substances. The sides intend to ratify a respective agreement. Russia's Cabinet is to consider a ratification bill at its meeting here on Thursday, an official in the government press service has told Itar-Tass.

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21. Japan Constitutional Revision

The Associated Press ("JAPAN LEADER BACKS CONSTITUTION REVISION", 2005-02-03) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Wednesday backed revising Japan's post-World War II pacifist constitution to begin calling government troops the Japanese military instead of the self-defense force. Koizumi, who has strongly backed a bigger role for Japan's forces, said Wednesday it was time for the troops to be openly referred to as a military. "To still be saying that Self-Defense Forces are in violation of the constitution strikes both the public and experts as strange. Whether they're called Self-Defense Forces or a Self-Defense Military, an organization to defend Japan should be clearly defined so that it does not raise issues of unconstitutionality," he told reporters Wednesday evening.

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22. Japan Volcanic Island

Reuters ("RESIDENTS RETURN TO VOLCANIC JAPANESE ISLE", 2005-02-03) reported that gas masks and bouquets in hand, the first group of residents of the tiny island of Miyakejima returned home on Wednesday, four and a half years after a volcanic eruption forced their evacuation. About 60 people took the first boat back to the island, about 112 miles south of Tokyo, after the government lifted an evacuation order. Many spoke of joy mixed with unease about continuing emissions of toxic sulfur dioxide that made the gas masks a necessary precaution.

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23. US on PRC Arms Embargo

The Associated Press ("HOUSE URGES EU TO MAINTAIN ARMS EMBARGO", 2005-02-03) reported that the House on Wednesday strongly condemned the European Union's plans to lift a 15-year-old arms embargo on the PRC, saying such a move would endanger both Taiwan and US troops stationed in Asia. The security of American troops, "is directly threatened by the shortsighted and greed-driven initiative emanating from Europe," said Rep. Tom Lantos, D-Calif. "It shows that they have truly lost their moral compass."

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24. PRC on Arms Embargo

Xinhua ("US OPPOSITION TO EU PLAN OF LIFTING ARMS BAN ON CHINA "UNNECESSARY"", 2005-02-03) reported that the US' opposition to European Union's plan of lifting arms embargo on the PRC is "totally unnecessary," said PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan here at a Thursday press conference. "Lifting the embargo does not mean China will import a large amount of arms from Europe," Kong said, adding that Premier Wen Jiabao had reiterated this point at the seventh EU-PRC summit held last year.

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25. Cross Strait Relations

Financial Times ("CHINA, TAIWAN TEST GROUND FOR WIDER CONTACTS", 2005-02-03) reported that the PRC and Taiwan have taken a cautious step towards improving ties with a private meeting in Taipei between delegates of the semi-official bodies set up by the two rival government to handle exchanges. The PRC's Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Strait (Arats) and its Taiwanese counterpart, the Straits Exchange Foundation, have not held formal talks for nearly six years, but this week's meeting suggests both could be testing the ground for wider informal contacts.

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26. Sino - US Trade Relations

Washington ("SENATORS REVIVING BILL SLAPPING DUTIES ON CHINA", 2005-02-03) reported that two US senators plan to reintroduce a bill giving the PRC six months to raise the value of its currency or face a possible 27.5-percent duty on exports to the US, congressional aides said on Wednesday. The moves reflects frustration in Congress that the PRC has not moved to a market-based exchange rate despite more than a year of pressure by the Bush administration.

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27. PRC Environment

Los Angeles Times ("CHINA ENVIRONMENT AGENCY TAKES ON GIANT DAM CORPORATION", 2005-02-03) reported that a state environmental agency succeeded in halting work on three new projects run by operators of the giant Three Gorges Dam, as part of a larger effort in the PRC to rein in infrastructure ventures that fail to meet environmental standards. It had been unclear whether the State Environmental Protection Administration could prevail over the government-owned enterprise that runs the world's largest hydroelectric project. But observers say the results this week show the country is serious about cleaning up the environment.

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28. PRC Child Trafficking

Reuters ("CHINA RESCUES 44 BABIES FROM TRAFFICKERS -- MEDIA", 2005-02-03) reported that the PRC, where strict family planning rules allow couples normally to have just one child, has broken up a baby-trafficking ring, arrested 40 people and rescued 44 infants, state media reported on

Thursday. The ring, involving 104 people in six provinces, had trafficked in 70 babies, including seven from Burma, over the past 10 years, the Beijing News said, adding many had traveled with breast-feeding women.

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29. PRC Agriculture

The Associated Press ("CHINA PROMISES FARMERS HIGHER SUBSIDIES", 2005-02-03) reported that the PRC is promising farmers lower taxes and higher subsidies in its latest effort to raise rural incomes and ease burdens that have sparked violent protests. The new policy, announced this week by state media, aims to help spread prosperity to the PRC's countryside, most of whose 800 million people have been left behind by a boom that has turned eastern cities into economic powerhouses.

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