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I. United States

1. Bush Kaesong Visit

Korea Times ("BUSH WILLING TO VISIT KAESONG INDUSTRIAL PARK", 2005-01-04) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun on Tuesday said US President George W. Bush agreed to accompany him to the border city of Kaesong, DPRK, to look around the industrial park for ROK companies. "I proposed to President Bush that he visit Kaesong during the APEC session in November this year and he accepted the request, saying `I will go there if you go,'" Roh said during a New Year meeting at Chong Wa Dae with ministerial and vice ministerial-level officials. Wary of the possible repercussions, Chong Wa Dae spokesman Kim Jong-min tried to play down the alleged agreement between the two heads of state. "It was a sort of casual statement and is not appropriate to interpret the dialogue as an official agreement between the two nations," Kim said.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France Presse ("ROH, BUSH OKAY NKOREA VISIT -- BUT AIDES SAY NO PLANS FOR TRIP", 2005-01-04) reported that ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun said US President George W. Bush had offered to join him on a trip to the DPRK, but aides said there was no formal agreement. Reports quoted Roh as saying he made the proposal late last year and Bush answered in the affirmative. Aides to Roh were quick to point out the conversation was informal and casual and there was no suggestion of a formal agreement on either side to travel to the DPRK. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. DPRK Arms Sales

Yomiuri Shimbun ("N. KOREA SOLD ARMS TO MORO EXTREMISTS", 2005-01-04) reported that the DPRK sold more than 10,000 rifles and other weapons in 1999 and 2000 to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the largest pro-Al-Qaida extremist group in the Philippines, according to Southeast Asian security sources. Between 1999 and 2002, the DPRK also attempted to sell submersible vessels to the MILF, who are fighting for independence for Mindanao in the southern Philippines, the sources said. Security authorities uncovered the MILF's weapons purchases after confiscating documents in November last year from the Mindanao-based Muslim rebel faction and other evidence. The sources said the deals were done mostly in Malaysia.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo ("PHILIPPINE REBELS DENY BUYING ARMS FROM N. KOREA", 2005-01-04) reported that the Philippines' largest Muslim guerrilla group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, denied Tuesday that it bought weapons from the DPRK in 1999 and 2000, as reported by a major Japanese daily. "The reports are baseless, an old issue and a propaganda by military officials who are opposing the peace talks between the MILF and the Philippine government. We strongly deny the reports," MILF spokesman Eid Kabalu said. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. DPRK on US-ROK Military Alliance

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("N.K. RAPS ALLEGED U.S. PLAN TO DEPLOY 'BUNKER BUSTERS' IN S. KOREA", 2005-01-04) reported that the DPRK accused the US Tuesday of planning

to augment its forces in the ROK by deploying state-of-the-art "bunker-buster" missiles. The state-run Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted a commentary from the DPRK's government paper, Minju Joson, alleging the plan is part of preparation for a preemptive attack.

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4. Japanese - DPRK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("KOIZUMI CANCELS DEADLINE ON NORMALIZING TIES WITH N.K.", 2005-01-04) reported that responding to the DPRK's hint that it may suspend dialogue with Japan over the issue of Japanese nationals that were kidnapped decades ago by the DPRK, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Tuesday that his government needed to unravel the DPRK's true agenda first and foremost. He added that Japan would not normalize its relations with the DPRK unless the Pyongyang Declaration was faithfully fulfilled, and said he would not set a deadline for the restoration of diplomatic ties. In this Koizumi backpedaled from his previous stance that he would normalize relations with the DPRK during his tenure.

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5. Japan on DPRK Abductees, Nuclear Program

Kyodo ("N. KOREA'S ABDUCTION SHOULD BE SETTLED BEFORE NUKES", 2005-01-04) reported that new Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi said Tuesday the issue of the DPRK's abductions of Japanese should be resolved before clearing up the issue of its nuclear ambitions. "As relatives of abductees are aging, the abduction issue, a humanitarian problem, should be resolved as soon as possible and before the nuclear issue" is settled, Yachi told a press conference.

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6. Japan on DPRK Aid

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPAN TO SUSPEND AID TO NORTH KOREA", 2005-01-04) reported that the Japanese government has suspended its plan to ship 125,000 tons of food aid and US\$3 million (W3.17 billion) in medicine to the DPRK after DNA tests revealed the remains of a Japanese kidnap victim turned over by Pyongyang were false. Despite calls for adopting a tougher line on the DPRK, the Japanese government has exercised caution ahead of placing further economic sanctions on Pyongyang. The government has resolved to keep dialogue channels with the DPRK open and request that working-level talks on the abduction issue are reconvened early next year.

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7. Inter - Korean Summit

Yonhap ("NOW IS TIME FOR INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT, FORMER PRESIDENT SAYS", 2005-01-04) reported that former President Kim Dae-jung expressed his belief on Tuesday that the leaders of the ROK and DPRK should hold a summit soon to make a breakthrough on the DPRK nuclear dispute. Kim, however, said he would not serve as an envoy to Pyongyang on behalf of President Roh Moo-hyun to expedite the summit.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("UNIFICATION MINISTER MULLS PUSHING FOR INTRA-KOREAN SUMMIT", 2005-01-04) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young hinted Tuesday that

since the six-party talks were not linked to an intra-Korean summit, it would be possible to push through with both agendas simultaneously. Appearing on MBC radio Tuesday, Chung said, "We're not saying that intra-Korean relations can open up only if there are six-party talks, and the government has maintained its argument that it could push both simultaneously." ([return to top](#))

8. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Joongang Ilbo ("SOUTH KOREA'S BOLD POLICY OF ENGAGEMENT ACCELERATES", 2005-01-04) reported that the Gaeseong Complex, an ambitious experiment that marries ROK capital and technology with the DPRK's cheap labor and land, started operations last month after four years of sometimes turbulent preparation. The industrial park sits just across the Demilitarized Zone and 170 kilometers from Pyongyang, the DPRK's capital. Longer term, the ROK government anticipates that the Gaeseong project will provide the DPRK with a chance to learn about free market economics, which would help gradually integrate the two Korean systems.

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9. ROK on DPRK Web Site Censorship

Joongang Ilbo ("CHUNG CONFRONTED ON CENSORING NORTH", 2005-01-04) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young was challenged yesterday over the government's recent move to block DPRK Internet sites and was asked how censorship could be a part of the Roh administration's professed policy of greater openness with the DPRK. Saying he would try to undo some of the bans, Mr. Chung said the Roh administration's DPRK policy is not intended to undermine the DPRK, but rather to expand exchanges and cooperation.

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10. ROK Coal Aid to the DPRK

Korea Herald ("SEOUL TO SEND COAL BRIQUETS TO N.K.", 2005-01-04) reported that the ROK will send about 5.4 million coal briquets to the DPRK by this month in a request for humanitarian aid from Pyongyang, the Unification Ministry said yesterday. Korea Land Corporation and the ministry will file 2.7 million pieces each and the ministry will also send 10,000 stoves, ministry spokesman Kim Hong-jae said in a news briefing.

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11. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREA VOWS NO REPEAT OF BIG NORTH REFUGEE RESCUE", 2005-01-04) reported that eager to coax the DPRK to restart stalled dialogue, the ROK said on Tuesday it would not repeat another large-scale rescue of refugees from the DPRK. Despite criticism from activist groups, Seoul now appears to be trying to appease the DPRK over the issue, including bringing in new measures aimed at controlling the flow of DPRK refugees into the ROK.

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12. DPRK Defectors in Russia

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREAN LABORERS IN RUSSIA FORM REFUGEE CAMPS", 2005-01-04)

reported that Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported yesterday that DPRK laborers dispatched to Russia turned down a return to their homeland and formed quasi refugee camps, hoping to go to a third country. The news medium, which covers news in socialist countries, quoted Pastor Douglas Shin, the leader of DPRK defector support group Exodus 21, as having said, "North Korean laborers working in construction sites or farms in the Maritime Provinces of Siberia rejected a return home after their contracts terminated or had escaped from their workplaces and lived in a camp in some places."

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13. DPRK Agriculture

Yonhap ("N. KOREAN SOLDIERS HELP FARMERS RAISE PRODUCTION: REPORT", 2005-01-04) reported that a unit of DPRK soldiers joined their country's New Year efforts to raise agricultural productivity by helping tend collective farms on Tuesday, the DPRK's state-run television station said. "The soldiers rushed out to the farms with quality fertilizers and agricultural equipment, prepared with the revolutionary military spirit, which is to take charge of both defending the country and building socialism," said the Korean Central Television Station.

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14. ROK Politics

International Herald Tribune ("TOP PARTY IN SEOUL FRACTURES", 2005-01-04) reported that in an admission of failure to pass their reform agenda, including the abolition of a controversial anti-Communist law, the leaders of the ROK's governing Uri Party resigned Monday. The party's chairman, Lee Bu Young, and the entire central committee of the party stepped down Monday. Their resignations follow that of the party floor leader, Chun Jung Bae, who resigned Saturday. The party will meet Wednesday to create an "emergency interim committee" until their convention in April.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France Presse ("SOUTH KOREA'S PRESIDENT REPLACES SIX MINISTERS IN RESHUFFLE", 2005-01-04) reported that President Roh Moo-Hyun has replaced six ministers in a reshuffle aimed at re-energizing his cabinet heading into the third year of his five-year term. Key defense, foreign affairs and economic posts were unaffected in the move that brought in new ministers of education, agriculture, home affairs, government legislation, gender equality and maritime affairs. "They (the departing ministers) might have exhausted their ideas and passion and become victims of stagnation after two years of service," Roh, who took office in February 2003, told a cabinet meeting. [\(return to top\)](#)

15. Japanese - ROK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("MORE JAPANESE SEE KOREA AS FRIEND THAN FOE: POLL", 2005-01-04) reported that more than half of Japanese people consider the ROK as a regional partner rather than a rival, whereas over 60 percent of ROK citizens view Japan competitively, according to a recent survey. A survey conducted by Japan's Fuji TV and Korea's Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) in celebration of the "Year of Friendship between Korea and Japan" showed that 56.1 percent of Japanese respondents consider the ROK as an ally, compared to 29.2 percent that said it was a rival. On the other hand, 62.9 percent of ROK citizens view Japan as a competitor, and 29.2 percent embrace the nation as a friend.

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16. Japan Constitutional Revision

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN TO LOOK AT REVISING PACIFIST CONSTITUTION", 2005-01-04) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has said his party would unveil ideas later this year on amending the US-imposed constitution amid calls to end the country's official pacifism. "Since the Liberal Democratic Party marks the 50th anniversary of its establishment this year, we want to make strenuous efforts to issue a draft or concrete ideas on revising the constitution by fall," Koizumi said. Press reports have said the ruling party wanted to overhaul the constitution to allow the military to use force in international missions.

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17. Yasukuni Shrine Issue

Asia Pulse ("JAPAN'S KOIZUMI SAYS HE WON'T VISIT WAR SHRINE INJA: REPORT", 2005-01-04) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Saturday he will not pay a visit this month to a controversial shrine devoted to Japan's war dead, Kyodo News Agency reported. Asked whether he will refrain from visiting the shrine during the New Year season, he told reporters, "Yes," according to the report. During a summit last November, PRC President Hu Jintao urged Koizumi to stop visiting the shrine.

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18. Sino - Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("ANALYSIS: CHINA WON'T FORGIVE JAPAN FOR LEE VISIT", 2005-01-04) reported that the PRC will not forgive Japan for allowing Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui's visit over the past week, even though Lee apparently did nothing political on his trip, because the visa approval has symbolic meaning that goes back more than 100 years, PRC political analysts said Tuesday. They also predicted long-term fallout for already strained Sino-Japanese political relations.

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19. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN'S LEGISLATIVE SPEAKER OFFERS TO VISIT CHINA TO HELP BREAK DEADLOCK IN RELATIONS", 2005-01-04) reported that the speaker of Taiwan's opposition-controlled legislature offered to make an unprecedented visit to the PRC to help President Chen Shui-bian break a prolonged stalemate with the PRC. Speaker Wang Jin-pygn, who is also a vice chairman of the opposition Nationalist Party, on Saturday offered to make the historic visit, saying Chen has failed to hold dialogue and ease simmering tensions with the PRC. There was no immediate reaction from Beijing.

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20. Taiwan on US Arms Sales

Asia Pulse ("TAIWAN'S PFP STILL AGAINST U.S. ARMS PURCHASE PLAN: AIDE", 2005-01-04) reported that the opposition People First Party (PFP) will remain opposed to the plan to purchase arms from the US as long as the Ministry of National Defense is unwilling to give detailed

explanations of the plan and cannot ease public concerns over the high cost, a ranking PFP member said Sunday. PFP Chairman James Soong reiterated before departing for the US a few days ago to visit his family that his party would support a reasonable and necessary arms purchase plan to protect the nation, but would never support a plan that includes paying the US an exorbitant amount for the weaponry, Chang said, adding that this stance has not changed and that the party will not change its position.

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21. PRC Tsunami Aid

New York Times ("BEIJING'S ROLE; SIZE OF CHINA'S AID MARKS A POLICY SHIFT, BUT IS STILL DWARFED BY THAT OF RICHER COUNTRIES", 2005-01-04) reported that the PRC's response to the tsunami disaster is showing the nation's limitations as an aspiring superpower, despite its new and growing influence in Asia. The PRC's offer of aid, if slightly belated, is sizable, given its often inward-looking history. But it is also a reminder that the world's most populous country is still far from being the dominant power in Asia.

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22. Hong Kong Dissent

Agence France Presse ("MAVERICK LAWMAKER NAMED HONG KONG PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR", 2005-01-04) reported that a maverick, pro-democracy legislator who has led dozens of protests against the PRC government has been voted Hong Kong's personality of 2004 in an end-of-year popularity poll. Leung Kwok-hung, known as "Long Hair" for his shoulder-length tresses, the avowed Marxist caused a storm when he reworded his legislative inauguration oath of office to include a pledge to fight for full democracy in the southern PRC enclave. A thorn in the side of both the local and PRC governments, Leung is banned from entering the PRC and is currently on bail after being arrested last week in scuffles during a street protest.

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23. Australia on Kyoto Treaty

Agence France-Presse ("AUSTRALIA, US MUST JOIN INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY ON EMISSIONS", 2005-01-04) reported that Australia and the US will have to eventually participate in an international strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, despite refusing to ratify the Kyoto protocol, an Australian minister has been reported saying. Environment Minister Ian Campbell said Australia was "very vulnerable" to climate change and achieving a comprehensive, worldwide approach on global warming must be a priority, The Sydney Morning Herald reported. Australia would continue to align itself with Washington in opposing Kyoto but Campbell conceded both countries would be part of a future global agreement, the newspaper said.

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