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I. NAPSNet

1. US-DPRK Talks on Financial Sanctions

Washington Times ("U.S., N. KOREA TO DISCUSS SANCTIONS", 2007-01-08) reported that the United States and DPRK have reached a tentative agreement to hold talks on a dispute over U.S. financial restrictions starting the week of Jan. 22. Song Min-soon of the Unification Ministry made the remark after arriving from Washington, where he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

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2. Sherman Visit to ROK

Yonhap News Agency ("WASHINGTON'S FORMER NK POLICY COORDINATOR TO VISIT SEOUL NEXT WEEK", 2007-01-09) reported that Wendy Sherman, an ex-advisor to former U.S. President Bill Clinton and to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on DPRK policy, is to arrive in Seoul next week on a three-day visit to meet with various officials on a number of issues, including the DPRK nuclear issue. Sherman worked as a counselor of the State Department from 1997 until January 2001, while concurrently serving as the special advisor to then President Clinton and then Secretary of State Albright, as well as the DPRK policy coordinator. She currently works for the Albright Group, an international advisory firm. "The main purpose of her trip is to study our (country's) pension programs and other social safety nets for the elderly, but she also wishes to meet with Minister Song," an official at the (ROK) ministry's North American bureau said while asking not to be identified.

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3. DPRK - Japan Relations

Kyodo News Service ("SENIOR JAPANESE LAWMAKER LEAVES FOR N KOREA", 2007-01-09) reported that Taku Yamasaki, a senior lawmaker of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, left Tuesday [9 January] for the DPRK, becoming the first Japanese politician of his stature to travel to the country since the formation of the government under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. On his visit, Yamasaki said he hopes to reconfirm that a September 2002 bilateral declaration, in which the two countries agreed to work towards normalizing ties and solve outstanding problems, remains valid. "I believe that dialogue and persuasion efforts are necessary to solve the nuclear, missile and kidnapping problems," he said, referring to the three main issues on Japan's list of problems that need to be tackled. But officials of the Abe administration have said his trip does not reflect any intention of the current administration, raising the question whether the visit will lead to a breakthrough that could prompt a resumption of bilateral talks stalled since February 2006. Yasuhisa Shiozaki, the government's top spokesman, said in Tokyo on Tuesday that Yamasaki's trip was "undesirable." "Under such circumstances, we believe it is undesirable for a parliamentarian, who is in the position of representing the Japanese people, to go to North Korea," he said. Japanese Prime Minister Abe also said, "Regarding North Korea, Japan is implementing sanctions and other pressures for it to respond with sincerity on resolving the nuclear and abduction issues. I hope he would bear that in mind."

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4. Inter-Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("AIDE CAUTIOUSLY CALLS FOR SUMMIT", 2007-01-08) reported that ROK

Unification Minister Lee Jae-joung said it would be "natural" to hold an inter-Korean summit. He said Seoul would consider sending an envoy to the DPRK to that end and for discussions in general of inter-Korean relations since the nuclear test in October. Speaking to Yonhap News Agency, Mr. Lee said it was more important for now to settle the nuclear issue within the framework of the six-party talks than to hold a summit. He seemed to be suggesting, however, that there was business other than the nuclear problem that the two Koreas could discuss. Mr. Lee said the key point should be a peace treaty on the peninsula. He noted that U.S. President George W. Bush said in November that such a peace treaty should be negotiated.

[\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("DOCTORS FROM 2 KOREAS WILL SOON WORK TOGETHER", 2007-01-10) reported that for the first time since the end of the Korean War, medical doctors from both Koreas will work together this week at a medical facility at the Kaesong Industrial Complex. "The joint medical team of South and North Koreans will begin working together on Thursday at the 396 square meter (4,263 square feet) Kaesong hospital," said Jeong Geun, secretary general of Green Doctors, which runs the medical facilities at Kaesong. Until now, there have only been piecemeal inter-Korean exchange programs for medical doctors. According to officials, the South will handle dental, surgical and internal disease cases, while the North will specialize in eye care, Oriental medicine, obstetrics and gynecology. Medical officials from the two sides have been preparing for the launch of the joint medical services for several months. About 30 medical staff members, including nurses and paramedics from the two sides, will help the medical team. [\(return to top\)](#)

5. US-ROK Security Alliance

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. SQUAWKS AT DELAY IN BASE MOVE", 2007-01-09) reported that the top US military commander in the ROK said yesterday that any delay in the relocation of US military installations here would be unwelcome and that he would "fight" any move by Seoul to postpone the move past 2008. Speaking at a press conference at Yongsan Garrison, Gen. B.B. Bell, commander of US Forces Korea, said in response to a question, "I am opposed to any decision to stretch this out for any reason, whether it's political or fiscal or whatever it is."

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6. US-ROK Relations

Yonhap News Agency ("U.S. OFFICIALS TO BE JOINED BY S. KOREAN PRESIDENT AT SEOUL MEETING ON N. KOREA", 2007-01-09) reported that a number of U.S. officials and scholars, including a former head of the Central Intelligence Agency Donald Gregg, are due in Seoul next month for a joint conference and a dinner to be joined by RO Korean President Roh Moo-hyun. The Korea Society, a New York-based nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working for the promotion of friendship between the U.S. and RO Korea, is to hold a joint conference on February 2 at a Seoul hotel. The conference, titled The Future of ROK-US Relations, will mark the 50th anniversary of the group's foundation, according to the organization. A gala dinner, co-hosted by Washington's top envoy to Seoul Alexander Vershbow, will be held the next day, at which the South Korean president is scheduled to give a congratulatory speech, according to an official invitation of the organization posted on its Web site. Gregg is to give a speech at the opening of the conference and later join Vershbow and others in a group discussion on various issues, including the DPRK nuclear dispute and the transfer of wartime operational control of RO Korean troops back to Seoul from Washington, according to the conference's program. Others to join the conference include Washington's former ambassadors to Seoul Stephen W. Bosworth, Thomas C. Hubbard and James T. Laney, as well as David I. Steinberg, an Asian studies professor from Georgetown University, and Don Oberdorfer, head of the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University.

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7. ROK Presidential Term of Office

The Associated Press ("S.KOREAN PRESIDENT SEEKS TERM REVISION ", 2007-01-09) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun proposed that the ROK adopt a new presidential system that allows the country's leader to seek re-election while reducing the term of office. Roh said in a nationally televised speech that he would seek to revise the constitution to change the current single five-year presidential term to two four-year terms, saying it was one of his campaign pledges. Roh was not seeking re-election himself, the presidential office said.

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8. Japan Defense Policy

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN LAUNCHES FIRST DEFENSE MINISTRY SINCE WWII ", 2007-0-09) reported that Japan launched its first full-fledged defense ministry since World War II as part of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's efforts to build a more assertive nation. He said the move "shows the maturity of Japan's democracy." The change is partly symbolic but the ministry will also have more power than the previous defense agency because it can submit its own budget requests. The bill enjoyed wide support, with the largest opposition party joining the ruling coalition.

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9. PRC Africa Diplomacy

Reuters ("CHINA DENIES CHECKBOOK DIPLOMACY IN AFRICA ", 2007-01-09) reported that the PRC dismissed a Taiwan accusation of buying diplomatic recognition in Africa with \$250 million in aid and loans on Tuesday, saying it was like a burglar shouting 'stop thief!' "Our relations with African countries are based on equality, mutual benefit and respect," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao told a news conference. "Those kinds of accusations are groundless."

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10. PRC on US Sanctions

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA CONDEMNS US SANCTIONS ON THREE FIRMS ", 2007-01-09) reported that the PRC condemned US sanctions imposed last week on three PRC companies for allegedly selling banned weapons to Iran and Syria, calling the accusations "totally groundless." The PRC firms are among 24 foreign entities from several countries hit with the sanctions, invoked under the 2005 Iran and Syria Nonproliferation Act.

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11. PRC Terror Raid

The Associated Press ("CHINA SAYS TERROR RAID FINDS TIES ABROAD ", 2007-01-09) reported that police found links to international terrorist groups during a raid on an alleged terror camp in the PRC's restive western Muslim region last week, the Foreign Ministry said. "There is a large amount of evidence that shows, including evidence we got from this raid, that the ETIM [East Turkestan Islamic Movement] is associated with international terrorist forces," said Foreign Ministry

spokesman Liu Jianchao. Liu gave no specific details about the alleged evidence or attacks and did not say which overseas terror groups those arrested were linked to. The PRC has said before that ETIM has links to al-Qaida.

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Nautilus Institute

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

nautilus@nautilus.org