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I. United States

1. US Rep. Lantos DPRK Visit

Associated Press ("US CONGRESSMAN MEETS N KOREAN OFFICIALS", 2005-01-11) reported that a US congressman who visited the DPRK said Tuesday that Pyongyang is waiting to see how the second Bush administration takes shape before deciding whether to return to talks on its nuclear program. Rep. Tom Lantos, the top Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, said the officials he met expressed "their desire for a significantly improved set of relations with the United States," but they argued repeatedly that the US still harbored "hostile intent."

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Presse (" US CONGRESSMAN 'OPTIMISTIC' PROGRESS MADE AFTER TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA", 2005-01-11) reported that US Congressman Tom Lantos said he urged top-level DPRK leaders in Pyongyang to revive stalled talks over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions and was "optimistic" over an outcome. "My message to the North Korean leadership was clear -- it is in the interest of North Korea to return to the six-party talks without any delay," Lantos said. "I made it clear to my North Korean hosts that we have a proposal on the table, and that proposal is supported by the Congress and is not just an administration proposal," he said. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. US Congressional Delegation in the DPRK

Yonhap ("U.S. LAWMAKERS ARRIVE IN PYONGYANG: REPORT", 2005-01-11) reported that a US congressional delegation led by Rep. Curt Weldon arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday, a DPRK news report said. The state-run Korean Central News Agency, monitored in Seoul, said the delegation was greeted by DPRK officials at the airport. The Republican from Pennsylvania and five other lawmakers will reportedly stay in the DPRK for four days. In Pyongyang, the delegation was scheduled to meet the DPRK's titular head of state, Kim Yong-nam, who heads the Presidium of the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France Presse ("US LAWMAKERS ARRIVE IN NORTH KOREA AFTER STOPOVER IN RUSSIA", 2005-01-11) reported that a US Congressional delegation arrived in the DPRK on Tuesday, hoping to restart talks on curbing the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. The US was not demanding regime change in the DPRK and would work with its leader Kim Jong-Il, he said.

However, Washington could do nothing until the DPRK agreed to renounce its nuclear program, Weldon added. The delegation hoped it would follow the example of Libya, which renounced its weapons of mass destruction last year, Weldon said, adding that the possibility of a meeting between the congressmen and Kim Jong-Il was not ruled out. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. US Congressional Delegation on DPRK Abductees

Yomiuri Shimbun ("U.S. DELEGATION TO PUSH ABDUCTION ISSUE", 2005-01-11) reported that US House of Representatives member Curt Weldon, who will lead a bipartisan group of six US lawmakers to DPRK on Tuesday, has said he will table the Japanese abduction issue in discussions with DPRK officials. "We'll let the North Koreans know that Japan's concerns are our concerns," the Pennsylvania Republican told The Yomiuri Shimbun on Thursday, reframing the kidnappings as a key issue in discussions that are expected to focus on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions and human rights record. Weldon also said US economic support to the DPRK would be contingent on the DPRK's efforts to resolve not only the nuclear issue, but also the abduction issue.

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4. Sino-US Relations on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Kyodo News ("COHEN CITES CHINA'S 'DEDICATED EFFORT' TO SETTLE N. KOREA NUKE ROW", 2005-01-11) reported that the PRC is making "a dedicated effort" through the six-party dialogue to help resolve the crisis over the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, former US Defense Secretary William Cohen said Monday. "I think there is a very dedicated effort on the part of the Chinese government to bring about a successful resolution of the situation with North Korea," Cohen told CNN from Beijing via a videophone. "There is every indication that they want to focus on ways in which the energy needs also of the North Koreans can be met," he said. "I detected a very strong commitment to resolving this successfully."

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5. DPRK on Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA SAYS NUCLEAR WAR RISK ON RISE - REPORT", 2005-01-11) reported that the DPRK believes the threat of nuclear war is growing because the US has troops in the ROK and an aggressive policy towards the DPRK, the DPRK told Russia's Interfax news agency on Monday. "From one day to the next the danger of nuclear war on the Korean peninsula is getting stronger because of a US policy that aims to strangle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," the DPRK embassy said in a statement released to Interfax.

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6. DPRK on US-ROK Relations

Yonhap ("N. KOREA ACCUSES SEOUL OF TOEING U.S. LINE", 2005-01-11) reported that the DPRK denounced the ROK government for toeing the US line and therefore engaging in an "unpardonable" anti-national activity, reported state-owned Radio Pyongyang on Tuesday. The DPRK's official media outlet claimed that the ROK is mired in an anachronistic practice of accepting US foreign policy without question.

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7. US on US-ROK Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. AMBASSADOR ANSWERS QUERIES", 2005-01-11) reported that US Ambassador Christopher Hill said yesterday that US forces stationed here would only be used for reasons other than DPRK deterrence only with the complete agreement of the ROK government. The message was posted in response to a question whether the US would consider dispatching US forces from here in case of an armed conflict between the PRC and Taiwan. The ambassador added that the recent deployment of new Patriot missile batteries is only for defensive purposes.

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8. Japan Spy Satellites

Japan Times ("JAPAN TO WORK ON SVELTE SPY SATELLITE", 2005-01-11) reported that Japan wants to scale down the size of its spy satellites to enhance their maneuverability and hopes to launch a small fourth-generation satellite by around fiscal 2010, government sources said Monday. The nation apparently wants to improve its satellites' photo-taking capabilities to be better able to spy on the DPRK's nuclear facilities. The current satellites orbit Earth at a speed of 29,000 kph along a north-south axis and can take photos of the DPRK once every two days for only several minutes.

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9. DPRK - Japan World Cup Preparations

Kyodo News ("AFC TO INSPECT N. KOREAN FACILITIES", 2005-01-11) reported that the Asian Football Confederation will send a six-man team on an inspection visit to the DPRK ahead of the final-round World Cup qualifiers, AFC general secretary Peter Velappan said Sunday. Velappan said the AFC party will travel to Pyongyang to meet with DPRK soccer officials and inspect the stadium, accommodations, transport and other facilities on a three-day visit from Jan. 24. Japan meets the DPRK at home in its first match of the final phase of qualifiers on Feb. 9, with the return leg scheduled for June 8 in Pyongyang.

[\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo News ("TENSIONS OVER ABDUCTIONS MAY SIMMER AT JAPAN-N. KOREA SOCCER GAMES", 2005-01-11) reported that when Japanese soccer players played in the World Cup preliminaries in Pyongyang, they were ignored by DPRK fans in 1985 and suffered through inadequate food in 1989, but the big question this year is whether the flaring tensions over the DPRK's abductions of Japanese nationals will spill onto the pitch. [\(return to top\)](#)

10. DPRK Hygiene

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH SEES DANGER IN LONG HAIR", 2005-01-11) reported that DPRK barbers will be apparently working harder because of a new state campaign to make men in the country more clean-cut. In the assault on what is perceived as the Western decadence that comes with long hair, the DPRK government is encouraging men to get something akin to crew cuts, meaning short-back-and-side trims. Pyeongyang television's campaign stressed hygiene and health, displaying various state-approved styles coming in hair-length variations from one to five centimeters (.4 to 2 inches), the report said. Men older than 50 are allowed to grow hair up to seven centimeters to cover balding, according to the campaign.

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11. Inter - Korean Aid

Yonhap ("SEOUL'S AID TO N. KOREA REACHES US\$256 MLN LAST YEAR", 2005-01-11) reported that the ROK's humanitarian aid to the DPRK reached US\$256 million last year, the largest figure in a decade, Seoul officials said Tuesday. The increased aid is mainly due to an outpouring of donations from local citizens following a devastating blast at a train station in Ryongchon, a town near the border with the PRC, in April last year, they said.

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12. ROK on Aid to the DPRK

Yonhap ("SEOUL TO MONITOR DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD AID IN N. KOREA", 2005-01-11) reported that ROK officials will visit the DPRK this month to monitor the distribution of food aid, Seoul officials said Tuesday. Two four-member monitoring teams will travel to Songrim, some 30 kilometers south of Pyongyang, and the northeastern port city of Chongjin on Jan. 13 and 17, respectively, they added.

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13. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Korea Times ("SEOUL CLEARS WAY FOR NK DEFECTORS TO REMARRY", 2005-01-11) reported that DPRK defectors who left behind spouses in the DPRK may soon be able to remarry new partners in the ROK thanks to a planned legal revision outlined on Tuesday by the Unification Ministry. Under the revision, defectors will be able to annul marriages with spouses remaining in the DPRK by simply making a public statement in court announcing their intention to divorce, ministry officials said.

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14. Near Inter - Korean Border Violation

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. HELICOPTER ALMOST CROSSED THE BORDER AND ENTERED NORTH KOREA", 2005-01-11) reported that it was recently revealed that a helicopter of the US Forces in Korea almost crossed the border and entered the DPRK, but it was stopped by a ROK military guard. According to military sources on January 11, a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter made a flight in Hwacheon-gun, Gangwon Province at noon on January 5 well beyond the No Fly Line (NFL). It was an urgent situation, if the helicopter flew one or two more minutes north, it would have crossed the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) and entered the shooting range of anti-aircraft missiles.

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15. US - ROK Military Alliance

Korea Herald ("USFK BUDGET TALKS TO BEGIN NEXT WEEK", 2005-01-11) reported that senior-level officials of the ROK and the US are set to meet next week in Seoul to discuss the Special Measures Agreement or SMA on how to share next year's budget for maintaining US Forces Korea. The third of its kind, the SMA meeting is set to take place Jan. 18-19 with top agendas including the agreement of the expiration of the bilateral agreement and the total amount of the shared fee.

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16. ROK Troop Strength

Chosun Ilbo ("DEFENSE MINISTRY SECRETLY SLASHING TROOP NUMBERS", 2005-01-11) reported that the Ministry of Defense has secretly reduced the ROK's troop strength by 9,000 troops, it was confirmed Monday. The ministry plans to reduce troop levels, which stood at 690,000 men as of last year, by an additional 5,000 this year, and wants to reduce overall manpower by more than 40,000 by 2008. The cuts aim to improve military structure, currently focused on troop numbers, and trim excess fat. This is the first time since the early 1960s that troop levels have been decreased.

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17. Sino - ROK Trade Relations

Asia Pulse ("CHINA EXPORTS MORE TO S. KOREA THAN U.S. IN 2004", 2005-01-11) reported that the volume of PRC imports purchased by the ROK exceeded those brought into the US for the first time last year, the Korea Customs Service said Tuesday. On a customs-cleared basis, the PRC accounted for 13.2 per cent, or US\$29.6 billion (30.9 trillion won), of the ROK's total imports, but only made up 12.8 per cent or \$28.8 billion of the bulk of US imports, the office said.

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18. ROK POWS in the PRC

Yonhap ("S. KOREAN POWS STRUGGLE TO RETURN HOME", 2005-01-11) reported that the issue of former ROK prisoners of war (POWs) has resurfaced following reports that a 72-year-old POW was recently arrested by PRC police after escaping the DPRK. PRC sources said that Han Man-tack, a former ROK POW, managed to flee the DPRK and hole up in the PRC as he was in the process of organizing safe passage home.

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19. ROK Nuclear Trade

Reuters ("SOUTH KOREAN TO APPEAR IN RUSSIAN COURT OVER NUCLEAR TRADE", 2005-0-11) reported that a ROK citizen suspected of smuggling radioactive materials into the Russian Far East will go on trial in a Russian court at the end of January, an official at Seoul's Foreign Ministry said on Monday. In late December, Itar-Tass news agency reported, citing prosecutors in the Pacific city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, that the man, identified as Kim Jong-hon, worked for a ROK firm suspected of illegally trading sensitive materials.

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20. ROK Relations with the PRC, Japan

Joongang Ilbo ("GOVERNMENT SEEKS CLOSER BONDS WITH JAPAN, CHINA", 2005-01-11) reported that a top government official said yesterday two proposals are underway that seek to tie the ROK, Japan and the PRC more closely in terms of communication, sports and economy. Moon Chung-in, president of the Presidential Committee on Northeast Asian Cooperation Initiative, said yesterday, "We are conceiving establishing a joint television channel among Korea's KBS, China's

CCTV and Japan's NHK so that each network can air eight hours per day on the channel." "In terms of economy, the three countries are discussing jointly buying oil from Middle Eastern countries," he said.

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21. Russian Nuclear Fuel Shipments

Asahi Shimbun ("RADIATION CONCERNS: RUSSIA SHIPS SPENT NUKE FUEL THROUGH SOYA STRAIT NEAR HOKKAIDO", 2005-01-11) reported that Japanese nuclear experts fear the vessel and its containers are not up to international standards. Russia has been using a Soviet-era ship to transport spent nuclear fuel near Hokkaido and through the Sea of Japan, raising concerns about possible radioactive contamination in northern Japan, nuclear industry officials said. Despite the risks of moving such highly radioactive material, Moscow is under no legal obligation to inform Tokyo of such shipments, Japanese government officials say.

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22. Japan SDF Reform

Kyodo News ("JAPAN EYES MAKING PEACEKEEPING PART OF SDF'S MAIN DUTIES", 2005-01-11) reported that Japanese Defense Agency Director General Yoshinori Ono said Monday night that the government will submit legislation during the upcoming regular Diet session to make the Self-Defense Forces' peacekeeping operations part of the SDF's main duties. Ono told reporters in Singapore that the bill is designed to revise the SDF Law and upgrade the status of peacekeeping operations to that of the SDF's main duties such as homeland defense.

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23. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("CRITICS SEE CHINA BEHIND HONG KONG'S SNUB OF TAIPEI MAYOR", 2005-01-11) reported that when Ma Ying-jeou, the popular mayor of Taipei, visited Hong Kong three years ago, even the government in Beijing seemed to bless the visit, sending representatives to an event at which he delivered the keynote address. So it was a surprise -- and a sign of the changing relations among the PRC, Hong Kong and Taiwan -- when the former British colony abruptly refused to grant Ma a visa last week for an unofficial, three-day visit to attend cultural and academic events here. The snub, widely seen as retribution for Ma's criticism of the PRC's plans to enact an anti-secession law targeting Taiwan, has prompted fresh worries about the erosion of the high degree of autonomy promised Hong Kong by the PRC government.

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24. PRC Income Disparity

The Associated Press ("POLL: INCOMES UP IN URBAN CHINA", 2005-01-11) reported that incomes have risen substantially since the late 1990s for urban residents in the PRC, a country rapidly growing into an international center of manufacturing, a Gallup survey released Monday found. The development has widened the divide between the haves and have-nots in the PRC. The Gallup project found that urban incomes have increased by almost 75 percent between 1997 and now - to an annual total equivalent to almost \$3,000 - but that amount buys much more in the PRC economy

than it would in the US. Rural incomes have increased only modestly during that time.

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25. Sino - US Economic Relations

Reuters ("REPORT: U.S. LOST 1.5 MLN JOBS TO CHINA IN 1989-2003", 2005-01-11) reported that the US lost nearly 1.5 million jobs between 1989 and 2003 because of increased trade with the PRC, according to a report released on Tuesday by a government watchdog committee. The report was prepared by the pro-labor Economic Policy Institute for the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a congressionally-appointed panel that has pushed for a tough US approach to the PRC on trade. The study estimates that imports from the PRC displaced 1.659 million jobs between 1989 and 2003, while exports to that country generated only 199,000 additional US jobs.

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26. PRC Trade Surplus

The Associated Press ("CHINA'S TRADE SURPLUS SURGES TO 6-YEAR HIGH", 2005-01-11) reported that surging exports helped push the PRC's trade surplus to a six-year high of \$31.98 billion in 2004, the government reported Tuesday. The PRC's exports rose 35.4 percent in 2004 over a year earlier to \$593.36 billion, while imports climbed 36 percent on-year to \$561.38 billion, the Commerce Ministry said, citing customs statistics. The resurgence in the PRC's trade surplus may revive pressures on Beijing from trading partners, especially the US, to relax controls on its currency, the yuan.

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27. PRC on Zhao Ziyang

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS FORMER PARTY CHIEF ZHAO ZIYANG ALIVE", 2005-01-11) reported that the PRC said Tuesday that Zhao Ziyang, who was toppled as the PRC's Communist Party chief, was in hospital and his health was stable, dismissing Hong Kong reports that he had died. "Zhao Ziyang is an old man who is over 80. He fell ill, but after attentive treatment, his condition is currently stable," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan told reporters.

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28. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

CanKor # 191 ("CANADA-KOREA ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICE", 2005-01-07) Mineral water from North Korea's Mount Myohyang is about to invade the South Korean market, as the first 15-ton shipment of bottled water arrives at Incheon on the last day of December. The joint DPRK-ROK Kaesong Industrial Park venture spawns its first small-business enterprise. About 1,000 items of iron kitchenware -- manufactured by North Korean labourers earning US\$50-60 per month -- arrived on the shelves of a Seoul department store late December. www.cankor.ca

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29. KBC Event

CanKor # 191 ("CANADA-KOREA ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICE", 2005-01-07) Korea Business Consultants invites fund managers, brokers, and interested businessmen to join delegations to Pyongyang. Delegates visit factories, markets and mining sites, and attend investment seminars on mining and minerals, manufacturing and light industry, and banking and finance. www.cankor.ca

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