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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Reuters ("CONDOLEEZZA RICE SAYS 'TIME FOR DIPLOMACY IS NOW'", 2005-01-18) reported that Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice vowed on Tuesday to press diplomacy in President Bush's second term after he was criticized for hawkish and unilateral policies in his first four years. Some hard-line administration officials eschew slow-moving diplomacy and argue for policies to isolate and confront Iran and the DPRK despite Bush's decision to see if negotiations can dismantle the "axis-of-evil" member states' arms programs. Bush's confidant suggested she preferred dialogue.

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2. DPRK on Nuclear Program

The Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA: U.S. A 'NUCLEAR CRIMINAL'", 2005-01-18) reported that a day after indicating a willingness to rejoin nuclear disarmament talks, the DPRK returned to its usual anti-American rhetoric Saturday, accusing the US of being a "nuclear criminal" with double standards. The report also denied that the DPRK is running a clandestine uranium enrichment program, as the US claims, in addition to its plutonium-based weapons program.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("US VISITORS SUGGEST 6-WAY N.KOREA PARLIAMENT SEMINAR", 2005-01-18) reported that a delegation of US congressmen led by Republican Curt Weldon has proposed parliamentary talks in the DPRK between the six countries involved in diplomatic negotiations aimed

at ending Pyongyang's nuclear programs. "We proposed to them the idea of establishing a separate initiative, a seminar if you will, at Mount Diamond, which is actually in North Korea, that would include parliamentarians from the six countries," Weldon told reporters in Beijing on Saturday.

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4. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Associated Press ("PYONGYANG ISSUES MIXED SIGNALS ON U.S.", 2005-01-18) reported that almost overnight, the DPRK returned to its usual anti-American rhetoric after it had indicated it would be willing to return to six-party talks aimed at dismantling the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. On Saturday, the DPRK's state-run newspaper Rodong Sinmun accused the US of applying a double standard against the DPRK and called the US a "nuclear criminal." The report came a day after the DPRK had appeared to soften its stance toward the US.

(return to top) Washington Post ("N. KOREA SAYS IT'S READY TO RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS IN MEETINGS WITH U.S. CONGRESSMEN, GOVERNMENT SAYS U.S. MUST DROP ITS 'BELLIGERENT MANNER'", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK government this week indicated its willingness to return to stalled nuclear disarmament talks if the US ceased acting in a "belligerent manner," according to the leader of a delegation of US congressmen that just returned from a rare series of high-level meetings in Pyongyang, the DPRK capital. The delegation, headed by Rep. Curt Weldon, told reporters in Seoul on Friday that DPRK officials had signaled their readiness to return to negotiations aimed at dismantling the DPRK's professed nuclear weapons program. (return to top) International Herald Tribune ("NORTH KOREA REPORTS IT'S READY TO RESUME NUCLEAR ARMS TALKS", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK announced Friday that it was ready to return to six-party talks on its nuclear weapons programs and other "outstanding issues," while proclaiming its desire to become a "friend" of the US. Members of the delegation, speaking Friday at a news conference in Seoul, said the talks, which have been stalled since September, could restart "within weeks." After the American delegation's meetings, the North's official Korean Central News Agency issued a statement Friday saying that the DPRK "would opt to find a final solution to all outstanding issues between the two countries, to say nothing of the resumption of the six-party talks and the nuclear issue, if what the US congressmen said would be formulated as policy of the second Bush administration." (return to top)

5. US Policy Toward the DPRK

New York Times ("CONSTRUCTIVE PATIENCE WITH NORTH KOREA", 2005-01-18) reported that it is not usually very productive, as President Bush has done, to call the DPRK's Dear Leader "evil" and "a pygmy." After four years of ideology and imprecations but no progress in dealing with the DPRK, with its comatose economy and its increasingly worrisome nuclear weapons program, many in Asia want the US to change its approach and start trying to achieve practical results patiently and in small increments - even if that means being civil to the DPRK's dictator, Kim Jong Il. At the least, they pray that the US will resist the urge to do anything precipitous that would set off a crisis.

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6. US on DPRK Energy Aid

Kyodo ("U.S. EYES COMPROMISE DEAL OF GIVING FUEL TO N. KOREA THRU KEDO", 2005-0--18) reported that the US is contemplating a compromise deal of providing heavy fuel oil to the DPRK "indirectly" through the multilateral Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization in a

bid to move the stalled six-party talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions, US administration sources said Monday. The deal, on condition that the DPRK commits to scrapping its nuclear programs completely, addresses the positions firmly held by both the US and the DPRK, the sources said.

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7. DPRK - US Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. CONGRESSMAN INVITED BACK TO PYONGYANG", 2005-01-18) reported that US House Armed Services Committee Vice Chairman Curt Weldon has been invited back to Pyongyang by the DPRK's Supreme People's Assembly Presidium President Kim Yong-nam, Weldon said Sunday. Weldon told a press conference he had been invited to lead another, bigger US Congressional delegation to Pyongyang.

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8. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Joongang Ilbo ("RUSSIA SEES NO COLLAPSE IN NORTH", 2005-01-18) reported that the Russian ambassador to Seoul said in an interview with the Joong-Ang Ilbo, that even if the six-party talks fail, Russia would be against the DPRK nuclear issue being referred to the UN Security Council. Teymuraz Ramishvili, 49, Russia's top envoy to the ROK, said, "Putting pressure [on the North] does not solve the nuclear problem but only aggravates it," adding, "Russia is against the idea of presenting the nuclear issue to the Security Council as a sanction against North Korea."

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9. DPRK Domestic Dissent

Reuters ("ACTIVIST: VIDEO SHOWS DISSENT IN COMMUNIST N. KOREA", 2005-01-18) reported that a ROK group said on Monday it had obtained what it said was the first visual evidence of dissent in the DPRK that indicated an organized attempt at a movement against its leader, Kim Jong-il. A 35-minute video clip viewed by Reuters showed a portrait of Kim taken inside a factory building and defaced by writing that demanded freedom and democracy. Such an act would be considered a grave crime in the DPRK and bring capital punishment without trial to the perpetrator, said Do Hee-youn, who heads the ROK group that made the clip available.

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10. DPRK Economic Reform

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA REMOVES STATE-RULED PRICES ", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK has partly abandoned its state plan and will carry out a factory and corporate reform by replacing its state-ruled prices with market prices. Experts analyzed that concerning the commencement of the factory and corporate reform following the agricultural reform, DPRK is converting to a market-socialism from the traditional socialist planned economy.

(return to top) Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA PROTECT PRIVATE PROPERTY BY LAW", 2005-01-18) reported that it is reported on January 16 that DPRK published "Code of Laws of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" last August. Enacted in March 2002 with four chapters and 58 clauses, the inheritance law guarantees the right of inheritance for personal properties. High-priced articles

such as houses and automobiles can be inherited, and consumption goods such as money, savings, books, household appliances, cultural goods, and daily commodities can also be passed to the heirs.
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11. DPRK Taxes

Yonhap ("N. KOREA DRASTICALLY INCREASES "TAX" ON ITS PEOPLE", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK has drastically strengthened its "tax" collection system, a Japanese civic group said Monday, in what appears to be a new effort to improve its moribund economy. Officially, the DPRK imposes no taxes on its people but experts say that money-making individual DPRK citizens and organizations have been required to pay due "fees" to the government.

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12. DPRK on US Troops in the ROK

Yonhap ("PYONGYANG REPEATS DEMAND FOR U.S. TROOP WITHDRAWAL", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK repeated its long-standing demand on Saturday that US troops be withdrawn from the ROK. Radio Pyongyang, one of the DPRK's state-controlled media organizations, claimed the US troops are threatening the DPRK with about 1,000 nuclear weapons.

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13. DPRK on US Human Rights Act

Yonhap ("N. KOREA URGES U.S. TO NULLIFY HUMAN RIGHTS ACT", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK asked the US Monday to negate its human rights act and ongoing naval exercises against the DPRK to revive stalled six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear arms program. While making the demand in an article in its party newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, the DPRK, however, stopped short of making it a condition for it to attend the six-party talks.

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14. DPRK on IAEA

Yonhap ("N. KOREA SAYS IAEA CHIEF OVERSTEPPED HIS AUTHORITY", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK said Tuesday that the head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency violated his authority over its nuclear weapons program and denounced him for pandering to US interests. In a dispatch from Pyongyang, the Korean Central News Agency said Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), conformed to Washington's "hostile" policy when he described the hermit state as the primary threat to the anti-nuclear coalition.

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15. DPRK Aid

Yonhap ("RED CROSS SETS US$11.28 MLN FOR AID TO N. KOREA THIS YEAR", 2005-01-18) reported that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS) said Saturday it has set aside US$11.28 million for the DPRK this year. It also unveiled the DPRK's Red Cross development plan for the 2004 to 2010 period, which defines three strategic directions for development and four core areas of concentration.

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16. DPRK Aid Distribution

Yonhap ("FOREIGN FOOD AID GOES TO N. KOREAN MILITARY: NGO", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK distributed about half of food aid from foreign donors to its military, a civic aid organization here said Monday. According to Good Friends, a non-governmental organization which supports DPRK refugees and human rights movement, the DPRK allotted 30-percent of outside aid to its People's Army and 10 percent to special organizations, factories and companies that produce arms and weapons.

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17. UN on DPRK Aid

Chosun Ilbo ("UN WARNS AGAINST TOO MUCH AID FOR N. KOREA ", 2005-01-18) reported that the United Nations has said poorly-led nations mired in poverty like the DPRK should not be given huge aid packages. The warning comes from a 3,000-page report released Monday and prepared by Columbia University Professor Jeffrey Sachs, who has led the international body's anti-poverty efforts. The report, titled “Investing in Development", classified the DPRK, Myanmar, Zimbabwe and Belarus as badly led, poverty-stricken states widely condemned for human rights abuses, and advised they should not receive large amounts of international aid.

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18. Kim Jong-Il US Visa

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL OBTAINED U.S. VISA IN 1997", 2005-01-18) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and two other DPRK citizens obtained US entry visas using fake Eastern European passports in 1997, the February edition of the Monthly Chosun reports. The magazine, published Tuesday, said that several months after the visas were issued, US intelligence officials realized that the photos on the ledger were those of Kim Jong-il, a secretary by the name Park, and Kim’s mistress Chung Il-son. Investigations revealed that Park and Chung went in and out of the US several times. It was not clear why Kim wanted a visa.

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19. Kim Jong-Il's 1996 Panmunjom Visit

Yonhap ("REPORT: KIM JONG-IL VISITED BORDER VILLAGE OF PANMUNJOM IN 1996", 2005-0--18) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il visited the inter-Korean border village of Panmunjom in 1996 with his late wife Ko Yong-hi, a DPRK defector said Tuesday. Kim, 63, routinely visits military units, apparently under his "songun" or military-first policy, but the alleged 1996 visit to Panmunjom has never been officially confirmed.

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20. Inter - Korean Summit

Donga Ilbo ("MISTY ROH-KIM SUMMIT TALK UNTIL NEW SIX-PARTY TALKS", 2005-01-18) reported that the Russian government invited the two Koreas to the event to celebrate “the 60th

anniversary of the Soviet Union's victory in the Second World War," which will be held on May 9 in Moscow. A government official showed a skeptical response, saying "there are lots of steps and procedures to go through until the South-North summit talks. It is still hard to say "Big News." The key is whether or not Kim Jung-il will participate in the event.

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21. Inter - Korean Cultural Exchange

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL MOVES TO CURB FALLOUT OF 'KOREAN WAVE'", 2005-01-18) 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. With the "[South] Korean Wave" sweeping its way through DPRK youth, leader Kim Jong-il is said to have issued a directive in early November demanding that the phenomenon be pulled out by the roots. A joint task force composed of party members, officials from the State Safety & Security Agency, the Ministry of Public Security and prosecutorial personnel were reportedly dispatched to crackdown on the trend.

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22. Japan on DPRK Abductees

The Associated Press ("JAPAN TO PRESS N KOREA ON ABDUCTIONS AS EVIDENCE EMERGES", 2005-01-18) reported that Japan pledged Monday to press the DPRK for information on two Japanese missing for decades, after photographs smuggled out of the DPRK allegedly show their faces. The four photographs - first obtained by television broadcaster Tokyo Broadcasting System, Inc., in the ROK - were reportedly brought out by DPRK defectors.

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23. DPRK on Abductees

BBC News ("N KOREA ABDUCTIONS ROW 'SETTLED'", 2005-01-18) reported that the statement appeared to rule out further talks on the abductions. The row has led Japan to threaten sanctions against the DPRK, a move which would inflame tensions further. "The DPRK [North Korea] feels no need to have inter-governmental contact with Japan any longer now that the 'abduction issue' has been settled... the DPRK has made all sincere efforts it can. And it explicitly states to the Japanese side that there will be no 'reinvestigation into the issue'," the DPRK's state news agency KCNA said.

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24. US on DPRK Sanctions

Kyodo ("U.S. LAWMAKER WELDON OPPOSES U.S. SANCTIONS AGAINST N. KOREA", 2005-01-18) reported that US Congressman Curt Weldon, who led a bipartisan delegation to the DPRK last week, said Tuesday he is opposed to Washington using economic sanctions on the DPRK as they could push Pyongyang toward war. Referring to US policies, the Pennsylvania Republican told reporters in Tokyo, "I am against economic sanctions at this time because I'm concerned that it would drive (DPRK leader) Kim Jong Il to do things that might precipitate a stupid act."

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25. ROK - Japanese Relations

Yonhap ("KOREAN VICTIMS OF JAPAN'S COLONIAL RULE VENT ANGER AT SEOUL, TOKYO", 2005-01-18) reported that Koreans who were victimized during the Japanese colonial rule of the peninsula escalated their resentment at the governments in Seoul and Tokyo on Tuesday, following the release of declassified documents on the normalization of diplomatic ties between the ROK and Japan. Victims of the 1910-1945 Japanese colonial rule and their advocate groups are vowing to simultaneously launch compensation suits against the ROK and Japanese governments.

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26. DPRK - Japanese Relations

Korea Times ("NK WANTS JAPAN'S MONEY IN RETURN FOR DIPLOMATIC TIES", 2005-01-18) reported that the DPRK's demand for Japan to come to terms with the past is an expression of Pyongyang's hope to receive a package of economic aid from Tokyo, DPRK experts in Seoul said Tuesday. The Foreign Ministry in Pyongyang issued a statement on Monday, urging Japan to make a "decisive decision" for the two nations' relationship and adopt measures to clean up wrongdoings committed during the 1910-45 period of colonial rule.

(return to top) Joongang Ilbo ("PYEONGYANG ASKS COMPENSATION", 2005-01-18) reported that coinciding with the release of historical documents detailing the re-establishment of ties between Seoul and Tokyo after World War II, the DPRK has issued an official statement demanding that it be compensated for Japan's colonial rule from 1910 to 1945. "Many years have passed with the old century replaced by the new century and the change of several generations since the end of the Japanese imperialists' occupation of Korea," the DPRK's Foreign Ministry said. "Japan, however, has shown no will to honestly repent of its crime-woven past and redeem it, but, on the contrary, has pursued its hostile policy toward the DPRK." (return to top)

27. Sino - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("CHINA PRESSURES N. KOREA INTO CLOSING CASINO IN BORDER AREA", 2005-01-18) reported that the PRC is pressuring its ally the DPRK to close a casino in a free trade zone near their shared border by mobilizing its media outlets. PRC media pointed out that 82 foreigners-only casinos in countries bordering the PRC such as Vietnam or Myanmar either suspended or shut down the casinos after Beijing issued a ban on gambling, but the casino in the DPRK border city of Rason is still active.

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28. US - ROK Relations

Donga Ilbo ("REPERCUSSIONS OF PRESIDENT ROH'S REMARKS IN LOS ANGELES AND EUROPE", 2005-01-18) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun's speech in Los Angeles (November 13, 2004) and remarks during the tour to Europe (December 1 to 7, 2004) escalated mistrust of the ROK among US government officials. An official in the Bush administration said, "Anti-proliferation officials expressed an immediate displeasure with President Roh's Los Angeles remark, but State Department officials seemed to understand to a degree. However, when the president made a denouncing remark on the US in France, a country that is at odd with the US these days, even the doves in the administration started to voice their displeasure." "President Roh should not expect to

be invited to the White House from now on."(Official 1)

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29. US - ROK Military Relations

Yonhap ("S. KOREA, U.S. OPEN THIRD ROUND OF DEFENSE BUDGET TALKS", 2005-01-18) reported that the ROK and the US opened two days of talks in Seoul Tuesday on how to share next year's budget for keeping US troops here. ROK began sharing the cost of stationing US soldiers on its soil in 1991 when it paid US$150 million. Since then, its share has more than quadrupled to $623 million in 2004. The allies have met twice to set this year's cost sharing, but failed to make progress. Few believe that this week's meeting will lead to a breakthrough.

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30. US on DPRK - Iran Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. PUNISHES N. KOREAN FIRM FOR HELPING IRAN: NYT", 2005-01-18) reported that the New York Times reported Tuesday that the US slapped penalties on nine firms for aiding Iran's ballistic missile development, including eight PRC munitions firms and one DPRK military goods export company. The companies will be barred from deals with the US government and denied export licenses to purchase controlled technologies from US corporations.

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31. US on Sino - Iran Relations

New York Times ("U.S. IS PUNISHING 8 CHINESE FIRMS FOR AIDING IRAN", 2005-01-18) reported that the Bush administration imposed penalties this month against some of the PRC's largest companies for aiding Iran's efforts to improve its ballistic missiles. The move is part of an effort by the White House and American intelligence agencies to identify and slow important elements of Iran's weapons programs. The White House made no public announcement of the penalties, and the State Department placed a one-page notice on page 133 of The Federal Register early this month listing eight PRC companies affected.

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32. PRC on Sino - Iran Relations

Reuters ("CHINA SAYS NO EVIDENCE TO BACK U.S. SANCTIONS", 2005-01-18) reported that the PRC said on Tuesday the US' imposition of sanctions against eight PRC companies for aiding Iran's weapons programs was not backed by evidence and added it was committed to preventing proliferation. "The US government has wantonly launched sanctions against Chinese companies without any evidence," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a news briefing, although he added he had not seen the Times report. "The Chinese government stands opposed to any spread of weapons of mass destruction."

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33. Cross Strait Relations

Washington Post ("CHINA, TAIWAN AGREE TO DIRECT FLIGHTS", 2005-01-18) reported that the PRC and Taiwan agreed Saturday to allow direct flights between the mainland and the island during this year's Lunar New Year holidays, a breakthrough in cross-strait relations that comes as tensions between the two sides have been running high. The deal, announced at a joint news conference in Macau, clears the way for the first nonstop commercial flights between the two political rivals. Analysts said the agreement could signal the beginning of a thaw in relations, which have been strained for more than a year by the pro-independence policies of Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian and by the PRC government's threats to respond with military force.

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34. US and Cross Strait Relations

Agence France Presse ("CHINA SAYS TAIWAN NOT INVITED TO BUSH INAUGURATION", 2005-0--18) reported that the PRC said it had received assurances from the US that Taiwan has not been invited to send a delegation to President George W. Bush's second-term inauguration this week. The statement contradicts earlier reports from Taiwan, whose media has said Nobel laureate Lee Yuan-tseh would head the island's delegation to the ceremony on Thursday. "China has expressed its concern to the US side," foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan told a regular briefing.

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35. Zhao Ziyang's Death

Washington Post ("ZHAO'S DEATH PUTS CHINA IN QUANDARY", 2005-01-18) reported that the PRC's Communist leadership convened a series of emergency meetings Monday to manage the consequences of the death of a disgraced party leader and confront the legacy of an event it has tried to put behind it, the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square. According to journalists and other Communist Party sources, the government was wrestling with the question of how to pay its respects to Zhao Ziyang, the party general secretary purged in 1989 for refusing to endorse the military assault on the student protesters, but to do so without triggering an emotional debate about the Tiananmen massacre.

(return to top) Agence France Presse ("SECURITY TIGHT IN BEIJING AFTER DEATH OF PURGED CHINESE LEADER ZHAO", 2005-01-18) reported that security has been markedly stepped up in Tiananmen Square, amid fears of protests related to the death of deposed PRC leader Zhao Ziyang, who opposed a crackdown on 1989 democracy protests in the square. Police were out in force, checking identification papers of visitors to the site of the landmark protests 15 years ago where disgruntled PRC traditionally hold demonstrations. (return to top)

36. US on Zhao Ziyang's Death

Reuters ("U.S. PRAISES 'MORAL COURAGE' OF CHINA'S ZHAO", 2005-01-18) reported that the US on Tuesday called the PRC's purged Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang, who opposed the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters, a "man of moral courage" as Beijing strove to downplay coverage of his death. "He was a man of moral courage who suffered great personal sacrifices for standing by his convictions during difficult times," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said of Zhao.

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37. PRC Hostages in Iraq

Reuters ("MILITANTS KIDNAP EIGHT CHINESE IN IRAQ", 2005-01-18) reported that insurgents released a video on Tuesday of eight PRC hostages in Iraq and threatened to kill them in 48 hours unless the Beijing government clarified their role in the country. The PRC's official Xinhua news agency confirmed eight PRC construction workers had been abducted in Iraq, citing the PRC embassy in Baghdad. It said diplomats were "making all efforts to rescue the eight hostages."

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38. US on Iraq

Washington Post ("IRAQ NEW TERROR BREEDING GROUND WAR CREATED HAVEN, CIA ADVISERS REPORT", 2005-01-18) reported that Iraq has replaced Afghanistan as the training ground for the next generation of "professionalized" terrorists, according to a report released yesterday by the National Intelligence Council, the CIA director's think tank. Iraq provides terrorists with "a training ground, a recruitment ground, the opportunity for enhancing technical skills," said David B. Low, the national intelligence officer for transnational threats. "There is even, under the best scenario, over time, the likelihood that some of the jihadists who are not killed there will, in a sense, go home, wherever home is, and will therefore disperse to various other countries." Low's comments came during a rare briefing by the council on its new report on long-term global trends. Within the 119-page report is an evaluation of Iraq's new role as a breeding ground for Islamic terrorists.

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