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1. US on DPRK Counterfeiting

Donga Ilbo ("US: BANK PROBE UNRELATED TO 6-WAY TALKS", 2006-01-24) reported that the US Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN), currently visiting the ROK, announced that its investigation of Banco Delta Asia (BDA) of Macao is not a sanction. According to an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, where the FinCEN had a working level meeting with officials of the Foreign Ministry, Unification Ministry and National Security Council yesterday, the enforcement team said that the US action against the BDA has nothing to do with the six party talks, and that it is purely a defensive law enforcement measure to protect US financial institutions.

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2. ROK-US Military Cooperation on DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("ARMY TO GET U.S. DIGITAL MAPS OF N.KOREA ", 2006-01-24) reported that the ROK military is to get satellite data about DPR Korean topography from the US that will greatly improve the armed forces' surgical strike capability. A military official said Sunday the director of the US National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), James Clapper, promised the digital geospatial information during a meeting with Army Chief of Staff Kim Jang-soo, who visited the US on Jan. 8-15. The intelligence comes in the form of digital maps and video images and is compiled from detailed satellite data covering physical features and facilities on the Korean Peninsula, including the DPRK's nuclear and missile facilities. The data is crucial in developing cruise missiles that fly at low altitude to avoid radar detection, and in launching surgical strikes using the GPS-guided smart bomb JDAM (Joint Direct Attack Munition).

(return to top) Joongang Ilbo ("KOREA EDGES CLOSER TO WEAPONS SEARCHES", 2006-01-24) reported that Seoul apparently is finding it difficult to resist US calls to participate in efforts to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Yesterday, a senior official here, speaking on background, told reporters that the administration has agreed to lend some support to Washington's Proliferation Security Initiative, a loose grouping of about 70 nations who have agreed to cooperate in interdicting the flow of missiles, mass weapons and materials and equipment used in their manufacture. He said, however, that the ROK would not formally declare its membership in the pact. Instead, he said, Seoul will send observers to interdiction drills conducted by other nations' militaries and join briefings where the results of consultations by members of the initiative are discussed. In addition, the official said, joint US-Korea military exercises will include drills on the interdiction of suspected mass weapons shipments. (return to top)

3. US on DPRK Sanctions

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. URGES SEOUL TO MATCH N.KOREA SANCTIONS", 2006-01-24) reported that a

US request for the ROK to fall in line behind financial sanctions on the DPRK has fallen on deaf ears. In a statement on Tuesday, the US Embassy in Seoul summed up discussions between US Treasury investigators and ROK officials on Monday. It said the team asked for support from the global community in putting pressure on the DPRK and stressed Washington had no intention of lifting its sanctions against DPRK firms it accuses of funneling gains from illegal activities.

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4. US on Kim Jong-il's Trip to PRC

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. CURIOUS ABOUT KIM JONG-IL'S CHINA TRIP ", 2006-01-24) reported that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's recent secretive trip to the PRC continues to be of interest in the international community. Washington in particular expressed curiosity about Kim's true motives for touring PRC industrial sites. US officials say they wonder whether Kim's tour was indeed part of a reform effort to revive his country's moribund economy. US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said at a press roundtable in Japan on Monday he was curious about Pyongyang's true intentions and would hear directly from his "Chinese colleagues" about the DPRK leader's visit.

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5. US Perception of Kim Jong-il

Joongang Ilbo ("HE'S NO. 2,' U.S. MAGAZINE SAYS OF KIM JONG-IL ", 2006-01-24) reported that Kim Jong-il is not No. 1 in the eyes of one Sunday supplement magazine in the US, but the top spot may be an honor he'd decline. Parade magazine's most recent issue ranked the world's 10 "worst" dictators, and placed Mr. Kim in second place, behind Sudan's strongman Omar al-Bashir. The magazine, which is distributed with the Sunday editions of 340 US. Newspapers, said it based its survey on information provided by Freedom House, Amnesty International and other human rights groups. It said that the top three positions were unchanged from last year.

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6. US on DPRK-PRC Relations

Reuters ("US URGES CHINA TO USE GLOBAL CLOUT WISELY", 2006-01-24) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick urged the PRC on Tuesday to be a responsible global player, as tensions simmered over nuclear stand-offs with Iran and the DPRK. "China's success and accomplishments make it an influential player in the global system," Zoellick told a news briefing.

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7. Japanese Military Leak to DPRK

Chosun Ilbo ("JAPANESE MISSILE DATA LEAKED TO N.KOREA ", 2006-01-24) reported that a dossier on the Japanese military's most recent surface-to-air missiles was leaked to a pro-Pyongyang group in Japan, the country's Sankei Shimbun reported Tuesday. It said the data was leaked to the Korean Association of Science and Technology in Japan (KAST) under the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon), a kind of DPRK fifth column there. The paper said the material seems already to have made its way to Pyongyang. The leaked dossier contains data on a research simulation outlining the defense capability of the SAM-3 mid-range guided missile system deployed since 2003. Compiled by the Mitsubishi Research Institute on April 20, 1995, it contains

information on missile system operations, interception altitude and distance and the missile's performance against fighter-bombers.

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8. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Korea Herald ("WATCHDOG TO ADDRESS N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS ", 2006-01-24) reported that the presidential human rights watchdog in the ROK pledged to address human rights abuses in the DPRK this year in its annual action plan released yesterday. The National Human Rights Commission said it will increase the number of investigators to conduct a wider ranging probe into the conditions of DPRK refugees and ROK abductees to the DPRK.

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9. PRC Chemical Spills

BBC News ("CHINESE CHEMICAL THREAT TO RIVERS ", 2006-01-24) reported that more than 100 chemical plants beside the PRC's rivers pose safety threats, the country's environment chief has warned. Zhou Shengxian said the plants were surveyed after a chemical spill in November poisoned the water supply for millions of people in the north-east.

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10. PRC Bird Flu

China Post ("CHINA RECORDS 10TH HUMAN BIRD FLU CASE", 2006-01-24) reported that the PRC's health ministry has announced the country's 10th human bird flu case, a 29-year-old woman who was in critical condition after contracting the virus, state media said Monday.

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11. PRC Security

Xinhua ("PRESIDENT HU URGES ENHANCED ANTI-TERROR EFFORTS", 2006-01-24) reported that PRC President Hu Jintao on Monday called for enhanced anti-terrorism efforts to maintain national security and social stability. After watching an anti-terror drill dubbed Great Wall No. 2 in the national anti-terror headquarters, Hu said international terrorist activities have posed a great threat to world peace and security, and the PRC is also faced with the threat of terrorism.

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12. Falun Gong in the PRC

The New York Times, International Herald Tribune ("FALUN GONG DETAINEE RETURNS TO CALIFORNIA", 2006-01-24) reported that a California businessman has returned to the United States after three years of imprisonment in the PRC for his participation in Falun Gong, a spiritual movement banned by the PRC government.

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13. PRC-India Relations

International Herald Tribune ("CHINA AND INDIA TAKE RIVAL PATHS", 2006-01-24) reported that as legions of influential policy makers and executives gather this week at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the role of India and China in shaping the world's economic fault lines is among the foremost issues on their minds.

(return to top) Xinhua ("INDIA, CHINA TO LAUNCH ACTIVITIES, MARKING FRIENDSHIP YEAR", 2006-01-24) reported that India and the PRC will jointly as well as separately undertake various proposals in trade, economy, defense, technology and tourism to mark the India-PRC Friendship Year in 2006, according to the Indian Foreign Ministry. (return to top)

14. PRC-US Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA, US USHER IN MAJOR YEAR OF BILATERAL TALKS", 2006-01-24) reported that the PRC and the United States kicked off a new year brimming with major events in bilateral relations, as senior officials announced here Tuesday a planned visit to America by PRC President Hu Jintao later this year.

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15. PRC on Japan-Taiwan Relations

Xinhua ("CHINA SAYS JAPAN MUST HANDLE TAIWAN-RELATED ISSUES APPROPRIATELY", 2006-01-24) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry Spokesman Kong Quan said Tuesday at a regular press conference that the PRC has already asked Japan to handle issues related to Taiwan in an "appropriate, well-considered" manner. It has been reported that former Taiwan leader Lee Teng-hui plans to visit Japan in May.

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16. Japan-PRC Security Relations

The Japan Times ("YAMAHA TIED TO SENSITIVE CHINA EXPORTS", 2006-01-24) reported that Police searched Yamaha Motor Co.'s headquarters in Iwata, Shizuoka Prefecture, and other places Monday, looking for evidence the company illegally exported remote-controlled helicopters to the PRC that could have military uses, investigative sources said.

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17. Japan on East Asia Relations

Crisscross News ("KOIZUMI BLAMES CHINA, S KOREA FOR LACK OF SUMMITT TALKS", 2006-0--24) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi again put the blame on PRC and ROK for cutting off summit talks with Japan on Monday as an opposition lawmaker criticized him for the deterioration in ties and a lack of effort to mend fences with the neighboring countries.

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18. US on Japan-PRC Relations

Crisscross News ("ZOELLICK OFFERS HELP IN IMPROVING STRAINED JAPAN-CHINA TIES", 2006-01-24) reported that U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick has offered to help improve relations between Japan and the PRC ahead of his visit to the PRC, Vice Foreign Minister Shotaro Yachi said Monday.

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19. Japan on Livedoor Case

The New York Times ("INVESTIGATION OF LIVEDOOR LEADS TO ARREST OF ITS FOUNDER", 2006-01-24) reported that Takafumi Horie, the brash Internet entrepreneur whose rise captivated Japan until an investigation into his business practices panicked the Tokyo Stock Exchange, was arrested Monday night on charges that he had violated securities exchange law.

(return to top) Australian News, Reuters ("PM IN HOT SEAT AFTER NET ARREST", 2006-01-24) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi came under fire todayafter the arrest of a brash young Internet chief executive who shook up corporate Japan and ran for parliament with ruling party backing as a poster boy for reform. (return to top)

20. Japan on US Beef Imports

The Japan Times ("ZOELLICK RUES FAULTY BEEF SHIPMENT, NEW BAN", 2006-01-24) reported that U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick said Monday it was "an unacceptable mistake" that a shipment of U.S. beef that arrived in Japan contained bone parts in violation of an accord on preventing mad cow disease, prompting Tokyo to once again ban American beef.

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21. Japan on location of US Military Bases

Crisscross News ("NEW NAGO MAYOR PREFERS SEA-BASED AIRPORT IN FUTEMMA RELOCATION", 2006-01-24) reported that Yoshikazu Shimabukuro, the newly elected mayor of Nago in Okinawa, said Monday the current plan to relocate a U.S. military airport to the city is "unacceptable" and that he prefers building a complete off-shore airfield.

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22. Cross Strait Relations

China Post ("DEPARTING PREMIER WARNS GOV'T ON POLICIES", 2006-01-24) reported that Departing Premier Frank Hsieh issued warnings to President Chen Shui-bian yesterday that his administration's policies were not in synch with the wishes of the people in Taiwan. While advising the government to be "more modesty" he also expressed his regret over the absence of a chance to ask the legislators to reconsider his budget plans.

(return to top) China Post ("GOV'T RULES OUT 2008 OLYMPIC EVENTS IN TAIWAN", 2006-01-24) reported that the government yesterday ruled out the possibility that 2008 Olympic sports events might be staged in Taiwan, adding it hopes plans for the Olympic torch relay will not downgrade Taipei's international status. (return to top)

23. East Asia Relations on History

Xinhua ("CHINA, ROK AND JAPAN SHOULD JOINTLY STUDY EAST ASIA WW2 HISTORY", 2006-0--24) reported that the PRC, the Republic of Korea (ROK)and Japan should jointly study East Asia World War 2 history, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said here Tuesday.

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