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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK on Nuclear Weapons Program

The Washington Post ("NORTH KOREA RENEWS COMMITMENT TO TALKS", 2006-01-31) reported that the DPRK renewed its commitment to stalled nuclear disarmament talks, while at the same time vowing to strengthen its stockpile of atomic weapons to counter what it called extreme US hostility. The DPRK "is sticking to its stand to seek ways of overcoming difficulties lying in the way of the six-party talks and of achieving progress in the talks," the Rodong Sinmun newspaper said.

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2. US Nuclear Intelligence Device

Chosun Ilbo ("ALL U.S. HANDS TO NUCLEAR INTELLIGENCE DRONES ", 2006-01-31) reported that the US is urgently developing ultra-small spy devices that could reveal the details of the DPRK's nuclear programs, according to a report in the New York Times on Tuesday. The remote-controlled drones resembling model airplanes are tipped to pick up electromagnetic waves and isotopes in the atmosphere around secret nuclear facilities to determine exactly how far the DPRK has come in developing nuclear arms.

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3. DPRK-Iranian Cooperation on Nuclear Weapons

The Sunday Times ("NORTH KOREA'S PLUTONIUM PILE ATTRACTS IRAN", 2006-01-29) reported that the drab compound that houses the Iranian embassy in Pyongyang is the focus of intense scrutiny by diplomats and intelligence services who believe that the DPRK is negotiating to sell the Iranians plutonium from its newly enlarged stockpile — a sale that would hand Tehran a rapid route to the atomic bomb. The risk is viewed with such gravity in Washington that the US has launched a concerted diplomatic and covert effort to prevent it, according to diplomats based in Pyongyang and Beijing.

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4. DPRK-US Relations

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA ACCUSES US OF AERIAL ESPIONAGE FOR WAR", 2006-01-31) reported that the DPRK accused the US of carrying out more than 190 spy missions in January using reconnaissance planes as part of war preparations. Quoting unnamed military sources, the official Korean Central News Agency said that US espionage planes such as U-2s, RC-135s and E-3s flew over the inter-Korean border "to spy on the important targets" of the DPRK.

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5. Kim Dae-jung's Trip to DPRK

Yonhap News ("FORMER S. KOREAN PRESIDENT CONFIRMS PLAN TO VISIT N. KOREA: GERMAN DAILY", 2006-01-31) reported that former RO Korean President Kim Dae-jung confirmed his plan to visit the DPRK by train when the weather gets warmer, a German newspaper reported Monday.

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6. Indonesia to Facilitate Inter-Korean Talks

Asia Pulse ("INDONESIA READY TO FACILITATE MEETING BETWEEN THE TWO KOREAS", 2006-01-30) reported that the Foreign Affairs Minister Hassan Wirayuda said he welcomed the RO Korean Defence Minister's request to Indonesia to act as facilitator in the meeting with the DPRK. "I heard about it when I was abroad but I have yet to hear directly from Indonesia's Defence Minister Juwono Sudarsono," he said here on Friday.

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7. DPRK-Japanese Relations

The Japan Times ("SUSPENSION OF FOOD AID TO N. KOREA TO CONTINUE; 125,000 TONS NEVER SENT ", 2006-01-30) reported that Japan will continue to suspend food aid to the DPRK despite an agreement to resume bilateral talks next Saturday in Beijing, according to government sources. The decision is in line with the government's policy of not normalizing relations with Pyongyang before the abduction issue is resolved, the sources said.

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8. Expert on DPRK Refugees in PRC

The Korea Herald ("N.K. HUMAN RIGHTS ACT DOES LITTLE TO HELP REFUGEES IN CHINA' ", 2006-01-31) reported that getting DPR Korean refugees out of the PRC to a safe country is becoming more difficult despite the enactment of the US North Korean Human Rights Act over a year ago, says a Seoul-based activist. The plight of DPRK's refugees is increasingly desperate as the PRC steps up a "strike-hard" campaign to crack down on refugees in the border area between the PRC and the DPRK, says Tim Peters of Helping Hands Korea. Peters, who is part of the "underground railroad" that gives refugees passage to a third country, says his job is becoming more difficult.

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9. PRC Drug Policy

Xinhua ("NATION TO SET UP LEGAL SYSTEM FOR DRUG SURVEILLANCE", 2006-01-31) reported that the PRC plans to use five years to set up and complete its legal system for drug surveillance, the Beijing Times newspaper reported here on Tuesday.

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10. PRC on Environment

Xinhua ("CHINA TO CONTINUE FISHING BAN ON YANGTZE RIVER IN 2006 ", 2006-01-31) reported that the PRC government will continue its fishing ban along the Yangtze River, the country's longest, in 2006 to help protect depleting fish resources, the fishery department of the Ministry of Agriculture said.

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11. PRC and Russia on Iran

Australian News ("RUSSIA, CHINA BACK IRAN ACTION", 2006-02-01) reported that Russia and the PRC have bowed to pressure from the US and Europe to send Iran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions over its nuclear program.

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12. Cross-Strait Relations

New York Times ("TAIWAN LEADER CALLS FOR END OF UNIFICATION COUNCIL", 2006-02-01) reported that [Taiwan President Chen stated] "It's proper time now to consider seriously the abolition of the National Unification Council and the Guidelines for National Unification, to express the Taiwan identity," Mr. Chen reportedly said during a lunch in his home county of Tainan. The president also suggested that Taiwan might apply this year to the United Nations as Taiwan instead of using its less controversial legal name, the Republic of the PRC, and that his country might work on a new draft of its constitution.

[\(return to top\)](#) Taipei Times ("CHEN DIDN'T BREAK ANY PROMISE: YU ", 2006-01-31) reported that Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Chairman Yu Shyi-kun yesterday defended the president, saying that the National Unification Council and Guidelines for National Unification should have been abolished long time ago. "President Chen Shui-bian did not break his promise, but instead he made his stance clearer than before," Yu said. "In fact, there is nothing to abolish because the unification council has not met since 2000." [\(return to top\)](#)

13. Japan on Cross-Strait Relations

Xinhua ("JAPAN REITERATES ONE-CHINA POLICY", 2006-01-31) reported that Japan's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday reiterated that Japan will stick to the One PRC Policy. "Regarding these issues, certainly what is most important is to preserve and enhance the peace and stability of the Taiwan Strait," Tomohiko Taniguchi, deputy press secretary said Tuesday afternoon, according to a Foreign Ministry fax sent to Xinhua.

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14. US on Taiwan Independence

News 24 ("US SAYS 'WOAH' TO TAIWAN", 2006-01-31) reported that in a rare move, the US state department issued a statement on Monday defining US policy towards Taiwan, emphasizing that Washington "does not support Taiwan's independence and opposes unilateral changes to the status quo by either Taiwan or Beijing."

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15. Japan-PRC Relations

Xinhua ("JAPANESE GOVT. POSITION PAPER SAYS CHINA NOT A THREAT", 2006-01-31) reported that Japan does not recognize the PRC as a threat, said a Japanese government position paper disclosed on Tuesday. The document, approved by the Cabinet, says the Japanese government "does not think the PRC has the intention to invade Japan," as an reply to a written question from House of Representatives member Kantoku Teruya of the Social Democratic Party.

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16. Japan on Yasukuni Shrine

BBC News ("JAPAN FM BACKS DOWN OVER SHRINE", 2006-01-31) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso has backtracked on his controversial call for the emperor to visit a war shrine despised by the PRC and ROK.

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17. Japan-US Beef Issue

China Post ("OVER 2,000 TONS OF U. S. BEEF WILL PILE UP IN CUSTOMS IN JAPAN'S LATEST IMPORT BAN: REPORT", 2006-01-31) reported that Tokyo eased its ban on U.S. beef imports on Dec. 12, but halted imports again this month after a beef shipment arrived in Japan with banned spinal bones in it. Japan considers such bones to be at risk for mad cow disease.

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18. Japan on US Military Bases

Asahi Shimbun ("REFERENDUM PLANNED ON U.S.-AIRCRAFT MOVE", 2006-02-01) reported that Mayor Katsusuke Ihara plans to hold a referendum in mid-March on a plan to relocate U.S. carrier-based aircraft from the Naval Air Facility Atsugi in Kanagawa Prefecture to the Marine Corps' air station here, sources said Tuesday.

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19. Japanese Military

Australian News ("JAPAN 'TO LEAVE IRAQ", 2006-01-31) reported that Japan would pull all of its troops out of Iraq by the end of May, ending Tokyo's first military deployment since World War II to a country where fighting was ongoing, a newspaper reported today.

[\(return to top\)](#) Mainichi Daily News ("ASO DENIES JAPAN MULLING TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM IRAQ", 2006-01-31) reported that the Japanese foreign minister on Tuesday denied reports that Japan will withdraw its troops from Iraq by May, saying Japan's priority was to bring security back to the war-torn country. [\(return to top\)](#)

20. ROK Military

Chosun Ilbo ("TOKYO'S IRAQ PULLOUT REOPENS DEBATE ON KOREAN TROOPS", 2006-01-31) reported that news that Japan is pulling its troops out of Iraq at the end of May has rekindled debate here over the extension of ROK soldiers' mandate in the war-torn country.

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II. CanKor

21. Report #234

CanKor ("CURRENT EVENTS", 2006-01-30) After a pause of more than three years, Japan and the DPRK are set to re-open normalization talks in Beijing on 4 February. In line with the format that was agreed by the two sides in December, the talks will consist of three separate but parallel discussions -- each with its own set of negotiators -- covering the abduction issue, security, and the establishment of diplomatic relations, including possible compensation for Japan's colonial history. Seoul finds it hard to accept pressures by Washington to fall in line with financial sanctions imposed on the DPRK for counterfeiting and money laundering, fearing that this will not only collapse Six-Party Talks, but also disrupt inter-Korean exchanges. The ROK nonetheless agrees to join -- at least partially -- the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), established to block the transfer of weapons of mass destruction and related illicit activities. China asks the USA to relax financial sanctions in order to encourage the DPRK to return to Six-Party Talks. The proposal involves giving the DPRK access to currently frozen accounts that are not linked to any illegal activities, such as ones used for normal international remittances.

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("FOCUS", 2006-01-30) This week's CanKor FOCUS presents a retrospective summary of key events involving the DPRK during the second half of 2005, selected and authored by CanKor editor Erich Weingartner in bi-monthly installments. [\(return to top\)](#)

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