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I. NAPSNet

1. Six Party Talks

Reuters ("N.KOREA SIX PARTY TALKS UNLIKELY BEFORE '07: RUSSIA", 2006-12-05) reported that Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alexeyev said the next meeting of the Six Party talks was unlikely to take place before 2007. "Taking into consideration the coming Christmas holidays, every day the possibility that the talks will restart in December is lower," Alexeyev told Interfax. No date has been finalized for the resumption of talks. In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said the United States would like the six-party talks to resume before the end of this year but he said it was important all the groundwork was done before such discussions began. McCormack said the atmosphere is "positive, but we are not yet ready to announce a date."

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2. US Incentives for DPRK

New York Times ("U.S. OFFERS NORTH KOREA AID FOR DROPPING NUCLEAR PLANS", 2006-1-05) reported that US officials announced they offered a detailed package of economic and energy assistance in exchange for the DPRK giving up nuclear weapons and technology. But the offer, made last week during two days of intense talks in Beijing, would hinge on the DPRK agreeing to begin dismantling some of the equipment it is using to expand its nuclear arsenal, even before returning to negotiations. It is unclear whether the DPRK will accept the offer, which is more specific — in both the details and the timing — than a vaguely worded statement of principles signed in September 2005, a year before Pyongyang's first nuclear test. The offer is significant because the US has resisted making clear to the DPRK exactly what kind of aid it would receive if it agreed to begin taking apart facilities like the plutonium reprocessing facility that turns spent fuel into weapons, and to provide a list of all its nuclear facilities. Hawks in the administration, particularly in Vice President Dick Cheney's office, have long opposed what they call "rewarding" the DPRK for its nuclear test. But State Department officials have argued that while the argument has gone on in Washington, the North has produced fuel for six or more weapons. They say the only successful strategy will be one that results in the beginning of dismantlement. Describing the DPRK response to the entire package of incentives and demands, the official, who was in the room during the exchanges in Beijing, said: "They listened intently. They were clearly in a listening and probing mode, and they said they were glad to be hearing this from us."

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3. Russia on Six Party Talks

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA READY TO GIVE UP NUCLEAR ARMS — RUSSIAN AGENCY", 2006-12-06) reported that Russia's Interfax news agency reported that the DPRK will renounce its nuclear weapons if the U.S. withdraws nuclear arsenals from the ROK and other countries in the region. "The statement that North Korea would act as a nuclear power at the negotiations means that, in exchange for its nuclear disarmament, it will demand the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from South Korea and other countries of the region," an informed DPRK Korean diplomatic source was quoted as saying by the Russian news agency. He added that the DPRK is ready to return to the negotiations if the conditions defined on October 31, would be observed.

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4. US Defense Secretary-designate on DPRK

Associated Press ("GATES PLEASED THAT CHINA TAKING STRONG STANCE ON NORTH KOREA", 2006-12-05) reported that Defense Secretary-designate Robert Gates said he was pleased over the PRC's shift to a tougher stance against the DPRK in response to Pyongyang's nuclear test two months ago. "Perhaps the one positive piece of news as a result North Korea's nuclear test is that it antagonized the Chinese and got them (to become active) on the issue," Gates told a Senate Foreign Relations Committee confirmation hearing, responding to a question. Sen. Carl Levin, a Democrat, questioned Gates about a 1994 article in which he advocated a U.S. attack on the DPRK's nuclear facilities. "I've changed my view on how to deal with North Korea," Gates said. "Clearly, at this point the best course is the diplomatic one."

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5. DPRK Sakhalin Work Visit

Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk ("DPRK DELEGATION ARRIVED TO SAKHALIN WITH A WORK VISIT", 2006-1-06) reported that the joint Sakhalin-DPRK group for trade-economic cooperation starts its work in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk. Seven DPRK representatives and thirteen Sakhalin specialists gathered at the meeting. The DPRK delegation will stay in Sakhalin till December 6. In this period the participants of the work group will meet the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Trade, representatives of the construction department, the fisheries department, the cultural administration, the Committee for natural resources and environment protection of the Sakhalin Area.

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6. DPRK Hydroelectric Construction

Pyongyang Korean Central Broadcasting Station ("KIM JONG IL GIVES 'ON-THE-SPOT GUIDANCE' AT POWER PLANT", 2006-12-06) reported that Kim Jong Il gave "on-the-spot guidance" at the Ryeso'ng River Power Plant construction site in the DPRK. Ryeso'ng is a large-scale hydroelectric power plant which, when completed should contribute to resolving the the North Hwanghae Province's electricity problem. Worthy of note is the mention that the plant has been designed so as to conform to "the principle of profitability".

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7. PRC Internet Use

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA HAS NEARLY 20 MILLION INTERNET BLOGGERS", 2006-12-06) reported that the PRC had 19.87 million Internet bloggers at the beginning of November -- a 24 percent increase over the past 12 months. Blogs devoted to medicine and education are particularly popular, the Xinhua news agency said. The report came some six weeks after state press reported that the PRC intends to require its millions of Internet bloggers to emerge from the shadows and register under their real names in a move that is raising privacy concerns.

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8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Joongang Ilbo ("SEOUL AGREES TO PAY MORE OF THE COST FOR U.S. TROOPS", 2006-12-06) reported that the ROK next year will pay 6.6 percent more of the cost to maintain US troops here under a deal struck yesterday between the two countries, the Foreign Ministry said. The ROK will contribute \$780 million next year, up 45.1 billion won from this year's arrangement, the ministry said. The ROK also agreed to hike its contribution in 2008, in line with inflation.

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9. ROK-US Trade Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("12 ARE ARRESTED, 20 INJURED IN CLASH AT ANTI-TRADE RALLY", 2006-12-06) reported that scoffing at a police ban, the Korea Alliance Against KorUS FTA held its third anti-trade demonstration of the season. Police said about 20,000 demonstrators were in the streets in 10 cities across the nation. About 5,100 demonstrators at three separate rallies in central Seoul converged on Euljiro and marched to Myeongdong, where police and protesters clashed; 12 protesters were arrested; 20 people, including police and protesters, were reportedly injured.

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Press ("US ANGER AS SOUTH KOREA BLOCKS LATEST BEEF SHIPMENT ", 2006-12-06) reported that the US government accused the ROK of finding an unscientific "excuse" to keep out US beef in angry remarks coinciding with the latest round of bilateral free-trade talks. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns said he was "very disappointed" over the ROK's decision to ban a third consecutive US beef shipment, after the discovery of tiny bone fragments in the consignment. [\(return to top\)](#)

10. Japan-ROK-PRC Trade Relations

The Associated Press ("JAPAN, CHINA, SKOREA SET TO BEGIN TALKS", 2006-12-06) reported that Japan, the PRC and ROK are now ready to start full fledged talks toward three-way pact aimed at expanding investment by reducing barriers among the three Asian neighbors, a Japanese foreign ministry official said. Japanese and ROK businesses are hoping that a three-way pact would loosen regulations and promote more investment in the PRC, Takamoto said. The PRC, however, have expressed reluctance to play by the same rule as the two bigger economies, he said.

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11. US on Japanese Defense Policy

Kyodo News ("U.S. OFFICIAL SUGGESTS JAPAN CHANGE VIEW ON COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE", 2006-12-06) reported that a US defense official expressed dissatisfaction during a recent visit to Japan over Tokyo's interpretation that it cannot exercise collective self-defense under the country's pacifist Constitution, a Japanese lawmaker said. Richard Lawless, the U.S. deputy defense undersecretary for Asia and Pacific affairs, was quoted as saying it would be "crazy" of Japan not to shoot down a missile clearly heading toward the US even when capable of doing so, apparently suggesting a change in interpretation.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Associated Press ("JAPAN WANTS U.S. TO LICENSE ARMS TECH", 2006-12-06) reported that the US should be more willing to share military technology with Japan and allow it to produce major weapons under license, Japan's defense chief said. Because Japan strictly limits its arms exports and transfers only to the US, the best way to minimize defense costs is to produce weapons under licensing contracts with the US, rather than developing its own equipment from scratch or procuring it at high cost, Fumio Kyuma, head of Japan's Defense Agency said. [\(return to](#)

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12. Japan ICC Membership

Agence France-Presse ("WORLD COURT CHIEF WELCOMES JAPAN, WANTS MORE ASIAN BACKING ", 2006-12-06) reported that the head of the International Criminal Court welcomed Japan's planned accession to the body, hoping it will encourage other countries in Asia, where few states have joined. The court has far less backing in Asia, where outside Oceania only Afghanistan, Cambodia, East Timor, Mongolia and the ROK are members. Japan has prepared to join the court next year, with the foreign ministry earmarking a budget for dues in the fiscal year to March 2008. It would be the largest financial contributor, as dues are based on the size of the economy.

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