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I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Agence France Presse ("CRUCIAL NEW YEAR FOR NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR STANDOFF", 2004-12-15) reported that pressure will grow for more diplomacy to end the nuclear standoff with the DPRK as the dispute enters a third calendar year which experts agree will prove decisive for any settlement. The DPRK has said it will take no steps until it is sure what shape US policy will take under the second administration of George W. Bush. Some analysts see a softer US line early in the year as the White House tries to deflect charges that it made no progress whatsoever in 2004 because it was unable to compromise with Pyongyang.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

The Associated Press ("U.S. ENVOY KEEPS N. KOREA TALKS IDEA OPEN", 2004-12-15) reported that the Bush administration is keeping the door open to limited face-to-face talks with the DPRK about its nuclear program but does not intend to sweeten its proposed trade-off to halt development of nuclear weapons, the US ambassador to the ROK said Wednesday. Maintaining a tough line, Ambassador Christopher Hill said the DPRK "needs to understand their interest is to come to the

table and respond to the proposal" for economic concessions and an improved international standing.

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3. Japan, US on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("KOIZUMI ASKS US TO SIGNAL N KOREA ON 6-PARTY TALKS", 2004-12-15) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Wednesday called on the US to tell the DPRK that the US intends to resolve the issue of Pyongyang's nuclear development peacefully through six-nation talks, Kyodo News reported, citing a Japanese official. In an interview with CNN, not all of which was aired, Koizumi stressed the need for the US to send such a message to DPRK leader Kim Jong Il so that the nuclear issue can be resolved peacefully, according to the official.

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4. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE OFFICIAL SAYS N KOREA TALKS UNLIKELY BEFORE FEBRUARY 2005", 2004-12-15) reported that the next round of six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear ambitions is likely to be delayed until February or possibly March, a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official said Wednesday. "No six-nation talks are expected this month," the official said, adding they were unlikely to be held in January, either.

[\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap ("N. KOREA RESPONSIBLE FOR SUSPENSION OF NUKE TALKS: JAPANESE ENVOY", 2004-12-15) reported that Japan believes the six-party talks are the most viable way to resolve the dispute over the DPRK's nuclear program and the DPRK's "passive attitude" is the reason why the negotiations are now stalled. "Because of North Korea's passive attitude, there is currently no prospect for the next round of the six-party talks to take place on specific dates," Toshiyuki Takano, Japanese Ambassador to the ROK, said in a recent interview with Yonhap. [\(return to top\)](#)

5. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("S. KOREA HOPEFUL OF RESOLUTION ON NORTH NUCLEAR ISSUE NEXT YEAR", 2004-12-15) reported that the ROK hopes that it will be able to find a peaceful resolution to the deadlock over the issue of the DPRK's nuclear weapons in the first half of next year, a senior aide to President Roh Moo-hyun said Wednesday (15 December). "We are making every effort to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully during the first half of next year, and I expect a good result by then," Kwon said.

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6. PRC on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("CHINA EXPECTS TALKS ON N. KOREA'S NUKES TO RESUME SOON: ENVOY", 2004-1-15) reported that the PRC expects the stalled negotiations over the DPRK's nuclear arms program to resume as early as January, if not December, but there are thorny issues to work out before discussions resume, such as the handling of DPRK defectors. "We (the participating countries in the six-party talks) have agreed to hold the talks by the end of this year, or at least hold working-level talks by that time. But considering the situation now, we think it is rather impossible to expect that

to happen," Li Bin, PRC ambassador to Seoul since 2001, said in a recent interview with Yonhap News Agency.

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7. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("LACK OF TRUST BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO RESUMPTION OF TALKS OVER N. KOREAN NUKES", 2004-12-15) reported that Russia sees little possibility of the six-nation talks over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program taking place before the end of 2004, but hopes to hold the next round early next year, Russian Ambassador to Seoul Teymuraz Ramishvili said. "We hope we will be able to resume in any composition or level the six-party talks in January or February, because long breaks between talks are detrimental to reaching a solution," the Russian ambassador said in a recent year-end interview with the Yonhap News Agency.

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8. DPRK on Japan Sanctions Threat

Reuters ("N.KOREA: JAPAN SANCTIONS WOULD BE WAR DECLARATION", 2004-12-15) reported that the DPRK warned Japan on Wednesday that it would treat economic sanctions as a "declaration of war" and threatened to try to exclude Tokyo from six-party talks on Pyongyang's nuclear arms programs. "If sanctions are applied against the DPRK due to the moves of the ultra-right forces (in Japan), we will regard it as a declaration of war against our country and promptly react to the action by an effective physical method," a spokesman for the DPRK's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

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9. Japan on DPRK Threat

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE LAWMAKERS BRUSH OFF 'DECLARATION OF WAR' THREAT, RENEW CALLS FOR SANCTIONS", 2004-12-15) reported that Japanese officials on Wednesday brushed off a DPRK statement saying it would consider sanctions imposed by Tokyo "a declaration of war," and renewed calls to penalize the DPRK for failing to account fully for Japanese citizens it abducted decades ago.

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10. US on Japan Sanctions Threat

Kyodo News ("U.S. SENATE EXPERT ADVISES AGAINST JAPAN SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2004-12-15) reported that an expert on DPRK affairs on the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee said in Tokyo on Wednesday that unilateral economic sanctions on the DPRK by Japan would not be beneficial. He added that sanctions, if imposed, will need to be both ideally multilateral and coupled with serious diplomatic engagement in order to be effective.

[\(return to top\)](#) Jiji Press ("ARMITAGE BASICALLY BACKS JAPAN SANCTIONS ON N. KOREA", 2004-12-14) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage on Tuesday expressed his basic support for Japan's economic sanctions against the DPRK. At a meeting with Takeo Hiranuma, head of a supra-partisan group of Japanese lawmakers assisting victims of the DPRK's abductions, Armitage complained that the US view on the issue has not been properly communicated to Japan.

Hiranuma said Armitage and James Kelly, US secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, expressed the view to him that Japan should make a decision on the issue of sanctions on its own initiative and that the US is ready to support any decision by Japan. [\(return to top\)](#) Kyodo News ("ARMITAGE URGES JAPAN NOT TO IMPOSE SANCTIONS NOW ON N. KOREA", 2004-12-14) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage urged Japan on Monday to avoid imposing economic sanctions on the DPRK at this time to pressure it into resolving the abduction issue, a visiting Japanese state minister said. Armitage also reiterated that the US will support Japan on settling the matter, the Japanese minister said. [\(return to top\)](#)

11. ROK on Japan Sanctions Threat

Associated Press ("S KOREA VOICES OPPOSITION AGAINST THREATS OF SANCTIONS AGAINST NORTH KOREA", 2004-12-15) reported that ROK on Wednesday expressed frustration over the DPRK's reluctance to resume talks on its nuclear weapons program, but said it was important to encourage the DPRK to return to the negotiations rather than impose sanctions. "We believe it ideal to encourage North Korea to come to the negotiating table as soon as possible and to make substantial progress through dialogue rather than to impose sanctions or blockades," Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon told journalists.

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12. PRC on Japan Sanctions Threat

Jiji Press ("CHINA CALLS FOR JAPAN'S CAREFUL APPROACH ON SANCTIONS", 2004-12-15) reported that the PRC on Tuesday called on Japan to think carefully before deciding to impose economic sanctions on the DPRK. Japan should be patient with the DPRK if it wants good results, PRC State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan said in a meeting with visiting Japanese Senior Vice Foreign Minister Ichiro Aisawa.

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13. Sino - DPRK Trade Relations

Korea Times ("NK-CHINA TRADE VOLUME HITS \$1-BIL. MARK ONCE AGAIN", 2004-12-15) reported that the DPRK's trade with the PRC amounted to \$1.01 billion in the first 10 months this year, up 40.3 percent on an annual basis, the Korea International Trade Association in Seoul said Wednesday. It is the second consecutive year for the two countries to surpass the \$1-billion-mark, according to statistics the association recently obtained from the PRC.

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14. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Yonhap news ("SOUTH KOREAN MINISTER IN NORTH HAILS OPENING OF INTER-KOREAN PARK", 2004-12-15) reported that shiny stainless pots rolled out from production lines Wednesday 15 December as a small ROK kitchenware firm began operation at a pilot industrial complex in the DPRK. Living Art became the first ROK firm to operate in the pilot zone of the complex being built by the ROK at the DPRK's border city of Kaesong, a few kilometers from the tense inter-Korean border.

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15. KEDO LWR Project

Asahi Shimbun ("EVEN IF THE LIGHT WATER REACTOR PROJECT IS TERMINATED, KEDO'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE EMPHASIZED BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN AN INTERVIEW", 2004-1-11) reported that in an exclusive interview with the Asahi Shimbun on December 9th, the Executive Director of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) Charles Kartman talked about the extended suspension of the Light Water Reactor project and his visit to the DPRK in November. Kartman stated that even if the Light Water Reactor project is ultimately driven into termination, KEDO should continue to be kept alive as it could play an important role in DPRK energy support.

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16. DPRK Military Defense

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA TO BOLSTER DEFENSE TO CHECK U.S. MISSILE DEPLOYMENT", 2004-12-15) reported that the DPRK said Wednesday that it will bolster its self-defense capabilities to counter the latest US deployment of new Patriot missiles in the ROK. "The servicepersons and people of the DPRK are getting stronger in their spirit and will to increase their self-reliant national defense capabilities in every way in order to take the toughest actions to counter force with force," the article said.

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17. DPRK Communications

Christian Science Monitor ("NEW AGENT OF CHANGE IN N. KOREA: CELLPHONES", 2004-12-15) reported that in a country where nearly every facet of society is controlled, DPRK authorities are encountering a new foe: the cellphone. Mobile phones, which are ubiquitous in the PRC and ROK, are now infiltrating the DPRK and are allowing information into - and out of - the "hermit kingdom." Douglas Shin, a Korean-American minister who has been campaigning for human rights in the DPRK, sees the emerging cellphone "revolution" as paralleling, if not abetting, budding dissent against the government.

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18. DPRK Property Rights

Donga Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA WILL ANNOUNCE NEW REAL ESTATE TRADING LAW NEXT YEAR", 2004-12-15) reported that the DPRK is planning to announce a real estate law that partly allows individuals to sell their houses at will in the first half of next year, said a Beijing-based source Wednesday. If the DPRK enacts the new house trading law as the source says, the law will come to legally guarantee the individual's right to houses, which were "actually traded in the manner of sales."

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19. DPRK Leadership

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL TAKES ACADEMIC INTEREST IN EX-PRESIDENT PARK", 2004-12-15)

reported that rumors of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's grip on power sliding were derided as groundless Wednesday by Russia's ROK expert Aleksandr Vorontsov, who said the Dear Leader was turning to past examples of ROK soldier-leaders for inspiration to bolster his position. The DPRK leadership is now engaged in concentrated research on late ROK president Park Chung-hee in order to influence its military-first "Songun" policy, he claimed.

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20. Inter - Korean Relations

Joongang Ilbo ("U.S. POLICY NEEDS LINK TO CHANGING OPINIONS", 2004-12-15) reported that a successful US security policy needs to take into account not only the military threat from the DPRK but also evolving views of the country by the ROK people, according to a new report. The Crisis Group, a research institute composed of former high-ranking government officials and experts from various countries, released the report Tuesday. The report points out that the generational shift currently taking place in the ROK is the main influence behind different opinions about the DPRK.

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21. US on DPRK Drug Trafficking

Yonhap News ("U.S. TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST N.K. DRUG TRAFFICKING IN 2005: EXPERT", 2004-12-15) reported that the administration of US President George W. Bush will crack down on drug trafficking by the DPRK as part of security operations during its second term, an American expert on the DPRK said Wednesday. Larry Niksch, a Korea analyst at the US Congressional Research Service, said one of the main goals of a US-led naval exercise, called the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), next year is to root out drug trafficking, and the DPRK is one of the major targets.

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22. DPRK - Russian Relations

Yonhap News ("N. KOREA TO DISPATCH 2,000 LOGGERS TO RUSSIA NEXT YEAR", 2004-12-15) reported that the DPRK will send about 2,000 timber loggers to Russia next year, a trade agency in the ROK said on Wednesday. Representatives from the DPRK and a local government in Russia reached an agreement in Pyongyang on Nov. 20 to dispatch the loggers to Russia and set up a lumber mill there, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said on its Web site.

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23. Inter - Korean Infrastructure

Yonhap News ("CONSTRUCTION OF 'PEACE DAM' TO BE COMPLETED BY END OF 2005", 2004-12-15) reported that the second-stage construction of the so-called "Peace Dam" and its supporting infrastructure will be completed by the end of 2005, the Ministry of Construction and Transportation said Wednesday. The dam, in Yanggu, lies 125 kilometers northeast of Seoul and is designed to counter the possible collapse of the DPRK's shoddily built Imnam Dam on the North Han River.

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24. ROK on DPRK Abductees

Chosun Ilbo ("SEOUL PLEDGES TO TACKLE NORTH ON ABDUCTEE ISSUE", 2004-12-15) reported that in relation to the abduction of pastor Kim Dong-shik by the DPRK, ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Ban Ki-moon said Wednesday that the government would employ all possible means in order to settle the issue of abducted ROK citizens at the earliest date.

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25. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap News ("FOUR SUSPECTED N. KOREANS SEEK ASYLUM IN BEIJING", 2004-12-15) reported that four people claiming to be DPRK defectors barged into a ROK school in Beijing Wednesday in an apparent defection attempt, diplomatic sources said. The four, including two children, entered the school through its main gate, which was not locked, the sources said.

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26. ROK, Japan on DPRK Issue, Trade, Visas

Korea Times ("ROH, KOIZUMI TO DISCUSS VISA, NUKES", 2004-12-15) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will have a summit meeting in Kagoshima, Japan, on Friday to discuss issues of mutual interest, Chong Wa Dae said Wednesday. "Main agendas of the summit talks will include the continuing impasse on the North Korean nuclear issue and the envisioned setup of a free trade agreement (FTA) between the two nations," Chung Woo-sung, presidential secretary on foreign policy, said during a media briefing. The two leaders will also discuss Japan's alleged plan to provide ROK nationals with permanent visa exemptions and increasing the flights between Kimpo and Haneda airports to promote travel, Chung said.

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27. ROK - Indian Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("S.K., INDIA TO HOLD ANNUAL SECURITY DIALOGUE", 2004-12-15) reported that the ROK and India yesterday agreed to hold a security dialogue between their governments annually and to increase bilateral trade volume to \$10 billion by 2008. Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon and his Indian counterpart Natwar Singh reached the agreements during the third meeting of ROK-India Joint Committee aimed at promoting bilateral cooperation.

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28. US Missile Defense

BBC News ("MISSILE DEFENSE SHIELD TEST FAILS", 2004-12-15) reported that the first test in almost two years of the planned multi-billion dollar US anti-missile shield has failed. The Pentagon said an interceptor missile did not take off and was automatically shut down on its launch pad in the central Pacific. The Pentagon is spending \$10bn a year on the missile system, which was meant to be in operation by the end of 2004.

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29. Australian Maritime Security

Agence France Presse ("AUSTRALIA BOOSTS ANTI-TERROR DEFENSES WITH NEW MARITIME SECURITY ZONE", 2004-12-15) reported that Australia will boost its defense against terrorism by creating a 1000-nautical mile security zone around its coast to protect its shipping, ports and oil rigs from attack, Prime Minister John Howard announced. Under a new joint customs and armed forces security command, thousands of ships approaching from some of the world's busiest sea routes will be monitored and, if necessary, intercepted.

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30. Japan Nuclear Waste

Kyodo News ("BRITAIN TO KEEP JAPANESE NUCLEAR WASTE", 2004-12-15) reported that the British government has decided to bury Japanese -- as well as German, Italian, Spanish, Swiss and Swedish -- nuclear waste in a bid to make money in order to pay for its own unresolved nuclear waste problems. This has the potential to create controversy in Japan if it is pressured into receiving high radioactive waste from Britain instead of dealing with its own less-radioactive waste.

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31. Sino - Japanese Relations

The Associated Press ("TOKYO HIGH COURT REJECTS COMPENSATION DEMAND BY FORMER CHINESE SEX SLAVES", 2004-12-15) reported that an appeal by four elderly PRC women forced to become sex slaves for Japanese soldiers during World War II was rejected Wednesday by a court in Japan that said the current government wasn't responsible for the atrocities committed by wartime rulers. The four women, aged from 77 to 81, from the PRC's Shanxi province, filed the original suit in 1995, seeking 20 million yen in damages and an official apology. They said they were repeatedly raped by Japanese soldiers posted in the PRC during the war.

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32. Sino - Japanese Relations on History, Security

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE LAWMAKERS TO VISIT CHINA TO DISCUSS HISTORY, SECURITY", 2004-12-15) reported that twelve lawmakers from Japan's two governing parties will visit the PRC next month to discuss history, security and economic issues with senior PRC Communist Party officials, delegation members said Wednesday. The lawmakers of the countries are expected to exchange opinions on Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's repeated visits to the controversial Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, as well as discuss security and economic issues.

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33. Sino - Pakistani Relations

Reuters ("PAKISTAN, CHINA DEEPEN TRADE TIES WITH AZIZ VISIT", 2004-12-15) reported that Pakistan and PRC signed a series of agreements on Wednesday on everything from agriculture to aid as they sought to deepen economic and trade ties during a visit by Pakistani President Shaukat Aziz. After a meeting between Aziz and PRC Premier Wen Jiabao, delegates from both sides signed a

series of agreements on projects including a nuclear power plant PRC agreed in May to help build and cooperation in agro-based industries.

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34. PRC on EU Arms Embargo

Agence France Presse ("CHINA WILL UPGRADE WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY IF EU LIFTS ARMS EMBARGO", 2004-12-15) reported that the PRC is ratcheting up pressure for the lifting of its EU arms embargo to remove the stigma of sanctions but also because it needs the technology to upgrade its existing systems, analysts say. During the Sino-European summit this month in the Hague, Europe refused to lift the 15-year-old ban but indicated that it could do so within six months if member states could agree on a code of conduct on weapons sales.

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35. US on PRC One Child Policy

The Associated Press ("U.S.: ONE-CHILD ABUSES RAMPANT IN CHINA", 2004-12-15) reported that despite some changes, the PRC's one-child family planning program remains a source of coercion, forced abortions, infanticide and perilously imbalanced boy-girl ratios, State Department officials said Tuesday. Testimony before the House International Relations Committee focused on a Shanghai woman who, since her second pregnancy in the late 1980s, has been assigned to psychiatric wards, coerced into an abortion, and removed from her job. She is reportedly subject to torture in a labor camp.

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36. Cross Strait Relations

The Associated Press ("CHINA BRUSHES OFF TAIWAN ELECTION WINS", 2004-12-15) reported that the PRC said Wednesday that peace with Taiwan can only be ensured if the island's authorities agree to reunify with the mainland, brushing off suggestions that recent election wins by the Taiwanese opposition might ease tensions. Change in cross-Strait relations can occur only "if the authorities in Taiwan recognize that there is only one China in the world and Taiwan is a part of it, and if they give up their Taiwan independence stance and stop Taiwan independence activities," Li said.

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37. PRC Satellites

Reuters ("CHINA PLANS BIG PRODUCTION OF SMALL SATELLITES", 2004-12-15) reported that the PRC, which put its first man in orbit last year, has built a national engineering and research center for small satellites, paving the way for large-scale production, state media said on Wednesday. Last month, state media said the PRC planned to launch more than 100 satellites before 2020 to watch every corner of the country.

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II. Japan

38. Japan National Defense Program

The Japan Times ("SDF SET TO SHED ITS 'NONMILITARY' SHELL", 2004-12-11) reported the new mid-term defense buildup plan for 2005-09. A new unit, 4,000- to 5,000-strong, to be based at the Ground Self-Defense Force Asaka Garrison straddling Tokyo and Saitama Prefecture will command mobile units and special forces in emergencies. The Maritime Self-Defense Force will revamp its escort elements into eight divisions, each consisting of four destroyers. New MSDF patrol planes will be deployed to replace the P-3Cs. The Air Self-Defense Force will introduce an in-flight refueling squadron at the ASDF base in Komaki, Aichi Prefecture, that will provide fuel for international and defensive missions.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Japan Times ("SDF LAW REVISION EYED", 2004-12-11) reported that Defense Agency chief Yoshinori Ono said Friday he will pursue legal changes to include peacekeeping activities as a main mission of the Self-Defense Forces along with national defense. He said he would submit a bill to make the necessary revisions to the SDF Law during the next ordinary Diet session that starts next month. [\(return to top\)](#)

39. Japan SDF Dispatch to Iraq

The Japan Times ("EXTENDED IRAQ TOUR A GIVEN FROM GET-GO", 2004-12-10) reported that some observers say the extension of the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) deployment to Iraq for another year is primarily designed to show that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is standing beside US President George W. Bush on the US-led war on Iraq. "The dispatch is largely a symbolic act to show that Japan is fighting (with the US) in its war against terrorism," said Akihiko Tanaka, professor of international relations at the University of Tokyo. He said it would not have been wise for Japan to withdraw from Iraq at this time, now that a nationwide election is planned for the end of January.

[\(return to top\)](#) The Japan Times ("MAJORITY WANT SDF BROUGHT HOME: SURVEY", 2004-12-11) reported that sixty-one percent of respondents to a Kyodo News poll oppose the Japanese government's decision to extend the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) mission in Iraq, according. Some 32.8 percent of respondents backed the one-year extension. On the DPRK, 75.1 percent said the government "should invoke economic sanctions and take a stern position." Some 22.3 percent advocated ongoing talks to resolve outstanding issues with the North. Meanwhile, fifty-one percent of respondents said Koizumi should visit Yasukuni Shrine again next year, while 40.8 percent said he should not. [\(return to top\)](#)

40. Japan UNSC Bid

The Japan Times ("SCHROEDER, KOIZUMI AGREE TO BACK EACH OTHER'S UNSC CANDIDACY BID", 2004-12-10) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder agreed Thursday to support each other's candidacies for permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. Speaking at an economic forum earlier in the day, Schroeder said new members should have equal status concerning veto rights. It is the first time Schroeder has mentioned this issue. At a joint news conference after the summit, Koizumi agreed with Schroeder, saying "The new permanent members and the current permanent members should not differ" in

their veto power.

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41. US Forces in Okinawa

The Japan Times ("AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL: U.S. TO RETURN RIGHTS TO OKINAWA", 2004-12-11) reported that the US agreed Friday to return to Japan air traffic control rights over Okinawa Island and its vicinity in about three years. Under the agreement, reached at a meeting of the bilateral Joint Committee in Tokyo, Japan will regain the air traffic control rights for the first time since World War II.

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