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I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Talks

Washington Post ("N. KOREA HESITANT TO RESUME TALKS", 2005-01-12) reported that a US congressman who traveled to the DPRK for talks with senior leaders said Tuesday that the discussions were "serious and substantive" but that he was told the DPRK was not ready to resume negotiations about dismantling its nuclear weapons program. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), briefing reporters after three days of meetings in Pyongyang, said the officials indicated they were "waiting to see the shape of the second Bush administration" before resuming six-nation talks that began in 2003.

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2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA EXPECTED TO RETURN TO DIALOGUE AFTER BUSH'S INAUGURATION", 2005-01-12) reported that the ROK's foreign minister said Wednesday he expects the DPRK to return to six-party talks over its nuclear weapons program after US President George W. Bush begins his second term in office later this month. "We are cautiously optimistic North Korea will agree to hold (six-party) talks at a certain time after the inauguration of US President George W. Bush," Ban Ki-moon said during his weekly press briefing.

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3. US on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Korea Times ("HILL TO HEAD 6-WAY TALKS", 2005-01-12) reported that Seoul's top diplomat said Wednesday it would be a "positive thing" for the resolution of the DPRK nuclear crisis if US Ambassador to the ROK Christopher Hill was named as chief US negotiator in the six-party talks. Ambassador Hill, who has served here for only five months, is tapped as one of the most viable candidates to replace US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, according to media reports.

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4. Lantos Delegation on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Los Angeles Times ("THE WORLD: DOOR AJAR FOR N. KOREA TALKS?", 2005-01-12) reported that a California Democrat in the first US congressional delegation to visit the DPRK since 2003 expressed hopes Tuesday of restarting stalled talks aimed at ending the regime's nuclear weapons program. "My message to the North Koreans was that it's in the interest of North Korea to return to the six-party talks without any delay," Rep. Tom Lantos of San Mateo said. "I had the very strong impression they are ready to discuss the matter because they understand we are determined to do so."

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5. Weldon Delegation Visit to the DPRK

Associated Press ("U.S. CONGRESSMEN MEET N. KOREAN OFFICIALS", 2005-01-12) reported that a group of US congressmen met with the DPRK's foreign minister in Pyongyang on Wednesday, the DPRK's official news agency said, in an effort to persuade the DPRK to rejoin talks on its nuclear weapons ambitions. A bipartisan delegation led by Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa., arrived in Pyongyang on Tuesday for a four-day visit as part of efforts to keep dialogue open between the US and DPRK, especially over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. The delegation met Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun on Wednesday, said the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency. The brief dispatch did not give further details.

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6. ROK on Sino-DPRK Relations

Reuters ("SEOUL EXPRESSES HOPE ON ATOM TALKS; SOUTH PRESSES CHINA TO INFLUENCE NORTH", 2005-01-12) reported that Ban Ki Moon, added that Seoul wanted Beijing to make greater use of its influence in Pyongyang to persuade the DPRK to resume talks that have been stalled since an inconclusive third round in June. Ban said he met with the PRC's foreign Minister, Li Zhaoxing, last week a conference on tsunami relief in Jakarta and urged the PRC, a longtime ally of the DPRK, to take the initiative required to lure the DPRK back to the table. Beijing said it would consider the proposal, Ban said.

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7. Sino - DPRK Economic Relations

Yonhap ("CHINA'S JILIN PROVINCE AIMS FOR US\$300 MLN IN TRADE WITH N. KOREA", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC's Jilin Province is aiming for \$300 million in annual trade with the DPRK this year, a PRC newspaper reported on Wednesday. Jilin Province is situated in the central section of the PRC's northeast region and is bordered by the DPRK on the east. Jilin's trade with the DPRK has been mostly in steel and coal.

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8. ROK, Japan on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Kyodo ("JAPAN'S DEFENSE CHIEF ARRIVES IN S. KOREA FOR TWO-DAY VISIT", None) reported

that Japanese Defense Agency Director General Yoshinori Ono arrived here Wednesday for talks with his ROK counterpart on matters of mutual concern, including the DPRK's nuclear weapons program, according to the ROK's Defense Ministry. Ono is slated to meet with ROK Defense Minister Yoon Kwang Ung and also with Prime Minister Lee Hai Chan on Thursday.

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9. ROK on DPRK Concessions, Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("ONLY DIALOGUE WILL LEAD TO N.K. CONCESSIONS: FOREIGN MINISTER", 2005-0-12) reported that the ROK's foreign minister said Wednesday that the DPRK should not expect any concessions from the US before it returns to multilateral talks aimed at defusing its nuclear program. "The U.S. position is that it can assume various flexible positions if North Korea joins the six-party talks, but before that, it will be difficult to adopt any concessions, compromise or a more flexible attitude," said Ban Ki-moon during a speech at a local forum.

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10. ROK Libya Visit for DPRK Nuclear Issue

Korea Times ("FOREIGN MINISTER TO VISIT LIBYA OVER NUKE ISSUE", 2005-01-12) reported that Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki-moon will head for Africa on Sunday for successive visits to four nations, including Libya, where officials say he will seek the country's "constructive role" in resolving the DPRK nuclear problems. Ban said during a press briefing Wednesday that he will embark on the African trip that includes stops in Algeria, Tanzania and Kenya, where he will discuss with the leaders of the African countries ways to improve bilateral relations as well as global issues.

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11. DPRK on Libya Model

Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH KOREA REJECTS SO-CALLED LIBYA MODEL", 2005-01-12) reported that DPRK officials told a US congressman visiting Pyongyang that the case of Libya could not be considered a model for solving the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. A spokesman for Representative Tom Lantos, Democrat of California, said in an interview given to Radio Free Asia that DPRK officials expressed a negative view of the "Libya model."

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12. DPRK on Inter-Korean Economic Cooperation

Korea Times ("NK WORRIED ABOUT MORE SOUTHERN VISITORS", 2005-01-12) reported that Pyongyang is putting the brakes on several projects related to the Kaesong Industrial Complex due to anxieties over the rapid increase in ROK visitors to the DPRK border city where the joint business zone is located, the Ministry of Unification in Seoul said Wednesday. "In the North's eyes, the size of South Korean delegations to each event in Kaesong has been worrying," a senior official said. "It might have been an anxious moment for the North," the official explained. "Their position (to inter-Korean contacts) is much more cautious than ours."

[\(return to top\)](#) Donga Ilbo ("IS NORTH KOREA CONCERNED ABOUT THE "SIDE EFFECT OF

OPENING" OF THE GAESONG INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX?", 2005-01-12) reported that on January 10, the DPRK effectively refused 20,000 tons of briquettes that the Korea Land Corporation and the Ministry of Unification decided to provide for heating of the Gaesong area, including the Gaesong Industrial Complex. The declared reason for the refusal is that it is hard to transport such a large quantity of briquettes. However, it is hard to accept the reason as it is, considering that it was the DPRK which first requested the briquette provision. An official engaged in the Assistance Group for the Gaesong Industrial Complex Project said, "There were probably criticizing voices within the North's authorities over fuel assistance limited to Gaesong when all North citizens are suffering from the cold." [\(return to top\)](#) Joongang Ilbo ("NORTH BARS BRIQUETTES TO GAESEONG", 2005-01-12) reported that the Unification Ministry said yesterday that the DPRK has asked for a delay in the delivery of heating briquettes intended for workers at Gaeseong, saying logistics for the distribution are too difficult. The Unification Ministry also said the DPRK had canceled a series of meetings over inter-Korean economic affairs. The DPRK also canceled a trip by a group of ROK doctors associated with the YMCA. "Considering that the factories in Gaeseong are operating smoothly, the series of incidents cannot be viewed as a change in North Koreans' attitude toward the Gaeseong project," a Unification Ministry official said. But, not all Seoul officials are optimistic. The DPRK's military has a strong sway over Gaeseong, so it is possible that the military leadership was displeased by the ROK's approach to the project by making a show out of it, a Seoul official said. [\(return to top\)](#)

13. ROK on Inter-Korean Summit

Yonhap ("FORMER ENVOY TO N.K. CALLS FOR SECOND INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT", 2005-01-12) reported that the ROK's former point man on the DPRK called on the government Wednesday to send a special envoy to the DPRK and hold a second inter-Korean summit. Lim Dong-won, who served as a special envoy to Pyongyang under former President Kim Dae-jung, said the lack of concrete dialogue between the leaders of the two countries threatened to undermine confidence in the reconciliation process and lead to misunderstandings.

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14. DPRK on Food Shortages

Yonhap ("U.S. BLOCKADE, NATURAL DISASTERS ARE TO BLAME TO FOOD SHORTAGES IN N.K.: REPORT", 2005-01-12) reported that the US economic blockade and a series of natural disasters are responsible for food shortages and difficulties in the DPRK, a DPRK newspaper claimed Wednesday.

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15. DPRK Population Increase

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA'S POPULATION PASSED 23 MLN IN 2001: KCNA YEARBOOK", 2005-0-12) reported that the DPRK's population, believed by outsiders to have decreased due to famine-related deaths, has actually been growing, reaching 23,149,000 in 2001, according to the DPRK's latest yearbook available on Wednesday. The figure, cited by the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency's Yearbook, is higher than most estimates by outside experts who believe that the country's population must have dwindled as it went through severe famine in the late 1990s.

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16. Japan on Boycott of DPRK Goods

Japan Times ("NORTH KOREA BOYCOTT SEES SOME IMPACT; CHEAP SUITS EASY TARGET, NOT SEAFOOD", 2005-01-12) reported that as the government continues to debate whether to impose economic sanctions on Pyongyang, nongovernmental organizations that believe the DPRK is still holding Japanese abductees are leading a nationwide call for a voluntary boycott of DPRK-made goods. But although the number of consumer goods bearing DPRK labels has visibly declined of late, experts on the reclusive state are divided over whether this means fewer products are coming in or they are merely being given another country of origin, including seafood caught in DPRK waters but identified as Russian or Chinese.

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17. DPRK - Japanese Relations and the World Cup

Kyodo ("SOCCER: N. KOREAN SIDE ASKING FOR 5,000 TICKETS FOR JAPAN MATCH", 2005-0-12) reported that the Japan Football Association said Tuesday it is willing to accept DPRK soccer officials' request for 5,000 tickets for its match against Japan in the upcoming opener of the final-round World Cup qualifiers. "Generally we provide supporters of the visiting team with tickets that account for about 10 percent of the total number of seats available," JFA President Saburo Kawabuchi said. The match will be played Feb. 9 at Saitama Stadium 2002, which can seat up to 63,700 spectators.

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18. ROK - PRC Conflict on DPRK Defectors

Kyodo ("CHINA STOPS S. KOREAN LAWMAKERS FROM HOLDING PRESS CONFERENCE", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC authorities on Wednesday prevented four legislators from the ROK's opposition party from holding a news conference at a Beijing hotel on DPRK defectors who fled their own country, saying they do not have permission. Four lawmakers of the ROK's Grand National Party, who were scheduled to hold the press conference from 2 p.m., were stopped by those who appeared to be PRC government officials, who forced reporters out of the room where the news conference was to be held. Angered by the action by the PRC authorities, ROK legislators refused to leave the room late into the night.

[\(return to top\)](#) Yonhap ("SEOUL UPSET OVER CHINA'S USE OF FORCE TO BREAK UP PRESS CONFERENCE", 2005-01-12) reported that the ROK expressed regret on Wednesday after the PRC used force to foil a press conference by ROK lawmakers in Beijing. "We think it is regretful that this kind of incident has happened," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lee Kyu-hyung said. "As soon as we confirms what exactly has happened, we will take necessary measures." Shortly after the incident, the GNP headquarters in Seoul expressed deep regrets over the PRC's use of force to break up its lawmakers' press conference and urged the ROK government to take stern action. [\(return to top\)](#)

19. ROK on DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("OPPOSITION LEADER PARK TO MEET WITH N. KOREAN DEFECTORS", 2005-01-12) reported that opposition party leader Park Geun-hye will visit a welfare facility for DPRK defectors on Thursday to get first-hand experience of their acculturation into the ROK's capitalist society, her office said Wednesday.

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20. ROK Military

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREAN MILITARY ADRIFT: NEWSWEEK", 2005-01-12) reported that the US current affairs magazine Newsweek has described the ROK military as "An Army Adrift." "Two decades ago, South Korea's military had a clear enemy. Yet today, several South Korean officials say a government white paper on national defense due later this month may do away with the traditional description of North Korea as Seoul's 'main enemy.' Political leaders are calling for closer friendship with Pyongyang and more independence from Washington," the article goes on. One regimental commander told Newsweek, "I wonder in what direction our guns should be aimed."

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21. ROK on Stem Cell Research

Agence France Presse ("SKOREA APPROVES CLONING RESEARCH", 2005-01-12) reported that the ROK gave official government backing to ground breaking research that produced the world's first cloned human embryos. The health and welfare ministry said a research team led by Hwang Woo-Seok, a Seoul National University professor, has been officially registered as a state institute and its research approved. "Professor Hwang Woo-Seok's team will now be able to step up its research on stem cells under the government's management system," the ministry said in a statement.

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22. Japan on Tsunami Warning System

Agence France Presse ("JAPAN MEETING TO TRY TO BUILD TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM AFTER ASIAN TRAGEDY", 2005-01-12) reported that in the wake of Asia's tsunami calamity, Japan plans to use a world anti-disaster conference next week to take the first firm steps toward creating a system to warn of giant waves in the Indian Ocean. Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has ordered his government to make "solid proposals" on a tsunami warning system amid outrage the Indian Ocean did not have the same technology available to wealthier states on the Pacific.

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23. PRC on Asian Energy Security

Kyodo ("CHINA ENVOY WANG CALLS FOR COOPERATION OVER ENERGY SUPPLY IN NE ASIA", 2005-01-12) reported that PRC Ambassador to Japan Wang Yi on Wednesday called for the PRC, Japan, Russia and the ROK to jointly establish a cooperation mechanism to secure energy supply in Northeast Asia. "By creating an energy cooperation framework in Northeast Asia, we can ensure a stable supply of oil and natural gas, as well as stabilize oil prices from the Middle East to Asia," he said in Japanese during a lecture at Waseda University.

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24. EU Arms Ban on the PRC

BBC News ("EU CHINA ARMS BAN 'TO BE LIFTED'", 2005-01-12) reported that the EU embargo on arms exports to the PRC is likely to be lifted in the next six months despite US objections, UK

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has said. The 15-year-old ban was imposed in the aftermath of the PRC's crackdown on protesters in Tiananmen Square. Mr Straw told a Commons select committee human rights concerns over the PRC remained.

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25. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA EYES LANDMARK NON-STOP FLIGHTS WITH TAIWAN", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC proposed Wednesday one-off, non-stop charter flights between PRC and Taiwan cities during the Lunar New Year holidays in February in a move seen aimed at easing tension between the foes. Landmark direct charter flights between the PRC cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Xiamen and the Taiwan cities of Taipei, Kaohsiung and Taichung would mark a step toward ending a decades-old ban by the island on direct air links with the PRC.

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26. Sino - US Trade Relations

The Associated Press ("EVANS GETS CHILLY RECEPTION IN BEIJING", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC's commerce minister told outgoing Secretary of Commerce Donald Evans on Wednesday that the American's four-year tenure has been only 70 percent successful. The minister also said he regrets that Washington hasn't granted the PRC a trade status that would lessen scrutiny of PRC export prices. A visibly uncomfortable Evans responded with surprise. "Oh, hey, that's almost flunking," he said. "That's almost failure." Later, Evans told The Associated Press that Bo meant the comment as praise.

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27. PRC Tsunami Aid

The Associated Press ("TSUNAMI RESPONSE EXPOSES LIMITS ON CHINA", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC — which has recently taken a larger role in the politics of Southeast Asia — seems strangely absent from the international response to the tsunami disaster. To be sure, the PRC has hardly been idle. It has promised \$83 million in aid, and PRC citizens have donated \$18 million more. Yet those steps have barely registered in media coverage of the aftermath of the Dec. 26 disaster, rife with images of US, Australian, and other relief teams at work. Analysts say the PRC's response exposes the limitations on its ability to help in such crises, along with the diplomatic costs of its aversion to foreign entanglements.

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28. PRC Economy

Agence France-Presse ("IN CHINA, MONEY DOES NOT BUY HAPPINESS: POLL", 2005-01-12) reported that the people of the PRC may be far wealthier than they were a decade ago, but they are not very satisfied with their quality of life, a survey showed. The Gallup Organization's study covering 15,000 adults across every province and autonomous administration unit in the PRC showed average household incomes nearly 2.5 times greater than those reported in 1994. Gallup said "despite impressive growth in average household income, the ratio of Chinese expressing satisfaction to those showing dissatisfaction has actually eroded somewhat over time."

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29. PRC Anti-Corruption Measures

Reuters ("CHINA CRACKS DOWN ON HIGH-ROLLING OFFICIALS", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC is targeting high-rolling government officials and executives at state-owned companies in a "relentless strike" against gambling, Xinhua news agency said. The campaign, announced late on Tuesday, comes as President Hu Jintao renewed the fight against widespread corruption, saying the battle was key to the survival of the ruling Communist Party.

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30. PRC on Zhao Ziyang Illness

The New York Times ("CHINA CONFIRMS PURGED LEADER'S ILLNESS", 2005-01-12) reported that the PRC government confirmed Tuesday that Zhao Ziyang, the purged Communist Party chief, had been hospitalized but denied a published report that he had died. The confirmation of Mr. Zhao's illness by a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, was a rare public comment by the PRC government about a man who was deposed as party leader after losing a power struggle with hard-liners during the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989.

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31. PRC Media Freedom

Agence France-Presse ("OUTSPOKEN HONG KONG DEMOCRAT CLAIMS MEDIA IS GAGGING HER", 2005-01-12) reported that editors used to call her a troublemaker for her outspoken pro-democracy views, but Hong Kong lawmaker Emily Lau says a covert effort by the PRC to gag dissenting media here has rendered her the quiet woman. After almost 20 years of getting under the skin of the PRC's political establishment, Lau says Beijing has given up trying to silence her and instead is pressuring media not to report her critical utterances.

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