

NAPSNet Daily Report 03 April, 1998

Recommended Citation

"NAPSNet Daily Report 03 April, 1998", NAPSNet Daily Report, April 03, 1998,
<https://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-daily-report/napsnet-daily-report-03-april-1998/>

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I. United States

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1. DPRK Missile Development

The Associated Press (Barry Schweid, "GROUP: N.KOREA MISSILE NOT A THREAT," Washington, 03/02/98) reported that the Union of Concerned Scientists said in a report Thursday that the DPRK missile program is hampered by technical problems and does not pose an imminent threat to other countries. The report said that the DPRK has not tested one missile for five years and has engineering problems with its second missile program. David Wright, the report's author and a physicist and researcher at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said that the US should take the opportunity to negotiate more aggressively with the DPRK, and consider trading US and Japanese investment to halt the program before it develops further. He stated, "North Korea isn't acting like a country committed to developing new missiles." Israel reportedly tried in 1994 to swap technology for curbs on the DPRK's missile sales to Middle East countries, but the Clinton administration blocked the negotiations while it concluded its own deal with the DPRK. Wright said that while, over the long term, the DPRK's missile program can pose a threat, aggressive US negotiating could ban flight testing, providing "long-term security benefits to the United States, Israel and North Korea's neighbors." He stated that the DPRK missile program is based on Scud

technology provided by the Soviet Union or Egypt. He added that the DPRK is developing the Nodong missile with a range of 600 to 750 miles, and has tested it once, in May 1993, for a partial range of about 300 miles. Since then, preparations were detected twice by satellite, in 1994 and 1996, but no tests were conducted, which Wright argued could be a signal to the US that the DPRK is prepared to bargain. He added that US satellites four years ago detected two mockups, apparently for a two-stage Taepodong missile, but neither has been tested and the project "makes little sense from an engineering standpoint." [Ed. note: Wright's article can be found online at the [UCS website](#).]

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2. Alleged Plot to Influence ROK Election

The Associated Press ("FORMER S. KOREAN SPY CHIEF ARRESTED," Seoul, 04/02/98) reported that Kwon Young-hae, former head of the ROK Agency for National Security Planning, was arrested Friday and charged with plotting to defame Kim Dae-jung during last year's election campaign. Kwon had been hospitalized since March 21 after slashing himself with a knife while being questioned about the alleged plot. Doctors said that Kwon has fully recovered from his wounds. Prosecution officials said charges filed against Kwon included defamation and meddling in politics in violation of laws governing the agency's activities, which is punishable by up to five years in prison.

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3. ROK National Assembly Election

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA OPPOSITION SWEEPS ELECTION," Seoul, 04/02/98) reported that, according to official results released Friday, the ROK main opposition Grand National Party won all four contested National Assembly seats in off-year elections called to fill vacancies left by the withdrawal or deaths of opposition legislators. The elections were seen as a test of the unity of the Grand National Party, which holds a majority in the Assembly.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. ROK-Japan Fisheries Talks

A special committee on international fisheries issues of the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) urged the ROK to resume fisheries talks indiscriminate of the few agreements the two parties had reached before Japan unilaterally declared an earlier fisheries accord between the two parties void in January. The agreements include issues regarding the sovereignty of the Tokto islets and other issues. Observers view Japan's emphasis of its stance on fisheries talks as a means to consolidate its posture in negotiations with the ROK, which Japanese Foreign Minister Obuchi Geijo had agreed to resume during his visit to Seoul last March. (Joongang Ilbo, "LDP URGES ROK TO RESUME FISHERIES TALKS ON TABLA RASA," 04/02/98)

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2. Asia-Europe Summit Meeting

ROK President Kim Dae-jung, now in London to attend ASEM, is to meet with PRC Prime Minister Zhu Rongji Wednesday afternoon at the Hilton Parklane Hotel, and is also scheduled to meet

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and UK Prime Minister Tony Blair. President Kim is expected to explain the new government's DPRK policy to the PRC Prime Minister, and ask for its continued cooperation in smoothing inter-Korean relations. Reinforced relations between the ROK and Japan, which had been strained over Japan's unilateral scrapping of a fisheries accord, will be the topic of discussion at the ROK-Japan summit. (Chosun Ilbo, "KIM DAE-JUNG TO MEET PRC-JAPAN-UK LEADERS," 04/02/98)

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3. PRC Democratization

PRC dissident in exile Wei Jingsheng warned April 1 that without Western states' support for democratic movements in the PRC, a civil war may break out. Wei, during a press conference in Hamburg, Germany, said that activists in the PRC, without external support, may have no other choice than to rely on violence as a means to transform the PRC's political system. (Joongang Ilbo, "PRC DISSIDENT WARNS WESTERN STATES," 04/02/98)

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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