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## I. United States

### 1. ROK-DPRK Summit

The Christian Science Monitor (Michael Baker, "TWO-KOREA TALKS MARK FRESH START," Seoul, 4/11/00) reported that the news of the DPRK-ROK summit scheduled for June could tilt elections in favor of ROK President Kim Dae-jung's ruling party in contested districts. One anonymous DPRK watcher in Seoul said, "I don't think that this is 'the breakthrough.' The interests of the two sides [are not] any more reconcilable now than they were [before]. But the two leaders probably imagine that they can trade off to mutual advantage in the near term." The DPRK so far has attached no conditions to the summit. Optimists said that a number of factors suggest that the DPRK is finally coming out of its hermitage even though exchanges so far have been well isolated. Ham Jae-bong, a political scientist at Yonsei University in Seoul, said, "Kim Jong-il has to reinvent himself the way Deng Xiaoping did.... He's going to have to go against everything that his father has stood for." Hideshi Takesada, a DPRK specialist at Japan's National Institute of Defense Studies, said that the

summit signals the first step toward a fall-of-the-Berlin-wall moment, because the DPRK will put itself into a chain of events it will not be able to control. Takesada said that the DPRK has long worried about the Trojan Horse aspect of economic openness, and the summit signals that "Kim Jong Il is underestimating this risk." Katsumi Sato, another Tokyo-based DPRK watcher, said that the DPRK is indeed acting to cash in on the soft approaches but will maintain its belligerent, manipulative stance toward other countries. [Ed. note: This article was included as a Top Story in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 11, 2000.]

The Washington Post (Steven Mufson and Doug Struck, "KOREAN SUMMIT SEEN AS ELECTION PLOY," 4/11/00) reported that some US Republicans and ROK opposition leaders said that the DPRK-ROK summit was an attempt by the DPRK to influence ROK parliamentary elections on April 13. They also warned that the DPRK is playing the US off the ROK and bargaining for more economic aid. Former US ambassador to the ROK Donald Gregg, now head of the Korea Society in New York, said that the summit indicates that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il now feels secure enough politically to meet his foe. Gregg also said that the summit was a tribute to Kim Dae-jung, who showed toughness in ordering a naval battle against the DPRK a year ago while pursuing his "sunshine policy" of better relations. Other experts were cautious about the summit because the announcement came so soon before the ROK elections. Five years ago, the DPRK tried to influence the elections by sending soldiers into the demilitarized zone, raising fears of conflict and driving votes to then-President Kim Young-sam. This time, some observers believe, the DPRK is trying to boost Kim Dae-jung. Chuck Downs, a senior foreign policy aide to US House Republicans, said, "clearly the ruling party in South Korea will bill this as a major achievement. The North Koreans have a record of appearing malleable and redefining their position later on. There is no reason to believe that this is not the same pattern as pursued earlier." Opposition parties in the ROK criticized the summit announcement as political maneuvering. The opposition Grand National Party said, "no regime in history has turned to such a blunt and shameless trick to win an election." Park Joon-young, spokesman for Kim Dae-jung, insisted that the timing was not set by Kim. Park said, "the president himself was surprised by the fast progress of the negotiations." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 11, 2000.]

The New York Times (Howard W. French, "MOOD-DIMMING QUESTION IN SEOUL," Seoul, 4/11/00) reported that after the initial surprise and relief that ROK residents felt upon hearing the news of the DPRK-ROK summit scheduled for June, many began to question the cost of such a meeting. Yeon Ha-cheong, an expert in DPRK relations and dean of the school of marketing at Myongai University in Seoul, said, "we are all waiting for the details of what we must give them and what we can expect from North Korea. North Korea will certainly demand lots of things." Several ROK analysts said that the DPRK most likely calculated that agreeing to the summit right before the ROK's election would allow it to get the best agreement. Cho Dong-ho, head of DPRK economic studies at the Korea Development Institute, stated, "This kind of meeting cannot come all of the sudden, out of nowhere. No one knows in detail, but the basic agenda must be a longer-term framework of political contacts between us and, of course, economic cooperation." Some analysts suggested that the ROK may offer to reconnect its power grid with the DPRK's to provide the DPRK with needed electricity. Jan Kwang-keun, a spokesman for the Grand National Party, stated, "The government must have paid a huge price, or agreed to some secret conditions to reach this deal, but that side has not been revealed. We want to remind people that such compensations involve taxpayers' money." [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 11, 2000.]

## **2. US View of ROK-DPRK Summit**

The US Department of State ("STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE K.

ALBRIGHT," 04/11/00) issues the following statement by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: "I warmly welcome the announcement that the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will hold a summit June 12-14. I called ROK Foreign Minister Lee Jung Binn early this morning to convey our strong support for this meeting, which will be a history-making event. Direct dialogue between the South and the North is central to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. President Kim Dae-jung's leadership and encouragement -- for engagement, for U.S.-DPRK dialogue, Japan-DPRK dialogue, and dialogue between the DPRK and other nations -- opened the door for this important step. The United States has long worked in support of achieving such dialogues, which are envisioned as part of the process outlined by Dr. Perry. The U.S., the ROK, and Japan have consulted closely together to achieve a coordinated policy pursuing our common concerns regarding weapons of mass destruction and missiles. We look forward to continuing close consultation and coordination with our ROK and Japanese allies."

### **3. ROK Aid to DPRK**

Agence France-Presse ("S.KOREA PLEDGES HUGE AID TO NORTH KOREA AHEAD OF SUMMIT," Seoul, 04/11/00), and the Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN CAUTIOUS ON SUMMIT," Seoul, 04/11/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Tuesday offered financial aid to the DPRK. Kim stated, "Substantial aid is needed for North Korea's economic rehabilitation which will require our investment and credit loans." Kim said that his June summit with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il should primarily deal with economic cooperation, reconciliation and exchanges, and the reunion of families separated by the division of Korea. He cautioned, however, "The national issues, which have been divisive for a half century, cannot be resolved overnight." Yu Suk-ryul of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, stated, "Kim's comment heralds an impending start of a rush by South Korean firms to reconstruct the weak economic infrastructure in North Korea." Kim Hyon-du, ROK unification ministry spokesman, stated, "During this week, we will tap on the North's ideas on schedules for preliminary talks (for the summit) and scales of working-level officials." Kwon Byong-hyon, ROK Ambassador to the PRC, said that vice ministers from the two Koreas would hold preparatory meetings in Beijing prior to the summit. Former US defense secretary William J. Perry stated, "A very reasonable goal is a reconciliation on the Korean peninsula--the countries living together peacefully. Their political systems are dramatically different. Their economic systems are dramatically different. I just have a hard time imagining [reunification]."

### **4. ROK Elections**

The New York Times (Valerie Reitman, "FOR S. KOREA'S PRESIDENT, IT'S SHAKY AT THE TOP," Seoul, 04/11/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung's party may fail to gain a majority in National Assembly elections on Thursday. Scott Snyder, Seoul representative of the Asia Foundation, said that more than the ROK-DPRK summit meeting, the ROK electorate is "interested in seeing a political process that can work in South Korea going forward." One of the key races is in the Chong-ro district of Seoul, which features Jung In-bong of the Grand National Party against ruling party candidate Lee Jong-chan, former head of the National Intelligence Service.

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. ROK-DPRK Summit**

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "SOUTH-NORTH SUMMIT EXPECTED TO BRING 55 YEARS OF

MUTUAL HOSTILITY TO AN END," Seoul, 04/11/00), Joongang Ilbo (Choi Won-sup, "THE EXPECTED AGENDA FOR NORTH-SOUTH SUMMIT TALKS," Seoul, 04/10/00), The Korea Times (Lee Chang-sup, "TWO KIMS TO DISCUSS WAYS OF REMOVING WAR THREAT," Seoul, 04/11/00) and Chosun Ilbo ("TWO KIMS TO MEET IN PYONGYANG IN JUNE," Seoul, 04/10/00) and Joongang Ilbo (Lee Chul-hui, "TWO KOREAS TO HOLD HISTORIC SUMMIT TALKS," Seoul, 04/11/00) reported that ROK officials and analysts said that the first ever inter-Korean summit was made possible through the ROK government's persistent implementation of the engagement policy, which met the DPRK's current domestic needs and situation. They said that the historic meeting between the top leaders of the two Koreas is certain to lend decisive momentum to the drive to eradicate the last vestiges of the Cold War by leading the two countries to an era of reconciliation and cooperation. They added that the talks will provide opportunities for massive economic cooperation projects between the ROK and the DPRK, as President Kim proposed in his "Berlin declaration" of March 9. Other items that could be included on the agenda for the "comprehensive" discussions are mutual disarmament, the DPRK's nuclear weapon and missile development programs, humanitarian aid for the DPRK, and guarantees that the DPRK's ruling mechanism will be maintained, officials said.

## **2. ROK Election**

The Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SUMMIT AGREEMENT SEEN AS SHARP BOOST FOR RULING PARTY IN THURSDAY'S POLLS," Seoul, 04/11/00) reported that ROK analysts said on Monday that the DPRK and ROK's agreement to hold a summit in June is expected to sharply boost the ruling party's chances for victory in Thursday's polls. "The agreement will put the ruling Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) in a better position in the election race, as it will attract the millions of voters who have family members in North Korea," said Kim Kwang-sik, a political commentator. The DPRK has often had a significant influence on ROK elections, raising suspicions of behind-the-scene deals between the two governments.

## **3. ROK Summit Preparations**

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "NSC HELD TO PREPARE FOR S-N SUMMIT," Seoul, 04/10/00) reported that the ROK government held a National Security Council meeting on Sunday to discuss measures to help the inter-Korean summit materialize and to effectively prepare for preliminary talks that will be launched this month, officials said. The meeting, which was presided over by Unification Minister Park Jae-kyu, focused on the overall framework for the summit, including its format and the level of the entourages participating, the official said.

## **4. DPRK-Japan Talks**

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "N.K. RAISES STOLEN CULTURAL ASSET ISSUE IN TALKS WITH JAPAN," Seoul, 04/10/00) reported that the DPRK strengthened its demands for Japanese compensation by raising the issue of looted cultural assets, right after their discussions ended with little progress on Friday. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency, after introducing details of the pillaging committed during Japan's occupation of Korea, said, "This is a pressing issue that should be clearly resolved." It added, "The looting of cultural treasures was a savage robbery almost unprecedented in scope and an unforgivable crime aimed at destroying our nation's spirit and blotting out our people." The Japanese side reiterated that the DPRK should address the alleged abduction of Japanese citizens and concerns about the DPRK's development and testing of ballistic missiles. Despite their conflicting views, the two sides struggled to maintain the momentum for the negotiations, saying that they had reached a deeper understanding of each other's positions and

agreed on "the need to continue talks on normalizing ties."

## **5. DPRK-ROK Economic Cooperation**

Joongang Ilbo ("MORE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS EXPECTED IN NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 04/10/00) reported that the likelihood of large-scale construction projects in the DPRK is high. LG Engineering and Construction is considering a joint venture with LG International Corporation to develop Social Overhead Capital (SOC) industries in the DPRK, such as oil refinement, and building and road construction. Hyundai Engineering and Construction, which has already made inroads into the DPRK construction business, is making plans to expand existing enterprises, including the construction of the west sea industrial complex and the employment of DPRK laborers in foreign countries.

## **6. ROK Aid to DPRK**

Chosun Ilbo (Kim Min-bai, "GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLY FERTILIZER AID TO NK," Seoul, 04/11/00) reported that an ROK government source revealed on Monday that 200,000 tons of fertilizer aid will be sent to the DPRK in April and May before the summit meeting between ROK President Kim Dae-jung and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. The source said that, during contacts with ROK officials, the DPRK requested the fertilizer in time for the planting season, and had expressed interest in the expansion and development of projects on the west coast and SOC work nationwide.

# **III. Announcement**

## **1. Korean-American Conference**

The International Council on Korean Studies (ICKS) will hold its 2000 Annual Conference on the theme "Current Status and Future of Korean Americans" on Friday, 2 June to Sunday, 4 June 2000, at the Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington, Virginia. The purpose of the conference is to analyze the current status and future of Korean Americans in terms of their special problems and possible remedies. The presented papers will appear in the coming issue of the International Journal of Korean Studies. The conference program and related information are available on the [ICKS Web Site](#).

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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