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I. United States

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1. Four Party Peace Talks

United Press International ("U.S. GEARS UP FOR KOREA TALKS," Washington, 03/11/98) reported that an anonymous senior US official said Wednesday that the Clinton administration will lift some economic sanctions against the DPRK if upcoming four-party peace talks yield tangible improvements in DPRK-ROK relations. The official stated, "What we've told the North Koreans is that when there is tangible progress, sanctions will be lifted." He said that such developments as establishing a military hot line between the ROK and the DPRK, or a cessation of "slanderous" DPRK rhetoric against the ROK, would represent the type of progress sought by the Clinton administration.

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S., NORTH KOREA TO HOLD BILATERAL TALKS IN BERLIN," Berlin, 03/12/98) reported that a U.S. State Department official said Thursday that Charles Kartman, US deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, will meet Friday in Berlin with Kim Gye-gwan, DPRK deputy foreign minister, ahead of the four-party peace talks scheduled to begin Monday in Geneva. The official said that the two are likely to discuss removal of US economic sanctions against the DPRK, as well as try to set a date for future talks.

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2. ROK National Security Agency

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("S. KOREA AGENCY OFFICIALS ARRESTED OVER ALLEGED SMEAR PLOT," Seoul, 03/12/98) reported that ROK prosecutors on Thursday arrested three high-ranking officials of the Agency for National Security Planning, including Director General Lee Dae-sung, on charges of plotting to smear President Kim Dae-jung during his election campaign last year. Prosecutors said the three officials paid US$19,000 to Korean-American businessman Yoon Hong-joon to hold news conferences in Beijing, Tokyo, and Seoul in December in which he alleged that Kim's campaign was funded by DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. Yoon was arrested on a libel charge in February.

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3. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The Los Angeles Times ("CHINA: TAIWAN PROFITING FROM CRISIS," Beijing, 03/12/98) reported that PRC foreign minister Qian Qichen on Thursday accused Taiwan of backing away from the policy of "one China" and of using the Asian financial crisis to its own advantage. Qian added that the PRC wants to start political talks and officially end hostilities as the first step toward reunification. Qian emphasized that the "one China" principle means "there is one China in the world and Taiwan is part of China," adding that Taiwanese officials "used to support this principle and now they seem to have backed down." Qian also criticized Taiwanese officials for traveling to Asian countries that are suffering from financial crises or receiving representatives from those countries. In response, Taiwan government spokesman Chen Chien-jen called Qian's remarks an attempt to turn Asian countries away from increased contacts with Taiwan. He stated, "Our leaders' visits are purely motivated by good faith. I wish the Chinese communist authorities would refrain from viewing every single action on our part with prejudice."

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4. Clinton to Visit PRC

The Washington Post (John F. Harris, "PRESIDENT TO VISIT CHINA IN JUNE," 03/12/98, A08) the Associated Press (Robert Burns, "CLINTON MAY GO TO CHINA IN JUNE," Washington, 03/12/98) and the New York Times (James Bennet with Seth Faison, "CLINTON MOVES UP HIS TRIP TO CHINA TO LATE IN JUNE," Washington, 03/12/98) reported that senior US administration officials said Wednesday that US President Bill Clinton has decided to move up his presidential trip to the PRC to late June instead of November. One senior administration official said Wednesday, "It is pretty much a done deal." Another official said that the US was eager to build on progress made during the visit by PRC President Jiang Zemin last October. He added, "There's tremendous positive feeling over there about the relationship." However, another senior official said that the president's advisers were concerned that relations with PRC had deteriorated recently, adding "It feels like some of that momentum has stalled." Meanwhile, a senior US diplomat in Beijing said that PRC

officials were so eager for Clinton's visit that they indicated a willingness to alter plans for visits by leaders from other countries to accommodate him. Yang Jiechi, PRC assistant foreign minister, stated, "There is a strong desire on both sides for friendly cooperation, not for confrontation. Both sides see a common good in a better relationship."

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5. Russian Ratification of START II

The New York Times (Steven Erlanger, "RUSSIA VOWS TO PUSH ARMS PACT, TO PAVE WAY FOR SUMMIT," Washington, 03/12/98) reported that Russian Prime Minister Victor Chernomyrdin said Wednesday that his government would push the Duma to ratify the second strategic arms reduction treaty (START II), to prepare the way for US President Clinton to visit Moscow for a summit meeting by the middle of the year. Senior US administration officials said that the Clinton administration has made a summit meeting with President Boris Yeltsin conditional on Russian ratification of Start II. Chernomyrdin appeared with Vice President Al Gore at a joint news conference Wednesday concluding the Washington meetings of the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission. Gore also announced the establishment of a new joint commission of experts to discuss and monitor the export of sensitive nuclear and missile technologies.

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6. Nuclear Waste Shipment to Japan

The Associated Press ("JAPAN VILLAGE NIXES NUCLEAR DUMPING," Tokyo, 03/12/98) reported that Governor Morio Kimura said Thursday that a ship carrying 30 tons of nuclear waste will be permitted to dock to prevent its crew from being stranded in rough seas, but will not be allowed to unload its cargo.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Light-water Reactor Project

Combustion Engineering Co. (CEC) of the US withdrew their application to supply parts for the DPRK light-water reactor project on March 10. The CEC had submitted their application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) with a view to obtain a permit to export nuclear reactor-related parts and equipment to the DPRK. However, William Kelly, spokesman of Asea Brown Boveri Ltd. (ABB), which is CEC's mother company, said that the decision to annul the application was made to avoid a public hearing. US media and related institutions, including the NRC, have been urging for a public hearing on issues regarding US exportation of nuclear energy-related facilities to an adversary. (Joongang Ilbo, "US COMPANY WITHDRAWS FROM KEDO PROJECT," 03/11/98)

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2. US-DPRK Relations

High-officials of the US and the DPRK will convene in Berlin March 13 to discuss bilateral issues. Represented by Charles Kartman, assistant deputy secretary of state for East Asia-Pacific, and Kim Kae- kwan, deputy foreign minister of the DPRK, the two parties will discuss issues such as lifting of US economic embargo, establishment of liaison offices, resumption of missile-talks and return of US

MIAs. (Joongang Ilbo, "US-DPRK OFFICIALS TO MEET IN BERLIN," 03/11/98)

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3. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks

The DPRK on March 11 turned down the ROK's offer to hold inter-Korean Red Cross talks at a venue in Korea. However, the DPRK suggested meeting in Beijing on March 25. Li Song-ho, chief of the DPRK Red Cross, said in a telephone message to his ROK counterpart, "In response to your March 10 letter: we will receive the fertilizer you have sent at Nampo; as for the fifth working-level talks on the third round of aid, we propose that they be held March 25 in Beijing, where they have been held previously." (Korea Herald, "DPRK REFUSES TO HOLD TALKS IN KOREA," 03/12/98)

III. Clarification

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1. UN Command

Ed. note: An article in the Korea Times on February 25 stated that Thailand and the Philippines are the only countries beside the US from the UN-coalition which fought in the Korean War to maintain contingents in the ROK. [See UN Command Disengagement in the ROK section of the February 25 Daily Report.] While this report is accurate, it should be noted that seven nations currently maintain UN Command rear liaison offices in Japan: Australia, Canada, France, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

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.
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