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I. United States

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1. ROK-DPRK Talks

Reuters ("NO PROGRESS IN KOREA TALKS," Beijing, 04/15/98) reported that an ROK embassy official in Beijing said that the ROK and DPRK made sporadic contact on Wednesday but did not agree to restart talks on fertilizer aid. The official stated, "There are no prospects today and no schedule for tomorrow."

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2. US Policy Toward DPRK

The Los Angeles Times carried an opinion article (Tom Plate, "NEXT ON THE DIPLOMATIC AGENDA: KOREA," 04/14/98) which said that, now that US President Bill Clinton has helped broker a peace agreement for Northern Ireland, he should turn his attention to the DPRK. The author argued, "The global stakes involving North Korea are even more serious than those in Northern Ireland, and are at least as intractable." He added that, while there are many impediments to a DPRK invasion of the ROK, those might not prevent the DPRK from using chemical or biological weapons. The author quoted Michael O'Hanlon as saying in the latest issue of International Security, "Initiating any kind of large scale war would represent a desperation option for North Korea. If it chose to exercise such an option, therefore, it might see little point in showing restraint, instead gambling that the allies would not escalate to nuclear retaliation." The article also quoted Michael J. Mazarr as saying in the current National Interest, "The ingredients are all in place for serious instability on the Korean peninsula, something that is not to be welcomed in the most heavily militarized region on earth." The author agreed with Mazarr's suggestion that a new initiative from the West is necessary to break the impasse with the DPRK. He called on the US and its allies to offer "a major package deal" to the DPRK. He stated, "The offer might include some formulation of a mutual pullback from the demilitarized zone, reduction in forces, renunciation of terrorism, and easing of U.S. economic sanctions." The article quoted Hyun-ok Park, a University of Michigan sociologist, as saying, "In recent months, North Korea has continually expressed a desire for change, and it wants to get South Korea and the Americans to help." It also quoted an unnamed senior US diplomat stationed in Asia as saying that, due to the ROK's economic crisis, "Not surprisingly now, there is a lot less interest in South Korea, across the entire political spectrum, in seeing North Korea collapse."

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3. Separated Korean Families

The Washington Post (Mary Jordan, "AGING KOREANS HOPE TO SEE THEIR KIN," Seoul, 04/15/98, A01) reported that national unification minister Kang In-duck announced Tuesday that the ROK will amend national security laws to allow ROK citizens to send small amounts of money directly to relatives in the DPRK.

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4. ROK Food Aid for DPRK

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA DONATES FOOD TO N. KOREA," Seoul, 04/15/98) reported that an ROK ship carrying 7,300 tons of wheat flour, rice, cooking oil, and other aid departed Wednesday from Inchon and was scheduled to arrive in the DPRK on Thursday. The shipment was the first of 50,000 tons of donated food which the ROK Red Cross had promised to the DPRK during talks in Beijing in late March.

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5. Reports on DPRK Famine

The Associated Press ("CANNIBALISM REPORTED IN NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 04/15/98) reported that representatives from the French aid group Doctors Without Borders said in a report compiled from interviews conducted with DPRK refugees in PRC border areas that some DPRK citizens are resorting to cannibalism to survive the famine. The report also quoted PRC citizens who had been to

the DPRK or had relatives there as saying that food aid was not being distributed to the population. Marcel Roux, one of the French aid workers who conducted the interviews, said that reports of cannibalism could not be proved because the DPRK government is hiding the truth from foreign aid agencies. He stated, "Nobody can prove anything in North Korea today because no one has access to reality, with the exception of those who flee the country. We, for instance, are shown a few sick people or malnutrition cases: just what is needed to justify aid." However, Catherine Bertini, executive director of the World Food Program, said Sunday after returning from a four-day visit to the DPRK that she had seen no sign of cannibalism and had no evidence of it occurring.

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6. ROK Financial Crisis

Dow Jones Newswires ("FORMER KOREAN FINANCE MINISTERS BARRED FROM LEAVING COUNTRY," Seoul, 04/15/98) reported that ROK government officials said Monday that former finance ministers Hong Jae-hyong and Rha Woong-bae have been barred from leaving the country and are expected to be summoned soon for questioning by prosecutors in connection with the financial crisis. Hong and Rha are being asked to clarify whether they were pressured or bribed to license between 1994 and 1996 a number of merchant banks which were later held partly responsible for the ROK's financial turmoil. Also on Wednesday, prosecutors raided the Korea Federation of Merchant Banks in downtown Seoul and confiscated documents.

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7. Russia-Japan Summit Meeting

The Associated Press (Yuri Kageyama, "YELTSIN, HASHIMOTO TO MEET IN TOKYO," Tokyo, 04/14/98) reported that Japanese officials said that Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and Russian President Boris Yeltsin will continue the discussions begun last November in Siberia this Saturday and Sunday in the seaside resort of Kawana, just south of Tokyo. The two nations have been discussing cooperation on various large-scale projects, including the upgrading of the Trans-Siberian railroad, construction of a pipeline from a Siberian gas field, and oil projects off Sakhalin Island. Despite these agreements, the question of the disputed Kuril Islands remains central to the talks. Muneo Suzuki, head of Japan's Hokkaido Development Agency, was quoted as saying, "Never have relations been better. We have to start with what can be done. This is going to take time." However, Shigeki Hakamada, a professor at Aoyama Gakuin University, warned that Yeltsin's domestic political difficulties make concessions on the territorial issue difficult. He stated, "Yeltsin can't afford to become isolated at home. Any agreement will leave plenty of gray areas."

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8. US Missile Technology Transfer to PRC

Reuters (Yuko Inoue, "LORAL SPACE CHIEF DENIES WRONGDOING IN CHINA CASE," Tokyo, 04/15/98) reported that Gregory Clark, president and chief operating officer of Loral Space and Communications Ltd, on Wednesday denied a report in the New York Times which said his company provided the PRC with technical information that enabled it to improve the accuracy of its nuclear missiles. He stated, "We feel (our) people involved in that behaved correctly. They did not divulge any information that was inappropriate. We feel that very strongly." He added, "We're collaborating very openly with government facilities investigating this." The Times report said that an expert panel headed by Loral which was sent to the PRC to analyze the failure of a PRC rocket carrying a commercial US satellite might have discussed sensitive aspects of rocket guidance and control with

PRC officials.

The New York Times carried an editorial ("THE SANCTITY OF MISSILE SECRETS," 04/15/98) which argued that, although relations with the PRC are improving, the time has not yet arrived to share US missile guidance secrets with the PRC. The article stated, "Control of these sensitive technologies is too important to sacrifice for commercial gain, much less campaign contributions." It concluded, "The investigation of Loral and Hughes should be vigorously pursued. The White House should not relax export control rules either to improve relations with China or to accommodate generous donors."

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9. US Arms Sales to PRC

The Los Angeles Times carried an analytical article (Jim Mann, "ARMS TO CHINA: TINY DEAL OR END TO BAN?," Washington, 04/15/98) which said that the Bill Clinton administration for several months has been trying to decide whether to permit Sikorsky Aircraft to sell spare parts and equipment for helicopters that the company originally sold to the PRC in 1984. Sales of any military-related equipment from the US to the PRC have been prohibited since the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. The author argued that allowing a waiver of these sanctions could induce the European Union to lift its own prohibition on arms sales to the PRC. However, the article quoted former US Defense Secretary William Perry as saying, "Arms cooperation programs ... are not part of my vision of what we'll be doing with China. I just don't see that it serves our national security interest to do that." It also quoted an unnamed Defense Department official as saying recently that it was "impossible" and "inconceivable" that the US would begin to sell military equipment to the PRC, noting that any such policy change would arouse intense opposition in Congress. US Representative Christopher Cox (R-CA), chairman of the House Policy Committee, said Tuesday that "changing the status quo on arms sales would be reckless." He added that even a sale of spare parts would be "enormously significant." However, another unnamed administration official said, "Over the long term, if the Europeans move in this area, there will be pressure from [the U.S. defense] industry."

II. Republic of Korea

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1. ROK-DPRK Talks

ROK and DPRK officials on Tuesday agreed to extend their landmark talks here as the two sides wrangled over their different agendas, demanding concessions from each other. "We want some reciprocity here. The North cannot go away with fertilizer only," said the ROK's chief delegate Jeong Se- hyun. "What we want from the North is a clear guarantee on the issue of reuniting separated families," Jeong said. For a start, the DPRK could agree on a concrete timetable for establishing a meeting place and a mail exchange center on the ROK-DPRK border in return for the shipment of fertilizer from the ROK, Jeong said. Jeong's DPRK counterpart, Chon Gum-Chol, said that the DPRK wants the ROK to ship half a million tons of fertilizer, while the ROK offered to supply no more than 200,000 tons. DPRK delegates said that the DPRK had come to the meeting only because the ROK had signaled it would provide fertilizer aid should the DPRK ask for it through official channels. The DPRK delegation had planned to return home in time for the 86th anniversary of the birth of the late DPRK leader Kim Il-sung, which falls on Wednesday. The PRC meanwhile on Tuesday announced it would donate 100,000 tons of food and 20,000 tons of chemical fertilizer to the DPRK to help alleviate food shortages. (Korea Times, "TWO KOREAS AGREE TO EXTEND TALKS AMID

WRANGLING," 04/16/98)

The ROK National Assembly is considering proposing ROK-DPRK parliamentary talks to help improve relations between the two halves of the Korean peninsula, a high-ranking official of the ruling camp said yesterday. The envisioned politicians' talks among the two Koreas are being promoted by the ruling coalition of the National Congress for New Politics led by ROK President Kim Dae-jung and the United Liberal Democrats led by Acting Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil, he said. The Assembly is expected to propose the holding of a preliminary meeting within the first half of this year to realize the parliamentary talks, he added. The coalition partners have already agreed with the government to make an overture for the meeting to the Supreme People's Congress of the DPRK. (Korea Times, "RULING CAMP PROMOTES HOLDING OF S-N PARLIAMENTARY TALKS," 04/15/98)

III. Announcements

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1. World Day of Response to DPRK Famine

On Saturday, April 25, volunteers from the Bay Area will meet in Union Square, San Francisco, from 5:30 - 7 pm, to show concern for the famine in the DPRK, as part of the World Day of Fasting for the People of North Korea. This event is being sponsored by the Bay Area Coalition for the World Day of Fasting for the People of North Korea, whose members include the Korean American Sharing Movement, the Hunger Relief Fund for North Korea, and the American Friends Service Committee. San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown as well as other speakers and cultural performances will be featured. For more information or to help, contact the Hunger Relief Fund for North Korea, phone: (415)565-0201 (ext.23) email: nkrelief@supernews.com website: http://www.nkrelief.supernews.com/

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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