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I. United States

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1. DPRK Missile Tests

The Associated Press ("REPORT: N. KOREA TO TEST ANOTHER MISSILE," Moscow, 12/17/98) reported that Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency on Thursday quoted sources in the Russian Defense Ministry as saying that the DPRK is planning another ballistic missile test, and is likely to again present it as a satellite launch. The sources said that a center for control over missile launches run jointly by Russia and the US has received information that a medium-range ballistic missile will be launched from the DPRK test site on Cape Musudan. They added that the new rocket would have a range of 2,170-miles. The report did not say when the test was expected to take place.

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2. Indian Nuclear Command and Control

The Associated Press (Donna Bryson, "U.S. HELPS INDIA MANAGE NUKES," New Delhi, 12/17/98) reported that an anonymous senior diplomatic source said Thursday that the US has taken steps to help India manage its nuclear arsenal. According to the source, US officials have given Indian envoy Jaswant Singh a tour of US facilities that provide direct communication between Washington and Moscow, and he has met with experts on command and control. He added that the US also has encouraged India to clearly define what it means by a "minimum, credible nuclear deterrent," arguing that openness about its capabilities is the only way to deter perceived enemies. A seventh meeting between Singh and US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott is scheduled in late January in New Delhi.

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3. Indian Nuclear Development

US State Department Spokesman Jamie Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, DECEMBER 16, 1998," USIA Transcript, 12/16/98) said that the US welcomes Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's reaffirmation of a commitment to join the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). Rubin said that while discussion between the US and India on nuclear issues have made some progress, "There are significant differences." He added, "It clearly is necessary in a democracy to build a base of parliamentary and public support for important actions, and we welcome the fact that Prime Minister Vajpayee is in the process of building a national consensus on no further nuclear testing and on India's adherence to the CTBT." He said that the US will continue to urge India and Pakistan "to exercise the utmost restraint in further missile development, including flight testing." Rubin noted that Vajpayee "left the door open for multilateral initiatives on a moratorium on fissile material production. He also expressed willingness to work for the early conclusion of this fissile material cut-off treaty in Geneva. We are looking forward to continuing discussions on this subject in talks with the Indians." He concluded, "With respect to suggestions that [Vajpayee's] statement is an implied commitment to deploy nuclear weapons, this is one of several statements we will explore in our next round of discussions.... It is our understanding that India has not deployed nuclear weapons. There is nothing in the Prime Minister's speech to indicate that India has deployed nuclear weapons, and we will continue to engage with the Indians on this issue."

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Hyundai's Invitation to DPRK Official

Chosun Ilbo ("DRPK OFFICIAL ACCEPTS HYUNDAI'S INVITATION," Seoul, 12/17/98) reported that Hyundai founder and honorary chairman Chung Ju-yung and four other Hyundai officials returned to the ROK Thursday morning through Panmunjom, following a three-day visit to the DPRK. In a press conference held upon his return, Chung told reporters that he had invited Kim Young-sun, chairman of the DPRK's Asia Pacific Peace Commission, to the ROK, adding that Kim had told him he saw no reason why he would not be able to accept the invitation.

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2. Alleged DPRK Weapons Violations

JoongAng Ilbo ("DPRK SUSPECTED OF WEAPONS VIOLATIONS AT PANMUNJOM," Seoul, 12/16/98) reported that the DPRK has allegedly built an underground base in the Panmunjom area, stocked with machine guns and trench mortars. It is illegal to place any weapons in the area under the DPRK-UN agreement. Even carrying handguns is a violation. The first section of the Joint Security Area (JSA) is apparently the base's location, which is also the spot where Sergeant Kim Young-hoon, now in custody, allegedly covertly contacted DPRK soldiers. A source from the Panmunjom Joint Security Area said on December 16, "Last February Byun Yong-kwan, the DPRK defector, also asserted this fact of illegal arms displacement to our government." He added, "The DPRK just finished constructing the underground base under a new officials' direct orders. This official recently took over command in the Panmunjom area." The ROK government suspected the existence of a base when unexpected DPRK high officials started appearing while massive military outfits and supplies were suddenly detected by ROK surveillance. This source also commented, "The DPRK replaced many military personnel at Panmunjom recently and ceased broadcasting propaganda." The DPRK is also suspected to be building an underground bunker under the Panmunjom JSA.

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3. DPRK Market Opening

JoongAng Ilbo ("DPRK OFFICIALS LEARNING INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL LAW," Seoul, 12/16/98) reported that DPRK officials have recently been studying international commercial law in preparation for a broader opening of the country's markets. Dr. Kenneth Quinones, Seoul representative for the Asia Foundation, on his return from visiting Beijing on December 16, said, "From December 5 to 14th, more than 10 law experts from the DPRK were learning international commercial law." The DPRK concentrated on the legal fine points concerning mediation in preparation for anticipated disputes with foreign companies. He continued, "They studied under American professors in Beijing University from 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. and reviewed in the evening. This course of study indicates that the DPRK is planning on a more open-door policy. It seems that the DPRK is preparing in a very cautious way because any talk of opening markets is a very subtle and complex issue in that society." Beijing University and New York University participated in this program, sponsored by the Asia Foundation.

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4. US Attack against Iraq

Chosun Ilbo ("GOVERNMENTS SUPPORTS US ATTACK," Seoul, 12/17/98) reported that a spokesman for the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) announced Thursday that the government fully understood the reasons for the US strike against Iraq and offered its support. He went on to say that the administration hopes the attack is limited to military targets and will minimize risks to civilians. Iraq should comply with UN weapons inspection demands in order that the attack can be brought to an early conclusion.

Korea Times ("IRAQI INCIDENT WILL NOT BOTHER ROK ECONOMY," Seoul, 12/17/98) reported that the US bombing of Iraq will not seriously affect the ROK's economic export situation, the ROK Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) predicted on December 17. The US asked the ROK, directly after the air attack, to issue a public statement supporting the US action on December 17. The government issued a statement fully condoning the bombing. The ROK's exports to Iraq reached US\$1.1 million from January to November, while oil imports marked US\$40 million. However, the ROK's exports to Arab countries traditionally have gone through Jordan, which acts as a kind of transfer station, so there is a lot more actual volume going to Iraq. In terms of automobiles,

Hyundai sends its Excel model to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and quite a few of the cars end up going to Iraq. The ROK's export drive into Mideast areas will be affected if the tension between the US and Iraq continues much longer. Petroleum imports will not be a problem for the ROK, though, provided the ROK secures other routes for Middle East oil. Hyundai and Daewoo have further postponed opening offices in Baghdad due to the current incident.

III. People's Republic of China

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1. Remains of US Soldiers from Korean War

China Daily ("SEARCH OPERATIONS," Washington, 12/16/98, A11) reported that US and DPRK negotiators have agreed to expand joint searches in the DPRK next year for the remains of US troops missing in action during the 1950-53 Korean War. The agreement for six joint search operations between April and November was reached following four days of talks that began in New York last Wednesday, said an announcement from the US Pentagon.

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2. PRC-US Relations

China Daily ("SINO-US RELATIONS LOOK INTO FUTURE," 12/15/98, A2) reported that senior PRC and US officials expressed their common wish on December 14 in Beijing to advance Sino-US relations into a new sphere in the next two decades. Bilateral ties will develop in a sound, stable, and sustained way so long as the two countries abide by the principles contained in the three Sino-US joint communiques, said Qi Huaiyuan, president of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Qi was speaking at a reception marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the PRC and the US. The meeting was attended by more than 200 people, including PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, US Ambassador to the PRC James Sasser, and US Senator Tim Johnson.

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3. PRC Military Business

People's Daily ("BUSINESS HANDOVER COMPLETED," Beijing, 12/15/98, A1) reported that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the Armed Police of the PRC have handed over their enterprises to a special office under the State Economic and Trade Commission (SETC) and relevant local offices across the PRC. This marks the smooth implementation of the Communist Party of China Central Committee's decision to disengage the PLA and the Armed Police from business activities. The initiative's success is attributed to prompt responses from the PLA and the Armed Police. Strong support from local governments across the PRC is considered another factor in the handover's success, sources from SETC's policy and regulations department said in Beijing on December 14.

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4. PRC New Representative to UN Office at Geneva

China Daily ("NEW REPRESENTATIVE," Geneva, 11/16/98, A2) reported that the PRC's new permanent representative to the UN and other international organizations at Geneva, Qiao Zonghuai, presented his credentials on December 15 to Vladimir Petrovsky, director-general of the

UN Office at Geneva. From 1997 until his assignment to Geneva, Qiao was the PRC's ambassador to Sweden. He served as ambassador to the DPRK from 1993 to 1997, and to Finland from 1991 to 1993.

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5. Indian Nuclear Development

Jie Fang Daily ("INDIA REITERATES TO MAINTAIN NUCLEAR DETERRENCE," New Delhi, 12/16/98, P3) reported that the Indian Government reiterated on December 15 that it will maintain the production of fissile material and its policy of minimum and reliable deterrence. Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee also said that India is testing its long-range "Agni" missile.

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6. Indian Adherence to CTBT

China Daily ("NUKE TEST BAN," New Delhi, 12/16/98, A11) reported that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said on December 15 that India, which conducted nuclear tests last May, was still prepared to work for the successful conclusion of a global nuclear test ban treaty by September 1999. "That remains our position," Vajpayee told the lower house of parliament.

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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