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I. United States

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1. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "NORTH TO SOUTH KOREA: LET'S TALK," Seoul, 02/19/98) reported that the DPRK on Thursday delivered 70 letters addressed to ROK leaders, including President-elect Kim Dae-jung, urging them to work toward reconciliation on the Korean peninsula. The letters were received through the border village of Panmunjom. The overture followed Wednesday's declaration by Kim Yong-sun, a top DPRK policy-maker, that the DPRK was ready to talk with the newly elected ROK government. Kim was quoted by the Korean Central News Agency as saying, "We make clear that we are willing to have dialogue and negotiation with anyone in South Korea, including political parties and organizations. The north and the south must promote coexistence, co-prosperity, common interests, mutual collaboration and unity between fellow countrymen." He added that the DPRK is ready to "turn inter-Korean relations ... into a relationship of conciliation and unity." ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung's party, the National Congress for New Politics, called the DPRK's move "a sign of change in the North's attitude."

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2. Aid for DPRK

Reuters (Justin Jin, "U.N. TO HELP NORTH KOREA BOOST GRAIN OUTPUT," Beijing, 02/18/98) reported that Christian Lemaire, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) resident representative in the DPRK, said on Wednesday that the UN plans to help the DPRK boost its grain output and gradually phase out food aid. He added that the UNDP will hold a round table meeting in Geneva in late April at which UN economists will propose a plan to help the DPRK boost grain production to 5-5.5 million tons a year by the turn of the century from the current two million tons. He said that the plan is expected to cost US\$200-US\$300 million over three years, whereas emergency food aid costs about US\$400 million a year. Lemaire stated, "With much less money, we can have a much better impact on the nutrition levels and on the health of the people." He added, however, "The objective of preparing any plan of action for the next 2-1/2 or three years is not to phase out humanitarian assistance as such. The main idea is really to phase out gradually food aid by the year 2000." He also said that the international donors would continue to supply medicine to the DPRK.

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3. 1973 Kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "REPORT: DOCUMENTS BACK SKOREA CHIEF," Seoul, 02/19/98) reported that the ROK newspaper Dong-A Ilbo published what it said were secret documents from the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) supporting President-elect Kim Dae-jung's claim that he was abducted in Tokyo in 1973 by ROK government agents. The documents listed the names of 46 KCIA agents and the specific roles they played in the kidnapping. The paper also quoted Lee Chul-hee, then the assistant deputy director of KCIA, as saying that he was ordered by his boss, Lee Hu-rak, to "bring Kim Dae-jung home at whatever cost." Kim was quoted by his spokesman, Chung Dong-young, as saying, "I have always believed that the truth would be known eventually. But I promise again that I will not seek political revenge." Meanwhile in Japan, the Asahi Newspaper said in an editorial on Thursday that the new revelations could lead to a reappraisal of the agreement between Japan and the ROK not to pursue an investigation into the incident.

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4. PRC-Taiwan Relations

Reuters (Alice Hung, "TAIWAN WON'T BE RUSHED INTO CHINA TALKS," Taipei, 02/19/98) reported that Shi Hwei-yow, who was appointed secretary-general of Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation on February 7, said Thursday that Taiwan would not rush to hold political reconciliation talks with the PRC. Shi stated, "We will not rule out talks that involve political elements, but we can't depart from the reality and discuss an unrealistic, ideological, political agenda." He added, "It's understandable the international community wants to see both sides resume talks and reduce tensions, but I don't think the international expectations are that strong or that they will try to force us to hold talks or political dialogue." However, Shi said that "One of my priorities is to try to reopen the talks. It seems the mainland side has the willingness to resume talks. We welcome this attitude."

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5. Alleged Japanese War Crimes

The Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "BRITISH POWS REJECT JAPAN APOLOGY," Tokyo,

02/19/98) reported that former British prisoners of war on Thursday rejected Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's apology for Japanese brutality during World War II as insufficient. Arthur Titherington, a British veteran, called it a "cruel insult" that the apology was published in the British tabloid The Sun instead of being made directly to the veterans.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Kim Dae-jung's Policy toward DPRK

The Chosun Ilbo carried an editorial ("KIM DAE-JUNG'S NORTHERN POLICY," 02/14/98) which criticized the policy proposals regarding the DPRK which ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung disclosed at a meeting with Lee Jong-chan, head of the transition committee, and Lim Dong-won, senior secretary for diplomacy and national security. The proposals included transparency of negotiations and allowing DPRK broadcasts to be heard in the ROK. [Ed. note: See [ROK-DPRK Relations](#) in the ROK Section of the February 17 Daily Report.] The article argued that, while there are "a substantial number of acceptable aspects" in this policy, "what is missing is any measure to deal with the problems that are likely to arise in the real world." It said that if DPRK broadcasts are allowed, it would call into question the ban on ROK citizens praising the DPRK system. The article stated, "It is said that many South Koreans are mature enough not to be swayed by propaganda from the North, but there are still some factions that have deeply rooted beliefs in anachronistic ideology." It also described the proposal announced by Kim Jong-pil for expanding the four-party talks to six-parties as too vague and questioned whether Kim Dae-jung and Kim Jong-pil discussed this matter before the announcement. "If there is a discrepancy between the president elect and his proposed prime minister on North Korean policy, the repercussions will be more serious than anything that happened under Kim Young-sam's government."

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2. ROK Financial Crisis

The Korea Times (Lee Chang-sup, "POLITICAL THEORY CAUSED CURRENCY CRISIS," 02/17/98) reported that the ROK Board of Audit and Inspection said Monday that the decision of ROK officials to adopt a strong-won policy in order to maintain a per-capita GNP of US\$10,000 was responsible for the ROK currency crisis. The Board said that officials hoped that maintaining the per-capita GNP would help the ruling party in the presidential election. Last year, the Bank of Korea spent as much as US\$26 billion out of its US\$30 billion-plus reserve to defend the won.

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.

Produced by [the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development](#).

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