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I. United States

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1. Six-Party Peace Talks Proposal

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("N. KOREA CALLS SIX-NATION JOINT PEACE DECLARATION 'SILLY'," Seoul, 02/20/98) and Reuters ("NORTH KOREA THROWS COLD WATER ON WARMING TIES," Tokyo, 02/20/98) reported that the DPRK, in a report carried by its official Korean Central

News Agency on Friday, rejected the recent ROK proposal of a "six-nation joint declaration" on the Korean peninsula. The report stated, "The call may sound good. But it is a silly and dangerous plan." Aides to ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung said that the six-nation declaration is patterned after the 1975 "Helsinki declaration," in which the US and other world powers pledged their commitment to peace in Europe. They pointed to the Helsinki declaration as the foundation for German unification. However, the DPRK responded that the present situation of Northeast Asia is different from that of Europe, as antagonism persists between the two Koreas, which are technically in a state of war. It added, "Stability and peace have not been ensured on the Korean peninsula not because there is no 'declaration' by its neighboring nations but because the United States has still kept huge armed forces in South Korea and presented military threat to the DPRK though the cold war ended long ago."

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2. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Washington Post (Mary Jordan, "N. KOREA OFFERS DIALOGUE IN RARE OVERTURE," Tokyo, 02/20/98, A01) reported that many analysts see the offer of political dialogue that the DPRK made through letters sent to ROK leaders as a significant gesture towards warming relations, because it appears to be a concrete follow-up to conciliatory statements on Wednesday night by Workers' Party Secretary Kim Yong-sun. US officials said that such remarks from the DPRK are rare, and that following up with hand-delivered letters is nearly unheard of. However, the officials warned that while the DPRK's moves could be "very dramatic," Kim Jong-il's long-term goals and intentions are still a mystery. A spokesman for ROK President Kim Dae-jung said that further study of the letters is needed but that the proposals for dialogue are welcome. He stated that the letters contain criticism of the outgoing Kim Young-sam administration and state that the "change of the administration and the president does not automatically open the way, but the key lies on changes of policy." Meanwhile, a spokesman for the ROK National Unification Ministry said that the government on Thursday granted two advertising companies permission to launch joint ventures in the DPRK to design ads to encourage foreign investment in the DPRK.

The Los Angeles Times carried an editorial ("BIG 'IF' OVER N. KOREA INITIATIVE," 02/20/98) which said that if the DPRK is sincere in its desire to hold talks with incoming ROK President Kim Dae-jung, it could lead to an unprecedented warming of relations between the two Koreas. However, the article added, "that 'if' looms large, given North Korea's history of duplicity and erratic policy swings where the south is concerned." The article argued that, while the DPRK claimed to be unwilling to improve relations with Kim Young-sam's government due to Kim's failure to offer condolences on the death of Kim Il-sung, "more likely Pyongyang decided to freeze relations while it sorted out how power would be apportioned in the post-Kim [Il-sung] era." The author speculated that the DPRK may have decided to take a more pragmatic approach, now that Kim Jong-il is firmly in command and a "moderate new government" is about to be inaugurated in the ROK. It concluded that agreeing to a program to allow contact between separated family members would be a good start for demonstrating the DPRK's sincerity.

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3. Challenges for Incoming President

The Washington Times carried an analytical article by [Richard Halloran](#) ("KIM FACES 7 BIG CHALLENGES," Honolulu, 02/20/98) which said that ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung will face "seven daunting challenges" in his new administration. The author argued, "Mr. Kim's success or failure will determine not only the immediate future of Korea but the security posture of the United

States in Northeast Asia." The article listed Kim's challenges as leading the ROK out of its economic crisis; coping with a "hostile" DPRK; consolidating his political position; reducing corruption; responding to "rising anti-Americanism"; purging "residual anti-Japanese emotions that hinder Seoul's ability to recover economically and to play a constructive role in Asia's international relations"; and encouraging ROK citizens to accept responsibility for their own problems. The author argued, "To meet these challenges, Mr. Kim will bring undisputed courage, a thirst for information that is the source of political power, a shrewd analytical ability to set his own politics aside when calculating events and a lifetime of ambition."

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4. 1973 Abduction of Kim Dae-jung

Reuters ("JAPAN RELUCTANT TO REOPEN CASE ON KIM ABDUCTION," Tokyo, 02/20/98) reported that Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi said Friday that the case of the 1973 kidnapping of Kim Dae-jung from a Tokyo hotel was already settled politically. Obuchi was referring to an agreement between the governments of the ROK and Japan in 1975 to terminate the investigation by Tokyo police into the kidnapping.

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5. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN TELLS CHINA TO ACT ON CALLS FOR TALKS," Taipei, 02/20/98) reported that Taiwan Premier Vincent Siew on Friday urged the PRC to quickly resume talks with Taiwan. Siew said that Taiwan would not limit the agenda, but hoped to focus on resolving fishing disputes, repatriating hijackers, and other issues that the two sides had almost settled before the latest break in negotiations. Also on Friday, Taipei Mayor Chen Shui-bian, the main opposition party's likely presidential candidate, invited the mayors of Shanghai and Beijing to visit Taiwan. Chen stated, "Comprehensive contacts are a necessary prerequisite for comprehensive negotiations."

II. Republic of Korea

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1. ROK-DPRK Relations

ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung, during an interview with CNN on February 19, said that he would pursue inter-Korean talks once inaugurated. Kim said he was willing to consider various options such as exchange of special envoys or a summit meeting to realize such a proposition. Kim added that, although the ROK is in no condition to advance much aid to the DPRK, he prioritizes the light-water reactor and food aid projects. (Dong-ah Ilbo, "DJ TO RESUME INTER-KOREAN TALKS; CNN," 02/20/98)

With just a month to go before the inauguration of ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung, the DPRK said on February 18 that it was willing to talk to any individual or group from the ROK. Kim Yong-sun, chairman of the national unification committee in the DPRK Supreme People's Assembly, said in an official gathering, "We have to deepen our understanding and trust through contacts, declaring that we are ready to talk and negotiate with political parties, organizations and anyone of the ROK." However, the president-elect's camp maintains a watchful eye over the DPRK's peace gesture. (Korea Times, "NEW ADMINISTRATION WATCHFUL OVER NK'S PEACE GESTURE," 02/19/98)

The Naewoo press reported on February 18 that the DPRK manifested a willingness to develop collaborative ROK-DPRK relations during a Political Party-Organizations' Conference in Pyongyang. Kim Yong-soon, the DPRK's national unification committee chair, urged the ROK through a Korea Central News Agency radio broadcast to abolish the National Security Law, disband the Agency for National Security Planning, and end joint military exercises. (Hankyoreh Shinmun, "DPRK CALLS FOR THE DISBAND OF ROK'S NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY," 02/19/98)

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2. UNC Proposes Military Talks

The UN Command (UNC) has proposed to the DPRK a meeting of top military brass of the ROK, the DPRK, and the US, according to a UNC spokesman on February 19. The official said that the "UNC strategic planning chief, Major General Ray Ayres of the US Army, sent to Lieutenant-General Li Chan-bok, chief of the DPRK representative office in Panmunjom, a letter proposing such a meeting on February 11." The UNC spokesman said the meeting, although unlikely to happen, will deal with such matters as how to reduce tension along the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). The official added that the proposal was made after full consultation with officials from both the outgoing and incoming ROK governments. (Korea Times, Oh Young-jin, "UNC SIDESTEPS NK DEMAND FOR EXCLUSIVE CONTACT WITH US," 02/19/98)

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3. US Embargo on DPRK

Sources reported on February 20 that the US government is reviewing a partial lifting of its economic embargo against the DPRK should it see positive results from the second round of four party peace talks on March 16. According to a US State Department official, the US may well allow US companies to set up branch offices in the DPRK and to transfer food manufacturing techniques. (Joongang Ilbo, "US TO LIFT EMBARGO AGAINST DPRK," 02/21/98)

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4. DPRK Expels ROK Defector

A man named Choi who had sought defection to the DPRK through the PRC last December was expelled from the DPRK after a month-long interrogation, the ROK Agency for National Security Planning (NSP) announced on February 18. According to the NSP, Choi was arrested upon his return to the ROK at Kimpo International Airport on the morning of February 18 on charges of violating the National Security Law. It was quite unusual for the DPRK to expel an ROK citizen seeking to defect, the agency added. (Korea Times, Son Key-young, "NK EXPELS DEFECTOR FROM ROK," 02/19/98)

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5. DPRK Food Aid

Kim Dong-soo, a former DPRK representative to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome who defected to the ROK on February 4, gave a press conference on February 18. Kim revealed that international food donations to the DPRK are being directed to the military and stored underground. Kim had overheard his boss Kim Hong-lim, Chief Representative of the DPRK branch of the FAO in Rome, make such remarks. Kim added that the ongoing four party peace talks negotiations are a ploy by the DPRK to get additional food assistance from the US, the ROK, and Japan, and that statistical data on the food shortage are exaggerated, though not completely

unfounded. (Chosun Ilbo, "NORTH TRANSFERRING FOOD AID TO ITS MILITARY: DEFECTOR," 02/19/98)

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6. DPRK-ROK-Japan Sea Route

Professor Kim Soo-yong of Kim Il-sung University announced on February 18 that the DPRK intends to open a ferry route linking Rajin with Pusan and Fukuoka. The DPRK hopes to promote tourism and trade through this sea route between the DPRK, the ROK, and Japan. Professor Kim's announcement was made during the 1998 Niigata Northeast Asia Economic Conference. (Hankyoreh Shinmun, "DPRK HOPES TO OPEN SEA ROUTE TO LINK NEIGHBORS," 02/19/98)

III. Japan

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1. 1973 Abduction of Kim Dae-jung

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("ROK PAPER REPORTS ON KCIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN KIM DAE-JUNG'S ABDUCTION," Seoul, 02/19/98) reported that the ROK paper Dong-A Ilbo said on February 19 that it had obtained a secret report by the Korea Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), which reveals the agency's involvement in the 1973 abduction of Kim Dae-jung. Dong-A Ilbo also cited former KCIA high-ranking official Lee Chol-hee as saying that then-KCIA head Lee Hu-rak ordered the abduction. According to the name list in the KCIA report, twenty five KCIA officials took Kim Dae-jung from Osaka to Pusan in a boat with twenty one crew members on board. Lee Chol-hee told the newspaper, "Lee Hu-rak called me to his office in the spring of 1973 and told me to bring Kim Dae-jung over here at any cost, and a team of our overseas agents abducted him." Lee Chol-hee also said that although he and Ha Tae-Joon were opposed to the idea, Lee Hu-rak forced them to do it. Although Kim Dae-jung said that he was almost thrown into the sea from the boat on its way to the ROK, Lee Chol-hee denied that the KCIA intended to kill him. The article added that whether then-President Park Chung-hee knew in advance about the abduction is still unclear.

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2. Japanese-Russian Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("AN ISLAND IN MIE PREFECTURE IS MOST-LIKELY PLACE FOR JAPAN-RUSSIA SUMMIT," 02/20/98) reported that, according to governmental sources on February 19, an island in Mie Prefecture is likely to be the place for the Japan-Russia summit meeting slated for April 10-14. The summit was already agreed to in the Hashimoto-Yeltsin meeting in Russia in October, 1997, and will be officially decided during Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi's visit to Moscow, slated for February 23.

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3. DPRK Defector

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("CAPITALISM PREVAILS AMONG DPRK LEADERS," Seoul, 02/18/98) reported that former DPRK Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) official Kim Dong-su, who defected to the ROK, said to reporters in Seoul on February 18, "Capitalism is prevailing among the North Korean leaders," suggesting that the collapse of the country's economic system is affecting

the maintenance of its socialist regime. He pointed out that a factor behind this is the ongoing food shortage, saying, "Farmers are concentrated on growing vegetables and livestock for sale and are not concerned about their state- owned farms." He also said that he was told by the DPRK Foreign Ministry to draw food aid from Japan through the Four Party Peace Talks, while keeping a high-profile to Japan as part of the DPRK's food aid diplomacy.

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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