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I. United States

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1. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA DENIES BUGGING BEIJING TALKS WITH NORTH KOREA," Seoul, 04/21/98) and Reuters ("SEOUL DENIES NKOREA'S ACCUSATION OF BUGGING," Seoul, 04/21/98) reported that the ROK on Tuesday denied an accusation made by the DPRK on Monday that the ROK's state-run KBS-TV, with government permission, wiretapped the conference room in

Beijing where ROK and DPRK officials held talks last week. The ROK Unification Ministry admitted finding the TV crew's wireless microphone hidden in a flower bouquet in the China World Hotel conference room but said it removed the device 80 minutes before the talks began on April 11. It added that the ROK had no need to bug the talks because both sides already had agreed to conduct sound recording of the talks. The ministry statement said, "Although the North blames the South for installing the microphone aimed for tapping, the blame is not relevant to any extent." The DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland as saying , "The senseless and despicable act, unprecedented in the history of inter-Korean dialogue, shows well the behavior of the South side with no sense of elementary morality and courtesy for talks." The broadcast added, "We feel deep apprehension as to whether we can discuss the national reunification issue decisive of the nation's destiny with them who regard inter-Korean relations and humanitarian assistance between fellow countrymen as a bargaining chip." It also said that the ROK government of President Kim Dae-jung was no different from the previous administration of Kim Young-sam in terms of "seeking confrontation with the North."

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2. US-DPRK Liaison Office Exchange

The North Korea Report ("US GETTING CLOSER TO PYONGYANG REP OFFICE," March, 1998, 6) cited unnamed sources in Pyongyang as saying that Evans Revere, the US official chosen to head up a future US liaison office in the DPRK, visited the DPRK in January. The report also quoted foreign residents in Pyongyang as saying that there had been a "steady stream" of US officials passing through Pyongyang to discuss liaison offices since then.

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3. Compensation for ROK Comfort Women

The Associated Press ("EX-SKOREA SEX SLAVES TO BE REPAYED," Seoul, 04/21/98) reported that the ROK Cabinet on Tuesday approved a plan to offer US$25,300 to each of 152 ROK women known to have been used as sex slaves by the Japanese army during World War II. The ROK government called the compensation "comfort money," and said that it will not ask Japan to contribute any of the compensation. Sadaaki Numata, chief spokesman for the Japanese Foreign Ministry, said in Tokyo, "We do hope that this will lead to an improvement in the living conditions of all the ladies who were involved in this during the war." However, Yang Mi-kang, secretary-general of the Korea Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery, stated, "We welcome the decision to compensate the women. But the government should demand that the Japanese government reveal the truth, compensate the women and punish those responsible." Meanwhile, seven legislators from the ROK, Taiwan, and the Philippines were in Tokyo Tuesday to urge Japan to officially compensate the women and issue a formal apology. Taiwanese legislator Alice Kao stated, "The (passing of) time has left us very little time to give the sex slave women real legal and moral compensation."

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4. ROK Financial Crisis

The Associated Press ("$400M IN CREDITS OK'D FOR S. KOREA," Washington, 04/20/98) reported that the US Clinton administration has approved US$400 million in additional export credits for the ROK to purchase US agricultural goods. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman told the National Association of Agricultural Journalists on Monday that the credits will help the ROK economy recover and will ensure continued flow of US farm goods there.

Dow Jones Newswires (Cecilia Kang, "SOUTH KOREA SAYS WORLD BANK IN DISCUSSIONS OVER BAILOUT FUNDS," 04/21/98) reported that ROK Minister of Finance and Economy Lee Kyu- sung on Tuesday said that the earlier misunderstanding between the government and the World Bank about proposed funds to be used for corporate restructuring has been resolved, and the two sides have begun detailed discussions on the plan. The funds, scheduled to be established in June, would be capitalized at 1 trillion won (US$723.2 million) each by the Korea Development Bank and other financial institutions. The funds would then be expanded to a combined total of 10 trillion won through funds from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and other sources, the ministry said.

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5. Kuril Islands Sovereignty

The Financial Times (Chrystia Freeland and Michiyo Nakamoto, "RUSSIA DENIES REPORTS OF KURILE ISLANDS DEAL," Moscow, 04/20/98) reported that Japanese newspapers on Monday cited anonymous government sources as saying that, during a weekend summit meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto proposed drawing a new border between Russia and Japan north of the four disputed Kuril islands. However, Russian presidential spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky denied that Russia was considering ceding control over the territories. He stated, "Russia has a constitution in which the situation on ... inviolability of its lands is set out the president is the guarantor of these principles." Minoru Tamba, deputy vice minister of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, also denied the reports Monday, saying, "This is nothing more than pure speculation."

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6. Japanese-PRC Relations

Dow Jones Newswires ("CHINA'S HU VOWS TO BROADEN COOPERATION WITH JAPAN: KYODO," Tokyo, 04/21/98) reported that Japan's Kyodo news service quoted an official of Japan's Foreign Ministry as saying that PRC Vice President Hu Jintao on Tuesday expressed the PRC's determination to establish a basic framework with Japan for both bilateral relations and broader cooperation for the next century. Hu told Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, "It is necessary for the two nations' politicians of today to make efforts to establish the framework." Hashimoto was quoted as responding, "It is impossible to change history but it is possible to create any future through our cooperation and efforts. I want to open the way for the 21st century." Hu said that the PRC attaches great importance to President Jiang Zemin's scheduled visit to Japan this fall and expects the visit will move the two countries' friendship and cooperation to a new stage. The ministry official said that Hashimoto and Hu did not talk about updated defense cooperation guidelines between Japan and the US. Hu arrived in Japan earlier Tuesday for a six-day official visit. During his stay, he will meet with Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi and lawmakers from the ruling coalition, as well as from the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan. He is scheduled to leave Japan on Sunday afternoon for the ROK.

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7. PRC-Taiwan Talks

Reuters (Lawrence Chung, "LITTLE PROGRESS SEEN GOING INTO TAIWAN-CHINA TALKS," Taipei, 04/21/98) reported that Taiwanese analysts said that bilateral talks in the PRC headed by Taipei negotiator Jan Jyh-horng scheduled for April 22 would accomplish little. Political science professor Chang Lin-chen stated, "Basically, the mainland authorities hope to have political instead

of technical issue talks with Taiwan. The latter are merely secondary for the communists." However, he said that Taiwan is reluctant to hold political talks with the PRC, believing the time is not yet ripe for negotiations. Meanwhile, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao on Tuesday stated, "We hope the Taiwan authorities will respond to our call as soon as possible and hold political talks to end the confrontational situation between the two sides under the one-China principle." However, Jan said he would only discuss issues concerning "expansion of exchanges between the sides and increased understanding." Chao Chun- shan, professor at National Chengchi University's East Asian Study Graduate Institute, said that the upcoming meeting "represents that the sides start to resume their understanding of each other." He added, "Nothing substantive will be achieved in the meeting."

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Alleged Plot to Influence ROK Elections

The prosecution's investigation of former and incumbent members of the Agency for National Security Planning (NSP) for the so-called "North Korean wind" plot began Monday. Prosecutors said they will indict former NSP director Kwon Young-hae Tuesday for violation of the election law. Three to four NSP working-level officials will be questioned on how the agency got hold of a letter believed to have been written and sent by Oh Ik-je, an ROK religious sect leader who defected to the DPRK last August. His letter implied that then-opposition leader Kim Dae-jung had close ties with DPRK officials. The prosecution also plans to look into an April 1996 incident in which a group of DPRK soldiers made an incursion into the truce village of Panmunjom just before the general election. (Korea Times, "PROSECUTION STARTS SUMMONING NMSP MEMBERS ON 'NORTH WIND' PLOT," 04/21/98)

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2. DPRK-PRC Relations

The Japanese daily Sankei Shimbun reported on Saturday, quoting a Tokyo-based source close to Korean issues, that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il has been negotiating with the PRC to visit the country for talks with President Jiang Zemin, but the PRC has so far declined to accept because of Jiang's tight schedule. The PRC proposed that Kim meet Prime Minister Zhu Rongji instead, the newspaper said. The DPRK side, however, turned down the proposal and pressed ahead on negotiations with the PRC government to arrange talks between Kim and Jiang, the daily said. (Korea Times, "N. KOREA'S KIM JONG-IL TRIP TO CHINA: REPORT," 4/21/98)

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3. ROK Aid to DPRK

The ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) informed its counterpart in the DPRK through Panmunjom that it will send over 8,000 tons of corn, flour, and fertilizer in aid. As a separate issue from the official talks between the two Koreas, the humanitarian aid package will reach the people in the DPRK, who are in need of food and other basic goods. A KNRC official said that 3,000 tons of corn donated by private organizations will be sent via land and sea routes by the end of April. The main shipment will also include 5.1 tons of potato seeds and 200 tons of composite fertilizer, together with 50,000 liters of cooking oil and other household items. (Korea Times, "RED CROSS TO SEND AID TO NK SOON," 04/21/98)

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4. ROK-DPRK Talks

After the breakdown in the inter-Korean high-level talks on Saturday, the ROK said that it would keep the door open to dialogue with the DPRK, urging the DPRK to change its attitude on inter-Korean ties. "The principle to push for inter-Korean dialogue is still in effect and the door for dialogue remains open," Jeong Se-hyun, chief of the South delegation, said after the unsuccessful negotiations with the North on issues of fertilizer aid and the reunion of separated families. (Korea Times, "SOUTH KEEPS OPEN DOOR TO DIALOGUE WITH NORTH," 04/21/98)

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5. ROK Fisheries Line

The self-imposed fisheries demarcation line which the ROK had deliberately placed further south than the official DMZ has been extended, the ROK Ministry of Maritime and Fisheries Affairs announced Monday. The initial placement, in 1945, was meant to prevent the kidnapping of ROK citizens by DPRK forces, a common practice in years gone by. The new limits allow the extension of fishing in the East Sea (Sea of Japan) around Chohdo Island from April to November (instead of October) and in the West Sea all year round with an increased area of ten square kilometers around both Baekryongdo and Daechongdo Islands. (Chosun Ilbo, "FISHERIES LINE EXTENDED TOWARDS NK," 04/21/98)

III. Announcements

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1. World Fast Day for DPRK Hunger

The NY Coalition for a World Day of Fasting for the People of N. Korea is pleased to announce that it will hold an interfaith prayer and fundraising event on Friday, April 24, 12:30-1:30pm, at the Interchurch Center Chapel, 475 Riverside Drive (120 St.), New York. Speakers will include Reverend Dr. Joan Campbell (President, NCCCUSA), Reverend Calvin O. Butts, Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Venerable Hwi- Kwang, and others. For more information, please contact John Kim, 212-679-3482.

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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