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IN TODAY'S REPORT:

I. United States

1. ROK-DPRK Talks
2. Opening of DPRK Airspace
3. Compensation for ROK Comfort Women
4. ROK Labor Unrest
5. Taiwan-PRC Talks
6. US-PRC Relations
7. PRC-Japan Relations
8. US-Russian Nuclear Nonproliferation Talks
9. Costs of US Nuclear Arsenal

II. Republic of Korea

1. Compensation for ROK Comfort Women
2. Forum on DPRK
3. ROK Policy on DPRK

I. United States

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1. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Associated Press ("EDITORIAL ROUNDUP," 04/22/98) reported that Tokyo's Mainichi Shimbun carried an editorial Tuesday which said that the recent ROK-DPRK talks in Beijing were designed to allow both sides to get a feeling for each other's strategies and capabilities before beginning discussions in earnest. The article argued that the DPRK's famine and its desire to normalize relations with the US and Japan will force it to come back to the bargaining table. It predicted that the DPRK "will devise a new posture after it grasps the policies of the Kim Dae-jung administration," and it called on the ROK to "take measures to prevent the polarization of public opinion at home and ensure that North Korea will not begin to harbor false expectations."

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2. Opening of DPRK Airspace

The Associated Press ("AIRLINES TO USE N. KOREAN AIRSPACE," Seoul, 04/22/98) reported that ROK aviation officials said Wednesday that Delta, United, and six other airlines have registered to use DPRK airspace after it opens to international flights beginning Thursday. A Singapore Airlines jet flying from Hong Kong to San Francisco on Thursday morning is the first scheduled flight through DPRK airspace. Other international airlines that have registered to use the new route are Korean Air and Asiana Airlines of the ROK and Vladivostok Airlines, Aeroflot, and Sakhalin Airlines of Russia.

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3. Compensation for ROK Comfort Women

The New York Times (Stephanie Strom, "KOREA WON'T SEEK JAPANESE REPARATIONS FOR WWII'S 'COMFORT' WOMEN," Tokyo, 04/22/98) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung vowed Tuesday that, despite its plan to provide compensation to former comfort women, the government would continue to seek an apology from Japan for the sexual enslavement of Korean women during World War II. A spokesman for Kim said Tuesday, "This does not mean the abandonment of demanding from Japan an apology and acceptance of its historical and moral responsibilities. The government will not interfere with continued demands by the former comfort women and nongovernmental organizations for compensation from the Japanese government." Meanwhile, the ROK Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry issued a statement saying, "We reiterated that a true future-oriented and mutually beneficial relationship between Korea and Japan can be achieved only if Japan recognizes past history and remorsefully reflects on its deeds." Yang Mi-kang, spokeswoman for the Korea Council for Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery in Japan, said Tuesday, "Our welcoming of our government's decision to provide financial support does not mean the automatic annulment or postponement of our demands for compensation from the Japanese government." Yang also rejected any compensation from Japan's privately financed Asian Women's Fund, saying, "The fund has been a scheme of the World War II aggressor, Japan, to avoid legal responsibilities for its actions." However, Shinichi Harada, spokesman for the Asian Women's Fund, said that the fund has raised US$3.26 million from businesses to provide medical and welfare expenses for the women, although he stressed that the money was not to be regarded as compensation. He added that more than 70 women, primarily from the Philippines, had received money from the fund, although he declined to give a more detailed breakdown by country, claiming that opposition groups had harassed the recipients. At least seven women from the ROK have received money from the fund.

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4. ROK Labor Unrest

Dow Jones Newswires ("S. KOREA LABOR LEADERS SNUB PRESIDENT'S APPEAL FOR PEACE," Seoul, 04/22/98) reported that Lee Kap-yong, head of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, on Wednesday rejected ROK President Kim Dae-jung's appeal for peace at work sites. Lee stated, "We are seriously disappointed by the government. They want workers to shoulder all the pain." He added that the chaebol "want an easy way out and are plotting mass layoffs." Meanwhile, a union of one-fifth of the nation's 150,000 taxi drivers said its members will go on strike Thursday for higher pay. President Kim told labor leaders Wednesday that labor unrest was causing difficulties in attracting foreign investment. The ROK Finance Ministry said that foreign investment in the first three months of this year dropped by 74 percent to US$328 million.

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5. Taiwan-PRC Talks

The Associated Press ("TAIWANESE HOPEFUL OF CHINA TALKS," Beijing, 04/22/98) reported that Taiwanese negotiator Jan Jyh-horng arrived in Beijing Wednesday and expressed optimism that his discussions with PRC officials would lead to the reopening of dialogue. He stated, "If from this day forth both sides can work together with the utmost sincerity, we will be able to bid farewell to the cold of winter and usher in a new spring." Sheu Ke-sheng, vice chairman of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council, said that Jan's visit is "the inevitable result of both sides realizing the need to face and solve the problems that concern the people on both sides of the strait."

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6. US-PRC Relations

The New York Times (Steven Erlanger, "U.S. MAY LIFT SOME SANCTIONS ON CHINA IF CONDITIONS ARE MET," Washington, 04/22/98) reported that the US is offering to lift some sanctions imposed on the PRC after the 1989 crackdown in Tiananmen Square, if the PRC makes additional concessions on human rights, trade, and exports of dangerous technologies before US President Bill Clinton's summit meeting in late June in Beijing. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will visit the PRC on Sunday and press the government to limit further its exports of sensitive missile, chemical, and nuclear technologies and expertise to countries like Pakistan and Iran. US officials say they remain extremely concerned about PRC help for the Pakistani and Iranian missile programs. An unnamed senior US official said, "We'll always get intelligence reports about Chinese officials' talking to the Iranians and others about all kinds of deals, but what really matters is what they do and whether they react to stop any deals." However, he added, "there is no question that they treat proliferation questions differently now than before.... What we worry about now are dual-use items, which require sometimes very technical discussions."

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7. PRC-Japan Relations

Reuters (Mure Dickie, "CHINA VICE PRESIDENT MEETS JAPAN POLITICIANS," Tokyo, 04/21/98) reported that PRC Vice President Hu Jintao held a breakfast meeting with Japanese politicians on Wednesday as part of his visit to Japan. A PRC embassy official said that Hu's trip would also pave the way for a state visit to Japan by PRC President Jiang Zemin later in the year. The official stated that Hu held brief talks with Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on Tuesday evening, at which the two avoided discussion of historical issues to focus on the future prospects for Sino-Japanese ties. Meanwhile, Japan's Kyodo news service reported that there was a high chance Hu would meet Tetsuzo Fuwa, chairman of the Japan Communist Party, at a Foreign Ministry welcome dinner on Wednesday night, which would be the first meeting between leaders of the two communist parties since they severed relations in 1967 during the PRC's Cultural Revolution.

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8. US-Russian Nuclear Nonproliferation Talks

The Associated Press ("U.S., RUSSIAN OFFICIALS DISCUSS IRAN-RUSSIA NUCLEAR PACT," Moscow, 04/22/98) reported that, during a series of meetings Wednesday, US officials pressed Russia on nuclear cooperation with and the suspected transfer of missile technology to Iran. The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Robert Gallucci, US special representative on

nuclear non-proliferation issues, met with Yuri Koptev, head of the Russian Space Agency, but it provided no details of the meeting. The US State Department said Gallucci was sent to Moscow to examine Russia's compliance with its pledges to end nuclear cooperation with Iran and to look at specific companies that might be involved. In a separate meeting Wednesday, US Under-Secretary of State John Holum received assurances from Yevgeny Adamov, Russia's atomic energy minister, that Russian nuclear projects in Iran were of peaceful nature.

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9. Costs of US Nuclear Arsenal

Reuters (Jim Wolf, "STUDY: PENTAGON UNDERESTIMATES NUCLEAR COST," Washington, 04/21/98) reported that a study by Brookings Institution released Tuesday said that the US Defense Department is underestimating the cost of the US nuclear arsenal by nearly two-thirds. The study found that the US would spend an estimated US$35.1 billion on nuclear weapons and weapons-related programs in fiscal 1998, while the Defense Department's estimate was only US$13 billion. Stephen Schwartz, director of the US Nuclear Weapons Cost Study Project at Brookings, stated, "Were this to occur with almost any other government program, I submit that Congress would be jumping up and down about it. But when it comes to military spending, and nuclear weapons in particular, it appears that the normal standards of oversight and accountability do not apply." The department countered that its estimate did not include "many costs not directly related to our nuclear forces," which it suggested were wrongly included in the Brookings study. It stated, "We estimate approximately $13 billion for our nuclear forces and this includes DOE (Department of Energy) costs." The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) figured that the cost of "current U.S. nuclear forces and supporting activities" totaled about US$20 billion in the fiscal 1998 budget, but would need to rise to US$22 billion to allow for force modernization at existing levels of strength. Factoring in such additional costs as US$5 billion for missile defenses and strategic air defenses and US$6 billion for Energy Department cleanups, CBO Director June O'Neil estimated total US spending at US$33 billion a year.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Compensation for ROK Comfort Women

The ROK government yesterday decided to offer 38 million won to each of 152 registered ROK "comfort women" as part of efforts to put an end to the prolonged controversy over whether Japan is responsible for making state-level compensation to them. The ROK's decision, made at a Cabinet meeting, is designed to financially assist the former "wartime sex slaves'' for Japanese soldiers during World War II, who are poor and in their advanced years, and seek to establish a future-oriented relationship with Japan. As Japan has failed to make state-level compensation, the official said that the ROK government decided to offer humanitarian aid to them in an effort to wrap up "fruitless debates'' between the two countries. However, Moon Bong-joo, director-general of the ROK Foreign Ministry's Asian-Pacific Affairs Bureau, noted that the ROK's action would be burdensome to Japan because the ROK government did what the Japanese government should do. (Korea Times, "SEOUL DECIDES TO OFFER 38 MILLION WON TO COMFORT WOMEN," 04/22/98)

ROK President Kim Dae-jung said yesterday that the ROK has not scrapped its official demand that Japan make a formal apology for its past mistakes of kidnapping ROK women and making them sex slaves during World War II. Kim promised that the beneficiaries of state assistance will also be

entitled to receive financial compensation from Japan following its voluntary apology. But the ROK government will prohibit the ROK comfort women from receiving compensation from the Japanese private fund, called the Fund for Asian Women. (Korea Times, "PRESIDENT KIM SAYS SEOUL HAS NOT SCRAPPED DEMANDS FOR JAPANESE APOLOGY," 04/22/98)

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2. Forum on DPRK

A group of US experts on Korea will come to the ROK Friday to attend a forum aimed at mapping out a new DPRK policy with the launching of the Kim Dae-jung government, a spokesman for the Seoul Forum said yesterday. The two-day meeting, organized by the Seoul Forum and the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations (CRA), will focus on the future of the DPRK, the ROK's responses to the DPRK's options on its future, and policy coordination between the ROK and the US on the DPRK, the spokesman said. (Korea Times, "US EXPERTS ON KOREA TO ATTEND FORUM ON NORTH KOREA," 04/22/98)

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3. ROK Policy on DPRK

The Kim Dae-jung administration's bargaining strategies turned out nightmarish for DPRK delegates to the Beijing talks on fertilizer aid because it stuck to transparent dialogue and the observance of principles throughout the week-long talks. "(DPRK chief delegate) Chon Gum-chol might face a sacking upon returning to the DPRK because he failed to secure fertilizer which the DPRK desperately needs to promote its agricultural production," said a senior ROK Unification Ministry official. In addition, the DPRK had been negative about the possibility that Kim Dae-jung would be elected the ROK President because Kim, once portrayed as a sympathizer with Communist ideologies, would have less maneuvering room in his policies regarding the DPRK. At the same time, Kim has been regarded as an astute strategist who strictly takes into consideration the general trend of public opinion. (Korea Times, "NEW GOVERNMENT GETS FIRMER ON NK POLICIES," 04/22/98)

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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