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1. Reunion of Separated Families

The Associated Press (Paul Shin, "N. KOREA MARKS LEADER'S BIRTHDAY," Seoul, 02/16/98) reported that the DPRK's official Central Radio said Sunday that the government would collect petitions from DPRK citizens who want to track down lost family members in other countries. The broadcast said that the campaign will start next month. Hong Hung-ju, an ROK government spokesman, stated, "We value as positive the interest shown by the North Korean side in resolving the issue of separated family members."

United Press International ("S.KOREA HOPING FOR EXCHANGES WITH NORTH," Seoul, 02/16/98) reported that the ROK's Yonhap News Agency said that the ROK hopes to allow senior citizens to meet long lost family members from the DPRK. The report cited an unnamed government official who said that the incoming Kim Dae-jung government is considering plans for a meeting place along the Demilitarized Zone. It added that the proposal would be brought up at the next inter-Korean Red Cross talks. A government spokesman stated, "There are plans, but it's too early to tell what will happen."

2. ROK-DPRK Air Route

United Press International (Hyewook Cheong, "TEST CLEARNS WAY FOR FLIGHTS OVER N.KOREA," Seoul, 02/17/98) reported that Oh Dae-woong, a spokesman for the ROK Transportation Ministry, said that air traffic control towers in the two Koreas have tested satellite contact, the last step required for test flights over the DPRK which are scheduled to start next month. Oh stated, "Satellite communication will take place on a daily basis until test flights for commercial airlines begin in March." The Ministry said the deal will be lucrative for both countries, as ROK carriers will save at least US\$20 million in fuel, and the DPRK will receive an estimated US\$2 million in air control fees. The new routes will shorten flights to the ROK from Europe and North America by up to 50 minutes. DPRK airspace is scheduled to open officially for commercial airlines on April 23.

3. Aid for DPRK

Reuters (Evelyn Leopold, "UN SEEKS MORE FOR PROJECTS IN NORTH KOREA," United Nations, 02/12/98) reported that the UN on Thursday appealed for US\$37 million for projects to improve the DPRK's water supply, sanitation, and food production. Douglas Coutts, the North American head of the World Food Program, stated, "Food alone is not going to do the trick, there are so many related factors." He added that so far only the US had responded to the UN's appeal for food aid for the DPRK, offering to donate 200,000 ton for one year from April. He said that the food situation in the DPRK improved after the harvest in October because the government used all its supplies immediately rather than spreading them out over the year. However, he added, "we are only talking about 400 grams per person per day and that is not a sustainable ration, even for adults, in the cold winter we are having this year. But as I speak now the ration is beginning to drop off because the harvest is beginning to run out." Carol Bellamy, the executive director of UNICEF, said that access to clean safe drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities in the DPRK were critical if gains in fighting malnutrition were to be sustained. Of the US\$37 million increase, \$6.4 is for UNICEF projects. UNICEF said that chlorination of water has virtually stopped in the past few years and fuel shortages are limiting the amount of water pumped from reservoirs, and that health problems are also caused by a scarcity of soap and disinfectant.

The Associated Press ("JACKSON PLANS CONCERT IN S. KOREA," Seoul, 02/16/98) reported Choi Kyu-sun, an aide to ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung, said Monday that US pop singer Michael Jackson plans a fund-raising concert in Seoul on October 10 to help starving DPRK children. The concert will be held at the Olympic Stadium and broadcast live in 120 countries. Choi stated, "Mr.

Jackson's side has been in contact with North Korea. But we can't say whether or not the hope will come true."

4. US MIAs from Korean War

The Associated Press (Robert Burns, "U.S. TRACKED AMERICAN POWS IN CHINA," Washington, 02/15/98) reported that, according to declassified US Army intelligence reports, hundreds of US servicemen were moved through a network of prison camps in the PRC during the Korean War. The reports speculated that many died in captivity from malnutrition or lack of medical care. An Army intelligence summary dated December 15, 1951, said that a "careful assessment" of available intelligence on prison camps led to the conclusion that about 2,500 US POWs were being held in Manchuria, and about 1,500 in other parts of the PRC. It added, "Specially selected groups are sent to China in relatively small numbers to undergo political indoctrination. Of those POWs processed in Manchuria, the ones not going to China are apparently being sent to mines and labor camps in Manchuria itself." It also cited "almost conclusive evidence" that some POWs were being supervised by Soviet officers. A report dated June 20, 1952, said that more than 1,000 US POWs were held in a former military prison outside Nanjing, under the charge of a "Russian colonel named Nokelov." A February 15, 1952, report said that about 500 POWs at a camp 10 miles east of Mukden were being indoctrinated "pending dispatch to USSR." The last report, dated January 20, 1953, said that because of a lack of reports on 12 prison camps in the PRC since April 1952, it was assumed all 12 had been abolished.

5. ROK Layoff Bill

The Associated Press (Sang-Hun Choe, "SOUTH KOREA GROUP CALLS OFF STRIKE," Seoul, 02/13/98) reported that the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions on Friday called off a nationwide strike planned to protest legislation aimed at making it easier to lay off workers. However, the group said it would still call the strike if the legislation is adopted by the National Assembly.

6. ROK President's Son Sentenced

Agence France-Presse ("APPEALS COURT GIVES THREE-YEAR SENTENCE TO S. KOREAN PRESIDENT'S SON," Seoul, 02/17/98) reported that an ROK appeals court on Tuesday upheld a three-year jail sentence for Kim Hyun-Chul, the son of outgoing ROK President Kim Young-Sam, for influence peddling and tax evasion. Kim's lawyers said that they would take their appeal to the Supreme court.

7. US Journalist Arrested in ROK

The Associated Press ("JOURNALIST FINED \$2,000 FOR LIBEL," Seoul, 02/17/98) reported that an ROK court convicted Korean-American journalist Richard Choi of libel Tuesday and fined him US\$2,000, saying he had damaged a rival news organization's prestige through a false report. Choi has one week to appeal the decision. Judge Hwang Chan-hyun stated, "The defendant reported on the rumored bankruptcy and merger of a rival company. He deserves punishment because the false report caused damage to the concerned newspaper."

8. US-Japan Missile Defense Program

Reuters ("JAPAN TO JOIN U.S. ON ANTIMISSILE RESEARCH," Tokyo, 02/14/98) reported that Japan's Nihon Keizai Shimbun said on Saturday that Japan has reached a basic agreement to carry out research with the US on a ballistic missile defense system. They will jointly conduct technological research starting in 1999 on Lightweight Exo-Atmosphere Projectiles (LEAP), part of plans by the US for a major new missile system known as Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD). The report said that the BMD will detect enemy missile launches by radar and fires land or sea-based interceptor missiles to destroy them. According to Japanese Defense Agency estimates, the joint research project should cost about 20 billion yen (US\$160 million) over the next five years.

9. Alleged Japanese War Crimes

The Associated Press (Jim Gomez, "EX-SEX SLAVES APPEAL TO JAPAN," Manila, 02/17/98) reported that Filipino women forced into sexual slavery by Japan during World War II on Tuesday urged visiting Japanese Prince Akishino and Princess Kiko to help them obtain official government compensation. The women were seeking a meeting with the members of Japan's royal family. A Japanese Embassy official, Toshihide Kawasaki, said that the royal couple's schedule had been arranged in advance and that it would be "quite difficult to find any space" for the so-called comfort women.

The Associated Press (Mari Yamaguchi, "JAPAN APOLOGY FOR GERM WAR SOUGHT," Tokyo, 02/17/98) reported that 107 plaintiffs from six towns in southeastern China appeared in Tokyo District Court Monday to demand that the Japanese government acknowledge using germ warfare in China during World War II and provide the victims with official compensation. The plaintiffs said that the germ warfare was the work of the Japanese Army's Unit 731, a detachment in Manchuria that conducted medical experiments on thousands of prisoners of war and civilians. The Japanese government argued in a statement that the case should be dismissed, saying that individuals cannot sue a state under the Hague Convention for laws of war and that the statute of limitations for filing a damages lawsuit has expired.

10. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN PARTY AGREES ON CHINA TALKS," Taipei, 02/15/98) reported that Taiwan's main opposition Democratic Progressive Party agreed on Sunday to push for talks with the PRC but affirmed its position that the island is an independent nation. Party chairman Hsu Hsin-liang stated, "We have established considerable consensus," following a meeting of party leaders to resolve difference over the party's policy toward the PRC. Chiu Yi-jen, the party's secretary-general, said that "the vast majority," of party representatives insist that Taiwan is independent and oppose making any concessions to the PRC over the island's sovereignty. Also on Sunday, the Liberty Times newspaper reported that an official of the ruling National Party discussed economic aid and air links with ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung last week in Seoul. The paper said that the meeting was kept secret to avoid provoking the PRC.

11. US-PRC Relations

The Washington Post (John Pomfret, "EVEN UP CLOSE, CHINA'S VISION OF U.S. IS OUT OF FOCUS, DEFENSE OFFICIALS INDICATE," 02/15/98, A10) reported that the US Defense Department published a report which said that the views expressed by some visiting PRC officers and recent PRC military publications indicate that the PRC leadership holds a number of misperceptions that may cause serious political friction or military conflict the US. The report, "Dangerous Chinese Misperceptions: the Implications for Department of Defense," argued that the PRC's belief in the weakness of the US and other US trained or equipped forces could contribute to a decision to attack Taiwan. The report noted that the problem has worsened despite unprecedented contact between the military forces of the US and the PRC.

II. Republic of Korea

1. Kim Jong-il's Ascension

Oleg Shenin, chairman of the United Council of the Russian Communist Party, said on February 11 that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's ascension to presidency will be decided soon. The decision will be made during the 50th anniversary of the DPRK's national foundation day in September. Shenin, who has already received an invitation to the anniversary, quoted DPRK officials as emphasizing that there is no famine in the DPRK and that its food crisis will be resolved within the next 2-3 years. (Kyunghyang Shinmun, "KIM'S PRESIDENCY TO BE DECIDED IN SEPTEMBER," 02/13/98)

2. Kim Jong-il's Birthday

The DPRK on Monday marked the 56th birthday of its leader Kim Jong-il. The DPRK regime is

preparing seminars, commemorative publications, and memorabilia and sports events in an attempt to praise the "Dear Leader," said DPRK analysts. "However, harsh economic reality has cut down on the frills, even compared to last year, and we expect there to be many mass rallies demonstrating loyalty to Kim," stated an analyst. In 1995, the DPRK made Kim Jong-il's birthday one of its main public holidays, elevating it to the same status as that of his late father, Kim Il-sung. (Korea Herald, "DPRK LEADER'S BIRTHDAY EVENTS SHORT OF FUNDS," 02/16/98)

3. Reunion of Separated Families

ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung, meeting a group of former DPRK residents on February 14, promised to try to achieve exchange visits for the estimated one million families separated by the division of Korea. The President-elect further told the group, some of whom still have families in the DPRK, that he will also push for the exchange of letters and establishment of reunion centers for the divided families. (Korea Herald, "KIM DAE-JUNG TO TRY TO ACHIEVE INTER-KOREAN EXCHANGES," 02/16/98)

The DPRK, through its Korea Central News Agency, announced on February 15 that its Social Security Agency will be conducting a survey of dispersed families in the DPRK and will mediate reunions starting on March 1, 1998. The DPRK's announcement is receiving much attention in relation to the incoming ROK government's recent announcement over its intentions to allow elderly ROK citizens to visit the DPRK for family reunions. The announcement urged DPRK citizens to submit personal and situational details of when they were separated from their families. The announcement drew extra attention since the scope of its search for lost families extends to countries outside the Korean Peninsula. (Joongang Ilbo, "DPRK TO MEDIATE FAMILY REUNIONS," 02/16/98)

4. ROK-DPRK Relations

ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung's transition committee has made resuming direct dialogue with the DPRK, including a possible ROK-DPRK summit, one of the top policy goals that the incoming government will promote. This policy agenda was among the "100 most important tasks" for the new government, which will be inaugurated on February 25. The new government will place a major priority on reopening a series of direct talks with the DPRK, said committee chairman Lee Jong-chan on February 12. It will also push plans to jointly develop with the DPRK "free tourist districts" linking Mt. Kumgang in the DPRK and Mt. Sorak in the ROK. For ROK-DPRK reconciliation and development of cooperative relations, the new government will seek to gradually deregulate censorship on DPRK's radio and TV broadcasting. (Korea Times, Kim Hyoung-min, "NEW GOV'T TO SEEK DIRECT DIALOG WITH NK," 02/13/98)

5. ROK-DPRK Air Route

Test flights by international airliners, including the ROK's two carriers, over the first inter-Korean route will be carried out next month. A hotline via satellite will be opened on February 17 linking aviation authorities of the two Koreas as a backup communication tool to the land-based line. According to the ROK Construction and Transportation Ministry on February 14, carriers from the ROK, the US, Singapore, and Hong Kong will conduct test flights over the inter-Korean route for six days beginning March 1. The route will be officially opened to all international flights on April 23 as agreed under the two Koreas' aviation agreement signed in Bangkok last year. (Korea Times, "TEST FLIGHTS ON INTER-KOREAN ROUTE DUE NEXT MONTH," 02/16/98)

6. Light-Water Reactor Project

According an official from the emergency economic committee, the Japanese government has stated its willingness to shoulder the initial costs for the light-water reactor project in the DPRK. The emergency economic committee is an ad-hoc organization adopted by the ROK government in order to oversee its economic crisis. The official, citing proceedings of the Korea Peninsula Energy Development Organization meeting in New York earlier this month, said that the Japanese delegation advanced no objection to the agreed cost-sharing, worth US\$1 billion. Furthermore, considering the ROK's economic woes, the Japanese government demonstrated willingness to shoulder the costs for the first 2-3 years of the project. Meanwhile, both ROK and Japanese delegates urged the US to shoulder 2-3 percent of the total cost of the project. (Kyunghyang Shinmun, "JAPAN TO PAY INITIAL COSTS OF LWR PROJECT," 02/17/98)

The US has demonstrated signs of easing its stance on shouldering part of the cost for the light-water reactor (LWR) project in the DPRK, the Chosun Ilbo reported on February 16. Although the amount of the contribution has not been disclosed, the US may contribute between US\$300 million and US\$400 million. Such reports followed US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific Stanley Roth's statement last week in Tokyo. Roth said that the US Congress is expected to favorably consider shouldering costs for the LWR project if suggested by the administration. The total estimated cost for the project is US\$5.17 billion. The ROK will pay US\$3.5 billion and Japan US\$1 billion. (KPS, "US TO SHARE COST OF DPRK REACTOR PROJECT," 2/16/98)

7. US Military in ROK

The US is sending a squadron of its F-15E and two AC-130 close air combat aircraft to the ROK to compensate for the absence of the USS Independence, now on its way to the Persian Gulf for possible engagement with Iraq. According to a US Forces Korea (USFK) spokesman on February 12, additional military assets in the US mainland are being put on standby for dispatch to the ROK "on short notice." The eighteen F-15Es sent to the ROK are based in Elmendorf, Alaska, while the AC-130s are from Hurlburt Field, Florida. (Korea Times, "US SENDS 18 F-15S, 2 AC-130S TO KOREA," 02/13/98)

8. ROK-US-Japan Defense Relations

Japan's Asahi Shimbun reported on February 13 that Japan, the ROK, and the US plan to intensify defense talks to discuss firm plans for military cooperation on the Korean Peninsula. The three countries plan to hold their next round of talks in Seoul, possibly in early March after the inauguration of ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung. The upcoming talks will focus on what roles the US and the ROK would play and how Japan would assist US forces in such emergencies as the collapse of the DPRK, sources said. (Korea Times, "JAPAN, KOREA, US TO INTENSIFY DEFENSE TALKS: REPORT," 02/14/98)

9. US-Japan Missile Defense Program

Japan and the US have agreed to start joint research for a ballistic missile defense program, Japan's Nihon Keizai Shimbun reported on February 14. Quoting Japanese government sources, the newspaper reported that the two sides will carry out research on an anti-missile weapon system fired from a ship. The US is pursuing a Ballistic Missile Defense program designed to protect US interests from hostile missile attacks in the region. The report said that Japan's Defense Agency expects an approximate cost of 20 billion yen (US\$160 million) over the next five years should it decide to take part in the research. The Agency, according to the report, plans to incorporate the plan into its budget request for fiscal year 1999. (Korea Times, "JAPAN, US AGREE TO RESEARCH MISSILE DEFENSE," 02/16/98)

10. ROK-PRC Relations

PRC President Jiang Zemin has invited ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung to visit the PRC as soon as possible. The invitation was extended via Kim Jong-pil, honorary president of the United Liberal Democrats, who returned on February 11 from his four-day visit to Beijing, the President-elect's spokesman Park Jie-won said. Kim Jong-pil, during his visit to the PRC, explained to Jiang about President-elect Kim's three-point DPRK policy of not using force, not pursuing reunification by absorption, and promoting inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation. (Korea Herald, "JIANG INVITES PRESIDENT-ELECT KIM TO PRC," 02/13/98)

11. ROK-Taiwan Relations

Chung Dong-young, spokesman for the National Congress for New Politics, denied Taiwanese press reports on February 16 that the ROK and Taiwan agreed to reopen commercial flight services, and that the ROK would receive financial assistance from Taiwan. A Taiwanese newspaper reported that ROK President-elect Kim Dae-jung secretly met the Taiwanese ruling party Secretary-General Zhang Xiao-yan on February 11. (Korea Times, "KIM DJ'S CAMP DENIES REPORTS OF ACCORD WITH TAIWANESE OFFICIAL," 02/17/98)

III. Japan

1. Japan-DPRK Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("RESUMPTION OF JAPAN-DPRK NORMALIZATION TALKS IS BECOMING UNCERTAIN," 02/16/98) reported that the DPRK's announcement through the Korea Central News Agency on February 15 that Japan broke the agreement for unconditional resumption of normalization talks by making the solution of the issue of "missing Japanese civilians" a condition has made the resumption of the talks uncertain. According to the report, the announcement came in response to Japan's dissatisfaction with the list of the missing Japanese civilians that the DPRK provided at an unofficial meeting between the two countries. The report cited a high-ranking Japanese Foreign Ministry official as saying, "The solution to the issue of the missing Japanese civilians is not a condition of the talks, but some kind of progress is necessary for the negotiations." Another Japanese Foreign Ministry official said, "It has become difficult for both sides to contact each other for a while." In addition, the Korea Central News Agency also announced that one Japanese woman who visited Japan with the second group of the Japanese wives sent Kim Jong-il a letter to the effect that money dominates everything in Japan.

2. US Bases in Japan

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("US SAYS ALTERNATIVE HELIPORT IS JAPAN'S RESPONSIBILITY," Washington, 02/15/98) reported that US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Kurt Campbell told Japanese reporters on February 13 regarding the freeze of the return of the Futenma Base that it is the Japanese government's responsibility to find a facility which Okinawa can accept both politically and technically. Campbell also said that what the US is concerned about is the construction of an alternative heliport which meets the requirements, and that as long as the requirements are met, the US is ready to discuss the matter quite flexibly. Campbell also revealed that representatives from both the US and Japan will gather in Japan to discuss the matter in late February or early March.

3. Japan-US Missile Defense Program

The Nikkei Shimbun ("JAPAN AND US TO CO-DEVELOP BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE," 02/14/98) reported that according to a Japanese governmental source on February 13, the Japanese and the US governments agreed to co-develop ballistic missile defense (BMD) technologies, specifically lightweight exo-atmosphere projectiles. The Japanese Defense Agency roughly estimates that the initiative will require twenty billion yen for the next five years, and the agency will start in 1999. The report added that although Japan postponed the decision on whether to introduce BMD, the co-

development will be a major step forward to the introduction of BMD in the future.

4. Japanese-Russian Relations

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPAN AND RUSSIA TO SIGN FISHERY AGREEMENT," 02/12/98) reported that Japan and Russia decided on February 11 to sign a fishery agreement during Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi's visit to Russia, slated for February 21. The agreement aims to secure safe fishing operations in the waters around the Northern territories, and according to the agreement, Japan is to pay for resource development while Russia is to allow Japanese to fish for Alaska pollack. Due to the delay of the signing, which was originally scheduled for late January, it became impossible for Hokkaido fishermen to begin fishing for Atka mackerel and octopus in the fall and for the Japanese government to facilitate Russian President Boris Yeltsin's visit to Japan, slated for April, by early realization of safe operations.

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR'S LECTURE," 02/17/98) reported that Russian Ambassador to Tokyo Alexander Panov said, during a lecture at the Defense Academy of Japan on February 16 regarding Japanese-Russian peace treaty negotiations, "The joint economic activities that we proposed would make the Northern Territorial islands special areas, and they would contribute to the peace treaty negotiations." He also argued that improvement of Japanese-Russian bilateral relations, signing of the peace treaty, and solution to the problems concerning the Northern Territory islands should be realized. In addition, he stated that a Japanese-Russian fishery agreement will be signed during Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi's visit to Russia, slated for February 21.

IV. Russian Federation

1. RF-Japan Relations

Segodnya ("THOROUGHNESS FOR 'NO-TIE MEETINGS' IS REQUIRED," Moscow, 2, 2/16/98) reported that RF Presidential Press Secretary Sergey Yastrzhembskiy confirmed that Japanese officials suggested two options concerning the place for holding the forthcoming RF-Japan "no-tie" summit, but that RF officials have not made a decision yet. The city of Kawana and the Kashikojima are the places suggested.

Sovetskaya Rossia ("THESE DAYS ... TOKYO," Moscow, 3, 2/17/98) reported that Japanese Premier Ryutaro Hashimoto said he will pay special attention to a "radical improvement of relations with Russia" and "further strengthening of confidence relations" with RF President Boris Yeltsin. He noted that Yeltsin is to visit Japan this April and said he will do his "maximum effort" in order "to fully normalize bilateral relations with Russia, concluding a peace treaty with Russia on the basis of the Tokyo Declaration, before the year 2000."

Nezavisimaya gazeta ("DOES RUSSIA NEED A PEACE TREATY WITH JAPAN?," Moscow, 3, 2/13/98) published an article by Nikolai Izvekov, Counselor, RF Foreign Policy Association, commenting on the present RF-Japan series of negotiations concerning a peace treaty and the South Kuril issue. Izvekov argued that a sound answer to the question "what is the treaty needed for" cannot be found. The state of war between the two countries ended in December of 1956 when their Joint Declaration came into effect. At the same time diplomatic relations were restored. The lack of a peace treaty has not prevented the two countries from concluding a number of agreements "when it served their mutual interests." As for a peace treaty, the author argued, its conclusion was blocked by the territorial claims raised by Japan "as advised by Americans who in principle have never been interested in real good-neighborliness developing between Japan and the USSR." Yet the RF is not the only country without a peace treaty with Japan. For instance, the PRC-Japan 1978 peace and friendship treaty legally is not a true peace treaty. Moreover, it did not solve the existing Japan-PRC dispute over isles in the East China Sea. In the author's opinion, the present efforts to reach a "separate peace treaty between Russia and Japan" look rather like a "clumsy anachronism." Besides, conclusion of such a treaty would undermine "the international legal basis of the key Article 2 of the San Francisco peace treaty." A "Pandora box" will be opened with the RF, thus rendering a great disservice to a number of other East Asian countries. "The train of history went too far," the author concluded, and a peace treaty is not the only means to solve the present problems in RF- Japan relations.

2. PRC-RF Relations

Izvestia's Aleksandr Platkovskiy and Yuriy Savenkov ("GOODBYE BANQUET FOR LI PENG IN MOSCOW," Moscow, 3, 2/17/98) reported that PRC State Council Premier Li Peng's visit on February 17- 18, "cannot be called sensational." It is expected that he and his RF hosts will sign a protocol on trade and two agreements related to the RF-PRC border in 1998. An agreement on speed vessel construction cooperation is to be signed, resulting in a US\$4 billion long-term program. Also, cooperation in the energy field is to be discussed, but it will already be a task for Chu Junzi, PRC State Council First Deputy Premier, to practically implement the existing agreements, as he is expected to become Li Peng's successor at the CCP Central Committee Plenum immediately after Li returns to the PRC.

Nezavisimaya gazeta's Pavel Spirin ("MOSCOW AND BEIJING STEPPING UP COOPERATION," Moscow, 1, 2/17/98) reported that during PRC State Council Premier Li Peng's official visit to the RF, eight bilateral agreements are expected to be signed, chiefly concerning RF-PRC economic, energy, and military-technical cooperation, as well as those concerning a facilitation of the RF-PRC border crossing.

3. RF-ROK Relations

Segodnya ("SOUTH KOREANS PAY HOMAGE TO THE MEMORY OF RUSSIAN HEROES," Moscow, 6, 2/10/98) reported that a ceremony took place at a spot in the Yellow Sea, with the participation of RF Ambassador in the ROK Yevgeniy Afanasyev and RF Military Attache Colonel Aleksandr Bodryagin, as well as some high-ranking ROK Naval officers on board a ship of the ROK Navy.

Mourning music was played and wreaths were laid at the place where the "Varyag" cruiser and "Koreyets" gun-boat of the Russian Imperial Navy were sunk in a battle against 14 ships of the Japanese Imperial Navy on February 9, 1904, at the start of Russo-Japanese War.

4. RF Pacific Fleet Energy Shortage

Segodnya ("PACIFIC FLEET DOES NOT PAY TO ENERGY PRODUCERS," Moscow, 3, 2/10/98) reported on February 9 that the personnel at the enterprise supplying electric energy to the facilities of the RF Pacific Fleet, including nuclear waste burial sites and nuclear submarines, went on strike. The strikers declared that they would continue to supply energy to the strategic facilities only. The employees have not been paid wages for about a year, with the RF Pacific Fleet being the major debtor.

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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