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United States

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1. DPRK Demand for Massacre Investigation

BBC News ("N KOREA DEMANDS 'MASSACRE' PROBE," 3/22/00) reported that the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) carried a memorandum by the DPRK Foreign Ministry which said the UN should investigate allegations that US troops massacred more than a million civilians and prisoners of war during the 1950-3 Korean war. The Ministry said "a special tribunal" should be set up to bring those responsible to justice. It accused the US of using biological and chemical weapons along with indiscriminate air raids during the war. KCNA said that the DPRK government expected the world to cooperate "to thoroughly probe the truth" under international law, and demanded compensation and an apology from the US. The memorandum said, "it is a commitment of the US as a criminal state to strictly punish those criminals who organized and commanded the mass killings or took part in them." KCNA cited a document that gave evidence of an alleged massacre in Sinchon county, 100km (62 miles) south of Pyongyang. The report said that "the US aggressors herded innocent civilians into the air-raid shelter and set fire to it after pouring petrol over them."

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2. Northern Limit Line Dispute

Reuters ("TWO KOREAS IN WAR OF WORDS OVER SEA BORDER," Seoul, 3/23/00) reported that the DPRK said on Thursday that US warships and civilian vessels would be allowed to enter waters south of a disputed demarcation line where DPRK and ROK naval vessels clashed in June 1999. However, the DPRK government said that its navy might resort to force if the ships went beyond the zones. According to the official Korean Central News Agency, a DPRK navy communique said, "if warships and civilian ships and planes of the U.S. forces side go beyond the designated zones and waterways, it will be an outright intrusion. Our revolutionary armed forces solemnly declare they will retaliate against the U.S. forces side without warnings if it dares challenge our sincere efforts to prevent conflicts in the West Sea (Yellow Sea)." The ROK Defense Ministry said Thursday that it would not tolerate the DPRK's intrusion into waters below the Northern Limit Line, imposed by the UN. The ROK Ministry said it would "firmly defend [the NLL], and if the North Korean Army intrudes the NLL on the basis of its own navigation order we will consider it to be provocation and will never tolerate it."

Associated Press (Paul Shin, "N. KOREA THREATENS S. KOREAN SHIPS," Seoul, 3/23/00) reported that the DPRK was creating one-mile-wide "navigational zones and waterways" for ships going to and from disputed islands in the Yellow Sea. According to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), civilian and military planes will not be allowed to fly above the five islands and violators will be punished. However, Captain Park Chung-hwa, spokesman of the ROK Navy Headquarters, said

that, "if the North illegally violates the Northern Limit Line, our armed forces will consider it a provocation and will not tolerate it." The ROK military ordered marines and navy ships guarding ferries and fishing boats in the disputed sea to strengthen their vigilance.

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3. Cross-strait Relations

Associated Press (William Foreman, "U.S. CURIOUS ABOUT INTENT OF TAIWAN," Taipei, 3/23/00) reported that Lee Hamilton, former chairman of the US House International Relations Committee, arrived in Taipei on March 22, hours after US diplomat Richard Holbrooke wrapped up talks with PRC leaders in Beijing. In a brief statement at Taipei's airport, Hamilton praised the "strength and vitality of Taiwan's democracy. I also wish to congratulate President-elect Chen and look forward to meeting him and learning more about the policies he seeks to carry out [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for March 23, 2000.]

The US State Department Office of International Information Programs released a House International Relations Committee Press Release ("GILMAN PRAISES CHEN'S RECONCILIATION EFFORT, 3/23/00) which said US Representative Benjamin A. Gilman, Chairman of the US House International Relations Committee, made a statement Thursday during a Full Committee consideration of House Congressional Resolution 292, a resolution congratulating President-elect Chen Shui-bian and Vice President-elect Annette Lu of Taiwan and reaffirming US policy toward Taiwan and the PRC. Gilman praised the people of Taiwan on a very successful election and for "taking another step in consolidating their democratic evolution [and] I want to commend the President-elect for his proposal of embarking on a journey of reconciliation with China and his offer to meet with China's leaders. Talks should only go forward at a pace and scope acceptable to the parties on both sides of the Strait." Gilman also encourged the PRC "to exercise restraint; to avoid fanning the flames of nationalism over Taiwan in an effort to divert attention from internal problems in China; to open dialogue with Taipei; and to end its military threats toward the island." The resolution passed in the committee by voice vote and now goes to the House floor.

Agence France Presse ("CHINA WON'T ALLOW WANG DAOHAN TO GO TO TAIWAN, ANALYST SAYS," Beijing, 3/23/00) reported that Guo Zhenyuan, a senior fellow at the Foreign Ministry's Institute of International Studies, said Thursday that the PRC will not allow Wang Daohan, its leading policy maker on cross straits relations, to attend the inauguration ceremony of Taiwan president-elect Chen Shui-bian, unless Chen accepts the principle that there is only one China. Guo said that the one China principle "is the basis and pre-requisite for the talks." Official PRC government offices refused to comment Thursday on the invitation announced by Chen on March 22. Chen had invited Wang Daohan to the May 20 inauguration, saying, "we would like to offer to Mr. Wang Daohan, if time allows and if that could be arranged, to attend Chen Shui-bian's and (vice-president-elect) Annette Lu's inauguration ceremony. Seeking everlasting cross-strait peace is our ultimate goal, our deepest concern, and our ethical obligation."

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4. PRC Naval Activity

Japan Times ("CHINESE NAVAL PRESENCE RISING OFF JAPAN," 3/22/00) reported that Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) announced on March 20 that the number of PRC naval vessels found in international waters surrounding Japan rose sharply for the 1999 fiscal year. MSDF Chief of Staff Kosei Fujita said that P3C patrol planes sighted a total of 31 PRC vessels on seven different occasions crossing over the central line between the overlapping exclusive economic zones of Japan and the PRC in fiscal 1999, ending March 31. The MSDF said only one or two PRC naval vessels had been spotted each year in the waters previously. Fujita said naval vessels have also been sighted off the PRC near the disputed Senkaku Islands. Fujita added, "I believe they are engaging in training activities." MSDF officials also said that they confirmed a total of 15 PRC research ships entered the waters on 23 separate occasions during the year, while no such vessels had been seen before.

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5. Political Change in Taiwan

Associated Press (William Foreman, "TAIWAN PRESIDENT TO QUIT PARTY POST," Taipei, 3/23/00) reported that Taiwan's state-run Central News Agency said Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui said Thursday that he would resign on March 24 as the leader of the Nationalist party. Since the party's defeat in the March 18 election, protesters have demonstrated outside the Nationalists' headquarters, demanding that Lee resign immediately as party chairman. Wang Tan-ping, a top official in the Nationalists' central policy committee, confirmed the report, saying, "he had wanted to resign after the election setback, but he wanted to initiate it himself, not under pressure." Vice President Lien Chan was to serve as the party's acting chairman.

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Republic of Korea

1. Japanese Foreign Minister to Visit ROK

The Korea Herald (Kim Ji-ho, "KONO TO VISIT SEOUL PRIOR TO JAPAN-N. KOREA TALKS," Seoul, 03/23/00) reported that ROK officials said here on Wednesday that Japanese Foreign Minister Yohei Kono will arrive in Seoul on March 26 for a two-day visit aimed at fine-tuning the two governments' DPRK policies prior to Japan's rapprochement talks with the DPRK on April 4. Ministry officials said Kono and ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Lee Joung-binn will meet on March 26 to coordinate their joint stances toward the Communist country. The DPRK and Japan are scheduled to resume talks on establishing diplomatic relations in Pyongyang. DPRK former Vice Foreign Minister Jong Tae-hwa will represent the DPRK at the five-day talks, while the Japanese team will be led by Takano Kojiro, ambassador to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization. Kono is expected to brief Lee on Japan's plans for talks on improving ties with the DPRK and to discuss key points requiring consultations with the ROK.

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2. DPRK Defectors to ROK

The Korea Herald ("4 NORTH KOREANS DEFECT TO SOUTH," Seoul, 03/23/00) reported that the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said that four DPRK defectors arrived in Seoul on March 22. The ministry identified the four as Shin Sang-woo, 58, and two members of his family, and Chung Kwang-pil, 43. They left the DPRK between 1998 and 1999. They arrived in the ROK from a "third country."

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3. Inter-Korean Summit

The Korea Herald (Chon Shi-yong, "KIM TO PROMOTE EARLY INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT: SAYS N.K.'S RESPONSE TO BERLIN PROPOSAL 'NOT ENTIRELY NEGATIVE'," Seoul, 03/22/00), Joongang Ilbo (Kim Jin-kook, "PRESIDENT KIM TALKS ABOUT INTER-KOREAN RELATIONSHIP," Seoul, 03/21/00) and The Korea Times (Lee Chang-sup, "KIM HOPES FOR S-N SUMMIT AFTER APRIL ELECTION," Seoul, 03/21/00) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung reaffirmed on March 21 that he would promote an "early" meeting with DPRK leader Kim Jong-il after the April 13 general elections. Kim said, "I intend to promote an inter-Korean summit at an early date if the election results convince me that the majority of South Koreans support the idea." Kim said that reports from ROK businessmen and scholars who recently visited the DPRK indicated that their attitude towards his Berlin speech was "not entirely negative."

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4. DPRK-Japan Talks

Joongang Ilbo (Oh Young-hwan, "NORTH KOREA AND JAPAN TO RESUME FULL-SCALE TALKS," Seoul, 03/22/00), The Korea Times (Son Key-young, "N. KOREA- JAPAN DIPLOMATIC NORMALIZATION TALKS APRIL 4," Seoul, 03/22/00) and Chosun Ilbo (Park Jong-hoon, "JAPAN-NK TALKS SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 4 FROM TOKYO," Seoul, 03/23/00) reported that the Japanese Foreign Ministry announced on March 22 that the DPRK and Japan will hold normalization talks April 4-8 in Pyongyang. DPRK Ambassador Chung Tae-hwa and Japanese Ambassador Kojiro Takano will head the talks. The two parties will reportedly discuss basic issues that include the regions under the DPRK's jurisdiction, the DPRK's demand for Japanese compensation for the damages incurred by its colonial rule over Korea, and other international matters.

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5. Mt. Kumgang Tour

Joongang Ilbo (Jung Chang-hyun, "200,000 KOREANS VISITED MT. KUMGANG," Seoul, 03/21/00) reported that Hyundai Merchant Marine Company announced that the total number of visitors to Mount Kumgang has passed the 200,000 mark. With the March 21 departure of the Hyundai Pungak, carrying 661 passengers exactly 200,119 tourists have visited Mount Kumgang. It took only 16 months since Hyundai's first voyage on November 18, 1998, to break the 200-thousand mark.

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6. DPRK Requests for Oil to US

Joongang Ilbo ("NK ASKS U.S. FOR SUPPLY OF CRUDE OIL," Seoul, 03/23/00) reported that DPRK officials at the US-DPRK talks in New York reportedly asked the US for a regular supply of crude oil. A foreign affairs insider in the ROK said that DPRK vice-foreign affairs minister Kim Gye-gwan asked US special envoy to the DPRK, Charles Kartman, to consider the fuel problem as top priority. The insider said the DPRK also raised the issue of the light-water reactors' completion date. The insider said it looks as though the DPRK will probably ask the US for further compensation for problems due to delayed construction.

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