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I. United States

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US State Department Acting Spokesman John Dinger ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MAY 5,"
USIA Transcript, 5/5/97) stated that talks led by the US Defense Department began May 4 in New
York City with DPRK officials in an attempt to resolve issues relating to US military personnel still

reported as missing in action (MIA) during the Korean War in the early 1950s. The talks resumed Monday and are expected to continue through the week. Among the subject areas to be discussed are reported sightings of Americans allegedly still living in the DPRK; access to military archives to recover DPRK data about Americans who were held as prisoners-of-war; and the establishment of a schedule to resume joint excavations to recover the remains of Americans buried in DPRK cemeteries and at other specific sites. "From the U.S. perspective, the meeting is moving in a productive direction," Dinger said. He noted that the DPRK delegation has agreed to meet on May 9 with family members of US MIAs. "This is the first time that the North Koreans have ever agreed to such a meeting," Dinger said. "We view this as a positive sign of North Korea's interest in making progress on this humanitarian issue." Dinger noted that "these talks are not connected to the talks that took place in New York just two or three weeks ago ... at which the Four Party Peace Talks Proposal was discussed. They are also not connected to the US-DPRK

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Reuters ("U.S., NORTH KOREA CONTINUE NEW YORK TALKS," Washington, 5/5/97) reported that US Defense Department Spokeswoman Lt. Col. Joan Ferguson also discussed the continuing US-DPRK talks on US MIAs in Korea. "The first round wound up on Sunday night with an agreement to continue," Ferguson said, adding that the talks were taking place at an undisclosed location and were expected to last through at least Thursday. There are about 8,100 US troops counted as still missing from the 1950-53 Korean War. US-DPRK talks on the missing troops were last held in May 1996, leading to an agreement that resulted in joint recovery of the remains of a US Army corporal, but were derailed as a result of the DPRK submarine incursion incident. Ferguson said one topic of the negotiations includes a possible schedule for resuming joint excavations at sites believed to contain remains of US servicemen buried or shot down during the war.

The Associated Press ("US-NORTH KOREA TALKS ON MIAS RESUME," Washington, 5/5/97) reported that US Defense Department Spokesman Larry Greer of the Department's POW-MIA office noted that at Monday's US-DPRK talks on US MIAs in Korea, the two sides discussed reports that some US servicemen are living in the DPRK.

Reuters ("N. KOREA SAID SET TO MEET MIA FAMILIES," Washington, 5/5/97) reported that the DPRK agreement to meet with the families of US soldiers missing from the Korean War was a sign of quickening cooperation on a crucial bilateral issue. Although the MIA talks are not formally related to the four-party peace talks proposal, they are related in a broad sense to U.S. efforts to defuse tensions on the Korean peninsula, the report said. The report cited US State Department spokesman John Dinger's remarks, but then noted that a military official at the Pentagon, who asked not to be

identified, said he understood that so far only one member of one family had agreed to attend the meeting.

2. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks

The Associated Press ("NO AGREEMENT ON FOOD AID FOR KOREA," Beijing, 5/5/97) and Reuters ("RED CROSS FAILS TO AGREE ON FOOD FOR N. KOREA," Beijing, 5/5/97) reported that talks in Beijing between the ROK and DPRK Red Cross organizations on food aid to the DPRK broke down over disagreements over terms and conditions for delivery of the aid. "I expected they would have something in their hands to deliver to us, but when we arrived and met together, I came to know that they came with no firm pledge," said Paek Yong-ho, head of the DPRK Red Cross. "Without knowing the quantity and the timing, how can we discuss transportation of relief goods?" he said. Lee Byung-woong, secretary general of the ROK Red Cross, said their side had insisted on opening more channels for direct shipments of grain while the DPRK wanted a pledge of an exact aid amount before it could agree to anything. "We suggested a meeting to discuss the method of delivery," Lee said. "The North Korean Red Cross side insisted if we show an exact amount of an assistance, then they can discuss other issues." ROK officials said they would provide aid but could not say how much because that depended on public donations. The Red Cross chapters in both Koreas are closely allied with their governments and political tensions have also stymied previous talks. However, at the end of their first talks in nearly five years, the Red Cross officials did agree to meet again. The two sides "are very keen on meeting very soon again," Red Cross official Lasse Norgaard said. Negotiators were returning to their respective capitals Tuesday for consultations. No date was set for the next talks. [Ed. note: Please see the related item in the ROK section, below.]

3. US Diplomacy on Peace Talks Proposal

US State Department Acting Spokesman John Dinger ("STATE DEPT. NOON BRIEFING, MAY 2," USIA Transcript, 5/5/97) stated that Charles Kartman, the principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, will be flying to Tokyo next week for discussions with officials from the ROK and Japan. "The talks will focus on North Korea...mostly on, obviously, the status of the South Korean and American proposal for four party talks," Dinger said. Dinger added that he was not aware that the US had received any new communications from the DPRK regarding the proposed talks.

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Red Cross Talks

The ROK and the DPRK Red Cross societies failed Saturday to reach a complete agreement on the direct shipment of aid goods to the DPRK, but agreed to resume their talks on Monday. Following a two-hour closed session, Lee Byung-woong, head of the ROK Red Cross delegation, told reporters, "We've fully exchanged our views on the stances of both sides. Befitting to the Red Cross, the atmosphere at the talks was good. We've agreed to continue our discussions at the same place at 10 a.m. on Monday." The inter-Korean Red Cross talks were the first of their kind in four years and nine months, and were designed to pave the way for the ROK to facilitate its humanitarian aid to brethren in the DPRK suffering from dire food shortages. DPRK chief delegate Paek Yong-ho said, "Today we've just met and fully exchanged our views." Paek indirectly hinted that the DPRK asked that the ROK commit itself on the scope of its relief aid in advance, saying, "On all issues, one side must make its views clear to the other." But when asked if the DPRK would allow the ROK Red Cross to monitor the distribution of relief goods, he replied in the negative. "Isn't it being done even now through the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies?" Paek replied. When asked if the DPRK would allow the shipment of relief goods by land through the truce village

of Panmunjom, Paek declined to give a direct answer, saying, "We have yet to conclude basic discussions." Earlier, the ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) reportedly asserted that the agenda be confined to "direct delivery of goods between the two Red Cross groups." But the DPRK Red Cross Society of the demanded that the ROK first disclose what and how much relief goods it will offer the DPRK and when, according to sources. The DPRK made the demand citing the 1984 precedence in which they supplied rice, cloth and cement to the ROK in a flood relief operation. Following procedures, the ROK suggested that a land route through the truce village of Panmunjom be opened and a sea route be added to the existing Inchon-Nampo route. Also suggested by the ROK were the monitoring of the relief distribution by ROK Red Cross staff or cadres of international agencies, identifying the donor in Hangul or the Korean alphabet, printing the KNRC logo on relief goods packages, and distributing aid to areas requested by the donor. The DPRK agreed in principle to the direct delivery of goods but responded negatively to opening a land route through Panmunjom, distribution monitoring by KNRC officials, and putting the KNRC logo on packages, according to the sources. The ROK delegation reportedly expressed a hope that plenary inter-Korean Red Cross talks be resumed on the Korean peninsula to help expedite mutual assistance and the reunion of split family members on a humanitarian basis. But the DPRK team declined to make itself clear on the matter. (Korea Times, "INTER-KOREAN RED CROSS TALKS FAIL TO REACH ACCORD," 05/05/97)

2. KEDO, DPRK Initial Protocol

On Friday, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the DPRK initiated a protocol on reimbursement of the cost for the construction of two light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK. The "protocol between the KEDO and the government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on actions in the event of nonpayment" calls on the DPRK to make regular payments over a 17-year period once construction is completed and the three-year grace period has expired. Further, not only does the protocol stipulate that no interest rates be levied during repayment, but that KEDO will reserve the right to impose sanctions on the DPRK if it fails to reimburse the cost of the reactors, which will be prepaid by KEDO under the 1994 nuclear agreement between US and the DPRK. The protocol was signed here between Mitchel Reiss, legal advisor to the KEDO executive director, and Jang Chang-chun, who is in charge of the light-water reactor project for the DPRK Foreign Ministry. Delegations of the two sides will sign the protocol officially at a later time, a KEDO official said. KEDO and the DPRK are reportedly continuing negotiations to achieve the following: protocols to assure the quality of the reactors, training for DPRK engineers, schedules for the handover of the reactors, implementation of obligations, agreeing to terms on the pricing of the reactors, transferring spent nuclear fuel, and establishing accountability for possible accidents. (Korea Times, "KEDO, NK INITIAL PROTOCOL ON REIMBURSEMENT OF REACTOR COST," 05/05/97)

3. Chinese Naval Ships in Spratlys

Philippines Defense Secretary Renato de Villa said Thursday that PRC ships near two of the Spratly islands in the South China Sea have ignored a demand to leave. On Wednesday, de Villa said the Philippine government handed a diplomatic note to the PRC ambassador, formally protesting the entry of the PRC ships into waters near the islands. Foreign affairs officials said the protest note expressed the Philippines' "concern" over the presence of the PRC ships and reminded the PRC of a bilateral code of conduct that requires one party to inform the other before taking any action. It also sought an explanation for the presence of the PRC ships. De Villa said the boats were believed to be still in the same area. "The ships that had been reported earlier are still there," de Villa said. "If they were the usual fishing boats, we don't protest. But if there are armed ships in the area, then we are concerned about the matter." PRC Ambassador Guang Dengming told Filipino officials he was unaware of the ships' presence and would inform the PRC of the Filipino report. Guang stated that

the PRC has "no intention of invading the Philippines." The PRC and the Philippines have overlapping claims to the Spratlys, a chain of atolls and reefs believed to be rich in oil and natural gas. They are among six countries claiming all or part of the islands. De Villa said a hut-like structure also had been constructed on one of the reefs, similar to those constructed by the PRC on Mischief Reef, also claimed by the Philippines, on February 1995. The discovery of the PRC presence on Mischief Reef caused a major diplomatic row between the two countries. At that time, President Fidel Ramos described the PRC action as an "incursion" into Philippine territory and ordered the military to strengthen garrisons. Within weeks, the Philippine military blasted PRC markers on some of the islands but there were no armed clashes. (Korea Times, "CHINESE NAVAL SHIPS IGNORE DEMAND TO LEAVE SPRATLYS," 05/05/97)

III. Russian Federation

1. RF Security Council Secretary on RF National Security

Nezavisimaia Gazeta ("ON THE CONCEPT OF RUSSIA'S NATIONAL SECURITY," Moscow, 1-2, 4/29/97) published a half page article by RF Security Council Secretary Ivan Rybkin who argued strongly in favor of an urgent development of an official "political conceptual document defining a strategy for countering threats to Russia's security in international, military-political, economic and other fields." The author referred to last year's Presidential Message to the RF parliament on national security and stressed that such a document would serve as a basis for RF military doctrine, its economic, ecological, financial, energy and other policies. Defense-wise he emphasized: "Russia doesn't threaten and doesn't wish to threaten anybody. But an aggressor will get according to the full program. But it's up to us what program it will be, with none of the weapon types excluded. Uncertainty as to the optional responses to a potential aggressor must be the heart of the military doctrine. That's the essence of deterrence." At the same time, concerning foreign countries, he added that "nowadays it is not so that we are divided due to threats to each other, but rather we are united by common threats," namely "international terrorism, narcobusiness, organized crime, political, ideological and nationalistic extremism."

2. RF and Chemical Weapons Convention

Izvestia's Vladimir Nadein and Viktor Litovkin ("U.S. BANNED ITS CHEMICAL WEAPONS WHILE THE DUMA MAKES RUSSIA VULNERABLE TO SANCTIONS," Moscow, 3, 4/26/97) reported that while the US Congress finally ratified the international chemical weapons ban convention and, despite Sen. Jesse Helms' attacks on it, managed to do it before the deadline of 4/29/97 when the convention come into effect, RF State Duma "primarily thanks to 'patriotically minded deputies' - Communists and Liberal Democrats [Vladimir Zhirinovski's party - PR] practically procrastinated the ratification." That means that all important decisions concerning inspection, funding and possible sanctions will be taken without the RF, and there will be not a single RF citizen among 369 staffers and 140 inspectors of the CWBC. If the RF fails in the future to fulfill some of the CWBC requirements, then its US\$60 billion worth chemical exports, comprising 40 percent of all national exports, might be blocked from international markets. Very unfavorable comparisons are drawn between US President Clinton's extensive ratification efforts and RF President Yeltsin's mere submission of the ratification documents to the legislature. RF State Duma on 4/25/97 issued a statement addressed to the parties to the CWBC wherein it promised to ratify the treaty this autumn.

3. RF Far East Hit by Ammo Depots Explosions

Segodnya's Oleg Kryuchek and Anton Trofimov ("FAR EASTERN REGION CELEBRATED THE EASTER WITH UNSCHEDULED FIREWORKS," Moscow, 5, 4/29/97), Nezavisimaia Gazeta ("AMMO DEPOTS EXPLODING AGAIN IN RUSSIA," Moscow, 2, 4/29/97) and Kommersant-DAILY's Denis

Dyomkin and Aleksandr Raskin ("A COLONY UNDER ARTILLERY FIRE," Moscow, 3, 4/29/97) reported that near Beera town in Jewish Autonomous Republic in RF Far East a fire erupted on Sunday at artillery storage depots belonging to the RF Far Eastern Military District. Half of Beera's population of 4000 have been evacuated. As of Monday, shells and cartridges continued to explode. Still unclear is whether the fire was caused by a forest fire, illegal smoking or some subversive activities. According to Nezavisimaia Gazeta, about 35 percent of 42 thousand tons of stored ammo have been destroyed. Kommersant-DAILY's authors added that since 1992 there have been three other similar incidents in RF Far East.

4. RF Media on RF-PRC Summit

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Dmitriy Gornostayev ("JIANG ZEMIN ARRIVED IN MOSCOW," 1, 4/23/97), Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("CPC CC CHIEF FLUTE PLAYER WILL PLAY FORGOTTEN MELODIES OF THE 1940s AND 1950s FOR YELTSIN," Moscow, 4, 4/23/97) and all other leading newspapers reported that PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin arrived in Moscow on an official visit to hold negotiations with RF President Boris Yeltsin and to sign important bilateral documents including a joint declaration on a multipolar world.

Izvestia's Yuriy Savenkov ("MOSCOW AND BEIJING URGING FOR FRIENDLY COEXISTENCE," Moscow, 3, 4/24/97) reported that RF President Boris Yeltsin and PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin signed a RF-PRC Joint Declaration on Multipolar World and Formation of a New International Order. The Declaration stated that there should be a just and democratic multipolar world, that trends towards cooperation are challenged by the Cold War inertia, and that there are some attempts being undertaken to orient the planet towards just one single pole. No guilty party was called by name. The Declaration called for strengthening the role on the UN and its Security Council. Izvestia's author added that the multipolar world idea was initially developed by the PRC and now has been adopted by the RF. Both countries are concerned with foreign military alliances stepping up their activities near their respective borders, namely NATO and the US-Japan alliance. The latter alliance, as Mu Huyming, General Secretary of PRC's International Strategic Studies Institute, said, has been transformed from a "passive and defensive one into an active and offensive." PRC political scientists are concerned with alleged US efforts to contain the PRC, while PRC diplomats in private talks with RF colleagues urge them to be more tough on the NATO expansion issue. In Izvestia's author's opinion, the present day absence of ideological rivalry between the two countries paradoxically made RF-PRC relations development an easier task than it was in the past.

Nezavisimaia Gazeta's Dmitriy Gornostayev and Aleksandr Reutov ("BEIJING AND MOSCOW SPOKE AGAINST UNIPOLAR WORLD IN THEIR JOINT DECLARATION," 1, 4/24/97) reported that RF President Boris Yeltsin and PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin in Moscow on 4/23/97 signed RF-PRC Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and Formation of a New International Order, aimed in particular against the inertia of the Cold War and attempts by some forces to establish a unipolar world order. Also a RF-PRC Committee on Friendship, Peace and Development was created to promote bilateral cooperation. Two rounds of summit talks were held on 4/23/97 on economic, border and nuclear energy issues. According to the Presidential Press Secretary, during the talks President Yeltsin favorably commented on cooperation in the RF-PRC-India triangle. Speaking about the RF-PRC troop reduction agreement to be signed today, President Yeltsin was quoted as saying: "Two defense ministers got stuck. We put them aside and solved the disputed issues ourselves."

Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("RUSSIAN-CHINESE SONGS ABOUT THE ESSENCE OF THE UNIVERSAL ORDER," Moscow, 1, 4, 4/24/97) reported on the signing of RF-PRC Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and Formation of a New International Order by RF President Boris Yeltsin and PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin in Moscow on 4/23/97. After describing the document, the author expressed doubts whether a "strategic partnership" between the two countries would be really be

beneficial to the RF. Why should the RF unilaterally give up its territories and reduce its troops, while "we mindlessly" sell licenses along with Su-27 fighters to the PRC, the author asked, quoting his "colleague" as predicting that at some future time "Chinese will settle everywhere and certainly here" in the RF.

Sovetskaya Rossiya ("CHINA URGES RUSSIA TO BUILD A NEW WORLD ORDER," Moscow, 1, 4/24/97) published a detailed report on PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin's official visit to the RF and the documents signed at his summit with RF President Boris Yeltsin, especially the RF-PRC Joint Declaration on a Multipolar World and Formation of a New International Order. Prior to that Mr. Yeltsin held negotiations with Mr. Jiang and pointed out in particular that the previous agreement to meet at least twice a year is adhered to. At the press conference after the Declaration was signed he stressed its unique nature and said that previously "Russia has never signed such document with any other country." Also following the leaders' talks the creation of a "Russian-Chinese Committee on Friendship, Peace and Development" was declared. The same day Mr. Jiang Zemin made a speech at RF State Duma where in particular he told RF parliamentarians that the development of bilateral intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary ties is "extremely important." Sovetskaya Rossiya also reported that its editorial office was visited by a New China News Agency representative who provided the newspaper with "statistical facts" about PRC economic achievements, which were published together with the summit news.

Kommersant-DAILY's Sergey Makarov ("RUSSIA AND CHINA WARNED THE USA," Moscow, 1, 4/24/97) reported on the RF-PRC summit in Moscow where RF President Boris Yeltsin and PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin signed in particular the Joint Declaration on Multipolar World and commented that, although RF officials kept explaining that the summit and the documents to be signed there should not be seen as anti-NATO or anti-USA actions, still the meeting yesterday is a rather powerful warning to the West and the USA. NATO and the USA are not mentioned in the Declaration, but Kommersant-DAILY's author quoted some paragraphs clearly concerning them. At the same time the author stressed that both countries have enough matters of mutual interest in their bilateral relations. At the summit the two leaders successfully discussed such issues as their border demarcation, mutual troops reduction, economic and nuclear energy cooperation and the idea of a trans-Asian Tomsk-Shanghai gas pipe-line.

Segodnya's Aleksandr Chudodeyev ("DAMANSKIY ISLAND WILL LONG HAUNT OUR DREAMS," Moscow, 1, 4, 4/25/97) reported on the signing of RF-PRC-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Agreement on mutual troop reduction in the areas of PRC-CIS borders. The Agreement was signed in Moscow on 4/24/97 in the course of PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin's visit to the RF. In the author's opinion, the signatories' statements about its "unprecedented" and "unique" nature are yet to be tested by time. The preceding negotiations lasted for 7 years, but only in December 1996, following the visit to Moscow by PRC Premier Li Peng, the chief ideologue of a "multipolar world," did RF leaders suddenly start speaking of a "breakthrough." The author pointed out that in practice the Agreement is to remove RF troops from the 100 kilometer wide border areas without affecting PRC troops. According to the author, RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov long remained the most bitter opponent of the "unilateral withdrawal" but his "hysterical arguments" were dismissed at the top where they obviously perceive the expanding NATO, not the PRC, as the main adversary. With the RF to be permitted under the Agreement to have just 120 thousand troops and a limited amount of weapons and equipment in the areas concerned one is bound "to feel uneasy" and to recall the "tragic fate of the island of Damanskiy" [the site of USSR-PRC armed conflict in 1969 - PR].

Nezavisimaya Gazeta's Tatyana Petrova and Rustam Nazarov ("CHINESE MARKET AND GREAT POLICY," Moscow, 1-2, 4/26/97) commented on some RF domestic criticism concerning the documents signed by RF President Boris Yeltsin and PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin on his official visit

here, in particular the joint RF-PRC Declaration on Multipolar World. The authors pointed out that the criticism of the Declaration originates from the same "pro-American politicians" here who attack RF-Belarus integration, RF economic relations with Iran and Iraq and in general argue that "any deviation of RF Foreign Ministry from the general policy of abiding to the directives from the West and primarily the USA is extremely harmful and dangerous." The authors simultaneously agreed that "it is funny indeed to present the Russian-Chinese agreements as an alternative to the NATO expansion." They argued that the work on strengthening RF-PRC economic cooperation has been going on for several years already and that in this respect President Yeltsin's visit to the PRC last year, where the "strategic decision on economic rapprochement" was taken, was more "productive" than the present visit by Chairman Jiang Zemin. Following the description of the development of the bilateral economic cooperation, the authors dismissed the criticism and maintained that the RF just has to break through to the PRC and the other Asia markets the same way as the West expands its presence in Eastern Europe. "As for the threatening calls against a cooperation with authoritarian regimes, it is hardly feasible to pay attention." Allegedly 70-80 percent of rooms in Iraq's best hotels are occupied by US businessmen, French and German companies are profitably active at Libyan oil fields, and so "they in the West will just respect Russia more if it stops giving up its traditional export markets."

5. RF Media on RF-PRC Arms Trade

Kommersant-DAILY's Ilya Bulavinov ("RUSSIA AND CHINA BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE," Moscow, 2, 4/22/97) reported on his recent travelling experiences in the PRC. The author mainly dwells on the history of USSR-PRC relations, on the present day economic reforms in the PRC. Touching upon the recent RF Defense Minister Igor Rodionov's visit to the PRC, the author reported that there are plans in the RF to complete work soon on two 'Sovremenniy' type destroyers, the building of which for the PRC was initiated in the USSR. Those will be exported together with Moskit anti-naval supersonic cruise missiles. Possibly the RF will sell to the PRC some of its Su-30 fighters, and maybe later even its production technology. The author admitted that possibly "Russia is arming its potential adversary," but "so far it hasn't happened and in order that it doesn't happen in foreseeable future it's more useful to be friendly with China than to be hostile to it."

Kommersant-DAILY's Mikhail Zhager ("THE WEATHER FAVORS THE ARMS TRADE," Moscow, 2, 4/24/97) reported with a reference to German Der Spiegel weekly magazine that a strong storm damaged 17 out of 24 Su-27 fighter airplanes stationed at an Air Force base in Eastern part of the PRC. 3 of the damaged planes are beyond repair. In 1992-1995 the PRC bought 48 Su-27 planes worth US\$3 billion. In 1996 it bought RF license to produce 200 Su-27SK planes in 5 years with no re-exporting right, for US\$2.5 billion. Some "Sukhoi" company experts believe that soon the PRC will buy additionally 50 Su-30 and Su-30MK planes. The PRC is believed to buy RF-made planes in order to maintain "its future air force superiority over Taiwan."

6. RF Politician on PRC Reforms and RF-PRC Relations

Nezavisimaia Gazeta ("'NON-TRADITIONAL MEDICINE' OF CHINESE WIZARDS," Moscow, 1, 4, 4/22/97) published a half page article by Sergey Shakhrai, a leading RF politician and formerly high ranking official, devoted to the history and the results of PRC economic reforms, both positive and negative. As a conclusion the author argued in favor of a "powerful impetus" to RF-PRC relations, one of the reasons for accelerating it being that the situation in the PRC might change soon and the present political leaders will be replaced by the young managers, the so-called "Shanghai boys," who studied in the West and consequently are bound to look there rather than towards the RF.

7. PRC Visited by Belarus President

Kommersant-DAILY's Ignatij Trubkin ("MINSK PREPARING A STRATEGIC ALLIANCE WITH BEIJING," Moscow, 4, 4/30/97) reported on Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko's visit to the PRC. His chief aim was to obtain contracts for Belarusian machine tool, optical and defense industries, but in this respect "the visit was poorly prepared," resulting in his failure to meet with PRC Premier Li Peng, whose schedule is planned half a year ahead. Also the PRC obviously didn't like the fact that Mr. Lukashenko went to Beijing "on his way back from Hanoi." PRC authorities tried to save the situation by arranging a meeting between PRC Chairman Jiang Zemin and the Belarus President, but that one was of an "obviously formal" nature, and Aleksandr Lukashenko's picture didn't even appear in Beijing newspapers.

8. PRC Visited by Kazakstan Parliamentarians

Segodnya's Beket Aubakirov ("KAZAKSTAN PARLIAMENTARIANS WANT TO LEARN FROM CHINA," Moscow, 4, 4/29/97) reported that the first ever Kazakstan parliamentary delegation visited the PRC and met there with PRC parliament Chairman Ziao Shi and PRC Premier Li Peng. Kazakstan parliamentarians studied PRC reform experiences and discussed future cooperation. Annual Kazakstan-PRC trade is about US\$0.5 billion, being hampered by transportation problems.

9. Hwang on DPRK Nuclear Threat

Kommersant-DAILY's Veniamin Pivovarov ("DPRK HAS GOT AN ATOMIC BOMB," Moscow, 5, 4/23/97) reported that according to former DPRK chief ideologue Hwang Jang-yop, who defected earlier this year and recently arrived in Seoul, the DPRK has got an atomic bomb and it is ready to use against the ROK. Experts, however, are skeptical about Hwang's statements and point out that his field of duty in the DPRK was rather isolated from nuclear and military spheres, although they do acknowledge that the DPRK might possess plutonium sufficient for 1 or 2 atomic bombs.

10. Japan-ROK Military Talks

Sovetskaya Rossiya ("THESE DAYS TOKYO," Moscow, 7, 4/29/97) reported that Japan's National Defense Agency head Fumio Kyuma went on a visit to Seoul to meet his ROK colleagues and discuss the Northeast Asia military situation and the relevant DPRK policies, including Rodong-1 ballistic missile deployment.

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We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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