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In today's Report:

### I. United States

- [1. Four-Party Peace Talks Meeting](#)
- [2. ROK Keeping Hwang Information Under Wraps](#)
- [3. Assessment of Agreed Framework](#)
- [4. Editorial on DPRK Food Aid](#)
- [5. ROK Ex-Presidents' Sentences Upheld](#)
- [6. Japanese Nuclear Accidents](#)

### II. Republic of Korea

- [1. Hwang Defection and DPRK Missile Program](#)
- [2. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. DPRK Commemorates Late Great Leader](#)
- [4. Assessment of DPRK Future](#)

### III. People's Republic of China

- [1. PRC Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [2. PRC-Russian Relations](#)
- [3. Japan's Foreign Policy](#)
- [4. Chemical Weapon Convention](#)
- [5. PRC Policy on Nuclear Disarmament](#)
- [6. Across-Straits Relations](#)

### IV. Japan

- [1. Japanese Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [2. Japan-ROK Relations](#)
- [3. Japanese Nuclear Accident](#)
- [4. Report Proposes Japanese Emergency Law](#)
- [5. PRC, DPRK Debate DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal](#)

## [6. PRC-Mongolian Relations](#)

### **I. United States**

#### **1. Four-Party Peace Talks Meeting**

Reuters ("KOREA TALKS ADJOURN BUT ALL SIDES SEE PROGRESS," New York, 4/17/97) and the Associated Press ("NO COMMITMENT YET ON KOREA TALKS," New York, 4/17/97) reported that the meeting among US, DPRK, and ROK delegations in New York Wednesday to discuss the four-party peace talks proposal ended inconclusively, but with all sides reporting progress and optimism that issues could be settled in a second meeting scheduled for Friday. Negotiators refused to go into detail about why Wednesday's meeting left the matter of the DPRK's participation in proposed peace talks unresolved. Chief US negotiator Charles Kartman told reporters, "We made some encouraging progress. There's still more to be done. We'll meet again on Friday to see if we can continue these discussions and achieve what we set out to do." Kartman said "there aren't any real blocks" to DPRK acceptance of the four-party talks proposal. "At this point, what we're trying to do is come to agreement about what the agenda and other details might be." Chief ROK negotiator Song Young-shik, speaking after the meeting adjourned, said "we expect to have an answer Friday" as to whether the DPRK would accept the proposal, adding he was "hopeful" it would be yes. "We had a very good discussion ... There was encouraging progress," Song said. Kim Gye-gwan, the DPRK's lead negotiator, also reported progress and said "maybe we can expect something for this com

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- [4. Editorial on DPRK Food Aid](#)
- [5. ROK Ex-Presidents' Sentences Upheld](#)
- [6. Japanese Nuclear Accidents](#)

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- [1. Hwang Defection and DPRK Missile Program](#)
- [2. US Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [3. DPRK Commemorates Late Great Leader](#)
- [4. Assessment of DPRK Future](#)

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- [2. PRC-Russian Relations](#)
- [3. Japan's Foreign Policy](#)
- [4. Chemical Weapon Convention](#)
- [5. PRC Policy on Nuclear Disarmament](#)
- [6. Across-Straits Relations](#)

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- [1. Japanese Food Aid to DPRK](#)
- [2. Japan-ROK Relations](#)

[3. Japanese Nuclear Accident](#)

[4. Report Proposes Japanese Emergency Law](#)

[5. PRC, DPRK Debate DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal](#)

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## **I. United States**

### **1. Four-Party Peace Talks Meeting**

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The Associated Press ("NO COMMITMENT YET ON KOREA TALKS," New York, 4/17/97) also reported that ROK sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that at the Wednesday meeting the DPRK delegation said the country is short 2.5 million tons of food, and can only make up

1 million tons of the deficit on its own. The sources added that Kim Gye-gwan, the DPRK's lead negotiator, said food aid was not a precondition for accepting the four-party talks, but that it would create a good atmosphere for talks. The ROK's Yonhap News Agency, in a dispatch from New York, said that both the US and ROK delegations made clear they could not promise food aid as a condition for the talks but would consider "extensive assistance" if the North helps reduce tensions in the Korean peninsula. Yonhap also said that the DPRK also wanted the withdrawal of US troops from the ROK to be placed on the agenda of the talks.

Reuters ("NORTH KOREAN AID DEMAND SLOWS PROGRESS IN TALKS," Seoul, 4/17/97) reported that ROK officials in Seoul said Thursday that the DPRK's demand for US and ROK food aid prevented agreement at Wednesday's meeting in New York on the DPRK's participation in the proposed four-party peace talks. ROK foreign ministry spokesman Lee Kyu-hyung said, "North Korea was putting forward a virtual pre-condition. We are firm that we will not guarantee any substantial food aid before we get down to the peace table." An unnamed senior Seoul government official said he expected the DPRK to join the four-party talks eventually, "not because they want peace with the South but because they want food aid." "We want to help relieve food shortages in North Korea. We certainly do not want a famine there, but we want Pyongyang to take peace steps which they do not plan voluntarily," he said.

Reuters ("KOREA TALKS ADJOURN BUT ALL SIDES SEE PROGRESS," New York, 4/17/97) also reported that earlier in the day, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright gave the clearest sign yet that the US thinks the DPRK is on the verge of accepting the four-party peace talks proposal, and that talks could begin by June or July. "We expect that we in fact might have some good news about the North Koreans' acceptance of four-party talks that deal with the Korean peninsula," she said at the rededication of the President Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

## **2. ROK Keeping Hwang Information Under Wraps**

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("FEER/INTELLIGENCE/S.KOREA: U.S. CAN'T INTERVIEW DEFECTOR," Seoul, 4/17/97) reported that the Intelligence column of the latest edition of the Far Eastern Economic Review, published Thursday, said that DPRK-watchers in Washington believe the ROK likely is not giving the US full access to information obtained from DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop. Usually, the US Central Intelligence Agency is allowed to interview DPRK defectors after a certain amount of time, but not in Hwang's case, the analysts say. Meanwhile, information attributed to Hwang is being leaked in Seoul, suggesting that the ROK wants to control the propaganda benefits of the defection as tightly as possible.

## **3. Assessment of Agreed Framework**

Howard Diamond, a senior research analyst at the Arms Control Association, argued in an opinion article in The Washington Post ("THE KOREA DEAL: ADVANTAGE U.S.," 4/17/97, A23) against claims that the 1994 US-DPRK Agreed Framework favors the DPRK. Responding specifically to an earlier opinion article in The Washington Post [Victor Gilinsky and Henry Sokolski, "Korea: How Long Do We Live With Blackmail?," March 27] that claimed the agreement "has been reinterpreted to Pyongyang's advantage," Diamond wrote, "This puzzling judgment is made possible only by mischaracterizing the significant progress to date and avoiding any mention of the benefits." Benefits Diamond cited included the cessation of DPRK production of plutonium, the canning of irradiated fuel which is expected to be completed by September, and the shut down of the DPRK's plutonium reprocessing facility. Diamond wrote, "Before a dime of U.S. money was spent on heavy fuel oil, and before KEDO (the U.S.-led consortium that will supply the light-water reactors) was even formed, the most important national security objectives of the United States and our allies already had been met: North Korea's drive to become a nuclear weapons state was stopped short."

Diamond also noted that the Agreed Framework requires the DPRK to take "all steps deemed necessary by the IAEA" to verify that it is not concealing nuclear materials before the key nuclear components for the light-water reactors are delivered. Diamond wrote, "In plain English, until both the United States and the IAEA are satisfied that North Korea has come clean, the most Pyongyang will receive is heating oil and some large concrete buildings. The burden of proof will be on North Korea to provide evidence that it did not reprocess and does not have any hidden plutonium, rather than on the IAEA to show the reverse." Lastly, Diamond responded to Gilinsky and Sokolski's suggestion that construction of the new reactors take place only with step-by-step reciprocal dismantling of the DPRK's old nuclear program, writing, "A good idea. The Agreed Framework does exactly that. The official supply schedule is contained in a 'confidential minute' that hasn't been made public. A precise time line was given, however, by Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe in a March 1995 speech. If anyone is interested, they can find Slocombe's remarks on Pages 183-195 of Sokolski's new book."

#### **4. Editorial on DPRK Food Aid**

The Los Angeles Times issued an editorial ("AID THE STARVING, NOT THE ELITE," 4/17/97) arguing that, although the additional food aid to the DPRK recently pledged by the US is vital, "No less essential is rigorous international oversight to make sure the food is fairly apportioned and not destined only for the elite of the last Stalinist state." The editorial noted increasing reports from the DPRK of "mass deaths from starvation and exposure, as well as many family suicides," and observed, "Whether these appalling conditions will help to moderate North Korea's confrontational foreign policy is a key question." The editorial suggested that, while indications that the DPRK may join Korean peace talks are encouraging, the DPRK "remains in desperate need of humanitarian aid." The editorial concluded, "The imperative for donor states is to make sure the help they give reaches those who most need it."

#### **5. ROK Ex-Presidents' Sentences Upheld**

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA LEADERS SENTENCES UPHELD," Seoul, 4/17/97) reported that the ROK Supreme Court on Thursday upheld lengthy sentences of former presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo for their convictions on charges of staging a coup and a massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators 17 years ago. In a unanimous ruling by the 13 justices, the highest ROK court ordered Chun, president from 1980 to 1987, to spend the rest of his life in prison, and sentenced Roh, his successor, to 17 years. The court also ordered Chun, 66, and Roh, 64, to pay US\$250 million and US\$300 million in fines, respectively -- the same amounts they were found to have received in bribes from businessmen while in office. The decision, while ending the courtroom battles, opened a new national debate over whether the two ex-presidents deserve special pardons. Even before Thursday's ruling, politicians discussed a possibility that President Kim Young-sam may free them under a special amnesty before he steps down in February 1998. Minkahyup, a group representing family members of the more than 200 victims of the 1980 massacre, objected to the prospect. In a statement Thursday, the group said, "If they do not stop the discussion, people will respond with a wave of protests."

#### **6. Japanese Nuclear Accidents**

The Associated Press ("11 JAPAN NUKE LEAKS NOT REPORTED," Tokyo, 4/17/97) reported that Japan's Power Reactor and Nuclear Fuel Development Corp. (also known as Donen), which oversees Japan's nuclear fuel plants, failed to report 11 minor radioactive leaks at a thermonuclear plant in the town of Tsuruga, 202 miles west of Tokyo. Akio Shimasaki, a safety official for Fukui state, said investigators discovered the leaks while inspecting plant records following a radioactive tritium leak there Monday. Monday's leak followed a March 11 fire and explosion at the fuel reprocessing plant

in Tokai, northeast of Tokyo, that led to the exposure of 30 workers to low levels of radiation. Donen already has been accused of falsifying its report to the government about the Tokai accident. Donen has stressed that none of the accidents resulted in dangerous levels of radioactive contamination, but it has admitted to consistently covering up mishaps at Japan's reactors.

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. Hwang Defection and DPRK Missile Program**

DPRK defector Hwang Jang-yop reportedly sold blueprints for the DPRK's Nodong II and Nodong III missile projects to PRC intelligence four months before his defection on February 12 to the ROK, a Philippine newspaper said Tuesday, quoting an intelligence source. "The Nodong missile projects are North Korea's biggest secret," the intelligence source was quoted as saying. The source added that the missiles, prototypes of which were being developed by DPRK scientists "are built on platforms of the 1960s-circa, Russian designed Scud missile ... and may eventually evolve into nuclear warhead launching platforms with the range of present intercontinental ballistic missiles." Hwang was reportedly paid "a hefty amount," which was channeled to a foreign exchange bank account. (Korea Times, "HWANG SOLD MISSILE SECRETS TO CHINA:REPORT," 04/17/97)

### **2. US Food Aid to DPRK**

Responding to an emergency U.N. appeal, the US announced Tuesday it will ship US\$15 million worth of corn to the DPRK to assist children under 6 who are affected by severe food shortages. US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the decision was not linked to a DPRK announcement, expected Wednesday, on whether to accept a US-ROK proposal to begin peace talks. Citing its proven ability to ensure that food donations reach their intended recipients, the US plans to channel the food aid through the U.N. World Food Program, which on April 3 asked for 100,000 tons of food relief on top of an earlier request for 100,000 tons. In response to the earlier request, the US made a US \$10 million contribution that is due to arrive in the DPRK in early May. The package announced Tuesday will total 50,000 metric tons. Although the response for peace talks may be negative, the US will go forward with the plan because they "have to meet humanitarian imperative before they meet political ones." (Korea Times, "US TO SHIP \$15 MIL. WORTH OF FOOD TO NK," 04/17/97)

### **3. DPRK Commemorates Late Great Leader**

DPRK leader Kim Jong-il commemorated his late father Kim Il-sung's birthday by reviewing a front line army unit, the DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Wednesday. Kim made the visit to Height 1211 on the eastern front of the Demilitarized Zone on Tuesday accompanied by three vice marshals and three generals, KCNA said. The junior Kim was absent from the festivities which came a week after the country admitted for the first time that the near-famine sweeping the country had resulted in the deaths of 134 children. He did however present gold rings to "maternal heroes and unassuming people for meritorious services." Though Kim Jong-il stepped into his father's shoes to lead the country in 1994, he has yet to formally assume the two major titles held by his father, those of state president and party general secretary. (Korea Times, "NK LEADER KIM VISITS EASTERN FRONTLINE TROOPS," 04/17/97)

The impoverished DPRK is building a multi-million dollar memorial to its late leader, Kim Il-sung, who DPRK citizens had long idolized as their "Great Leader." According to the ROK Agency for National Security Planning, the US\$190 million project, launched in 1994, is scheduled for completion in July, the third anniversary of Kim's death. Kim, who ruled the DPRK with an iron fist since its founding, died of heart failure July 8, 1994, at age 82. (Korea Times, "P'YANG BUILDING

#### **4. Assessment of DPRK Future**

A peace treaty with the ROK will strip the DPRK's struggling regime of its legitimacy while the so-called "soft-landing" policy, pursued by Seoul and Washington, is an impossible dream, according to a US scholar. Nick Eberstadt, affiliated with both the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research and Harvard University, called for an overhaul of the basic approaches by policymakers of the ROK, the US and their allies when he joined a round-table session on Tuesday at the invitation of the Korea America Friendship Society. "If I were to be asked by the DPRK leadership, I would tell them a peace treaty with South Korea would be extremely detrimental to DPRK's interests and that it would be very positive for the ROK's interests. A peace treaty with South Korea will undermine one of the fundamental pillars of legitimacy in the DPRK regime," he said. For decades, the DPRK has demanded sacrifices from its people to achieve the glorious goal of an ultimate reunion of the Korean people under an independent socialist government, he noted. Consequently, Eberstadt said, the DPRK's main objective in the four party talks is "money-for-meetings," which he said will result in "a little bit of aid and a little bit of talking," but no breakthroughs. Eberstadt noted that the two-state arrangement on the Korean peninsula is no longer feasible, because the DPRK is not a "self-sustaining political and economic entity for the future." With the DPRK's economy declining, its military situation is becoming more dangerous, he said, pointing out that a "separation of severe economic decline from killing power is one of the key aspects of DPRK's strategic objectives." Eberstadt added that the "soft-landing is not the likely possibility," and advocated a strong policy of deterrence as being a precondition for Korean unification because it minimizes the possibility of war. (Korea Times, "DROP 'SOFT LANDING' POLICY, PREPARE FOR UNIFICATION: EBERSTADT," 04/17/97) [Ed. note: For another rendition of Eberstadt's views, see "Comment on Prospects for Korean Unification" in the US section of the April 10 Daily Report.]

### **III. People's Republic of China**

#### **1. PRC Food Aid to DPRK**

PRC Ambassador to the DPRK Wan Yongxiang notified DPRK Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Kim Yong-nam on April 12 that, in order to consolidate and develop the traditional bilateral friendship, and to maintain the status quo in the DPRK, the PRC Government has decided to provide the DPRK with 70,000 tons of grain aid in the near future to help the DPRK through their current difficulties. Wan told Kim that the PRC Government and people are deeply sympathetic with the DPRK, which is facing serious difficulties because of a grain shortage. Wan said that the PRC has always given as much as it could and that it demonstrates that the PRC's Party and government treasure the Sino-DPRK traditional friendship. On behalf of the DPRK government, Kim expressed his pleasure and appreciation. People's Daily ("CHINA PROVIDES GRAIN AID TO THE DPRK," Beijing, A1, 4/13/97)

#### **2. PRC-Russian Relations**

PRC President Jiang Zemin will pay a state visit to the Russian capital from April 22 to 26 at the invitation of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said in Beijing on April 10. Shen told a news briefing that the leaders of the two countries will have an in-depth exchange of views on ways to deepen the friendly and good neighborly relations between the PRC and Russia, and major international issues of mutual interest. In addition to issuing a joint statement with Yeltsin, Jiang will also sign an agreement on the mutual reduction of military forces in border areas with Russia, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan and Tajikistan. China Daily ("JIANG'S MOSCOW TOUR TO BOOST RUSSIAN FRIENDSHIP," A1, 4/11/97)

When meeting his Russian counterpart Igor Nikolayevich Rodionov in Beijing on April 14, PRC Defense Minister Chi Haotian said that Rodionov's visit to the PRC was conducive to maintaining and developing friendship between the armed forces of the two countries and to the overall growth of bilateral ties as well. Chi said that the PRC was ready act in accordance with the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence to enable the two countries to become good neighbors, good partners and good friends forever and to push forward their strategic cooperative partnership. He expressed the hope that the armed forces of the PRC and Russia would maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges and step up military cooperation in various fields to further the friendship between them. People's Daily ("CHINESE AND RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTERS HOLD TALKS," Beijing, A4, 4/15/97)

### **3. Japan's Foreign Policy**

According to Jie Fang Daily ("LDP STRESSES ON JAPANESE-US ALLIANCE," Tokyo, A4, 4/13/97), Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) emphasized the persistence and strengthening of the Japan-US security system in its foreign policy guideline laid out on April 11. The guideline said that in order to establish a multilateral security safeguard regime in the Asia-Pacific region, it was necessary to push multilateral dialogues. It suggested that Japan, the US and the PRC form a security safeguard structure for Northeast Asia, the core of which being the three countries. As to Japan's policy toward the PRC, the guideline said that the policy of cooperation with the PRC should be reassessed.

### **4. Chemical Weapon Convention**

PRC delegation head Huang Yu, attending a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Organization in Hague, on April 9 called on countries concerned to take concrete measures to create conditions for the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Huang said that the PRC was concerned very much over the chemical weapons left behind by Japanese army in China during World War II. He strongly demanded that Japan assess its aggressive history and shoulder all responsibility of destroying the abandoned chemical weapons. According to the report, The PRC ratified the Convention last December 30. People's Daily ("CHINA CALLS ON TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT CWC," Hague, A6, 4/11/97)

### **5. PRC Policy on Nuclear Disarmament**

PRC Ambassador for Disarmament Affairs Sha Zukang, in a speech to the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), called for an end to the nuclear deterrence policy, People's Liberation Army Daily ("DETERRENCE SHOULD BE ABOLISHED," United Nations, A5, 4/10/97) reported. Sha said some countries still adhere to the policy of nuclear deterrence based on a first-strike capability and are trying to find excuses to justify their development and deployment of missile defense systems that undermine strategic security and stability. On the nuclear disarmament issue, he said that the PRC stands for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons and regards the NPT and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as intermediate steps for that purpose.

### **6. Across-Straits Relations**

Lee Ching-ping, Deputy Secretary-General of the Taiwan-based Strait Exchange Foundation (SEF), will visit the mainland from April 28 to May 7, according to Relations Across the Taiwan Straits (ARATS). ARATS sources said on April 15 that Lee's forthcoming visit to the mainland does not mean that talks between the Beijing-based ARATS and the Taipei-based SEF will be resumed following a



two-year suspension. It is still not clear whether Lee Ching-ping will meet his ARATS counterparts. The ARATS sources said that Lee Ching-ping's mainland visit will not involve talks between the two organizations. China Daily ("SEF OFFICIAL TO VISIT MAINLAND," A2, 4/16/97)

## **IV. Japan**

### **1. Japanese Food Aid to DPRK**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("JAPANESE AND ROK FOREIGN MINISTERS AGREE TO PROMOTE SECURITY TALKS," 1, 4/15/97) reported that visiting ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong Ha told his Japanese counterpart Yukihiko Ikeda that it is important to realize the Four-Party Peace Talks and to involve the DPRK in them. He also stressed that the food aid issue can be discussed during the talks. Ikeda, in turn, said that each country has its own rationale for decisions made regarding the issue, suggesting that Japan maintains a careful stance on food aid to the DPRK because of the DPRK's suspected abduction of Japanese civilians.

The Nikkei Shimbun ("US WILL URGE JAPANESE FOOD AID TO DPRK," Washington, Evening Edition, 1, 4/16/97) reported that during a press conference April 15, US State Department Spokesman Nicholas Burns said that the US decision to send additional food aid to the DPRK is based on consultations with Japan and the ROK. He also said that only Japan can decide whether it will contribute food aid, and that he understands the distrust among Japanese regarding suspected DPRK abductions.

The Nikkei Shimbun ("JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS JAPAN WILL MAKE OWN DECISION ON FOOD AID TO DPRK," 2, 4/17/97) reported that in response to a question from a Social Democratic Party Diet member Shigeru Ito concerning food aid to the DPRK, Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said at a Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee meeting April 16 that it is natural that each country make its own decision on food aid. The report pointed out that his statement emphasizes that Japan will keep its careful stance on food aid while watching how the four-party talks proposal turn out. With regard to the suspected abduction by the DPRK of a Japanese girl in Niigata, Ikeda said that he expects the DPRK to exhibit sincerity if it denies the suspicion, suggesting that the suspected abduction case is one reason for Japan's careful stance on food aid, according to the report.

### **2. Japan-ROK Relations**

The Daily Yomiuri ("WORK TOGETHER ON PEACE TALKS," 1, 4/16/97) reported that according to a Japanese government official, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto told visiting ROK Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-ha April 15 that he hopes the four-party peace talks begin on the right track, and that it is important that the DPRK and the ROK engage in a genuine dialogue. The report also said that they agreed that Japan, the ROK, and the US will work closely to try to achieve progress in the four-party peace talks.

### **3. Japanese Nuclear Accident**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("POWER REACTOR AND NUCLEAR FUEL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (DONEN) ORDERED TO SHUT DOWN REACTOR," 1, 4/16/97) reported that the delay in Donen's reporting on the radioactive leak in the Fugen reactor in Tsuruga prompted the Japanese Science and Technology Agency on April 15 to order the company to shut down the reactor. The report cited Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto as saying, "I'm disgusted. I saw the date of the (Fugen) accident (Monday) and the date Donen reported it (Tuesday). It's completely hopeless!"

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGENCY CONSIDERS TOTAL HALT ON DONEN ACTIVITIES," 1, 4/17/97) also reported that Japanese Science and Technology Agency head Riichiro Chikaoka revealed April 16 that the agency has begun considering a total halt on Donen reactors.

#### **4. Report Proposes Japanese Emergency Law**

The Nikkei Shimbun ("LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (LDP) SECURITY STUDY GROUP REPORT PROPOSES JAPANESE EMERGENCY LAW," 1, 4/16/97) reported that a LDP security study group decided April 16 to submit a report early next week to Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto proposing that the government urgently arrange an emergency law in time for the review of the Guideline for Japan-US Defense Cooperation slated for this fall. The report states that to embody the goals of last April's Japan-US Security Joint Statement, Japan should enact an emergency law that would make possible Japan-US joint defense action and Japan's assistance to US Forces in times of emergency around Japan. With regard to collective defense, which the Japanese constitution forbids, the report suggested that this subject be discussed separately and that the problem of constitutional interpretation also be discussed in the future. With regard to the US-led Ballistic Missile Defense Initiative, the report emphasized that the initiative should be discussed more actively.

#### **5. PRC, DPRK Debate DPRK-Taiwan Nuclear Waste Deal**

The Yomiuri Shimbun ("PRC-DPRK RELATIONS WORSEEN," Beijing, 2, 4/13/97) reported that the PRC is strongly opposing the DPRK's possible concentrated dumping of Taiwan's nuclear waste on the PRC-DPRK national border in accordance with the Taiwan-DPRK nuclear waste agreement. According to a Beijing source cited in the report, the PRC government told the DPRK through a diplomatic channel that the Taiwan-DPRK deal is a strategy aimed at provoking the PRC, and demanded that the DPRK halt the plan because potential radiation leaks from the dumped nuclear waste may harm the PRC. The DPRK, in turn, rejected the PRC's demand, saying that there are no technical problems with the dump. The report pointed out that the DPRK may use the Taiwan-DPRK nuclear waste deal to urge the PRC to provide food aid to the DPRK, which the PRC agreed to provide based on the PRC-DPRK economic-technological cooperation agreement last year.

#### **6. PRC-Mongolian Relations**

According to a new China Daily report carried in the Nikkei Shimbun ("CHINA- MONGOL RELATIONS STRENGTHEN," Beijing, 8, 4/15/97), PRC People's Representative Committee executive member Qiao Shi and the Mongolian President and Prime Minister met in Ulan Bator April 14 and agreed to strengthen PRC-Mongol ties. Qiao said during the meeting that Mongolia is an important northern neighbor of the PRC, and that PRC-Mongolian relations will remain friendly regardless of changes in international affairs.

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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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