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I. United States

1. US-DPRK Talks

Agence France-Press ("U.S., KOREA TO OPEN MORE TALKS ON UNDERGROUND SITE'S INSPECTION," Washington, 02/24/99) reported that US and DPRK officials will open a fifth round of talks Saturday in New York on an underground site at Kumchangri. US special envoy Charles Kartman will lead the US side, and vice foreign minister Kim Kye-gwan will head the DPRK delegation. The negotiations are expected to adjourn Saturday and likely continue, after a one-day break, during the week. One unnamed US official stated, "We're not prepared to pay North Korea to adhere to obligations it's already undertaken." Another unnamed senior US official said recently, "We have suspicions about a number of places," but intelligence agencies have focused on the site at Kumchangri. Gordon Flake, a Korea scholar and executive director of the nonprofit Mansfield Center for Pacific Affairs, said that there was some optimism on the US side "that they're going to get something in this round." Flake stated, "They've seen movement in the North Korean position and convinced them that this is a very, very serious issue." He predicted a deal guaranteeing US access to the site in exchange for an understanding that US food aid would continue. Robert Manning, director of Asian studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that he also believed a deal could be imminent involving multiple US nuclear inspections followed by 300,000 to 400,000 tons of food aid.

2. US Policy toward DPRK

The Associated Press ("U.S. ALBRIGHT CALLS N. KOREA "HUGE THREAT," BACKS FOOD AID," Washington, 02/25/99) reported that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, testifying at a House International Relations Committee meeting on Thursday, called the DPRK a "huge threat" to the US. Albright said that US President Bill Clinton plans to discuss the DPRK issue Friday in San Francisco with former Defense Secretary William Perry. She added, however, that based on reports from some 50 World Food Program (WFP) monitors, there have been no significant diversions of food aid. She said that US aid policies would continue to be based on WFP assessments. Republican Representative Henry Hyde said that the US food assistance program for the DPRK enables that country to divert funds for its military buildup and thus should be cut off. Committee Chairman Benjamin Gilman stated, "Under this administration, North Korea has become the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid in Asia." He added, "For 40 years, North Korea posed a threat to 37,000 American troops and the South Korean capital of Seoul. Now they are threatening our mainland. In short, we must now worry about our safety in Seattle, not just Seoul."

The Wall Street Journal (Thomas E. Ricks and Michael Schuman, "U.S. REVIEW OF NORTH KOREA POLICY SETS THE STAGE FOR A HARSHER STANCE," 02/25/99, 12) reported that US officials said that former Defense Secretary William Perry is expected to tell US President Bill Clinton on Friday that the current US policy of cautious engagement of the DPRK has been a failure and should be abandoned. The officials said that Perry is expected to recommend a two-phase approach. The US would offer the DPRK a final chance to engage more vigorously, holding out the possibility of dropping the US trade embargo and expanding economic, political and cultural ties. If that does not work, the US would curtail contacts and attempt simply to contain the DPRK militarily until the regime collapsed. Perry declined to comment except to say, "We can't really afford to 'ignore' Pyongyang if they persist in building nukes and ICBMs."

3. ROK Policy toward DPRK

Reuters ("S.KOREA'S KIM SEEKS 'PACKAGE DEAL' WITH N.KOREA," Seoul, 02/24/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Wednesday proposed resolving all outstanding political, security and economic issues with the DPRK simultaneously in what he called a "package deal." The DPRK would be asked to curb its development and deployment of missiles and end a suspected nuclear weapons program under the proposal. In exchange, the DPRK would get food and economic aid, and the US would end trade sanctions, and, along with Japan, move to normalize ties with the DPRK, Kim told a news conference marking his first year in office. Diplomats said that a recent DPRK proposal to the ROK for government-level talks may be a sign it is preparing to negotiate such a deal. Economic assistance to the DPRK would be a key element of the package. President Kim said the ROK would continue to cooperate with the US on policies toward the DPRK and that there would be no difference between the allies on DPRK policies.

4. Alleged PRC Aid to DPRK Missile Program

The Associated Press ("CHINA DENIES ASSISTING N. KOREA IN SPACE LAUNCHES," Beijing, 02/25/99) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue on Thursday denied a report that the PRC was sharing space technology with the DPRK that could help the DPRK develop long-range missiles. Zhang stated, "On the issue of non-proliferation, China has all along taken a serious attitude and exercised strict export control." She added, "Some people in the United States are fabricating lies in the aim of attacking China and disrupting the development of China- US relations. Their attempts are doomed to failure."

US State Department Deputy Spokesman James Foley ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 23," USIA Transcript, 02/23/99) said that the US cannot confirm a newspaper report that the PRC has aided the DPRK's missile program. Foley stated, "We are certainly opposed to further North Korean rocket launches, and the United States has made that very clear since August at the time of the last missile launch. Our opposition to such launches includes launches intended to orbit satellites because space launch vehicles and their technology are interchangeable with ballistic missiles as demonstrated by the August 31 Taepodong I test. Such launches are destabilizing, in our view."

Dow Jones Newswires ("WHITE HOUSE SAYS CHINA NOT AIDING N. KOREAN MISSILE PROGRAM," Washington, 02/23/99) reported that White House Spokesman Joe Lockhart said that the US has no evidence that the PRC is helping the DPRK develop long-range missiles. He added, "The U.S. and China share concerns about North Korea's missile development." He also said, "China supports our efforts to restrain North Korea from conducting further missile and satellite launches. China also recognizes, as we do, that further launches will destabilize the region. China has given us assurances that they are not providing assistance to the North Korean missile program."

The Washington Times (Bill Gertz, "U.S. EYES N. KOREAN MISSILES FOR SIGNS OF AID," 02/24/99, 3) reported that US Defense Department spokesman Colonel Richard Bridges on Tuesday declined to comment on alleged intelligence reports that the PRC was aiding the DPRK's missile program. Bridges stated, "We don't talk about intelligence. We closely watch the North Korean space and missile program. We are watching the program for signs of foreign assistance and remain attuned to it." Henry Sokolski, a former Defense Department weapons-proliferation specialist, said that the allegations should raise questions in Congress about whether the US should continue to utilize PRC space launch services. Sokolski stated, "I've always suspected there was cooperation, and this latest story makes me think there is no question."

5. US Troops in ROK

Pacific Stars And Stripes (Jim Lea, "NK DEMANDING THAT U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL BE DISBANDED IN ROK," Seoul, 02/25/99, 4) reported that Li Hyong-chol, DPRK ambassador to the UN, demanded in a letter that the UN Security Council disband the UN Command in the ROK. Li asked the Security Council to "correct its wrongdoing" in establishing the command. He said that the US is maintaining the command to launch "a pre-emptive strike on our country in a so-called emergency case."

6. ROK Political Prisoners

The Associated Press ("S. KOREA FREES 41-YEAR PRISONER," Taejon, 02/25/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung marked the first anniversary of his inauguration Thursday by releasing 17 men convicted of spying for the DPRK. Included in the amnesty was Woo Yong-gak, believed to be the world's longest-serving political prisoner after 41 years in solitary confinement. Woo said that he hoped the government would allow him to return to the DPRK. Human rights groups, however, argued that more than 200 political prisoners still remain in jail. At a news conference Wednesday, Kim expressed willingness to trade the DPRK spies for about 300 ROK soldiers captured during the Korean War and believed still held in the DPRK.

7. Comfort Women Issue

Agence France-Press (David Williams, "JAPANESE PROFESSOR CONTENDS JAPAN NEVER USED WARTIME SEX SLAVES, Tokyo, 02/25/99) reported that Nobukatsu Fujioka, a professor at Tokyo University, called Thursday for educators to delete references to Japan's use of wartime sex slaves from school history books. Fujioka stated, "Comfort women were not sexual slaves. They were simply prostitutes taken to war zones by private brokers." He added, "In Korea, almost all the brokers were Korean. The prostitutes, on the other hand, were about 40 percent Japanese and 20 Korean." Fujioka stated, "Personally, I think the story is fabricated." He also said, "Another very important reason for objecting to the inclusion of comfort women in history education is that it is harmful for personal development of the children, who are at puberty. There is nothing to be gained from delving into the darker aspect of human nature, that of sexual desire in an abnormal situation, wartime, when children first learn about the relationship of love and sexual intimacy." Fujioka said that the Japanese government's admission that the army enslaved women was only made because Japan "bent to the pressure of the Korean government and other groups."

8. PRC-Taiwan Relations

The Associated Press ("TAIWAN GRP TO BOOST CHINA CONTACTS OUTSIDE OFFICIAL CHANNELS," Taipei, 02/24/99) reported that a pro-PRC politician, Fung Hu-hsiang, said Wednesday that he is opening channels for the Taiwanese to bypass their government and deal directly with the PRC on questions about tourism and investment on the mainland. Fung, a legislator from the small New Party, said that he established a service center to speed things up, because the semi-official organizations in the PRC and Taiwan that are supposed to handle such contacts are deadlocked over political questions. Fung said at a news conference, "The government's political burden is too great to do these things. We, however, are free from that burden." Evelin Ko, director of Fung's constituent services office in Taipei, said that the PRC has not only lent vocal support to Fung's center, but also will provide free office space in Beijing and Shanghai. The center joins a growing number of civic organizations founded by pro-reunification politicians.

9. PRC-Taiwan Diplomatic Rivalry

The Associated Press ("CHINA TO VETO MACEDONIA MISSION," United Nations, 02/24/99) and the New York Times (Paul Lewis, "CONTINUATION OF U.N. FORCE IN MACEDONIA FACES A CHINESE VETO," United Nations, 02/25/99) reported that PRC Ambassador to the UN Qin Huasun said Wednesday that he will veto a Security Council resolution to extend a UN peacekeeping force in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia for another six months. Qin denied that the action was retaliation for Macedonia's recognition of Taiwan, saying that the PRC had consistently opposed the extension because it did not consider the situation in Macedonia a threat to international peace.

10. US Satellite Sales to PRC

The Washington Post (John Mintz, "SALE OF SATELLITES TO CHINA REJECTED, 02/24/99, 15) reported that senior US government officials said Tuesday that the administration rejected a US$600 million sale of US communications satellites to the PRC because several government agencies concluded that the company proposing the transaction, Hughes Electronics Corp., has for years violated US regulations. The company said in a statement, "Hughes believes it has followed U.S. government regulations in its business dealings in China." However, an unnamed senior administration official said that the Defense Department, State Department, and Arms Control and Disarmament Agency "simply weren't confident in the bona fides of Hughes in following U.S. rules and regs. They were very uncomfortable with Hughes's record in China, with the way Hughes exploited loopholes in the regulations."

US State Department Deputy Spokesman James Foley ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 23," USIA Transcript, 02/23/99) said that the US government decided to deny the Hughes Company a license regarding the Asia-Pacific Mobile Telecommunications project because the proposed exports are inconsistent with the foreign policy and national security interests of the US. Foley stated, "I would like to add that this decision does not mean in any way that we've changed our policy concerning the launches in principle of US satellites in China. Allowing the launch of commercial satellites from China is, we believe, in the interests of both our countries; provided, of course, that the appropriate safeguards are in place." He added, "Our policy is to support the civilian launching of US satellites on Chinese rockets, but not for military purposes or not for military concerns in that respect."

The Associated Press ("CHINA 'RESENTS' U.S. CANCELLATION OF SATELLITE DEAL," Beijing, 02/25/99) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue on Thursday called a decision by the US government to cancel a US$450 million commercial satellite sale "entirely unjustifiable." Zhang said that the US decision "will only have negative impact on the normal economic and trade relations between the two countries and cooperation between the two sides." She added, "We ask the US to correct its wrong decision."

11. Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

Reuters ("U.S. REASSURES RUSSIA OVER MISSILE DEFENSES," Moscow, 02/24/99) reported that US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott held talks on Tuesday with Russian officials on US plans to build a missile defense system. An unnamed senior US official told a briefing, "There is obvious concern on the Russian side that American programs or intentions are intended in some fashion to threaten Russia and to undermine Russia's deterrent. This is not the case." One unnamed US official said that Russia does not wish to see the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty amended. He added that no US decision had been taken and the US side gave "the strongest possible reaffirmation of the importance of the ABM treaty." Interfax news agency quoted Russian Premier Yevgeny Primakov's spokeswoman, Tatyana Aristarkhova, as saying that Primakov had

underlined the importance of the treaty during the talks. Aristarkhova stated, "Primakov noted in part the principal nature of the unshakeability of the ABM agreement, which remains a cornerstone of strategic stability."

12. Y2K Bug

The Associate Press ("CIA PREDICTS SERIOUS Y2K PROBLEMS OUTSIDE U.S," Washington, 02/24/99) reported that Air Force General John Gordon, deputy director of the CIA, warned Wednesday that the Year 2000 computer problem could cause serious disruptions in several countries. Nevertheless, Gordon stressed that agency officials "currently do not see a danger of unauthorized or inadvertent launch of ballistic missiles from any country due to Y2K problems." He added, however, that there could be serious local problems with missiles if temperature or humidity monitors malfunction, and that problems in early-warning systems could lead to incorrect information. Meanwhile, US Deputy Defense Secretary John Hamre said that 93 percent of the military's mission-critical computer systems will be fixed by the end of March. He added, "I would also like to take this opportunity to state unequivocally that our nuclear command and control system has been thoroughly tested and has performed superbly."

II. Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Famine

JoongAng Ilbo ("DPRK REQUESTS FOOD AID FROM NORTHERN EUROPE," Seoul, 02/25/99) reported that the DPRK sent a delegation to northern Europe earlier this month to ask for massive food support. According to a source from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, this delegation left the DPRK on February 6 and journeyed to Sweden, Norway and other Scandinavian countries, where delegates requested large allotments of food aid for their country. The delegation, which includes officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Agriculture, negotiated to buy facilities for storing and preserving grain. The delegation is likely to visit many other countries in Europe, including Switzerland.

2. ROK Political Prisoners

Chosun Ilbo ("DPRK SPIES RELEASED ON AMNESTY," Seoul, 02/25/99) reported that Woo Yong-gak, aged 72, was released Thursday after spending 41 years in prison for espionage on behalf of the DPRK. Woo went to the Kwanak Gathering House where he met Lee Jong, 88, who had been released in 1989, also after imprisonment for spying for the DPRK. Woo expressed his thanks to those in the house and human rights groups who helped him. Woo will move after a few days rest in Kwanak to another "Gathering House" in Kalhyon-dong with others out of the group of 17 DPRK spies released on amnesty. Earlier this morning Choi Sun-mook, 73 (30 years in prison), Ahn Young-ki, 71 (37 years), Jang Byong-lak, 66 (37 years), Kim Ik-jin, 70 (30 years), Kim Eun-hwan, 70 (30 years), and Yang Jong- ho, 69 (30 years) all walked free, along with ten lesser jail term servers. Woo, looking relatively healthy, said, "I will live with the mind of serving our neighbors and society. There has been no change in my mind in doing my responsibility to advance unification. I have no worries about my family in the DPRK."

Korea Herald ("AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CITES PROGRESS IN ROK HUMAN RIGHTS," Seoul, 02/24/99) reported that Amnesty International (AI) said that the ROK government's decision to release 17 long-term political prisoners shows some progress has been made in the nation's human

rights standards during President's Kim Dae-jung's first year in office. However, the international human rights organization noted that the progress would have a lasting impact only when it is accompanied by further reforms and real commitment to the issue on all governmental levels. "A new window for opportunity for substantial human rights progress in the ROK has slowly opened during the last year. But if key legal and institutional reforms are not introduced soon, this important change for change could be lost," AI said in a faxed statement to the Korea Herald. "At least 270 political prisoners are still held after this amnesty, many of whom were denied release simply for refusing to sign a 'law-abiding pledge' which is not imposed on ordinary criminals. And until the ROK's National Security Law is changed, more political prisoners will be wrongly sent to jail." Over the past year, more than 150 political prisoners have been released in two amnesties.

3. ROK-DPRK Repatriation

Korea Herald ("DEBATE ON SWAP OF PRISONERS WITH DPRK HEATS UP IN ASSEMBLY," Seoul, 02/26/99) reported that the rival political parties fought each other over ROK President Kim Dae-jung's proposal for a spies-for- prisoners swap with the DPRK when the National Assembly opened the Unification and Foreign Affairs Committee's session on Wednesday. Lawmakers of the ruling coalition parties focused on how to pull off the unprecedented swap with the DPRK, but lawmakers of the opposition Grand National Party (GNP) said the proposal is unrealistic, expressing doubts that DPRK would agree to exchange ROK prisoners of war with convicted spies released from prison in a presidential amnesty. The wrangling between the rival parties in the parliamentary committee came a day after President Kim Dae-jung suggested the swap during a news conference held on the eve of his first anniversary in office. Kim said that the ROK is willing to send 20 DPRK citizens convicted of spying in the ROK on condition that the DPRK returns ROK POWs held in the DPRK back to their families. The DPRK has yet to officially respond to Kim's offer. It only demanded the spies' repatriation on Tuesday, saying it would help improve inter-Korean relations.

Korea Herald ("DPRK CALLS FOR REPATRIATION OF PRISONERS," Seoul, 02/24/99) reported that the DPRK on Tuesday demanded that the ROK repatriate a group of Communist political prisoners to be released in a special presidential amnesty. The DPRK also suggested that it may take corresponding action when it said their return to the DPRK would help improve inter-Korean relations. The DPRK made the demand in a letter sent by Jang Jae-on, who heads the DPRK's Red Cross society, which was delivered to his southern counterpart Chung Won-shik. In the letter, the DPRK also welcomed the ROK government's action to release 17 Communists from prison to mark the March 1 Independence Movement against Japanese colonial rule. "It is coming belatedly, but we think it is a fortunate development," the DPRK said in the letter. "If the ROK releases all these kinds of prisoners and sends them back to their families, it will serve as an important occasion in opening various (inter-Korean) contacts and in thawing the frozen inter-Korean relations," it said.

4. DPRK Diplomat's Disappearance

Korea Herald ("SEOUL DENIES INVOLVEMENT IN DISAPPEARANCE OF DPRK DIPLOMAT IN THAILAND," Seoul, 02/26/99) reported that the ROK on Wednesday denied any involvement in the disappearance of a DPRK diplomat and his family in Bangkok, Thailand, last week. The Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry in Seoul said that it had learned about the case after a news report. "We have nothing to do with the case," said a ministry official at the Asian and Pacific Affairs Bureau. He said the ministry is now trying to find out the whereabouts of the missing diplomat and his wife and 20-year-old son. "We do not know yet whether or not the DPRK family is seeking political asylum," he added. Hong Sun-kyong, 60, a counselor for science and technology at the DPRK Embassy in Bangkok, and his family have been reported missing since February 19. It had been reported that

the DPRK requested Thailand to help track down Hong, who the DPRK insisted embezzled money from a DPRK fund to purchase rice. Some diplomatic sources in Seoul said that the DPRK may have brought the embezzlement charges in to make it difficult for Hong to seek political asylum.

5. ROK Military Budget

Chosun Ilbo ("MILITARY BUDGET TO BE SPENT EARLY," Seoul, 02/22/99) reported that the ROK Ministry of National Defense has decided to implement the majority of its defense-related projects in the first half of the year to help improve the nation's economy and reduce the number of jobless. 80.9 percent, or W4.55 trillion of this year's W5.6 trillion budget (ROK won portion) for importation of weapons and facility construction projects will be spent before July. A high-ranking official at the ministry said that the budget also includes the construction of apartments for army personnel. He said if the budget is spent in advance, the operation rate of the nation's defense industry will be enhanced to 52 percent from the current 51 percent. An additional 50,000 new jobs will also be created.

6. Northeast Asian Tourist Route

Korea Herald ("TWO KOREAS TO OPEN TOURIST ROUTE WITH PRC," Seoul, 02/24/99) reported that a new international tourist route linking the ROK and the DPRK with the PRC will likely be opened in May, the Korea Trade- Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) said Tuesday. In a report on the prospects for a Northeast Asian transportation infrastructure, the state-run agency forecast that the governments in the ROK, the DPRK, and the PRC may be able to eliminate the remaining hurdles to the three-nation overland tourist route by May. Opening the new tourist route, which may link Tonghae in the ROK, Rajin in the DPRK, and Hunchun in the PRC, will also exert pervasive effects on economic exchanges between the three countries, the KOTRA report said. "With the mediation of the United Nations Development Program, the three nations reached a tentative agreement on port usage, customs, passenger safety and other details," it said.

III. People's Republic of China

1. PRC-US Relations

China Daily ("US STILL BACKING NATION'S WTO ENTRY," 2/24/99, A1) reported that a visiting senior US official said on February 23 that the US will continue to support the PRC's efforts to gain entry in the World Trade Organization (WTO). Speaking at a press conference following an afternoon meeting with PRC Premier Zhu Rongji, US Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence Summers said the US is very interested in the PRC's entry into the WTO. He added that US Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky is scheduled to visit the PRC in the near future to participate in detailed discussions concerning the PRC's WTO membership. Summers said that one purpose of the visit is to prepare for the forthcoming US visit by Premier Zhu. Summers noted the importance of the WTO issue and said he and Premier Zhu also exchanged views on global economic development.

People's Daily ("US STATE SECRETARY TO VISIT CHINA," Beijing, 2/24/99, A1) reported that PRC Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue announced at a news briefing on February 23 that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will pay a visit to the PRC from March 1 to 2, at the invitation of PRC Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan. The two sides will exchange views on Sino-US relations and other international and regional issues of common concern, Zhang said.

2. PRC-Russian Relations

China Daily ("ZHU'S VISIT EXPECTED TO PROMOTE SINO-RUSSIAN TRADE," 2/23/99, A1) reported that PRC Premier Zhu Rongji's official visit to Russia February 24-27 is expected to raise bilateral trade relations to a new level. Zhu and his Russian counterpart Yevgeny Primakov will hold the fourth regular meeting between the PRC and Russian prime ministers. Their discussions will be centered on expanding trade and economic cooperation between the two countries and seeking common development, according to the newspaper. While the PRC and Russia have maintained a rapid growth in relations in recent years, the bilateral trade volume has dropped because of repercussions of the Asian financial crisis and other factors, the report said.

3. PRC Cooperation with Chemical Weapons Ban

China Daily ("CHINESE LAB LISTED FOR INSPECTIONS," 2/23/99, A1) reported that a Chinese laboratory has been listed by the organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to conduct chemical weapons inspections. The analytical Chemical Lab attached to the Chinese Research Institute of Chemical Weapons Prevention was one of seven labs to receive the designation recently. The PRC is willing to cooperate with the OPCW, promote expansion of the Chinese lab and contribute to the elimination of chemical weapons throughout the world, a PRC military official said.

4. PRC-Pakistan Relations

People's Liberation Army Daily ("PAKISTANI PRESIDENT MEETS WITH CHI," Islamabad, 2/23/99, P1) reported that during a meeting with General Chi Haotian, vice-chairman of the PRC Central Military Commission, at the Presidential House, Pakistan's President Rafiq Tarar said that his country will further devote itself to strengthening the good-neighborly friendship with the PRC. The president stressed that to develop friendly and cooperative relations with the PRC is the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy. He assured General Chi, who is also PRC State Councilor and Defense Minister, of Pakistan's support to the PRC on the issues of Taiwan, Tibet, and human rights. General Chi conveyed PRC President Jiang Zemin's greetings to Tarar. He said the PRC Government and its army will continue to work for the establishment of the all-round cooperative partnership towards the 21st century.

5. Japanese-Russian Relations

People's Daily ("JAPANESE PM AND RUSSIAN FM HAVE A MEETING," Tokyo, 2/23/99, A6) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi had a meeting with visiting Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on February 22. Obuchi expressed his expectation that Japan and Russia can seal a peace treaty by 2000 to create a new prospect of Japanese-Russian relations. During the meeting, Obuchi said that Japan's proposal on the territorial issue between Japan and Russia is the most appropriate arrangement and has given a comprehensive consideration of Russia's situation. He expressed hope that the Russian side would accept that proposal. The Japanese prime minister invited Russian President Boris Yeltsin to visit Japan this spring. He said he expected that the two countries can reach an agreement on the conclusion of a peace treaty during that summit.

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