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I. United States

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1. Four-Party Peace Talks

Reuters ("NORTH KOREA THREATENS TO WALK FROM FOUR-WAY TALKS," Tokyo, 04/30/99) reported that the DPRK's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Friday quoted a DPRK Foreign Ministry spokesman as threatening to withdraw from the four-party peace talks. The spokesman stated, "If the talks drag on like this, wasting time, we will be no longer be interested in them." He noted that discussion of US troop withdrawal from the ROK "was persistently ignored while an insistence on unessential and offbeat issues was repeated." He argued that withdrawal of US troops and the conclusion of a peace accord between the DPRK and the US are the foremost issues for peace on the Korean peninsula, adding, "This stand of ours will remain unchanged."

2. DPRK Missile Talks

Reuters ("JAPAN TO PROPOSE THREE-WAY N. KOREA MISSILE TALKS," Tokyo, 04/29/99) reported that Japan's Nihon Keizai Shimbun on Thursday cited government sources as saying that, during his visit to the US, Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi will propose that Japan, the US and the DPRK hold meetings to discuss the DPRK's ballistic missile program. Obuchi is scheduled to meet with US President Bill Clinton next Monday.

3. US Food Aid for DPRK

The US Department of Agriculture ("AGRICULTURE SECRETARY ON WHEAT FOR BALKANS, NORTH KOREA," Washington, 04/29/99) issued the following press release. "Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today announced that USDA [US Department of Agriculture] has purchased 700,000 metric tons of wheat that will be donated for use as humanitarian aid in the Balkans, to assist Kosovar refugees, in North Korea, and other areas suffering food shortages. This amount is in addition to a 1 million-metric ton purchase announced March 26. 'With America's current surplus of grain, we have a moral obligation to act when millions of people elsewhere are going hungry or without adequate nutrition,' said Glickman. 'At a time of turmoil around the world, these purchases will serve as a tool of mercy and a tangible expression of our commitment to peace and prosperity for people everywhere.' Through the World Food Program (WFP) and other private voluntary organizations, administered under the section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949 by USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), ... 400,000 metric tons of wheat and 300 tons of nonfat milk powder are being shipped to alleviate hunger and malnutrition in famine-stricken North Korea."

4. DPRK Famine

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA MUST START PRODUCING ITS OWN FOOD: UN OFFICIAL," Hong Kong, 04/23/99) reported that Christian Lemaire, coordinator for the UN Development Program in the DPRK, said on April 23 that the international community must help the DPRK revive its agriculture sector to prevent it from becoming totally dependent on food aid.

Lemaire said that a serious famine had been controlled and reports of up to three million people dead since 1995 were exaggerated. He stated, "There is no famine, there is a slow and serious degradation of the health of virtually the entire population. There is severe malnutrition across many age groups ... but the country is not going to collapse." He warned, however, "We can't make the decision that we are going to feed two million people forever, because what will happen is that you will end up feeding the entire population of 22 million. Food aid is not a solution. The key is to go back to helping them to produce their own food." He said that if enough seeds, fertilizer and fuel were supplied for the next harvest, the DPRK could produce six million tons of food. Lemaire accepted that there was hostility among some major powers to contributing towards the long-term development of the DPRK, but he argued that countries need to take a long-term view. He stated, "By postponing the problem you just create a larger problem for the future. The problem of lack of food in North Korea is not going to disappear."

5. DPRK-PRC Relations

Far Eastern Economic Review (Lorien Holland, "LIPS AND TEETH: SMILES ARE STRAINED NOW BETWEEN CHINA, NORTH KOREA," Beijing, 04/26/99) reported that PRC-DPRK relations are strained by the influx of DPRK refugees in the PRC. The article said that the PRC also is worried that the DPRK's alleged missile and nuclear programs are bolstering support in the region for an increased US military presence. Gerald Segal of the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London noted that the PRC vetoed a vote in the UN Security Council to censure the DPRK for its August rocket launch, but also urged the DPRK to reach an agreement with the US on the underground construction site. The article said that the PRC hopes to confirm Kim Jong-il's planned October visit when DPRK Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun visits the PRC this summer. It quoted the Russian Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic Academy as noting that the DPRK failed to give the PRC advance notice of the rocket launch and turned down later PRC requests for information. Yu Shaohua, deputy director of Asia-Pacific studies at the China Institute for International Studies stated, "There are now some areas where China and Korea do not see eye to eye and this is a change from the very close relationship in the past." Yu, a former diplomat to Pyongyang, said that the DPRK finds it hard to accept the PRC's 1992 establishment of diplomatic ties with the ROK. She denied that the PRC exerted direct pressure during the recent US-DPRK talks, but she said that the government gave DPRK diplomats in Beijing a full report of all Chinese meetings with US officials over the DPRK since late last year, to demonstrate the US position that the DPRK's behavior was destabilizing the region. Aidan Foster-Carter of Leeds University in England stated, "There is no contradiction in China both being cross with North Korea" and promoting high-level visits. He added, "China's way of trying to influence North Korea is by almost never openly criticizing it, having watched Moscow throw away any clout it had in Pyongyang by joining the ranks of North Korea's public critics."

6. PRC-DPRK Economic Relations

Far Eastern Economic Review (Susan V. Lawrence, "CROSS-BORDER DISAPPOINTMENT," Yanji, 04/26/99) reported that PRC-DPRK barter trade has been diminishing due to the lack of goods in the DPRK. The article said that trade between the DPRK and the PRC's Yanbian prefecture, where 40 percent of the 2.1 million residents are ethnic Koreans, peaked in 1993 at US$310 million, accounting for nearly 70 percent of Yanbian's foreign trade. By 1998, Yanbian's trade with the DPRK had fallen to US$32 million, with Yanbian companies shipping US$22 million worth of goods and getting less than US$10 million worth back. However, Cao Zhizhong, the general manager of the government-owned Yanbian Foreign Economic Trade Company, stated, "Our strength is North Korean trade. Our contacts are there." The DPRK has also been slow to improve a 65-kilometer road

from the border to the port of Rajin. The Yanbian Hyuntong Shipping Group, together with its ROK partner, the Dong Yong Shipping Company, sends a 3,500-ton ship between Rajin and the ROK port of Pusan every 10 days. Hyuntong also built a market inside the DPRK where people from both countries do small-scale trading three days a week.

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA TIGHTENS CONTROL OVER RAIL WAGONS TO NORTH KOREA," Hong Kong, 04/25/99) reported that the PRC Ministry of Railways has tightened control over its rail wagons to the DPRK after several hundred went missing. An unnamed source stated, "If the wagons are not returned within seven to 10 days, then nothing moves across the border." The source added, "Last winter the delivery of food aid was delayed and in March more than 100 wagons were backed up in Dandong before they could cross." A spokesman from the DPRK Embassy in Beijing said he knew nothing about the delays.

7. DPRK Refugees in PRC

The Far Eastern Economic Review (Shim Jae Hoon, "NORTH KOREA: A CRACK IN THE WALL," along the PRC- DPRK border, 04/26/99) reported that an increasing number of DPRK citizens are crossing the border into the DPRK in search of food. The article said that DPRK border guards allow the migrants pass for a share of the food and money they bring back. A medical doctor from the DPRK city of Chongjin who fled in January stated, "On arriving, they marvel at the amount of food available on the Chinese marketplaces and blame Kim Jong-il for keeping them ignorant about the outside world." He added, "People are openly criticizing Kim Jong-il in North Korea." The ROK magazine Monthly Chosun quoted a former DPRK university professor interviewed in hiding in the PRC as saying, "We refugees in China must unite and open a second front against the Kim regime. The North Korean people are not simply dying from hunger. Kim Jong-il is starving them to death." A Workers' Party member who fled in March from North Hamkyong province stated, "The first people to die were the sick and the handicapped. Others were good, honest party members who were repeatedly told: 'This hardship is temporary. Food is on its way; trust us and wait.'" He said that people who defied internal travel restrictions to go foraging survived, while loyal party members died. A team from the ROK's Yongnam University concluded that most people only stay a few days in the PRC. An ROK Foreign Ministry official said that the ROK wants the UN to set up refugee centers, but the PRC refuses to declare them refugees. An unnamed ROK aid worker said, "It will open up the floodgates if China hints at accepting them as refugees. That can shatter the regime in Pyongyang."

The Philadelphia Inquirer (Jennifer Lin, "QUIETLY, DESPERATELY, CHILDREN FLEEING THE FAMINE OF N. KOREA," on the PRC-DPRK border, 04/26/99) reported that an increasing number of DPRK children are fleeing into the PRC to escape the famine. Gary Perkins, Beijing representative for the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that if the UN set up feeding programs, shelters, or mobile orphanages, "It would have an enormous pull factor. Everyone would know about it in North Korea within three weeks." He added, however, that if nothing is done soon, "that will be a tragedy. There's a humanitarian situation that has to be taken care of. We don't know if they are refugees in a legal sense, but the UNHCR agrees that, particularly for these vulnerable groups, something should be done."

8. ROK Political Prisoners

The New York Times (Nicholas Kristof, "OUT AT LAST, PRISONER 3514 CATCHES UP ON 40 YEARS," Seoul, 4/29/99, A4) carried an article profiling Woo Yong-gak, who was released from an ROK prison after serving 40 years for spying for the DPRK. Woo stated, "The real issue isn't economic development.... We have lost our self-reliance. Economically, politically, and militarily, the

level of dependence on the outside has increased." Woo said that 12 of his fellow prisoners died under torture. Nam Kyu-sun, secretary general of the ROK human rights group Minkahyup, argued, "[ROK] President Kim Dae-jung has been honored with human rights awards and touted as a 'human rights President.' But such things don't really make a 'human rights President.'" He added that the way for Kim to truly earn the title would be to reform the National Security Law.

9. US Radar Sales to Taiwan

The New York Times (Philip Shenon, "U.S. PLANS TO SELL RADAR TO TAIWAN TO MONITOR CHINA," Washington, 04/30/99) and the Wall Street Journal (Helene Cooper, "'VALID NEED' FOUND TO PROVIDE TAIWAN WITH RADAR SYSTEM," Washington, 04/30/99) reported that US administration officials said Thursday that the US has decided to sell an early-warning radar system to Taiwan that would allow Taiwan to monitor PRC launches of ballistic missiles or manned bombers. The officials said that the sale was approved at the recommendation of senior policymakers from the White House, the State Department and the Defense Department who believed that the PRC's deployment of short-range missiles along its coastline posed a serious military threat to Taiwan. One unnamed official stated, "I think there was a fairly good meeting of the minds on this. We have told the Taiwanese that we will meet their legitimate defensive needs. And a passive early-warning system is clearly a legitimate defensive need." US Representative Benjamin Gilman, R-N.Y., chairman of the House International Affairs Committee, stated, "I'm pleased that the administration has finally recognized that it is appropriate to help the Taiwanese protect themselves. If China is pointing missiles at Taiwan, I would expect Taiwan to try to defend itself." Yu Shuning, spokesman for the PRC Embassy in Washington, stated, "We have made serious representations with the US side. We say that any arms sales to Taiwan by any country in the world constitutes an infringement on Chinese sovereignty, an interference in our internal affairs." [Ed note: This article was one of the top stories in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 30.]

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 29, 1999," USIA Transcript, 04/29/99) said that, in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act, US President Bill Clinton and the US Congress have determined which defense articles and services Taiwan needs in order to maintain a sufficient self- defense capability. Rubin added, "Both the Taiwanese and the United States authorities agree not to discuss the specific details of this process. We have had a frank and broad exchange of views on issues related to Taiwan self- defense needs, but both sides have agreed not to discuss the details of this process."

10. US-Taiwan Relations

The Los Angeles Times (Jim Mann, "CHINA WANTS TO RING DOWN CURTAIN ON TAIWAN CHARADE," Washington, 04/28/99) reported that last week Richard Bush, the head of the Washington office of the American Institute in Taiwan, hosted a private dinner for Chen Shui-bian, the likely presidential candidate next year for Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The article speculated that the likely purpose of the dinner was to allow US officials to assess whether Chen, if elected president next year, might do something to cause a new crisis in the Taiwan Straits. Chen said that if the DPP comes to power, it will be "a peacemaker, not a troublemaker." He added, "We seek to maintain the status quo of Taiwan's independence." He also stated, "Any change in the status quo would have to be approved by the people. A referendum would be one of the methods of approval ... but not the only one." At a recent conference, US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth argued, "It's hard to see what a plebiscite would accomplish in a positive manner." US Representative Christopher Cox, Republican-California, stated, "The United States should not support independence, because the United States should not put its thumb on the scale and

determine the outcome from afar. But if that is the solution the Chinese come up with, they are entitled to it."

11. Alleged PRC Nuclear Espionage

The New York Times (James Risen and Jeff Gerth, "CHINA SPY SUSPECT REPORTEDLY TRIED TO HIDE EVIDENCE," Washington, 04/30/99) reported that US officials said that Los Alamos National Laboratory scientist Wen Ho Lee tried to hide evidence that he had transferred nuclear secrets out of a computer system at a the laboratory two days after he failed a Federal Bureau of Investigation polygraph examination in February. The officials said that Lee had not deleted the transferred files earlier, but had moved them out of the lab's classified computer, renamed them and stored them in an unsecure system years earlier. [Ed note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for April 30.]

12. PRC Nuclear Development

The Los Angeles Times carried an opinion article by Justine A. Rosenthal, Special Assistant to the President of the Council on Foreign Relations ("CHINA ISN'T PLAYING NUCLEAR CATCH-UP; IT'S CAPABLE OF SURGING AHEAD," 04/30/99) which said that, despite the end of the Cold War, the US should be concerned with the PRC's nuclear development. The article stated, "Although we cannot stop espionage entirely ... we must understand the enormous implications of nuclear theft in the post-Cold War world.... As America's technological advancements slow, China's quicken, making it far easier for China to close the gap." The article added, "China clearly will be a competitor in the future. The US should take this into serious consideration now." It argued, "First, we should continue to engage China economically, even though this engagement helps bolster China's military expenditures, because financial cooperation will lessen the chances of an immediate arms race and will maintain a level of transparency between the two countries. Second, we must heavily invest in our research and development programs to maintain our military advantage." It added, "We should reconsider whether the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is still to our advantage." It concluded, "Without a large increase in the amount of money and importance the U.S. gives to nuclear and military research and development, the inevitable theft of secrets will do far more damage to our national security than what occurred during the Cold War."

13. G-8 Meeting in Okinawa

US State Department Spokesman James Rubin ("STATE DEPARTMENT NOON BRIEFING, APRIL 29, 1999," USIA Transcript, 04/29/99) confirmed that the Japanese Prime Minister's office announced on April 28 that the city of Nago in the prefecture of Okinawa has been selected to host the 2000 summit of the Group of 8 industrialized countries (G-8). Rubin stated, "We welcome the decision and have every confidence that Japan and Okinawa will host a very successful summit next year." He added, "The President [Bill Clinton]'s visit next year will have a positive impact on relations with Okinawan people and illustrate the strength of the US-Japan alliance and also our deep interest in the culture and economy of Okinawa." Asked how it would affect the issue of US bases on Okinawa, Rubin replied, "Well, I'm sure it will give a boost to the Okinawan economy."

14. Indian Adherence to CTBT

The Associated Press ("INDIAN PM: UNLIKELY TO SIGN TEST BAN BY SEPTEMBER - REPORT," New Delhi, 04/30/99) reported that Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said Friday that the

Indian government is unlikely to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by its self-imposed September deadline. Vajpayee stated, "If there was a parliament we could have struck a consensus on these issues. But if elections are delayed, it may be highly improper to commit ourselves." Vajpayee said he would try to call a meeting of all parties and reach an agreement on the nuclear treaty, "But I don't have much hopes since we are in the midst of a do-or-die election."

II. Republic of Korea

1. ROK-DPRK Talks

The Korea Herald (Ji-ho Kim, "FORMER U.S. OFFICIAL PREDICTS INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT IN NEAR FUTURE," Seoul, 04/30/99) reported that C. Kenneth Quinones, former head of the DPRK desk at the US State Department, predicted on Thursday that the leaders of the ROK and the DPRK will likely hold a summit meeting within a year or two due to the rapid improvement in inter-Korean relations. Quinones stated, "South Korea is stabilizing both economically and politically with President Kim successfully solidifying his governing base. These and other favorable developments will cause North Korea to propose an inter-Korean summit, which will eventually be realized." Quinones, now representative for Korea in the Asia Foundation, noted that the DPRK is weighing both the ROK and the US as negotiating partners. "The Clinton administration has passed its peak after the president's sex scandal and the Democratic Party has little power in the U.S. Congress," he told a workshop organized by the Christian Journalists Club of Korea. "Even if Clinton promises more carrots for Pyongyang, the North Koreans will not be so sure whether the new U.S. government will keep such promises." In contrast, the ROK has been recovering from its catastrophic economic crisis, while actively pushing ahead with President Kim's engagement policy on the DPRK, he said. He stated, "I think chances are big that North Korea chooses South Korea as its negotiating partner, enabling a historic summit to take place on the Korean peninsula." Asked for views on the ROK's "sunshine policy," he said the policy has impressed the international community, creating a globally sympathetic atmosphere toward the ROK in its relationship with the DPRK.

2. US Policy towards Korean Peninsula

The Korea Herald (Kwan-woo Jun, "ENVOY DENIES U.S. SKEPTICAL ON KOREA'S REUNIFICATION," Seoul, 05/01/99) reported that Richard Christenson, deputy chief of the US Embassy in the ROK, strongly refuted suspicions that the US is inwardly opposed to the reunification of the two Koreas. Christenson, speaking at a seminar in Seoul on "U.S.-Korea Relations on the Eve of the 21st Century Asia-Pacific Era," stated, "Some (Koreans) even think the United States wants to block their reunification. A reunified Korea, however, is the necessary key to building a more stable and prosperous Northeast Asia. And that is very much in the U.S. interest." Christenson referred to "two major theories" whose reasoning he says bears reconsideration or further thought. One theory, he said, is that the US wants to keep the ROK divided as a way to continue stationing troops on the Korean peninsula. The other is that the US opposes unification so it can continue selling weapons to the ROK. "Stationing troops here is a means of maintaining peace and stability, not an end in itself," he said, adding that unification would make the ROK and Northeast Asia significantly more peaceful and stable. He also denied the second theory by revealing that US arms sales here are less than 4 percent of US exports to the ROK, too small a portion to become a decisive factor in the policy. Christenson said that the current armistice agreement is merely an "uneasy and temporary solution" to structural problems surrounding the Korean peninsula, adding that unification would be the basis for a stable long-term solution. He reiterated that the US government supports ROK's engagement policy towards the DPRK.

3. ROK Views of US-PRC Relations

The Korea Times (Key-young Son, "EQUI-DISTANCE DIPLOMACY TO US, CHINA UNREALISTIC'," Seoul, 04/30/99) reported that at a symposium "U.S.-Korea Relations on the Eve of the 21st Century Asia-Pacific Era," sponsored by the Asia-Pacific Policy Research Institute and The Korea Times, Prof. Paik Jin-hyun of Seoul National University argued that the idea of the ROK pursuing an equal-distance diplomacy towards the US and the PRC is nothing more than a "fantasy." He said, "We should keep in mind that if we choose to keep the United States away out of concerns that our close ties with the United States might provoke negative reactions from China, we would eventually lose support and trust from both the United States and China." Although the ROK needs to maintain a close partnership with the PRC, Professor Paik stressed that the foundation for ROK's unification diplomacy lies in the strong ROK-US alliance. Former ROK foreign minister Gong Ro-myung said in a keynote speech that the ROK and Japan need to foster a friendly relationship with the PRC to alleviate Beijing's concerns that the close security alliance between the ROK, Japan and the US might be designed to contain it. He also hoped that the US would pursue its "engagement policy" towards the DPRK to prevent any possible disputes taking place in the future. Richard Christenson, deputy chief of mission at the US Embassy, noted in a luncheon speech that the US and the ROK need to create a better "status quo for the new millennium" by ending the Cold War on the Korean peninsula. He said that the status quo of Northeast Asia in the second half of the 20th century, marked by military and economic dangers and the tragic division of the Korean people, is one that cannot meet the needs of the 21st century. "In order to help create a new status quo, the U.S. will need to continue to play an active and constructive regional role. We will need to maintain a military alliance with Japan, one that is prudently formulated to be a source of regional stability. We will need to foster a strong relationship with China, one that encourages China's economic and political growth," he said. In particular, Christenson stressed that friendly ties between the US and the PRC would be beneficial to the ROK's future.

4. PRC Tourism in ROK

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINESE TOURISTS RUSH TO KOREA," Seoul, 04/30/99) reported that many Chinese tourists are heading towards the ROK for their golden May Day holiday (April 29-May 3). Travel agencies are having difficulty in finding vacant airline seats and available hotel rooms as twice the normal number of tourists have decided to come to the ROK. The ROK Consulate in the PRC is even working overtime to issue tourist visas.

5. Japan-ROK Fishery Pact

The Korea Herald (Shi-yong Chon, "VICE MARITIME-FISHERIES MINISTER SACKED OVER KOREA-JAPAN PACT, CORRUPTION SCANDAL," Seoul, 04/30/99) reported that ROK President Kim Dae-jung on Thursday fired Vice Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Minister Chun Sung-kyu, holding him responsible for the controversial ROK- Japan fisheries pact and a corruption scandal involving senior ministry officials. Kim named Hong Seoung-yong, head of the Korea Maritime Institute, to succeed Chun at the ministry. Chun's dismissal came about one month after the President replaced the maritime and fisheries minister to allay ROK fishermen's anger over the new ROK-Japan fishing regulations. The ROK ministry came under fresh public criticism in the wake of a snowballing corruption scandal involving senior officials. Former assistant minister Park Kyu-suk has already been sent to jail on a graft charge. About half a dozen other ministry officials have also been implicated in separate corruption cases. Presidential spokesman Park Jie-won said that President Kim decided to replace the vice minister to rejuvenate the ministry.

6. US Consulates in the ROK

Joongang Ilbo (Hwashik Bong, "TWO U.S. CONSULATES TO BE RETURNED," Seoul, 04/30/99) and the Korea Herald ("U.S. RETURNS 2 PIECES OF KOREAN PROPERTY OCCUPIED FOR FREE," Seoul, 04/30/99) reported that the US on Thursday returned two of seven pieces of real estate used rent-free over the past decades to the ROK. The ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said that the property returned are the US consulate in Pusan and the official residence of the head of the US cultural center in Kwangju. The Ministry of Finance and Economy will consult with relevant provincial governments on how to use the real estate, ministry spokesman Lee Ho-jin said. The ROK government will expedite talks to take back five other ROK properties occupied for free by the US government. They include the US embassy building and US Information Service in downtown Seoul and the residential zone for US embassy staff in the Yongsan military complex in the capital. The US is still using the Yongsan army base and the American Embassy rent-free according to a contract signed in 1948.

III. Japan

1. Japanese-ROK Maritime Security Cooperation

The Yomiuri Shimbun (Chiharu Mori, "JAPAN AND ROK AGREED TO ESTABLISH INFORMATION EXCHANGE LIAISON AGAINST SUSPICIOUS SHIPS," Seoul, 04/29/99) reported that the visiting Japanese Maritime Agency Director General Yukio Kusunoki met with ROK Maritime Police Head Kim Dae-won in Inchon on April 29 and agreed to establish a liaison office to exchange information on suspicious ships. They also agreed to regularize this kind of meeting. This meeting was the first of its kind, according to the report. The report added that they signed an agreement on future discussions on joint exercises for search and rescue and elimination of maritime pollution and on promotion of cooperation in dealing with illegal activities based on the newly adopted Japanese-ROK fishery pact.

2. Japan-US Summit Meeting

The Sankei Shimbun ("PRIME MINISTER SAYS JAPAN STRIVES TO STRENGTHEN ALLIANCE WITH US," 04/30/99) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi spoke with reporters just before leaving for his official visit to the US on April 29. Obuchi stated, "Japan and the US have maintained the best relations ever seen. To further strengthen our alliance relations, (we) want to do our best. I am also personally close to President Clinton, and I want to deepen our mutual trust." Regarding the Guidelines for Japan-US Defense Cooperation, Obuchi said, "I will report that we are in the process of establishing a basis for stability of our country hand in hand with the US." As for the economy, Obuchi said, "Because the economies of Japan and the US have a large impact on the world economy, Japan and the US have to cooperate with each other. As the Asian economy has been in recession for the past one year, I want to discuss the Asian economy and security."

3. PRC Reaction to Japan-US Defense Guidelines Bill

The Asahi Shimbun ("LI PENG EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT GUIDELINES BILL," 04/29/99) reported that, during the talks with visiting Japanese Upper House Chairman Juro Saito in Beijing on April 29, former PRC premier Li Peng indirectly expressed his concern about the bill related to the Japan-US defense guidelines. Li stated, "I am concerned about the status of Taiwan, which is part of the PRC and also about the extent to which Japan would play a military role in relation to the PRC."

Li's statement was the first of its kind since the bill passed the Lower House Diet session, according to the report. Li also said, "The PRC has repeatedly expressed its concern about the scope of situations in areas surrounding Japan. Although the Japanese government has explained (the scope) to us, some vagueness still remains. The PRC people are very strictly watching (it) because we are a war victim nation." In response to this, Saito only said, "There are differences among parties," reiterating the Japanese government's explanation of the scope of situations in areas surrounding Japan. As for Taiwan, Saito said, "(We) seriously acknowledge the PRC's argument that (the Taiwan issue) is the PRC's domestic affair." Saito also invited Li to visit Japan.

4. Russian Reactions to Japan-US Defense Guidelines Bill

The Asahi Shimbun ("RUSSIA EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT PASSAGE OF GUIDELINES BILL," 04/28/99) reported that an unnamed high-ranking Russian Foreign Ministry official expressed grave concern to the Itar Tass News Agency about the passage of the Japan-US defense cooperation guidelines bill through a lower-house Diet session on April 27. According to the report, the Russian official pointed out that Japan and the US have not clarified whether the guidelines extend to the third country and who would determine "contingency." The official also said, "(My statement) can be seen as Russia's official expression of concern (about the guidelines.)"

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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