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AFTERNOON

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April 21, 1997 USIA OPERATIONS CENTER

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===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====

ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 0 00:00:00.00

TEXT:

RFC-822-headers:

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===== ATTACHMENT 2 =====
ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 0 00:00:00.00

TEXT:

Zairians rampage against refugees, aid workers
By Matthew Bigg
LULA, Zaire (Reuter) - Zairians armed with knives and machetes went on the rampage in rebel-held eastern Zaire on Monday against aid workers and Rwandan Hutu refugees they blamed for killing six villagers.

In the capital Kinshasa, which rebels say is their next target, Zaire's information minister told foreign journalists that the 200 or so of them in the capital needed new accreditation by Wednesday to report on the war.

In Cape Town, South African sources said President Mobutu Sese Seko had yet to respond formally to President Nelson Mandela's written invitation last week to a meeting with rebel leader Laurent Kabila. Kabila had raised the stakes by saying their meeting could only be a handover of power.

Armed with knives, machetes and clubs, some angry Zairians south of Kisangani said they looted vehicles since early Monday at the urging of the Tutsi-dominated Zairian rebels, who have seized more than half of Africa's third largest country.

"The liberators (rebels) sent us here to pillage things going to the refugees. When we got back ... they (the rebels) took the things from us," said a young man who declined to be identified at Lula, four miles south of Kisangani.

"We are angry because the refugees have killed our people so we are here to loot any vehicle that goes past," another said.

Some locals were enraged at the amount of aid being given to the refugees but the two young men said they were angry because aid convoys were carrying arms for the Hutus in bags of maize and they would stop all aid workers from passing.

Following the killings, U.N. refugee agency chief Sadako Ogata said a Rwandan rebel operation near Kasese camp, 15 miles south of Kisangani, raised fears of a new refugee exodus.

Residents said Rwandan Hutu refugees attacked a village near Kasese camp, with 32,000 refugees, before dawn and killed at least six people. Journalists saw six bodies before they were stoned by Zairians.

Villagers, meanwhile, attacked a train loaded with 120 tons of food for the Hutu refugees near Lula early Monday and then looted a World Food Program (WFP) warehouse further to the south.

"We lost 119 tonnes of food on the train and they took 72 out of 78 tonnes of food in the warehouse and on two railway wagons (cars) plus portable storage equipment being brought in from Uganda," said a WFP spokeswoman.

``We're talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of food and equipment," she added.

Aid workers said they feared residents who looted aid and stopped aid workers reaching the camps south of Kisangani both Friday and Monday were doing so with encouragement from the Zairian rebels, though the rebels have consistently denied any role.

WFP staff said Zairian rebel guards shot in the air to keep the looters back.

Eastern Provincial Gov. Yagi Sitolo told reporters up to eight Zairians were killed in the attack near Kasese camp. ``There is tension .... We heard the population is angry because the (Rwandan) refugees killed six or eight Zairian people," Sitolo said. ``That is why we sent a group to see what has happened there."

He said Sunday a U.N. airlift for the estimated 100,000 refugees south of Kisangani should not start until May 5 due to a cholera epidemic. Aid officials say they planned to fly out only healthy refugees.

The death toll from cholera, malaria and malnutrition among the refugees stands at about 40 a day, with bodies lined up under blankets along a mud road leading through the camps. In Kinshasa, Zairian Information Minister Kin-Kiey Mulumba said foreign journalists had to seek new accreditation by Wednesday and he announced the setting up of an ``ethics" committee to monitor foreign reporting of the war.

Mulumba, who has been critical of reporting on the war, did not make clear if reports would be censored.

As the rebel drive to unseat Mobutu has gained speed, foreign journalists have poured into Kinshasa to witness what may be the final days of his more than three decades in power. France, a longtime backer of Mobutu which only recently distanced itself from him, hinted Monday it might be talking to Kabila as part of its peace efforts.

``We are not ruling out any party in our contacts to help solve the crisis," Foreign Ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt told reporters when asked whether Paris was making contact with the rebels.

REUTER

Reut12:36 04-21-97

Mobutu wants Zaire talks held close to home

By William Wallis

KINSHASA, April 21 (Reuters) - Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko will not travel to South Africa this week for a much expected meeting with rebel leader Laurent Kabila on ending Zaire's civil war, his son and spokesman said on Monday.

``Apparently President Mobutu doesn't want to travel to South Africa. He prefers somewhere else," Nzanga Mobutu told Reuters. ``It's a long flight and he's still convalescing." Mobutu, 66, had prostate cancer surgery in August and is still receiving treatment, although he looked in fair shape at his last public appearance a few days ago.

Some regional analysts said health may not be the only reason for Mobutu's reluctance to go to South Africa. One said

President Nelson Mandela's mediation was perceived by some members of the Kinshasa government as an international public relations exercise for South Africa.

South Africa has staged a series of exploratory talks involving envoys of the two camps. Mandela last week met Kabila and official South African sources said later a Mobutu-Kabila meeting could take place in South Africa this week.

Mobutu's opponents have also threatened that if he ventures far afield his return will be blocked.

Asked if his father would prefer to go to Brazzaville, capital of Congo across the river from Kinshasa, Nzanga said: ``From what I've heard Kabila doesn't want to go to Brazzaville."

Congo's President Pascal Lissouba is pursuing parallel efforts to bring Zaire's chief protagonists to the negotiating table in his country. He met Mobutu in Kinshasa last week. Benin's President Mathieu Kerekou was expected in the Zaire capital on Sunday for talks with Mobutu presumed to be linked to the attempts to end the civil war through diplomacy. His trip was cancelled at the last minute but officials in Kinshasa said he was still expected this week.

Mobutu's Foreign Minister Kamanda wa Kamanda has been touring regional capitals since last week.

Nzanga said the Mobutu-Kabila talks were not off and that negotiators from both sides were working on a date and venue. Mobutu reluctantly agreed to meet Kabila, who demanded direct talks as a condition for ending his six-month-old armed campaign to topple the long-serving president.

Kabila's forces have seized more than half of Zaire's vast territory and are threatening to bring the war to the capital Kinshasa if Mobutu does not agree to step down at their planned meeting. Mobutu wants the talks to set the stage for elections.

Diplomats and military analysts in the Zaire capital are skeptical about Kabila's genuine interest in the talks given his overwhelming military advantage on the ground.

The rebel leader reinforced such doubts at the weekend by declaring that he expects the planned meeting to be a formal handover of power by Mobutu, who has been in power since 1965.

Reut13:12 04-21-97

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U.S.'s Albright to visit Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY, April 21 (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is scheduled to visit Guatemala on May 4 to observe the peace process and perform other duties, officials said on Monday.

She is also expected to help iron out details of a visit by President Bill Clinton on May 8 to Costa Rica for a meeting of Central American heads of state, officials said.

Albright will observe Guatemala's ongoing peace process with a visit to a guerrilla demobilization camp constructed in part with U.S. funds, a spokeswoman for the Guatemalan foreign relations minister said.

Ex-rebels have lived for three months in eight disarmament

camps while they turn in weapons under terms of a December peace treaty that ended 36 years of civil war in Guatemala.

From Guatemala, Albright will continue to Mexico City to join Clinton, who is scheduled to spend May 5-7 there before heading to Costa Rica to attend the Central American summit. With Central America's last internal armed conflict over in Guatemala, presidents from the isthmus hope to put trade and immigration issues at the top of the agenda for the summit.

REUTER

Reut12:04 04-21-97

Europe seeks to ease Cuba dispute with U.S.

By Robert Evans

GENEVA (Reuters) - The European Union Monday asked the World Trade Organization to suspend a panel looking into a potentially explosive dispute with the United States over the Helms-Burton law on investment in Cuba.

The EU move followed an agreement between the two top trade powers under which Brussels agreed to hold off on its WTO action in return for a pledge by the Clinton administration to work for a softening of the law.

The agreement, which EU officials insist is provisional and dependent on progress in negotiations between the administration and Congress, was welcomed by WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero.

In a statement issued from Beijing where he is currently on a visit, Ruggiero said the accord on the dispute -- which trade diplomats feared could undermine the authority of the WTO -- was "a very positive development."

The agreement, he said, was also "a testimony to the effectiveness of the WTO's multilateral dispute settlement procedures in focussing the minds of participants toward a solution."

Brussels, backed by almost all the WTO's 130-state membership, argued that the law violated the organization's open trading rules by seeking to extend the long-standing U.S. economic boycott of Cuba to other countries.

But the United States argued the measure was a foreign policy, not a trade, matter and indicated it would refuse to cooperate with the panel's investigation.

The EU suspension request was delivered to panel chairman Arthur Dunkel, former director-general of the WTO's predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, EU officials said.

But the short note made clear that Brussels was reserving its right to ask for the three-member body -- which had yet to hold its first formal meeting -- to be reconvened if the United States failed to carry out its side of the deal, they added. "The EU will obviously be watching developments very carefully," one diplomatic source said.

Under the pact, shaped after months of discussion between the two top trade powers just hours before the panel was due to convene for the first time, the EU agreed to work with Washington for an accord on investment protection.

The Helms-Burton act, named for its congressional sponsors, was partly targeted against foreign companies investing in Cuba

and making use of property nationalized after President Fidel Castro came to power in 1959.

It allows for U.S. citizens, including Cubans who fled after the revolution, to take action in U.S. courts against foreigners ``trafficking" in their property, and for executives of foreign firms investing in Cuba to be barred from the United States. Clinton had already suspended implementation of the first provision, but has to win congressional agreement to waive the second, which has already been applied to some European -- as well as Mexican and Canadian - businessman.

Reut12:28 04-21-97

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Colombian justice minister resigns -officials

BOGOTA (Reuter) - Colombian Justice Minister Carlos Medellin, an outspoken supporter of calls for an end to the country's constitutional ban on extradition, resigned Monday, government officials said.

They said Medellin, who has won high marks from the United States for pushing tough anti-drug laws through Congress since he took office early last year, announced his ``irrevocable decision" to step down in a letter handed early Monday morning to President Ernesto Samper.

Spokesmen for both Medellin and Samper said the resignation had been widely expected since Medellin -- a firm proponent of cracking down on Colombia's criminal drug gangs -- was preparing to launch a bid for a congressional seat or to stand as the running-mate of presidential hopeful Carlos Lleras de la Fuente in elections next year.

There was no official word on who Samper would name to replace Medellin. But local radio reports said the president had chosen Alba Beatriz de Rergifo, a lawyer and his personal adviser on legal affairs.

Samper announced earlier this month, at the urging of Medellin and under intense U.S. pressure, that he would propose legislation to lift the constitutional ban on extradition of drug lords and other criminals introduced by Colombia's constituent assembly in 1991.

Political analysts and diplomats say the government faces a long, uphill battle to win approval of the legislation, since most Colombians oppose extradition and drug barons have shown they can influence many legislators.

U.S. officials say that detention in a secure facility in the United States is what Colombia's powerful drug lords fear the most.

REUTER

Reut11:53 04-21-97

N. Koreans keep U.S., S. Korea hanging

WASHINGTON, April 21 (Reuter) - U.S. and South Korean representatives waited on Monday to see if North Korea was prepared to resume a crucial meeting on peace efforts that was suspended last week.

South Korean spokesman Ji Won Suh told Reuters the two

allies hoped to resume the meeting in New York at 2 p.m. (1800 GMT) but by 11:30 a.m. (1530 GMT) had not heard from the North Korean side. He said Seoul's delegation was willing to give the North Koreans time to obtain instructions from Pyongyang but "it would be hard for us to prolong it (the waiting in New York) endlessly."

In addition to promises of more food aid, Pyongyang was demanding a "more favourable gesture from the United States" in the form of a promise to lift sanctions on North Korea, but such demands at this point "cannot be fulfilled," Suh said. The three delegations, headed by senior negotiators, met last Wednesday in formal session to hear the North's response to a year-old U.S.-South Korean proposal for four-party peace talks that would finally close the books on the 1950-53 Korean War by replacing the fraying armistice with a peace treaty.

Although that meeting was inconclusive, negotiators reported "encouraging progress" and agreed to resume on Friday. But the North Koreans, saying they awaited instructions from Pyongyang, never showed up. The meeting was re-set for Saturday, but they again failed to appear.

The three sides maintained contacts all weekend in hopes of getting the formal chief negotiators' meeting back on track. Peace talks, if accepted by Pyongyang's Stalinist regime, may not begin until June or July. China would be the fourth participant.

REUTER

Reut12:28 04-21-97

China army unit makes low-key entry into Hong Kong

By Diane Stormont

HONG KONG (Reuters) - An advance guard of China's army rolled quietly into Hong Kong Monday, preparing the ground for the territory's return to Chinese rule after 150 years of British rule.

The arrival of the small unarmed unit of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), with 71 days to go before Britain hands over its last important colony, was low-key and left many of the wealthy territory's 6 million people unmoved.

But as the convoy carrying 40 Chinese soldiers navigated crowded city streets, some democracy advocates who recalled the Chinese military's role in suppressing dissent in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989 questioned their presence.

There was no pomp and little ceremony when the PLA party led by Maj. Gen. Zhou Borong drove across the border to Hong Kong.

Zhou emerged from his black staff car to be greeted by a Chinese diplomat stationed in Hong Kong but his soldiers remained inside their vehicles, staring ahead impassively. They arrived as Hong Kong argued about civil liberties after the handover, but the advance party, whose task is to prepare facilities for the full garrison due July 1, is expected to play no part in internal Hong Kong affairs.

As the clock ticks away to the end of a British era in Asia at midnight June 30, Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp is squabbling with the territory's post-colonial leader who supports China's proposals to dilute civil liberties laws.

Martin Lee, leader of the largest pro-democracy party in Hong Kong, returned Monday from the United States where he met President Clinton and obtained considerable support for his campaign opposing the proposed changes.

Hong Kong's future leader, former shipping magnate Tung Chee-hwa, recently canceled his own plans to visit the United States to explain why he thinks the China-endorsed changes are needed.

He argues that replacing Hong Kong's elected legislature with one crafted by Beijing, and legislative changes to curb demonstrations and ban foreign funding for political groups, will not fundamentally damage freedoms in the bustling community.

The advance PLA party will live alongside the remaining British soldiers in the Prince of Wales Barracks and at a naval base on nearby Stonecutters Island.

British soldiers waiting at the border climbed in beside PLA drivers to guide the eight-vehicle convoy to their harbor-side barracks in the shadow of gleaming skyscrapers in the central business district.

But few in Hong Kong expect to see the Chinese relaxing in Hong Kong's bars or nightclubs with British troops and American sailors from U.S. warships visiting the port.

"Many people in Hong Kong have mixed feelings about the PLA, a lot of which is in fact fear; so the behavior of the PLA, the first contingent of the PLA in Hong Kong, will certainly have an impact on how Hong Kong will see the arrival of the Chinese government and its representatives," said Democratic Party member Huang Chen-ya.

But a middle-aged Hong Kong woman, among the sparse crowds who stood on overpasses for a glimpse of the new arrivals, said she was not concerned. "What is there to fear?" she asked. Hong Kong's stock exchange, which long ago digested the coming fundamental changes in the territory, showed no qualms. The Hang Seng Index ended higher on the strength of companies involved in the sky-high property market.

REUTER

Reut11:36 04-21-97

Massive disruption hits London after bomb threats

By Giles Elgood

LONDON, April 21 (Reuter) - London was hit by massive disruption on Monday after suspected IRA bomb threats closed five railway stations and three international airports.

Road, train and air travel came to a virtual standstill for more than three hours in the morning rush, turning some streets into eerie deserts and others into bumper-to-bumper jams.

Traffic on roads and motorways into Europe's largest city tailed back for miles. Travel organisations said it was the worst disruption they could remember. Key sections of the "Tube" underground railway were also shut for several hours. "West London and central London are closed," said a Royal Automobile Club spokesman. "This is some of the worst traffic chaos that we have seen in London for many years, if ever."

Politicians swiftly blamed the Irish Republican Army, which has used similar tactics in northern England several times in the past month in an effort to keep Northern Ireland on the agenda during the campaign for a May 1 parliamentary election.

``These are despicable actions and I condemn them unreservedly...It has all the indications of IRA activities," said British Home Secretary Michael Howard.

Police evacuated mainline stations at King's Cross, Charing Cross, Paddington and St Pancras and the busy Baker Street underground station after receiving a series of coded warnings that bombs had been left there.

No bombs were found and most of the stations were reopened by noon. Surrounding roads were closed during the search, turning parts of the bustling heart of the capital into peaceful oases.

``You can almost hear a pin drop in Trafalgar Square," said one BBC reporter. ``Everything is deathly calm."

Passengers were left sitting on planes for seven hours on the runway at Gatwick and Luton airports and Heathrow's international Terminal 3 was partially evacuated. At Gatwick, airport staff were trying to find a vacant hangar to house some of the 8,000 passengers stranded by the warnings.

The airports re-opened later but many flights were still disrupted.

Millions of commuters who travel into the capital mostly took the disruption in their stride, some taking to bicycles or walking. Others sat down on pavements in bright sunshine to read newspapers, waiting for normality to resume.

``This won't break our spirit. It's just given us the morning off," said Ian Harvey from east London.

The London bomb warnings appeared to form part of a campaign by the IRA to cause huge disruption in mainland Britain and win maximum publicity at virtually no cost.

Earlier this month the Grand National steeplechase -- one of Britain's biggest sporting events -- was abandoned because of an IRA telephone call to the racecourse minutes before the start.

Prime Minister John Major expressed contempt for the IRA and its political wing Sinn Fein, who want an end to British rule of Northern Ireland.

But he said the authorities had no alternative but to act on the threatening telephone calls.

``It is essential to take these warnings seriously. The IRA have murdered in the past. They will not hesitate to murder again if they thought it was in their interests to do so," Major told a news conference.

Sinn Fein was excluded from peace talks on a political solution to Northern Ireland peace because of IRA violence and the talks have been suspended during the election campaign.

REUTER

Reut11:59 04-21-97

Russia firmly opposed to NATO's eastward expansion

By Alan Crosby

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (Reuters) - Russian Prime Minister

Viktor Chernomyrdin said Monday a pact between Russia and NATO could be signed May 27, but that Moscow's opposition to the eastward expansion of the security alliance would not change. NATO officials earlier said a new round of talks between NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana and Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov, aimed at overcoming remaining Russian objections, had been set for May 6 in Luxembourg.

Asked at a news conference if the deal could be signed May 27, as stated by President Boris Yeltsin last week, Chernomyrdin said laughing: "If the president said the 27th that means it will be ready on the 27th. As for NATO expansion, we will be against it even after that."

Yeltsin said in Germany last week that he hoped the NATO-Russia pact would be ready for signing in Paris May 27. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland are leading contenders to be invited to join the alliance in a first wave of new members, expected to be announced at a NATO summit in Madrid in July.

Moscow, which opposes the expansion, has demanded the North Atlantic Treaty Organization not station nuclear and other weapons in new member states and wants a binding treaty on relations between Russia and the alliance.

"It is not a question of NATO. We are talking about the military components of NATO," Chernomyrdin said after talks with Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus in Prague.

"We should not allow new divisions to appear in Europe, new blocs. That is why we are today against the expansion of NATO," he added.

NATO officials, who have stressed enlargement would proceed whether or not a deal with Russia has been signed, have said that the alliance has "no intentions, no plans, no reasons" to place foreign troops or nuclear weapons on the territory of new members.

The Czech Republic has said Russia's security concerns must be taken into account but there can be no turning back on NATO expansion. Klaus said he understood Moscow's security concerns, but added that NATO membership for the Czech Republic is "an expression of our interest in our security."

"We discussed our positions in detail. They are not identical because they are based on the different specific interests of the two countries. But I nevertheless believe that these differences of opinion will not lead to any complications in our future relations," Klaus said.

Relations between the Czech Republic and Russia remain for many overshadowed by the 1968 Warsaw Pact intervention to crush the Prague Spring attempt to introduce "socialism with a human face" in then Communist Czechoslovakia.

But Chernomyrdin and Klaus both stressed the need for closer cooperation, particularly in the economic field. "No going back, no repetition, but cooperation," Chernomyrdin said. The two prime ministers also signed an addendum to a 1994 agreement on settling debt from Russia and the former Soviet Union to the Czech Republic, which provides for interest to be paid on the debt over two years in the form of cash and goods. REUTER

Reut12:23 04-21-97

Chirac to announce early French election

By Paul Taylor

PARIS, April 21 (Reuters) - French President Jacques Chirac, gambling his political future on the drive for a single European currency, was poised to call a snap parliamentary election nine months ahead of schedule in a broadcast to the nation on Monday.

His decision was seen as a bid to secure a safe, if probably sharply reduced, majority before taking fresh austerity measures to qualify France for European monetary union in 1999.

The president held mandatory consultations with Prime Minister Alain Juppe and the leaders of both houses of parliament on Monday morning and his office said he would make a television and radio address at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT).

National Assembly president Philippe Seguin confirmed he had been consulted under article 12 of the constitution, which gives the president the power to dissolve the lower house and call an election at 20 to 40 days' notice.

The only doubt was whether the two-round vote would be held on May 25 and June 1 or June 1 and 8. The earlier dates seemed more likely since Chirac was reported to want a short campaign.

The prospect of up to six weeks of political uncertainty with an outside chance of a left-wing victory gave the French financial markets the jitters, dealers said.

The franc, stocks and bonds all fell. The CAC-40 bourse index was down 1.20 percent in late trade on Monday after losing 2.69 percent last Friday as election speculation mounted.

The franc hit a one-month low of 3.3772 to the mark but was far from the panic level of 3.58 to the German currency reached on the day of Chirac's inauguration in May 1995.

A SOFRES institute opinion poll published by the daily Le Figaro suggested the ruling centre-right coalition, which controls 478 of the Assembly's 577 seats, would lose about 150 seats but keep a comfortable overall majority.

It forecast the extreme-right National Front would capture 14.6 percent of the vote but win only two or three seats.

Finance Minister Jean Arthuis denied published reports that France was significantly adrift of the goal of cutting the public sector deficit to three percent of gross domestic product this year to qualify for EU economic and monetary union (EMU). He told Europe 1 radio there were economic advantages to bringing forward the poll due next March, since political uncertainty was delaying investment decisions.

Industry Minister Franck Borotra said France needed to clear the decks ahead of key decisions on European integration, especially the selection in April or May 1998 of the first countries to qualify for a single European currency.

Pundits said Chirac wanted to get the election out of the way now rather than have to campaign next year at a time of unpopular austerity measures to qualify for the single currency.

Even before he fired the starter's gun, electioneering erupted in earnest on Sunday.

Socialist opposition leader Lionel Jospin said on television he would reject tougher austerity if it were required to meet the

Maastricht treaty criteria for EMU.

Testing likely campaign themes, Jospin said an early poll would be "an admission of failure" by Juppe's government and the Left would offer an alternative based on shorter working hours and a revival of economic growth.

Jospin added that Chirac was worried about corruption probes rocking the ruling centre-right parties.

Communist party leader Robert Hue, who has demanded a referendum on a single currency, said Jospin's shift to a more critical stance on EMU was "undoubtedly a positive evolution."

The newspaper Le Monde said Chirac would justify the snap poll, the first to be called without a political crisis or a change of president, by the need to prepare France for the euro.

It said he would advocate reducing taxes and the role of the state -- two pledges he made in the 1995 presidential election, only to do the opposite after taking office.

The president's mandate will not be directly affected by the vote. Chirac has five more years to serve. But a left-wing victory could make him a premature lame duck.

Reut10:57 04-21-97

Italian, Greek troops reach troubled Albanian city

By David Brough

VLORE, Albania, April 21 (Reuters) - Heavily armed Italian and Greek troops poured into the violent southern Albanian port city of Vlore on Monday and secured a key bridgehead with a spectacular show of force.

Nearly a week after soldiers from a multinational security force secured two key ports of entry, Italian and Greek troops drove into Vlore early on Monday as Italian marines splashed ashore in a seaborne landing.

About 30 tanks and armoured personnel carriers rolled onto beaches near the port after amphibious landing craft brought them to shore from a transport ship.

Some 160 Italian marines leaped off their launches and hovercraft. With rifles at the ready position, they immediately began searching buildings near the port as sporadic gunfire rattled in the distance.

"The operation went exactly according to plan," said Italian commanding officer Colonel Vincenzo Lops.

Vlore, 150 km (90 miles south of Tirana), and much of southern Albania have been controlled by rebel committees since an armed uprising that has claimed about 300 lives began in February.

The committees reject the authority of President Sali Berisha and demand his resignation. They blame Berisha for the collapse of get-rich-quick schemes that triggered the revolt. The eight-nation U.N.-backed security force that will protect humanitarian aid convoys had been extraordinarily cautious about its plans for entering Vlore, where the violence began and the death toll has been high.

The troops were the first permanent contingent of soldiers into Vlore from the 6,000-strong force.

About 4,000 soldiers have now arrived in Albania. France, Spain, Romania, Turkey, Austria and Denmark are also

contributing troops.

``On Tuesday the troops might, and I would like to emphasize the word 'might,' start accompanying the first aid convoys," said Gianfranco Scala, spokesman for the military command in Tirana.

General Girolamo Giglio said a total of 740 troops arrived in Vlore on Monday. He said 450 Italian and 130 Greek soldiers came by land and another 160 Italians by sea.

Hundreds of Albanians watched from a distance as the sea landing unfolded. Many cheered and tried to shake the hands of the soldiers after they arrived and fanned out through the area.

``Our brothers, the Italians," they chanted. ``We're glad our brothers have come."

Fresh violence broke out in the capital Tirana on Tuesday. A 34-year-old father of four was shot dead by five gunmen as he stood guard at a glass factory on the western outskirts, police said.

Another, 29-year-old man, was killed by three gunmen for what a police spokesman called ``property reasons."

The state news agency ATA reported a Vlore man was shot dead on Monday evening by a man who was trying to steal his car. In Rome, Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said Italy considered it vital for Albania's planned general election to go ahead by the end of June.

``Rapid and transparent elections to allow the immediate removal of troops and to confirm that the crisis is temporary are essential," Prodi said.

In Vienna, Albanian Foreign Minister Arjan Starova said the general election would be held as promised on June 29 because the government was regaining control in the south.

The situation in Albania had largely improved with public order restored in most parts of the country, said Starova, a member of the centre-left Social Democratic Union.

Reut12:44 04-21-97

U.S. to ``respond appropriately" to Iraqi flights

WASHINGTON, April 21 (Reuters) - The White House on Monday urged Iraq to reconsider its decision to send helicopters to pick up Iraqi Moslem pilgrims from the Saudi border despite a U.S. and allied ban on flights by Iraq in the area, adding that it would ``respond appropriately" to any such flights.

``We certainly recognise the significance of the haj but there are other means and procedures available for the transportation of haj pilgrims," White House spokesman Mike McCurry said, referring to the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. ``We would encourage the government of Iraq to meet its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions and we will monitor carefully any potential violations of the no-fly zone," he told reporters. ``We will respond appropriately but we're not going to shoot down civilian helicopters."

The Iraqi News Agency reported on Monday that Iraq had decided to send helicopters to pick up Moslem pilgrims from the Saudi border in the south despite a U.S. and allied ban on flights by Iraq in the area.

Defence Secretary William Cohen said Iraq cannot dictate or

flaunt no-fly rules by arbitrarily sending helicopters to pick up the pilgrims but it may be eligible for a humanitarian exemption allowing the flights if it follows proper procedure.

``The Iraqis are in no position to give any kind of dictates to the American people or to NATO or to the United Nations," Cohen told reporters.

``I think that obviously when there are humanitarian issues involved that we'd be most receptive, the United Nations would be receptive," Cohen said.

``There are rules that have to be complied with. There are requests for permission for exemptions. This may be one of them," he said. ``But they're not in any position to be simply flaunting the rules on their terms."

The Iraqi News Agency said the decision was announced after a meeting of Iraqi leaders headed by President Saddam Hussein in which they warned the United States against any attempt to intercept the helicopters. ``Any American practice threatening the safety of the helicopters and the pilgrims will be met with an appropriate action," it said, quoting an authoritative source.

Spokesmen for allied forces patrolling the no-fly zone were not immediately available to comment.

Iraq flew a civilian plane to Saudi Arabia on April 9 carrying 104 elderly and sick pilgrims to Mecca for the haj pilgrimage despite U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The plane returned home the same day.

The U.N. Security Council issued a statement calling on Iraq not to fly more planes without its consent but stopped short of regarding the flight as a breach of the embargo.

REUTER

Reut11:54 04-21-97

Cohen says no firm link found in Saudi bombing

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Defense Secretary William Cohen said Monday there was no concrete evidence linking Iran or any other country to the fatal truck bombing of a U.S. military housing complex in Saudi Arabia last year.

``The evidence concerning the Khobar Towers bombing thus far is fragmentary, incomplete and very circumstantial," Cohen told reporters. ``We do not have any concrete evidence of any country being directly linked to the bombing."

Cohen's comment was the most definitive in a series of statements by Clinton administration officials that Iran has not been positively linked to the bombing last June 25 that killed 19 U.S. servicemen.

State Department officials told the Senate last week the United States will respond appropriately against any country found to be involved in the bombing but they would not say what the response might be.

The Washington Post quoted U.S. and Saudi officials this month as saying a senior Iranian intelligence officer, Brig. Gen. Ahmad Sherifi, met two years before the bombing with Hani Abd Rahim Sayegh, a Saudi Shiite arrested in Canada last month and

accused of participating in the bombing.

It quoted the officials as saying the evidence appeared to show a conclusive Iran link although a U.S. official said it would not be conclusive enough for a criminal prosecution. Cohen said ``the FBI has not completed its investigation. More evidence is to be gathered and it would be premature and speculative to try and lay the responsibility at the feet of any country or any particular group."

REUTER

Reut13:18 04-21-97

U.N. envoy Baker set to tackle W.Sahara dispute

RABAT, April 21 (Reuters) - U.N. special envoy James Baker will arrive in Morocco on Wednesday to tackle a 21-year-old conflict which has defied U.N. peace efforts and kept relations between neighbours Morocco and Algeria cool for years.

A Moroccan foreign ministry official said: ``The U.N. envoy is arriving at Casablanca airport around 9 a.m. (0900 GMT) on a commercial flight on Wednesday, not on Tuesday as was thought earlier on."

A U.N. spokesman said last week Baker, envoy for the disputed Western Sahara, would start his visit to the region on Tuesday.

Another Moroccan official said: ``James Baker is expected to be received by King Hassan in Rabat and later to confer with government officials including Interior Minister (Driss) Basri."

Baker, a former U.S. secretary of state whose diplomacy helped convene the 1991 Madrid peace conference on the Middle East, was appointed last month as personal envoy to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Annan has expressed frustration with the failure to hold a U.N.-brokered referendum, originally planned for January 1992, to decide whether the former Spanish colony should be integrated in Morocco or should be independent.

Morocco claims and largely controls the territory, while the Polisario Front seeks independence for the Sahrawi people. The two parties late last year held direct talks in the Moroccan capital, attended by Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed. Diplomats said the talks failed to overcome differences.

The referendum has been delayed by disputes over who should be allowed to vote, and U.N. registering of voters collapsed last year.

Fighting in the territory ended in September 1991 with a U.N.-sponsored ceasefire, which has since been monitored by a U.N. force known as Minurso, whose numbers have been reduced to some 230 military observers and support personnel.

``At this stage, what we know is that Mr Baker is going to visit Rabat, Tindouf, Algiers and Nouakchott (in neighbouring Mauritania)," a Minurso spokeswoman said in Layoune, the capital of Western Sahara.

Tindouf is a main Polisario camp just inside Algeria which has long backed Polisario's claim for independence.

The Security Council last month expressed disappointed at

the lack of progress in organising the referendum and warned that any breach of the ceasefire ``could seriously threaten regional stability."

The Polisario, whose leader Mohamed Abdelaziz said last month war could resume if the U.N. plan was not implemented, has welcomed Baker's appointment.

The U.N. said Baker's visit was to ``make a fresh assessment of the situation," examine obstacles to implementing the settlement plan, and report back to Annan.

Reut12:53 04-21-97

02 2.00-10*

Opponents seek to force Netanyahu indictment

By Susan Sappir

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Opponents of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched an uphill fight in court Monday to try to force his indictment after prosecutors decided not to try him for corruption.

But legal experts said chances the court would force the prosecution to press charges of fraud and breach of trust were slim.

The scandal has sidelined efforts to pull Middle East peace efforts out of deep crisis, but there was no evidence Netanyahu would be any more ready to make concessions than he was before a police report threatened his political career.

Prosecutors said Sunday they lacked sufficient proof to charge him, as recommended in the report, over the appointment of an attorney-general, allegedly as part of a shady deal with a political ally on trial for corruption.

But they cited ``real suspicions" about his role.

Opposition lawmakers and a public watchdog group went to the High Court of Justice Monday demanding Netanyahu be charged, saying the prosecution's decision to close the case despite ``real suspicions" was ``highly unreasonable."

``This government lost its moral basis. We believe all personalities concerned should be indicted and this is the reason we are here to appeal to the Supreme Court," leftist legislator Yossi Sarid, who filed one of three court challenges, said.

But a former justice minister from the opposition Labor party, David Libai, doubted the appeals would succeed.

``I don't think the High Court will overturn the conclusions of the state attorney," Libai told army radio. ``The chance the appeals will succeed to force an indictment is very slim."

Netanyahu said in a televised speech immediately after prosecutors issued their 75-page report: ``The bottom line is I didn't commit any crime and the attorney-general confirmed that."

He apologized for any mistakes in the January appointment, but said the media and opposition had tried to use the affair ``to overthrow the government."

Prosecutors decided only Netanyahu's political ally, Aryeh Deri, already facing corruption charges, should be indicted. A Channel One television report in January spurred the police inquiry by alleging Deri coerced the government into appointing as attorney-general Roni Bar-On, who would then offer him a plea

bargain.

Bar-On quit 12 hours after taking office amid a public outcry that he was unqualified for the job.

A poll of 502 Israelis for Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper after the prosecutor's report found 58 percent did not think Netanyahu had to resign over the affair while 40 percent thought he did. Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat called the scandal an internal Israeli matter but warned Netanyahu not to take actions against Palestinians to try to divert attention from his problems at home.

Immediately after the prosecutors's report, however, Netanyahu launched into a defense of policies the Palestinians say have brought the peace process to a halt.

He reaffirmed his decision to build new Jewish housing in a sector of Jerusalem Israel captured in 1967, underscoring the difficulty of the task facing Washington as key Middle East broker in reconciling Israeli and Palestinian positions.

The Palestinians see the new housing as preempting talks on Jerusalem. Israel has declared the whole city its eternal, undivided capital but the Palestinians want the eastern sector as capital of their own future state.

Israeli troops wounded five Palestinians Monday in a clash in the West Bank village of Sourif where the Israeli army wanted to demolish the home of a resident suspected of involvement in killing several Israelis over two years.

Within his own coalition, Netanyahu hoped to satisfy two cabinet ministers who had threatened to quit over the scandal when he announced he was forming a new advisory committee on senior appointments and government procedures.

His spokesman said Netanyahu decided to set up the committee after consulting Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky and Finance Minister Dan Meridor.

Sharansky, head of the seven-member Yisrael ba-Aliya party, and Meridor, of Netanyahu's own Likud party, both withdrew their threats to bolt after prosecutors released their report.

REUTER

Reut13:08 04-21-97

India's new PM promises free market will continue

By Nelson Graves

NEW DELHI, India (Reuters) - India's new prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral took power Monday after a three-week crisis, promising to press ahead with open-market economic reforms and pursue peace talks with old foe Pakistan.

In his maiden policy speech, Gujral moved swiftly to allay concerns he might slow down the reforms that have opened the world's second most populous nation behind China, with 920 million inhabitants, to trade and investment.

The 77-year-old Marxist-turned-social democrat threw his support behind a landmark budget that revived stock markets when it was introduced in February but had been held hostage by the political crisis.

In a sign of his commitment to continuity, he stepped up efforts to lure the architect of the budget, departing finance minister P. Chidambaram, into his council of ministers.

Gujral, a veteran statesman and two-time foreign minister, gave every indication the government's goals had changed very little despite three weeks of turmoil which toppled previous prime minister H.D. Deve Gowda and brought India to the brink of mid-term polls.

“It is business as usual,” the goateed, bespectacled prime minister, who made his political start when India was still a socialist economy, told business leaders hours after he assumed office in a ceremony at the Presidential Palace, former home of Britain's imperial viceroys.

“India can look forward to the continuation of reform and programs, and its deepening and widening.”

His reassurances shored up stock markets, which had had their fill of uncertainty since March 30 when Congress party president Sitaram Kesri unexpectedly withdrew his support for Deve Gowda.

The Bombay bourse index, confident Chidambaram's budget would make it safely through parliament, surged 2.8 percent to close at a provisional 3,799.79 points.

Gujral pledged to continue the policy of building better relations with India's neighbors including old foe Pakistan. India's neighbors were pleased.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called Gujral a “genuine friend,” Pakistani newspapers were fulsome in praise and Sri Lanka's President Chandrika Kumaratunga said “there could be no more fitting choice to lead India in this, its 50th anniversary year of independence.”

Gujral reappointed all but five ministers from Deve Gowda's government to their same posts, leaving 35 in place.

The five outsiders included four from Chidambaram's Tamil Maanila Congress party, which Saturday said it would not join the government because the 15-party United Front passed over its leader G.K. Moopanar in choosing a new prime minister.

But the alliance, keen to patch up the embarrassing split, sought to woo back Moopanar and Chidambaram, who was Deve Gowda's most articulate spokesman for free-market reforms, which leftwing United Front partners still find hard to swallow. Moopanar showed signs of wavering, saying it was up to his party colleagues to decide whether to join the cabinet.

Gujral kept the finance portfolio for himself so that he could give it back to Chidambaram if he returned to the fold. The new prime minister, set to face a vote of confidence in parliament Tuesday, was assured victory because he had the support of the United Front's 178 votes in the 542-member lower house as well as Congress's 140.

While Gujral has established a coordination committee aimed at improving communication between the United Front and Congress, his alliance is still beholden to the uneasy ally who toppled Deve Gowda.

Opposition rivals predicted a rocky road for the head of the center-left coalition, which came close to rupturing during three days of frantic lobbying by ambitious prime ministerial aspirants.

“The prime minister is likely to have a trying time to keep

heterogenous elements together," K.L. Sharma, a spokesman for the rightwing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party, said.

``I gave the last government one year in office," BJP president L.K. Advani said. ``And I don't give them any more."
REUTER

Reut12:08 04-21-97 Taleban, opposition trade claims on fighting
By Sayed Salahuddin

KABUL, Afghanistan (Reuter) - The Islamic Taleban movement said Monday it had defeated its foes in the eastern provinces, but Afghan sources said opposition forces were holding a key town not far from a provincial capital in the east.

``The revolts of the opponents of the Islamic State (of Afghanistan) have been all defeated and there is no longer any possible danger," Amir Khan Mutaqi, the Taleban information and culture minister, told reporters.

He was responding to an opposition report Saturday, which said opposition forces had killed nine Taleban fighters while repelling an attack in Kunar province, northeast of Kabul. But Afghan sources quoted by the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said forces led by Abdullah Jan, former governor of Laghman province, were holding the town of Tarang, six miles from the provincial capital of Mehtar Lam.

The sources said Taleban artillery had been in action for the past two days as part of efforts to recapture Tarang. They said fighting was continuing in Kunar, but had no details. Factions loyal to former President Burhanuddin Rabbani have recently launched attacks on the Taleban in eastern provinces captured by the fundamentalist Islamic militia last year, but Mutaqi said the opposition was much weaker than it claimed. ``Their threats are completely over in Nangarhar and the situation is calm in Laghman. There is no danger in Kunar either, but occasionally the hideouts of the enemy are firing shells from the mountains," he said.

``They are no longer able to launch any offensive and they make false news to boost the morale of their fighters."

Mutaqi said the Taleban had taken about 300 opposition prisoners in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces recently, including the son of former Nangarhar Governor Haji Qadir.

AIP quoted Taleban sources as saying that information provided by Haji Qadir's son, Mohammad Zahir, had enabled the Taleban to seize large amounts of weapons and ammunition in the Surkh Rud area, six miles west of Jalalabad, Friday.

REUTER

Reut13:18 04-21-97

===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: swalitsk (swalitsk@usia.gov@INET@LNGTWY [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:23-APR-1997 10:55:00.00

SUBJECT: Daily Digest: HELMS-BURTON

TO: susan e. walitsky (susan e. walitsky@EOP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Last week's deal between the U.S. and the EU on the Helms-Burton Act

prompted

mostly words of cautious support from European observers. Under the

agreement,

during the next six months, the EU would drop its WTO complaint and the

two

sides would negotiate a common policy on properties seized by the Castro

government and work toward the development of a global policy on

protection of

expropriated properties. For its part, the White House would seek to

persuade

Congress to waive certain key provisions of the legislation. Some

commentators

held that the agreement was a welcome measure, largely because it allows

the EU

and the U.S. to avert--even if temporarily--a major transatlantic

confrontation. Right-of-center Frankfurter Allgemeine said:

"This...approach

will help both sides, since they are not interested in an escalation of

the

controversy and in poisonous and superfluous transatlantic friction."

London's

independent Financial Times agreed, saying: "After a year of fruitless bickering over the politics of trade, the last few days have brought welcome

signs from the U.S. and the EU of a more constructive approach to the issues

dividing them." These opinionmakers also believed the deal served to shield

the fledgling WTO from a "tough blow" which could have occurred had the Clinton

government "withdrawn the responsibility from the WTO by referring to U.S.

national security." A few pundits, while still supportive of the U.S.-EU

measure, were not so sanguine. They cautioned that the success of the compromise is still very uncertain because it involves a "stubborn and self-confident" third party that must "speak the decisive word" on the agreement: the U.S. Congress. Echoing the sentiment of other media voices,

London's centrist Independent contended that President Clinton faces a tough

task with the GOP-dominated legislature, and declared that his ability to

deliver is "far from guaranteed." Complaining that Congress is "controlled" by

the Cuban community in Miami, Havana's own Central Communist Party Granma, in

bitter tones, echoed a similar doubt: "Even if he wanted to, President

Clinton

would be unable to amend a single letter of the legislative monster now

under

assessment, with no guarantees at all." Hamburg's left-of-center weekly

Die

Zeit was the most negative in its assessment of the U.S.-EU agreement.

Calling

it "a strange compromise," the paper charged that the negotiators from

Brussels

and Washington "circumvented with their deal a long overdue test of the

authority of the WTO."

All commentators conveyed a strong dislike for the sanctions policy

embodied in

the Helms-Burton Act, as well in other U.S. legislation imposing

sanctions

against countries such as Iran and Libya. There was agreement among

analysts

that these laws constitute "an example of U.S. interference in other

countries' internal affairs...something which is both inadmissible and

unprecedented in international law." Pointing to the U.S.-EU pact on

Helms-Burton as evidence, however, some writers expressed the hope that

Washington was exhibiting a "lower propensity...to adopt sanctions and

raise

trade tension with its main partners." London's independent weekly

Economist

undertook a broader examination of the U.S.' international trade policy and its role as world leader. Deeming the U.S.-EU plan "an uneasy truce," the paper went on to express concern that the champions of free trade in the U.S. have lost the initiative. "America's trade policy is in disarray.... America deserves, and the rest of the world needs, stronger leadership than this," the paper intoned.

This survey is based on 14 reports from 7 countries, April 13-24.

EDITOR: Diana McCaffrey

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

CUBA: "The Slavery Act"

The excerpts from the "Summons to the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba" in Central Communist Party's Granma read (4/17): "Faced with the internal strengthening of the revolution that this socialist-democracy improvement meant, and with the failure of the Torricelli bill intended to make our people surrender by hunger, the Yankee imperialism passed the Helms-Burton Act, or the Slavery Act, as we all call it. These are wild laws

dictated

by hatred and impotence, which the world rejects and although they

increase

our difficulties, they will never succeed in making Cuba kneel down or

halt.... Meanwhile, solidarity with Cuba has grown worldwide, and

Washington's isolationist attempts have all failed. Never has the voice

of our

nation been more potent as in the last five years, via Fidel's bright

participation in the Iberoamerican and World Summits, and his trips to

various

countries of Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia."

"No Guarantees In Draft Agreement Between EU And U.S."

On the International page of Cuban Central Communist Party Granma

(4/17), a

report datelined Brussels read: "It is no secret that the U.S. Congress

is

controlled by the interests of the U.S. extreme right wing, in infamous

alliance with Miami's annexationist Mafia, which also holds seats in the

U.S.

legislature. Facing such facts, even if he wanted to, President Clinton

would

be unable to amend a single letter of the legislative monster now under

assessment, with no guarantees at all."

"Nothing Has Changed"

An opinion piece in Communist Youth weekly Juventud Rebelde (4/13) remarked that the UN secretary general "is quite optimistic" regarding improved U.S.-Cuba ties, adding, "This happened the same day on which...Clinton told the press in Washington that there would be no changes in his country's policy toward the island. And the latest events prove so. Except the two adjournments to the enforcement of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act, the rest of the evil mechanisms of said law have been started, at full speed....

There is a long list of examples. The latest one is Miami's imprisonment of Spanish entrepreneur Javier Ferreiro, accused of violating the laws of the blockade against the island. Helms-Burton once again. The one they resorted to this week, when they confiscated the plane of Millard Harmon, a 71-year-old man who committed the crime of landing in Havana with medications--penicillin and asthma spray--mainly intended for children. Now they are pressuring the European Union, even more, so that the latter joins their strategy to

internationalize the embargo. No one will dare trade with the island.

What

they fail to say is that their sole and historical goal is to turn Cuba

into

the 51st star of the imperial flag."

CHILE: "Socialism Or Death"

Commentator Maria de la Luz Benavente said (4/14) in financial El Diario,

"The

question is: What are Cuba's chances, in the short term, to advance

toward

democracy? The chances for the liberalization and democratization of the

Cuban

regime are unlikely due to the ideological obstinacy with which the

political

elite has reacted to the current crisis, rejecting

outright...Western-style

democratic practices. In this context, Fidel's predicament seems to be

the

same as he himself formulated: Socialism or death."

EUROPE

GERMANY: "Strange Compromise"

According to an editorial in left-of-center weekly Die Zeit of Hamburg (4/17),

"A strange compromise. The United States ceases to prosecute foreign businessmen whose companies are investing in former American property in

Cuba. For the time being, the respective lines in the Helms-Burton act will

not be enacted. Reciprocally the European Union abstained from its lawsuit at

the WTO against the Helms-Burton Act. So far, so good? Barely. The negotiators from Brussels and Washington circumvented with their deal a long

overdue test of the authority of the WTO. Would the superpowers accept the

ruling of the WTO if important business interests are affected? Most likely

the Americans would not have done it in this particular case and by this they

would have harmed the WTO. Now the question remains open and the road is

clear for the next deal. Most likely over the European Union bananas regulations, which violate the WTO regulations as much as the

Helms-Burton Act

does."

"Cutting The Gordian Knot"

Washington correspondent Dietrich Zwaetz filed the following editorial for

business Handelsblatt of Duesseldorf (4/15), "The talks with Canada's Premier

Jean Chretien...eventually convinced President Clinton...that the United

States has embarked on the wrong path with the Helms-Burton Act. The president realized that a suspension of a certain provision of the Act every

six months...did not help win back too much of the lost prestige of the

United States. Clinton cut the Gordian knot together with the European Union. The question is now not whether and with which majority the U.S.

Congress will soften the catalogue of sanctions within the next six months.

It is much more important whether the United States and Europe enter into a

deeper discussion about extraterritoriality, as EU Commissioner Leon Brittan

wishes. Only such talks can disclose whether the United States wants to give

up permanently its claim on acting as the global trade cop."

"De-Escalation For The Time Being"

Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger said in an editorial in right-of-center

Frankfurter

Allgemeine (4/14): "The Clinton government and the European Union now

have

half a year to settle the conflict about the wretched Helms-Burton

Act....

This negotiation approach will help both sides, since they are not

interested

in an escalation of the controversy and in poisonous and superfluous

transatlantic frictions. It would also have meant a tough blow for the

WTO if

the Clinton government had withdrawn the responsibility from the WTO by

referring to U.S. national security.

"But Washington would also have cut its own flesh by damaging the WTO as

the

guardian of the multilateral trade order--this is an insight that did

not come

one day too early. But we must be careful, since the peace pipe not only

needs

to be smoked, it needs to be filled. The stubborn and self-confident

Congress

has to speak a decisive word, too, since, over the past few months, it

has
subjugated foreign policy to the yoke of U.S. domestic policy. And this
is
why this de-escalation is not definite."

"Cuba Will Fail"

Centrist Darmstaedter Echo (4/14) opined: "Fidel Castro is indefatigably
warning against jettisoning the 'achievements' of socialism in Cuba and
against
falling back to 'hell' which Cuba was before his rule. At the same
time, the
Cuban government is cutting all subsidies to the ill-managed state
industry
and is risking an open and covert unemployment. Cuba is not China--but
Cuba
will fail because of the contradiction to allow market economic but no
political reforms. The question is only when."

BRITAIN: "A Question Of Leadership"

The independent weekly Economist's editorial held (4/18) regarding U.S.
trade

policy: "If a single word can summarize America's view of its role in the world, it is 'leadership.' In international diplomacy, this is not in doubt.

Until recently it was also true in international trade, as America pushed

steadily for global trade liberalization. Now, however, America's trade policy

is in disarray. An uneasy truce has broken out with the European Union over

the Helms-Burton anti-Cuba law. Another war, over the state of dead American

poultry, in which trade bulks large, is disintegrating. And his dream of free

trade in the Americas, beginning with Chile's long-awaited admission to NAFTA,

is still just that.

"In large part, this is Mr. Clinton's fault. But blame also belongs at the

other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. Too many in Congress see trade as a stick

with which to beat the president, not as a route to peace and prosperity.

America deserves, and the rest of the world needs, stronger leadership than

this.... Gone from key committees are trade champions; in their place are

lesser lights. There are still free- traders on the Hill, but they, and

Mr.

Clinton, have lost the initiative. No wonder that when America speaks of

trade, its allies now hear only the North Carolinian tones of Senator

Jesse

Helms."

"U.S. And Europe Close To Deal On Cuba Conflict"

According to the centrist Independent from Brussels (4/14): "While

Friday's

proposed agreement, defusing a threatening clash in the WTO, represents a

major

breakthrough after weeks of tense negotiations, talk of a definitive

settlement

of the Helms-Burton row is still premature.... Even if approved by the

15

member states, the deal is premised on agreement by the U.S. Congress

that

European companies and their executives will be shielded from the effects

of

legislation against Cuba, but also Iran and Libya. President Clinton's

ability

to deliver is far from guaranteed.... In the immediate term, the outline

accord averts an acrimonious E.U.-U.S. confrontation in the WTO."

"Transatlantic Rift More Dangerous Than Threat From Cuba, Iran"

The independent Financial Times said in an editorial (4/14): "After a year of

fruitless bickering over the politics of trade, the last few days have brought

welcome signs from the United States and the EU of a more constructive approach

to the issues dividing them.... The row over America's anti-Cuba law

threatened to impose intolerable strains on the still untried dispute

settlement procedures of the WTO. Governments in the United States and Europe

are thus sensible to seek a way out. The outlines of a face-saving deal are

clear....

"Neither Iran nor Cuba poses as much of a threat to the West as does a serious

transatlantic rift. Both the United States and the EU would do well to

remember that in coming months. For the Clinton administration, that means

taking control of the trade agenda rather than allowing Congress to make the

running. For the EU it means demonstrating greater sensitivity to justified

American concerns."

ITALY: "Washington's Lowered Propensity To Adopt Sanctions"

Leading business-oriented Il Sole 24-Ore (4/24) devoted a full page to an

analysis of the recently reached EU-U.S. compromise on Title 4 of the

Helms-Burton Act. Besides reporting on the presence of foreign

companies,

including Italian ones, in Cuba and their exports there, the article also

looks

at the D'Amato Bill and reports on EU-U.S. negotiations on it. It then

noted:

"But the EU-U.S. commercial/diplomatic truce goes beyond sanctions on

Cuba,

Libya and Iran and produces a wider commercial impact on companies

operating in

international markets. It reflects the lower propensity by Washington,

once

the election year ended, to adopt sanctions and raise trade tension with

its

main partners. American companies...are also putting increasing pressure

on

Washington not to mix business and foreign policy."

DENMARK: "Victory For WTO"

Center-right Berlingske Tidende said (4/21): "The American government is apparently in the process of discovering that it is not realistic to support legislation which interferes with other countries' domestic policies. The so-called Helms-Burton Law make it possible for American citizens to initiate legal action against foreign companies--also Danish companies--which trade with countries boycotted by the United States. Currently this applies to Iran, Libya and Cuba. The EU and several other countries have protested against the law and have brought the case before the new global free trade organization, WTO. The protest has now, however, been suspended for six months, while the president attempts to gain Congressional permission to delay the implementation of the law, or at least delay the implementation of parts of it. The present arrangement is better than nothing, but far from being satisfactory. The American law is an example of U.S. interference in other countries' internal affairs and that is something which is both inadmissible and unprecedented in international law. Cuba, Iran and Iraq are all terrible dictatorships,

but the

UN is the only organization that can initiate political binding sanctions

on

behalf of its member countries. The United States is, of course, at

liberty to

boycott Cuba, but it should not attempt to force other countries to

follow the

same course.

"The U.S. retreat, however small, is a victory for the WTO. Unlike its

predecessor, GATT, the WTO has been afforded the power to judge cases

which

involve barriers to free trade. Fear of being found wanting by the WTO

must be

seen as a contributory factor when discussing the changed American

standpoint.

It augurs well for the free trade in the future and the EU should not

hesitate

from resuming its protest if the United States does not provide

sufficient

concessions."

SPAIN: "Rejecting Helms-Burton Is The Right Way To Go"

Independent El Mundo's editorial held (4/17): "At the urging of various

states, including Spain, the EU has introduced a resolution which would

reactivate automatically (the Helms-Burton complaint against the United

States) in the event that Washington places sanctions on a European business.... It would have been preferable if Washington had committed itself to overturning the law...but its commitment to not apply the most problematic articles...can be considered minimally sufficient. Spain is not only interested in the issue for international trade. Cuba isn't just a market for Spain. Spain's democracy has the duty...to help the Cuban people, a simple objective to conceptualize but difficult to put into practice--because it requires a way to do it without supporting the dictatorship that tortures its people, but also to find a way to move away from the dictatorship without punishing its victims. The rejection of Helms-Burton is, without doubt, the right way to go."

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===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====

ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 0 00:00:00.00

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RFC-822-headers:

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id <01II2ZVQ8300002NQB@PMDf.EOP.GOV> for "susan e. walitsky"@oa.eop.gov; Thu,

24 Apr 1997 12:00:56 -0500 (EST)

Received: from gatekeeper.eop.gov by PMDF.EOP.GOV (PMDf V5.0-4 #6879)

id <01II2ZVOTZDC0034ME@PMDf.EOP.GOV> for susan_e._walitsky@oa.eop.gov; Thu,
24 Apr 1997 12:00:54 -0500 (EST)

Received: from Connect2 Message Router by usia.gov via Connect2-SMTP 4.20B.6;
Thu, 24 Apr 1997 11:58:51 -0400
Organization: USIA
X-Mailer: Connect2-SMTP 4.20B.6 MHS/SMF to SMTP Gateway
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RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: USIA_Media_Reaction (USIA_Media_Reaction/R__MR/WASHDC/USIA/GOV.USIA@notes1.usia.gov@INET@LNGTWY [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:23-APR-1997 11:05:00.00

SUBJECT: Daily Digest: NORTH KOREA: 'HOW HUNGRY IS IT FOR PEACE?'

TO: Doris O. Matsui (Doris O. Matsui@eop [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

Foreign media analysts pondered what the future might hold for the Korean peninsula, now that talks in New York--involving the U.S., South and North Korea--have failed to produce a commitment from Pyongyang that it will participate in four-party talks (including China) aimed at bringing a formal end to the Korean War. Amid widespread reports of famine in North Korea and recent statements by North Korean defector Hwang Jang-yop expressing his perception that the North may use "its formidable armed forces" against South Korea, few editors were sanguine about the prospects for peace and many debated on how best to "engage" or "deal with" the North Korean regime. The press in South Korea offered varied assessments of the North's actions and whether or not the reports of food shortages in the North have been "exaggerated." Some observers advocated "civilian food aid" to the North Korean people, while others voiced suspicion that food coming into the North from abroad "will

fatten high officials only" or, worse yet, the military. Seoul's moderate Hankook Ilbo applauded the U.S. State Department for urging North Korea to reduce the size of its military, stating: "From now on, all efforts connected with food aid and the opening of dialogue channels should be geared toward having the North reduce its military." The question of providing food aid to North Korea was also hotly debated in the Japanese media, with a number of editors focusing on North Korea's alleged kidnapping of a Japanese school girl in Niigata 20 years ago. Tokyo's conservative Sankei judged giving food aid to a "kidnapper" state "unnecessary," and noted, "Even though Pyongyang says it is on the verge of starvation, its negotiating stance is far from desperate.... There is no need to be hasty."

Analysts from Australia to Germany pointed to the "tinderbox" atmosphere on the Korean peninsula. Munich's Sueddeutsche Zeitung, for example, warned, "The failure of the talks in New York again demonstrated how unpredictable and dangerous the regime in Pyongyang still is.... The danger remains that the North could risk a new war--be it because Kim Jong-Il or his military leaders feel they are being backed up against the wall, or because they

overestimate

their own forces." The top-circulation, moderately conservative Bangkok

Post

likewise cautioned: "As long as the Pyongyang regime refuses to join

peace

talks, its decision is effectively to continue to refuse any search for

peace.

This can only be taken as a distressing sign that North Korea intends to

continue its secretive activities...aimed at destabilizing the Korean

peninsula

and all of East Asia."

Recent releases from Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency,

meanwhile, revealed that food supplies in the North were not so limited

as to

keep Kim Jong-Il from throwing a banquet for overseas Koreans in honor of

his

father, the late Kim Il-Sung. The latter was "a legendary man" who shared

the

"weal and woe" of his people under the motto, "One is sure to win if he

believes in and depends upon the people," the release declared.

This survey is based 56 reports from 13 countries, March 13 - April 23.

EDITOR: Kathleen J. Brahney

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

NORTH KOREA: "'Juche' Seminars Held Abroad"

A release from government-owned Korean Central News Agency said (4/21):

"National seminars were held in (Tanzania and Nigeria)...on the occasion

of the

birth anniversary of President Kim Il-Sung.... Yemi Oyeneye, Chairman of

the

Nigerian National Committee for the study of the Juche idea, spoke at a

national seminar of the Juche idea study organisations in Nigeria. He

said

that Secretary Kim Jong-Il, with a clairvoyant scientific intelligence,

leads

the revolution without any slightest deviation and plans and pushes ahead

with

all work in a revolutionary, bold and big way."

"A Banquet For Overseas Koreans In Pyongyang"

Government-owned Korean Central News Agency (4/16) said, "Comrade Kim

Jong-Il

took care that a banquet was given for overseas Koreans on April 15, the

birth

anniversary of the Great Leader President Kim Il-Sung. Kim Yong-Sun,

chairman

of the Reunification Policy Committee of the Supreme People's Assembly...

said

in his toast that the respected General Kim Jong-Il arranged a grand banquet for the overseas Koreans who have come to the homeland with deep reverence for the president. The president's was a great life of a legendary man, a peerlessly great leader who led the revolution and construction to brilliant victory, sharing weal and woe with the people through trials under the motto, 'One is sure to win if he believes in and depends upon the people,' Kim Yong-Sun noted."

"VOA Broadcasts--Useless Propaganda"

Official Korean Central News Agency put forth this view (3/13): "The United States has recently begun broadcasting 'Radio Free Asia' in Korean. This is part of an ideological and cultural infiltration to bring under control the Asian countries that are building an independent new society free from imperialist domination and subjugation.... The broadcasting of the radio in Korean indicates that the United States has not renounced its policy of antagonizing and stifling (North Korea) and is pursuing it in a more undisguised way.... No one can deny that South Korean society has turned into

a den of criminals under the sway of corruption and social vices...because of the influence of the 50-odd years of U.S. military occupation and American 'values' and decadent culture. No matter what false propaganda the United States may spread over 'Radio Free Asia,' the Korean people will feel stronger wrath and hatred for the United States and harden their confidence in their ideology, culture and cause."

SOUTH KOREA: "Pyongyang's Double Standard"

Independent Dong-A Ilbo asserted (4/23): "North Korea made unreasonable demands that food aid be provided first and that the United States ease economic sanctions against it. These demands were not resolved and the New York meeting was postponed. This is a disappointing development. Although the four-party talks are not entirely off, they certainly look uncertain at this point. The North is practicing its brinkmanship strategy again, and we must be especially careful with its double-standard tactics.... The four-party talks should not be used as a conduit for the North's food negotiations."

"Three-Party Meetings Pretty Much Bungled"

According to anti-establishment Hankyoreh Shinmun (4/23): "The New York meetings ended without producing the result we expected. Nevertheless, recognition by the North of the need for four-party talks and its agreement in principle to the proposal was an achievement. Another positive development was that both Koreas are now trying to increase contacts with each other....

"(But) the North's secretive negotiating style aggravated the situation, making a solution more difficult. For its part, South Korea failed to show flexibility and was only interested in submission by the North. These limits on both sides have long derailed efforts to find a peace mechanism, distorting them into long, hard fights. The result is that the South and the North are stuck in fruitless competition. The four-party talks won't do much for us if there is no improvement in the relationship between the two Koreas."

"It Is Getting Too Late To Help"

An op-ed piece in anti-establishment Hankyoreh Shinmun (4/22) queried:
"What

do the starving people of the North have to do with the four-party talks?

The

South Korean government has prohibited public contributions to our

Northern

brethren, even though the government recently agreed to allow civilian

food

aid. What is the government's message?... Food aid with all kinds of

preconditions tagged on will only hurt the recipient's pride.... Only

food aid

will demonstrate that we are morally better positioned than the North. It

may

well be the only opportunity we have to control the issue. The government

has

not presented any reasonable justification for why we should miss this

opportunity."

"On Helping North Korea"

In the opinion of conservative Chosun Ilbo (4/21): "The campaign to help

North

Korea is spreading. The problem is that some are not bothering to

investigate

what the best way is to help. They say 'Let's just give food,' and even

point

their fingers at the government for 'blocking' the aid effort. This kind

of

attitude has often caused the North to misjudge and continue tactics that

ridicule us.... We suspect that its food shortages are not as bad as have been reported, or that it is perverse enough to ignore its starving people. Unless the North dispels our suspicions that food coming in from abroad will fatten its high officials only, the campaign to help with Its food shortages won't get the support from our public."

"Hwang Jang-yop In Seoul"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo (4/21): "Our main interest in Hwang is the information he has on North Korea. The United States and Japan have made direct and indirect demands that they be allowed to participate in debriefing

Hwang.... If the United States wants information on the North, we can always relay it to them for the sake of our solidarity. The South Korean government

would be wise to not take advantage of Hwang's defection politically.

That, however, does not mean that things must remain secret, because the public has a right to know the results of questioning of Hwang."

"Hwang Jang-yop: Long Journey To Freedom"

Government-owned Seoul Shinmun (4/21): "The United States and Japan have both expressed a desire to question Hwang. Although it is natural for them to show interest in him, we disapprove of U.S. participation in the interrogation process.... If the United States cannot trust us, and if that is why it wants to question Hwang, what we face here is a need for the United States, Japan and South Korea to build a formation exchanging mechanism that is acceptable to all sides."

"U.S. Will Conduct Equidistant Diplomacy"

Independent Dong-A Ilbo (4/19) wondered: "How is the United States looking at the Korea issue? At this point it does not look as if U.S. policy will change much. With improved prospects for talks increasingly stabilizing this peninsula, the United States will continue to pursue its 'soft-landing' policy...(and) will try to maintain its current level of influence over both Koreas....

"If the four-party talks show quick progress, the United States will be in an advantageous position to conduct an 'equidistant diplomacy' toward both Koreas and will be able to manage both sides effectively. This new development will be a significant advantage to the United States in terms of its regional diplomacy. Chinese influence, which will inevitably grow in this region in the new century, would be checked by a stabilized Korean peninsula. With a stabilized Korea and China's influence blocked, the United States will also be able to keep Japan inside the U.S.-Japan security system."

"Rice First, Or Dialogue: A Tedious Battle"

According to moderate Hankook Ilbo (4/18): "North Korea did not quite say that it would agree to the four-party talks, nor did the April 16 New York meeting look like much more than a 'food session' in which both sides merely repeated their former stands. After the meeting, the chief of the North Korean delegation stated that there was progress, which was a positive signal. Both the United States and South Korea stuck to their position that the North

had to

come to the four-party talks before food aid could be provided. When the meeting

resumes on Friday, the North is expected to agree to the four-party dialogue."

"North Korean Famine And Military Reduction"

In the view of independent Dong-A Ilbo (4/17): "It is highly significant that

the U.S. government raised the issue of North Korea's need to reduce its military just before the opening of the four-party talks. In so doing, the

United States has pointed to the core of the issue.... The presence of separate North and South military forces consisting of over two million men

poses the greatest obstacle to the important goal of easing tension and achieving peace on this peninsula. A reduced military would greatly enhance

the chances of reaching that goal, and decreased military costs would be the

best method to accomplish it. The four-party talks should deal with this issue. Meanwhile, the North should first use the food it has stockpiled for

military use to feed its starving people."

"'Trust' Emerges As The Main Issue Of The Four-Party Talks"

Anti-establishment Hankyoreh Shinmun commented (4/17): "Reducing military costs is likely to become one of the main topics at the four-party talks. Indeed, it is especially important in terms of restoring trust toward each other.... In addition to easing tensions on this peninsula, the North's agreeing to take actions to help restore trust would greatly enhance the environment for food aid as well as economic cooperation."

"North Korea Should Solve its Food Problem With Military Reductions"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo opined (4/17): "When the State Department urged North Korea to cut down the size of its military, the United States finally saw the North Korea issue in a realistic way.... The United States' dialogue with North Korea increases our leverage over the North. From now on, all efforts connected with food aid and the opening of dialogue channels should be geared toward having the North reduce its military."

"Crisis Management Plan Needed For North Korea"

Pro-business Joong-Ang Ilbo cautioned (4/14): "With several high-ranking U.S. officials, including Vice President Al Gore, agreeing about the possibility of

the North's early collapse, it seems that the U.S. intelligence and security communities share similar views. Plans--ranging from how to deal with North Korean refugees to an entire crisis management blueprint dealing with a collapse situation--should already be in place. We must bear in mind that the possibility of military provocation remains high.... Ways to prevent our Northern brethren from starving must be prepared."

"How Can We Verify The North's Food Shortages?"

Government-owned Seoul Shinmun declared (4/14) editorialized that "Our problem is that the shortages have never been proven and we do not have means to confirm how bad the situation really is. This confusion has been further aggravated by a new theory that the North may pursue war even if food is coming in from abroad.... As a result of food shortages, the North indeed could either be simply too hungry to wage war or be forced to provoke a crisis. Without having the means at this point to confirm any of the allegations, how the situation is read depends entirely on how one looks at it."

JAPAN: "Dealing With North Korea Requires Patience"

Conservative Sankei had this to say (4/23): "Diplomatic moves over North Korea have become hurried and pointless. Although international relief including food aid for Pyongyang is flowing because of the reports that North Korea is on the brink of starvation, preliminary talks in New York between North Korea, the United States and South Korea on four-party peace negotiations have fallen through again.

"North Korea is hinting it will not attend the four-party talks if it does not receive additional food from the United States and South Korea. Although Pyongyang says it is on the verge of starvation, its negotiating stance is far from desperate.... From the beginning, North Korea has always been more eager to establish direct links with the United States and less than enthusiastic about four-party talks for a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula. Even if the United States and South Korea 'force' an 'unwilling' North Korea to participate in the four-party talks, nothing positive can be expected from such talks. Only when the North decides it needs to secure international food aid

by whatever means possible will Pyongyang be ready to compromise and accept the peace talks. There is no need to be hasty."

"North Korea Should Promote Dialogue In A Positive Manner"

Liberal Mainichi opined (4/21): "North Korean Workers' Party Secretary Hwang Jang-yop's arrival in the South Korean capital after two months of diplomatic bargaining showed the complexities of the international politics between South and North Korea.... Hwang warned of the danger of the North launching a war on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang may react strongly to Hwang's statement.... We believe that the Hwang defection case should no longer be used as an excuse to intensify the confrontation between the two Koreas.... The real objective should be direct dialogue through which peace can be restored and the Korean peninsula reunified. Nothing can be resolved until the two countries sit down together and start talking. The United States is beginning to become irritated with North Korea's slow and indecisive response to U.S. and South Korean

calls
to attend four-party talks on peace on the Korean peninsula. In Japan,
concern
is growing over alleged North Korean abduction of Japanese citizens.
North
Korea should put its own house in order quickly, and engage in dialogue
with
these countries in order to settle pending issues in a positive manner."

"Japan Should Clarify Its Position Over Food Aid For North Korea"

Top-circulation, moderate Yomiuri (4/16) held, "North Korea needs foreign
food
aid. This is obvious from film clips and other reports of the food crisis
that
country faces. Nevertheless, most Japanese find it difficult to respond so
easily to appeals from the North for food aid. Suspicions surfaced
earlier
this year that North Korea had a hand in the abduction of a Japanese
junior
high schoolgirl, who disappeared in Niigata 20 years ago. Six similar
cases
remain unaccounted for.... Another matter of concern is the report,
confirmed
by the Foreign Ministry, that Rodong-1 missiles have been re-deployed.
The
missiles could pose a serious threat to peace and stability in East Asia.

Doubts remain whether international food aid reaches North Koreans
civilians....

"Pyongyang must respond in good faith to allay suspicions about its past
deeds.... Working closely with the United States and South Korea, the
Japanese
government should reiterate its basic policy toward North Korea and
carefully
consider steps to be taken in this matter."

"Japan Should Give Food To Neighbor In Need"

Liberal Mainichi said (4/9), "Sooner or later, Japan will be asked to give
food
aid, too. Japan should then express its willingness to give food aid to a
neighbor in need. At the same time, Japan should urge Pyongyang not to
develop
missiles capable of attacking Japan and request that North Korea explain
the
circumstances of the alleged abduction of a Japanese schoolgirl (about 20
years
ago)."

"Food Aid For 'Kidnapper' State Unnecessary"

Conservative Sankei published this analysis (3/14): "Suspicion has grown
that

North Korea ordered the abduction of a Japanese junior high school girl from Niigata 20 years ago.... Japan should not follow the lead of the United States and South Korea, which have contributed 10 million dollars and 6 million dollars respectively to the World Food Program (for North Korea). Neither should it participate in talks to determine Japan's share of financial aid for KEDO.... Needless to say, it is strategically important to maintain stability on the Korean peninsula. But there is no need to give humanitarian aid to North Korea, an inhumane state which continues to refuse the release of those kidnapped by North Korean agents."

AUSTRALIA: "Potential War In Korea Rattles The U.S"

An op-ed piece in the liberal Canberra Times (4/15): "The U.S. forces in the Far East are not a safeguard against aggression, but an instrument of blackmail in the hands of the North Koreans, who are demanding ever larger amounts of food aid from the United States and Japan because they know that in the last resort neither dare refuse.... The strategic dilemma in which the United States finds itself is acute. The lack of a secure defense against missile attack renders its forces, notwithstanding their otherwise high

level

of technological sophistication, impotent in the face of the possibility

of a

regional war in north-east Asia."

PHILIPPINES: "Koreas: Potential Tinderbox"

The independent Manila Standard (4/22) said, "It is hoped that the two

Koreas

would finally close the books on the 1950-53 Korean War by replacing the

shaky

armistice with a more enduring peace treaty. The world should hope that

the

North Korean leaders would see the wisdom of joining the four-party

talks.

Negotiations could stave off the impending famine, ease tensions and make

possible the idea of a united Korea. An escalation of mass hunger and

desperation could prompt a proud and defiant Pyongyang to engages the

South

rashly in a show of force. The starving masses, unrestrained by

government

troops, could pour into South Korea in huge numbers.... The Korean

peninsula

is a tinderbox that has the potential to cause grave destruction and

suffering."

"Facing Famine"

The independent Manila Times judged (4/17): "A big part of North Korea's economic and financial crisis should be laid at the doorstep of the one million-strong armed forces.... This bloc, admittedly, gets the best accommodations, food and clothing, even while the rest of the country is famished.... But peace talks should be treated separately from what is clearly a humanitarian issue. The World Food Program has a proven record of ensuring that food donations reach their intended recipients."

"The Philippines And The Two Koreas"

The independent Manila Standard said this in an editorial (4/4): "Part of the reason President Ramos agreed to have (North Korean defector) Hwang Jang-yop...stay longer in the Philippines is to help reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula and help bring about a reconciliation of the Korean people in the two countries.... A reunification of the two nations would be costly to South Korea in the short run, but would, looking down the road, help promote development and stability on the peninsula and the region."

"Juche Fails"

Antonio Abaya had this to say in the conservative, second largest circulation

Philippine Star (3/22): "Hwang Jang-yop...is a major catch for South Korea

because he was a leading figure in the reclusive regime of the late...Kim Il

Sung. He was...the chief architect of the hermit kingdom's national ideology

of 'Juche,' or 'Self Reliance,' which is now being stood on its head as North

Korea faces widespread starvation following two years of devastating floods.... The main Filipino admirers of Hwang's Juche...should be given the

opportunity to interact with Hwang and hear from no less than the architect of

Juche why it failed."

"Philippines Plays 'Third Man' In Two Koreas' Squabble"

Former ambassador Oscar S. Villadolid had this to say in the independent Manila

Standard (3/19): "There is a dangerous catch to the...dangerous diplomatic

game the Philippines has decided to play. Allowing Hwang a 'transit

point' (in the Philippines) as requested by Beijing and South Korea would ensure his departure from China, and this may earn for the Philippines a lifetime of enmity, if not hatred, from the unpredictable communist overlords in Pyongyang. With its huge armed forces...and modern weaponry to boot, its displeasure toward us may eventually translate into numerous clandestine arms shipments to the remaining insurgents in our country."

THAILAND: "North Korea Risks Its Own Survival"

The lead editorial of top-circulation, moderately conservative Bangkok Post commented (4/21): "North Korea's decision to renege on its own promise (by refusing to show up for three-way talks with the United States and South Korea in New York) once again can only be viewed with worry and even some alarm. As long as the Pyongyang regime refuses to join peace talks, its decision is effectively to continue to refuse any search for peace. This can only be taken as a distressing sign that North Korea intends to continue its secretive activities. These are, in essence, aimed at destabilizing both the Korean peninsula and all of East Asia.... North Korea has two honorable courses, and

if it expects respect from the world it must choose one of them, quickly. The first is to accept the U.S.-South Korea offer of peace talks, including China.... The second acceptable choice is for North Korea to reject the U.S.-South Korean offer and make one of its own. Such an offer must address security issues, including the fears among many of North Korea's neighbors that it intends to renew war. It must also include hard decisions about Pyongyang's secretive but known attempts to build nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them.... A North Korean decision to negotiate will be well received, and Pyongyang knows this. Similarly, North Korea must know it will receive no reward for continuing to be recalcitrant. Each time Pyongyang backs down on one of its promises, it increases the tension and threat of violence. North Korea can become respectable if it negotiates. By continuing to delay, it is only risking its own survival."

"North Korea: How Hungry Is It For Peace?"

The independent, English-language Nation editorialized (4/18), "The history of Korean negotiations suggests that any diplomatic gains will not come easy.

"Despite their reservations, the U.S.-led allies must persist in using the opportunity presented by the crisis in North Korea to search for a solution.

Much is at stake and not only from the threat of famine to North Korea's

22

million people. Successful talks including China, South Korea, the United States and North Korea could finally end the technical war that has divided

the peninsula for four decades and replace the long-standing armistice with a

peace treaty. It is in nobody's interest to let North Korea implode, unleashing instability, massive refugee flows and unpredictable reactions from

Pyongyang.... There is no doubt about the self-serving nature of Pyongyang's

regime and the huge gap in trust that needs to be bridged before real progress

can be made. The West, led by the United States, is slowly making those steps

with increased offers of aid. It could move further by proposing a comprehensive deal in which it would promise guaranteed food aid and an easing

of U.S. trade sanctions. But in return, Pyongyang must commit itself to redeploying the massive assortment of troops and arms along the border, and

begin doing it quickly."

"U.S. And Asia"

Tosapon Kraipan commented in elite Siam Post (4/12): "The United States is now utilizing all means at its disposal to persuade North Korea to enter into peace negotiations with South Korea... If North Korea complies, leading to the signing of a peace treaty, unification of the two Koreas may be possible.

Pyongyang will not be able to resist the strain the famine (and mismanagement) have brought on the regime for too long. It will eventually be forced to abandon socialism and to embrace democracy.... When that day comes, North Korea will not be different from today's Russia, which is forced by circumstances to unconditionally follow the U.S.s' every lead... Then, the

United States could divert its attention to seriously negotiating with China on the issues of Taiwan, human rights and freedom of Hong Kong residents. If this scenario works out accordingly, it would not be difficult for the United States to take total and undisputable control of Asia."

"Warning Shots From North Korea"

Elite Siam Post's Tosapon Kraipan commented (4/11), "North Korean troops' exchanging of warning shots with their South Korean rivals at the demilitarized zone shortly before U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen flew to the area...was intended to be seen as a challenge to both the United States and South Korea.... (But) North Korea is not currently in the position to challenge anyone.... It may be oblivious to the fact that, by acting this way, it has played into the hands of its adversaries. First, U.S.-South Korean ties, military and otherwise, will be strengthened. Second, the United States will have an excuse not to withdraw its troops from the Korean peninsula and North Korea will continue to be branded as a confirmed pariah and ostracized."

EUROPE

BRITAIN: "Keep Talking To North Korea"

The independent weekly Economist told its readers in an editorial (4/18):

"Some countries are hard to help. North Korea is about the hardest of all.

Its usually secretive regime has admitted that some children have died from

malnutrition. Yet even as North Korea extends its begging bowl, it continues

to bite the hands trying to feed its hungry people.... So what to make of North Korea's expected 'yes' to a joint American-South Korean proposal for four-way peace talks...that could ease tensions at one of the world's most dangerous frontiers? Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst.

Indeed, the biggest worry is that it may already be too late to prop up North Korea.

By all means, hope for a 'soft landing' for its crumbling economy. But be prepared for a crash."

"North Korea Starves"

In the judgment of the liberal Guardian (4/16): "There are strategic arguments

for keeping food and the peace talks linked, but it would be unwise only to

dole out the bare minimum. This is a humanitarian issue and there is no reason

why the people of North Korea should be punished for living under a fantasy

cult regime. Nor is the strategy a sound one: None of North Korea's neighbors--least of all South Korea--wants the country to implode. A collapse

of the regime would produce a huge refugee problem, and possibly internal strife as well--perhaps even a last-breath military provocation. Much

better

to feed the generals and the people, and give the solution time to emerge."

"Chinese See Piles Of Dead Children In North Korea"

Under the above headline, the conservative Times ran this report from its China

correspondent in Dandong, on the North Korean border (3/18): "Chinese truck

drivers ferrying grain supplies to North Korea say they have seen corpses of

children lying abandoned, and describe scenes of hunger and deprivation in the

world's last Stalinist state.... Analysts predict that North Korea could collapse in two years, with chaos similar to that in Albania, another state in

the Stalinist mode."

GERMANY: "Helpless, Unpredictable Pyongyang Plays A Hazardous Game"

Gebhard Hielbscher maintained in an editorial in centrist Sueddeutsche Zeitung

of Munich (4/23): "The failure of the talks in New York again demonstrated

how unpredictable and dangerous the regime in Pyongyang still is. As long as

North Korea refuses an open dialogue, we must assume that it does not accept

South Korea as a partner of detente. Obviously, Pyongyang continues to see

Seoul as an opponent that needs to be outmaneuvered and possibly eliminated.

Thus the danger remains that the North could risk a new war--be it because Kim

Jong-Il or his military leaders feel they are being backed up against the wall,

or because they overestimate their own forces. South Korea and its allies

must always be prepared for such danger. U.S. satellite pictures showing that

North Korea has deployed medium-range missiles underscore this threat. It would be irresponsible behavior to dismiss such moves as a red herring.

"We can only speculate about the reasons for the cancellation of the talks.... But because of North Korean defector Hwang Jang-yop, Seoul and Washington now have a better picture of the situation in North Korea....

It is much more important to learn how seriously Kim Jong-il and his generals take the current food crisis. The breakdown of the New York talks gives reason

to assume that Pyongyang believes to have more latitude than pictures of downtrodden people offer. If it is clear that considerable parts of

foreign

food aid lands in army depots or with leadership cadres, the donor

countries

should insist on supervising the distribution of food, since the

suffering of

the people would than only be prolonged."

RUSSIA: "China May Follow Japan's Path"

Reformist weekly Moskovskiye Novosti's (# 16, 4/22) ran this comment by

Lev

Prichinin: "Only very naive people might think that the United States,

Japan

and South Korea have been forging stronger strategic ties among themselves

with

the sole purpose of fending off Communist North Korea. Rather, they are

preparing for a cold war in the Pacific, with China--still (a Communist)

'people's,' republic, but with its economy growing fast--ready to attack

new

markets. There is no guarantee that the Chinese will not follow the path

of

Japanese economic expansion, in a way that might pale anything the

Americans

and the Japanese have seen.... Russia and China may not be allies, but,

having

similar geopolitical concerns, they can hardly be enemies either."

"Wars Come And Go, U.S. Interests Remain"

Ivan Shomov contended in reformist Segodnya (4/8): "The United States'

strong

objections to the proposed sales of Russian rocket complexes to South

Korea are

strictly political, and serve the interests of U.S. arms manufacturers,

which

have dominated that region for decades. The same is true of Defense

Secretary

Cohen's statement that Washington intends to keep its forward-base forces

in

East Asia even after a full peaceful settlement is reached on the Korean

peninsula.... Hearing that, you can't agree more with a prominent

politician

who once said that wars, cold or hot, come and go, but U.S. interests

remain."

BELGIUM: "Weighing Food Aid To North Korea"

Independent Le Soir's Pierre Lefevre observed (4/9): "Food assistance

to

North Korea has, more than elsewhere, a political dimension.... Donor

countries--the United States, Japan and South Korea among others--are

carefully

weighing the tons of rice they are allow for delivery to Pyongyang, as much according to the country's overtures and political evolution as to its shortage of food. Beyond humanitarian considerations, they are seeking to prevent the implosion of North Korea....

"Paradoxically, South Korea is the more reserved.... It is not very popular in South Korea to be generous toward an ungrateful regime which ignores, despises and refuses to recognize the sister country.... (South Korea's) fingers have been burned by Pyongyang's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. Fearing (North Korea's) capacity in the field of arms proliferation and caring about regional stability, the United States shows more flexibility. On one hand, it is providing assistance and talks to Kim Jong-Il's regime. On the other, it is trying to lead Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing into a policy of regional stabilization and integration of North Korea. With some success."

DENMARK: "Aid Will Be Worth Twice As Much"

Center-right Berlingske Tidende had this perspective (4/21): "South Korea promised to lend more emergency aid to North Korea over the weekend and in the United States, a government spokesman indicated that North Korea, South Korea, China and the United States will shortly initiate peace negotiations.

These developments indicate that the situation in North Korea is worsening.

Massive floods three summers in a row and the general economic collapse of the Stalinist state have led to severe food shortages.... There is simply not enough to sustain life and the death toll will explode during the course of the

spring if massive humanitarian aid is not provided.... This is why both South

Korea and the United States have promised to increase their support without

demanding any political concessions as previously.... If aid is provided quickly, it will be worth twice as much in the long run and it will make it

difficult for the North Koreans to maintain their Cold War stance."

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: "Forces In Asia: Pentagon Creates Confusion"

This analysis by Tokyo correspondent F. J. Khergamvala appeared in the

centrist

Hindu (4/14): "Defense Secretary William Cohen, and the soon-to-retire Chief

of the Joint Services, General John Shalikashvili, have just ended back-to-back

visits to Japan and South Korea.... Cohen...announced that even if the two

Koreas were to unite, U.S. forces would retain their present strength in Japan

and South Korea 'into the indefinite future.'... This is the first time a top

U.S. official has linked the future presence of U.S. forces to a particular

eventuality.... Within two days, General Shalikashvili said in Tokyo that,

should there be a change on the Korean peninsula, 'we would make the right adjustments' after consultation with allies....

"The Pentagon seems to be trying to juggle several balls at one time, including

constituencies back home.... On the other hand, Cohen also sought to reassure

Southeast Asian nations who feel that the United States--and only the United

States--with Japan in a subsidiary role, can play the role of the regional gendarme."

"North Korean Defector"

This analysis appeared in the centrist Times of India (3/20): "While Hwang is potentially a priceless intelligence asset, South Korea will need to clear up one other mystery first: is there any likelihood that Hwang is in fact a double agent, told to defect in order to spread disinformation about North Korea's true intentions?... This question will be difficult to answer; North Korea's angry reactions could have been rehearsed. The reactions would have been the same whether Hwang was a real defector or a planned deception. The South Koreans are certain to be wary."

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA: "Parallel Tragedies"

Pro-government La Prensa told its readers (3/21): "The food crisis in North Korea and the financial disaster which led Albania to anarchy are different expressions of the same evil.... The North Korean and Albanian crises are

the
result, in different stages and according to local characteristics, of the
unique aspect shared by the Communist regimes of Pyongyang and
Tirana--isolation. Schismatic in the communist world since the end of the
50s,
Albania--under the ruthless tyranny of Enver Hoxja--closed its doors to
the
foreign world in a process that turned it into the poorest country in
Europe
and moved it back to the pre-history of the modern economy. Shortly
before,
North Korea had also become a fortress-island of communist puritanism and
imposed a 'Self-Reliance' ('Juche') policy, whose mentor--supreme
ideologist
Hwang Jang-yop, who drove his country to famine as a consequence of his
ideas--has recently deserted to capitalist South Korea. At 74, he
appears to
feel sorry for his unfortunate concepts which have affected 24 million
Koreans
who, unlike him, do not have the same privilege of abandoning their
oppressive
country.

"Albania is the 'sui generis' prologue of the future that awaits North
Korea.

When the famous fences of the 38th parallel collapse--as (such barriers)
did in

Eastern Europe at one point--trampled down by a population tired of
spiritual
and material deprivation, the thousands of refugees who cross the Adriatic
will
be but shadows of the migratory movements that will take place in the
Korean
peninsula. And here lies the difference that makes North Korea a victim
with
some kind of 'advantage.' It has, like East Germany had in West Germany,
a
sister nation in South Korea, to assist with funds and experience. There
is no
West or South Albania that can assist it in the painful transition from
proto-communism to a market economy. This is clearly evident."

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===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====
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id <01III1QBSNP0W003LLU@PMDF.EOP.GOV> for Matsui_d@a1.eop.gov; Wed,
23 Apr 1997 14:15:59 -0500 (EST)
Received: from storm.eop.gov (storm.eop.gov)
by PMDF.EOP.GOV (PMDF V5.0-4 #6879) id <01III1QBQGXDC003UX3@PMDF.EOP.GOV> for
Matsui_d@a1.eop.gov; Wed, 23 Apr 1997 14:15:56 -0500 (EST)
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by STORM.EOP.GOV (PMDF V5.1-7 #6879)
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X-Lotus-Type: Daily Digest

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===== ATTACHMENT 2 =====

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FOREIGN MEDIA REACTION

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GTON DC 20547 OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND MEDIA REACTIONOO

#XP\ P6QyP#Patricia McArdle, Branch Chief Media Reaction (R/MR), #:x2PkCXP#

#XP\ P6QyP#mcardle@usia.gov, (202) 6196511 Ann

Pincus, Directo

r, (202) 6196511

X` hp x (##Xn\ P6Qy&P#Wednesday, April 23, 1997

X` hp x (#%

NORTH KOREA: 'HOW HUNGRY IS IT FOR PEACE?'

X` hp x (#Foreign media analysts pondered what the future might hold for the K
orean

peninsula, now that talks in New Yorkinvolving the U.S., South and North

Koreahave failed to produce a commitment from Pyongyang that it will

participat

e in fourparty talks (including China) aimed at bringing a formal

end to the Ko

rean War. Amid widespread reports of famine in North Korea and

recent statemen

ts by North Korean defector Hwang Jangyop expressing his

perception that the No

rth may use "its formidable armed forces" against South

Korea, few editors were

sanguine about the prospects for peace and many

debated on how best to "engage

" or "deal with" the North Korean regime. The

press in South Korea offered var

ied assessments of the North's actions and

whether or not the reports of food s

hortages in the North have been

"exaggerated." Some observers advocated "civil

ian food aid" to the North Korean people, while others voiced suspicion that food coming into the North from abroad "will fatten high officials only" or, worse yet, the military. Seoul's moderate Hankook Ilbo applauded the U.S. State Department for urging North Korea to reduce the size of its military, stating: "From now on, all efforts connected with food aid and the opening of dialogue channels should be geared toward having the North reduce its military." The question of providing food aid to North Korea was also hotly debated in the Japanese media, with a number of editors focusing on North Korea's alleged kidnapping

of a Japanese school girl in Niigata 20 years ago. Tokyo's conservative Sankei judged giving food aid to a "kidnapper" state "unnecessary," and noted, "Even though Pyongyang says it is on the verge of starvation, its negotiating stance is far from desperate.... There is no need to be hasty."

Analysts from Australia to Germany pointed to the "tinderbox" atmosphere on the Korean peninsula. Munich's Sueddeutsche Zeitung, for example, warned, "The failure of the talks in New York again demonstrated how unpredictable and dangerous the regime in Pyongyang still is.... The danger remains that the North could risk a new war because Kim JongIl or his military leaders feel they are being backed up against the wall, or because they overestimate their own forces." The top-circulation, moderately conservative Bangkok Post likewise cautioned: "As long as the Pyongyang regime refuses to join peace talks, its decision is effectively to continue to refuse any search for peace. This can only be taken as a distressing sign that North Korea intends to continue its secretive activities...aimed at destabilizing the Korean peninsula and all of East Asia."

Recent releases from Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency, meanwhile, revealed that food supplies in the North were not so limited as to keep Kim JongIl from throwing a banquet for overseas Koreans in honor of

his father, the
late Kim IlSung. The latter was "a legendary man" who
shared the "weal and wo
e" of his people under the motto, "'One is sure to win
if he believes in and de
pends upon the people,'" the release declared.

This survey is based 56 reports from 13 countries, March 13 April 23.
EDITOR: Kathleen J. Brahney

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

NORTH KOREA: "'Juche' Seminars Held Abroad"

A release from governmentowned Korean Central News Agency said (4/21):
"Nat
ional seminars were held in (Tanzania and Nigeria)...on the occasion of
the bir
th anniversary of President Kim IlSung.... Yemi Oyeneye, Chairman of
the Niger
ian National Committee for the study of the Juche idea, spoke at a
national sem
inar of the Juche idea study organisations in Nigeria. He said
that Secretary
Kim JongIl, with a clairvoyant scientific intelligence, leads
the revolution wi
thout any slightest deviation and plans and pushes ahead
with all work in a rev
olutionary, bold and big way."

X' hp x (# "A Banquet For Overseas Koreans In Pyongyang"

X' hp x (#

X' hp x (#Governmentowned Korean Central News Agency (4/16) said, "Comrade Kim
JongIl

took care that a banquet was given for overseas Koreans on April 15, th
e

birth anniversary of the Great Leader President Kim IlSung. Kim YongSun,
cha

irman of the Reunification Policy Committee of the Supreme People's
Assembly...

said in his toast that the respected General Kim JongIl arranged
a grand banqu

et for the overseas Koreans who have come to the homeland with
deep reverence f

or the president. The president's was a great life of a
legendary man, a pee

rlessly great leader who led the revolution and
construction to brilliant victo

ry, sharing weal and woe with the people
through trials under the motto, 'One i

s sure to win if he believes in and

depends upon the people,' Kim YongSun noted

."

X` hp x (#
"VOA Broadcasts Useless Propaganda"

Official Korean Central News Agency put forth this view (3/13): "The United States has recently begun broadcasting 'Radio Free Asia' in Korean. This is part of an ideological and cultural infiltration to bring under control the Asian countries that are building an independent new society free from imperialist domination and subjugation.... The broadcasting of the radio in Korean indicates that the United States has not renounced its policy of antagonizing and stifling (North Korea) and is pursuing it in a more undisguised way.... No one can deny that South Korean society has turned into a den of criminals under the sway of corruption and social vices...because of the influence of the 50odd years of U.S. military occupation and American 'values' and decadent culture. No matter what false propaganda the United States may spread over 'Radio Free Asia,' the Korean people will feel stronger wrath and hatred for the United States and harden their confidence in their ideology, culture and cause."

X` hp x (# SOUTH KOREA: "Pyongyang's Double Standard"

Independent DongA Ilbo asserted (4/23): "North Korea made unreasonable demands that food aid be provided first and that the United States ease economic sanctions against it. These demands were not resolved and the New York meeting was postponed. This is a disappointing development. Although the fourparty talks are not entirely off, they certainly look uncertain at this point. The North is practicing its brinkmanship strategy again, and we must be especially careful with its doublestandard tactics.... The fourparty talks should not be used as a conduit for the North's food negotiations."

X` hp x (#
"ThreeParty Meetings Pretty Much Bungled"

According to antiestablishment Hankyoreh Shinmun (4/23): "The New York meetings ended without producing the result we expected. Nevertheless,

recognition

by the North of the need for fourparty talks and its agreement in principle to the proposal was an achievement. Another positive development was that both Koreas are now trying to increase contacts with each other....

"(But) the North's secretive negotiating style aggravated the situation, making a solution more difficult. For its part, South Korea failed to show flexibility and was only interested in submission by the North. These limits on both sides have long derailed efforts to find a peace mechanism, distorting them into long, hard fights. The result is that the South and the North are stuck in fruitless competition. The fourparty talks won't do much for us if there is no improvement in the relationship between the two Koreas."

"It Is Getting Too Late To Help"

An oped piece in antiestablishment Hankyoreh Shinmun (4/22) queried: "What do the starving people of the North have to do with the fourparty talks? The South Korean government has prohibited public contributions to our Northern brethren, even though the government recently agreed to allow civilian food aid. What is the government's message?... Food aid with all kinds of preconditions tagged on will only hurt the recipient's pride.... Only food aid will demonstrate that we are morally better positioned than the North. It may well be the only opportunity we have to control the issue. The government has not presented any reasonable justification for why we should miss this opportunity."

"On Helping North Korea"

In the opinion of conservative Chosun Ilbo (4/21): "The campaign to help North Korea is spreading. The problem is that some are not bothering to investigate what the best way is to help. They say 'Let's just give food,' and even point their fingers at the government for 'blocking' the aid effort. This kind of

attitude has often caused the North to misjudge and continue tactics that ridicule us.... We suspect that its food shortages are not as bad as have been reported, or that it is perverse enough to ignore its starving people. Unless the North dispels our suspicions that food coming in from abroad will fatten its high officials only, the campaign to help with its food shortages won't get the support from our public."

"Hwang Jangyop In Seoul"

Conservative Chosun Ilbo (4/21): "Our main interest in Hwang is the information he has on North Korea. The United States and Japan have made direct and indirect demands that they be allowed to participate in debriefing Hwang.... If the United States wants information on the North, we can always relay it to them for the sake of our solidarity. The South Korean government would be wise to not take advantage of Hwang's defection politically. That, however, does not mean that things must remain secret, because the public has a right to know the results of questioning of Hwang."

"Hwang Jangyop: Long Journey To Freedom"

Government-owned Seoul Shinmun (4/21): "The United States and Japan have both expressed a desire to question Hwang. Although it is natural for them to show interest in him, we disapprove of U.S. participation in the interrogation process.... If the United States cannot trust us, and if that is why it wants to question Hwang, what we face here is a need for the United States, Japan and South Korea to build a formation exchanging mechanism that is acceptable to all sides."

"U.S. Will Conduct Equidistant Diplomacy"

Independent DongA Ilbo (4/19) wondered: "How is the United States looking at the Korea issue? At this point it does not look as if U.S. policy will change much. With improved prospects for talks increasingly stabilizing this peninsula

a, the United States will continue to pursue its 'softlanding' policy...(and) will try to maintain its current level of influence over both Koreas....

"If the fourparty talks show quick progress, the United States will be in an advantageous position to conduct an 'equidistant diplomacy' toward both Koreas and will be able to manage both sides effectively. This new development will be a significant advantage to the United States in terms of its regional diplomacy. Chinese influence, which will inevitably grow in this region in the new century, would be checked by a stabilized Korean peninsula. With a stabilized Korea and China's influence blocked, the United States will also be able to keep Japan inside the U.S.Japan security system."

"Rice First, Or Dialogue: A Tedious Battle"

Xinhua (#

According to moderate Hankook Ilbo (4/18): "North Korea did not quite say that it would agree to the fourparty talks, nor did the April 16 New York meeting look like much more than a 'food session' in which both sides merely repeated their former stands. After the meeting, the chief of the North Korean delegation stated that there was progress, which was a positive signal. Both the United States and South Korea stuck to their position that the North had to come to the fourparty talks before food aid could be provided. When the meeting resumes on Friday, the North is expected to agree to the fourparty dialogue."

Xinhua (#

"North Korean Famine And Military Reduction"

In the view of independent DongA Ilbo (4/17): "It is highly significant that the U.S. government raised the issue of North Korea's need to reduce its military just before the opening of the fourparty talks. In so doing, the United States has pointed to the core of the issue.... The presence of separate North and South military forces consisting of over two million men

poses the greatest obstacle to the important goal of easing tension and achieving peace on this peninsula. A reduced military would greatly enhance the chances of reaching that goal, and decreased military costs would be the best method to accomplish it. The fourparty talks should deal with this issue. Meanwhile, the North should first use the food it has stockpiled for military use to feed its starving people."

"'Trust' Emerges As The Main Issue Of The FourParty Talks"

Antiestablishment Hankyoreh Shinmun commented (4/17): "Reducing military costs is likely to become one of the main topics at the fourparty talks. Indeed, it is especially important in terms of restoring trust toward each other.... In addition to easing tensions on this peninsula, the North's agreeing to take actions to help restore trust would greatly enhance the environment for food aid as well as economic cooperation."

"North Korea Should Solve its Food Problem With Military Reductions"

Moderate Hankook Ilbo opined (4/17): "When the State Department urged North Korea to cut down the size of its military, the United States finally saw the North Korea issue in a realistic way.... The United States' dialogue with North Korea increases our leverage over the North. From now on, all efforts connected with food aid and the opening of dialogue channels should be geared toward having the North reduce its military."

"Crisis Management Plan Needed For North Korea"

Probusiness JoongAng Ilbo cautioned (4/14): "With several highranking U.S. officials, including Vice President Al Gore, agreeing about the possibility of the North's early collapse, it seems that the U.S. intelligence and security communities share similar views. Plans ranging from how to deal with North Korean refugees to an entire crisis management blueprint dealing with a collapse situation should already be in place. We must bear in mind that the possibility of m

ilitary provocation remains
high.... Ways to prevent our Northern brethren from
starving must be
prepared."
X` hp x (#

"How Can We Verify The North's Food Shortages?"

Governmentowned Seoul Shinmun declared (4/14) editorialized that "Our
problem
is that the shortages have never been proven and we do not have means
to confirm
how bad the situation really is. This confusion has been further
aggravated
by a new theory that the North may pursue war even if food is
coming in from a
broad.... As a result of food shortages, the North indeed
could either be simply
too hungry to wage war or be forced to provoke a
crisis. Without having the
means at this point to confirm any of the
allegations, how the situation is really
depends entirely on how one looks at
it."

X` hp x (# JAPAN: "Dealing With North Korea Requires Patience"

Conservative Sankei had this to say (4/23): "Diplomatic moves over North
Korea
have become hurried and pointless. Although international relief
including food
aid for Pyongyang is flowing because of the reports that North
Korea is on
the brink of starvation, preliminary talks in New York between
North Korea, the
United States and South Korea on fourparty peace
negotiations have fallen through again.

X` hp x (#

"North Korea is hinting it will not attend the fourparty talks if it does
not receive
additional food from the United States and South Korea. Although
Pyongyang
says it is on the verge of starvation, its negotiating stance is
far from desperate.... From the beginning, North Korea has always been more
eager to establish
direct links with the United States and less than
enthusiastic about four
party talks for a lasting peace on the Korean
peninsula. Even if the United States
and South Korea 'force' an 'unwilling'
North Korea to participate in the
fourparty talks, nothing positive can be

expected from such talks. Only when the North decides it needs to secure international food aid by whatever means possible will Pyongyang be ready to compromise and accept the peace talks. There is no need to be hasty."

"North Korea Should Promote Dialogue In A Positive Manner"

Liberal Mainichi opined (4/21): "North Korean Workers' Party Secretary Hwang Jangyop's arrival in the South Korean capital after two months of diplomatic barrier gaining showed the complexities of the international politics between South and North Korea.... Hwang warned of the danger of the North launching a war on the Korean peninsula. Pyongyang may react strongly to Hwang's statement.... We believe that the Hwang defection case should no longer be used as an excuse to intensify the confrontation between the two Koreas.... The real objective should be direct dialogue through which peace can be restored and the Korean peninsula reunified. Nothing can be resolved until the two countries sit down together and start talking. The United States is beginning to become irritated with North Korea's slow and indecisive response to U.S. and South Korean calls to attend fourparty talks on peace on the Korean peninsula. In Japan, concern is growing over alleged North Korean abduction of Japanese citizens. North Korea should put its own house in order quickly, and engage in dialogue with these countries in order to settle pending issues in a positive manner."

"Japan Should Clarify Its Position Over Food Aid For North Korea"

Top circulation, moderate Yomiuri (4/16) held, "North Korea needs foreign food aid. This is obvious from film clips and other reports of the food crisis that the country faces. Nevertheless, most Japanese find it difficult to respond so easily to appeals from the North for food aid. Suspicions surfaced earlier this year that North Korea had a hand in the abduction of a Japanese junior high schoolgirl, who disappeared in Niigata 20 years ago. Six similar cases remain unaccounted for."

ounted for.... Another matter of concern is the report, confirmed by the Foreign Ministry, that Rodong1 missiles have been redeployed. The missiles could pose a serious threat to peace and stability in East Asia. Doubts remain whether international food aid reaches North Koreans civilians....

"Pyongyang must respond in good faith to allay suspicions about its past deeds.

... Working closely with the United States and South Korea, the Japanese government should reiterate its basic policy toward North Korea and carefully consider steps to be taken in this matter."

"Japan Should Give Food To Neighbor In Need"

Liberal Mainichi said (4/9), "Sooner or later, Japan will be asked to give food aid, too. Japan should then express its willingness to give food aid to a neighbor in need. At the same time, Japan should urge Pyongyang not to develop missiles capable of attacking Japan and request that North Korea explain the circumstances of the alleged abduction of a Japanese schoolgirl (about 20 years ago)."

"Food Aid For 'Kidnapper' State Unnecessary"

Conservative Sankei published this analysis (3/14): "Suspicion has grown that North Korea ordered the abduction of a Japanese junior high school girl from Niigata 20 years ago.... Japan should not follow the lead of the United States and South Korea, which have contributed 10 million dollars and 6 million dollars respectively to the World Food Program (for North Korea). Neither should it participate in talks to determine Japan's share of financial aid for KEDO.... Needless to say, it is strategically important to maintain stability on the Korean peninsula. But there is no need to give humanitarian aid to North Korea, an inhumane state which continues to refuse the release of those kidnapped by North Korean agents."

X hp x (#

AUSTRALIA: "Potential War In Korea Rattles The U.S"

X' hp x (#

An oped piece in the liberal Canberra Times (4/15): "The U.S. forces in the Far East are not a safeguard against aggression, but an instrument of blackmail in the hands of the North Koreans, who are demanding ever larger amounts of food aid from the United States and Japan because they know that in the last resort neither dare refuse.... The strategic dilemma in which the United States finds itself is acute. The lack of a secure defense against missile attack renders its forces, notwithstanding their otherwise high level of technological sophistication, impotent in the face of the possibility of a regional war in northeast Asia."

X' hp x (#

PHILIPPINES: "Koreas: Potential Tinderbox"

X' hp x (#

The independent Manila Standard (4/22) said, "It is hoped that the two Koreas would finally close the books on the 1950-53 Korean War by replacing the shaky armistice with a more enduring peace treaty. The world should hope that the North Korean leaders would see the wisdom of joining the four-party talks. Negotiations could stave off the impending famine, ease tensions and make possible the idea of a united Korea. An escalation of mass hunger and desperation could prompt a proud and defiant Pyongyang to engage the South rashly in a show of force. The starving masses, unrestrained by government troops, could pour into South Korea in huge numbers.... The Korean peninsula is a tinderbox that has the potential to cause grave destruction and suffering."

"Facing Famine"

The independent Manila Times judged (4/17): "A big part of North Korea's economic and financial crisis should be laid at the doorstep of the one million strong armed forces.... This bloc, admittedly, gets the best accommodations, food and clothing, even while the rest of the country is famished.... But peace talks should be treated separately from what is clearly a humanitarian issue. The

World Food Program has a proven record of ensuring that food donations reach their intended recipients."

"The Philippines And The Two Koreas"

X` hp x (#The independent Manila Standard said this in an editorial (4/4): "Part of the reason President Ramos agreed to have (North Korean defector) Hwang Jangyop...stay longer in the Philippines is to help reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula and help bring about a reconciliation of the Korean people in the two countries.... A reunification of the two nations would be costly to South Korea in the short run, but would, looking down the road, help promote development and stability on the peninsula and the region."

"Juche Fails"

Antonio Abaya had this to say in the conservative, second largest circulation Philippine Star (3/22): "Hwang Jangyop...is a major catch for South Korea because he was a leading figure in the reclusive regime of the late...Kim Il Sung.

He was...the chief architect of the hermit kingdom's national ideology of 'Juche,' or 'Self Reliance,' which is now being stood on its head as North Korea faces widespread starvation following two years of devastating floods.... The main Filipino admirers of Hwang's Juche...should be given the opportunity to interact with Hwang and hear from no less than the architect of Juche why it failed."

X` hp x (#

X` hp x (# "Philippines Plays 'Third Man' In Two Koreas' Squabble"

X` hp x (#

Former ambassador Oscar S. Villadolid had this to say in the independent Manila

Standard (3/19): "There is a dangerous catch to the...dangerous diplomatic game

the Philippines has decided to play. Allowing Hwang a 'transit point' (in

the Philippines) as requested by Beijing and South Korea would ensure his departure

from China, and this may earn for the Philippines a lifetime of enmity, if

not hatred, from the unpredictable communist overlords in Pyongyang. With its

huge armed forces...and modern weaponry to boot, its displeasure toward us may eventually translate into numerous clandestine arms shipments to the remaining insurgents in our country."

THAILAND: "North Korea Risks Its Own Survival"

X' hp x (#

X' hp x (#The lead editorial of topcirculation, moderately conservative Bangkok Post

commented (4/21): "North Korea's decision to renege on its own promise (by

refusing to show up for threeway talks with the United States and South Korea

in New York) once again can only be viewed with worry and even some alarm.

As long as the Pyongyang regime refuses to join peace talks, its decision is

effectively to continue to refuse any search for peace. This can only be taken

as a distressing sign that North Korea intends to continue its secretive activities.

These are, in essence, aimed at destabilizing both the Korean peninsula and all of East Asia....

North Korea has two honorable courses, and if it

expects respect from the world it must choose one of them, quickly. The first

is to accept the U.S./South Korea offer of peace talks, including China....

The second acceptable choice is for North Korea to reject the U.S./South Korean

offer and make one of its own. Such an offer must address security issues, including

the fears among many of North Korea's neighbors that it intends to renew

war. It must also include hard decisions about Pyongyang's secretive but known

attempts to build nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them.... A North

Korean decision to negotiate will be well received, and Pyongyang knows this.

Similarly, North Korea must know it will receive no reward for continuing to

be recalcitrant. Each time Pyongyang backs down on one of its promises, it increases

the tension and threat of violence. North Korea can become respectable if it negotiates. By

continuing to delay, it is only risking its own survival.

"

"North Korea: How Hungry Is It For Peace?"

The independent, Englishlanguage Nation editorialized (4/18), "The history of Korean negotiations suggests that any diplomatic gains will not come easy.

"Despite their reservations, the U.S.led allies must persist in using the opportunity presented by the crisis in North Korea to search for a solution. Much is at stake and not only from the threat of famine to North Korea's 22 million people. Successful talks including China, South Korea, the United States and North Korea could finally end the technical war that has divided the peninsula for four decades and replace the longstanding armistice with a peace treaty. It is in nobody's interest to let North Korea implode, unleashing instability, massive refugee flows and unpredictable reactions from Pyongyang.... There is no doubt about the selfserving nature of Pyongyang's regime and the huge gap in trust that needs to be bridged before real progress can be made. The West, led by the United States, is slowly making those steps with increased offers of aid. It could move further by proposing a comprehensive deal in which it would promise guaranteed food aid and an easing of U.S. trade sanctions. But in return, Pyongyang must commit itself to redeploying the massive assortment of troops and arms along the border, and begin doing it quickly."

X` hp x (# "U.S. And Asia"

Tosapon Kraipan commented in elite Siam Post (4/12): "The United States is now utilizing all means at its disposal to persuade North Korea to enter into peace negotiations with South Korea... If North Korea complies, leading to the signing of a peace treaty, unification of the two Koreas may be possible. Pyongyang will not be able to resist the strain the famine (and mismanagement) have brought on the regime for too long. It will eventually be forced to abandon socialism and to embrace democracy.... When that day comes, North Korea will not be different from today's Russia, which is forced by circumstances to unconditionally follow the U.S.s' every lead... Then,

the United States could divert its attention to seriously negotiating with China on the issues of Taiwan, human rights and freedom of Hong Kong residents. If this scenario works out accordingly, it would not be difficult for the United States to take total and undisputable control of Asia."

X' hp x (#

"Warning Shots From North Korea"

Elite Siam Post's Tosapon Kraipan commented (4/11), "North Korean troops' exchange of warning shots with their South Korean rivals at the demilitarized zone shortly before U.S. Defense Secretary William Cohen flew to the area...was intended to be seen as a challenge to both the United States and South Korea....

(But) North Korea is not currently in the position to challenge anyone.... It

may be oblivious to the fact that, by acting this way, it has played into the hands of its adversaries. First,

U.S.-South Korean ties, military and otherwise, will be strengthened.

Second, the United States will have an excuse not to withdraw its troops from the Korean peninsula and North Korea will continue to be branded as a confirmed pariah and ostracized."

EUROPE

X' hp x (#

BRITAIN: "Keep Talking To North Korea"

The independent weekly Economist told its readers in an editorial (4/18):

"Some countries are hard to help. North Korea is about the hardest of all.

Its usually secretive regime has admitted that some children have died from malnutrition. Yet even as North Korea extends its begging bowl, it continues to bite the

hands trying to feed its hungry people.... So what to make of North Korea's expected 'yes' to a joint American-South Korean proposal for four-way peace talks...that could ease tensions at one of the world's most dangerous frontiers? Hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. Indeed, the biggest worry is that it may already be too late to prop up North Korea.

By all means, hope for a 'soft landing' for its crumbling economy. But be prepared for a crash."

X` hp x (#

"North Korea Starves"

X` hp x (#

In the judgment of the liberal Guardian (4/16): "There are strategic arguments for keeping food and the peace talks linked, but it would be unwise only to dole out the bare minimum. This is a humanitarian issue and there is no reason why the people of North Korea should be punished for living under a fantasy cult regime. Nor is the strategy a sound one: None of North Korea's neighbors would produce a huge refugee problem, and possibly internal strife as well perhaps even a lastbreath military provocation. Much better to feed the generals and the people, and give the solution time to emerge."

X` hp x (#

"Chinese See Piles Of Dead Children In North Korea"

X` hp x (#

Under the above headline, the conservative Times ran this report from its China correspondent in Dandong, on the North Korean border (3/18): "Chinese truck drivers ferrying grain supplies to North Korea say they have seen corpses of children lying abandoned, and describe scenes of hunger and deprivation in the world's last Stalinist state.... Analysts predict that North Korea could collapse in two years, with chaos similar to that in Albania, another state in the Stalinist mode."

GERMANY: "Helpless, Unpredictable Pyongyang Plays A Hazardous Game"

Gebhard Hielbscher maintained in an editorial in centrist Sueddeutsche Zeitung

of Munich (4/23): "The failure of the talks in New York again demonstrated how unpredictable and dangerous the regime in Pyongyang still is. As long as North Korea refuses an open dialogue, we must assume that it does not accept South Korea as a partner of detente. Obviously, Pyongyang

continues to see Seoul as an opponent that needs to be outmaneuvered and possibly eliminated. Thus the danger remains that the North could risk a new war because Kim Jong Il or his military leaders feel they are being backed up against the wall, or because they overestimate their own forces. South Korea and its allies must always be prepared for such danger. U.S. satellite pictures showing that North Korea has deployed medium-range missiles underscore this threat. It would be irresponsible behavior to dismiss such moves as a red herring.

"We can only speculate about the reasons for the cancellation of the talks....

But because of North Korean defector Hwang Jangyop, Seoul and Washington now have a better picture of the situation in North Korea.... It is much more important to learn how seriously Kim Jongil and his generals take the current food crisis. The breakdown of the New York talks gives reason to assume that Pyongyang believes to have more latitude than pictures of downtrodden people offer.

If it is clear that considerable parts of foreign food aid lands in army depots or with leadership cadres, the donor countries should insist on supervising the distribution of food, since the suffering of the people would then only be prolonged."

RUSSIA: "China May Follow Japan's Path"

Reformist weekly Moskovskiye Novosti's (# 16, 4/22) ran this comment by Lev Prichinin: "Only very naive people might think that the United States, Japan and

South Korea have been forging stronger strategic ties among themselves with the sole purpose of fending off Communist North Korea. Rather, they are preparing for a cold war in the Pacific, with China still (a Communist) 'people's,' republic, but with its economy growing fast ready to attack new markets. There is no guarantee that the Chinese will not follow the path of Japanese economic expansion, in a way that might pale anything the Americans and the Japanese have seen

en.... Russia and China may not be allies, but, having similar geopolitical concerns, they can hardly be enemies either."

"Wars Come And Go, U.S. Interests Remain"

Ivan Shomov contended in reformist Segodnya (4/8): "The United States' strong objections to the proposed sales of Russian rocket complexes to South Korea are strictly political, and serve the interests of U.S. arms manufacturers, which have dominated that region for decades. The same is true of Defense Secretary Cohen's statement that Washington intends to keep its forwardbase forces in East Asia even after a full peaceful settlement is reached on the Korean peninsula a.... Hearing that, you can't agree more with a prominent politician who once said that wars, cold or hot, come and go, but U.S. interests remain."

BELGIUM: "Weighing Food Aid To North Korea"

X' hp x (#

X' hp x (#Independent Le Soir's Pierre Lefevre observed (4/9): "Food assistance to North Korea has, more than elsewhere, a political dimension.... Donor countries the United States, Japan and South Korea among others are carefully weighing the tons of rice they are allowed for delivery to Pyongyang, as much according to the country's overtures and political evolution as to its shortage of food. Beyond humanitarian considerations, they are seeking to prevent the implosion of North Korea....

"Paradoxically, South Korea is the more reserved.... It is not very popular in

South Korea to be generous toward an ungrateful regime which ignores, despises

and refuses to recognize the sister country.... (South Korea's) fingers have

been burned by Pyongyang's attempts to acquire nuclear weapons.

Fearing (North

Korea's) capacity in the field of arms proliferation and caring about regional

stability, the United States shows more flexibility.

On one hand, it is providing

assistance and talks to Kim Jong Il's regime.

On the other, it is trying to

lead Seoul, Tokyo and Beijing into a policy of

regional stabilization and integration of North Korea. With some success."

DENMARK: "Aid Will Be Worth Twice As Much"

Centerright Berlingske Tidende had this perspective (4/21): "South Korea promised to lend more emergency aid to North Korea over the weekend and in the United States, a government spokesman indicated that North Korea, South Korea, China and the United States will shortly initiate peace negotiations. These developments indicate that the situation in North Korea is worsening. Massive floods three summers in a row and the general economic collapse of the Stalinist state have led to severe food shortages.... There is simply not enough to sustain life and the death toll will explode during the course of the spring if massive humanitarian aid is not provided.... This is why both South Korea and the United States have promised to increase their support without demanding any political concessions as previously.... If aid is provided quickly, it will be worth twice as much in the long run and it will make it difficult for the North Koreans to maintain their Cold War stance."

SOUTH ASIA

INDIA: "Forces In Asia: Pentagon Creates Confusion"

This analysis by Tokyo correspondent F. J. Khargamvala appeared in the centrist Hindu (4/14): "Defense Secretary William Cohen, and the soon-to-retire Chief of the Joint Services, General John Shalikashvili, have just ended back-to-back visits to Japan and South Korea.... Cohen...announced that even if the two Koreas were to unite, U.S. forces would retain their present strength in Japan and South Korea 'into the indefinite future.'... This is the first time a top U.S. official has linked the future presence of U.S. forces to a particular eventual event.... Within two days, General Shalikashvili said in Tokyo that, should there be a change on the Korean peninsula, 'we would make the right adjustments' af

ter
consultation with allies....

"The Pentagon seems to be trying to juggle several balls at one time, including constituencies back home.... On the other hand, Cohen also sought to reassure Southeast Asian nations who feel that the United States and only the United States with Japan in a subsidiary role, can play the role of the regional gendarme."
"

"North Korean Defector"

This analysis appeared in the centrist Times of India (3/20): "While Hwang is potentially a priceless intelligence asset, South Korea will need to clear up one other mystery first: is there any likelihood that Hwang is in fact a double agent, told to defect in order to spread disinformation about North Korea's true intentions?... This question will be difficult to answer; North Korea's angry reactions could have been rehearsed. The reactions would have been the same whether Hwang was a real defector or a planned deception. The South Koreans are certain to be wary."

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA: "Parallel Tragedies"

Progovernment La Prensa told its readers (3/21): "The food crisis in North Korea and the financial disaster which led Albania to anarchy are different expressions of the same evil.... The North Korean and Albanian crises are the result. It, in different stages and according to local characteristics, of the unique aspect shared by the Communist regimes of Pyongyang and Tirana: isolation. Schismatic in the communist world since the end of the 50s, Albania under the ruthless tyranny of Enver Hoxha closed its doors to the foreign world in a process that turned it into the poorest country in Europe and moved it back to the prehistory of the modern economy. Shortly before, North Korea had also become a fortress."

ssisland of communist puritanism
and imposed a 'SelfReliance' ('Juche') policy,
whose mentorsupreme
ideologist Hwang Jangyop, who drove his country to famine
as a consequence
of his ideashas recently deserted to capitalist South Korea.

At 74, he
appears to feel sorry for his unfortunate concepts which have affec
ted 24
million Koreans who, unlike him, do not have the same privilege of
aban
doning their oppressive country.

"Albania is the 'sui generis' prologue of the future that awaits North Korea.
When the famous fences of the 38th parallel collapseas (such barriers) did
in E
astern Europe at one pointrampled down by a population tired of
spiritual and
material deprivation, the thousands of refugees who cross the
Adriatic will be
but shadows of the migratory movements that will take place
in the Korean penin
sula. And here lies the difference that makes North Korea
a victim with some k
ind of 'advantage.' It has, like East Germany had in
West Germany, a sister na
tion in South Korea, to assist with funds and
experience. There is no West or
South Albania that can assist it in the
painful transition from protocommunism
to a market economy. This is clearly
evident."

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===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====

RECORD TYPE: FEDERAL (TRP NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: USIA_Media_Reaction (USIA_Media_Reaction/R__MR/WASHDC/USIA/GOV.USIA@notes1.usia.gov@INET@LNGTWY [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:28-MAY-1997 13:06:00.00

SUBJECT: Daily Digest 5/28: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN IRAN

TO: Doris O. Matsui (Doris O. Matsui@eop [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

The election of Seyyed Mohammed Khatemi as the next president of the

Islamic

Republic of Iran caught the attention of editors worldwide, with most

concluding that his landslide victory signaled a shift toward "moderation"

in

the theocratic republic. In Iran, official English-language papers saw

the

"moderate" cleric's win as "a turning point" in the history of the Islamic

republic and urged Mr. Khatemi's aides to "make accountability and the

rule of

law the main pillars of their plan of action." Official Iranian radio,

however, insisted in its English-language broadcast that the Western media

had

misinterpreted the former minister of Culture and Guidance's victory as

being a

protest vote and "a message for changes...in this country." It praised

the

Iranian people for being "vigilant" against "various conspiracies by the

enemies." That "message," nonetheless, found credence not just in Western

capitals, but in the Middle East and Asia as well. Cairo's pro-government

Al-Ahram declared: "It is obvious from the results of the...elections that the Iranian people have come to strongly seek moderation and reform." Karachi's independent national Dawn observed that Mr. Khatemi's "platform of personal freedom" and political "participation" had attracted large numbers of women and young voters. Tel Aviv's mass-appeal, pluralist Maariv declared: "The Iranians appear to have had enough of religious extremism and deprivation of civil liberties."

While pundits uniformly found the elections encouraging, many confessed that Iran's future remains an enigma. The majority concluded that although "the leading Islamic country" has sent "a powerful signal" to the Islamic world by defying its conservative clerical leaders and voting for a reform-minded president, Iran remains "a theocracy, not a democracy." These observers cautioned that outsiders must take a wait-and-see approach in light of the many areas--the Middle East peace process, state-sponsored terrorism, the development of weapons of mass destruction and the violation of human rights--in which Iran's activities have become the concern of many nations.

Nevertheless, some European writers deduced that after a period of "appropriate reflection" after the Mykonos case, "it should not be difficult for Europe to resume its traditional trade and political relations with Iran."

Writers

from Italy to Bahrain to Bangladesh urged the United States to conduct a "strategic revision" of its dual containment policy and to "open a dialogue"

with Iran. Still, there were significant voices of caution against expecting

too much from the new Khatemi administration. The liberal Montreal

Gazette

suggested that the new president "has no intention of spending his limited political capital trying to change Iran's terrible relationship with the

United

States." Istanbul's religious/fundamentalist Milli Gazete intoned ominously,

"Some people expected radical changes from Rafsanjani as well when he was elected, but time showed that he did not do anything against the principles of the Iranian Islamic revolution."

This survey is based on 32 reports from 18 countries, May 23-28.

EDITORS: Gail Hamer Burke and Kathleen Brahney

SOUTH ASIA

IRAN: "President-Elect Khatemi"

Official Iranian radio, Tehran's Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, broadcast this in Persian (5/25): "The leader of the revolution, his eminence

Ayatollah Khamenei, in a message to Iranians on the occasion of the enthusiastic and unprecedented seventh presidential election and the election

of Seyyed Mohammed Khatemi as the new president, described the greatness and

brilliance of the tremendous turnout of the people in the...elections....

What

clearly comes across from the message of the esteemed leader of the revolution

is the undeniable effect that the presence of varied ideas and tastes on the

enthusiasm of the people to participate in the election....

"The figures related to the seventh presidential election clearly emphasized

the role of the people in the new chapter that has been opened nationwide.

That is because the participation of more than 29 million people in the polls

on Friday and the election of a president with more than 20 million votes

was

unprecedented in all the elections during the Islamic Republic rule.

Thus, the

people's president-elect, who has been chosen as the seventh president of

Islamic Iran by their decisive vote, begins his responsibility to manage

the

executive affairs of the country and to give momentum to the trend of the

country's development and progress with the support of the leader and each

and

every one of the people."

"Western Mass Media Misinterpret Elections"

Official Iranian radio, Tehran's Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran,

broadcast this commentary in English (5/25): "It should be mentioned

that the

mass media affiliated with world imperialism, which did not expect such an

enthusiastic presence by the people in the presidential elections of Iran,

continued to present wrong analyses concerning the elections. In this

regard,

some of the Western mass media have interpreted the votes cast by the

people of

Iran as a sign of opposition to the sovereignty of the theologians and

believe

that the votes cast by the Iranian people are in fact a message demanding

changes and developments in this country. This is under conditions when

this

time too, the Iranian people cast their votes in favor of a theologian as their future president. Additionally, with the election of the people's favorite president, it was revealed how baseless the publicity of the Western media was where they claimed that the Iranian president had been pre-elected. The reality is that the Iranian people's great and enthusiastic participation in the elections proved that in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it is the people's votes which determine their political fate.... In order to have access to truth, they have to review the 18-year-long history of Iran following the victory of the Islamic revolution, and then they will realize that the sustainable and vigilant presence of the Iranian people in various arenas has safeguarded Iran against various conspiracies by the enemies."

"Turning Point In Iran's History"

In the words of the official, English-language Kayhan International (5/25), "It is everybody's belief that Friday's presidential election proved to be a determining day for and a turning point in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"A Vote For Change"

The official, English-language Tehran Times held (5/25), "The unprecedented, massive turnout in the presidential elections--covered by more than hundred teams of newsmen from across the world--is another vote of confidence for the Islamic system and its leadership.... While people's participation in the election confirms their loyalty to the Islamic system, their new choice has a special message for the officials: Grievances and complaints must not remain unheeded. In other words, people's vote for Hojjat Ol-Eslam Khatemi is a call for change in certain issue areas."

"Next Is Accountability And The Rule Of Law"

The official, English-language Iran Daily opined (5/25), "Next in the line is rule of law and the inter-relationship between authority and responsibility.... Khatemi's aides will do the nation a major service if at the outset they make accountability and rule of law the main pillars of their

plan of action.... Now, more than at any time in the past, it is possible and necessary to join hands with the forthcoming administration of Mohammed Khatemi to face internal problems and foreign pressure."

BANGLADESH: "Election In Iran"

Conservative Ittefaq declared (5/27), "It is notable that Iran has been holding elections regularly since the Islamic revolution. The propensity to cling to power like many Third World countries is not visible in Iran. The loser in the just-concluded election conceded defeat before the counting of votes was completed and congratulated the winner. This example of conceding defeat is rare in many Asian and African countries. It has become part of the political culture to raise allegations of vote-rigging if one loses the election in these countries. Even Iran's supreme leader congratulated the victor. This reflects an allegiance and sincerity to democratic values."

"New Iranian President"

According to anti-West Inqilab (5/27), "A certain anti-Islamic circle is viewing this victory of Khatemi from a different angle. This circle has termed the victory as an end to the influence of the Islamic clergy, as the fall of fundamentalism and as a victory for the moderates. They have forgotten that the Islamic revolution of Iran was the reflection of people's long-cherished aspirations. Programs for leading the country to its desired goals may be different, but this does not at all change the policies and ideals."

"Iranians Want Change"

Pro-left Sangbad asserted (5/27), "The result of the just-concluded election is clear evidence that the influence of Iran's supreme leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on his people is on the wane. This verdict of the people proves that a freer political and social environment is more desirable in Iran than tougher religious injunctions. But religious hardliners have been occupying the most seats in the Iranian parliament. This will increase the president's conflict with them in the coming days. Will the radicals be able to accept this

changed

situation?"

"New Iranian President And Open Air"

According to independent Banglabazar Patrika (5/27), "President-elect Khatemi

will face two tough problems. The first is domestic and the second is international. The Iranian image abroad has been damaged substantially since

the Islamic revolution. The economy has not yet been rebuilt and there are

great ideological divisions. The Western influence has very strong roots in

Iranian society. Iranian women could not accept the revolution wholeheartedly. The Islamic hardliners have been interpreting Islamic injunctions according to their convenience and trying to subjugate the womenfolk. But they cannot suppress the younger generation's interest in the outside world."

"Iran's Verdict For Continued Reforms"

The conservative New Nation expressed these views (5/29), "Considering Khatemi's all-round exposure in governance, backed by the unprecedented popular

support that he enjoys, it's time for the West to open a dialogue with him

inasmuch as he is indeed the right person capable of defusing the long accumulated tensions in international relations."

PAKISTAN: "New President For Iran"

Karachi's independent, national Dawn held (5/27), "The elections last week, which were the seventh in Iran since the Islamic revolution in 1979, were hotly contested. It speaks of the Iranian leadership's commitment to democratic rules and practices--which has never flagged at any stage--that the campaign was conducted in a dignified manner and the loser accepted his defeat gracefully, although he was generally expected to win. This points to the growing maturity of Iranian democracy within the framework set by the Islamic clerics.... It is on the platform of personal freedom that Mr. Khatemi has made the strongest impression. His promise of change and his assurance to women that they will enjoy greater participation in national life have undoubtedly won for him the votes of the youth and women--a factor which may have been decisive in his victory."

MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL: "Iran's Second Revolution"

The independent Jerusalem Post told its readers (5/25): "Although President-elect Mohammed Khatemi campaigned on maintaining the state's hostility to the United States and Israel...there may be room for some hope that some thaw in the attitude to the 'great and little Satans' might emerge.... Israel's defense establishment undoubtedly will be watching closely for any change in Tehran's support for Hezbollah and must be alert to any winds of change, regardless of the direction, that may blow up in the most important non-Arab state in the Middle East after Turkey."

"A Better Iran"

Mass-appeal, pluralist Maariv judged (5/25): "The victory of Mohammed Khatemi in the presidential elections is the best piece of news to have come out of Iran since the ayatollahs took over the country. In the long run, the victory of the less radical and more liberal of Iran's fanatic religious leaders might be good news also for Israel.... The Iranians appear to have had enough

of
religious extremism and deprivation of civil liberties. More and more
Iranians
have grown bitter over the economic situation.... Mohammed Khatemi may
yet
prove a bonus to the West. It would seem that the specter of nuclear
confrontation in the Middle East has lessened somewhat."

EGYPT: "Moderation In Iran"

Unsigned commentary in pro-government Al Ahram remarked (5/26): "It is
obvious
from the results of the Iranian elections that the Iranian people have
come to
strongly seek moderation and reform."

JORDAN: "The Road To Change"

Daily columnist Mahmoud Rimawi opined on the op-ed page of
pro-government,
influential, Arabic-language Al-Ray (5/27): "If the new president...is
to
succeed in his call for change and in confronting the traditional forces
of
power within the regime, the change will be as good as a second
revolution,
which Iranians and their neighbors have been waiting and hoping for....

We
don't expect Iran to make a complete shift of attitude or an instant
change
in policies due to the complexity of the decision-making system. Yet,
the
new leadership should invest in the prevailing positive climate to start
on
the path of change and reform and to re-portray Iran's image as the
open-minded, the peaceful and the prosperous."

BAHRAIN: "Beginning Of A New Iranian Era"

Leading, semi-independent Al-Ayam published this view by Omran Salman
(5/29),

"The Iranians generously granted Khatemi their votes and gave him the
number

two position in Iran. By doing so, that country moved a step forward. A
step

which is enough to spread modernization, even if on a limited scale....

Will
this be the beginning of a new Iranian era that will render unto Caesar
the
things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's?"

"The Second American Defeat By Iran"

Hafedh Al-Shaikh wrote (5/23) in leading, semiofficial Akhbar Al-Khalij, "The latest edition of Foreign Affairs definitely is the most important edition published.... This edition should be read carefully by all of those in the region who are under the illusion that America will forever defend the status quo.... The article...provides evidence of the failure of the sanctions against Iran.... The Iranian economy is healthier and more stable under the blockade than many countries receiving aid from America."

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: "Majority Of Iranians Want Freedom And Reforms"

Sharjah-based, Arabic-language Al-Khaleej (5/27) editorialized, "The outcome of the elections reflects a tendency for some sort of moderate democracy in a country that was guided by conservative clergymen.... The election of Khatemi means that the majority of Iranians want freedom and reforms. We wonder whether Khatemi will break Iran's isolation and establish with neighboring countries relations based on mutual respect, confidence and good-neighborliness. The answer to this is strongly linked to his ability to use his popular support in his expected confrontation with the parliament

led

by its speaker, his rival Nateq Nouri."

EUROPE

TURKEY: "Is Iran Changing?"

Ferhat Koc wrote in Istanbul's religious/fundamentalist Milli Gazete

(5/28):

"The results of the elections in Iran were a surprise to the Westerners

who

called Khatemi a liberal. In fact, this should not be regarded as a

surprise

because there were only two favorites in the elections. The winner,

Khatemi,

will not bring much of a change to Iran. Let's not forget the fact that

some

people expected radical changes from Rafsanjani as well when he was

elected,

but time showed that he did not do anything against the principles of the

Iranian Islamic revolution. As for the newly elected president, he is

also a

well-educated, religiously competent and staunch supporter of the Islamic

revolution.... Khatemi himself is a religious figure. He was in charge

of

the Ministry of Religious Philosophy two years ago."

GERMANY: "Iran Still A Theocracy"

In the view of right-of-center Frankfurter Neue Presse (5/27): "The Rafsanjanis and Khatemis do not differ in any essential point from the advocates of the purely theocratic doctrine. Their liberality is exhausted by interpreting the Islamic dress regulations in a more liberal way. And it is occasionally limited to offering a carrot to the Europeans, who want to enter into a 'critical dialogue.' In the elections, a clique of the enemies of freedom extended its position at the expense of others. Khatemi will not withdraw the order to kill Salman Rushdie nor will he change one iota of the policy that aims at brutally suppressing one's own people. The election and the outcome are by no means the first signal for a better future. The Iranian people had the alternative of deciding between dark green or not so dark a green. It is evidence of an incredible naivete that several experts on the developments in the Orient now speak of a 'revolution at the ballot box.'"

CANADA: "The Women's Vote"

Independent journalist Gwynne Dyer suggested in the liberal Montreal Gazette

(5/28) that "Ayatollah Mohammed Khatemi, the surprise victor in the Iranian

presidential election last week, owes a lot to women.... There is speculation

that Khatemi may even nominate Rafsanjani's daughter Faiza as his vice-president.... But Iran is a democracy, if a strange and rather limited

one, and even the most conservative mullahs cannot ignore who elected Khatemi

to the presidency.... So what can Khatemi do with this resounding victory,

with or without a female vice-president? Khatemi is not a 'liberal.'... He

has no intention of spending his limited political capital trying to change

Iran's terrible relationship with the United States.... What's left for Khatemi is the political and social field--and it's because they believe that

he would start opening Iran up in these areas that the women, the young people,

and everybody else interested in change voted for him."

"Iran's Islamic Revolt"

The liberal Toronto Star (5/27) commented, "Iranians sent the Islamic world a powerful signal this weekend by defying their conservative clerical leaders and voting for a reform-minded president.... They do not equate being a good Muslim with being closed-minded.... They value political pluralism and religious tolerance.... Just how much success Khatemi will have is uncertain.... The rise of Khatemi with such strong popular support will also have reverberations beyond Iran. That the leading Islamic...country should signal its yearning for pluralism and tolerance in the best humanistic traditions of the religion strengthens progressive forces across the Muslim world."

"Iranians Vote For Change"

According to the liberal Montreal Gazette (5/27), "By giving Mohammed Khatemi a landslide victory...Iranians voted massively for change. They voted for greater personal freedoms and less censorship; they voted for a more tolerant regime and against the favored candidate of the religious

establishment....

Anyone who expects any major change in Iran's truculent foreign policy...may

well be disappointed.... Without the presence of true opposition figures on

the ballot, it is hard to know exactly to what extent the vote was a rejection

of the status quo. But it is clear Iranians delivered quite a rebuke to the

establishment.... Changes would be welcome advances for civil liberties and

human rights. But they would still leave Iran a theocracy, not a democracy."

BRITAIN: "Iran Votes For Change"

The independent Financial Times declared (5/27): "There can be no mistaking

the yearning for change shown by Iranian voters who last Friday buried the favored presidential candidate of the mullahs in a landslide.... Mohammed

Khatemi is the most outward looking leader to emerge in Iran since the 1979

revolution against the Shah.... It appears that Iranian voters have cleared

the way towards more rational government in their country."

RUSSIA: "Iranians Vote For More Liberal Life"

Konstantin Eggert said in reformist Izvestia (5/27): "Yevgeny Primakov has lost

the bet on finding a new ally in the fight for a 'multipolar world.'

Nateq

Nouri's disastrous defeat means that, after 18 years of the Islamic revolution,

Iranians want a more liberal life and a stable economy."

ITALY: "Khatemi Can Reopen Game In Middle East"

An editorial in provocative, classical liberal Il Foglio stressed

(5/28):

"Certainly nobody can fool himself that Khatemi is another Tony Blair nor that

Iran has suddenly become an Anglo-Saxon democracy. If a parallel can be

drawn, albeit with extreme caution, it is perhaps with Deng Xiaoping's

China.... The Iranian masses which have experienced the flimsiness and

the

inefficiency of the Islamic 'third way' between capitalism and

socialism...and

especially the younger generations, now have a chance to promote a change

in

their nation.... After a period of appropriate reflection in the wake of

the
verdict on the Mykonos case, it should not be difficult for Europe to
resume
its traditional trade and political relations with Iran. More
complicated
appears the strategic revision in which the Clinton administration is
engaged.... While in the case of Iraq a direct threat on the rich but
weak
monarchies in the Gulf remains, in the case of Iran the possibility is
emerging for the first time of overcoming the break in diplomatic
relations
which followed the occupation of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran between '79
and
'81. There are also other means to discourage Tehran's plan to build its
own
nuclear arsenal and to resort to the weapon of terrorism: For example,
by
playing on Iran's urgent need for political and economic reform, and on
the
consequent need of restoring normal relations with the West."

SPAIN: "Iran Won't Return"

Conservative ABC editorialized (5/26): "It's not worth holding your breath
expecting that the victory of the moderate candidate in the Iranian
presidential elections will be the beginning of a Western-style
democracy. But

it is the best omen to lay the foundation of hope for pulling back from the old-style Islamism of Khomeini. With almost three times as many votes as his adversary...the victory of Mohammed Khatemi was overwhelming.... The high level of participation, 90 percent of the eligible voters, the failure of presumed vote-rigging, and the votes of Iranian youth....for a moderate and outward-looking candidate should cause the religious leaders to reflect about an irreversible past and a different future in the Islamic Republic."

EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC

INDONESIA: "Voice Of Freedom And Tolerance Wins In Iran"

Leading independent Kompas concluded (5/26): "It is too early to predict where Khatemi will take Iran in the next four years, though he explicitly stated that he will not change policy toward the United States. However, given the fact that he was elected with the mandate of two-thirds of the voters, his moderate nature and support of freedom and tolerance has clearly been accepted

by most Iranians."

"Democracy In A Theocracy--Between Myth And Reality"

The pro-government Indonesia Times said in an editorial (5/26): "Iran's election proved to be alarmingly opposite to what was expected. Being a country based on Islamic theocracy, Iran had, in fact, brought distrust as to what kind of democracy was to be applied. Western countries were even in doubt as to whether it recognizes democracy as a universal value. Now, the Iranian government under the supreme leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei, the spiritual successor to the late Ayatollah Khomeini, has proven itself to be one of the forerunners in democracy. Subsequently, the Iranian nation has demonstrated how Islam can come to be revered as a religion that respects democracy and the principles of self-determination."

JAPAN: "A Breeze Of Freedom In A Fundamentalist Nation"

According to liberal Asahi (5/27): "Former Culture Minister Mohammad

Khatemi,

backed by centrists and Islamist leftwingers, was elected president in an unexpected landslide victory over his conservative rival. Khatemi fought the election campaign under the banner of 'freedom.'... Khatemi, who expressed his tolerance for officially banned satellite television, attracted overwhelming support from youth and women.

"The poll offered a glimpse of changes taking place within Iranian society.

We would like to see Iran, which until recently locked its doors to the outside world, begin to open itself in small but steady steps. Khatemi's background indicates he will be faithful to the country's Islamic rule of law. We should not discount the strength of the Islamic establishment, which has been in place since the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the overthrow of the pro-American, pro-modernization regime of Shah Pahlavi.

"Khatemi has promised to follow the line set by the incumbent President Rafsanjani. However, the present government has troubled relations with Western countries over a number of issues. Will these relations change under the new president? The Middle East peace process is the first and foremost

matter of concern.... Iran has opposed the ongoing peace process brokered by the United States. Iran will have little influence in the region if it is seen as obstructing the peace process by supporting terrorism."

LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA: "A Signal To The West"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst for leading Clarin, wrote (5/26),

"The election of moderate Mohammed Khatemi as Iran's new president appears to

be a forecast of double and contradictory meaning: It is the first signal in a

long time which points to a lessening of pressure in the tortured relationship

of the Islamic revolution with the West. At the same time, it suggests...the

threat of growing tension within the regime of religious leaders which has ruled the country for the past 18 years. The key question is: Does

Khatemi's

victory really go against the desires of the Revolutionary Council and Iran's

maximum authority, spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei?"

"In Spite Of Moderates' Victory: Ayatollahs' Regime Remains Intact In
Iran"

Rome-based correspondent Fernando Elenberg commented (5/26) in
business-financial El Cronista, "Cohabitation' of the republic's new
president
with a conservative parliament will not be easy, but parliament will not
be
able to ignore the plebiscite through which Khatemi was elected. One of
the
major problems the new president will have to face will probably be Iran's
foreign policy. Khatemi expects diplomatic relations with the West to be
'normal' again."

##===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====
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by PMDF.EOP.GOV (PMDF V5.0-4 #6879) id <01IJEP66P9TC004NU6@PMDF.EOP.GOV> for
Matsui_d@a1.eop.gov; Wed, 28 May 1997 15:32:07 -0500 (EST)
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by STORM.EOP.GOV (PMDF V5.1-7 #6879)
with SMTP id <01IJEP5H3HK4001E8W@STORM.EOP.GOV> for Matsui_d@A1.EOP.GOV; Wed,
28 May 1997 15:31:28 -0400 (EDT)
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PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN IRAN: 'MODERATION' WINS

The election of Seyyed Mohammed Khatemi as the next president of the Islamic
R
epublic of Iran caught the attention of editors worldwide, with most
concluding
that his landslide victory signaled a shift toward "moderation" in
the theocra
tic republic. In Iran, official Englishlanguage papers saw the
"moderate" cler
ic's win as "a turning point" in the history of the Islamic
republic and urged
Mr. Khatemi's aides to "make accountability and the rule
of law the main pillar
s of their plan of action." Official Iranian radio,
however, insisted in its E
nglishlanguage broadcast that the Western media
had misinterpreted the former m
inister of Culture and Guidance's victory as
being a protest vote and "a messag
e for changes...in this country." It
praised the Iranian people for being "vig
ilant" against "various conspiracies
by the enemies." That "message," nonethel
ess, found credence not just in
Western capitals, but in the Middle East and As
ia as well. Cairo's
progovernment AlAhram declared: "It is obvious from the re
sults of

the...elections that the Iranian people have come to strongly seek modernization and reform." Karachi's independent national Dawn observed that Mr. Khatemi's "platform of personal freedom" and political "participation" had attracted large numbers of women and young voters. Tel Aviv's mass appeal, pluralist Maariv declared: "The Iranians appear to have had enough of religious extremism and deprivation of civil liberties."

While pundits uniformly found the elections encouraging, many confessed that Iran's future remains an enigma. The majority concluded that although "the leading Islamic country" has sent "a powerful signal" to the Islamic world by defying its conservative clerical leaders and voting for a reform-minded president, Iran remains "a theocracy, not a democracy." These observers cautioned that outsiders must take a wait-and-see approach in light of the many areas—the Middle East peace process, state-sponsored terrorism, the development of weapons of mass destruction and the violation of human rights in which Iran's activities have become the concern of many nations. Nevertheless, some European writers deduced that after a period of "appropriate reflection" after the Mykonos case, "it should not be difficult for Europe to resume its traditional trade and political relations with Iran." Writers from Italy to Bahrain to Bangladesh urged the United States to conduct a "strategic revision" of its dual containment policy and to "open a dialogue" with Iran. Still, there were significant voices of caution against expecting too much from the new Khatemi administration. The liberal Montreal Gazette suggested that the new president "has no intention of spending his limited political capital trying to change Iran's terrible relationship with the United States." Istanbul's religious/fundamentalist Milli Gazete intoned ominously, "Some people expected radical changes from Rafsanjani as well when he was elected, but time showed that he did not do anything against the principles of the Iranian Islamic revolution."

This survey is based on 32 reports from 18 countries, May 23/28.

EDITORS: Gail Hamer Burke and Kathleen Brahney
SOUTH ASIA

IRAN: "President-Elect Khatemi"

X'hp x (#Official Iranian radio, Tehran's Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, broadcast this in Persian (5/25): "The leader of the revolution, his eminence Ayatollah Khamenei, in a message to Iranians on the occasion of the enthusiastic and unprecedented seventh presidential election and the election of Seyyed Mohammed Khatemi as the new president, described the greatness and brilliance of the tremendous turnout of the people in the...elections.... What clearly comes across from the message of the esteemed leader of the revolution is the undeniable effect that the presence of varied ideas and tastes on the enthusiasm of the people to participate in the election....

"The figures related to the seventh presidential election clearly emphasized the role of the people in the new chapter that has been opened nationwide. That is because the participation of more than 29 million people in the polls on Friday and the election of a president with more than 20 million votes was unprecedented in all the elections during the Islamic Republic rule. Thus, the people's president-elect, who has been chosen as the seventh president of Islamic Iran by their decisive vote, begins his responsibility to manage the executive affairs of the country and to give momentum to the trend of the country's development and progress with the support of the leader and each and every one of the people."

"Western Mass Media Misinterpret Elections"

Official Iranian radio, Tehran's Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran, broadcast this commentary in English (5/25): "It should be mentioned that the mass media affiliated with world imperialism, which did not expect such an enthusiast

ic presence by the people in the presidential elections of Iran, continued to present wrong analyses concerning the elections. In this regard, some of the Western mass media have interpreted the votes cast by the people of Iran as a sign of opposition to the sovereignty of the theologians and believe that the votes cast by the Iranian people are in fact a message demanding changes and developments in this country. This is under conditions when this time too, the Iranian people cast their votes in favor of a theologian as their future president. Additionally, with the election of the people's favorite president, it was revealed how baseless the publicity of the Western media was where they claimed that the Iranian president had been preselected. The reality is that the Iranian people's great and enthusiastic participation in the elections proved that in the Islamic Republic of Iran, it is the people's votes which determine their political fate.... In order to have access to truth, they have to review the 18-year long history of Iran following the victory of the Islamic revolution, and then they will realize that the sustainable and vigilant presence of the Iranian people in various arenas has safeguarded Iran against various conspiracies by their enemies."

"Turning Point In Iran's History"

In the words of the official, Englishlanguage Kayhan International (5/25), "It is everybody's belief that Friday's presidential election proved to be a determining day for and a turning point in the history of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

"A Vote For Change"

The official, Englishlanguage Tehran Times held (5/25), "The unprecedented, massive turnout in the presidential elections covered by more than hundred teams of newsmen from across the world is another vote of confidence for the Islamic system and its leadership.... While people's participation in the

election confirms their loyalty to the Islamic system, their new choice has a special message for the officials: Grievances and complaints must not remain unheeded. In other words, people's vote for Hojjat OI Eslam Khatemi is a call for change in certain issue areas."

"Next Is Accountability And The Rule Of Law"

The official, Englishlanguage Iran Daily opined (5/25), "Next in the line is rule of law and the interrelationship between authority and responsibility.... Khatemi's aides will do the nation a major service if at the outset they make accountability and rule of law the main pillars of their plan of action.... Now, more than at any time in the past, it is possible and necessary to join hands with the forthcoming administration of Mohammed Khatemi to face internal problems and foreign pressure."

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BANGLADESH: "Election In Iran"

Conservative Ittefaq declared (5/27), "It is notable that Iran has been holding elections regularly since the Islamic revolution. The propensity to cling to power like many Third World countries is not visible in Iran. The loser in the just concluded election conceded defeat before the counting of votes was completed and congratulated the winner. This example of conceding defeat is rare in many Asian and African countries. It has become part of the political culture to raise allegations of voter rigging if one loses the election in these countries. Even Iran's supreme leader congratulated the victor. This reflects an allegiance and sincerity to democratic values."

"New Iranian President"

According to antiWest Inqilab (5/27), "A certain antiIslamic circle is viewing this victory of Khatemi from a different angle. This circle has termed the victory as an end to the influence of the Islamic clergy, as the fall of fundamen

talism and as a victory for the moderates. They have forgotten that the Islamic revolution of Iran was the reflection of people's longcherished aspirations.

Programs for leading the country to its desired goals may be different, but this does not at all change the policies and ideals."

"Iranians Want Change"

Proleft Sangbad asserted (5/27), "The result of the justconcluded election is clear evidence that the influence of Iran's supreme leader, the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, on his people is on the wane. This verdict of the people proves that a freer political and social environment is more desirable in Iran than tougher religious injunctions. But religious hardliners have been occupying the most seats in the Iranian parliament. This will increase the president's conflict with them in the coming days. Will the radicals be able to accept this changed situation?"

"New Iranian President And Open Air"

According to independent Banglabazar Patrika (5/27), "Presidenelect Khatemi will face two tough problems. The first is domestic and the second is international. The Iranian image abroad has been damaged substantially since the Islamic revolution. The economy has not yet been rebuilt and there are great ideological divisions. The Western influence has very strong roots in Iranian society. Iranian women could not accept the revolution wholeheartedly. The Islamic hardliners have been interpreting Islamic injunctions according to their convenience and trying to subjugate the womenfolk. But they cannot suppress the younger generation's interest in the outside world."

"Iran's Verdict For Continued Reforms"

The conservative New Nation expressed these views (5/29), "Considering Khatemi's allround exposure in governance, backed by the unprecedented popular support

that he enjoys, it's time for the West to open a dialogue with him inasmuch as he is indeed the right person capable of defusing the long accumulated tensions in international relations."

PAKISTAN: "New President For Iran"

Karachi's independent, national Dawn held (5/27), "The elections last week, which were the seventh in Iran since the Islamic revolution in 1979, were hotly contested. It speaks of the Iranian leadership's commitment to democratic rules and practices which has never flagged at any stage that the campaign was conducted in a dignified manner and the loser accepted his defeat gracefully, although he was generally expected to win. This points to the growing maturity of Iranian democracy within the framework set by the Islamic clerics.... It is on the platform of personal freedom that Mr. Khatemi has made the strongest impression. His promise of change and his assurance to women that they will enjoy greater participation in national life have undoubtedly won for him the votes of the youth and women a factor which may have been decisive in his victory."

X' hp x (#MIDDLE EAST

ISRAEL: "Iran's Second Revolution"

The independent Jerusalem Post told its readers (5/25): "Although President-elect Mohammed Khatemi campaigned on maintaining the state's hostility to the United States and Israel...there may be room for some hope that some thaw in the attitude to the 'great and little Satans' might emerge.... Israel's defense establishment undoubtedly will be watching closely for any change in Tehran's support for Hezbollah and must be alert to any winds of change, regardless of the direction, that may blow up in the most important non-Arab state in the Middle East after Turkey."

"A Better Iran"

Massapeal, pluralist Maariv judged (5/25): "The victory of Mohammed Khatemi in the presidential elections is the best piece of news to have come out of Iran since the ayatollahs took over the country. In the long run, the victory of the less radical and more liberal of Iran's fanatic religious leaders might be good news also for Israel.... The Iranians appear to have had enough of religious extremism and deprivation of civil liberties. More and more Iranians have grown bitter over the economic situation.... Mohammed Khatemi may yet prove a bonus to the West. It would seem that the specter of nuclear confrontation in the Middle East has lessened somewhat."

EGYPT: "Moderation In Iran"

Unsigned commentary in progovernment Al Ahram remarked (5/26): "It is obvious from the results of the Iranian elections that the Iranian people have come to strongly seek moderation and reform."

JORDAN: "The Road To Change"

Daily columnist Mahmoud Rimawi opined on the oped page of progovernment, influential, Arabic language AlRay (5/27): "If the new president...is to succeed in his call for change and in confronting the traditional forces of power within the regime, the change will be as good as a second revolution, which Iranians and their neighbors have been waiting and hoping for.... We don't expect Iran to make a complete shift of attitude or an instant change in policies due to the complexity of the decisionmaking system. Yet, the new leadership should invest in the prevailing positive climate to start on the path of change and reform and to reportray Iran's image as the openminded, the peaceful and the prosperous."

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BAHRAIN: "Beginning Of A New Iranian Era"

Leading, semi-independent AlAyam published this view by Omran Salman (5/29),
"The Iranians generously granted Khatemi their votes and gave him the number two position in Iran. By doing so, that country moved a step forward. A step which is enough to spread modernization, even if on a limited scale.... Will this be the beginning of a new Iranian era that will render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's?"
X` hp x (#
"The Second American Defeat By Iran"

Hafedh AlShaikh wrote (5/23) in leading, semiofficial Akhbar AlKhalij, "The latest edition of Foreign Affairs definitely is the most important edition published.... This edition should be read carefully by all of those in the region who are under the illusion that America will forever defend the status quo.... The article...provides evidence of the failure of the sanctions against Iran....
The Iranian economy is healthier and more stable under the blockade than many countries receiving aid from America."

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES: "Majority Of Iranians Want Freedom And Reforms"

Sharjah-based, Arabic-language AlKhaleej (5/27) editorialized, "The outcome of the elections reflects a tendency for some sort of moderate democracy in a country that was guided by conservative clergymen.... The election of Khatemi means that the majority of Iranians want freedom and reforms. We wonder whether Khatemi will break Iran's isolation and establish with neighboring countries relations based on mutual respect, confidence and good neighborliness. The answer to this is strongly linked to his ability to use his popular support in his expected confrontation with the parliament led by its speaker, his rival Nateq Nouri."
X` hp x (#EUROPE

TURKEY: "Is Iran Changing?"

Ferhat Koc wrote in Istanbul's religious/fundamentalist Milli Gazete (5/28):

"The results of the elections in Iran were a surprise to the Westerners who called Khatemi a liberal. In fact, this should not be regarded as a surprise because there were only two favorites in the elections. The winner, Khatemi, will not bring much of a change to Iran. Let's not forget the fact that some people expected radical changes from Rafsanjani as well when he was elected, but time showed that he did not do anything against the principles of the Iranian Islamic revolution. As for the newly elected president, he is also a well-educated, religiously competent and staunch supporter of the Islamic revolution.... Khatemi himself is a religious figure. He was in charge of the Ministry of Religious Philosophy two years ago."

X' hp x (#
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X' hp x (#
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X' hp x (#

CANADA: "The Women's Vote"

Independent journalist Gwynne Dyer suggested in the liberal Montreal

Gazette
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... But Iran is a democracy, if a strange and rather limited one, and even the most conservative mullahs cannot ignore who elected Khatemi to the presidency.
... So what can Khatemi do with this resounding victory, with or without a female vicepresident? Khatemi is not a 'liberal.'... He has no intention of spending his limited political capital trying to change Iran's terrible relationship with the United States.... What's left for Khatemi is the political and social field and it's because they believe that he would start opening Iran up in these areas that the women, the young people, and everybody else interested in change voted for him."

"Iran's Islamic Revolt"

The liberal Toronto Star (5/27) commented, "Iranians sent the Islamic world a powerful signal this weekend by defying their conservative clerical leaders and voting for a reform-minded president.... They do not equate being a good Muslim with being closed-minded.... They value political pluralism and religious tolerance.... Just how much success Khatemi will have is uncertain.... The rise of Khatemi with such strong popular support will also have reverberations beyond Iran. That the leading Islamic country should signal its yearning for pluralism and tolerance in the best humanistic traditions of the religion strengthens progressive forces across the Muslim world."
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According to the liberal Montreal Gazette (5/27), "By giving Mohammed Khatemi a landslide victory...Iranians voted massively for change. They voted for greater personal freedoms and less censorship; they voted for a more tolerant r

egime and against the favored candidate of the religious establishment.... Anyone who expects any major change in Iran's truculent foreign policy...may well be disappointed.... Without the presence of true opposition figures on the ballot, it is hard to know exactly to what extent the vote was a rejection of the status quo. But it is clear Iranians delivered quite a rebuke to the establishment.... Changes would be welcome advances for civil liberties and human rights. But they would still leave Iran a theocracy, not a democracy."

X' hp x (# BRITAIN: "Iran Votes For Change"

X' hp x (#

The independent Financial Times declared (5/27): "There can be no mistaking the yearning for change shown by Iranian voters who last Friday buried the favored presidential candidate of the mullahs in a landslide.... Mohammed Khatemi is the most outward looking leader to emerge in Iran since the 1979 revolution against the Shah.... It appears that Iranian voters have cleared the way towards more rational government in their country."

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Konstantin Eggert said in reformist Izvestia (5/27): "Yevgeny Primakov has lost the bet on finding a new ally in the fight for a 'multipolar world.' Nateq Nouri's disastrous defeat means that, after 18 years of the Islamic revolution, Iranians want a more liberal life and a stable economy."

ITALY: "Khatemi Can Reopen Game In Middle East"

An editorial in provocative, classical liberal Il Foglio stressed (5/28): "Certainly nobody can fool himself that Khatemi is another Tony Blair nor that Iran has suddenly become an AngloSaxon democracy. If a parallel can be drawn, albeit with extreme caution, it is perhaps with Deng Xiaoping's China.... The Iranian masses which have experienced the flimsiness and the inefficiency of the

the Islamic 'third way' between capitalism and socialism...and especially the younger generations, now have a chance to promote a change in their nation....

After a period of appropriate reflection in the wake of the verdict on the Mykonos case, it should not be difficult for Europe to resume its traditional trade and political relations with Iran. More complicated appears the strategic revision in which the Clinton administration is engaged.... While in the case of Iraq a direct threat on the rich but weak monarchies in the Gulf remains, in the case of Iran the possibility is emerging for the first time of overcoming the break in diplomatic relations which followed the occupation of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran between '79 and '81. There are also other means to discourage Tehran's plan to build its own nuclear arsenal and to resort to the weapon of terrorism: For example, by playing on Iran's urgent need for political and economic reform, and on the consequent need of restoring normal relations with the West."

X` hp x (# SPAIN: "Iran Won't Return"

Conservative ABC editorialized (5/26): "It's not worth holding your breath expecting that the victory of the moderate candidate in the Iranian presidential elections will be the beginning of a Westernstyle democracy. But it is the best omen to lay the foundation of hope for pulling back from the oldstyle Islamism of Khomeini. With almost three times as many votes as his adversary...the victory of Mohammed Khatemi was overwhelming.... The high level of participation, 90 percent of the eligible voters, the failure of presumed voter rigging, and the votes of Iranian youth....for a moderate and outwardlooking candidate should cause the religious leaders to reflect about an irreversible past and a different future in the Islamic Republic."

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INDONESIA: "Voice Of Freedom And Tolerance Wins In Iran"

Leading independent Kompas concluded (5/26): "It is too early to predict whether Khatemi will take Iran in the next four years, though he explicitly stated that he will not change policy toward the United States. However, given the fact that he was elected with the mandate of two-thirds of the voters, his moderate nature and support of freedom and tolerance has clearly been accepted by most Iranians."

"Democracy In A Theocracy Between Myth And Reality"

The pro-government Indonesia Times said in an editorial (5/26): "Iran's election proved to be alarmingly opposite to what was expected. Being a country based on Islamic theocracy, Iran had, in fact, brought distrust as to what kind of democracy was to be applied. Western countries were even in doubt as to whether it recognizes democracy as a universal value. Now, the Iranian government under the supreme leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei, the spiritual successor to the late Ayatollah Khomeini, has proven itself to be one of the forerunners in democracy. Subsequently, the Iranian nation has demonstrated how Islam can come to be revered as a religion that respects democracy and the principles of self-determination."

JAPAN: "A Breeze Of Freedom In A Fundamentalist Nation"

According to liberal Asahi (5/27): "Former Culture Minister Mohammad Khatemi, backed by centrists and Islamist leftwingers, was elected president in an unexpected landslide victory over his conservative rival. Khatemi fought the election campaign under the banner of 'freedom.'... Khatemi, who expressed his tolerance for officially banned satellite television, attracted overwhelming support from youth and women."

"The poll offered a glimpse of changes taking place within Iranian society.

We would like to see Iran, which until recently locked its doors to the outside world, begin to open itself in small but steady steps. Khatemi's background indicates he will be faithful to the country's Islamic rule of law. We should not discount the strength of the Islamic establishment, which has been in place since the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the overthrow of the pro-American, pro-modernization regime of Shah Pahlavi.

"Khatemi has promised to follow the line set by the incumbent President Rafsanjani. However, the present government has troubled relations with Western countries over a number of issues. Will these relations change under the new president? The Middle East peace process is the first and foremost matter of concern.... Iran has opposed the ongoing peace process brokered by the United States. Iran will have little influence in the region if it is seen as obstructing the peace process by supporting terrorism."

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LATIN AMERICA

ARGENTINA: "A Signal To The West"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst for leading Clarin, wrote (5/26), "The election of moderate Mohammed Khatemi as Iran's new president appears to be a forecast of double and contradictory meaning: It is the first signal in a long time which points to a lessening of pressure in the tortured relationship of the Islamic revolution with the West. At the same time, it suggests...the threat of growing tension within the regime of religious leaders which has ruled the country for the past 18 years. The key question is: Does Khatemi's victory really go against the desires of the Revolutionary Council and Iran's maximum authority, spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei?"

"In Spite Of Moderates' Victory: Ayatollahs' Regime Remains Intact In Iran"

Romebased correspondent Fernando Elenberg commented (5/26) in
businessfinancia

l El Cronista, "Cohabitation' of the republic's new
president with a conservati
ve parliament will not be easy, but parliament
will not be able to ignore the p
lebiscite through which Khatemi was elected.
One of the major problems the new
president will have to face will probably
be Iran's foreign policy. Khatemi
expects diplomatic relations with the
West to be 'normal' again."

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===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====