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JAPAN: MIKI CABINET PARALYZED SINCE RAMBOUILLET

Dec. 27 (IPS)-- The government of Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Miki has been paralyzed by strong external pressure from the U.S. and the New York banks, combined with internal weakness and divisions, since the economic summit at Rambouillet in November. The Miki government, and its backers in the Japanese Zaibatsu (giant conglomerates), has not moved significantly to further advance the pro-Third World development, pro-fusion policies that were put forward at Rambouillet.

The basic reason for this is the incredible U.S. effort since Rambouillet to terrorize the Japanese with veiled threats of economic warfare and military threats.

Immediately following Rambouillet, the yen was subjected to tremendous pressure as a result of tightening of credit from New York banks, which forced net repayment of Japan's massive foreign debt obligations and a consequent drain on Japan's foreign reserves. The drop of the yen to 308 to the dollar was worked out at the summit itself and control over the Bank of Japan exercised through swap arrangements with the U.S. Federal Reserve. U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's policy was clearly stated in his Detroit speech, which focused on Japan and contained not so subtle threats, evoking the memory of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

AGENTS WITHIN GOVERNMENT

These actions have occurred in tandem with the activities of key figures within the government who are functioning essentially as agents of the Rockefeller family in Japan. The main figure is Takeo Fukuda, the Vice-Premier and head of the Economic Planning Agency, who has consistently pushed a zero-growth, full austerity policy worked out at every key point with the New York banks (principally David Rockefeller), who hold Japan's external debt obligations.

Fukuda works mainly through the Bank of Japan and the Finance Ministry, headed by Chira, a factional leader in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. These agencies have attempted at every point to block any proposals for Third World development by Miki. Miki's allies in this regard are the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and Minister Komoto, who is a close personal friend of Miki's and is very pro-growth and anti-Club of Rome, etc. Komoto, in a recent interview in the Far East Economic Review, expressed these views very strongly and backed the development of thermonuclear fusion power as a key part of his growth strategy for Japan and the world. MITI generally represents the views as well of

of the Zaibatsu, especially those involved in industrial production and heavily oriented toward the export markets for these goods (the large trading companies control this).

OTHER OPERATIVES

The other main pro-U.S. operatives within the government are Foreign Minister Kiichi Miyazawa and the head of the Japan Defense Agency, Michita Sakata. Both have pushed key aspects of the U.S. "Pacific Doctrine" strategy for northeast Asia. The strategy is based on a U.S.-Peking-Japan alliance against the Soviet Union that would involve an integration of U.S. and Japanese defense capabilities along NATO lines (joint contingency planning) accompanied by selective up-grading of Japanese defense forces.

The move to force the Japanese to sign the anti-Soviet "anti-hegemony" treaty with China, which has been stalled for a year or more, is being backed all the way by Kissinger. This is clear from the wording of his statements in Peking, the use of the "anti-hegemony" wording of the Peking regime, and his description of Japan as one of the areas of "convergence" of U.S. and Chinese strategic interest.

Miyazawa has played the role of pushing the China alliance, and sabotaging the pro-development policies of Miki (as he evidently did at the North-South talks where the Japanese backed off from their summit proposals and said almost nothing).

Sakata has worked to bring about the tightening of defense relations with the U.S. and has recently moved to bring into being the joint contingency planning apparatus between the two armed forces. A meeting in mid-January will be held to plan this. This apparatus would bring automatic deployment of Japanese forces in conjunction with the U.S. in the event of "emergencies" in the Far East. Korea of course in the "emergency" that Kissinger has most in mind and the pressure is on Japan in the form of various military maneuvers recently in the area, where U.S. troops have simulated deployment from bases in Japan for use in Korea. This is something which Miki has made a point of avoiding -- any commitment by Japan to allow such use, unless a direct threat to the security of Japan exists. The joint contingency plans would draw Japan into any U.S. provocation against the Soviet Union either in Korea (where there is heavy deployment of tactical nuclear weapons) or against the Soviet Pacific fleet, which is based in Vladivostok and must exit through straits either controlled by Japan (or between Japan and the Soviet Union) or the Korea Straits.

Sakata has made statements recently indicating allowing the use of bases in Japan in emergencies while Miyazawa backed for the first time, though he later withdrew his statement under questioning in the Diet, the 12 mile limit which would heighten possibilities of incidents over passage of Soviet vessels through the straits around Japan.

These activities have taken place in a political atmosphere within Japan that has been marked by an evident weakness on the part of Miki to provide strong leadership in the government and over the LDP. This has been reflected in large drops in his popularity in public opinion polls (only about 26 per cent support him). Further government weakness was shown in its handling of the public workers

strike (from Nov. 26 to Dec. 3). Miki backed off from a policy of compromise with the workers over the right to strike and austerity measures under pressure from right-wing LDP elements led by Fukuda and LDP Secretary General Nakasone, who advocated a hard-line policy.

On economic policy, despite strong statements by representatives of the leading business organizations, such as Keidandren, calling for an expansionary growth policy, Fukuda has been able to retain control and maintain austerity as the government policy. This debate is going on currently. There has been very little activity on the part of business to make further progress on expanding trade with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries or the developing countries, after a strong push was made in this direction before the Rambouillet summit. However, it is widely known that they do not favor, for the most part, any China alliance.

Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko is scheduled to visit Japan in the immediate future (before the end of the year or soon after) where the conclusion of the Japan-Soviet peace treaty is to be discussed.