

Business Briefs

East-West

Japan won't approve venture with Soviets

The Japanese government has been put in a quandary over a joint Soviet-Japanese venture to promote hatching of salmon on one of four Soviet-held islands claimed by Japan. It appears that the government will forbid the venture.

The agreement was reached between Japanese and Soviet fishery cooperatives in May. It calls for the two cooperatives to launch a salmon-hatching venture on Kunashiri, one of four Soviet-held islands off Hokkaido. The Foreign Ministry said it could not approve any joint venture with the Soviets on any of the disputed islands. The islands were Japanese territory, but have been occupied by the Soviet Union since World War II.

Signing of the agreement was reported to the Hokkaido Prefecture by Tadaichi Shiiku, head of the Utari Fisheries Cooperative run by the Ainu minority race in Shibetsu, Hokkaido.

Shiiku said he signed the agreement with V.I. Balmuta, head of the Sakhalin Fishery Cooperative, on May 14 during his visit to Sakhalin. Moscow has urged Japanese fishery companies and cooperatives to promote joint ventures in the North Pacific, including Sakhalin.

Food

Kampuchea suffering shortage of rice

Kampuchea needs to import 92,000 tons of rice from outside Indochina for its security stock this year, because a "lean season" has set in two months earlier than usual, according to a U.N. report. The "lean season," normally from July to November, arrived prematurely, at the end of April, after prolonged rains began in December 1987.

The rains "saved large crop areas and thus averted a potentially disastrous food supply situation," the report said.

The rice requirement—equivalent to one month of national needs—was based on a

consumption figure of 153 kilograms of rice per person each year, or 418 grams a day.

Present domestic reserve stocks, calculated from interviews with provincial authorities and farmers, could provide between 2.5 and 6 months of consumption, the report said.

Approximately 40,000 tons of husked rice were imported from Vietnam to make up for the shortfall in 1987. Since then, 15,000 more tons have been imported, but, given the severe rice shortage in Vietnam, it is feared that another 25,000 tons needed this year might not be forthcoming.

The report said that 50,147 tons were pledged as food aid to Kampuchea for the November 1987 to October 1988 period.

Productivity has been hampered by weather conditions, lack of technical personnel, absence of basic agricultural tools, and a scarcity of trucks and fuel, the U.N. report said. Delivery of foreign aid is hampered by lack of infrastructure—the limited facilities at Phnom Penh port, the only port safe to use given security problems at Kompong Som in the southwest.

According to a report on the situation in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, the rice shortage will cause "severe hardships" to about 1 million people.

European Community

Catholic daily attacks 'Single Europe' act

Italy's leading Roman Catholic daily newspaper has published a blistering attack on the "Single Europe 1992" measures planned by the European Community bureaucracy. Under the measures, all border controls governing people and goods will be dropped, ostensibly to make Europe into a copy of the United States economically.

But, says Italy's *Avvenire*, "The united Europe which is being shaped is not (at least not so far) that of the peoples, of the history and culture of the community, but that of the financiers who make decisions as oligarchs, within closed circles." *Avvenire* charges that a recent trade accord between the European Community and the Soviet Comecon bloc was prepared in secret in Moscow.

It quotes British financier James Goldsmith saying that the purpose is to transform Western Europe into a Soviet "protectorate," and this, says *Avvenire*, is why the oligarchs are in such a hurry to create a European Central Bank. "The European bank is supposed to be created on the model of the American Federal Reserve, a public organ controlled by private bankers."

The Trilateral Commission orchestrated this model of European integration, based on strategic plans drawn up by Zbigniew Brzezinski, and reported in *Foreign Affairs* in 1984, to "integrate" Western and Eastern Europe, and withdrawing U.S. troops from the continent.

"What is happening under our eyes will be presented as 'reunification,' as the creation of 'an independent Europe based on its own identity.' Now, we know where these slogans are coming from," i.e., Moscow, *Avvenire* concludes.

Foreign Debt

Bishop calls debt collection 'robbery'

German Catholic Bishop Franz Kamphaus likened the debt servicing system to "robbery," at a session of the joint church commission on development policy in Berlin June 21. Kamphaus was speaking on the topic of International Monetary Fund conditionalities.

He said that the churches must not view themselves as mere observers of the worsening of living conditions in the Third World, nor should they restrain themselves from intervening in the situation.

"We have learned," said the bishop, "that it is not sufficient to only care about the victims of robbery like a Samaritan. It is also important to expose robbery as such, and step in the way of the robbers."

He compared the current indebtedness of the Third World to the catastrophic situation Germany was exposed to under the 1919 Versailles Treaty, a situation that contributed to the destruction of democratic rule and paved the way for fascism: "More than others, we [Germans] know what hunger and the feeling of having no future mean. More than others, we know what kind of

demagogic dangers lie in collective humiliation under the regime of an unjust system of foreign debts."

Kamphaus, a co-author of the May 13 bishops' statement that denounced the private banks as well as World Bank and IMF for their debt policy against the developing sector, gave a similar speech in Bonn April 18.

AIDS

West German panel divided on disease

Figures released in a report by a commission on AIDS appointed by the West German government, say that more than 2,000 people are sick of the killer disease in West Germany. At a press conference releasing the report, however, it became clear that sharp differences divided the members of the commission.

The majority of commission members expressed support for Health Minister Rita Suessmuth's "do-nothing" policy of accord-ing civil rights to the virus.

However, the four Bavarian members, Professors Zoellner, Spann, Gallwas, and Christian Social Union parliamentarian Geis, voted against the majority report and presented their own. The minority report's conclusions included the statement that AIDS is a disease within the meaning of the federal epidemic law and must be treated according to this law; i.e., public health measures of quarantine and prevention are required. It also said that people in high risk groups and those who are infected have the duty not to endanger the health of others.

While the majority of the commission members insist that there is no risk of infection through casual contact or coughing, the minority report points out that this is still not settled.

The majority report insists that the government has no responsibility for fighting the disease, that that is entirely up to the individual. "The importance of the individual citizen's responsibility for the individual citizen's protection against AIDS must be underlined. It must be clear that this respon-

sibility can not be delegated to the state."

It appears that the only country in the world to now be successfully checking the spread of AIDS is Fidel Castro's Cuba. A Health Ministry report published there says that nearly one-third of Cuba's sexually-active population, and 20% of the total population of 10 million, have been tested for the disease, "probably the highest percentage worldwide." Tests uncovered 230 carriers, of whom 34 have developed the disease. Seven people have died. Those found to be carriers have been quarantined.

The report said that based on the geometrical progression of AIDS in most countries, without these containment measures, Cuba would now have between 2,000 and 3,400 AIDS carriers.

Deindustrialization

French daily describes U.S. 'apartheid'

"Terrifying, abandoned, and poverty-stricken; certain American towns presented as 'models' at the beginning of the 1960s have become 'ghost towns' today." So reads a report in the French daily *La Tribune*.

It continues, "In East St. Louis, Illinois, the garbage has not been collected for six months. The inhabitants have to put their rubbish out on the roofs out of the way of dogs and rats.

"In Camden, New Jersey, thieves have literally taken down, bit by bit, the whole town. . . .

"In Benton Harbor, Michigan . . . 60% of the population lives directly on public aid money. . . . Two-thirds of the housing is below standard. . . .

"These are just a few examples, but are representative of dozens of towns in the United States, towns which are never discussed because they are too far from American standards. . . .

"This descent into hell began 20 years ago, with the epoch of deindustrialization and the departure of the better-off part of these towns' population, generally the white population. The process was accelerated by the progressive disengagement of the federal government. It is apartheid, American-style."

Briefly

● **BRITISH** financier Robert Maxwell is planning to raid Belgium's Société Générale de Belgique. Within hours of an announced settlement wherein Italian financier Carlo de Benedetti reduced his stake in the huge minerals and financial holding company, Maxwell told press he plans to go after a stake.

● **HUNDREDS** of children in Moldavia, U.S.S.R., died of drinking improperly treated tap water in 1987, West Germany's *Bild Zeitung* reported June 25.

● **THAILAND'S** economy is expected to grow by 9% this year, second in the Far East only to the anticipated 10% growth in South Korea, Dr Phisit Pakkasem, deputy secretary-general of the National Economic and Social Development Board, reported June 13. Thailand also recorded a payments surplus during the first quarter of the year, and its international reserves rose to \$5.7 billion.

● **EAST GERMANY** was accused of responsibility for the death of fish and seals in the North Sea by Bavarian Prime Minister Stoiber June 24. He said that releasing untreated industrial waste into the Elbe River is standard practice in East Germany. As a result, poisonous algae have invaded the North Sea, entering the respiratory systems of all living creatures to a depth of 15 meters and killing them. More than 1,500 seals have died.

● **LIBYA** is now China's fourth-largest source of investment, the *China Daily* reported June 19. Libya invested the equivalent of \$14.3 million in China in the first quarter of the year. Hong Kong is by far the largest investor at \$599.26 million, followed by the United States, \$41.93 million; Japan, \$41.66 million; and West Germany, \$11.01 million.

● **12% OF ITALY'S** GNP reflects black market activities, the largest being drug trafficking, according to a study published by the country's Censis think tank.