

Business Briefs

Technology

South Korea strives to catch up to G-7 by 2000

South Korea President Noh Tae Woo stated that his nation will be able to catch up with the Group of Seven advanced industrial countries in science and technology by the year 2000, the May 1 *Korea Herald* reported. The President said that to achieve this technological renovation is an "historical mission imposed on all of us." "Whether or not we attain the goal will decide the future of the nation," he told a press conference at which most of Seoul's science journalists were present.

"What Korea aims at attaining in 10 years is to keep the world's highest-level technology in some scientific fields and to be capable of keeping up our technological renovation without foreign aid," he said.

"Let's recall the days 30 years ago when we could not do a thing without foreign aid. Who could imagine that 30 years later, we could by ourselves make nearly everything, from optical fiber cable and semiconductors to giant ships, and sell them to the world."

He said that the government will soon initiate a lifetime pension to encourage scientists to devote themselves to research without worrying about their livelihood. He said the government will also give bold tax reductions and other support to firms which make heavy investment in R&D.

'New World Order'

Peruvian congressman slams malthusianism

Opposition Peruvian Congressman Carlos Calderón Carvajal charged during mid-April congressional interrogations of cabinet officials that the Fujimori government was serving as a puppet of economic interests with their own "new world order" agenda of malthusianism and drug legalization. In a speech that was blacked out by the Peruvian press, Congressman Calderón charged, "Neither this cabinet,

nor the previous one, rules this country. They only function as a bunch of liberal marionettes manipulated by evil hands hiding from the population."

Calderón pointedly denounced George Bush's favorite free market economist, the neo-liberal Hernando de Soto, as one of those who "praise the economic benefits of coca." Said Calderón, "There you have Hernando de Soto, who in 1984 proposed the legalization of coca in the magazine *Que Hacer*." De Soto is currently considered the *éminence grise* of the Alberto Fujimori presidency.

Calderón went on to denounce Bush's "new world order, which is being fully implemented in our country. [It] is a malthusian order that seeks to stop the growth of our population, that wants to reduce our market, and that wants to deny us any development projects." Malthusians and liberals represent "the philosophy of death," which must be replaced by a "philosophy of life" which recognizes that there is "a fifth commandment: Thou Shall Not Kill. . . . Not to kill means protecting national industry . . . not giving away condoms in schools . . . ensuring that purified water gets to our *pueblos juvenes* [Peru's shantytowns] . . . protecting the salaries of the majority which have been reduced drastically by 70% in the past year. . . . Not to kill means to truly fight coca and not to use false negotiators, those who recommend that coca be freely consumed."

International Cooperation

Ukraine, Germany announce joint ventures

A Ukrainian delegation visiting Bonn in late April emerged with a host of agreements for industrial and scientific joint ventures. Leonid Kravchuk, chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Soviet, headed the delegation to Germany; it met with President Richard von Weizsäcker and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Kiev International News Service reported May 1.

According to Kravchuk, "A memorandum was signed with the Siemens firm on set-

ting up a joint venture with the Kiev scientific and production conglomerate for relay and automatic equipment, [to provide] computer tomographs for medical check-ups." Deals were also finalized for a joint enterprise in furniture, and for a baby food enterprise to be set up in Transcarpathia. "Commercial contracts were consolidated or established with more than 30 firms," concluded Kravchuk.

Kravchuk said that a permanent Ukrainian-Bavarian working group will hold its first meeting in Kiev in June, and that soon, the Bavarian prime minister and ministers of health, justice, culture, and ecology will visit Ukraine.

Trade

Soviets score U.S. space technology monopoly

The Soviet military newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* denounced the U.S. monopoly in space technology exports on April 27. "As soon as U.S. interests are affected, the administration's practical actions immediately begin to diverge from its expansive declarations. . . . Europe and Japan are becoming increasingly aware that the aim of this policy is not so much to prevent the possibility of improving Soviet military technology as to force rivals from the international market."

The article cites two cases. When Brazil wanted to launch a satellite using a Soviet booster rocket, "cries of outrage from Washington immediately rained down on the heads of the unfortunate Brazilians." A similar case involving Australia is cited.

Krasnaya Zvezda comments, "One would have thought that mutually advantageous cooperation could have been achieved in precisely this sphere. However, some people are again seeking reasons for political opposition, completely discounting the fact that ignoring other countries' achievements and repeating stages of technical development that have long been passed can only set back those who scorn the experience of others and act in such a way as to prevent competition on the international market."

Briefly

● **MACHINE TOOL** output in the United States has fallen so low that it is now sixth in the world, behind even Switzerland. The U.S. now accounts for only 6.7% of total world production. Japan was first in 1990 with 23.2%, followed by Germany at 21.2%. Switzerland, with only 6.5 million people, edged past the U.S. with 6.8%.

● **JURGEN MOLLEMANN**, the German Finance Minister, told journalists in Washington May 8 that restrictions and discrimination in technology transfer, whether against the Third World or the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, i.e., the Bush policy, is a bad policy.

● **LATE FROST** in April devastated up to 40% of vineyards in France, according to the Bordeaux Wine Producers Association. A wine association spokesman said that 1991 production could be reduced by half, representing a loss of up to 400 million bottles.

● **MICHELIN** is laying off 4,900 workers by the end of 1992, as a result of the drop in auto sales internationally and a rise in the financing costs of its current debt. Meantime, Air France has announced that the Gulf war cost it \$660 million in losses, "the worst in the history of Air France."

● **INDONESIAN** President Suharto wants Japanese help with Indonesia's nuclear program, the Japanese Kyodo news service reported. Japanese Environment Minister Kazuo Aichi and Science and Technology Minister Akiko Santo were in Indonesia in early May.

● **LAOS** has asked Thailand to become its partner in the development of at least three large-scale hydroelectric projects inside Laos, reported the *Bangkok Post* May 2. Under terms of the Mekong River Project, Laos this year began selling electricity to Thailand from its newly completed Xeset hydroelectric plant.

Debt

Africa needs development to have democracies

Without debt relief and development of its economies, democracy has no chance in Africa, warned a feature in the Berlin daily *Tagespiegel* May 6. As long as the Club of Paris government creditors to Africa refuses to write off African debt, the article said, there is little hope for real progress.

The democracy movement that has or is taking power in some African states now, will run into a dead-end without the perspective of economic development. In short, the failure of the democratization experiment is preprogrammed, warned the article.

Africa's status as a mere supplier of raw materials to the industrialized world must be changed, *Tagespiegel* recommended. Africa needs industries to be able to fabricate finished products, which would liberate the African economies from their present dependency on world raw materials markets which are outside their control.

Infrastructure

China vacillates on Yangtze River dam

Although Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng is widely reported to have announced at the recent National People's Congress that a plan to build the world's largest dam on Yangtze River was to proceed, the official *Liaowang* magazine reports that the project will not be undertaken in the near future, although the dam is still supported by the government.

In late April, a noted scientist denounced the project, saying it should not be undertaken "as long as peace is not secured under the current international situation." He claimed that Scud and other missiles now "make it pointless to distinguish between front and rear lines. The dam would become a burden to our future generations, as outside enemies could use the dam for blackmail."

Chief among the opponents are the British. London's *Financial Times* denounced the proposed Three Gorges Dam as a "threat" and as "Stalinist folly." An article by chief China correspondent Colina MacDougall on April 24 admits that the plan, first proposed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, would go a long way toward meeting the enormous energy needs of the mainland, alleviate flooding that threatens millions every year, and open up the interior to ocean-going ships. But, she says, "Wouldn't it be better for Peking to spend the money on installing equipment nationwide to save electricity rather than providing more?"

Citing mostly environmentalist complaints, the correspondent reports that the dam is unlikely to be built due to the lack of investment funds, but that "it remains a threat as long as a totalitarian government in Peking can in the last resort overrule opposition."

Ecological Holocaust

Brazilian minister says millions will die

Speaking at a World Health Organization (WHO) meeting in Geneva, Brazilian Health Minister Alcení Guerra laid out an apocalyptic situation on his continent. "Millions of Latin Americans will die in the next years because they lack potable, clean water," he stated on May 7. In Brazil, 350,000 children die every year, more than four times as many as died at Hiroshima.

Dr. Guerra said that when countries negotiate new conditions of debt payment, they shouldn't ignore health. "Life can't occupy second place," he said. He also asked for a special drive to combat cholera.

Also speaking in Geneva, WHO director general Hiroshi Nakajima noted that serious epidemics were raging in Benin, Mozambique, and Zambia, that AIDS was spreading rapidly in Africa. Nakajima said that "Health is a right of man that must be protected; therefore, a good sanitation system constitutes an optimal investment of the human resources of a country."