



SPECIAL REPORT- JAPAN

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Nov.29 (IPS) --The key developments in Japanese Politics this week are the post-summit confirmation of Japanese intent to proceed along the policy lines they laid out at Rambouillet, especially as regards the Third World, and the development of international cooperation in fusion power.

Internally, the massive strike of Japanese public workers is the center of attention and directly reflects the continuing battle within the government between the Deputy Premier Takeo Fukuda forces, the Finance Ministry, and Prime Minister Takeo Miki.

POST-SUMMIT DEVELOPMENTS:

The Japanese press coverage of the Rambouillet summit not only reconfirms the content of the key Japanese proposals but gives additional details of what actually transpired.. First, it was at the insistence of the Japanese that any written agreement appeared at all at the end of the summit. The Japanese had prepared a draft agreement which they submitted to the participants. Included in the draft were points for : "International cooperation for the development of substitute forms of energy, including energy generated by nuclear fusion"; expansion of aid to developing countries along with efforts to stabilize the export incomes of developing countries; "the desirability of stable expansion of economic relations between the East and the West".

At a press conference following the summit, Miki specifically reaffirmed the importance of fusion cooperation.

The Japanese press contained rather explicit descriptions of the actual response to the Miki proposals at the summit. The Asahi described the U.S. frame of mind as "highly belligerent" (which is described as related to the Zionism resolution at the U.N.), the Europeans as "highly apprehensive" and Miki, "appealing to the Conference to take a magnanimous attitude toward the developing countries...found himself talking against a considerable underflow of resistance".

Upon Miki's return to Japan following the summit, the general approach taken in the press, and by Miki himself, was to proclaim the summit a "success" and then proceed to implement the policy "as if" it had been approved at the summit. Japan is "taking responsibility" for "assuring dialog and harmony with developing nations", according to an account in the Yomiuri Shimbun. The Yomiuri, in this context, reported a lead from "sources" that Miki had decided at the summit to launch a series of talks with

Asian and Arab leaders to promote cooperation between advanced countries, oil-producers and developing countries. Miki is believed to be making approaches to these countries for some kind of summit in Tokyo - a pan-Asian, Arab affair, The Yomiuri reports: "The premier believes that the formation of a new international economic order, which is one of the objectives of the 6-nation summit in Rambouillet, presupposes dialogs between the North and South and between the East and West by broad channels".

The only additional concrete moves in this regard is a report that the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry has come out asking for a loosening of the COCOM controls on East-West trade since "the COCOM list has lost its raison d'etre because of detente", according to the Yomiuri. A delegation from the Supreme Soviet is presently in Japan.

The Nov.26 Pravda, ran a straight-forward article on Japan-Soviet cooperation in Siberia.

PUBLIC WORKERS STRIKE IN JAPAN

The massive public workers strike now going on in Japan, one of the largest and most extensive in post-war history, is actually a crucial battle on the question of austerity. The immediate question is the demand for the right to strike for public employees which was taken away by Head of U.S. occupation forces Gen. Douglas MacArthur in 1948. However behind this is the massive debt crisis of the Japanese municipalities and particularly, the Japanese National Railways (JNR) which is at the center of the strike.

The strike has been set up as a provocation by Fukuda, with the obvious hope of providing the crisis which could damage or topple Miki. Fukuda and the Finance Ministry, less than a week before the strike, came out with their proposal for dealing the JNR crisis. The Finance Ministry proposed an outright austerity plan which included 80-90 per cent hikes in rail fares, layoffs of 13,000 employees, and cutbacks in trackage on local lines. This plan is opposed by the unions, the Transport Ministry and by circles in the LDP. They are proposing instead some kind of "shelving of debt" as an alternative to fare hikes. There are some differences between the unions and the Ministry (and JNR management) but they all agree on some kind of debt relief as opposed to austerity. It is clear that Miki had hoped for some kind of settlement that would combine the granting of a limited right to strike with this anti-austerity program.

This does involve, it should be noted, a corporatist setup for strike situations. Fukuda's move was made to preclude this and setup a confrontation. He was aided in this by anti-labor sentiment in rightwing LDP circles which back him. Therefore, if Miki is to get a settlement, which could end up improving his political position domestically, he must have a showdown with these elements in the party ---something he has felt too weak to carry out up to now.