

NORTH ASIA - ASIE DU NORD

JAPAN/JAPON

- Prime Minister Kaifu has decided to send Japanese minesweepers to the Persian Gulf. The four minesweepers, command ship and supply vessel will set out following ratification of the decision by the National Security Council on April 26.

- Finance Minister Hashimoto has informed USA Treasury Secretary Brady that Japan does not intend to make up the US\$ 400 million shortfall in its Gulf War contribution caused by the decreased value of the yen. Japan has indicated that it would consider providing aid for Kurdish refugees and to the new Multilateral Investment Fund for private investment in Latin America to compensate for the shortfall.

- The visit by Soviet President Gorbachev to Japan has resulted in the release of a joint communique acknowledging the difficulty of the Northern Islands sovereignty issue without offering any concrete solutions. In his address to the Diet April 17, Gorbachev called for a security conference among the USA, the USSR, China, India and Japan.

- Le Japon va commencer d'ici mars prochain 1992, la construction de son premier centre d'entraînement entièrement consacré à la préparation des astronautes. Le centre formera des astronautes japonais, américains, canadiens et européens.

- Le comité sur les problèmes de la condition féminine a remis à M. Kaifu son rapport, préconisant un certain nombre de mesures à prendre d'ici cinq ans, dont la possibilité pour les femmes de conserver leur nom et l'augmentation à 15% de la proportion des femmes dans les commissions consultatives gouvernementales.

KOREA/CORÉE

- The Korean Government has announced that it will raise its official beef quota to 84,000 MT and an additional 3,000 MT of pork will be allowed into the market in an effort to stabilize food and livestock prices and keep inflation down.

- According to the Korean Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), Korea's economy will likely grow 8 percent in the second quarter of this year, compared with an estimated 7.1 per cent growth in the first quarter. KCCI based its predictions on the stabilization of oil prices due to the end of the Gulf War and the expected global economic recovery.

- The USA principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence for