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MFA Weekly Press Briefing, Thursday March 16

US Embassy Rwanda

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PAGE 01 BEIJIN 07025 01 OF 03 161025Z

ACTION EAP-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AIT-03	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	EB-01	EUR-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	IO-10	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02
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	T-00	USIE-00	SA-01	PMB-00	DRL-09	G-00	/052W
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FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6211

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMCONSUL SHENYANG

AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU

AMCONSUL SHANGHAI

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL CHENGDU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 007025

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BEIJIN 07025 01 OF 03 161025Z

E.O. 12356: N/A

TAGS: PROP, RP, HK, CH

SUBJECT: MFA WEEKLY PRESS BRIEFING, THURSDAY,
MARCH 16

1. IN THE WEEKLY PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 16, MFA PRESS
SPOKESMAN SHEN GUOFENG RESPONDED TO QUESTIONS ON
CHINA'S POSSIBLE MEMBERSHIP IN THE WTO, THE

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 1

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8

CONTINUING DISPUTE OVER THE SPRATLY ISLANDS, AND
RELATIONS WITH TAIWAN. HE ALSO COMMENTED ON WEI
JINGSHENG'S SITUATION, LI PENG'S VISIT TO COPENHAGEN,
NUCLEAR ISSUES ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, AND OTHER
ISSUES.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR CHINA'S ENTRY INTO WTO

2. THE SPOKESMAN WAS ASKED WHETHER NEGOTIATIONS FOR
CHINA'S POSSIBLE ENTRY INTO THE WTO WOULD RESUME IN
APRIL, AND WHETHER CHINA WAS WILLING TO MAKE
CONCESSIONS. THE SPOKESMAN STATED THAT WHEN U.S.
TRADE REPRESENTATIVE KANTOR WAS IN CHINA RECENTLY, HE
DISPLAYED A FAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARD CHINA ENTERING
GATT AND BECOMING A FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE WTO. THE
SPOKESMAN SAID THAT CHINA MUST FIRST EVALUATE THE
POSITIONS OF THE OTHER PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE WTO
NEGOTIATIONS, BEFORE DECIDING ON A TIME TO BEGIN
NEGOTIATIONS. CONCERNING GATT ENTRY, HE STATED THAT
CHINA WOULD ENTER GATT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE URAGUAY
ROUND, AND ON THE BASIS OF ITS LEVEL OF ECONOMIC

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BEIJIN 07025 01 OF 03 161025Z
DEVELOPMENT.

3. NOTING THAT CHINA HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID THAT IT
WOULD RETURN TO NEGOTIATIONS ONLY WHEN THE U.S. HAD
GIVEN UP ITS EXHORBITANT DEMANDS, A REPORTER ASKED
WHETHER THE U.S. HAD GIVEN UP THESE DEMANDS, OR IF
CHINA HAD MADE SOME CONCESSIONS. IN RESPONSE, THE
SPOKESMAN STATED THAT CHINA HAD NEVER CLOSED THE DOOR
ON NEGOTIATIONS, AND THAT THE U.S. NOW SUPPORTED
CHINA'S ENTRY INTO GATT. HE ADDED THAT THE U.S. HAD
AGREED TO USE NEGOTIATIONS TO DEAL WITH CHINA'S
STATUS AS A DEVELOPING COUNTRY. THE SPOKESMAN SAID
THAT HE WANTED TO STRESS THAT CHINA WOULD CONTINUE TO
BE FLEXIBLE AND REALISTIC IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

SPRATLY ISLANDS ISSUES

4. SEVERAL REPORTERS ASKED ABOUT THE UPCOMING
MEETINGS IN BEIJING BETWEEN THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 2

UNCLASSIFIED

Date Printed:

17 Mar 2003

DOC_NBR: 1995BEIJIN07025

CHANNEL: n/a

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8

AND A DELEGATION FROM THE PHILIPPINES. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ABOUT HOW CHINA PLANNED TO EASE THE CONCERNS OF OTHER COUNTRIES ABOUT CHINA'S PLANS FOR THE SPRATLY ISLANDS, THE SPOKESMAN STATED THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT CHINA HAD INDISPUTABLE SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SPRATLY ISLANDS AND THE SURROUNDING WATERS. HE CLAIMED THAT PRIOR TO THE 1970'S, EVERYONE AGREED THAT CHINA HAD SOVEREIGNTY. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT CHINA FAVORED SHELIVING THE DISPUTES IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 04 BEIJIN 07025 01 OF 03 161025Z
THE AREA. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT CHINA HAD ALREADY REACHED AGREEMENTS ON JOINT DEVELOPMENT WITH SOME OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED, AND HOPED TO ACHIEVE ADDITIONAL AGREEMENTS SOON.

5. WHEN ASKED TO COMMENT ON THE SHELTERS BUILT IN THE SPRATLY ISLANDS TO HOUSE FISHERMEN, AND WHETHER OTHER COUNTRIES'S FISHERMEN WOULD BE WELCOME TO USE THE SHELTERS, THE SPOKESMAN AVOIDED ANSWERING THE QUESTION DIRECTLY. INSTEAD, HE REITERATED THAT CHINA HAD SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE SPRATLY (NANSHA) ISLANDS, AND THE SURROUNDING WATERS.

RELATIONS BETWEEN TAIWAN AND THE MAINLAND

6. A FEW REPORTERS ASKED ABOUT CHINA'S REACTION TO TAIWAN'S PROPOSED ASIA PACIFIC TRANSPORTATION HUB, AND TAIWAN'S NEW SUGGESTIONS ON RELATIONS WITH THE

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PAGE 01 BEIJIN 07025 02 OF 03 161026Z
ACTION EAP-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AIT-03	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00
	DODE-00	EUR-01	FBIE-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-10
	L-01	ADS-00	M-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01
	PA-02	PM-00	PRS-01	P-01	SP-00	TRSE-00	T-00

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 3

UNCLASSIFIED

Date Printed:

17 Mar 2003

DOC_NBR: 1995BEIJIN07025

CHANNEL: n/a

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INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA
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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 03 BEIJING 007025

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BEIJIN 07025 02 OF 03 161026Z
E.O. 12356: N/A
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MARCH 16

MAINLAND. THE SPOKESMAN STATED THAT CHINA HAD ALWAYS BEEN IN FAVOR OF ESTABLISHING DIRECT LINKS ACROSS THE TAIWAN STRAITS, AND THAT ANY STEPS FAVORABLE TO INCREASED INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES HAS GOOD. HE ADDED THAT DIRECT LINKS WERE IMPORTANT TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE STRAITS.

7. ON THE QUESTION OF CONTACTS BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF TAIWAN AND THE MAINLAND, THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT THE MAINLAND WAS IN FAVOR OF MEETINGS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, AND HE REITERATED THE INVITATION FOR THE LEADERS OF TAIWAN TO VISIT THE MAINLAND. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT SOME ISSUES COULD ONLY BE RESOLVED THROUGH DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF BOTH SIDES. HE ADDED THAT ON THE BASIS OF

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 4

UNCLASSIFIED

Date Printed:

17 Mar 2003

DOC_NBR: 1995BEIJIN07025

CHANNEL: n/a

HANDLING: n/a

8

THE ONE CHINA PRINCIPLE, THE MAINLAND WAS WILLING TO
HOLD NEGOTIATIONS TO SELECT AN APPROPRIATE VENUE AND
DECIDE ON A NAME UNDER WHICH TO HOLD SUCH MEETINGS.

WEI JINGSHENG

8. A REPORTER ASKED THE SPOKESMAN ABOUT THE
WHEREABOUTS OF WEI JINGSHENG, AND WHETHER CHINA WOULD
SUPPORT HIM AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE NOBEL PEACE

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BEIJIN 07025 02 OF 03 161026Z
PRIZE. THE SPOKESMAN CLAIMED THAT WEI JINGSHENG HAS
NOTHING MORE THAN A CONVICTED CRIMINAL, AND THAT HE
HAD NO QUALIFICATIONS TO RECEIVE THE NOBEL PEACE
PRIZE. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD NO IDEA WHERE WEI WAS.
WHEN PRESSED TO SPECIFY THE CRIMES THAT WEI HAD
COMMITTED, AND WHETHER HE WOULD BE PUT ON TRIAL, THE
SPOKESMAN STATED THAT THE MATTER WAS REALLY THE
RESPONSIBILITY OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS, AND THE MFA
SHOULD NOT COMMENT ON THE ISSUE.

NORTH KOREAN ISSUES

9. WHEN ASKED ABOUT NORTH KOREA'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT
A LIGHT WATER NUCLEAR REACTOR FROM SOUTH KOREA, AND
NORTH KOREA'S STATEMENTS THAT NOW WAS NOT THE
APPROPRIATE TIME TO PUT THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT INTO
EFFECT, THE SPOKESMAN STATED THAT THE SIGNING OF THE
FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT CREATED A FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR
RELAXING TENSIONS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, AND THAT
NORTH KOREA SHOULD PLACE IMPORTANCE ON THE
AGREEMENT. HE SAID THAT THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT WAS
DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE, AND THAT THE PARTIES INVOLVED
SHOULD WORK TOGETHER TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES ASSOCIATED
WITH THE REACTOR DISAGREEMENT. HE ADDED THAT THE
PROCESS OF RESOLVING THE NUCLEAR ISSUES ON THE KOREAN
PENINSULA WOULD REQUIRE PATIENCE, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND
EQUALITY.

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Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 5

UNCLASSIFIED

Date Printed:
17 Mar 2003

DOC_NBR: 1995BEIJIN07025

CHANNEL: n/a
HANDLING: n/a

8

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PAGE 04 BEIJIN 07025 02 OF 03 161026Z
LI PENG TRIP TO COPENHAGEN

10. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ABOUT PREMIER LI PENG'S TRIP TO COPENHAGEN, AND WHETHER IT HAD BEEN AN EFFORT TO BOOST LI PENG'S IMAGE, THE SPOKESMAN STATED THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR CHINA TO BE REPRESENTED AT THE SUMMIT MEETING IN COPENHAGEN, BECAUSE CHINA WAS THE LARGEST OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. AS SUCH, HE STATED THAT IT WAS NATURAL TO SEND THE HEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT TO REPRESENT CHINA AT THE SUMMIT.

SINO-JAPANESE COOPERATION ON WWII CHEMICAL WEAPONS

11. THE SPOKESMAN WAS ASKED TO COMMENT ON JAPAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WOULD SEND INVESTIGATORS TO CHINA TO SEARCH FOR CHEMICAL WEAPONS LEFT OVER FROM WORLD WAR II. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT CHINA HAD

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PAGE 01 BEIJIN 07025 03 OF 03 161026Z
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INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-17	ACDE-00	AIT-03	CIAE-00	SMEC-00	OASY-00
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Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 6

UNCLASSIFIED

8

Date Printed:

17 Mar 2003

DOC_NBR: 1995BEIJIN07025

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UNCLAS SECTION 03 OF 03 BEIJING 007025

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BEIJIN 07025 03 OF 03 161026Z

E.O. 12356: N/A

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ASKED JAPAN TO DEAL RESPONSIBLY WITH THE PROBLEM OF
CHEMICAL WEAPONS LEFT OVER FROM THE JAPANESE
INVASION. HE STATED THAT INSPECTORS FROM JAPAN HAD
ALREADY ARRIVED IN CHINA, AND WERE CARRYING OUT THEIR
INVESTIGATIONS. HE ADDED THAT CHINA HOPED THAT JAPAN
WOULD SPEED UP THE PROCESS OF RESOLVING THIS LONG
STANDING ISSUE.

HONG KONG ISSUES

12. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION ABOUT HOW CHINA'S
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICES IN HONG KONG WOULD CHANGE IN
NAME AND FUNCTION AFTER 1997, THE SPOKESMAN STATED
THAT WHILE THERE WOULD CERTAINLY BE SOME CHANGES AND
ADJUSTMENTS IN THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF CHINA'S
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICES AFTER 1997, THE EXACT CHANGES
WERE STILL UNDER DISCUSSION AND HE HAD NOTHING
SPECIFIC TO REPORT.

13. THE SPOKESMAN ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT:

-- AT THE INVITATION OF PRESIDENT JIANG ZEMIN, THE
KING AND QUEEN OF SPAIN WOULD PAY A STATE VISIT TO
CHINA FROM MARCH 29 TO APRIL 1.

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED

Page: 7

UNCLASSIFIED

Date Printed:
17 Mar 2003

DOC_NBR: 1995BEIJIN07025

CHANNEL: n/a
HANDLING: n/a

8

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BEIJIN 07025 03 OF 03 161026Z

-- AT THE INVITATION OF VICE PRESIDENT RONG YIREN,
THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA WOULD
TRAVEL TO CHINA ON MARCH 22, FOR A GOODWILL VISIT.

-- AT THE INVITATION OF VICE PREMIER AND FOREIGN
MINISTER QIAN QICHEN, THE FOREIGN MINSITER OF
THAILAND WOULD MAKE AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO CHINA FROM
MARCH 19-21. HALLFORD

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Page: 8