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CONTENTS

I. United States

1. US Bolton on DPRK 'Hellish Nightmare'
2. DPRK Agreement to Multilateral Talks
3. US Response to DPRK Multilateral Talk
4. US on PRC Missile Build-Up
5. PRC-Russia Space Arms Ban
6. US Nuclear Weapons Watchdog Disbandment
7. Japan Energy Crisis
8. Japan DPRK Asylum Seekers
9. PRC US Rights Activist Trial
10. US-Australia Terrorist Intelligence Confusion

II. Japan 1. Japan's Safeguard Measure
2. Roles of SDF in Iraqi Reconstruction
3. DPRK Diplomacy under the Armistice Agreement
4. Japan Iraq Troop Deployment
5. SDF Permanent Legislation
6. Japan-Australia Relations
7. Japan ODA Guideline
8. Japan Spent Nuclear Fuel

I. United States

1. US Bolton on DPRK 'Hellish Nightmare'

Agence France-Presse ("TOP US OFFICIAL SLAMS NORTH KOREA, DEMANDS END TO NUCLEAR DRIVE," 07/31/03) reported that top US arms negotiator John Bolton has slammed DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il for forcing his people live a "hellish nightmare" as he stepped up a war of words with the DPRK over its nuclear weapons ambitions. The US undersecretary for arms control and international

security said Thursday that Kim had to scrap his nuclear weapons drive and was "dead wrong" if he thought developing them would serve to strengthen his regime. "The days of DPRK (DPRK) blackmail are over," Bolton said in a speech to the East Asia Institute, a Seoul-based private thinktank. "Kim Jong-Il is dead wrong to think that developing nuclear weapons will improve his security. Indeed the opposite is true." He said Kim lived like royalty while keeping "hundreds of thousands of his people locked in prison camps with millions more mired in abject poverty, scrounging the ground for food. For many in the DPRK, life is a hellish nightmare." Asked at a press conference what effect his criticial remarks were likely to have on Pyongyang while delicate diplomatic negotiations were underway, Bolton said it was necessary to speak out. "I think it is important to tell the truth and I think that being able to state clearly the concerns we have about the regime in North Korea is important internationally in explaining why we are concerned both about its own support for terrorism and its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction," he said.

2. DPRK Agreement to Multilateral Talks

The Associated Press (George Gedda, "NORTH KOREA SEEMS READY FOR NEW TALKS," Washington, 07/30/03) and Reuters (Martin Nesirky, "NORTH KOREA BACKS SIX-WAY TALKS ON NUCLEAR PROGRAM," 08/01/03) reported that the DPRK appears ready to accept President Bush's proposal for six-party talks to resolve growing concerns about Pyongyang's nuclear weapons, the State Department said Thursday. Spokesman Richard Boucher said that an initial round of three-way talks involving the US, the DPRK, and the PRC, held in Beijing last April, apparently will be expanded to include the ROK, Japan and Russia. The first public word of what appears to be a major diplomatic breakthrough for the administration came from Russia, where DPRK Ambassador Pak Ui Chun met with Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov. He said the Pyongyang leadership instructed him to express the DPRK's support for "six-sided talks with the participation of Russia on resolving the current complex situation on the Korean Peninsula." Boucher had no information on where or when the talks might be held. He said the administration was "encouraged, very encouraged" by the development.

3. US Response to DPRK Multilateral Talk

Agence France-Presse ("US "ENCOURAGED" BY SIGNS THAT NORTH KOREA IS ACCEPTING TALKS OFFER," Washington, 07/31/03) reported that the US said it was "very encouraged" by signs that North Korea may be ready to accept its long-time demand for multilateral talks on a nuclear crisis. Hours after Russia said the DPRK had accepted a US proposal for six-way talks, and President George W. Bush spoke to PRC President Hu Jintao on the issue, the State Department said it was "very encouraged" by developments. "At this moment we have indications that we find very encouraging," said State Department spokesman Boucher said. Russia's foreign ministry said earlier that the DPRK had agreed to a US proposal to hold six-nation talks to try to resolve the nuclear standoff. Boucher said that US diplomats had not yet consulted Russian opposite numbers on the announcement, and officials said US optimism was based on Bush's call on Wednesday with Hu. "We are actually beginning to make serious progress about sharing responsibility on this issue," Bush said in a White House news conference on Wednesday.

4. US on PRC Missile Build-Up

Reuters (Adam Entous, "US CALLS CHINA MISSILE BUILD-UP DESTABILIZING," Washington, 07/31/03) reported that the White House warned on Thursday that the PRC's build-up of ballistic missiles capable of striking Taiwan could destabilize the region, and said it was prepared to sell

Taipei the weapons to defend itself. "We've made it very clear that China's rapid build-up of weapons, particularly missiles opposite of Taiwan, is something that is destabilizing," White House spokesman Scott McClellan told reporters. He said Washington had expressed its "concerns" directly to Beijing, which views the self-ruling island as a breakaway province and has threatened to attack if it declares independence. "The best way for these two sides to resolve their differences is through a peaceful dialogue and we encourage the parties to pursue that dialogue," McClellan said. Washington is wary of antagonizing Beijing, which has been a key ally in pressing North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program. The White House was responding to a Pentagon report which warned that the PRC was hard at work preparing for a potential war over Taiwan. The report said the PRC possesses about 450 short-range ballistic missiles and is expected to add about 75 annually over the next few years. The Pentagon last year had estimated that the PRC possessed 350 of these missiles and would be adding 50 per year. All of these missiles are capable of being used against Taiwan and all are believed to be based in the Nanjing Military Region opposite Taiwan, the report said. McClellan said the Bush administration would "fulfill our commitments" under the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, which calls for the US to sell Taiwan the weapons to maintain a self-defense capability.

5. PRC-Russia Space Arms Ban

Reuters (Robert Evans, "CHINA AND RUSSIA URGE SPACE ARMS BAN," Geneva, 07/31/03) reported that the PRC and Russia, with the US clearly in their sights, said Thursday "Star Wars" dangers were growing and called for a quick start to talks on a treaty to ban weapons in space. The two powers delivered their plea at a session of the United Nations-backed Conference on Disarmament just over a year after tabling proposals for a pact, to be known as PAROS, that have met with a cold reception from Washington. "Dire developments augur ill for the issue of PAROS," PRC disarmament ambassador Hu Xiaodi told the 66-nation forum, declaring that efforts were under way to "control and occupy outer space." "The risk of weaponization of outer space is mounting," he added, in remarks that sources close to his delegation said were aimed at the US National Missile Defense (NMD) system due to start up in September next year. Russia's ambassador, Leonid Skotnikov, told the Geneva disarmament forum Thursday that his country remained firmly committed to banning the deployment of weapons in outer space and wanted a moratorium while a treaty was negotiated. "We are ready to take on such a commitment immediately as long as the leading space powers join in a moratorium," he said. Skotnikov also called for renewed efforts to relaunch discussion on confidence-building measures on PAROS -- Preventions of an Arms Race in Outer Space -- that have been stalled for almost a decade. Russia, he said, had started to take unilateral action to ensure openness and reduce fears about its own space activities by notifying in advance planned launches of probes, their purpose and their flight paths. "We call on other countries which have space launching capabilities to join us and undertake all necessary measures for building confidence in outer-space activities," Skotnikov added. In the past, Russia has accused the US directly of obstructing discussion at the conference, which holds three sessions a year, on a new space accord. Proponents of a pact, which include many European and nearly all developing countries, say it is vital to ensure that the 1967 treaty banning weapons of mass destruction in outer space is not undermined. With the US withdrawal last year from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty with the old Soviet Union, they argue there is no reliable legal pact barring countries from using space for military purposes.

6. US Nuclear Weapons Watchdog Disbandment

The Guardian (Julian Borger, "US SCRAPS NUCLEAR WEAPONS WATCHDOG," Washington DC, 07/31/03) reported that a US department of energy panel of experts which provided independent

oversight of the development of the US nuclear arsenal has been quietly disbanded by the Bush administration, it emerged yesterday. The decision to close down the national nuclear security administration advisory committee - required by law to hold public hearings and issue public reports on nuclear weapons issues - has come just days before a closed-door meeting at a US air force base in Nebraska to discuss the development of a new generation of tactical "mini nukes" and "bunker buster" bombs, as well as an eventual resumption of nuclear testing. Ed Markey, a Democratic congressman and co-chairman of a congressional taskforce on non-proliferation, said: "Instead of seeking balanced expert advice and analysis about this important topic, the department of energy has disbanded the one forum for honest, unbiased external review of its nuclear weapons policies." An NNSA spokesman, Bryan Wilkes said: "The advisory committee was created to assist the NNSA administrator during the creation of the NNSA, and it was not intended to go on beyond two years. Clearly the NNSA is up and running and it is not needed any more." The typical lifetime of such federal advisory committees is two years. However the NNSA committee's charter stipulates "The Committee is expected to be needed on a continuing basis." Former members of the advisory committee said they had the impression that the new administrator, Linton Brooks, appointed last year, was not interested in its work, and decided not to renew its charter. Sidney Drell, a leading American physicist and a former committee member said: "It was not renewed. I presume they did not value us or found us a nuisance. An independent, tough advisory board is very important in having a strong (nuclear) stockpile programme." The committee's charter said that it's meetings "will be held approximately four times each year". In fact, it was not summoned at all in the last year of its existence.

7. Japan Energy Crisis

The Economist ("JAPAN'S ENERGY CRISIS: DARKNESS FALLS ON TOKYO," Tokyo, 07/17/03) reported that Japan's electricity industry is in turmoil. This may have a big impact on the world's energy markets. Wakj into the - Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and you will find most of its lifts shut down, the corridors dark, and-although it is hot and humid-the air conditioners barely working. During the lunch hour, office lights are switched off, and on rainy days (this is Tokyo's rainy season, so there are plenty) bureaucrats can be seen straining to catch what little light comes through the windows as they work through their break. Sometimes offices get so dark that their solar-powered calculators stop working. The ministry, which oversees the electricity industry, is gearing up for a power shortage that could leave Tokyo facing unprecedented blackouts this summer, when demand for electricity reaches its peak. The reason: Tokyo Electric Power (Tepco), the world's largest private electricity company, had to close its 17 nuclear reactors after it was caught last September falsifying safety records to hide cracks at some of its power plants. Three have now restarted, but it is unclear when the local authorities will allow others to do so. As these nuclear reactors usually supply almost half the electricity for the region centerd on Tokyo, Tepco reckons that it may fall short of expected demand by almost 10% this summer.

8. Japan DPRK Asylum Seekers

Agence France-Presse ("TEN SUSPECTED DPRK ASYLUM-SEEKERS AT JAPANESE EMBASSY IN BANGKOK," 08/01/03) reported that ten people believed to be DPRK asylum seekers have taken refuge at the Japanese embassy in Bangkok and are being interviewed to determine if they are seeking asylum. "Ten people -- five men and five women including two children, one boy and one girl -- entered the premises of the Japanese embassy in Thailand," the mission's minister, Toshihisa Takata, said Thursday. "Now these 10 people are safely in the building of the Japanese embassy. We are now investigating their names... and their wishes," he told reporters, adding that they were trying to determine if they were seeking asylum. Takata said the group slipped into the embassy

compound when the gates were opened for a car to enter. They were stopped by a guard and then an embassy official had them escorted inside the building. "Our security guard stopped them just inside the gate partly because they were shouting 'North Korea' or something like that," he said. The group, whose youngest member was just about two or three years old, had been given food and water and they appeared to be in good health, the official said. "Their condition at the moment is that we provided lunch and some water. It seems to me that their health condition is normal. They seem to be reasonably relaxed at the moment," he said.

9. PRC US Rights Activist Trial

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA PREPARES TRIAL AGAINST RIGHTS ACTIVIST AS US SENATE ISSUES WARNING," 07/31/03) reported that the PRC is preparing a trial against US-based human rights activist Yang Jianli, as the US Senate warned such cases could harm relations between Beijing and Washington. Forty-year-old Yang, who has been in PRC detention for 15 months, is scheduled to appear at a Beijing court Monday on charges of espionage, which in grave cases can lead to the death penalty. "The Senate ... condemns and deplores the ongoing ... detention of Dr Yang Jianli, and calls for his immediate and unconditional release," the US Senate said in a unanimous resolution this week. "The US ... should ensure the government of the People's Republic of China understands that ... the infliction of human rights violations ... will reduce the opportunities for cooperation between the US and the People's Republic of China," it said. Yang has lived in the US since 1989 when he was forced to flee the PRC after the crackdown on the Tiananmen protests, where he was a high-profile participant. He was detained in April last year after he entered the PRC using a friend's passport in an attempt to observe ongoing labor unrest. While the trial itself is unlikely to be a lengthy affair, the actual verdict could be delayed for a considerable period of time. "A verdict can come anytime from Monday to never," Genser said. "In some of these dissident cases, they waited as much as two years."

10. US-Australia Terrorist Intelligence Confusion

Agence France-Presse ("US STRUGGLE WITH ANOTHER INTELLIGENCE MUDDLE," 07/31/03) reported that Australia has openly disputed a US report citing the country as a possible "point of origin" for an al-Qaeda terrorist attack on the US or Europe. The row between the Iraq war allies emerged as officials on both sides sought to dispel confusion sparked earlier this week by a hijacking alert issued by the US Department of Homeland Security. The alert, sent to US airlines, cited new intelligence information indicating Australia was among targets for new suicide hijackings planned by the al-Qaeda group which carried out the September 11 2001 attacks on New York and Washington. Australian officials insisted throughout the day Wednesday that the report was incorrect and that Washington would soon issue an amended advisory omitting the reference to Australia. But US officials publicly stood behind the report for more than 24 hours before clarifying Thursday that the warning should have identified Australia as a possible "point of origin" for a suicide hijacking, not a target. The targets of the plot, they said, were in the eastern US or Europe. The head of Australia's domestic intelligence agency ASIO, Dennis Richardson, downplayed the mix-up as a bureaucratic error rather than an intelligence failing. "This is not an issue between intelligence agencies. It's simply an issue of someone's misreading of the facts they have before them," he told reporters Thursday. "The intelligence on which that threat advisory was based did not refer to Australia as being a target. It referred to Australia as being a point of origin," he said. But Foreign Minister Alexander Downer then publicly dismissed the revised US warning, scoffing at the idea someone would hijack an airliner in Australia to attack Europe or the eastern US. "It is far-fetched to imagine that someone would hijack a plane in Australia and fly it all the way to the east coast of the US or to Great Britain, landing it a couple of times along the way to refuel, in order to

launch a terrorist attack," he said. "I'm not disturbed by these reports. This is all based on one intelligence report," he said.

II. Japan

1. Japan's Safeguard Measure

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI DISMISSES COMPLAINTS ABOUT BEEF TARIFF HIKES," Tokyo, 07/30/03) reported that Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi on Wednesday dismissed calls from the United States and Canada for Tokyo to withdraw a plan to raise tariffs on chilled beef from Friday in response to a surge in imports. "Considering the whole food situation in Japan, I will make efforts" so that the US and Canada can understand Tokyo's stance, Koizumi told reporters. "We're following the law. It is difficult to change what the government has done so far," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told reporters earlier Wednesday, saying the plan is in line with the law based on World Trade Organization rules. The Finance Ministry said Tuesday the tariff on chilled beef will be raised to 50% from the current 38.5% from Friday to next March 31 following a surge in imports in the April-June period. The US Embassy in Tokyo reacted sharply to the announcement, saying in a statement, "The United States is strongly disappointed that Japan has chosen to implement a safeguard action...In this instance, there is no justification." Lyle Vanclief, Canadian agriculture minister, also voiced disappointment Tuesday with Japan's decision in a meeting with Japanese farm minister Yoshiyuki Kamei in Montreal. The imports jumped 34%, far above the 17% year-on-year increase on a cumulative quarterly basis that allows Japan to introduce the safeguard barriers. The surge followed a plunge in beef imports in the same period last year when Japanese consumers shunned beef after the discovery of the country's first case of mad cow disease in September 2001.

2. Roles of SDF in Iraqi Reconstruction

The Asahi Shinbun ("SDF IRAQ MISSION RETHINKS STRATEGY," 07/29/03) reported that frightened by the enduring drumbeat of war and a nervous public, Japanese government has dramatically reversed course and decided Ground Self-Defense Force members deployed to Iraq will initially do humanitarian and reconstruction work rather than provide logistics support to U.S.-led combat troops. The unexpected change was immediately criticized by lawmakers, with one saying, "If we are not going to support the U.S. troops, why on earth did we legislate the special measures law to dispatch SDF members?" Defense Agency Director-General Shigeru Ishiba announced the shift in direction Sunday: "We want to begin the deployment in a way that will be understood and supported (by both the people of Japan and Iraq). To accomplish that, the emphasis will fall on humanitarian and reconstruction aid." The government appears to be seeking a less hazardous mission for the troops, who were expected to play a rear-echelon support role for US and other soldiers in Iraq, providing water, transporting personnel and ammunition and filling other logistics needs. Tokyo must now convince Washington to accept the idea, not an easy task. Appearing on a TV news program, Ishiba said, "The support of the Iraqi people is absolutely essential in deploying our SDF troops." To get this support, Japan will emphasize "humanitarian assistance in the initial stages," he said. Ishiba said it would take about two months to come up with a basic deployment plan. During this time the government will explain the apparently diminishing SDF contribution to the United States. "It will require U.S. understanding of (our position)", he said. Continued attacks on US troops, coupled with disagreements between Tokyo and Washington on the role and location of Japanese troops, prompted a reassessment of the mission by the prime minister's aides and the Foreign Ministry. While it appears tasking for the GSDF may be less ambitious, plans for the Air Self-Defense Force-assigned to ferry supplies to Baghdad-from outside Iraq, have not changed.

3. DPRK Diplomacy under the Armistice Agreement

The Asahi Shinbun (Kiyoshi Hasaba, "NORTH KOREA'S NULES PUT SHAKY CEASE-FIRE AT A CROSSROADS,"07/30/03) reported that the Armistice Agreement signed July 27, 1953, by the Korean People's Army, the Chinese People's Volunteers and UN Command forces established a shaky framework that left the devastated Korean Peninsula neither at peace nor war. But even that framework is not properly functioning any more, as shown by the Military Armistice Commission (MAC), which was established to oversee implementation of the armistice and to handle violations of the cease-fire. The commission has not held a general meeting since March 1991. The reason for the long inaction is due to DPRK's objections to an American general being replaced by his ROK equivalent as chief representative of the U.N. Command forces in the commission. DPRK and PRC have since pulled out of the MAC. In its place, an informal meeting of army generals was established to handle provocations and exchanges of gunfire in the Yellow Sea. Even so, DPRK has refused to take part in those meetings since March. While tensions between the two Koreas have lessened due to government dialogue and economic cooperation, the U.N. Command forces and the DPRK military communicate only via a telephone line. The Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, established to help oversee the armistice, also has been effectively dismantled. Both the US and ROK argue the armistice should be maintained until full-fledged peace is secured on the peninsula. But Pyongyang, insisting the agreement is ineffective, is calling for a new peace treaty between itself and the US. With the arguments of the two sides never meshing, there is no obvious course for achieving lasting peace in this last Cold War frontier. As for international concerns about DPRK's development of nuclear weapons, Pyongyang argues it is a deterrent for self-defense against the Bush administration's hard-line policy toward DPRK. Pyongyang has indicated it intends to continue developing nuclear weapons as long as Washington continues on this course. Pyongyang's attitude demonstrates the tremendous distrust of the US that has been building over the past half century. No doubt, Pyongyang also worries from a national security perspective since DPRK is the sole party in a region where superpowers have been competing for years that is not covered by a nuclear umbrella. In hopes of resolving the issue, the focus of upcoming talks with North Korea will be on a framework for talks. Regardless of the kind of framework proposed, the core of the problem is that the state of war remains in effect. This being the case, the issues involved in transforming a cease-fire structure into a genuine framework of peace will inevitably become entangled. It was no coincidence that the three nations that met in Beijing in April-the US, DPRK and PRC-are all participants in the Armistice Agreement. DPRK has threatened to abandon its obligations under the Armistice Agreement if sanctions are imposed against it. If that occurs, it would represent a reversal of course toward war. Given DPRK's development of nuclear weapons and deployment of missiles, it goes without saying that Japan cannot be an innocent bystander in a possible second Korean War. Fifty years after the Armistice Agreement was signed, we stand at a crossroads: Either true peace will prevail on the Korean Peninsula through the peaceful resolution of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons development program or nations will proceed once again on the road to war.

4. Japan Iraq Troop Deployment

The Japan Times ("GSDF MAY GET GUERRILLA COMBAT TRAINING," 07/15/03) reported that the Japanese Defense Agency has started deliberations on whether to train Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF) troops to fight guerrillas and terrorists and dispatch them along with other GSDF personnel to Iraq, sources said. The special troops are being considered in light of the current security situation in Iraq, according to the sources. Although the GSDF does not have troops specifically trained to combat guerrillas, the agency would gather elite elements from various units nationwide and train them to counter such terrorist activities as suicide bombings. It would also compile a code of conduct that clearly states under what circumstances the troops would be allowed to use their

weapons.

The Japan Times (Kanako Takahara, "GOVERNMENT SEEKS SOFA DEALS WITH THREE MIDEAST HOSTS," 07/16/03) reported that the Japanese government plans to conclude status of forces agreements (SOFA) with Kuwait, Qatar and Jordan, a senior official of the Foreign Ministry said. Japan hopes to ink the accords before Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) personnel are dispatched to these countries, from which they are expected to transport supplies to Iraq to help with the reconstruction process. Japan is also planning to conclude a similar, though simpler, agreement with the Coalition Provisional Authority, a US administrative body serving in Iraq, the official said on condition of anonymity. It would be the first time for Japan to have a SOFA covering an overseas dispatch of SDF personnel. Such a pact governs the activities of military personnel when they are stationed overseas. The bilateral accords are expected to stipulate investigation and trial procedures if SDF personnel are accused of committing crimes or causing accidents in the host countries. "Since a SOFA concerns extraterritorial rights in the host country, (bilateral) negotiations to conclude the agreements may take time," the official said, adding that it may be several months before the accords are finalized. The government is expected to map out simplified SOFA deals with the host countries, such as entering a bilateral "arrangement," rather than full-blown treaties, which need to be approved by the Diet, the official said.

The Japan Times ("SDF'S IRAQ ASSIGNMENT DRAWING FLAK," 07/18/03) reported that a reported US request for Self-Defense Forces (SDF) units to help with reconstruction efforts in an Iraq hot spot is causing a flap in Japan. "The security situation in Balad is not good. Under the current circumstances, it would be difficult" for Japan to dispatch SDF troops there, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said. US sources said the US government has asked that SDF personnel be sent to Balad, about 100 km north of Baghdad, and help provide clean water to US soldiers. But Fukuda said he has yet to be officially informed of the US request.

5. SDF Permanent Legislation

The Japan Times ("SDF PEACEKEEPING FORCE EYED BY DEFENSE AGENCY," 07/16/03) reported that the Japanese Defense Agency is considering creating a standing unit of the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) dedicated to peacekeeping, antiterrorism and other overseas operations, agency officials said. The move to set up what is tentatively referred to as an international contribution corps is in line with an earlier suggestion by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi that Japan enact a permanent law authorizing SDF missions abroad, including those not under UN auspices, the officials said. The officials said a standing special corps would allow Japan to respond promptly to the requirements of the international community. One of the ideas being proposed is to gather up to several hundred personnel each from the Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces and establish a central command, they said. The agency also has an eye on registering the proposed unit with the UN Standby Arrangements System, according to the officials. While 75 countries are parties to the system, Japan has never been a part, the Foreign Ministry said. The idea of Japan drawing up a readily available SDF unit for international peace efforts was proposed by an advisory panel to the chief Cabinet secretary chaired by former UN Undersecretary General Yasushi Akashi in a report in December.

6. Japan-Australia Relations

The Asahi Shimbun (Taro Karasaki, "JAPAN, AUSTRALIA OK STEPPING UP SECURITY COOPERATION," 07/17/03) reported that the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and his visiting Australian counterpart, John Howard, agreed on July 16 to step up cooperation to combat

terrorism in Asia. The two leaders issued a joint statement and an attached action plan detailing efforts to strengthen bilateral consultation and cooperation in fighting terrorism by increasing information sharing and helping Asian nations set up anti-terrorism programs. The two leaders agreed to increase dialogue between senior- and working-level officials dealing with terrorism, strengthen immigration and border controls, beef up transportation security and implement financing and other support for building anti-terrorist operations in countries in the region.

7. Japan ODA Guideline

The Japan Times ("NGOS RENEW CALL ON ODA GUIDELINES," 07/20/03) reported that a group of non-governmental organizations has repeated its demand that the government review a draft guideline on official development assistance, saying the projects should be used to ensure the nation's security and prosperity. ODA Reform Network Tokyo will continue to promote its position before the Cabinet examines the draft in late August, according to Riei Nagase, who heads its secretariat. Nagase also expressed hope that a basic ODA law will be set up to provide a more consolidated framework to deal with ODA matters, saying it is important that a legal framework be devised. Network officials said they fear the draft may undermine international efforts to eradicate poverty, hunger and other concerns covered by the Millennium Development Goals, which also aim to promote social development and environmental issues.

8. Japan Spent Nuclear Fuel

The Japan Times ("MAYOR OF AOMORI TOWN LOBBIES TEPCO TO CONSTRUCT SPENT-FUEL FACILITIES THERE," 07/24/03) reported that the mayor of Mutsu, Aomori Prefecture, urged Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) to apply with his city to build "interim" storage facilities for spent nuclear fuel. Masashi Sugiyama made the request during a meeting with TEPCO President Tsunehisa Katsumata at the utility's headquarters in Tokyo. The nation's largest utility now plans to apply to the Mutsu municipal and Aomori prefectural governments for permission to use the site. It will survey geological and meteorological conditions before applying for a construction permit from the national government, sources said. Nuclear power plants in Japan are currently storing their spent fuel. Many are expected to reach capacity around 2010. Power companies are thus hoping to build interim facilities to store the spent fuel for around 50 years. TEPCO has proposed building two interim storage facilities capable of handling 5,000 to 6,000 tons of spent nuclear fuel at Mutsu's Sekinehama port. It has said it wants to put one facility into operation by 2010. Sometime within 40 years of the beginning of operations, TEPCO and the city will discuss when the stored spent fuel will be removed.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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