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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. DPRK on Nuclear Program

Korean Central News Agency of the DPRK ("FM SPOKESMAN ON DPRK'S STAND ON NUCLEAR FREEZE AND WAY OF VERIFICATION", 2004-07-14) reported that the DPRK Foreign Ministry elaborated on the proposal on "reward for freeze" at the third round of the six-party talks: The DPRK would like to reclarify its stand here. Its ultimate goal is to realize the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The DPRK will dismantle its nuclear weapons program only when conditions for it are created by the U.S. drop of its hostile policy toward the DPRK. To this end, it wishes to wipe out mistrust and build confidence between the DPRK and the U.S. by implementing the measure of "reward for freeze," to begin with. The DPRK will naturally return to NPT if the Korean peninsula is denuclearized and those fundamental elements, which compelled the DPRK to pull out of the treaty, are consequently removed. It is the unshakable stand of the DPRK that it can not stop its nuclear activities for a peaceful purpose before this happens. Its nuclear activities for a peaceful purpose are the issues pertaining to its sovereignty and this should never be included in the objects to be frozen or dismantled. As already clarified by the DPRK, a freeze is the first phase leading to the final dismantlement of its nuclear program and the freeze is bound to be accompanied by an objective verification. By verification the DPRK means monitoring the state of freeze. The issue of inspection of the nuclear facilities and nuclear substance of the DPRK is something to be discussed only at the phase of dismantling its nuclear program.

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2. US on DPRK Nuclear Program

Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA SAID ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAMS ARE WEAPONS RELATED: US", 2004-07-15) the DPRK acknowledged that most of its nuclear programs are weapons related, during the recent six-party talks to resolve the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula, US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly told a Senate committee. While they said they wanted to maintain a civil nuclear program, they also acknowledged that most of their nuclear programs are weapons related," Kelly said Thursday. The DPRK has refrained from stating publicly that it has nuclear weapons, although it speaks of an existing "nuclear deterrent."

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3. DPRK - Iranian Relations

Tehran Times ("IRAN, NORTH KOREA REBUKE U.S. DOUBLE STANDARD", 2004-07-15) reported that Head of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Ala'ddin Borujerdi said here Wednesday that the U.S. is the only state around the globe which has used nuclear weapons and killed tens of thousand of innocent people. Borujerdi made the statement in a meeting with Ambassador of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to Tehran Kim Chong Ryong. He criticized U.S. performance over respecting human rights, saying the U.S. blatantly violates human rights throughout the world. Borujerdi termed as logical and peaceful the DPRK policy of holding several rounds of the six-way nuclear talks. Elsewhere, Borujerdi called on strengthening amicable relations between Iran and the DPRK in all areas.

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4. UK on DPRK Nuclear Program

The Guardian ("TONY BLAIR'S STATEMENT TO MPS", 2004-07-14) [Excerpt on North Korea] The prime minister's response to the Butler report. Lord Butler's report is comprehensive, thorough, and I thank the members of his committee and their staff for all their hard work in compiling it. We accept fully the report's conclusions. The report provides an invaluable analysis of the general threat in respect of WMD, of the potential acquisition of WMD by terrorists. And though it devotes much of its analysis to Iraq, it also goes into detail on the WMD threat posed by Iran, Libya, North Korea and A Q Khan. About the DPRK, the report concludes that it "is now thought to be developing missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons as far away as continental US and Europe". The report goes on, in paragraph 99: "North Korea is a particular cause for concern because of its willingness to sell ballistic missiles to anyone prepared to pay in hard currency".

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5. DPRK Internet

Radio Free Asia ("NORTH KOREA LAUNCHES PILOT WEB PORTAL BUT PROBLEMS LINGER", 2004-07-14) reported that the DPRK testing its first Web portal but major glitches remain. Visitors can now visit the site to read the only news pages published by the tightly closed country's official media. The English- and Korean-language Naenara ("My Country") site at www.kcckp.net is based in Germany and promised links to information on DPRK politics, tourism, and trade. It also offers links to DPRK official media and "real time" music and movies. The Web site is available in English and Korean and promises links to arts, culture, shopping, e-mail, Korean cuisine, and an ambiguous feature titled "Korea is One: Homogeneous Nation." But the only features working are newsfeeds supplied by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), a mouthpiece of DPRK leader Kim Jong-il and his government, and features marking the 10th anniversary of the death of North Korea's founding president Kim Il Sung. KCNA has been available on the Internet for about five years on the Japan-based site www.kcna.co.jp. Another DPRK site, www.uriminzokkiri.com, publishes Pyongyang views from the PRC.

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6. US - ROK Relations

Donga Ilbo ("KOREA-U.S. RELATIONS DRIFTING AFTER ROH PLEDGES SELF-RELIANCE IN NATIONAL DEFENSE ", 2004-07-15) reported that the so-called 'blood-tie' alliance between the ROK and the US is being cast away as distrust between the two governments continues to deepen, reported the Asahi Shinbun on July 15. According to the Japanese press, the ROK government is taking precautions against a possible change of Korea-U.S. relationship to a "local alliance" after the U.S. announced it would sharply reduce the amount of U.S. forces stationed in Korea last month.

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7. DPRK on Troop Redeployment

Yonhap ("U.S. REDEPLOYMENT TARGETS N. KOREA, CHINA, RUSSIA, P'YANG SAYS ", 2004-0--15) reported that reduction and redeployment of the U.S. forces in the ROK are apparently aimed at restraining the DPRK, the PRC and Russia, Pyongyang said Thursday. "The U.S. troop reduction and relocation are an attempt to suppress our country (the DPRK) and restrain its neighboring countries," the Rodong Shinmun, the official organ of the North Korean Workers' Party, said in a commentary.

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8. Inter - Korean Relations

Korea Times ("URI TO EXCLUDE NK FROM ANTI-STATE LIST", 2004-07-15) reported that the ruling Uri Party is seeking to revise the National Security Law to exclude the DPRK from the list of anti-state organizations, a move which is expected to create a stir in the entire political sphere. The revision draft, prepared by Rep. Yang Seung-jo, reduces the scope of anti-state groups to only those who attempt to overthrow the nation. Existing laws designate the DPRK as an anti-state group. Yang said that he will introduce a bill to revise the security law in the National Assembly in September along with his colleagues. The move comes as the Defense Ministry is considering a move to stop labeling North Korea as the "main enemy" in its policy White Paper. Instead, the paper this year will use milder terms such as "military threat" or "main threat." However, some party officials argue the law should be scrapped rather than revised. "South Korea no longer needs the anti-communist law, which was introduced more than half a century ago to guard against the threat from North Korea," party chairman Shin Ki-nam said.

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9. Inter - Korean Trade

The Associated Press ("INTER-KOREAN TRADE JUMPS 21% IN FIRST HALF, JULY 15, 2004", 2004-07-15) reported that trade between the DPRK and the ROK jumped 21% to $325 million in the first six months this year from $269 million in the same period last year, the Unification Ministry said Thursday. The ROK attributed the January-June rise to an increase in commercial trade between the two Koreas, as well as ROK aid shipments to the impoverished DPRK. The ROK's exports totaled $209 million in the January-June period, a 33.5% rise from the corresponding period last year. Imports also jumped 3.5% to $116 million, the ministry said in a statement. The ROK imports fisheries products and raw materials from the DPRK. It exports textiles and chemical products. ROK aid shipments totaled $152 million in the six months, accounting for 54.2% of the total trade.

Bilateral trade has been rising sharply in recent years, from $222 million in 1998 and $333 million in 1999, to $425 million in 2000 and $403 million in 2001. Last year, inter-Korean trade totaled $724 million, up from $641 million in 2002.

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10. Inter - Korean Talks

Joongang Ilbo ("UNIFICATION CHIEF TAKING CRASH COURSE BEFORE TALKS", 2004-07-15) reported that Unification Minister Chung Dong-young has begun a three-week intensive course in preparation for the inter-Korean cabinet-level talks next month. Ministers of the two Koreas will meet in Seoul for four days starting Aug. 3, only a month after Mr. Chung was appointed unification minister. He will meet the DPRK's chief delegate, Kwon Ho-ung, chief counselor of the DPRK cabinet. Now, for the inter-Korean ministerial talks, Mr. Chung will need to learn the fine details about negotiation, officials responsible for cross-border talks said. The Unification Ministry's Office of South-North Dialogue is in charge of tutoring him in negotiation skills, the officials said Wednesday. Mr. Chung will be shown scripts of past ministerial talks and video records, as well as other confidential data, so that he can develop an understanding of the special nature of inter-Korean talks. He will also receive one-on-one training from three officials from the dialogue office. The National Intelligence Service will also provide confidential files on the DPRK's power elite. Mr. Chung's preparation for the talks will also include mock negotiations featuring possible situations that could develop.

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11. Japanese - DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("N. KOREAN FERRY LEAVES NIIGATA PORT", 2004-07-15) reported that the DPRK ferry Mangyongbong-92 left Niigata port on Thursday after an overnight stay, heading back to the DPRK with 220 passengers and 80 tons of cargo. The 9,672-ton ship is scheduled to make its next call to Niigata on July 28. The vessel arrived in Niigata on Wednesday. The Japan Coast Guard and the Tokyo Customs held a joint inspection of the vessel before its departure for Wonsan, DPRK, and found no problems.

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12. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("GERMANY ALLOWS KNIFE-BRANDISHING NORTH KOREANS TO GO TO SEOUL", 2004-07-15) reported that Germany has decided to send four DPRK citizens to the South, dropping an earlier plan to turn them in to PRC police for brandishing a knife while barging into a German school to seek asylum last month, sources said. The defectors, one man and three women, will be flown to Seoul via a third country on Thursday, according to the sources who requested anonymity. ROK officials will take custody of them in the unidentified third country and accompany them to Seoul, they said.

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13. ROK Cyberattacks

Chosun Ilbo ("CHINESE HACKER MAY BE PLA", 2004-07-15) reported that the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs send an urgent message to the Korean Embassy in Beijing instructing it to confirm whether the recent hacking of computers at major national institutions is connected with the PRC Peoples Liberation Army. The Foreign Ministry said, however, that since neither the identity of the hacker nor the level of PLA involvement has been revealed, it was best to respond cautiously. In accordance, at a meeting of high-ranking Foreign Ministry officials Thursday, the ministry decided to demand that measures be taken through diplomatic channels after National Intelligence Service and police investigations have been completed. In some Foreign Ministry quarters, there are concerns that if the PRC government doesn't cooperate, the criminal may not be revealed and the matter itself may fall into a labyrinth. They say that if the criminal is not revealed, there are limits to the diplomatic measures the Korean government could apply.

Korea Times ("NK HANDS SUSPECTED IN CYBERATTACKS", 2004-07-15) reported that a top military intelligence agency in Seoul on Thursday indicated the possibility that the DPRK's hacking unit was involved in the recent cyber attacks by hackers into networks of the ROK government. The allegation of the North's involvement was brought up a day after the National Intelligence Service (NIS) confirmed the identities of PRC hackers who were suspected of attacking the computers within 10 government agencies in the ROK. "We don't rule out the possibility of the North's connection with the cyber attacks against us," a source in the Defense Security Command (DSC) told The Korea Times. "But we first have to wait and see until we get an investigation result as South Korea has already asked Interpol to begin probes into this case."

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14. US - PRC Relations

The Associated Press ("U.S. COMMITTED TO 'ONE CHINA' POLICY ", 2004-07-15) reported that the US reaffirmed its commitment Wednesday to a "one China" policy and its opposition to any moves by Beijing or Taiwan that would change the status quo. The statement came a day after Sun Weide, the PRC Embassy spokesman, called in reporters to complain about U.S. support for Taiwan. The American policy recognizes the PRC government as the only legitimate Chinese government, although the US also has pledged to provide enough defensive equipment to Taiwan to assure its security. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said the US was committed to the policy based on three joint communiqués the two governments have issued over the years as well as the Taiwan Relations Act, which permits arms sales to the island off the Chinese mainland. "For Beijing that means no use of force or other forms of coercion against Taiwan," Boucher said. "For Taipei, it means exercising prudence in managing all aspects of cross-Straits relations."

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15. US on Taiwan Arms Sales

Agence France-Presse ("US SHRUGS OFF CHINA WARNING, WILL CONTINUE SELLING WEAPONS TO TAIWAN", 2004-07-15) reported that the US said it would continue selling weapons to Taiwan, shrugging off a warning from Beijing that any improvement in US-PRC relations hinged on America cutting military links with the island. The PRC warned Tuesday that Beijing was "gravely concerned" over recent US moves on the Taiwan question, pointing out that the situation was "quite critical," particularly over arms sales. "Well, I don't know why one needs to talk about recent US moves," US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said when asked to comment on the statement. Boucher said there had been no change in US policy regarding China and Taiwan and vowed defense sales to Taipei would continue as enshrined in US law. "We continue the sale of appropriate defensive military equipment to Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act,"

he said.

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16. PRC Spying Allegations

The Associated Press ("CHINA JAILS TAIWAN MAN ON SPYING CHARGES", 2004-07-15) reported that the PRC sentenced a Taiwanese man on Thursday to four years in prison on charges he spied on the military for rival Taiwan. Song Xiaolian was convicted by a court on the southern island of Hainan of receiving money from Taiwan's military spy agency and providing information on unspecified "military conditions," the official Xinhua News Agency reported. Hainan, in the South China Sea, is home to several military bases. Song was among seven Taiwanese detained late last year and charged in January with spying. The PRC says all seven confessed, but it has released few details of their cases. The status of the others wasn't announced Thursday. Song, whose name also is spelled Sung Hsiao-lien, received $600 from Taiwanese military intelligence, Xinhua said.

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17. PRC Domestic Economy

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA SAYS NO PLANS TO RELAX MACRO-ECONOMIC CONTROLS", 2004-07-15) reported that the PRC will not ease measures aimed at cooling the economy anytime soon as decision makers wait for further evidence of the effectiveness of the policies introduced over a year ago. "We are still at a critical stage for macro-economic controls ... we should not waver after scoring some initial success," said the National Development and Reform Commission, the top economic planning body. "Instead we should further implement the measures put forward by the central government to bring the economy under control," the commission said in statement on its website. Slowing fixed-asset investment and money supply, and increasing grain production were only initial successes, the commission said, and the country still had a long way to go before its "economic structure" improved.

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18. PRC on Baby Trafficking

Reuters ("CHINA RESTATES HARD LINE ON BABY TRAFFICKING ", 2004-07-15) reported that the PRC, which introduced a one-child policy in the 1970s, restated Thursday its hard line on trafficking in children and its ban on selective sex abortions. The sale of women and children has become a nationwide problem in the PRC, where stringent rules on family planning still restrict couples to having just one child, at least in the cities, and limit numbers elsewhere. The one-child policy has been blamed for upholding the traditional bias for male offspring, especially in rural areas, and triggering a surge in selective abortion, child trafficking and killing of female infants. "Criminal acts of trafficking, maltreatment and abandonment of female infants must be punished with severity, and illegal sex determination and sex selective abortion must be strictly banned," Zhao Baige, deputy director of the National Population and Family Planning Commission of China, told a conference. The PRC has also launched a "Girl Care" project, designed to protect the rights and interests of girls. PRC police had arrested 95 members of a gang in Inner Mongolia for trafficking 76 babies, the China Daily said on Wednesday.

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19. PRC Explosion

The Associated Press ("BLAST IN CHINESE VILLAGE KILLS 16 PEOPLE ", 2004-07-15) reported that a cache of homemade explosives blew up in a village in northern PRC, killing 16 people and knocking down 16 houses, the government said Thursday. The blast Wednesday night in the village of Huilong in Shanxi province also injured eight people, said local officials cited by the official Xinhua News Agency. The blast was traced to a home workshop where a villager named Han Weichun made and stored explosives, Xinhua said. It said Han and his family were killed. The PRC has a large cottage industry that produces fireworks and explosives in village homes for mining and construction. Fatal accidents are frequent.

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20. Economic Freedom in Hong Kong

The Associated Press ("HONG KONG TOPS ECONOMIC FREEDOM LIST ", 2004-07-15) reported that even though Hong Kong is experiencing political difficulties, it retains the highest ranking for economic freedom, according to a survey released Thursday. Hong Kong is closely followed by an Asian neighbor, Singapore, in "Economic Freedom of the World: 2004 Annual Report," produced by the Cato Institute, a Washington-based think tank that advocates limited government. The United States tied for third place in the survey with New Zealand, Switzerland and Britain. "Many economists have long argued that economic growth and poverty reduction require an economic policy that encourages economic freedom," said John B. Taylor, Treasury undersecretary for international affairs at a news conference at which the survey was released. "This report provides plenty of empirical evidence of that."

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21. Abductee Reunion

Reuters ("EX-U.S. SOLDIER TO TRAVEL TO JAPAN ON SUNDAY: SOURCE", 2004-07-15) reported that a former U.S. soldier accused of deserting to the DPRK is to travel to Japan on Sunday for medical care, a Japanese government source said, after signs Washington would not seek custody while he was in hospital. U.S. Ambassador Howard Baker said on Thursday that Washington was sympathetic to the health problems of ex-U.S. army sergeant Charles Robert Jenkins, and left open the possibility it might not seek immediate custody if he went to Japan for medical care. Jenkins has expressed concern he would be handed over to U.S. authorities for court martial if he came to Japan. A stalemate over his future could irritate U.S-Japan ties. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Tokyo was working to enable Jenkins to receive treatment in Japan soon but the timing had not been decided.

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22. US on Abductee Reunion

The Associated Press ("U.S. PLANS TO PROSECUTE ACCUSED DESERTER", 2004-07-15) reported that the US plans to pursue a case against accused Army deserter Charles Jenkins, but might not demand he be turned over immediately to American custody if he comes to Japan, the U.S. ambassador said Thursday. Ambassador Howard Baker's comments came as Japanese officials - including Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi - said the 64-year-old American, who allegedly fled his

post to the DPRK in 1960s, should be taken to Japan for medical treatment.

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23. Japanese Industry

Asahi Shimbun ("JAPAN: MAKERS SHIFT TO OVERSEAS MARKETS DUE TO DROPPING ORDERS FOR POWER PLANTS", 2004-07-15) reported that wilting domestic demand has heavy machinery makers looking abroad for business. With domestic orders for electric power plants dropping off, heavy machinery makers are switching their attention to overseas markets. Countries of interest include the PRC, where electricity suppliers are racing to keep up with the demands of a surging economy, and the US, which is taking a fresh look at nuclear power.

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24. Mongolian Infrastructure

The New York Times ("MONGOLS GO FROM CAMELS TO JEEPS AND A SUPERHIGHWAY", 2004-07-15) reported that this summer, from westernmost Tsaganuur to Halhyn Gol in the east, road crews are working to add another to the list, the Mongolian Millennium Highway. Long written off as a buffer state between the PRC and Russia, Mongolia, twice the size of Texas but with 13 percent of the population, is embarking on a classic exercise in modern nation building. "What I understand from reading books and surfing the Internet is that developed countries, like Canada and the United States, greatly spread development through roads," said Manduul Baasankhuu, policy director of Mongolia's Road, Transport and Tourism Department. Pausing a few miles east of here, he said: "We are doing virtues here. A road is like an artery for human beings. This road we're building will play an important role in transportation, tourism, advancement of our economy."

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25. US Bases in Okinawa

Kyodo ("MARINE CONVICTED, ACCUSER OR NO", 2004-07-09) reported that the Naha District Court in Okinawa Prefecture on July 8 sentenced a US Marine Corps major to a suspended one-year prison term for attempted molestation and property destruction -- even though his accuser wanted all charges against him dropped. Prosecutors had demanded a three-year prison term for Maj. Michael Brown, 41, on charges of attempting to rape the alleged victim, a Filipino woman, and of destroying her property. But presiding Judge Nobuyuki Yokota instead found the defendant guilty of attempted molestation and property damage, suspending his sentence for three years. Yokota said in handing down the ruling: "The victim's court testimony was unnatural, as it was contradictory. The court finds the record of interrogation (of Brown) during the investigation admissible." "There remains reasonable uncertainty over the accusation that the defendant had threatened to rape the victim." Brown had maintained his innocence throughout. The case prompted debate because it was the first in which a handover before indictment had been rejected since Japan and the US agreed in 1995 to give "sympathetic consideration" to handing over suspects in serious crimes, including murder and rape, before charges are filed.

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26. Japan on Iranian Nuclear Development

The Japan Times ("JAPAN URGES IRAN TO FOLLOW IAEA", 2004-07-09) reported that Japan urged Iran to implement all the resolutions adopted by a UN nuclear watchdog as a way to help it gain support from other countries, a Japanese official said. Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi also told visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh that Tehran should be transparent in its fulfillment of the International Atomic Energy Agency resolutions, the official said. "We intend to sincerely cooperate with the IAEA," Aminzadeh was quoted as replying to Kawaguchi.

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27. Japan SDF Expansion

The Japan Times ("FORMER U.N. BUREAUCRAT WANTS BIGGER SDF ROLE", 2004-07-09) reported that the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) should be allowed to maintain security in conflict zones, even if those activities are not authorized by the UN, former UN Undersecretary General Yasushi Akashi said. Speaking at a seminar titled "Peace Support Operations and the Role of Civilians," organized by the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo, Akashi said Japan should "expand (the SDF's role) to include peace-ensuring activities," like those of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. Although the Japanese tend to deify the UN, "it may no longer be realistic to seek legitimacy solely at the UN," he added. Akashi chaired a private advisory panel on international cooperation for former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda that compiled a report urging the SDF to join multinational peacekeeping efforts, although with clear restrictions.

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28. Japan on UNSC Expansion

The Japan Times ("DELEGATES AT KYOTO TALKS PUSH SECURITY COUNCIL EXPANSION", 2004-07-15) reported that a two-day conference on reforming the UN ended in Kyoto with participants agreeing that the number of Security Council seats should be expanded to better meet threats to global security. "There was support among participants for expansion of the Security Council, but there are still many questions on how to expand," said former Thai Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, who chaired the meetings. A Foreign Ministry spokesman from Tokyo who attended the meetings said one of the Indian delegates voiced support for Japan becoming a permanent member of an expanded Security Council. Other participants, he said, suggested that Germany might also qualify and that African nations also want to have a permanent member. Though the talks were unofficial, the recommendations will be used for reference this week in Vienna by a formal committee appointed by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan last year to examine ways to restructure the UN.

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29. Japan's Nuclear Industry Data Fabrication

Kyodo ("KEPCO SCRUTINIZED", 2004-07-08) reported that the Japanese government began conducting on-site inspections of Kansai Electric Power Co. (KEPCO) facilities, following recent revelations of fabricated data. The Kansai Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry, a regional office of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), plans to complete the inspections at the utility's 11 facilities in Osaka, Hyogo and Wakayama prefectures by July 14, METI officials said. The

regional bureau decided to conduct additional inspections, as the cases include 87 particularly serious ones, including bogus reports of facility safety checks that were never carried out and the minutes of meetings that never took place, the officials said. The bureau will decide within two or three months whether to punish the utility by having it halt its power generating facilities.

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30. Japan's Nuclear Cycle Cost Estimation Scandal

The Japan Times ("ELECTRIC POWER BODY SAT ON DATA", 2004-07-08) reported that the Federation of Electric Power Companies admitted on July 7 that it failed to disclose data it compiled in February 1996 on the cost of burying spent nuclear fuel. The federation estimate shows that the cost of burying spent nuclear fuel is about 30 percent lower than recycling it. The federation, which consists of 10 power utilities in Japan, is under no obligation to publicize such data, but trust in nuclear power policy may be eroded due to the failure by the government and the power industry group to disclose crucial information, critics claim. "It was a rough estimate that simply applied case examples overseas to the situation in Japan, and could not be called a responsible calculation," federation officials said in a statement. The officials claimed that they found the documents on July 6 when going through storage facilities following media reports on the concealments by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

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