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United States

1. US Congressman DPRK Visit

A senior US congressman has unveiled a 10-point plan to defuse growing tensions on the Korean Peninsula that calls for a non-aggression pact between the United States and the DPRK and Washington's official recognition of the DPRK. Republican Representative Curt Weldon, who led a congressional delegation to Pyongyang in late May-early June, said failure to resolve the crisis now could result in the proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology, possibly to terrorist organizations. He said leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were convinced that the administration of President George W. Bush had found the concept of regime change very attractive and were unlikely to strike a deal without a security guarantee. "They see the issue of regime change as the determining factor in whether a peaceful resolution to the current standoff is possible," Weldon said. After his return from Pyongyang, Weldon said his ideas had received a positive response from DPRK leaders. He has also briefed on his plan Secretary of State Colin Powell, who has made no public comment.

"US Congressman DPRK Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, US)

2. Suspension of US Aid

The US will suspend military aid to about 35 countries that didn't meet a deadline for exempting Americans from prosecution before the new UN international war crimes tribunal. Presidential spokesman Ari Fleischer said the military aid cutoffs are "a reflection of the United States' priorities to protect" its troops. Congress set a July 1 deadline for most recipients of US military aid to exempt US soldiers and other personnel from prosecution before the new International Criminal Court. US diplomats have pressed allies to approve bilateral agreements exempting Americans. Advocates of the court have accused the Bush administration of trying to bully weaker nations and of undermining an important advancement in human rights, said the report.

"Suspension of US Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, PRC)

3. US Nuclear Weapons Spending

A House of Representatives panel on Tuesday passed a bill that would curb spending on US nuclear weapons programs, in what lawmakers termed "a shot across the bow" of the Bush administration. Showing rare bipartisan unity, the House Appropriations subcommittee unanimously approved the \$27.1 billion measure to fund energy and water programs in 2004, including a boost in funding for the controversial Yucca Mountain nuclear waste dump. Overall the bill would be an increase of around \$942 million over the current fiscal year but would slash more than \$326 million from President Bush's budget request for the federal agency that oversees nuclear weapons programs. Both Republican and Democratic lawmakers expressed skepticism about whether the current US nuclear stockpile was appropriate in a world without a superpower foe. The bill, one of 13 Congress must pass each year to fund the federal government, now goes to the full Appropriations Committee. The Senate has yet to act on its companion measure.

"US Nuclear Weapons Spending" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, US)

4. US PRC Espionage Case

A judge has indicated she may drop three charges against a woman accused of stealing classified information from her FBI handler to pass on to the PRC. Katrina Leung, a naturalized US citizen, would still face two charges. The other charges may not meet the law's requirement of intent to harm the US and benefit a foreign country, US District Judge Florence-Marie Cooper said Tuesday. The judge said she would review the issues again and issue a ruling later. The three counts not in question allege that Leung unlawfully retained three documents relating to national defense. Prosecutor Michael Emmick argued that the intent requirement was met because the charges stated that she took the material "willfully." Emmick said that if the charges were dismissed he would seek a new grand jury indictment reinstating the counts and adding the necessary language regarding intent. Leung, a naturalized citizen who was born in the PRC, made her first public comment on the case outside court. She had been in custody since April until her release last week on \$2 million bail. "I love America. I have been and I am a very proud and loyal American," she said. "America is my home and I cherish it. I know we will answer the charges and my name will be cleared." The government has alleged that Leung carried on a sexual relationship with now-retired FBI agent James J. Smith, 59, who is charged with fraud for filing false reports about Leung's reliability and with gross negligence for allowing her access to classified material. He is free on \$250,000 bail and attended Tuesday's hearing. If convicted of all counts, Leung faces up to 50 years in prison. Smith could face up to 40 years if convicted.

"US PRC Espionage Case" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, US)

5. US Forces in Japan Realignment

The commander of US forces in the Pacific and a senior Pentagon official ruled out a big realignment of US troops in Okinawa. The US forces in Okinawa "are absolutely central to our planning and our ability to meet our security concerns in the Pacific," Adm. Thomas Fargo, head of the US Pacific command, said in congressional testimony. Assistant Defense Secretary for International Security Affairs Peter Rodman told the same hearing that the US and the Japanese government are looking at "small adjustments" in the US military presence in Okinawa, home to the bulk of the 47,000 U.S. troops deployed to Japan. "We don't expect to leave there. I think we're talking about small adjustments," Rodman told the House of Representatives East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee.

"US Forces in Japan Realignment" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, Japan)

6. US Missile Defense Asia Destabilization?

A US-advocated missile defenses need not destabilize Asia, but may not protect South Korea (news - web sites) or Taiwan in meaningful ways and could provoke a US-China crisis, a new study released this week says. President Bush jettisoned the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty to aggressively build a missile defense system for the US and is urging allies to establish similar systems on their territories. This has been a particular issue with Asia, where the DPRK's stated determination to manufacture nuclear weapons and missiles is seen as a threat to regional security and a central motive behind Bush's missile defense agenda. In the study, the Atlantic Council of the US, a research institute, said, "If it continues to be managed well, the development of missile defenses in Asia need not lead to instability." This will require Washington to continue discussing its plans in public and consulting closely with key states. Most missile defense systems being developed will not be ready for several years and even when deployed, the PRC "should be confident they do not pose a threat to its deterrent capabilities," the report said. The report examines the cases of Japan, ROK, Taiwan and India, which are all considering missile defense systems. The DPRK threat created new impetus for Japan to consider missile defenses but the decision is far from made since many Japanese fear rising tensions with the PRC, it said.

"US Missile Defense Asia Destabilization?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

7. US Views on DPRK Nuclear Program

The US intelligence community now believes that DPRK is seeking to have a strong nuclear deterrent against being attacked by the US, a U.S. government source said Wednesday. The assessment was made in a report compiled in June by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), based on information gathered by the CIA and other institutions, including the Defense Department's Defense Intelligence Agency, the source said. This indicates a change in the view within the U.S. government that DPRK is using its nuclear ambitions as a negotiating tactic. The source did not go into specifics of the CIA report, but said U.S. intelligence shows DPRK had purchased from PRC chemicals necessary to reprocess spent nuclear fuel rods. Vehicle and personnel movements were observed at the Yongbyon nuclear complex and DPRK is conducting tests to make nuclear warheads small enough to fit on its ballistic missiles, the source said. At PRC-brokered talks with the U.S. in Beijing in April, DPRK reportedly claimed it possesses nuclear weapons and has reprocessed the 8,000 spent fuel rods stored at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, a move that, if true, would enable it to make more nuclear arms. However, the CIA report says U.S. intelligence has so far picked up no sign of the krypton gas that is released into the atmosphere when nuclear fuel rods are converted into weapons-grade plutonium, according to the source. The CIA has no evidence either that DPRK has obtained advanced technology to prevent krypton gas from being released into the atmosphere during such reprocessing, the source said. Therefore, the U.S. intelligence community believes that DPRK's reprocessing of fuel rods, if it has really begun, would be at the initial stage, the source said.

"US Views on DPRK Nuclear Program" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, Japan)

8. EU US Steel Tariff

The European Union, Japan, the PRC and five other countries welcomed a decision by the WTO that US safeguard measures on steel imports were illegal under international trade rules. The EU initiated the move against the US steel tariffs and was joined by Brazil, the PRC, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, the ROK and Switzerland in a complaint lodged at the Geneva-based World Trade Organization last year. "This is not just a partial victory. It's a full victory. We have been given satisfaction on all accounts," European Commission spokeswoman Arancha Gonzalez said. However, the US quickly contested the decision by a panel of experts and vowed not give up its tariffs. "Where the panel found against the US, we disagree, and we will appeal," US Trade Representative spokesman Richard Mills said in a statement after the decision was announced in Geneva. "In the meantime, the steel safeguard measures will remain in place." Mills added that so-called "safeguard measures" to protect an industry under certain conditions are allowed under WTO rules. But the panel of three independent experts rejected the arguments laid down by the US, finding Washington had failed to provide a "reasoned and adequate explanation" of a link between increased imports and "serious injury" caused to US producers, a WTO report said. The report, more than 900 pages long, confirmed an interim WTO ruling in March. The US slapped three-year tariffs of eight to 30 percent on selected types of steel imports in March 2002 to prop up its ailing steel industry, prompting anger from steel-producing nations.

"EU US Steel Tariff" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

9. US PRC Weapons Proliferation Seizure

US authorities announced the seizure of nearly half a million dollars worth of arms that were being shipped from China to the Central American state of El Salvador. The 421,500-dollar shipment, that included 780 handguns, 950 ammunition magazines and 150 pistol grip shotguns, was taken off a ship bound from the Canadian port of Vancouver to El Salvador on June 28, officials said. "The arms were not military weapons and had been sent by a Chinese arms manufacturer from Shanghai to an arms dealer in El Salvador," Mike Milne of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection told AFP. "There is no indication that this weapons shipment was in any way linked to terrorism or to any military or para-military group -- it was a private deal," he said. A suspicious 20-foot container that turned out to be filled with the guns and ammunition was taken off the ship Nordstrand in the west coast port of Portland, Oregon last week as it wended its way to Central America. Officials became suspicious of the container because the cargo manifest indicated it was carrying frozen trout, while the shipper was an arms manufacturer and the recipient a gun dealer, officials said. They removed the container from the ship on June 28 and then formally seized it Wednesday after confirming with the Department of Homeland Security and the State Department that no permit existed to ship the weapons. "Since September 11, 2001, the US has tightened up scrutiny of all cargo passing through the US even if it is not destined for this country to prevent any sort of terrorist attack," Milne said. In addition to the cache of handguns, ammunition and pistol-grip shotguns seized, US authorities also detained some 300 standard pump-action shotguns that were also in the shipment. Officials declined to identify either the shipper or the consignee of the cargo of weapons, but said they appeared to have been intended for private use.

"US PRC Weapons Proliferation Seizure" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

10. Lockheed Martin US Patriot Missile Contract

US defense giant Lockheed Martin said it received a 260 million dollar US Army contract to improve the Patriot antimissile battery. The program will include software, testing and modification work, among other areas, with flight tests of the new missile to begin in September 2006. Patriot missiles have been deployed by the US around the Middle East as protection against some types of missile attacks. The newest version called the PAC-3 Missile, according to Lockheed, "defeats the entire threat to the Patriot Air Defense System: tactical ballistic missiles (TBMs) carrying weapons of mass destruction, advanced cruise missiles and aircraft." The new contract "is another example of the implementation of technology maturation to make a great system even better, giving the warfighter a higher level of protection and a larger defended footprint," said Ed Squires, senior vice president of Air Defense Programs for Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control.

"Lockheed Martin US Patriot Missile Contract" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

11. US Domestic Politics

Democratic presidential hopefuls on Friday demanded an investigation into false intelligence given to the president over Iraq's nuclear weapons in what could become an important issue in the 2004 election. Democratic White House contenders and others in the party are daily becoming more critical of President Bush's handling of the war, the intelligence he used in justifying it and mounting US casualties since the fall of Baghdad. White House rivals in the crowded Democratic race, Sen. Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut, former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, Florida Sen. Bob Graham and Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts all called for an investigation into prewar intelligence. "Instead of engaging in bureaucratic finger pointing, he (the president) needs to be honest with the American people. To achieve that goal, we need a full and honest investigation into intelligence failures," said Kerry in a statement. The White House acknowledged this week that an accusation made by the president in his State of the Union address in January that Iraq had sought to acquire nuclear material from Africa was incorrect. Graham called for a broad, independent and public investigation. "Day after day, the Bush administration fails to confess the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about the use of intelligence leading us to war with Iraq," he said in a statement. Dean, who has made his opposition to the war a hallmark of his campaign, said whoever was responsible for misleading Bush over claims of Iraq's nuclear weapons program should quit. "Whoever it was who withheld that information, needs to resign," he said in an interview with ABC's "Good Morning America" show. "We need a full-scale ... bipartisan investigation outside of Congress." Lieberman, who voted in favor of going to war with Iraq as did Kerry, voiced strong concern over news reports on Thursday the Bush administration had ignored the CIA's objection to including the uranium claim in the State of the Union address. "These are troubling reports that need full and thorough investigation. We cannot and should not play fast and loose with our intelligence information, and however it happened we now know that the information in the State of the Union was false, and misled the American people," said Lieberman.

"US Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK Arms Trade

The US efforts to gain backing for an aggressive initiative to intercept North Korean ships and planes suspected of carrying banned weapons hit a snag this week as key ally Australia balked at the plan. Australia is hosting the second meeting of the US-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) an 11-nation campaign to halt trade in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. But after strongly supporting the initiative, Australian leaders have begun backing away from US suggestions PSI countries could quickly begin intercepting North Korean ships and planes as part of the campaign. "We are not at this stage considering military contributions," Prime Minister John Howard said when asked about the US push. "US-Australia on DPRK Arms Trade" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

2. ROK WMD Export Regulations

The ROK government's policy to regulate exports of sensitive materials used in the creation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) has fallen on deaf ears in local exporting companies, government officials said. At the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy enforced the so-called "Catch-All" system. This was meant to control exports of all WMD-related materials, but there has been no request for export approval under the system so far, they said. Under the Catch-All system, the government bans exports of some types of biochemical, semiconductor and machine tool products, which could be diverted for use in the development and production of WMDs, including nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, and their transportation vehicles. All local exporters of the WMD-sensitive materials are obliged to report to the commerce ministry for approval, if there are suspicions that the end users are involved in WMD development. "Despite massive exports of Korean chemicals, semiconductors and machinery, not a single exporter has complied with Catch-All-related requests so far, indicating widespread indifference in local business circles to the otherwise costly rules," said a ministry spokesman. Violators of the Catch-All regulations could be dealt a devastating blow in overseas business and fall into a life-or-death crisis. The US bans imports of all products manufactured by the violators of WMD rules for a period of one to 20 years, while other countries enforce similar punishments. "But domestic export companies appear generally unprepared to realize the potential damage," he said, revealing a plan to reinforce the anti-WMD systems and rules.

"ROK WMD Export Regulations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

3. DPRK-UN Relations

The DPRK's U.N. ambassador has visited several members of the Security Council in recent days to urge them to act impartially on the DPRK nuclear crisis, diplomats said on Thursday. Among those approached by the DPRK's Pak Gil Yon was Spanish Ambassador Inocencio Arias, the Security Council president for July, who told reporters he planned to brief the council on Monday about his July 1 meeting with Pak. But Spanish officials stressed there would be no substantive discussion in the council of the DPRK's revival of its nuclear weapons program.

"DPRK-UN Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

4. DPRK-ROK Relations

The DPRK and ROK opened cabinet-level talks here overshadowed by revelations that the DPRK has been pushing ahead with its nuclear weapons drive. The DPRK's top delegate kicked off the session by warning of the gathering "dark clouds" of nuclear confrontation and said the Stalinist State would not flinch if faced by war. But chief delegate Kim Ryong-Song's call for the ROK to support the DPRK in resolving the crisis was immediately rebuffed. "This is not the kind of issue that can be settled by just South and North Korea joining forces, but one requiring cooperation with the international community," said his southern counterpart, Unification Minister Jeong Se-Hyun. A DPRK envoy said Thursday his nation was ready for "both war and dialogue" and insisted on direct talks with the US to resolve a nine-month-old nuclear standoff. The ROK said Wednesday that the DPRK has taken a key step toward building nuclear bombs by reprocessing a small number of spent nuclear fuel rods. The report escalated a standoff that began last October when US officials said the DPRK admitted having a secret nuclear program, in violation of international agreements. The US wants the DPRK to abandon such programs. "Our basic position is that we want to resolve the (nuclear) issue peacefully," DPRK negotiator Kim Ryong Song said Thursday before talks with ROK delegates in Seoul. "But if outside forces ignore our position and try to use force, we will face them boldly and show our strength." Kim urged cooperation between the ROK and the DPRK to prevent war on the Korean Peninsula and said no nation can force policies on the DPRK. The DPRK delegation arrived Wednesday and was scheduled to leave Saturday. "DPRK on Nuclear Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

5. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Development

The DPRK has carried out some 70 high-explosive tests linked to nuclear weapons development, the ROK's spy chief was quoted as saying. He said that the ROK's National Intelligence Service also suspected that the DPRK had reprocessed part of its stockpile of spent nuclear fuel rods that will yield plutonium for nuclear bombs. Ko told the National Assembly's intelligence committee there had been some 70 high-explosive tests at Yongdok, 40 kilometers (25 miles) northwest of Yongbyon, the DPRK's nuclear complex north of the capital city Pyongyang. Experts said conventional high-explosives are used to trigger atomic blasts by compressing the plutonium core. "We have also noticed high-explosive tests being conducted in Yongdok district in Gusong City in (the northwestern province of) North Pyongyang and we have been keeping track of the movement," Ko was quoted as saying by a senior parliamentary aide. "ROK on DPRK Nuclear Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, US)

6. DPRK Multilateral Negotiations

The ROK is doing its utmost to hold multilateral talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions within the next month or two, President Roh Moo-hyun's foreign policy chief said on Friday. Ban Ki-moon told YTN television the venue could be decided for the talks once the parties had agreed to meet. That still remains a tall order, although Roh urged the PRC during a visit to Beijing this week to persuade the DPRK to join such talks. "We will do our utmost to hold multilateral talks within one month or two," Ban said. "The venue could be determined after all involved agree on the multilateral talks." A first round of talks involving the PRC, the US and the DPRK was held in Beijing in April. At that meeting, the DPRK told the US it had nuclear weapons and intended to make more. The DPRK has so far insisted the nuclear issue can only be resolved in bilateral talks with Washington. But Ban said the DPRK had shown a gradual change in its stance and he expected it to seriously consider holding multilateral talks. The ROK, which is holding bilateral economic talks in Seoul with the DPRK, warned Pyongyang on Thursday against aggravating the nuclear crisis on the peninsula. The DPRK-ROK talks were bogged down on Friday over the wording of a joint statement on the nuclear issue.

"ROK-DPRK Nuclear Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

7. DPRK on Neutrality

The DPRK followed up a letter warning the U.N. Security Council to take a neutral stance on the DPRK's nuclear program with visits to some council members urging them to be impartial, diplomats said Thursday. Spain's U.N. Ambassador Inocencio Arias said he plans to report to the council Monday on a visit from the DPRK's U.N. Ambassador Pak Gil Yon on July 1. "He wanted the council to act impartially," Arias said. Lower-ranking DPRK diplomats delivered the same message to Britain's U.N. Mission and other council nations last week, diplomats said. The US wants the Security Council to condemn the DPRK's nuclear weapons program and demand its immediate and permanent destruction, according to a draft US document circulated to the other permanent council members last month. The DPRK has warned that any Security Council action would undermine attempts to end the nuclear standoff peacefully. It has said it would see U.N. sanctions as a declaration of war. The five-page letter sent to the council by Pak on June 27 was peppered with fiery language accusing Washington of threatening his country and violating international treaties. The ambassador called on the Security Council not to be influenced by the American position. "The Security Council has an obligation to judge... whether or not it would be justifiable for one member state of the United Nations to stifle another member state," Pak wrote. While Arias said he would report to the 15-member council Monday on his meeting with Pak, he stressed that no substantive discussion of the DPRK's nuclear program had been scheduled.

"DPRK on Neutrality" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

8. Australia on DPRK Nuclear Crisis

The threat posed by the DPRK will be the major focus of top-level talks during a visit by Australian Prime Minister John Howard to the Philippines, Japan and the ROK next week. Howard leaves Sunday for Manila on the first leg of the three-nation trip for talks with their leaders. Plans by an alliance of 11 countries to stop the DPRK's trade in illicit arms and drugs will be high on the agenda, officials said. Australia and Japan are among the 11 nations that have made a commitment under the so-called Proliferation Security Initiative to tackle the trade between perceived rogue states in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Australia has committed its military, police and intelligence services to take part in maritime exercises as early as September as a first step towards a global operation to stop the international arms trade.

"Australia on DPRK Nuclear Crisis" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

9. Japan-ROK-US on KEDO and DPRK

Japan and the ROK have agreed with the United States to halt the construction of light-water reactors in the DPRK if the DPRK fails to drop its nuclear ambitions, a report said. The agreement was reached during informal talks among senior diplomats from the three nations, who met in Washington on July 2 and 3, Jiji Press agency said citing a senior Japanese source. The trio decided to "monitor the situation for another month," but also confirmed they would stop making the reactors should the DPRK maintain its nuclear programme, Jiji reported. Japanese foreign ministry officials in charge of the project were unavailable for immediate comment Tuesday. Following the talks among the senior diplomats, the US State Department said last Thursday they had reached no specific conclusions and characterised the meeting as "a brainstorming session." Construction of the reactors started in August under a 1994 framework agreement between Pyongyang and Washington designed to halt North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions. The Asahi newspaper said last month the United States may halt the KEDO project to press Pyongyang to drop its nuclear goals, even if Japan and South Korea did not agree.

"Japan-ROK-US on KEDO and DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, US)

10. DPRK SARS Quarantine

The DPRK has resumed flights and train services from the PRC and dropped a tough anti-SARS measure that forced all travelers into 10 days of quarantine since late April, the PRC's Xinhua news agency said on Friday. No SARS cases have been reported in the DPRK, which is in dire straits economically and has a failing health system. Neighboring China was the epicenter of the global Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome outbreak, which the World Health Organization now says has been contained. The DPRK's Foreign Ministry notified embassies and international agencies in Pyongyang that incoming passengers were still subject to medical checks and possible deportation if they were suspected of being infected with the SARS virus, the official news agency said. Trains from Beijing to Pyongyang resumed service on Wednesday and the DPRK's flag carrier Koryo Airlines resumed flights between the two capitals on Thursday, Xinhua said. There are just a handful of international flights per week serving the country of 23 million.

"DPRK SARS Quarantine" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

11. ROK Video Game World Cup

Some 400 cyber-athletes from 37 countries sat down to six days of championship video-gaming with South Koreans tipped as the favorites to scoop the first ever Electronic Sports World Cup. Held at the Futuroscope theme park near this central-western French town, gamers aged from 18 to 25 will compete in teams of five on three of the current online favourites -- "Counter strike", "Warcraft 3" and "Unreal Tournament". The competition, ending Sunday and expected to draw some 30,000 people, was organised by a French firm, Ligarena. The ROK is said to have 25,000 video game centers, and has been holding "World Cyber Games" for several years.

"ROK Video Game World Cup" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC-Russian Ties

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan in Beijing at a regular briefing referred to the ongoing three-day visit by Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo to Russia, saying that Dai would have an exchange of views with the Russian side on the situation in the Korean Peninsula. Kong said that Dai's visit shows that PRC and Russia maintain close co-ordination and co-operation on the major international issues, adding that the two countries agreed to solve the DPRK nuclear issue through peaceful means. "We welcome the opinions from various parties on the peaceful resolution of issue," the spokesman said, noting that PRC was open and flexible to the type of the dialogue.

"PRC-Russian Ties" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, PRC)

2. PRC-ROK Relations

The PRC and ROK have issued a joint statement, in which the two countries said they had reviewed the development of their relations during the past 11 years, and announced a desire to build an all-round cooperative partnership. The statement says the PRC and the ROK agree that the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula should be maintained and the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear free. The two sides are also convinced that the nuclear issue in the DPRK could be settled peacefully through talks, it says. It says the PRC holds that the security concerns of the DPRK should be taken into account and the ROK notes that the nuclear issue in the DPRK should be resolved in a verifiable and irreversible way. The two sides agree that the Beijing talks held in April this year is helpful and hope that the dialogue process starting from Beijing talks should continue so as to push the situation on the Korean Peninsula toward a positive direction, the statement says. The statement says the PRC reiterates that there is only one PRC in the world and Taiwan is part of the PRC, and the ROK understands and respects the PRC's stance, pledging that it will continue to adhere to the one-China policy. The two sides will strengthen mutual visits and meetings between leaders, and widen channels and improve mechanism of cooperation and dialogue, it says. The two sides agree to take active measures for the healthy and smooth development of trade, it says, sticking to the principle of seeking trade balance through development for the common goal of improving the situation of trade imbalance.

"PRC-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, US)

3. PRC-US Relations

The Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi visits the US from July 1-4, Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said on July 1. Wang is there to exchange views with the US side on various Asian issues, particularly the current situation in the Korean Peninsula, Kong said at a regular press briefing.

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, PRC)

4. PRC Sex Health Website

The first ever website giving advice on sexual health to young people has been launched in the PRC as the population becomes more sexually active and at an earlier age, state press said. The interactive site encourages youngsters to openly discuss their love lives and all matters related to sex, site designer Sang Qing told the China Daily. Most Chinese people have little access to reliable and accurate information on sex due to traditional sensitivities about the issue, but the growing prevalence of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases is worrying authorities. Unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions are also a problem. According to UN estimates, between 800,000 and 1.5 million people in the PRC had HIV by December 2001, and the number could reach 10 million by 2010. Most are in the 15 to 29 age range, according to the Ministry of Health. "In China, where there is a wider gap between puberty and marriage, sexual activity outside marriage has increased and this has increased young people's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS," said Liu Liqing, the PRC representative of the non-profit organisation Marie Stopes International. The launch of the website, partly sponsored by the United Nations, follows an announcement in December that the PRC will lift a ban on condom advertisements in an effort to promote safe sex. Family planning associations throughout the PRC meanwhile have been asked to do a better job of teaching the rural and migrant population about safe sex to prevent HIV/AIDS. The website can be found at www.youandme.net.cn.

"PRC Sex Health Website" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

5. PRC HIV Protests and Arrests

The PRC has stepped up arrests and violence against HIV-positive villagers protesting for more government help, rights groups said. The crackdown has been felt hardest in central Henan province where many farmers were infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, which causes AIDS, by selling blood in government-approved schemes, New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) and other groups said villager reports have indicated a tougher approach towards their status even as the PRC actively seeks international funding to fight AIDS. The charges came after farmers in one village in Henan told AFP last week 13 farmers who had allegedly joined a protest calling for the establishment of a hospital were arrested in a night raid on June 22 in which hundreds of police beat them indiscriminately. Police confirmed the arrests and those of three other villagers in an earlier incident, saying they face charges of robbery and "attacking state offices." HRW said in a statement that police in Henan, where many villages are devastated by AIDS, are increasingly using arbitrary arrests and violence against HIV-positive protestors seeking access to treatment. "Persecuting HIV-positive protestors is doubly outrageous given that the state was complicit in their infection in the first place," Joanne Csete, director of HRW's HIV/AIDS and Human Rights Program, said Wednesday. "Henan authorities seem to want to sweep their role in the AIDS epidemic under the rug by silencing protesters."

"PRC HIV Protests and Arrests" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, US)

6. PRC on Hong Kong Protests

The PRC has sent a team of officials to gauge Hong Kong's political crisis after massive protest rallies forced a controversial anti-subversion law to be shelved, sourcesxxxx and reports "The officials have been seeking views from various sectors in the community," said a pro-Beijing politician, who declined to be named. "They were also seen at the rallies to get a first hand report of the situation," he said. Their remarks confirmed reports in English-language Hong Kong dailies which said that middle-ranking officials from China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of State Security and intelligence agencies had been arriving since early this week. Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa called off legislation of an anti-subversion bill on Monday after 500,000 people took to the streets on July 1 in the most spectacular protest in more than a decade. Foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan on Tuesday said Beijing believed "the majority of Hong Kong people and mainland compatriots" had confidence in Hong Kong's government. "PRC on Hong Kong Protests" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

7. PRC Three Gorges Dam

The Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest water control project, has begun generating electricity. The first of the dam's 26 generators to go into operation was connected to the power grid at 0131 local time on Thursday (1831 GMT on Wednesday), 20 days ahead of schedule, Xinhua news agency reported. The generating unit will supply 12.9m kWh per day to the power grids in central and east China, the project's vice general manager said. Yang Qing said the unit would have to pass a 30-day trial operation, before beginning commercial production in August. The combined energy of all the dam's 26 generators will eventually generate more than 80bn kWh of electricity each year. The Three Gorges dam is unprecedented in both the scale of its construction and the number of people who have been forced to move to make way for the project. By the time it is completed, the water level will reach a depth of 175 metres (574 feet), and create a reservoir that is 600 km (375 miles) long. Many villages and towns - and even some small cities - along the banks of the densely populated Yangtze have already been submerged by the rising waters. More than 600,000 people have been forced to relocate, some as far away as Shanghai, 1,000 km (600 miles) east. About 1.3m people will eventually have to move. The PRC's leaders say the country needs the 180bn yuan (US\$22bn) dam to produce electricity, as well as control the annual flooding of the Yangtze. But critics are worried about the destruction of dozens of cultural heritage sites. And they say that if the dam breaks, it would spell disaster for those living down-river. Many environmentalists have also warned about the danger of soil erosion, as well as pollution caused by trapped sewage and industrial waste. "PRC Three Gorges Dam" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, US)

8. PRC Flood Developments

The death toll from massive floods crippling large parts of China jumped to 569 Friday with half a million homes destroyed as PRC President Hu Jintao ordered increased efforts to fight the annual blight. Up until July 10, more than 505,000 homes had collapsed and 1.33 million houses had been damaged by floods that have mainly occurred in central, east and southern China since mid-May, the Civil Affairs Ministry said in its latest report. At least 2.29 million people have been evacuated while economic losses nationwide have risen to 39.87 billion yuan (4.8 billion dollars). The flooding has mainly occurred in two periods, the ministry said, the first being in mid-May when southern PRC, including Jiangxi, Fujian, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi and Guizhou provinces were hit by torrential rains. Since June 20, those areas and five other provinces in central PRC, including Anhui, Henan and Jiangsu, which bound the central Huai River valley, have also been inundated by incessant storms. More than 260 fatalities have occurred since June 20 as rains in southern Guizhou and in Chongqing municipality sent torrents of water gushing down mountain passes, destroying homes and crops. In the Huai River valley the water levels have reached their highest in 10 years, and the government has evacuated farming communities and blown up dykes in an attempt reduce the amount of water in the swelling river. "In comparison to the same time last year, this year's flood disaster has been worse in the areas affected, fatalities, number of houses collapsed and economic losses," the ministry said. "So far it has not reached the level of the big disaster of 1991 or the big disaster of 1998," it said.

"PRC Flood Developments" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 11, US)

Japan

1. Japan's Roles in Iraqi Reconstruction

The US has called on Japanese Self-Defense Forces (SDF) personnel to be more involved in military activities in Iraq than Japan had anticipated, sources familiar with bilateral ties told Kyodo News on Tuesday. The US asked during a series of meetings last week between officials from both governments that Japanese personnel fly CH-47 transport helicopters in Iraq, on the assumption they could carry weapons and soldiers for U.S.-led coalition forces, they said. The Japanese delegation stopped short of immediately accepting the request during the meetings in the US due to security concerns, the sources said. Japan mainly envisions SDF officers providing humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Iraqi people and helping foreign forces keep order in the country. Two Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF) transport aircraft carrying 41 Self-Defense Force (SDF) officers left Japan on Thursday morning for Jordan to help deliver relief supplies for the Iraqi people, government officials said. The 41 SDF members will be joined by 49 others who are traveling on a commercial airline, the officials said. Japan is sending the troops to help transport the relief goods to Iraq, although they will not enter that country, under an existing law on cooperation for U.N. peacekeeping operations, following a request by the World Food Program, the officials said. The government is considering sending troops to Iraq later this year under a special law now before the House of Councillors and expected to be enacted this month. According to the government, SDF contingents will be sent to Iraq to help in its reconstruction.

"Discussions on SDF" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, Japan)

2. SDF Permanent Legislation

Japan should consider implementing a permanent law that stipulates the principles under which the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) can be dispatched overseas, rather than drawing up sunset legislation every time the need arises, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said. The comment came during debate on a bill to authorize an SDF dispatch to Iraq. The government's case-by-case approach regarding SDF deployment has also been criticized by some experts. "There are opinions within the Liberal Democratic Party that a permanent law is more desirable in considering what kind of peacekeeping activities the SDF should engage in within the framework of the Constitution," Koizumi said during the debate at the House of Representatives. "Drafting a permanent law should be considered as a future issue after taking into account national debate on the matter." Later in the day, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda voiced hope for an early debate on the issue.

"SDF Permanent Legislation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, Japan)

3. Japan-US Relations

Japan and the US failed to bridge differences over the treatment of US servicemen accused of crimes in Japan on July 3, weeks after a US Marine's arrest on rape charges stirred fresh resentment against the US military presence.

"Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 8, PRC)

4. Lawsuit on Anti-terrorism Law

A special antiterrorism law enacted in 2001 in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks on the US has survived its first legal challenge. The Saitama District Court dismissed a suit challenging the law's constitutionality. The 253 plaintiffs had sought nullification of the law, claiming it violates the Constitution's recognition of the right of people around the world to live in peace and its renunciation of war as a means of settling international disputes. They also had demanded 2.53 million yen -- 10,000 yen each -- in damages in the suit. In addition, the plaintiffs demanded that the government order the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) vessels that had been dispatched to the Indian Ocean under the law to return home. Presiding Judge Tateo Toyoda dismissed the plaintiffs' claims, saying that the court "does not have the power to rule on whether a law is unconstitutional." "The court merely followed political circles rather than maintaining the independence of the judiciary," one of the plaintiffs said. During the proceedings, the court did not allow the plaintiffs to bring in constitutional scholars and military affairs commentators to testify when it suddenly called off procedures in March after holding only three sessions. In response, the plaintiffs challenged the judges, but the claim was denied by the Tokyo High Court. In a statement, the plaintiffs argued: "The SDF activities under the law should be considered military activities and the exercise of the right to collective defense, as they have enabled the US-led forces to continue military action." They also insisted Japan's provision of support for military action in and around Afghanistan violates an international convention on the rights of children, because the US and British bombing of the country has worsened the living conditions of Afghan children. The plaintiffs said they would appeal the ruling shortly.

"Lawsuit on Anti-terrorism Law" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, Japan)

5. Japan on Iran's Nuclear Development

Japan is calling on Iran to give International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors full access to its nuclear facilities. In response to growing concern in the international community over Iran's nuclear program, Senior Vice Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi told Iranian Ambassador to Japan Ali Majedi his country should "fully cooperate with the IAEA and immediately and unconditionally sign and implement an additional protocol," a Foreign Ministry official said. The additional protocol would enable the IAEA to conduct inspections without prior notification. Majedi responded that the nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and said he will notify the Iranian government of Japan's request, the official said. "Japan on Iran's Nuclear Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 9, Japan)

6. Japan's ODA Strategy

Japan has been the biggest provider of ODA but in 2001 it dropped to second place after the US. In the fiscal 2003 budget, 857.8 billion yen was set aside for ODA. Japan allocated 911 billion yen in ODA in fiscal 2002, and 1 trillion yen the previous year. The Foreign Ministry, which is responsible for funding, has been discussing revisions to the ODA Charter, adopted in 1992, since the end of last year. While Japan led the world in ODA funding to developing nations for many years, its own dire fiscal conditions forced the government to cut expenditures for four straight years through fiscal 2003. Against this backdrop, the draft of the revised charter states that a key objective of ODA expenditures should be to promote friendship and exchanges that would bring benefits to Japan, according to a draft obtained by The Asahi Shimbun.

"Japan's ODA Strategy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 10, Japan)

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Nautilus Institute

608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email:

nautilus@nautilus.org