

NAPSNET Week in Review 19 July, 2002

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United States

1. US Domestic View on Missile Agency

US Congressional critics of the multibillion-dollar missile defense program say the Bush administration's plan to reorganize the agency will give Congress inadequate information to gauge whether it is taking too long, costing too much or failing too often. "Now we have no way of knowing whether the program measures up or not," said Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass. The argument centers on a reorganization of missile defense efforts ordered this year by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. The reorganization folded several separate missile defense programs into the Missile Defense Agency and freed the agency from previous requirements to provide budget projections, performance objectives and development deadlines. President Bush is seeking US\$7.6 billion next year for work on the systems to protect the United States and its military from incoming missiles.

"US Domestic View on Missile Agency" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 US)

2. US-Taiwan Strategic Talks

A new round of the biannual "Monterey talks," considered the second channel of strategic communications between Taiwan and the US, has officially opened Tuesday in Monterey, California. The Taiwan delegation to the two-day meeting is being led by Vice Foreign Minister Ying-mao Kau and Vice Chief of the General Staff Ju Kai-san. Other members of the delegation include officials from the National Security Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of National Defense. US officials participating in the strategic dialogue include Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Peter Rodman and officials from the White House National Security Council and the American Institute in Taiwan.

"US-Taiwan Strategic Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 US)

3. US Domestic View of PRC

A special US commission that advocates tougher US policies toward the PRC said on Monday it has asked Congress to enact some of its ideas into law, including tightening access of PRC firms to US capital markets. Voting 11-1, the commission concluded that the PRC's leaders believe the US is a declining power with important military vulnerabilities that can be exploited, Chairman Richard D'Amato told a news conference. The report also concluded that the US has been a major contributor, through trade and investment, to the PRC's rise as an economic power, and said this raises serious national security concerns for the US. William Reinsch, president of the National Foreign Trade Council, the sole dissenter among the panel members, faulted the report for "implicitly repudiating engagement" with the PRC. "What this report says is we should be more suspicious (of China). I think that's the wrong way to go," he expressed.

"US Domestic View of PRC" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 US)

4. US Congressmen to DPRK

A US congressional delegation headed by Representative Kurt Weldon, Republican of Pennsylvania, is reportedly trying again to visit DPRK. A government source in Seoul said Tuesday, Mr. Weldon, a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, is again pushing for a trip to DPRK with 10 other representatives from both the Republican and Democratic parties. But, the source said, nothing is confirmed yet. "Considering that it didn't go well on the first try in May, we shouldn't rush to any conclusions yet," the source said.

"US Congressmen to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 ROK)

Republic of Korea

1. DPRK Rationing System

The DPRK has started to scrap its decades-old state rationing system in what would be a major step towards a market economy in one of the most food-deprived countries on earth, a diplomatic source said on Friday. The DPRK began to introduce the new system in June, prompting a sharp increase in wages and prices, said the diplomatic source, speaking on condition of anonymity. "This is an epoch-making event," the source said. "The rationing system will be replaced with a new economic system in which all transactions and economic activities are settled with the won," he said. The tentative experiment with what appear to be market reforms will also extend into industry. Officials at state-owned enterprises were gathered earlier this month and told of changes that mean their state-owned factories and companies would now be required to end their reliance on state subsidies and become self-sustaining concerns, the source said. The new system will apply to all of the DPRK's 22 million people whether working in farms, in industry or as government bureaucrats, the source said.

"DPRK Rationing System" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 US)

2. ROK Domestic Politics

ROK President Kim Dae-jung's cabinet reshuffle on July 11 is seen by political observers as an attempt to seek public support before the December presidential election. The most notable aspect of the shake-up was the nomination of a woman as prime minister, said the report. Local media in Seoul said, according to the report, that Kim had no choice but to reshuffle the cabinet, given his awkward situation caused by continual scandals involving government officials and two of Kim's own sons and also last month's inter-Korean naval clash. The report said, most citizens of the ROK have welcomed the reshuffle decision
"ROK Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 PRC)

3. DPRK-Russian Relations

China Daily ("RUSSIAN FM TO VISIT DPRK," Seoul, 07/17/02, P11) said that Russia's foreign minister will soon visit DPRK, the ROK's official news agency reported on July 16 following an earlier announcement from Seoul of a three-day visit by the minister to ROK.
"DPRK-Russian Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 PRC)

4. Inter-Korean Relations

A group of 15 ROK religious and civic leaders left for the DPRK Friday to promote civilian exchanges, despite a recent naval clash between the ROK and DPRK. The delegation, led by Catholic priest Kim Jong-soo, will arrive in the DPRK Saturday by way of Beijing, said Ahn Jung-hee, a spokesperson for a coalition of pro-unification activist groups. The trip sets the stage for the ROK and DPRK to resume contact - albeit unofficial - since their navies fought a bloody gunfight near the disputed western sea border four weeks ago. Also Saturday, a DPRK passenger plane will land at a remote ROK airport on the east coast, to test the feasibility of air services that the DPRK wants to start under an agreement with a US-led consortium to build two power-generating nuclear reactors in the DPRK. "Inter-Korean Relations"
(NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 US)

5. DPRK Defectors ROK Arrival

Three DPRK defectors who took refuge in the ROK consulate in Beijing for the past month landed in the ROK after having traveled via Thailand. The three included two men and a 24-year-old woman, identified by her family name Kim, who had been on a women's football team in the famine-hit communist country. "While staying in the consulate, I was so concerned about my fate. But I am now delighted to land here. I want to go on with my life as a soccer player despite my age limit," Kim said Monday.
"3 Defectors in Seoul" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 ROK)
"DPRK Defectors ROK Arrival" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

6. ROK and Japan on DPRK-ROK Naval Skirmish

ROK foreign minister Choi Sung-Hung stated that there was no evidence that DPRK leader Kim Jong-Il had ordered a recent sea battle with the ROK. The clash in the Yellow Sea on June 29 dominated talks between Choi and his Japanese counterpart Yoriko Kawaguchi. But officials said Saturday the two agreed on the need to make efforts to reduce tensions during talks in Seoul. Choi said after the meeting: "It is clear that the North carefully premeditated the maritime provocation, but it still remains unclear whether higher level DPRK leaders ordered it in advance." The ROK and the DPRK have blamed each other for the clash.
"ROK and Japan on DPRK-ROK Naval Skirmish" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

7. KEDO Project in DPRK

The international consortium in charge of building two light water reactors in DPRK arrived in Pyongyang by air to discuss on measures in case of accidents or damage during the construction, Tuesday. The KEDO group headed by chief counsel Edward Lynch is expected to remain in Pyongyang till Saturday. This is the second time the two sides address legal measures and other financial circumstances in case of accidents during construction of the twin light water reactors since last May.

"KEDO Project in DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 ROK)

8. DPRK-Libya Relations

The DPRK and Libya inked a treaty that promised of encouragement and protection in bilateral investment and cooperation in science and technology sector Tuesday, reported Korean Central Broadcast Wednesday. At the meeting were Kim Yon-nam the visiting nominal head of DPRK accompanied by his aides; Foreign Minister Paek Nam-sun, Trade Minister Ri Kwang-gun, head of National Academy of Science Ri Kwang-ho, chairman of the Korean Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries Mun Jae-chol and DPRK ambassador to Libya Choe In-sop. Representing Libya was Abdulrahman Mohamed Shalgham, secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Relation and International Cooperation and other officials. The two countries also jointly signed an executive plan for treaty on information and culture from year 2002-2004.

"DPRK-Libya Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 ROK)

"DPRK-Libya Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 ROK)

"DPRK-Libya Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

9. ROK-Japan Relations

Foreign ministers from Japan and the ROK called for greater efforts to ease tensions on the peninsula, officials said. During talks in Seoul with her ROK counterpart Choi Sung-Hung, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi stressed the need for US and ROK dialogue with the DPRK, they said Saturday. "Japan does not want the tensions to escalate any further in the region," Kawaguchi said, according to an ROK ministry official at the talks. Both ministers "completely shared the view that it is important for Japan and the United States to have dialogue with the North" to ease tensions, the ministry official said.

"ROK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

10. ASEAN Regional Forum Meeting

The ROK plans to raise the issue of the recent inter-Korean gun battle on the West Sea during the upcoming ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and call for the participating countries' cooperation in resolving the issue, officials said Wednesday. They said that the ROK government will make it clear during the forum that the DPRK is to blame for the first armed clash between the Koreas in three years. But the tone of our criticism will depend on actions taken by the North," a Foreign Ministry official said. Officials from 23 ARF member countries, including from the ROK and the DPRK, will attend the annual security forum in Brunei July 31. Foreign ministers from ROK, US, Japan and PRC are scheduled to gather for the meeting.

"DPRK in ARF?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 ROK)

"ARF Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 ROK)

11. CDMA Technology in DPRK

The US government is opposing the inter-Korean joint venture to develop the Code Division Multiple Access mobile phone system in the DPRK, an ROK government source said Wednesday. The ROK's Information and Communication Ministry last month announced a plan to carry out the communication business jointly with DPRK. "Washington said through diplomatic channels that the CDMA technology should not be transferred to the North," the ROK official said. "Since North Korea is on the list of state sponsors of terror, the US government controls exports to the North; the CDMA technology belongs to a US company, Qualcomm."

"CDMA Technology in DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 ROK)

12. Russia-ROK-DPRK Relations

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov will visit the ROK and DPRK this month amid tension over a recent gunbattle in disputed Korean waters, officials said. Ivanov is due to visit Seoul from July 26-28 before heading to Pyongyang, according to foreign ministry officials in Seoul. Ivanov is to hold talks with Foreign Minister Choi Sung-Hong and meet President Kim Dae-Jung during his three-day stay.

"Russia-ROK-DPRK Relation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 US)

13. Russia on DPRK-ROK Dialogue

A Russian presidential envoy said Wednesday that DPRK leader Kim Jong Il is ready for renewed dialogue with the ROK but remains wary of the US. "Pyongyang today is an enterprising partner engaged in a search for ways out of the crisis situation and wanting to establish good neighborly relations," said Konstantin Pulikovsky, Russian President Vladimir Putin's special envoy to the Russian Far East. "The North Korean leadership however treats outside intervention with suspicion and believes that the United States plays a negative role in inter-Korean relations," he said.

"Russia on DPRK-ROK Dialogue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 17 US)

14. ROK Visas Policy

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TO ALLOW ETHNIC KOREANS IN CHINA, RUSSIA TO LIVE AND WORK IN KOREA," Seoul, 07/17/02) reported that the ROK government said Wednesday it will allow some ethnic Koreans living in the PRC and Russia to live and work in the ROK. Until now, they were barred from living, working or buying property in the ROK and were treated like other foreigners when applying for visas. However, from November, those aged 40 or older with relatives in the ROK will be allowed to stay for up to two years, the government said Wednesday in a news release. They will only be allowed to work in restaurants, factories and manual jobs. The government estimates tens of thousands of Korean-Chinese are already working illegally in the ROK, where they can earn up to 10 times more than in the PRC.

"ROK Visas Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 17 US)

15. Inter Korean Relations

The DPRK sent a fax Monday that agreed to the ROK's proposal to hold working level talks in preparation for the August 15 festival next week from July 20-23, said ROK's headquarters for DPRK-ROK joint function. The ROK Preparatory Committee for 2002 DPRK-ROK Joint Festival is planning to fax DPRK with the basic outline for August 15 Liberation Festival slated to be held in Seoul. "We won't have much trouble with working level contacts since we have already applied for inter-Korean contacts much earlier," one of the officials of ROK's Committee said.

"Inter Korean Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 ROK)

People's Republic of China

1. Cross-Straits Military Relations

Taiwanese lawmakers and retired generals met secretly with high-ranking PRC military officers last month in Beijing and discussed defense issues, an organizer of the meeting said. The gathering was the first time in recent years that retired Taiwanese generals met face to face with other PRC military officers on the mainland, said Chou Chih-cheng, head of the Asian-Pacific Security Studies Foundation. Three Taiwanese lawmakers, six retired military officers and six scholars participated in the exchange, which might be followed by other meetings in the future, he said. Chou, a retired lieutenant general and former lawmaker, would not name the PRC officers who attended the conference. He said that ruling Democratic Progressive Party lawmakers Lee Wen-chung and Chen Chung-shin went to the meeting. The third legislator was Chen Shei-saint of the Nationalist Party. During the conference, the two sides discussed military issues and "steered clear of politics," said Chou, who declined to provide details of the discussion. "It was a good opportunity to open the door, to sit down and have some tea and just chat," Chou said.

"Cross-Straits Military Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 17 US)

2. PRC Defensive Military Policy

The PRC criticized a US Defense Department report alleging its military is growing rapidly, saying Tuesday that the document had "very evil motives." PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan accused the report's authors of having an "outdated Cold War mentality" and of "groundlessly playing up the concept of a China threat." "China hopes that that all US people of insight could have a clear idea about the detrimental effect of the report," Kong said.

"China is a peace loving country. Its national defence policy is defensive in nature," Kong stated. "China never joins in any military race and its national defence expenditure is the lowest among big powers," it said. The PRC has proposed increasing its military budget by US\$3 billion or 17.6 percent in 2002. The PRC's foreign ministry said it hoped the US government would stick by the three joint communiques of 1972. "PRC Response to Pentagon Report" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 US)

"PRC Defensive Military Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

3. PRC Response to Pentagon Report

A senior PRC foreign policy official has warned ties with the US could be "seriously affected" by a pair of recent official US reports labeling the PRC as a potential threat, state press said. Zeng Jianhui, chairman of the foreign affairs committee of China's parliament, the National People's Congress, urged US legislators to reject the studies. "I hope the US Congress will not legislate them, or else bilateral ties will be seriously affected," he was quoted as saying Wednesday by the China Daily newspaper. "I expect insightful US Congress members to recognize the possible consequences any further moves in that direction would bring, and do their best to avoid a detrimental outcome."

"PRC-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 PRC)

"PRC Response to Pentagon Report" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 US)

4. Taiwan on State of PRC Military

In its first official response to a Pentagon report on the strength of the PRC military, Taiwan on Monday warned the PRC against coercing Taiwan into reunification. "We urge Beijing to drop the idea of using force to settle the differences between the two sides," Taiwan foreign ministry spokeswoman Chang Siao-yue declared. Chang's statement followed a report by the Pentagon Friday in which the US questioned the PRC's commitment to a peaceful resolution of its differences with Taiwan. However, Taiwan maintains a qualitative edge over PRC forces in the air and at sea, but has only negligible defenses against the PRC's ballistic missiles, a Pentagon report on PRC military power said. The report released Friday said that the PRC has more than 300 short range ballistic missiles that can strike Taiwan. "This number will grow substantially over the next few years. Taiwan's ability to defend against ballistic missiles is negligible," it said.

"Taiwan on PRC Military Build Up" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 US)

"Taiwan on PRC Military Build-up" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 US)

"Taiwan on State of PRC Military" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

"Taiwan Military Status" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

5. Taiwan Missile Defense

Taiwan needs an island-wide missile defense system to counter a perceived growing threat from the PRC, which has over 300 missiles pointed at the island, a defense official said on Tuesday. Taiwan needs to improve its ability to stop missiles, and to boost its radar capability to give earlier warning of attack and minimize possible damage, Defense Ministry spokesman Huang Suey-sheng said at a news conference. "In the future we'll need to buy systems from overseas or domestically manufacture them so we can aggressively create an islandwide missile defense system," Huang said. Huang's comments were the Defense Ministry's first public reaction after the release late last week of a US Pentagon assessment of the PRC's military modernization.

"Taiwan Missile Defense" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 US)

6. PRC Domestic Politics

As PRC leaders gather in the seaside resort of Beidaihe to work out details of a leadership change, rumours are spreading fast that Jiang Zemin is making a play to stay on as head of the Communist Party. The idea is based largely on a state media campaign extolling his plan to modernize the party as well as reports of private letters and circulars sent to Central Committee members commending his leadership, academics and diplomats say. But while no one is certain of the outcome of the secretive Beidaihe meetings, many analysts play down the likelihood of Jiang keeping the country's top job after a five-yearly party congress in September or October. "There are rules," one senior PRC government official said when asked about the possibility of Jiang staying on. "If one person breaks the rules, then why can't everybody?"

"PRC Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 US)

7. Cross-Straits Relations

Some PRC women who are married to Taiwanese have been asked to have abortions when they visit home to comply with the PRC's one-child policy, a Taiwanese official said Thursday. At least six PRC women with Taiwanese husbands have reported that they were harassed or coerced by PRC officials who wanted them to have abortions or undergo surgeries to prevent further pregnancies, Taiwan's Straits Exchange Foundation said in a statement. To prevent forced abortions on the mainland, Taiwan has allowed Chinese spouses who are pregnant but have yet to gain residency rights to extend their six-month temporary stays on the island so they can deliver their babies on the island.

"Cross-Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 US)

8. US PRC Sanctions

US sanctions are being slapped on nine PRC firms or people and an Indian man accused of helping "rogue states" Iran or Iraq amass weapons of mass destruction, a US official said Friday. The sanctions on the PRC involved three cases of sales of advanced conventional arms and chemical and biological weapons components to Iran between September 2000 and October 2001. This would be the fourth time since September that the US had penalized PRC companies for transferring arms-related material or technology to Iran, it added. "It's nine Chinese entities and one Indian individual," the official said. The US official declined to name the firms and business people, saying Congress still had to be notified. But he said the Indian man was a corporate officer in an Indian firm and the PRC list included a man who has been sanctioned in the past.

"US PRC Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 US)

9. DPRK-Chinese Relations

A reception was held on July 11 to mark the 41st anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance between the PRC and the DPRK. It said President of the PRC-DPRK Friendship Association Li Shuzheng and DPRK Ambassador to the PRC respectively made speeches at the reception. Over 100 concerned people attended the activity, said the report.

"DPRK-Chinese Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 PRC)

10. PRC-Russian Relations

Leaders of the PRC and Russia on July 16 hailed the one-year-old Sino-Russian Treaty of Good-neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation as a success, attributing much of the progress in bilateral ties in the past year to the pact. In a letter of congratulations to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, it reported, PRC President Jiang Zemin said it has been proven that the signing of the treaty was insightful and of strategic significance.

"PRC-Russian Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 PRC)

11. PRC-US Cold War Missing Search

A US Army team arrived in the PRC on Wednesday on the first mission allowed by the PRC to search for the remains of US soldiers who went missing in action during the Cold War, the US embassy said. The eight-member team from the US Army Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) will look for the remains of two pilots whose plane crashed in northeastern PRC on a CIA spying mission in 1952. The pilots' charred bodies were believed to have been buried at the crash site.

"PRC-US Cold War Missing Search" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 17 US)

Japan

1. Japan Domestic Politics

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi ordered seven cabinet ministers to draw up concrete measures by late August to cut budgets, targeting bloated public works, farm subsidies and several other areas. Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told a press conference the government needed to "review fiscal spending strictly" to achieve true reform. Asked whether saved money should be used to finance tax cuts, Fukuda said: "It will certainly be considered." The premier urged the ministers to make "top-down" decisions on reform measures for intensive debate in late August at the Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy. The seven addressed were the ministers for home affairs, education, health and welfare, agriculture, trade, land and infrastructure minister, and science and technology.

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 US)

2. Japanese Logistical Support for US

Japan may continue to refuel US warships in the Indian Ocean in the event of a US attack on Iraq, diplomatic sources said. Although Japan believes an imminent US attack on Iraq is not likely, the Foreign Ministry and the Defense Agency have secretly discussed measures Japan should take if an attack were launched, the sources said. Japan is now considering whether to continue its refueling operation for US vessels engaged in the Afghanistan campaign on condition that the US pledges not to use the fuel for military operations against Iraq, they said.

"Japanese Logistical Support for US" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 Japan)

3. Integration of Three Forces of SDF

Japanese Defense Agency chief Gen Nakatani announced a shift in basic policy that will integrate in an "organic" manner the Ground, Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces' operations so the three branches can perform their duties promptly and effectively. The concept is contained in an interim report compiled on Nakatani's instructions in April by Shoji Takegouchi, chairman of the Joint Staff Council (JSC), and the chiefs of staff of the three SDF branches. A task force under the JSC chairman is scheduled to compile a final report by the end of this year after further studying such issues as redefinition of the authority and responsibility of the JSC chairman and establishment of a new organization to support the JSC chairman, as well as education of personnel, exercises, communications and infrastructure for the integrated operations, Nakatani said. Under the policy shift, the JSC chairman would directly command elements of the three forces, a responsibility that currently rests with the chief of staff of each branch. Nakatani said the new goal is not intended to enhance the power of military officers over civilian officials in the agency. "Final decisions will be made by the Defense Agency chief and there is no problem from the viewpoint of civilian control (of the military)."

"Integration of Three Forces of SDF" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 Japan)

4. Japan Development Aid

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi is facing a new challenge to her reform efforts as the ministry's bureaucrats are rebelling against her decision to look to a rival ministry to fill a foreign aid commission. Takeo Hiranuma, minister of economy, trade and industry, said Tuesday that Kawaguchi has officially asked him to recommend able personnel from his ministry for the Foreign Ministry's Economic Cooperation Bureau. However, several bureau heads and other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry oppose the idea, saying the Economic Cooperation Bureau, which handles official development assistance -- the core of Japan's diplomacy -- should be headed by a career diplomat. The fact that Kawaguchi is a former trade ministry bureaucrat is also riling some Foreign Ministry bureaucrats, one official said.

"Japan Development Aid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 Japan)

5. A-Bomb Exhibition at UN

The UN has canceled a scheduled exhibition about the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at its headquarters in New York this fall, saying some photographs offered for display are "too gruesome." Officials of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Hidankyo), which organized the exhibits, received word from UN headquarters that the exhibition would not go ahead because some people might find it distressing. The display items included 80 photographs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki immediately after the bombings as well as scenes of hibakusha (A-bomb survivors).

"A-Bomb Exhibition at UN" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 18 Japan)

6. US-Japan Relations

A Japanese court on July 15 turned down a US claim for damages for losses due to alleged bid-rigging by 26 Japanese contactors for building a US military base near Tokyo. The ruling by the Tokyo District Court was the first on a lawsuit filed by the US against Japanese construction firms over bid-rigging at US bases in the country. It said that the US Government filed the damages suit against 53 Japanese firms in 1994, claiming they had illegally raised prices for 98 construction projects at Atsugi base in Kanagawa, southwest of the capital, from 1984 through 1990. The number of defendants later declined to 26 as the US Government dropped its claims against 27 of the 53 firms by reaching out-of-court settlements or for other reasons, said the report.

"US-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 19 PRC)

"Japan-US Contract Case" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

7. Japan Development Aid Budget

Japan Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said Wednesday that the fiscal 2003 official development assistance (ODA) budget should be increased. "ODA is important for humanitarian reasons and its budget should increase in line with Japan's reform plans," Kawaguchi told the Lower House Foreign Affairs Committee. Regarding the idea to separate the bureau from the ministry and create an independent aid agency, Kawaguchi said, "the ODA constitutes an important diplomatic tool. I doubt if it is appropriate to have a separate cabinet minister handle it."

"Japan Development Aid Budget" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 17 US)

8. DPRK-Japan Relations

Japan's Sankei Shimbun reported Sunday that an investigation team discovered Korean writing on a rocket launcher found aboard the sunken unidentified ship Japanese authorities are salvaging in the East China Sea. The rocket launcher, reportedly a Soviet-designed RPG7, also bears familiar star designs used on DPRK-made Soviet weaponry. The same day, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported Japanese coast guards and navy are conducting their first joint drill on the open sea near Maizuri on Tuesday. High-speed missile and special patrol boats will be used for the drill. The boats were specially designed after losing a DPRK boat that intruded Japanese waters near the Noto Peninsula in 1999.

"DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 16 ROK)

9. Japanese Domestic Politics

Japanese Health, Labor and Welfare Senior Vice Minister Kazuaki Miyaji resigned his government post over a medical entrance exam scandal in the latest blow to Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. Miyaji submitted his resignation to Chikara Sakaguchi, head of the ministry, officials said Monday. "Our minister (Sakaguchi) accepted the resignation," said a ministry spokesman. Miyaji, a lawmaker and senior official of Koizumi's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, allegedly interceded to help a supporter's grandchild pass an entrance examination for the medical school of Teikyo University in Tokyo.

"Japanese Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 15 US)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

In their article for the Economic and Political Weekly, India, R. Rajaraman, M.V. Ramana and Zia Mian examine "the dangers that come with the possibility that in the foreseeable future India and Pakistan may deploy their nuclear arsenals." According to a report in the daily Dawn, Pakistan, India's military scientists have claimed that they have developed safeguards against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) is working on a plan to set up two new nuclear power plants.

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

Afghanistan's Minister for Tribal and Frontier Affairs Aref Noorzay has stated that the U.S. team investigating the bombing of a wedding party will not be visiting the villages that were attacked. Southern Afghan governors have reportedly arranged a meeting to discuss a proposal that would require US troops to seek their permission before striking at suspected al-Qaeda and Taliban units in the region. Meanwhile, a compound being used by US Special Forces in central Afghanistan was attacked with small arms.

"Current Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

2. Humanitarian Crisis

World Health Organization (WHO) has expressed fears that cholera can spread in Kabul. Three people in the city have so far been diagnosed with the disease. The daily News, Pakistan, reports that humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan is facing serious funding shortage. Meanwhile, about 100,000 Afghans have returned to their homeland from Iran.

"Humanitarian Crisis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

According to press reports, Indian army has withdrawn three strike divisions, or about 18,000 men, from the Pakistan frontier. The Indian government, however, has denied the report. Pakistani military, meanwhile, has initiated a 10-day long war exercises.

"India-Pakistan Tensions" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

2. Analysis

The Daily Times' editorial criticizes India for "milking its post- September 11 policy somewhat like Israel, thinking Washington will deliver Pakistan's submission." Kuldip Nayar's article in the daily Dawn calls upon India and Pakistan to start a process of military de- escalation and dialogue. Writing for the daily Hindu, India, P.R. Chari believes that the "test of success in the present coercive diplomacy is not the discomfiture of Pakistan but the resolution of the Kashmir problem." L. Ramdas' article in the daily Hindu argues that "as a gesture of honest intent, India and Pakistan must reduce the levels of their security forces on the border." "Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

3. Kashmir Situation

At least 25 people were killed in a terrorist attack in Jammu. India has expressed outrage at the massacre of Hindu civilians but "the usual diatribe against Pakistan was noticeably absent amid otherwise angry words." The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has condemned the massacre and called for impartial inquiry. There were reports of more violence in the state. According to a Hindustan Times report, "terrorists in Kashmir are targeting village heads to frighten voters away from crucial state elections set for September and October." "Kashmir Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

Pakistan and India

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

Pakistani government has proposed another set of constitutional amendments ahead of the October general elections. The Pakistan Supreme Court upheld the newly introduced condition of minimum educational qualification for the members of parliament and provincial assemblies. The minimum education condition has created difficulties for political parties trying to select candidates for the October polls. The proposed constitutional amendment package has been strongly criticized by the Pakistan Bar Council. Pakistani press has also been very critical of the proposed amendments.

"Pakistan: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

2. Daniel Pearl Case

The Anti-Terrorist Court, Hyderabad, has awarded death sentence to Ahmed Omar Saeed Shaikh, the prime accused, and life terms to co-accused, Salman Saqib, Fahad Nasim and Shaikh Muhammad Adil in the kidnapping and murder case of US journalist Daniel Pearl. The three accused have filed a joint appeal challenging the judgment of the trial court. Kamran Khan's report in the daily News indicates the possibility that the case may be sent back to the court for a fresh trial. Ahmed Omer Saeed Sheikh and his supporters have warned of "dire consequences" if "any harm came to the commander Omer Sheikh or other Mujahideen." "Daniel Pearl Case" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

3. Operations Against al-Qaeda

According to a daily News report, US forces have expanded their operations along Afghanistan-Pakistan border. US law enforcement agencies have also reportedly been working in tandem with the US military in Pakistan. According to President General Pervez Musharraf, only Pakistani forces - helped by "just a dozen US troops providing intelligence, communication support" - are conducting the search for al- Qaeda and Taliban fighters in Pakistan's tribal areas.

"Operations Against al-Qaeda" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

4. India: Domestic Situation

According to Hindustan Times, India, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is planning to force early state elections in Gujarat. Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has called the Indian Parliament the "biggest obstruction" in its efforts to build the controversial Ram temple in Ayodhya. VHP has also backtracked on its promise to abide by the court verdict on the Ayodhya issue.

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

Regional News

1. Philippines

Writing for Frontline, Aijaz Ahmad gives a background to the US involvement in the Philippines and argues that the country may be the "next target in the 'war against terrorism'".

"At the mouth of a volcano"

"Philippines" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #23)

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