

NAPSNET Week in Review 23 August, 2002

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United States

1. US Missile Defense Test

The Pentagon postponed a missile defense test scheduled for Saturday because of problems with the interceptor rocket. Workers discovered problems with seals on the nozzles that help steer two stages of the three-stage rocket, the Defense Department's Missile Defense Agency said in a statement Tuesday. The test scheduled for Saturday would have been the seventh test for a system to knock down enemy intercontinental missiles with interceptor rockets fired from silos on the ground. Two previous tests have been failures, but in the other four tests the interceptor knocked out a dummy warhead more than 140 miles above the Pacific. The tests, which cost about \$100 million each, are part of the military's drive to develop a series of missile defenses. The Bush administration hopes to have a permanent test site built in Alaska within four years which could provide some basic missile defense for the United States.

"US Missile Defense Test" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

2. Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group

Senior diplomats from Japan, the ROK and the US will meet next month to fine-tune their policy towards the DPRK, the ROK foreign ministry announced. The three-way meeting, due to open in Seoul on September 7, is seen as crucial to determining how to handle the DPRK. The ministry said Friday the three allies would also hold bilateral talks on September 6 on the sidelines of the full-party talks. At the upcoming TCOG meeting, attention would be on the US which has been slower than the other two in responding to the overtures from the DPRK, officials at the ROK foreign ministry said.

"Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

3. ROK US Military Helicopter Crash

Hundreds of US and ROK soldiers and police searched thick forests in heavy fog Friday for two US pilots of a military helicopter that disappeared during a training flight. The AH-64A Apache helicopter was declared missing early Thursday after taking off from Camp Page, a US military base at Chuncheon, 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of Seoul. It was heading to Camp Eagle at Wonju, 90 kilometers (55 miles) southeast of the capital. "We will continue our operations, day and night, until we find our air crew and our aircraft," US military spokesman Lt. Col. Steven Boylan said. "The type of terrain we have - dense forest, sheer cliffs and deep ravines and gullies - makes it very difficult to put people on the ground to search. It's a very slow process," he said. The US military identified the missing pilots as 1st Lt. Dustin Shannon, 23, and Chief Warrant Officer James Wallenburg, 40, of B Troop, 1st Battalion, 6th Cavalry Brigade.

"ROK US Military Helicopter Crash" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

"ROK US Military Helicopter Crash" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 22, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK Economic Reform

In the DPRK, salaries have soared, prices skyrocketed and the currency been slashed in value. The DPRK say this isn't reform, this the perfection of communism. But the DPRK's unprecedented move to boost wages, hike the price of rice and other staples and charge rent seems to sit uneasily residents who for years have been guided by central planning. "The recent changes are aimed at giving incentives for producers to produce more," said one official. The ROK's central bank said on Thursday stated that the DPRK's unprecedented move to boost prices on rice and other staples, raise wages and charge rent was driven by dire shortages that will raise prices further. The report by the Bank of Korea marks the most significant public reaction yet from the ROK. "This is a first step towards adopting a market economy," the Bank of Korea said. "Inflationary pressure will deepen as prices and wages have risen sharply."

"DPRK Economic Reform" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 22, US)

2. DPRK Missile Part Sales

The Bush administration has imposed sanctions against the DPRK after concluding that it sold Scud missile components to Yemen before President Bush took office, American officials said today. The timing of the penalties is particularly sensitive given the US' tenuous relations with the DPRK and developments between the DPRK and the ROK. The missile components were sent by Changgwang Sinyong Corporation in the DPRK, the marketing arm for the DPRK's missile export program. The company has been a catalyst for earlier penalties, but in this case it is not their only target. The sanctions, which bar licenses and contracts for high-tech items, also apply to the DPRK government, under an amendment to the Arms Export Control Act sponsored by Senator Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, on nonmarket economies.

"DPRK Missile Part Sales" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

3. DPRK-Russia Relations

DPRK leader Kim Jong Il capped his second visit to Russia in a year with a long meeting with President Vladimir Putin. Putin and Kim talked for about 3 1/2 hours at a government meeting house outside Vladivostok, Russia's main Pacific Coast city. Kim made no comments after the meeting, but as he walked away with Putin he appeared pleased, smiling and spreading his arms wide. The Russian president said little more, giving only a short synopsis of the talks, which he said focused on economic development. In particular, he said the two leaders talked about potential Russian involvement in a proposal to link the rail systems of the ROK and DPRK.

"DPRK-Russia Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, ROK)

"DPRK-RF Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

4. DPRK Criticizing Joint Drill

The DPRK continued its denouncing of the ROK and US conduction of joint military drills.

"The US Forces are conducting Ulchi Focus Lens exercise in Korean Peninsula reversing the reconciliation and reunification mood in the region," the DPRK's spokesman to the Foreign Affairs Ministry said Wednesday in his interview with Korean Central News Agency. "It is a serious challenge to the hope and desire of Koreans and the international society." The Ulchi drill is a computer simulation-based war game aimed to exercise, evaluate, and improve crisis action measures. The training will last until next Friday, and be joined by other US units based in Japan and Guam.

"DPRK Criticizing Joint Drill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, ROK)

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

"DPRK response to Annual US-ROK Military Drill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

5. DPRK-US War Remains

Remains recently unearthed in the DPRK and believed to be those of seven US soldiers missing in action from the Korea War were repatriated Tuesday to the moan of bagpipes and the crack of a 21-gun salute. A bugler blew taps as the caskets, draped in powder blue United Nations flags, were carried by full-dress military honor guards under a full moon and into a hangar at Yokota Air Base on the outskirts of Tokyo. A US Air Force cargo plane picked up the remains in Pyongyang earlier in the day. On Wednesday, they are scheduled to be flown to the U.S. Army's Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii for forensic examination.

"DPRK-US War Remains" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

6. ROK Domestic Politics

The ROK President Kim Dae-jung's nominee for prime minister is already acting the part, giving speeches and attending Cabinet meetings. But critics say his conduct clouds the question of who would succeed Kim if he were incapacitated without an approved deputy. Chang Dae-whan, a former publisher of the Maeil Business Newspaper who was nominated two weeks ago, will act as prime minister until parliament votes on his confirmation next week. The post has been vacant since Lee Han-dong resigned in a Cabinet reshuffle on July 10. Kim has defended the decades-old practice of appointing an acting deputy, saying it ensures government stability. But opposition lawmakers and some analysts say filling in as prime minister is illegal. "As long as this illegal practice goes on, the country could be vulnerable to serious confusion in case the president is incapacitated and there is no consensus on who should take over his duties," said Yoo Jin-shik, a law professor at Kyunghee University in Seoul.

"ROK Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

7. ROK DPRK Repatriation

The ROK will return the engineer of a fishing boat used by a group of DPRK defectors in their escape, ROK officials said. Li Kyong-Song, 33, was detained in the hull by the group of defectors off the country's southwestern coast on Sunday, they said. Officials at the National Intelligence Service (NIS), the ROK's spy agency, said it was possible Li was forced to the ROK against his will. "It is true that the engineer was under a brief detention," an NIS spokesman stated, adding that a probe was underway to confirm "what he really intended to do."

"DPRK Engineer to DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, ROK)

"ROK DPRK Repatriation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 22, US)

"ROK DPRK Defector Return" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

8. DPRK Defectors Arrival in ROK

Two DPRK defectors who sought asylum at the Albanian Embassy in Beijing arrived in the ROK on Thursday after flying via the Philippines, an official said. The men flew to Incheon International Airport west of Seoul aboard an Asiana Airlines flight from Manila, said an airport official who requested anonymity. Government officials took them away for debriefing. The men, who say they are brothers, had lived in the northeastern PRC province of Jilin for the past four years and worked as farmers, according to Kujtim Xhani, Albania's ambassador to Beijing. Philippine officials identified them as Lee Soo Chul, 26, and Lee Soo Hyuk, 22.

"DPRK Defectors Arrival in ROK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 22, US)

9. ROK Family Reunions

The ROK National Red Cross (KNRC) said Tuesday that it selected 300 initial candidates for a fifth round of reunions of families separated by the 1950-53 Korean War at DPRK's Mount Kumgang next month. The candidates will receive a physical examination before the KNRC draws up a list of 200 to be sent to DPRK so that the DPRK Red Cross can begin locating their long-lost kin. Based on the results of DPRK's efforts to track down the family members, the KNRC will choose the final 100 people lucky enough to travel to the DPRK mountain resort for the reunions, which the two Koreas agreed on during their recent ministerial talks.

"Family Reunion" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, ROK)

"ROK Family Reunions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

10. Japan-DPRK Kidnapping Issue

Japan and the DPRK concluded two days of talks Monday with a vow by the DPRK to broaden an investigation into the whereabouts of dozens of Japanese nationals, including 11 whom Japan claims were kidnapped by DPRK spies, and a similar promise for Japan to locate missing Koreans. During the talks, held under the auspices of the Red Cross in Pyongyang, the DPRK provided details on six of 49 Japanese nationals that Japan believes may be still be in the DPRK. The DPRK also pledged to broaden the scope of its search for others. Of the six on whom it provided information, two were alive but the remaining four had died, according to Atsuhiko Hata of the Red Cross In Tokyo. He refused to provide any further details.

"Japan-DPRK Kidnapping Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 22, US)

11. ROK Boat Raising

The ROK navy patrol boat riddled with bullet holes was raised Wednesday, eight weeks after it sank in a deadly gun battle with ROK warships near the peninsula's disputed western sea border. Navy divers fastened the 150-ton boat with steel chains and lifted it from the muddy bottom 25 meters (82 feet) under water, said a media pool report. The salvage crew hoisted it onto a barge as sea water gushed from hundreds of bullet holes and four soccer ball-sized holes created by the impact of DPRK shells. The "Chamsuri 357" will be carried to a navy base in Pyongtaek south of Seoul on Thursday. Military investigators will examine the boat to help reconstruct the June 29 naval clash that killed five South Korean sailors and injured 19 others. The DPRK acknowledged an unspecified number of casualties.

"ROK Boat Raising" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

12. ROK Liberation Day

Hundreds of ROK and DPRK civic leaders gathered Thursday to celebrate the 57th anniversary of the Korean peninsula's liberation from Japanese colonial rule. Traditional dances and songs calling for reunification filled the second of a four-day joint celebration in Seoul. The festivities came a day after the two Koreas agreed to restart talks on national reconciliation, stalled by recent political and military tensions. Separately, ROK President Kim Dae-jung gave high marks to his nation's latest effort at reconciliation with the DPRK, but said priority should be given to implementing agreements reached between the two nations. In a statement issued to mark Liberation Day, Kim reconfirmed that he would continue to pursue his "sunshine" policy of engaging the DPRK during the remainder of his term, which ends in February.

"ROK Liberation Day" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

13. ROK Supersonic Trainer Jet

The ROK's air force conducted a successful test flight of its first supersonic trainer jet on Tuesday. The T-50 Golden Eagle, designed and built by the government-funded Korea Aerospace Industries Co. with technological assistance from the U.S.-based Lockheed Martin Corp., will be used to train ROK pilots, the air force said in a news release. The trainer can fly at a speed of up to Mach 1.4 and can double as a lightly armed attack plane. The ROK has been building the trainer jet since late 1997.

"ROK Supersonic Trainer Jet" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC-ROK Relations

Presidents Kim Dae-Jung of the ROK and Jiang Zemin of the PRC exchanged letters to celebrate 10 years of diplomatic ties and vowed to boost relations further. In a letter delivered to Jiang Friday through Ambassador Kim Ha-Joong, President Kim said the two sides had made remarkable progress in developing ties in all fields and cooperated closely for regional peace and stability. "The development of South Korea-China ties are crucial not only to mutual interest but to regional stability and prosperity as well," Kim was quoted as saying in the letter. Jiang, for his part said in a letter delivered Friday to Kim by Ambassador Li Bin, that the PRC would continue to boost its cooperative partnership with the ROK, officials said. The PRC leader stressed that the PRC firmly supported any effort aimed at reconciliation, cooperation and peaceful unification in the Korean Peninsula.

"PRC-ROK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

2. PRC Kyoto Climate Treaty

The PRC is close to ratifying the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and an announcement will be made around the time of the upcoming UN Earth Summit, a senior foreign ministry official said. "China's State Council (cabinet) has already decided to ratify the Kyoto Protocol," said Zhang Jun, deputy director general of the foreign ministry's department of international organizations and conferences, on Wednesday. Zhang said procedures were under way to finalize the details of the PRC's ratification.

"PRC Kyoto Climate Treaty" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

3. PRC New Ambassadors

PRC President Jiang Zemin announced on August 20 the appointment of new ambassadors to the East Timor and nine other countries, in accordance with a decision made by the National People's Congress Standing Committee. Shao Guanfu was appointed ambassador to the Democratic Republic of East Timor. Zhao Huimin replaced Zhou Xiuhua as ambassador to the State of Qatar. Zhou Xiuhua is now ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic, replacing Shi Yanchun. Zhou Guobin, ambassador to the Republic of Yemen, gave his position to Gao Yusheng. Yin Yubiao, ambassador to the Republic of Togo, is replaced by Zhang Shixian. Zha Peixin is appointed new ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, replacing Ma Zhengang. Zhang Xiaokang, ambassador to Ireland, gave her position to Sha Hailin. Sun Rongmin replaces Ding Baohua as the new ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Tang Zhenqi is appointed new ambassador to the Republic of Greece, replacing Zhen Jianguo. Zhen Jianguo is now ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark, replacing Wang Qiliang.

"PRC New Ambassadors" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

4. Cross-Straits Relations

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian said on Tuesday the island had no intention of engaging the PRC in fruitless confrontation, toning down polemical talk after his deputy ruffled the PRC's feathers by visiting Indonesia. Vice-President Annette Lu declared her four-day Indonesia trip a setback for the PRC, prompting media speculation that Taiwan had switched from defensive to offensive diplomacy as proposed by Chen's top security aide. Chiou I-jen, secretary-general of the National Security Council, told a group of Taiwan diplomats in a recent closed-door session the island should light diplomatic fires so that "the flames of battle would be raging everywhere." In an apparent bid to avoid further riling the PRC, President Chen told a group of visiting Caribbean dignitaries: "We have no intention of engaging Communist China in a zero sum contest."

"Cross-Straits Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

5. UN on PRC Peacekeeping Role

The PRC wants to expand its role in UN peacekeeping missions, but isn't offering combat troops, a top UN official said Wednesday. The PRC has trained more than 600 troops for peacekeeping, including a 525-member engineering battalion, 35 medical personnel and two transportation companies with a total of about 80 troops. "There is obviously a ... great interest in having a high profile for China in the UN and a recognition that peacekeeping is a key activity for the UN," Jean-Marie Guehenno, the UN undersecretary-general for peacekeeping, said at a news conference. Despite having a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, Beijing didn't take part in its first peacekeeping mission until 1989. Its first large-scale contribution was 800 military engineers sent to Cambodia in 1992-94. Today, the PRC has 69 civilian police on the UN mission in East Timor and 15 others in Bosnia, as well as 48 military observers spread across six missions.

"UN on PRC Peacekeeping Role" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

6. US Bases in Okinawa

Ginowan Municipal Assembly in Okinawa decided Friday to send letters to US military forces in Okinawa Prefecture and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi protesting US military training flights, in the wake of the emergency landing of a US Marine Corps CH-53 helicopter about 50 meters from private residences in the village of Ginoza. During an extraordinary session, the assembly unanimously adopted a resolution calling on US forces to immediately terminate practice flights over the city's residential areas. The resolution also calls for the early handover of the Futenma Air Station in Ginowan.

"US Bases in Okinawa" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, Japan)

7. PRC Top Japan Exporter

The PRC is on pace to replace the US as the top exporter to Japan and could do it as early as this year, the Japan government said Tuesday. The news comes as Japan reported that total trade with the PRC, imports and exports, rose 3.4 percent to a record \$45.12 billion in the first half of the year. The PRC is still Japan's No. 2 trading partner behind the US. But the figures indicated the PRC is rapidly passing the US as the top exporter to Japan. The US Commerce Department announced Tuesday that the US trade deficit narrowed only slightly in June to US\$37.2 billion, the second biggest deficit on record. Roughly 17.8 percent of all good imported to Japan came from the PRC during the first half of 2002, according to the Japan External Trade Organization. That's just behind the US, which accounted for 18.2 percent of Japan's imports over the period.

"PRC Top Japan Exporter" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, US)

8. PRC World Cup Bid

The PRC will put in a bid to host the 2014 soccer World Cup if the tournament returns to Asia, state media reported Thursday. The PRC's facilities and experience in hosting international sports competitions already qualify it to stage world soccer's premier event, Zhang Jilong, president of the PRC Football Association, was quoted saying in an official Xinhua News Agency report published in the Beijing Youth Daily and the Beijing Morning Post. By 2014, China will have hosted the 2003 women's World Cup championship, the 2004 Asian Cup and the 2008 Olympic Summer Games.

"PRC World Cup Bid" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

Japan

1. Japan-US Relations

The US State Department announced that a top official will head to Japan this weekend, then to the ROK, to discuss defense and security issues. John Bolton, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, will visit Tokyo from August 24 to 28, then Seoul from August 28 to 30, the State Department said Friday. On his trip, Bolton will "meet with officials in both capitals to discuss regional and arms control and security matters," said Reeker, adding that he would also be making "public remarks in Seoul."

"Japan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 23, US)

2. Japan 57th Anniversary of World War II Surrender

Thousands of Japanese, from war veterans to lawmakers, gathered in the nation's capital Thursday to mark the 57th anniversary of Japan's surrender in World War II with bundles of flowers and silent prayers for the dead. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Emperor Akihito were among those invited to the traditionally staid ceremony held annually at a cavernous martial arts hall outside the stone-lined moats of the Imperial Palace. Gathering at Thursday's ceremony in Tokyo were 6,000 people who lost loved ones in the conflict.

"Japan 57th Anniversary of World War II Surrender" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

3. Nagasaki 57th Anniversary

Nagasaki, on last Friday marked the 57th anniversary of the 1945 atomic bombing by singling out the nuclear policies of the US for condemnation. Mayor Itcho Ito criticized recent US moves, including its withdrawal from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty with Russia, its refusal to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty on nuclear weapons and its suggestion that it may engage in pre-emptive nuclear strikes. "We are appalled by this series of unilateral actions taken by the government of the United States, actions that are also being condemned by people of sound judgment throughout the world," Ito said. It was the first time a mayor of Nagasaki has denounced the US by name in the annual peace declaration. He also demanded that the government enact legislation "without delay" to legalize Japan's three principles of not possessing, producing or allowing nuclear weapons on its soil.

"Nagasaki 57th Anniversary" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, Japan)

4. Sea of Japan Map Issue

Japan pledged Thursday to fight an international proposal that would cross out the name "Sea of Japan" from the world's sea charts, as a lingering map spat deepened between Japan and its neighbors. Under the new plan, floated by the Monaco-based International Hydrographic Bureau, the body of water separating Japan and the Korean Peninsula would simply have no officially recognized international name. The move is meant as a compromise with the ROK, which uses the name "East Sea" and protests the more recognized moniker "Sea of Japan" as a vestige of Japan's 1910-1945 colonial rule over the Korean peninsula. The DPRK uses "Korean East Sea." Iwabuchi said Japan will lobby against the switch. The ROK has been campaigning for a name change of the sea at least since 1992.

"Sea of Japan Map Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

5. Japan Red Army Return

Relatives of the Japan Red Army radicals who allegedly staged the country's first hijacking will return to Japan from the DPRK as early as September 10, a media report said Wednesday. The group currently lives in the DPRK with several members of the ultra-leftist faction wanted for the 1970 hijacking of a Japan Airlines flight to the DPRK. Among the returnees is Takako Konishi, wife of alleged hijacker Takahiro Konishi, as well as children of some of the hijackers. Takako Konishi is on an international wanted list for passport violations and faces possible arrest in Tokyo upon her arrival, Kyodo reported. Emiko Akagi, the returnee wife of another Red Army member, faced trial earlier this year on similar charges. Also expected to return September 10 are Konishi's 22-year-old daughter and Akagi's 22-year-old daughter. The sons of faction members Moriaki Wakabayashi and Kimihiro Abe, as well as the daughter of Takeshi Okamoto, also have travel documents.

"Japan Red Army Return" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, US)

6. Overseas A-Bomb Survivors

Japanese Health, Labor and Welfare Minister Chikara Sakaguchi called Friday on ROK and other survivors' groups for help in implementing the government's plan to assist A-bomb survivors who live overseas. "We cannot proceed unless we find out how many survivors live in each country," Sakaguchi said following a ceremony marking the 57th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Nagasaki. An estimated 5,000 atomic bomb survivors live abroad and receive no aid from Japan, with an estimated 2,200 in the ROK, 900 in the DPRK, 1,000 in the US and 180 in South America, according to the health ministry.

"Overseas A-Bomb Survivors" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, Japan)

7. Japan over Illicit Arms Trade

Japan has drafted a UN resolution urging the world body to address the issue of the illicit global trade in small arms that critics say are responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths each year. As a symbol of solidarity with the developing world, the Japanese government plans to turn its small-arms draft into a joint resolution to be cosponsored by Colombia and South Africa, diplomatic sources said. A draft of the resolution, made available to Kyodo News on Friday, calls on the UN General Assembly to convene a conference of states in July or September next year to address the matter. In considering the steps for enhancing international cooperation to control the flow of small arms, the UN would "take into consideration the views of states," the draft said, a position apparently reflecting the divergence of domestic laws on small arms.

"Japan over Illicit Arms Trade" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 21, Japan)

8. DPJ's View on US Attack on Iraq

Naoto Kan, secretary general of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), the largest opposition party, said that the party cannot support US plans to attack Iraq without sufficient proof it is developing weapons of mass destruction. During a speech to the Japan Society in New York, Kan also said that concrete evidence of Iraq's "alleged assistance to terrorist groups like al-Qaeda" is also necessary.

"DPJ's View on US Attack on Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, Japan)

9. Yasukuni Shrine Visit

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was sued in Matsuyama District Court by two religious groups and relatives of war dead who say his visit to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine in April violated the constitutional separation of state and religion. The class-action suit names the central government, the prime minister and Yasukuni Shrine as defendants. They want a restraining order against official visits to Yasukuni by the prime minister and compensation of 10,000 yen for each of the complaining parties in the suit. The group said theirs is the first suit involving Koizumi's visit during the spring memorial period at Yasukuni.

"Yasukuni Shrine Visit" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, Japan)

10. Japanese Plan on Spy Satellite

Japan's plan to deploy reconnaissance satellites to monitor military movements in East Asia will get off the ground in November, when the Cabinet Satellite Information Center starts up the system's nerve center in Tokyo. The government plans to launch one optical satellite and one radar satellite in February, and then a similar pair in July, from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima Prefecture. Officials involved in the program said the areas to be subject to surveillance are the PRC, Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, Russia and Japan. The Japanese government decided to launch its own intelligence-gathering satellites after the DPRK fired a Taepodong ballistic missile over Japan in 1998.

"Japanese Plan on Spy Satellite" (NAPSNet Daily Report, August 20, Japan)

Nuclear Issues

1. Related News and Analysis

Asia Times reports that Washington's opposition to the proposed Israeli sale of the Arrow missile defense system to India is straining Indo-US relations. Manpreet Sethi (Indian Express) argues that India needs to seriously consider nuclear power as a "viable alternative source of energy." Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf has stated that he will not allow UN inspections at Pakistani nuclear facilities.

"Related News and Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

Afghanistan

1. Current Situation

At least eight Afghans were killed in fighting between sub tribes of Paktia province. The daily News reports rumors that at least 16 US troops were killed on Friday in two different incidents in Khost and Gardez in Afghanistan. The Afghan government and the US military has rejected claims by President Musharraf that a lack of control inside Afghanistan could allow the Taliban and al-Qaeda to regroup there. According to a military spokesperson, the US Special Operations troops have found several large weapons caches in southeastern Afghanistan. Several hundred US Special Forces soldiers and Afghan allies are reportedly conducting operations in that region. Columnist MJ Akbar recounts impressions of his visit to Herat for the daily Dawn, Pakistan.

"Current Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

2. Humanitarian Crisis

Lack of resources has reportedly forced the UN's World Food Program to cut rations for millions of Afghans. Earlier this week, a mass grave, reportedly containing about 900 bodies of Taliban and al Qaeda fighters, was discovered in Northern Afghanistan. Ijaz Hussain (Daily Times) examines questions and problems arising from the return of more than 1.5 million Afghan refugees to their home.

"Humanitarian Crisis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

India-Pakistan Tensions

1. News

Pakistan has accused India of launching an air attack on its military post in northern Kashmir. India immediately dismissed Pakistan's claim as "disinformation and malicious propaganda." President Musharraf has also stated that the "possibility of individual small groups going across [the Line of Control into India] is there." Pakistan's junior foreign minister Inam-u-Haq later echoed Musharraf's remarks. According to Indian foreign ministry spokeswoman Nirupama Rao, Musharraf's remarks confirm India's "worst fears." Meanwhile, the meeting of foreign ministers from the seven-member South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) in Katmandu, Nepal, has ended without the hoped-for meeting between the foreign minister of India and Pakistan. India has told the visiting US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage that President Musharraf "has not implemented the promises that he had made" to stop infiltration of militants across the LoC into Kashmir.

"India-Pakistan Tensions" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

2. Analysis

The daily Telegraph published a review of VR Raghavan's book "Siachen: Conflict Without End". Conn Hallinan's essay (reprinted in Asia Times) criticizes Britain and the US for pursuing military deals with India.

"Analysis" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

3. Kashmir Situation

The Kashmir Committee (KC), led by Ram Jethmalani, has suggested deferment of Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Election Commission has, however, issued notification ordering polls in J&K from September 16. The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government is also opposed to deferring the Assembly elections. The BJP has decided to contest the J&K in alliance with the Jammu State Morcha (JSM), a newly created RSS front that brings together 19 organizations. Kashmir's largest militant group, Hizbul Mujahideen, has endorsed the All Parties Hurriyat Conference's (APHC) decision to boycott the elections.

"Kashmir Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

4. India, Pakistan, US

VR Raghavan essay (Hindu) argues that the "challenge for the US rests in emphasising the importance of the electoral process vis-a-vis a Pakistani commitment to armed action in Jammu and Kashmir."

"India, Pakistan, US" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

Pakistan and India

1. Pakistan: Domestic Situation

General Pervez Musharraf has announced constitutional amendments restoring presidential powers of dissolving the National Assembly. Musharraf has also appointed himself as president and chief of army staff for five years, and validated all actions, acts and laws promulgated by him. The Legal Framework Order 2002 also allows for a permanent political role for the military through the establishment of a National Security Council (NSC). All Pakistani political parties, as well as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), have condemned the constitutional changes.

"Pakistan: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

2. US-Pakistan Relations

US has agreed to reschedule Pakistan's over \$3 bn bilateral debt. The US consulate in Karachi, the target of a deadly bomb attack in June, has re-opened at an undisclosed location. Khalid Ahmed (Daily Times) looks at conspiracy theories about the US role in Pakistan's politics appearing in country's Urdu press.

"US - Pakistan Relations" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

3. India: Domestic Situation

The Indian government has asked the Supreme Court to examine the legality of the Election Commission's (EC) decision to disallow early elections in Gujarat. India's Deputy Prime Minister L. K. Advani has stated his belief that the EC cannot hold up the elections in Gujarat. Meanwhile, the Gujarat Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has announced its plans to launch a Hindu religious procession from one of the district worst hit by the recent anti-Muslim riots in the state. The daily Indian Express reports that six months after the anti-Muslim violence in Gujarat, the process of identification of missing persons "is making some headway."

"India: Domestic Situation" (SANDNet Weekly Update, V.3 #28)

[\(return to top\)](#)

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