

NAPSNET Week in Review 25 July, 2003

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United States

1. US President Bush DPRK Stance

US President Bush appeared today to shrug off evidence that North Korea may have begun producing plutonium at a second, hidden nuclear facility, and avoided any hint of confrontation with the country as it races to expand its nuclear arsenal. "The desire by the DPRK to convince the world that they're in the process of developing a nuclear arsenal is nothing new," Bush said, striking a far more moderate tone than in March, when he declared that the US would not tolerate a nuclear DPRK. He insisted that cooperation with the PRC on a diplomatic solution was moving forward and said American allies would work "to convince Kim Jong Il," the DPRK leader, "that his decision is an unwise decision." Bush's remarks - which are in sharp contrast to his words and actions regarding Iraq - come at a time when US and Asian officials have said there is "worrisome" but not "conclusive" evidence that the DPRK has constructed a second plant for producing weapons-grade plutonium.

"US President Bush DPRK Stance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

"Bush on DPRK International Alienation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

2. Perry on DPRK Nuclear Resolution

An editorial by former US Secretary of Defense, William J. Perry that read that the DPRK's nuclear facility at Yongbyon, which had been "frozen" under international inspection since 1994, was reactivated this January for the production of plutonium. Just last week the DPRKs announced that they intended to use the resulting plutonium to make nuclear weapons, which only confirmed what we always believed. If it keeps on its present course, the DPRK will probably have six to eight nuclear weapons by the end of the year, will possibly have conducted a nuclear test and may have begun deployment of some of these weapons, targeted against Japan and the ROK. By next year, it could be in serial production of nuclear weapons, building perhaps five to 10 per year. This is a nightmare scenario, but it is a reasonable extrapolation from what we know and from what the DPRK has announced.

"Perry on DPRK Nuclear Resolution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

3. Powell on US DPRK Policy

US Secretary of State Colin Powell stated that the US policy on the DPRK is "very solid." Responding to questions from the press on July 22, Powell said: "We will not accept nuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and we have very successfully over the last seven or eight months brought together all of North Korea's neighbors to provide that same consistent message to North Korea." Powell made his remarks on Capitol Hill after his meeting with Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (Republican of Illinois) and the Task Force For A Drug Free America. The US, he said, has "made it clear that we are going to have a dialogue with a multilateral framework to try to find a solution to the problem" of the DPRK's nuclear weapons program.

For the full transcript:

"Powell on US DPRK Policy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

4. Multilateral DPRK Ship Interceptions

The Bush administration is preparing to tighten an economic noose around the DPRK, even as it considers new talks to persuade the regime of Kim Jong Il to give up nuclear weapons. The administration has lined up 10 other nations to join a so-called proliferation security initiative. These countries -- Japan, Australia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and Spain -- have agreed to intercept DPRK ships suspected of carrying weapons and illegal drugs, major sources of hard currency for Kim's government. A State Department official who is familiar with the program but asks not to be named says, "We're ready to rock and roll right now" on the interception program. "All we need is actionable intelligence" on a suspect DPRK shipment, he says.

"Multilateral DPRK Ship Interceptions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

5. US DPRK Missile Export Sanctions

The US imposed new sanctions on the DPRK over its export of 15 Scud missiles to Yemen last year, which ignited a major diplomatic incident and exposed a loophole in global non-proliferation regimes. The State Department slapped the punishment on the DPRK's Changgwang Sinyong Corporation, but stuck to its decision last year not to punish Yemen for ordering the consignment. "We have assurances that this was the last part of the shipment and that there will be no further shipments," said State Department spokesman Richard Boucher.

"US DPRK Missile Export Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 25, US)

6. US on PRC Missile Proliferation

Gaps in the PRC's proliferation controls and a lax attitude by the government on enforcement are permitting PRC firms to funnel illegal missile exports out of the country, a senior US official charged. Paula DeSutter, assistant Secretary of State for verification and compliance, said in testimony to the US-PRC Economic and Security Review Commission on Thursday that the PRC had failed to take serious steps requested by Washington. "We continue to see problems in the proliferant behavior of certain PRC entities and remain deeply concerned about the PRC government's often narrow interpretation of nonproliferation commitments and lack of enforcement of nonproliferation regulations," she said. "The PRC Government appears to view missile nonproliferation, at least in part, not as a goal in and of itself but as an issue that needs merely to be managed as part of its overall bilateral relationship with the US," she said.

"US on PRC Missile Proliferation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 25, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. DPRK Second Plutonium Production Plant

US and Asian officials with access to the latest intelligence on the DPRK say strong evidence has emerged in recent weeks that the country has built a second, secret plant for producing weapons-grade plutonium, complicating both the diplomatic strategy for ending the program and the military options if that diplomacy fails. The discovery of the new evidence, which one senior administration official cautioned was "very worrisome, but still not conclusive," came just as the DPRK declared to the US 11 days ago that it had completed reprocessing 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods, enough to make a half dozen or so nuclear weapons. US officials have said they cannot verify that claim, though they confirm that sensors set up on the DPRK's borders have begun to detect elevated levels of krypton 85, a gas emitted as spent fuel is converted into plutonium.

"DPRK Second Plutonium Production Plant" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

"DPRK Nuclear Program" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

2. DPRK Tactical Nuclear Arms Threat

The DPRK said Thursday it would treat any new US high-tech weapons deployed in the ROK as tactical nuclear weapons and respond in kind. The latest rhetorical twist in the DPRK's standoff with the US came soon after President Bush and ROK President Roh Moo-hyun agreed in a telephone call to keep pushing for multilateral talks on the DPRK's nuclear aims. A DPRK statement -- issued to mark the July 27 50th anniversary of the truce that ended Korean War fighting -- said the US was "trying to complicate the nuclear issue" by avoiding the bilateral talks that Pyongyang favors. But it stopped short of ruling out multilateral talks, which seem likely to take place in a few weeks, according to diplomats.

"DPRK Tactical Nuclear Arms Threat" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

3. DPRK Nuclear Prediction

The DPRK may have as many as eight nuclear weapons by the end of the year, if its nuclear program goes unchecked, a former US defense secretary predicted. "If North Korea continues on its present course, by the end of the year, I think we'll have about eight nuclear weapons, and next year will be in serial production of about five to ten nuclear weapon as year," said William Perry. Perry, who caused a stir here last week by warning that Washington and Pyongyang could be at war as early as this year, said the DPRK might soon have enough nuclear weapons to target Japan and the ROK while offering leftover plutonium for sale to the highest bidder. "I consider that this poses an unacceptable risk to our security," the former defense secretary stated.

"DPRK Nuclear Prediction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

4. DPRK on 50th Anniversary Armistice Celebration

Sunday's ceremony is due to be held in the truce village of Panmunjom. Pyongyang has criticised US-led plans to mark the 50th anniversary of the armistice which ended the Korean War. North Korea described a ceremony to be held on 27 July in the demilitarized zone which separates the DPRK and ROK as "a very dangerous act". But the UN Command in the ROK said it was confident that the event, due to be attended by about 200 foreign dignitaries as well as veterans, would go ahead safely. The deputy chief of staff of the UN Command, Thomas Kane, said that the DPRK had not been invited to the ceremony. He said the DPRK planned to hold its own commemoration in Pyongyang on Sunday.

"DPRK on 50th Anniversary Armistice Celebration" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

5. DPRK US Troop Repositioning Accusation

The DPRK accused the US of preparing for a pre-emptive attack against the DPRK by repositioning its military resources in the ROK and the region. The DPRK's news media said the US demands for multilateral talks to resolve the stand-off over the DPRK's nuclear weapons programme were a disguise for its military ambitions. "Finding it hard to settle the nuclear issue as Washington intends and implement its policy to stifle the DPRK, the US seeks to attain its criminal aim... at any cost by mounting a preemptive attack on it," said Minju Joson, the DPRK's official government daily, on Saturday. The official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said the planned repositioning of US troops stationed in the ROK was aimed at occupying "positions favorable for mounting a preemptive attack on the North."

"DPRK US Troop Repositioning Accusation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

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

6. DPRK Artillery Movement

The DPRK has moved heavy artillery closer to the tense border with the ROK, and last year deployed more missiles that are capable of reaching Japan, ROK said. The DPRK "has increased the threat on South Korea's capital by moving forward 170mm and 240mm long-range artillery," the ROK Defense Ministry said in a policy report Friday. It did not say when the redeployment occurred, nor how many guns were shifted.

"DPRK Artillery Movement" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

7. ROK Southeast Asia Tour

ROK Foreign Minister, Yoon Young-kwan, today left on a trip to Malaysia and Indonesia for talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. Yoon will arrive in Malaysia this afternoon for a two-day official visit, where he will discuss ways to promote bilateral ties between Seoul and Kuala Lumpur with Prime Minister Mohamad Mahathir. The minister will then head for the Indonesian resort island of Bali for a meeting with foreign ministers from countries belonging to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), an intercontinental forum comprising 25 nations. After the meetings end on Thursday, the ASEM foreign ministers are scheduled to adopt a presidential statement calling for a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula, a peaceful resolution to the ongoing nuclear standoff, and continuation of the dialogue created in the first round of nuclear talks in Beijing in April, officials said.

"ROK Southeast Asia Tour" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

8. US-ROK on DPRK Talk Format

US President George W. Bush briefed ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun on his efforts to ensure the ROK and Japan are included in any future nuclear crisis talks with the DPRK, the White House said. Bush spoke to Roh for about 15 minutes by telephone about efforts to forestall Pyongyang's drive for nuclear weapons, said White House spokesman Scott McClellan. "They discussed next steps on North Korea policy, particularly our efforts to make sure that South Korea and Japan are involved in multilateral talks," he said. The US has insisted on a multilateral format for the talks while the DPRK is pressing for one-on-one consultations with Washington to resolve the crisis.

"US-ROK on DPRK Talk Format" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 25, US)

"ROK-US DPRK Diplomacy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

"DPRK Attitude to Multilateral Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

9. UK-ROK on DPRK Resolution

ROK President Roh Moo-hyun and British Prime Minister Tony Blair agreed Sunday to resolve the standoff over the DPRK's nuclear development program through peaceful means. During summit talks at Cheong Wa Dae, the two leaders agreed that the DPRK should accept multilateral talks that include the ROK and Japan. Roh and Blair also concurred on the need to prevent Pyongyang from acquiring nuclear weapons or having the capability to export them to a third party.

"UK-ROK on DPRK Resolution" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

"Inter-Korean Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

10. ROK-US Bio-Weapons Joint Task Force

The ROK and the US yesterday agreed to tackle the threat of biochemical weapons. The agreement, which establishes a joint task force on biochemical weapons, was signed by ROK Health and Welfare Minister Kim Hwa-joong and her US counterpart Tommy Thompson. The memorandum also covers cooperation on issues such as epidemics, chronic diseases and sanitation. The panel on biochemical weapons is also aimed at promoting health worker exchanges and joint projects between the two nations. "ROK-US Bio-Weapons Joint Task Force" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

11. DPRK on War Prevention

The DPRK has insisted it is doing all it can to prevent war on the Korean peninsula, but said it was ready to fight to the death if there were a conflict, official PRC media reported. "The DPRK has made unremitting efforts to prevent the outbreak of war and safeguard peace on the Korean peninsula," said Yang Hyong Sop, vice-president of the DPRK's Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly. "But the US has turned down the DPRK proposal for signing a non-aggression treaty." Yang made the remarks at the opening ceremony of the International Conference for Peace on the Korean peninsula in Pyongyang, the PRC's Xinhua news agency reported from the DPRK capital. Delegates from dozens of countries and international organizations are attending the three-day meeting, Xinhua said.

"DPRK on War Prevention" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

"ROK-DPRK Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

12. US ROK Microchip Sanctions

US authorities voted to slap steep duties on ROK semiconductor imports, even in the face of furious protests from Seoul. The quasi-judicial International Trade Commission (ITC) voted three-to-zero in support of a determination that the semiconductor imports from major manufacturer Hynix Semiconductor were damaging to US industry. One of the four ITC members was absent. The ITC vote, taken in public but without any open discussions, was effectively the final stage in a lengthy process leading to duties of 44.71 percent on the imports from Hynix Semiconductor.

"US ROK Microchip Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

13. ROK on PRC Currency Under-valuation

ROK Trade Minister Hwang Doo-Yun said that his country was "very much concerned" about the exchange rate of the PRC currency, the yuan. "The PRC yuan is a very important factor to the trading partners, so we are very much concerned about the yuan exchange rate," Hwang said on the sidelines of a meeting of Asian and European economic ministers in the northeastern PRC city of Dalian. The question of whether the yuan should lose its peg against the US dollar "should be discussed" he said. "Our position is very clear, which is that exchange rates should be decided by the market," he said.

"ROK on PRC Currency Under-valuation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC on DPRK Talks

The PRC was making unremitting efforts toward restarting negotiations with the DPRK on its nuclear weapons programs but would not say if talks were imminent. A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman declined Wednesday to confirm a ROK newspaper report that talks would be held on September 6, or British Prime Minister Tony Blair's remarks that talks between the US, the DPRK, and the PRC were likely in the next few weeks. "The PRC side has made unremitting efforts on the DPRK nuclear issue," she told Reuters. The PRC has sent envoys to Pyongyang, Washington and Moscow in recent weeks in a bid to kick start talks.

"PRC on DPRK Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

2. PRC-US Relations on Korean Issue

Vice-Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo has left for the US to discuss the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula with US Secretary of State Colin Powell, the Foreign Ministry revealed on July 17. Foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan announced the trip on July 17 at a regular news conference and said Dai will stay in the US for about two days. After his Russian visit earlier this month, Dai ended a four-day visit to Pyongyang this week during which he met the DPRK leader, Kim Jong-il, and presented a letter from Chinese President Hu Jintao. On the nuclear issue, PRC will continue to "make unwavering, active, responsible and constructive efforts," Kong said, noting the latest US trip was agreed upon during a telephone discussion between Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Powell on July 16.

"PRC-US Relations on Korean Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

3. PRC's Stance on ROK-DPRK Frontier Clash

China Daily ("NATION CALLS FOR RESTRAINT AFTER CLASHES", 07/18/03, P1) reported that PRC urged the DPRK and the ROK to show restraint after their frontier clash to avoid escalation of the conflict. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Kong Quan said PRC hopes the two sides can stay calm and stop the situation from deteriorating further.

"PRC's Stance on ROK-DPRK Frontier Clash" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

4. DPRK-PRC Relations

Kim Jong Il, the leader of the DPRK on July 14 met Dai Bingguo, the visiting Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister, who is also a special envoy of the Chinese government. They had "in-depth discussion on issues of mutual concern", a Chinese delegate told Xinhua. Dai had talks with Kim Yong Nam, the president of Supreme People's Assembly, and Paek Nam Sun, the foreign minister of DPRK, before he met Kim Jong Il, said the report.

"DPRK-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

5. Taiwan-US Relations

A top aide to Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian has flown to the US for high-level talks with Washington officials, it was reported here. Chiou I-jen, secretary general to the presidential office, left for Los Angeles Tuesday, the China Times reported. He is accompanied by National Security Council Deputy secretary general Ko Cheng-heng and vice foreign minister Michael Kau as well as two MPs from the ruling Democratic Progressive Party, the paper said. The presidential office, which has kept a low profile on official exchanges with the US for fear of irritating the PRC, has remained tight-lipped about the visit. The United Daily News Tuesday said Chiou's delegation was to discuss with high-ranking US officials issues including Taiwan's plan to introduce a controversial referendum system.

"Taiwan-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

6. Hong Kong Security Bill

Hong Kong's government announced plans to re-launch public consultation on a new security law which sparked massive protests and the city's worst political crisis since the 1997 handover. Permanent secretary for security Timothy Tong said consultations would re-start in September, adding a draft bill would be released as soon as possible. The government's initial bill, drawn up under Article 23 of Hong Kong's post-1997 constitution, was shelved by Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa after more than 500,000 marched through the streets in protest here on July 1. The new legislation will be heavily based on the earlier proposed security bill, but will include several key amendments already agreed by the government, said Tong. The key amendments included the removal of provisions enabling Hong Kong authorities to proscribe organizations banned in the PRC and another giving police power to conduct searches without warrants.

"Hong Kong Security Bill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

7. PRC Earthquake Victims

One million people affected by a major earthquake in southwest PRC Yunnan province are in desperate need of food and supplies, but rescuers have been forced to travel by horseback due to badly damaged roads, officials said. The deadly 6.2 Richter-scale tremor which happened late Monday killed at least 16 people and injured about 300 others according to the latest tally, a Yunnan seismological bureau official told AFP. "Based on the government in Dayao county, 16 people died, 46 people were seriously injured and 251 slightly injured," the official, surnamed Hu said. Dayao county, located some 180 kilometres (110 miles) from the Yunnan capital Kunming, is the worst-affected county, with the epicenter of the quake located in Tanhua town, where nine were confirmed dead and 38 wounded.

"PRC Earthquake Victims" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 24, US)

8. Asia Europe Meeting

The aftermath of the SARS epidemic, North Korea and a new global round of trade talks are likely to top the agenda at the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) of economic ministers in the PRC next week, observers said. "They will probably discuss political issues such as the Korea question," said Wang Yi, an expert on Europe at the China Institute of International Studies, a think tank run by the foreign ministry. "But since they're not foreign ministers, they are likely to be speaking only in fairly vague and general terms, expressing their concern," he said.

"Asia Europe Meeting" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

9. PRC-Hong Kong Relations

Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa got a dressing down from the PRC's top leaders Saturday and was told the key to Hong Kong's economic recovery was to maintain social stability and win the hearts of the people. Tung was on his first visit to Beijing since more than 500,000 Hong Kong citizens took to the streets of Hong Kong on July 1 demanding the shelving of a controversial subversion bill and calling for his resignation. He met with President Hu Jintao, Premier Wen Jiabao and other top leaders to report on the political crisis that has also led to the resignation of the territory's financial and security ministers this week. "The central government is very concerned with the situation in Hong Kong," Hu was quoted by Xinhua news agency as telling Tung. "Only by maintaining Hong Kong's social stability, can a good commercial environment be safeguarded and can Hong Kong's advantages as an international finance, trade and transport center be maintained."

"PRC-Hong Kong Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

People's Republic of China

1. Japan Parliament on Iraq Troop Deployments

Japan's parliament voted to allow Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's government to send troops to Iraq in what will be the first dispatch of Japanese military personnel to a combat zone since World War II. The approval came after Koizumi easily hurdled a no confidence motion tabled by the four main opposition parties in response to the bill, already passed in the all-important lower house on July 4. Japan's Kyodo news agency said Koizumi will begin work Monday to schedule the dispatch of the Self-Defence Forces (SDF). The first troops are expected to depart in August, followed by a 1,000-strong contingent in October. The Japanese mission would be to help resettle refugees, rebuild facilities and provide fresh water and supplies. They are banned under the new legislation from providing weapons and ammunition for combat. From Thursday afternoon into the small hours of Friday, opposition lawmakers submitted a series of censure motions in the upper house against government ministers to delay the bill. All were easily voted down. Attempts to derail the bill finally floundered late Friday as the ruling coalition rejected by 287 votes to 178 a motion of no confidence in Koizumi. The prime minister greeted the result with a bow.

"Japan Parliament on Iraq Troop Deployments" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 25, US)

2. Koizumi No Confidence?

Japanese opposition parties tabled a no-confidence motion against the cabinet of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in a bid to delay the passage of a bill allowing Japanese troops to be sent to Iraq, opposition officials said. "We strongly demand an immediate resignation of the Koizumi cabinet," the motion submitted to the lower house of parliament said. It accused Koizumi of "employing absurd sophistry" to defend the bill. "The Self-Defence Forces (SDFs) will be dispatched primarily to support US and British troops, it will be inevitable the SDFs will become a target of guerrilla war," the motion said. The motion also added Koizumi's reform drive had "completely faded", with Japan facing persistently high unemployment.

"Koizumi No Confidence?" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 25, US)

3. Japan Public Opinion on Troops to Iraq

A majority of Japanese oppose sending troops to Iraq to help with reconstruction efforts, as public support for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi slid, according to a survey released. Fifty-five percent of those responding said they were against dispatching the Self-Defence Forces (SDF) to the war-torn country, compared with 43 percent in a similar poll in June, the Asahi Shimbun said. The latest survey showed 33 percent of the respondents voiced support, down from 46 percent in the previous poll. The daily conducted the latest survey by phone on Sunday and Monday. Valid responses came to 1,946 or 53 percent. When asked why they oppose sending SDF personnel, 25 percent of the respondents said Iraq is still dangerous.

"Japan Public Opinion on Troops to Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

4. PRC-Japan Relations

Japan is trying to arrange a visit to Beijing by its defense minister which it hopes will help ease the PRC's concerns over its efforts to boost its security role, officials said Tuesday. "We are working on a schedule for his visit to China. But we have not finalized any specific plan," a Japanese Defense Ministry official said. It would be the first visit by a Japanese defense chief to the PRC in five years. Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper said Tuesday that Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba's PRC trip was set for September 1-4. Defense Ministry officials were unable to confirm the report but they said they would not rule out the possibility. "It depends on domestic political schedules, but we do not rule out his visit in September," another Defense Ministry official said.

5. SDF's Roles in Iraqi Reconstruction

US asked Tokyo to deploy the Self-Defense Forces to a city north of Baghdad, Balad, that has seen recent hostile activity. Japanese government will likely reject the US request unless the situation changes on the ground, several government sources said Thursday. The sources said officers at the US Central Command in Tampa, Florida, asked if Tokyo could dispatch SDF troops to Balad to help purify and provide drinking water for US forces in the area. The dispatch of SDF troops would come under the special measures bill for providing support to Iraq's reconstruction, now in the final stages of Upper House deliberation. However, because of a difference of opinion over where the SDF troops should be sent, Japanese government officials are now considering delaying any dispatch until after November. "SDF's Roles in Iraqi Reconstruction" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

6. Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Talks

Japan basically is in agreement with a US initiative to involve 11 nations in a global crackdown on the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), say government officials. Under the proposal, participating nations would implement existing domestic laws to prevent smuggling WMD and related materials out of suspect countries as well as stopping passage of prohibited items through their territorial waters and air space. Officials said they are in basic agreement with the proposal put before the 11 nations taking part in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). A second round of talks was held July 9-10 in Brisbane, Australia. Because DPRK is a target of the PSI, Japanese government officials plan to lobby Asian neighbors, especially PRC and ROK, to support the initiative. "Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

7. Japan Flash Floods

The death toll from the weekend landslides and flash floods in southwestern Japan climbed to 15 as the search continued for seven others missing, officials said. Fifteen bodies have been recovered from several sites on the island of Kyushu, where torrential rain triggered landslides and flooded houses on Sunday.

"Japan Flash Floods" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 23, US)

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