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United States

1. US Lawmaker DPRK Diplomacy Plans

A Republican lawmaker recently back from DPRK unveiled details of a 10-point plan he discussed with Pyongyang leaders to prod them to abandon their nuclear weapons program. Curt Weldon, vice-chairman of the House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, outlined the plan in a commentary published in the Philadelphia Enquirer Monday. He recalled that he had taken it up with DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-Gwan and received an encouraging response. The two-stage plan would initially involve: a one-year non-aggression pact signed by Washington and Pyongyang. The DPRK's official renouncement of its nuclear weapons and research programs, with full and unfettered inspection of its nuclear facilities by a US designee. A Korean Economic Development and Security Initiative funded by the US, DPRK, ROK, Japan, China, Russia and European partners to the tune of three to five billion dollars per year over the next 10 years. Washington's official recognition of DPRK and the opening of a mission in Pyongyang. After the one-year period or the satisfactory completion of the first five steps, a second stage would involve, among other things, making the non-aggression pact permanent and DPRK's ratification of the Missile Technology Control Regime. "Following a detailed discussion of each point, Vice Minister responded that this plan is exactly what the North is seeking," Weldon wrote. "He stated that with this plan as the starting point, everything was on the table for negotiation."

"US Lawmaker DPRK Diplomacy Plans" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

2. US Security Measures

US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham ordered a broad overhaul of security at US nuclear weapons laboratories in response to a series of security lapses ranging from missing computers to reports of sleeping guards. The order came as a congressional report said that security upgrades required by heightened terrorist threats since the September 11 attacks will not be fully in place and tested at the department's nuclear weapons facilities for two to five years. "In light of recent security incidents at the labs ... improved security must be aggressive and far reaching," Abraham said. He said he was directing the National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees nuclear weapons programs, "to put in place any immediate changes" deemed necessary to prevent future security problems.

"US Security Measures" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

3. US Exports of Mass Destruction Alliance

The US is seeking an international alliance to block exports of weapons of mass destruction and missiles by DPRK and Iran. The US may scuttle an international project to build light-water reactors in DPRK, a deal contingent on the Stalinist state's adherence to a pact freezing its nuclear arms program. DPRK publicly declared this month it was seeking nuclear weapons. A senior US administration official said Washington would help establish a "voluntary alliance" of countries that would boost inspections of ships and aircraft against the hardware shipments, the Japanese daily said. Leaders of the 11-country bloc are the US, Japan and Australia, which met in Madrid on June 12 to plot strategies to thwart the spread of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons and missile components, the influential daily quoted an unidentified official as saying. Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal and Spain have confirmed they would make best use of existing laws to intercept such exports, the official said.

"US Exports of Mass Destruction Alliance" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

Korean Peninsula

1. Multilateral DPRK Talks

Senior diplomats from the US, Japan and the ROK will meet for a second day of informal talks on the DPRK and efforts to end the stalemate over its nuclear weapons programs, officials said. "They decided it would be useful to continue talking, so they will meet again tomorrow (Thursday)," said an official from the US State Department where the talks are being held. An ROK official also said the talks would resume on Thursday but there was no indication from any of the sides as to what the reason for the extension was. The State Department had earlier gone to great lengths to play down the importance of the discussions, stressing that they did not constitute a formal meeting of the so-called Trilateral Coordination and Oversight Group (TCOG) which comprises US, Japanese and ROK diplomats. "These are informal consultations among the members of the group that does meet more formally sometimes on North Korea," spokesman Richard Boucher said.

"Multilateral DPRK Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 3, US) "Multilateral DPRK Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 2, US)

2. UN DPRK Rebuke Delay

The PRC and Russia sought today to delay a Security Council condemnation of the DPRK's nuclear arms program, a day after a top DPRK general said any sanctions or blockades initiated by the US would be considered a "complete breach" of the truce that ended hostilities on the peninsula 50 years ago. The letter added that if the US took such actions, the DPRK army would "immediately take strong and merciless retaliatory measures" and promised that "horrible disasters" would befall the South Korean population. The July 1 letter from "the chief of the Panmunjom Mission of the Korean People's Army," contrasted sharply in tone though not in overall content from a letter the Korean foreign minister, Paek Nam Sun, sent the Security Council last week. The harsh follow-up this week to the original letter led some diplomats to wonder if there was an internal DPRK dispute over what mix of conciliatory language and threats should be used with the United Nations and the US. "The meaning is not clear, because we don't know if the army is speaking for Kim Jong Il," one senior Asian diplomat said, referring to the DPRK leader. "But it is unusual to have the Army communicating with the United Nations."

"UN DPRK Rebuke Delay" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 15, US)

3. US on DPRK Nuclear Missiles

US intelligence officials believe that the DPRK is developing technology that could make nuclear warheads small enough to be placed atop the country's missiles, which could put Japan at risk, the New York Times reported on Tuesday. Officials who have received US Central Intelligence Agency reports told the newspaper that US satellites had identified an advanced nuclear testing site in an area of the DPRK called Youngdoktong. Equipment at the site is set up to test explosives that could set off compact nuclear explosions when detonated. The information has been shared with Japan, the ROK, and other allies in recent weeks, the newspaper said. Intelligence officials cited by the newspaper believed the testing facility suggests that the DPRK wants to make sophisticated weapons that would be light enough to attach to medium- and long-range missiles.

"US on DPRK Nuclear Missile" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 2, US) "DPRK Nuclear Technology" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US)

4. DPRK on Weapons Proliferation

The DPRK's ruling party newspaper on Wednesday dismissed US criticism of its missile exports as interference in the DPRK's internal affairs, saying the arms sales were legitimate commerce. The commentary by the Rodong Sinmun daily came amid renewed focus on the DPRK's sales of weapons of mass production and a fresh flurry of diplomatic consultations aimed at halting Pyongyang's attempts to build nuclear weapons. Also on Wednesday, the ROK confirmed it would host ministerial talks with the DPRK next week, but said the eleventh round of cabinet-level talks since 2000 would be scaled down in view of the lack of progress on the nuclear dispute. The Rodong Sinmun, mouthpiece of the ruling Workers Party, rejected US calls to curb sales of ballistic missiles as a "dangerous attempt to bring the DPRK under its control by the allied imperialist forces and international reactionaries." A Korean-language version of the commentary, published by Seoul's Yonhap news agency, said: "It is recognized as thoroughly legal commerce that meets the legitimate security needs of other countries."

"DPRK on Weapons Proliferation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 2, US)

5. US-Russia on the DPRK

US President Bush reported progress with Russia on Wednesday in his efforts to bring diplomatic pressure to bear against Iran and North Korea to dismantle nuclear programs. Bush spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin for 15 minutes. Bush told reporters Iran and the DPRK were two key subjects. Putin has been cool to US demands that Russia stop assisting Iran's civilian nuclear program. But Putin has agreed that Iran should cooperate with demands from the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency for more intrusive inspections to determine if Tehran is trying to build a nuclear weapon. "I thanked him for keeping the pressure on the Iranian government to dismantle any notions they might have of building a nuclear weapon," Bush said. "And we're making progress on that front." Bush said Putin also agreed that the best way to deal with the DPRK is to do so in a multinational forum.

"US-Russia on the DPRK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 2, US)

6. DPRK Free Enterprise

In one of its biggest experiments yet with capitalism, the DPRK has started building hundreds of market halls around the country to encourage private merchants, and has loosened rules about who may do business and what may be sold, according to sources in the ROK. The new rules were issued last month. In effect, they make official what long ago had become reality in the DPRK. The DPRK has become increasingly dependent on private commerce to feed and clothe themselves in the absence of a viable public distribution system. "Before, they were tolerating private business. Now they are encouraging it," said Cho Myong Chol, a DPRK defector who had been an economics professor at Kim Il Sung University in Pyongyang, the capital. Cho, who remains in contact with his DPRK friends, said the regime had ordered local governments to construct buildings to be used as market halls with stalls to be rented out to merchants. Currently, most markets are just a cluster of vendors who spread out their wares on mats outdoors in schoolyards or vacant lots. Instead of being called "farmers' markets" as they were in the past, the new markets will be known as "district markets." The name change is being made because they are now permitted to sell almost everything but drugs and stolen goods, whereas in the past they could legally sell only food. Foreigners also will be able to sell their products in the markets.

"DPRK Free Enterprise" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US) "DPRK Shadow Market Economy" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US)

7. ROK Railway Strike

ROK railway workers were voting on whether to end a strike as the government of President Roh Moo-Hyun maintained a tough stance against labor unrest. "The vote is under way in Seoul and regional branches of our union," a railway union spokesman in Seoul told AFP Tuesday. About 8,000 railway workers remained on strike despite reports that their resolve may be weakening following threats of job losses from management backed by the government. The government has already ordered the state-run Korean National Railroad (KNR) to dismiss or suspend 630 strike leaders from duty. The vote came one day after the National Assembly passed a bill to transform the railroad network into a public corporation that would require job cuts and restructuring. The rail strike began on Saturday, sparking transportation bottlenecks and public resentment, notably in Seoul. Railway workers accuse the government of breaching its earlier promise to improve working conditions and raise wages in return for reform of railroad services. The government hopes to sell off or close some of the network's heavily indebted businesses such as catering services while shutting down railway services on some loss-making routes.

"ROK Railway Strike" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US) "ROK Railway Strike" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

8. DPRK on US Sanctions

The DPRK's military threatened "strong and merciless" retaliation if the US and its allies imposed sanctions or a blockade against the DPRK. The Korean People's Army (KPA) said in a statement on Tuesday that such steps would breach the armistice agreement (AA) that ended the 1950-1953 Korean War. "If the US side applies sanctions against the DPRK and conducts sea and air blockades against it anywhere and starts bolstering troops in and around the Korean peninsula, the KPA side will promptly regard it as a complete breach of the AA by the US side," it said. Freed from its obligations under the armistice accord, the DPRK would not hesitate to inflict "strong and merciless retaliatory measures...", it said. The KPA statement denounced US plans to boost military spending by 11 billion dollars over the next four years in the ROK as well as plans to realign US forces on the peninsula. It also criticized US efforts to build an international coalition to pressure Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear ambitions. "DPRK on US Sanctions" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US)

9. DPRK-Japan Relations

The DPRK has again abandoned a planned ferry trip to Japan, a pro-Pyongyang group said on June 23. The Mangyongbong-92 - the only direct passenger link between Japan and the DPRK - had been scheduled to arrive at the port of Niigata on Japan's northwest coast yesterday after a previous trip was called off earlier in the month. The pro-Pyongyang group, representing people from the DPRK in Japan, said it had been informed of the cancellation by the DPRK Government, blaming discriminatory measures against the nation's ships by Japanese authorities. "Our country is very angry about Japan's application of political pressure - a discriminatory act," said an official of the General Association of Korean Residents in Japan (Chongryon), according to the report. "DPRK-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

10. US Troops in ROK

ROK President Roh Moo-Hyun said on June 27 that ROK needs the US troops resided in ROK for a long term, meanwhile, ROK will reinforce self-defense policy. The US troops is the long time need for ROK, and ROK's self-defense will be a reliable guarantee for ROK's security at large, Roh said according to the report. However, the 37,000 US troops stationed in ROK will be reduced, and "both governments have agreed to relocate the bulk of the US Yongsan Garrison and to reposition the US 2nd Infantry Division," said Lt. Gen. Charles Campbell, commander of the US Eighth Army. During a seminar on the role of the US military held in Seoul he said "Some reduction in force will accompany these moves," but did not revealed any further details. His remarks are the first official confirmation that the US will decrease its military presence in the Korean Peninsula.

"US Troops in ROK" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

11. DPRK Anti-US Protest

Over one million Pyongyang residents took to streets for anti-US rallies on June 25 to mark the 53rd anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. The anniversary is also marked as a "Day of Anti-US Struggle" in the DPRK. At the main rally held at the Kim Il Sung Square in the central part of the city, Ryang Man Gil, chairman of the Pyongyang City People's Committee, said that the DPRK has no way but to "accelerate its pace to seek nuclear deterrent force for self-defense" in face of the US "blockade" against the DPRK under the pretext of the nuclear issue. The DPRK people will foil the US attempt at pushing the situation on the Korean Peninsula "to the brink of a war", Ryang told the some 100,000 participants. The rally was followed by a large-scale anti-US demonstration in the city, where all squares were thronged with people protesting the US policy towards the DPRK, said the report.

"DPRK-US Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

12. ROK-PRC Relations

President of the ROK Roh Moo-hyun will visit PRC from July 7 to 10, his first since coming to power last December, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan announced on June 26.

"ROK-PRC Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

People's Republic of China

1. PRC Role in DPRK Nuclear Talks

The PRC has intensified efforts to help resolve the DPRK nuclear standoff and is trying to bring the US and the DPRK back to the negotiating table, officials said on Thursday. Vice Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo was due to discuss the DPRK issue in Moscow after arriving in Russia on Wednesday, said Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan. Those talks will come on the heels of discussions Vice Foreign Minister Wang Yi held with US officials in Washington on Wednesday and ahead of ROK President Roh Moo-hyun's visit to Beijing next week. "China's efforts to promote the peaceful resolution of the DPRK issue will undoubtedly continue," Kong told a news conference. "And we hope relevant sides will cooperate with China's efforts."

"PRC Role in DPRK Nuclear Talks" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 15, US)

2. US on PRC Human Rights Record

The PRC has not met its commitments to address human rights concerns, which were made in December talks with the US, the State Department said. "During much of 2002, we saw incremental, but unprecedented steps in the right direction on human rights," department spokesman Richard Boucher said in a written response to a question asked earlier Wednesday at a daily press briefing. "We have been disappointed, therefore, to see negative developments in 2003," he said. "The commitments to make progress on human rights concerns made by China at the conclusion of the December human rights dialogue have not been met, and there have been a number of troubling incidents since the beginning of the year." Among US concerns are the execution of a Tibetan without due process, the arrests of democracy activists, and harsh sentences given to Internet essayists and labor protesters, Boucher said.

"US on PRC Human Rights Record" (NAPSNet Daily Report, May 15, US)

3. Hong Kong Security Bill

Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa faced growing pressure on Thursday to withdraw parts of a planned anti-subversion bill, with even some of his staunchest supporters urging him to make concessions as public anger grows. Pro-Beijing lawmakers and political commentators called for Tung to listen to the city's seven million residents after a massive street protest on Tuesday, the largest demonstration in more than a decade. Organizers plan more protests. Victor Sit, a Hong Kong delegate to the PRC's parliament, told local television he had requested Beijing to ask Tung to shelve the legislation. "The circumstances now are not suitable for passing the law urgently, because 500,000 people have come out to march and protest and some of them don't have enough understanding of the law," he told the television station. Tsang Yok Sing, the head of Hong Kong's largest pro-government party and a member of Tung's inner cabinet, said Tung had no choice but to respond to demands to at least amend the security law.

"Hong Kong Security Bill" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 3, US) "Hong Kong Anti-Subversion Law" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 2, US) "Hong Kong Anti-Subversion Law Protest" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US) <https://nautilus.org/napsnet/dr/0107/JUL01-03.html#item9>

4. PRC on Nuclear Free Korea

The PRC called Monday for a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons and urged a diplomatic settlement to the DPRK nuclear crisis. "China hopes to see a nuclear weapons-free Korean peninsula which enjoys lasting peace and stability," PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing told reporters after meeting European Union officials and the bloc's outgoing president Greece. "It is important to address the security concerns of a certain country but should there be disagreements or even conflicts between certain countries the only way to solve them is through dialogue in a peaceful manner," he said.

"PRC on Nuclear Free Korea" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

5. Taiwan WHO SARS List

Taiwan hopes to be removed from the World Health Organization (WHO) blacklist of SARS-affected areas on July 6, which would mark the required 20 days with no new infections, health authorities said. "Spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) on the island has been effectively contained," said Lee Ming-liang, chief of the cabinet's SARS Contingency Committee. "With the last onset of the disease on June 15, Taiwan is expected to be automatically delisted at the zero hour of July 6 if there are no surprises," Lee said Monday. The number of infections on the island totaled 678 with no new cases reported for the 15th successive day, Lee said. The death toll from the epidemic stood at 84 with 42 people still in hospital, he said. Despite the apparent halt of the spread of the virus, Lee warned the public to stay vigilant to counter a possible resurgence.

"Taiwan WHO SARS List" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

6. PRC Hong Kong Protest Media Coverage

The PRC's major newspapers ignored massive demonstrations over anti-subversion legislation in Hong Kong that many fear could erode political freedom six years after its return to PRC rule. Instead, the state-controlled press focused on comments by Premier Wen Jiabao supporting Hong Kong's leaders and the need for "understanding, trust and unity" as well as "confidence, courage and action". "Hong Kong's future will be shaped by the people of Hong Kong," Wen said at a Hong Kong cocktail party, the English-language China Daily reported Wednesday. "I hope our Hong Kong compatriots will cherish the hard-won position as masters of their own affairs, and make efforts to fulfill the popular aspiration for social stability and seize precious opportunities for development." But there was no mention of the controversial Article 23 legislation.

"PRC Hong Kong Protest Media Coverage" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 2, US)

7. PRC Communist Party 82nd Anniversary

PRC President Hu Jintao told the PRC he intends to better serve the public as the party marked its 82nd birthday on Tuesday, but the secretive, one-party system gave no indication of evolving to share power. The anniversary came as a new generation of leaders headed by Hu, who became party leader in November, tries to establish its grip on power in a fast-changing, increasingly capitalist society. Commentaries in state newspapers called for the party, in power since 1949, to be more responsive to public needs. Amid widespread complaints about graft and official abuses, they warned members to live simply and stay humble. Hu was quoted by the official Xinhua News Agency as calling for the party to "dedicate itself to the interests of the public and govern for the people's benefit." In a speech to a party seminar, Hu was quoted as saying the party should show "still greater enthusiasm" for the political theories of his predecessor, Jiang Zemin - the awkwardly named "Three Represents," which calls for the party to modernize by offering membership to capitalists. The report gave no indication whether Hu, whose political views are still largely a mystery, revealed any personal vision for the party's future.

"PRC Communist Party 82nd Anniversary" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US)

8. PRC AIDS Situation

The world's two most populous nations, the PRC and India, are facing an AIDS "catastrophe", one of the US' most senior experts on infectious diseases warned here. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director Julie Gerberding named Cambodia as another Asian country staring at disaster unless there were international efforts to help develop adequate public health measures. Gerberding, on a tour of Asia to assess regional infectious diseases and give technical advice, praised Thailand's efforts to contain the HIV-AIDS epidemic. "(But) in some countries, like Cambodia and the PRC and India, the public health measures have yet to take hold," Gerberding told a seminar at the American Chamber of Commerce. "And the epidemic is really in that phase of scaling up very, very quickly. It looks like Africa did a decade or so ago. "If we don't intervene in those environments we will have a catastrophe. A very, very profound increase in the number of cases."

"PRC AIDS Situation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 3, US)

9. PRC Uninhabited Islands Regulation

The PRC's first national administrative regulation on uninhabited islands will be enacted on July 1, the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) announced Monday. The regulation was jointly issued by the SOA, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Headquarters of the General Staff of PRC People's Liberation Army on June 17 this year. The regulation lays out strict measures on the protection of uninhabited islands around the base points of China's territorial waters and prohibits activities that might damage the islands. It says uninhabited islands belong to the nation, and organizations and individuals must apply for approval if they want to use the islands. An SOA official said China's island administration had, for a long time, been relatively weak, and disorderly exploitation of uninhabited islands had caused worsening damage to natural resources and the environment. Disorderly exploitation also harmed the national interest and posed a threat to national defense and military security, said the official. "The issuing and enacting of the regulation is a very good reinforcement of China's existing oceanic laws and will be conducive to maintaining order of uninhabited island exploitation, protecting the ocean environment, and safeguarding China's national interests," said the official. China has more than 6,000 islands each with an area larger than 500 square meters, of which 94 per cent are uninhabited. (XIC)

"PRC Uninhabited Islands Regulation" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, US)

10. PRC's APEC Addressing

PRC Vice-Premier and Health Minister Wu Yi shared PRC's experience of fighting SARS with ministers in charge of public health from the Asia-Pacific region on June 28, affirming the importance of international co-operation in containing the disease. PRC has taken immediate and decisive measures to contain the spread of SARS, although the country was "in an awkward position" in the early days of the outbreak, Wu said in her speech at the opening ceremony of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Health Ministers' Meeting held here on June 28. She noted the World Health Organization (WHO) on June 24 lifted the travel advisory against Beijing, the last PRC city on its PRC list, and removed the city from the list of areas with recent local transmission. The vice-premier summarized the PRC's success on combating SARS as a result of taking several measures listed in the report. Wu admitted the epidemic has adversely affected the development of some regions and sectors in PRC.

"PRC's APEC Addressing" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

11. PRC-US Relations on Taiwan Issue

The PRC reiterated on June 24 that it opposes any form of official contact between the US and Taiwan authorities, Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said at a press conference. "Such contact overtly violates the principles of the three Sino-US joint communiques and relevant commitments made by the United States," he said. Kong was commenting on reports that Taiwan "foreign minister" Eugene Chien had attended a meeting in the US under the sponsorship of the American Enterprise Institute. Kong said that PRC has expressed deep concern over the issue and asked the US to clarify its position in this regard. The US should recognize the importance and sensitivity of the Taiwan question and review its official exchanges with Taiwan to avoid damaging Sino-US relations, the spokesman said.

"PRC-US Relations on Taiwan Issue" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC) "Relations Across Taiwan Straits" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

12. PRC ID Card Law

The PRC's top legislature, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, passed overwhelmingly the law of citizen identification card on Saturday. The law, compared with the resident ID card regulations adopted in 1985, focused more on safeguarding the citizens' rights, said Ying Songnian, a member of the Committee for Internal and Judicial Affairs of the NPC and law professor with the National School of Administration. According to the law, no organization or individual has the right to check a citizen's ID card except for the police holding proper reasons. The police must keep confidential any personal information obtained from citizens' ID card. The new ID card, with the application of integrated circuit (IC) technology, can be read by computers as well. The new law enlarges the scope of ID card holders by including those below the age of 16, who may thus exercise their civil rights. "PRC ID Card Law" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

13. PRC-Hong Kong Relations

PRC Premier Wen Jiabao has arrived in Hong Kong for a three-day visit during which he will attend the signing ceremony of the first bilateral trade agreement with the former British colony. He was greeted on arrival at the airport by senior officials led by Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa. Wen made no comment on his arrival. He is making his first visit to the territory since succeeding Zhu Rongji in March. Wen, 60, is scheduled to visit the Prince of Wales hospital and attend a reception Monday for those who contributed to the fight against the pneumonia like Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The devastating outbreak has left 297 dead from nearly 1,800 infections. On Tuesday he will attend festivities marking the anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to PRC sovereignty on July 1, 1997 before departing. Police have erected steel barriers to cordon off the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, the site of the anniversary celebrations, and the adjacent Grand Hyatt hotel where Wen will stay.

"PRC-Hong Kong Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

14. PRC Three Gorges Dam

The third phase of re-housing more than a million people displaced by China's massive Three Gorges dam project began, state media reported. About 23,400 people now living in the southwestern Chongqing region are to be relocated by the end of next year to other provinces, including the eastern province of Zhejiang more than 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) away, Xinhua news agency said. During the first two phases of the re-housing, 140,000 people displaced by the dam project left their ancestral homes for other parts of China. In total, more than 700,000 people already been moved and more than 400,000 will be relocated as the water levels of the Yangtze river rise in 2006 and 2009. From June 1-10, the Three Gorges dam, the largest in the world, closed its sluice gates for the first time, submerging 13 towns to form a lake more than 400 kilometres long. The majority of those displaced are being moved to new towns built on higher ground and bordering the lake. Meanwhile, the China Daily reported that the construction of high-tension lines to carry electricity from the hydroelectric dam to central and eastern China has been completed. The dam will begin to produce electricity in August.

"PRC Three Gorges Dam" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

Japan

1. Japan on DPRK Nuclear Development

A top Japanese official said Thursday that a project to help the DPRK build nuclear power plants should be scrapped, as Japan appeared to close ranks with Washington over Pyongyang's suspected pursuit of nuclear weapons. The \$4.6 billion project, backed by the US, the European Union, Japan and the ROK, would build two light-water reactors - a type that cannot produce weapons-grade plutonium. But construction has been in limbo since the DPRK admitted last year it had a secret nuclear program. "I personally think it is appropriate for KEDO to decide to suspend it," Senior Vice Minister Toshimitsu Motegi said of the internationally backed Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, which is building the reactors. US Ambassador to Japan Howard Baker said last week that US was unlikely to follow through with completing the power plants if DPRK did not give up its nuclear weapons ambitions. At the time, Tokyo suggested it wanted to push on. Hideo Tarumi, of the Foreign Ministry's Northeast Asia Division, said Motegi's comments reflected only his personal opinion and not Tokyo's official stance. "We are currently making every diplomatic effort (with the DPRK), and it's too early to decide on the future of the project," Tarumi said. "Japan on DPRK Nuclear Development" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 3, US)

2. The Public Views in Japan over SDF

The public in Japan is pretty evenly divided over the dispatch of Self-Defense Forces to Iraq to help reconstruct the country, an Asahi Shimbun survey showed over the weekend. Of 1,859 voters responding to the telephone poll Saturday and Sunday, 46 percent favored an SDF mission to Iraq and 43 percent were against. Looking back, nearly six in 10 said they do not think there was justification for the US-led attack on Iraq. While the public was in discord over a role for the SDF, a large majority-about 70 percent-said Japan should get involved in Iraqi reconstruction. Voters supporting the Cabinet of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi or the ruling Liberal Democratic Party backed SDF involvement to the tune of 50 to 60 percent. But about 60 percent of Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) supporters opposed it. Asked why they approved of SDF participation, about 60 percent of supporters cited the need for an international contribution by Japan, followed by respondents who said there were roles suitable for SDF troops to play in Iraq, and voters who said they valued Japan's relationship with the US. Asked if the Iraq war was justified, a point of contention in Diet debate on the bill to send SDF troops to Iraq, 57 percent said no, nearly double those who thought it was necessary, at 29 percent. Overall, 67 percent said they do not support the U.S. attack, against 22 percent who do. Fifty percent said they do not approve of Koizumi's support for Washington's decision to fight, compared with 36 percent who said they do-an increase in negative responses from an April survey, just after the main hostilities had ended. "The Public Views in Japan over SDF" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, Japan)

3. Japan-RF Relations

Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov will visit Japan by the end of the year, becoming the first Russian prime minister to do so since 1999. The agreement came during a two-day visit to the Russian Far East by Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, who met Sunday in Vladivostok with Viktor Khristenko, Russia's deputy prime minister and co-chairperson of the Japan-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Issues. With the likelihood growing that Russian President Vladimir Putin will put off a visit to Japan until next spring at the earliest, the Japanese government is eager to continue high level talks with the Russians. Economic matters, including energy issues, are expected to dominate talks during Kasyanov's visit to Japan. In her talks with Khristenko, Kawaguchi revealed that Japan is soon planning to send a delegation to Russia headed by Iwao Okamoto, director-general of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy, to explore the possibility of jointly developing oil fields as part of a larger plan to open a Pacific route pipeline from eastern Siberia to Nakhodka.

"Japan-RF Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, Japan) "Russia-Japan Relations" (NAPSNet Daily Report, July 1, PRC)

4. Japan Domestic Politics

A majority of Japanese voters support Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's bid for reelection in the ruling party's presidential race, which secures his premiership, according to a poll. Some 52 percent of the respondents said they backed Koizumi's election in the Liberal Democratic Party's leadership election in September, the Asahi Shimbun said in its poll, released Monday. Some 29 percent of them were opposed, according to the survey conducted by the daily over the weekend, covering 2,000 voters across Japan of whom 52 percent gave valid responses. Koizumi's current two-year term as LDP president expires September 30. He took office in April 2001 and was reelected as party leader in September 2001. If chosen again in the upcoming poll, Koizumi could remain in the office until 2006 as the party has extended the president's term to three years from two years.

"Japan Domestic Politics" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

5. Japan Troops Role in Iraq

Japan plans to send more than 1,000 troops to Iraq to help rebuild the war-torn country under new legislation expected to pass by late July. As a first step, some 500 Ground Self-Defence Force troops, the core of the Japanese mission, are likely to be deployed starting in early October, the Tokyo newspaper said. The troops are expected to supply fuel and water to US forces and citizens in Baghdad, the daily said, citing a Defence Agency outline on reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Japanese and US officials plan to discuss the details based on the outline in a meeting Monday, the report said. The Air Self-Defence Force will send three C-130 transport planes while the Maritime Self-Defence Force will deploy an amphibious ship and a destroyer, according to the paper. In all, the number of Japanese SDF personnel is likely to top 1,000, the newspaper said.

"Japan Troops Role in Iraq" (NAPSNet Daily Report, June 30, US)

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