

International Intelligence

Russia: No Threat From Pacific Naval Exercises

The huge naval exercises begun on Aug. 18 by the Russian Pacific Fleet are intended to help safeguard regional stability and do not pose any threat to neighboring nations, according to the Russian military press, reported the Chinese news service Xinhua on Aug. 19.

The Pacific Fleet's press service issued a statement saying that the Fleet pledges to serve as a safeguard of both Russia's economic and political interests in the Far East, and the whole region's security and stability. It said that the exercises aim to improve cooperation in fighting against international terrorism and illegal exploitation of marine biological resources, and in ensuring ecological and navigation safety.

A total of 60 ships and boats, 35 support ships, 70 planes and helicopters, and 70,000 servicemen and civilians are involved in the ten-day exercises, which are taking place in the Sea of Okhotsk, Bering Sea, and Sea of Japan.

South Korean and Japanese surface ships and helicopters, and a U.S. Coast Guard ship will participate, and there are military observers from Canada and China.

In related news, the Russian agency Novosti reported that Russia's Far Eastern Primorye territory is prepared to receive 100,000 "forced migrants" in case of any "emergency in the Northeast Asian nations bordering Russia"—a clear reference to North Korea—according to Oleg Melnikov, chairman of the emergency commission of Primorye territory.

He said that one task of the large-scale exercises in the Russian Far East, is to build centers for receiving refugees.

China Builds Ties With Zimbabwe

A Chinese delegation was in Zimbabwe in mid-August to explore opportunities in mining and the iron and steel industries, the *Herald* of Harare reported on Aug. 16. The delegation held a meeting with officials from the Zimbabwe Mining and Smelting Company, Zimbabwe Iron and Steel Company (Zisco),

ZimAlloys, and others. The delegation said that China could provide the finance, technology and market to exploit Zimbabwe's resources; that feasibility studies had already been done, and developments should be expected "as soon as possible," starting with the mining of chrome (Zimbabwe already has an annual production of 250,000 tons).

Other Chinese initiatives toward the African country, which has been isolated by an Anglo-American campaign against President Robert Mugabe, were reported by the African Church Information Service on Aug. 18. The Chinese quietly arrived in Zimbabwe in May and began work on Zimbabwe's great Nuanetsi irrigation project. The Zimbabwe government in Harare contracted with Chinese Water and Electrical International, to clear 100,000 hectares of land in Masvingo province, in the south, and build on it the infrastructure needed for irrigation farming to grow maize and sorghum. Zimbabweans would farm the land. Harare had declared irrigation to be of strategic national importance.

As the Chinese began work in May, Zimbabwe announced an increase in the project's size to 150,000 hectares (375,000 acres). A key feature of the plan is to use the irrigation to make possible a third (Winter) crop each year. Zimbabwe successfully grew its first-ever Winter maize crop in 2002.

When complete, the project is expected to produce an average annual yield of 3 million tons of maize. Zimbabwe's domestic requirement is only 2.1 million tons or less.

Vajpayee Looks To Great Projects for the Future

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee exuded optimism on India's Independence Day, the Indian media reported. Speaking from the ramparts of the historic Red Fort in New Delhi on Aug. 15, India's 57th independence day, Vajpayee announced that India is ready to send an unmanned mission to the Moon in 2008. "India is ready to take a big leap in science. It will be called *Chandrayan Pratham* (First Journey to the Moon)," he said. The mission is expected to cost \$80

million and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) began working on it in 2001, Vajpayee said.

Vajpayee also announced that by the end of this year, his government will begin a 50 billion rupees infrastructure-building project called The Linking of Rivers. Its task force has already identified two areas for implementation of the project: linking of the Ken and Betua Rivers in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh states, and the Parvati, Kalisindh, and Chambal Rivers in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan states. The entire project involves 30 rivers in the country and envisages diverting water from surplus river basins to water-deficient areas.

Speaking in the same vein, India's President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam appealed for "a moratorium on all issues which are impediment to the development of nation" and urged the people to focus on networking of rivers, quality power generation, providing urban amenities to rural areas, information and communication technology, tourism, and enriching village life. President Kalam said that "within the next two decades, we will encounter a totally new situation of acute shortages of water, power and minerals." These shortages would be on a global scale and "no single nation will be able to handle this situation by itself," he pointed out, urging the nations of the world to find new ways of cooperating to overcome this crisis.

Moscow, Jakarta Reach Nuclear Power Accord

The Russian government has approved a draft agreement with Indonesia on cooperation in the nuclear energy industry, Interfax news agency reported on Aug. 20. The draft calls for the two countries to exchange nuclear materials, equipment, and technology while fulfilling their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other international export control agreements.

The report said that Indonesia would be forbidden to use materials and technologies it receives from Russia to create explosive nuclear devices. Russia and Indonesia will work together on developing nuclear power plants and research reactors, as well as other projects.