



Regional Overview:

Six-Party Progress Helps Give Peace a Chance

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The quarter was highlighted by the beginning and, after a five-week recess, successful conclusion of the long-delayed fourth round of Six-Party Talks. While the Joint Statement issued Sept. 19 was far from a breakthrough, leaving many questions unanswered and most contentious issues unsettled, it did provide a framework for future cooperation (and, one hopes, eventual progress) by listing mutually agreed upon objectives, to include “the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.”

In Southeast Asia, the Indonesia government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) also decided to give peace a chance in the long-troubled and more recently tsunami-devastated Aceh province. Also in Southeast Asia, the annual round of ASEAN ministerial meetings took place in late July with the focus largely centered on which ministers did not attend the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) security dialogue and who would assume the ASEAN chair in mid-2006. Meanwhile, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) got Washington’s attention when it called for the United States to set a date for the withdrawal of its forces from Central Asia’s “temporary infrastructure,” raising questions about Beijing’s (and Moscow’s) support for the war on terrorism and desire for cooperative, constructive relations with Washington.

Finally, World Health Organization officials continued to warn of a potential pandemic if a new variant of the avian flu virus, which has now killed at least 65 people in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and most recently Indonesia, begins spreading from human to human.

Six-Party Talks: neither breakthrough nor breakdown

The prospects for a peaceful settlement of the Korean Peninsula nuclear crisis rose dramatically this quarter when, after a year of delay and months of on-again, off-again, deliberations, China, North and South Korea, Japan, Russia, and the U.S. all signed a Joint Statement laying out points of general agreement and mutually agreed upon objectives to achieve the stated goal of “verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.”

The talks had been in limbo since June 2004 due to North Korea's persistent refusal to return to the negotiating table. Repeated demands by the other five (and who knows what kind of other incentives, promises, and/or pressures) finally persuaded Pyongyang to return for the fourth round of talks on July 26, in no small part due to the effective and energetic diplomacy of Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill, who doubles as the administration's point man for the six-party process. With Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's vocal support and President Bush's obvious backing – as noted last quarter, Bush had begun toning down his own personal rhetoric regarding Mr. Kim Jong-il – Hill appeared to have a much freer hand than his predecessor in dealing directly with Pyongyang and demonstrating U.S. flexibility, as much to maintain solidarity among the other five as to cajole Pyongyang back to the table.

Hopes for an early breakthrough during the fourth round of talks were quickly dashed, however. After 13 days of deliberation, a “recess” was declared by the Chinese hosts “so that the delegations can go back to report to their respective governments, further study each other's position and resolve differences which still exist.” The main sticking point was reportedly an insistence by Pyongyang that it be provided light-water reactors (LWRs) as called for in the original 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework and Washington's equally adamant insistence that no “peaceful” nuclear energy program be permitted in the North, given its track record of cheating. Assistant Secretary Hill, in a comment that proved to be much less unyielding than it appeared, asserted that the North Koreans needed to “go back and think about what they have been told, which is, they are not going to get a light-water reactor.”

Joint Statement. After five weeks of behind-the-scenes negotiations (including PRC senior officials' visits to Pyongyang and the use of the U.S.-DPRK “New York channel”), the six parties reassembled in Beijing on Sept. 13. Three days into the talks, diplomats were talking about “irreconcilable deadlock” with “no prospect for delivery” of a joint statement. A breakdown appeared likely, if not imminent. However, a Chinese full court diplomatic press and some (quite frankly surprising) additional U.S. flexibility resulted in a Sept. 19 Joint Statement that finessed or skirted the most contentious issues but managed to avoid the feared complete breakdown. While it would be premature to call the statement a true breakthrough, it makes one possible by providing a set of agreed upon principles and mutually shared objectives to work toward. Most significantly, if Pyongyang is indeed sincere, it represents the “strategic decision” long insisted upon by Washington as the first step in the process: the agreement by North Korea to abandon “all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs” and return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

The statement defers or leaves many critical questions unanswered. One of the most critical is the fate of Washington's earlier promise (under the now defunct Agreed Framework) to provide Pyongyang with LWRs. This problem was not solved; it was merely deferred, with the parties agreeing “to discuss at an appropriate time the subject of the provision of light-water reactors to the DPRK.” Washington (and reportedly the other four) apparently agreed that the “appropriate” time was after Pyongyang had returned to

the NPT and came into full compliance with IAEA safeguards and immediately made this clear. North Korea obviously disagrees, wanting – as it always has – its rewards up front, clearly inappropriate timing from Washington’s perspective.

The disagreement over the “appropriate time” was underscored by a North Korea announcement, within 24 hours of the issuing of the Joint Statement, that “the U.S. should not even dream of the issue of (North Korea’s) dismantlement of its nuclear deterrent before providing LWRs, a physical guarantee for confidence-building.” This statement did not, as many in the press indicated, negate or undermine the Joint Statement. It merely began the debate over timing. It was as much a reaction to Washington’s definition as it was a typical North Korean negotiating tactic, not to mention an attention-getting measure.

Pyongyang’s decision to immediately reintroduce its LWR demand was likely also intended to deflate the credit being heaped upon Chinese diplomacy and U.S. flexibility, to remind the world (and especially Beijing and Washington) that Pyongyang remains in the driver’s seat. As it has in the past, the LWR issue also serves to distract attention from the real issue, which is Pyongyang’s plutonium- and uranium-based nuclear weapons programs and how to both account for and then verifiably dismantle them.

One detail that remains critical to the ultimate success of the agreement is the definition of “all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.” The Sept. 19 Joint Statement successfully finessed the disagreement over whether a uranium enrichment program exists in the North – Washington says it does; Pyongyang still denies it. Agreeing that “all” programs will be included is only significant, however, if there is agreement on what constitutes “all.” The other parties cannot allow the LWR smokescreen to overshadow this yet-to-be resolved issue, as Secretary Hill reminded Pyongyang at quarter’s end, when he noted that there could be “trouble ahead” if Pyongyang did not admit to a uranium enrichment program at the next round of talks.

During the recess (Aug. 14), DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan once again asserted that “we don’t have any uranium-based weapons program, but in the future if there is any kind of evidence that needs to be clarified we will be fully prepared to do so.” This comment leaves open the possibility that Pyongyang at some point might acknowledge the purchase of Pakistani centrifuges for an energy – as opposed to weapons – related uranium enrichment program, allowing both sides a face-saving way out of this current standoff.

Also unresolved is the broader issue of energy assistance to Pyongyang. The Joint Statement “reaffirmed” the ROK offer to provide 2 million kilowatts of electric power to the DPRK. It did not indicate if the North was prepared to settle for this offer, much less accept it as a substitute for the LWRs (which, by no mere coincidence, were to have provided the same amount of power). Seoul, which trumpeted this “breakthrough” when it was first announced, has now been strangely quiet on the connection between its energy offer and the need for Pyongyang to drop the LWR demand.

Another major unresolved issue is sequencing. While all concurred that the denuclearization agreement will be accomplished in “a phased manner in line with the principle of ‘commitment for commitment, action for action,’” the “commitments” and “actions” have yet to be defined, much less put in an agreed upon order – Washington apparently wanted some sequencing outlined in the statement but Beijing saw this as too hard.

The Joint Statement also noted that “the directly related parties will negotiate a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula at an appropriate separate forum.” Unfortunately, it did not reveal who the “directly related parties” might be. It may represent a simple desire to keep the Japanese (and perhaps the Russians) out of the treaty talks. But, recall that North and South Korea, China, and the U.S. were all engaged in Four-Party Talks several years ago to accomplish just that. These talks, at an “appropriate separate forum,” broke down over Pyongyang’s refusal to acknowledge that Seoul should be a signatory – it wanted a bilateral peace treaty with Washington. Has this position changed? Only time will tell. North Korea’s most recent peace treaty demand, issued at the time of the August recess, once again called for a U.S.-DPRK treaty.

Finally, another important missing element is discussion of security assurances or guarantees. The Joint Statement includes a promise by Washington not to attack or invade the North, but does not address the behavior of the other parties. If North Korea employs military force against South Korea or Japan – two U.S. treaty allies – is Washington prohibited from responding? Is stopping a North Korea ship suspected of smuggling nuclear weapons (or drugs or counterfeit currency) an “attack”? Is Pyongyang prepared to refrain from hostile acts of this nature? These questions will also have to be sorted out during subsequent rounds of dialogue.

All this is not to demean the agreement – it represents a vital first step. A real breakthrough still remains possible, if the other five parties can avoid being distracted by the LWR issue and speak with one voice with Pyongyang in insisting that it start charting a clear path toward the accomplishment of now agreed upon objectives when they reconvene in Beijing in early November 2005 for the next round of talks.

Aceh: giving peace a chance

One of the most promising developments of this or any other quarter in Southeast Asia was the signing, after three decades of conflict that saw 15,000 people killed, of a peace accord between the government of Indonesia and the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM). The agreement, brokered by former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari was reached July 17 and officially signed Aug 15. The agreement calls for the rapid disarmament of rebels, the scaling back of Indonesia's military and police presence to roughly half its current size, and greater self-government for the province. The rebels gave up their claim for independence from Indonesia, and the government yielded ground on the question of allowing Aceh some political autonomy. The Acehnese won the right to form local political parties, which are banned under Indonesian law, giving them a measure of self-rule they never had. Those parties will be able to compete in provincial

elections within 18 months, according to the agreement. The agreement also reiterated a commitment made in 1999 to allow Aceh to retain 70 percent of all revenues from oil, gas, and other resources.

Some 25,000 Indonesian military (TNI) soldiers and 5,000 police personnel are to leave the province in the next six months; roughly 3,000 rebels would be disarmed over the same time. According to the timetable, the rebels will lay down at least 20 percent of their weapons, and the military will move out 20 percent of their troops every two months. A 300-member Aceh Monitoring Mission (AMM) from the European Union and ASEAN will oversee disarmament at 12 centers, where rebels are supposed to turn in their arms and receive help for reintegrating into society. Each combatant who turns in weapons will receive about five acres of land and supplies to become a farmer or fisherman in the province. Under the terms of the accord, rebels and political prisoners will be granted amnesty. At quarter's end, both sides appeared to be keeping to their end of the bargain. The Free Aceh Movement (GAM) had already surrendered almost 300 of their estimated 800 weapons to the AMM and about 6,000 TNI troops from 11 battalions had been withdrawn.

While there are a number of explanations for the breakthrough, almost all commentators agreed that the Dec. 26 tsunami, which devastated Aceh (killing at least 131,000 Acehnese), had changed the political landscape and put tremendous pressure on both sides to make compromises in Helsinki, since neither side wants to be accused of obstructing the rebuilding of the war- and tsunami-ravaged province.

ARF ministers (or designated representatives) meet in Laos

The annual Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) ministerial gatherings took place in Vientiane, Laos between July 24-29, including an ASEAN-only ministerial, a Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) between ASEAN and its dialogue partners, various "10+1" meetings between ASEAN and individual partners, the ASEAN+3 (A+3) meeting involving ASEAN ministers and their counterparts from China, Japan, and the ROK, and the 12th annual ASEAN Regional Forum security dialogue. The big news coming out of the ASEAN ministerial was the expected announcement that Myanmar (Burma) had elected to skip its turn as ASEAN (and thus ARF) chair next year so it could "focus its full attention on the ongoing national reconciliation and democratization process." Malaysia assumed the chair at the end of the Vientiane meeting and will host the summer 2006 ministerial. Going alphabetically, it would have then been Myanmar's turn to accept the mantle of leadership (which will now go to the Philippines).

ASEAN had been facing intense pressure from Washington and others to bypass Myanmar unless there was some significant movement toward political reform. By "postponing" its turn – the Lao foreign minister noted that "once Myanmar is ready to assume the chairmanship, it can do so" – the immediate problem is resolved. Of course, it also takes a lot of the pressure off Myanmar, which may now assume that it is free to continue to pursue its repressive domestic policies regardless of growing international (to include ASEAN) condemnation. In short, by "doing the right thing" – i.e., giving up its

2006 chairmanship – Yangon can more easily avoid doing the *really* right thing: releasing Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and seriously moving forward on democratization.

Diminishing the ARF? Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, who was present in Vientiane for the A+3 and other dialogues, elected to skip the ARF meeting in order to make his first visit to Myanmar. Beijing had long been arguing against any “interference in Myanmar’s internal affairs.” Going to Myanmar instead of the ARF demonstrated Beijing’s solidarity with Yangon and its displeasure over Washington’s (and ASEAN’s) strong-arm tactics. It also underscored one of ASEAN’s greatest concerns: that putting pressure on Myanmar drives it deeper into Beijing’s camp. More broadly speaking, Li’s actions also signaled China’s preference for “Asia-for-Asians” forums, ones that specifically exclude the United States, over “Asia-Pacific” gatherings like the ARF.

Foreign Minister Li was not the only high-profile “no-show” at the ARF. The foreign ministers of Japan and India also sent representatives due to “pressing duties” elsewhere (including pursuing their futile attempt to gain permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council), as did U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who was represented by her deputy, Robert Zoellick. While Zoellick is highly regarded in Asia, Rice’s decision to skip her first opportunity to meet face-to-face with all her ASEAN and other East Asian counterparts was widely reported as “an unnecessary snub.”

The international press magnified her absence by repeatedly, but inaccurately, reporting that Rice was “the first secretary of state in 20 years to miss an ARF meeting.” In fact, the ARF was not even established until 1994 and neither Warren Christopher nor Madeleine Albright had a perfect attendance record during the Clinton years. Rice’s immediate predecessor, Colin Powell, did attend all four ARF meetings during his tenure in office, however. Secretary Rice did make a quick 18-hour visit to Thailand “to show how much the United States cares about Southeast Asia” during her early July swing through Northeast Asia. In Phuket, in response to repeated questions, she explained, to virtually no one’s satisfaction, that “other essential travel ... in roughly the same time frame” precluded her participation at the ARF.

As one Singaporean security analyst noted, “Dr. Rice’s absence should not come as a surprise because President George W. Bush’s unilateral-focused administration had downgraded the importance of multilateral forums like the ARF.” In truth, during its first four years, the Bush administration was a strong proponent of East Asia multilateralism. Secretary Powell’s perfect attendance at the ARF was matched by President Bush’s at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting, something his predecessor (who established the forum) failed to do. But in Asia, perception frequently trumps reality, and Rice’s ill-conceived decision to skip her first ARF meeting regrettably will reinforce all the wrong perceptions at a time when Southeast Asians are seeking reassurance of Washington’s continuing commitment in the face of a rising China.

Meanwhile, with Assistant Secretary Hill preoccupied with North Korea and Secretary Rice focused on the rest of the world, Deputy Secretary of State Zoellick has become “Mr. Asia” for the second Bush administration, not only filling in for Secretary Rice at the ARF, but (as will be discussed shortly) delivering the administration’s most definitive statement on China policy in late September.

ARF Accomplishments. Despite the absence of several high-profile players, the July 29 ARF meeting was not without its (minor) accomplishments. The ministers praised and supported ongoing and future planned efforts to better coordinate and conduct disaster relief operations in the region. They also “expressed their concern at the pace of the democratization process” in Myanmar and called for “effective dialogue with all parties concerned,” an obvious but not specific reference to Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy. They also reinforced their mutual commitment to promoting more effective counterterrorism and other law enforcement efforts and their commitment to halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. To this end, they accepted a proposal by Brunei and China to host another Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ISM on CTTC) in China in 2006, along with two Inter-Sessional Support Group meetings, co-hosted by the U.S. and Philippines, on Confidence-Building Measures (ISG on CBMs). The CBM ISG was also to evolve into an ISG on CBMs and Preventive Diplomacy. An ARF Experts and Eminent Persons (EEP) meeting is also planned for the coming year.

Of note, Timor-Leste was admitted as the ARF’s 25th participant. The ministers also welcomed the accession of the Republic of Korea, Russia, New Zealand, and Mongolia to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) and Australia’s declaration of intent to accede. While this makes all theoretically eligible to participate in this December’s East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur, the inaugural meeting is expected to be limited to the ASEAN 10+3+2+1 grouping (the two plus one being Australia and New Zealand, plus India, which like China had previously acceded to the TAC – the U.S. has not).

During Zoellick’s 10+1 meeting with the ASEAN ministers, agreement was reached to begin negotiations for a U.S.-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership, building upon the 2002 ASEAN Cooperation Plan, along with an extension of U.S. technical assistance and training programs, counterterrorism assistance, and financing for clean energy programs and other environmental and wildlife conservation projects. Zoellick also applauded the ARF’s willingness (finally) to move toward preventive diplomacy. For their part, his interlocutors urged Washington to consider a U.S.-ASEAN free trade agreement.

Multilateral Military Developments. In other ASEAN-related developments, on Sept. 7, Thailand joined an agreement with Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore to begin conducting joint “eye-in-the-sky” patrols over the piracy-prone Malacca Strait. Each will contribute two aircraft to the daily surveillance effort, which supplements ongoing naval patrols by the littoral states. Foreign countries were welcome to provide assistance to this effort “as long as they did not breach the principles of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.” The U.S. is reportedly providing intelligence, training, and equipment in support of this effort.

This quarter also saw Southeast Asia's first Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercise in mid-August, when navy, coast guard, and customs units from 12 countries participated in the Singapore-hosted *Exercise Deep Sabre 2005* in the South China Sea. This was the 18th PSI exercise, aimed at advancing the operational capabilities of PSI participating nations by integrating an at-sea boarding (conducted by a combination of military and law enforcement forces) with a port search operation (conducted primarily by law enforcement). Asia-Pacific participants included Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Singapore. While Japanese navy and coast guard ships have participated in PSI exercises in the past – Japan even hosted one such exercise – this was the first time that armed self-defense force personnel participated, an event made even more significant by the fact that there were no protests, either at home or in Southeast Asia, to this unprecedented step. U.S. forces included a navy destroyer with a Coast Guard law enforcement detachment, plus *P-3* maritime patrol aircraft.

SCO: Yankee go home!

The Bush administration remains generally supportive of East Asia multilateralism, even to include forums like A+3 and the upcoming EAS that do not directly involve Washington. [For details, see [Issues & Insights Vol. 5 No. 9, "The Emerging East Asian Community: Should Washington be Concerned?"](#)]. However, it has begun to cast a wary eye on the Beijing and Moscow-dominated Shanghai Cooperation Organization which also involves four Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan). In early July, the SCO, during a summit meeting in the Kazakhstan capital of Astana, called on the U.S. and its coalition partners to “decide on the deadline for the use of the temporary infrastructure and for their military contingents’ presence” in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan – the U.S. keeps roughly 1,000 troops each at airfields in Karshi-Khanabad in Uzbekistan and Manas in Kyrgyzstan – “as the active military phase in the anti-terror operation in Afghanistan is nearing completion.”

By the end of the month, it became obvious that one of the hosts – Uzbekistan, which had come under increasing criticism from the U.S. and the international community in general for its harsh repression of protestors in Andijan in May – was not going to wait for the U.S. to set its own deadline; on July 29, Uzbekistan gave Washington 180 days to vacate Karshi-Khanabad, an order unanimously approved by the Uzbek Senate a month later. While this no doubt reflects Uzbek President Islam Karimov's displeasure over Washington's criticism of his dismal human rights record, it is doubtful it could have occurred without Moscow and Beijing's consent, if not active encouragement and support. (In contrast to Washington's demand for an international investigation into the Andijan incident, China invited Karimov to Beijing for a 21-gun salute in May, within two weeks of the massacre, with Chinese President Hu Jintao paying a reciprocal visit a month later, where he once again heaped praise on the Uzbek leader.)

Meanwhile, Washington's foothold in neighboring Kyrgyzstan seems secure for the time being. Secretary Rumsfeld made his second visit to Bishkek in five months in late July to shore up the continued U.S. presence at Manas. Newly elected President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, during his Aug. 14 inauguration (following the landslide July 10 election of the

former opposition leader), pledged to follow an independent foreign policy, pledging that his country would not be “a place for the fulfillment of someone else’s geopolitical interests” – apparently referring as much to Beijing and Moscow as to Washington. While initially saying that the necessity of the U.S. presence at Manas should be discussed, he gave assurances to Rumsfeld that U.S. forces could stay as long as they are needed to bring stability to Afghanistan. Rumsfeld also visited neighboring Tajikistan. The U.S. does not have forces based there but does have an arrangement that allows overflight and also permits refueling stops under certain circumstances.

Whither U.S.-China relations?

China’s intense courting of Myanmar and Uzbekistan fit a broader, potentially disturbing pattern. In late July, Beijing also feted Zimbabwe dictator Robert Mugabe with full honors during his state visit to China. Mugabe’s gross violations of human rights have resulted in travel bans preventing him from traveling to Europe or the U.S. and condemnation from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who called Mugabe’s controversial slum demolition campaign a “catastrophic injustice” to the poor people of Zimbabwe. Beijing, on the other hand, expressed confidence in Mugabe’s ability to handle this “internal affair.” From North Korea to Myanmar and Uzbekistan in Asia, to Sudan and Iran in the Middle East, to Venezuela and Cuba in Latin America, it seems that one thing that most countries currently in conflict or disagreement with Washington have in common is the same best friend: China.

This phenomenon no doubt contributed to Deputy Secretary Zoellick’s admonition – during a Sept. 21 speech on “Whither China: from Membership to Responsibility?” – that Beijing recognize how its actions are perceived by others: “China’s involvement with troublesome states indicates at best a blindness to consequences and at worst something more ominous.” In what was identified as a major address on China policy, Zoellick cautioned Beijing that uncertainties about how Beijing will use its power may cause Washington, among others, to hedge their relations, urging China instead to become a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system. Even as Washington applauds growing cooperation with Beijing on issues such as Korean Peninsula denuclearization, currency revaluation, and a modest reduction in cross-Strait tensions with Taiwan, it cannot help but notice an increasingly active Chinese diplomatic campaign aimed at protecting, if not emboldening, some of the globe’s most repressive regimes; efforts that frequently run contrary to U.S. interests and the preservation and promotion of global norms. [For more on this subject, see [PacNet No. 31 “China: the company one keeps!”](#)]

Avian flu: no epidemic (yet)!

Concerns about the spread of avian or bird flu to humans grew this quarter after Indonesia experienced its first human fatalities. At least four deaths have been confirmed (with several other cases being reported), causing Indonesian Health Minister Siti Fadilah Supari at one point to say that “this can be classified as an epidemic and most definitely there will be other [deaths] as long as we are unable to positively identify the sources.” She later said that she had misspoken, saying that she merely believed that the disease

could become epidemic. Nonetheless, with at least 65 deaths now being recorded in four Southeast Asian countries and millions of infected birds being reported in 12 countries throughout East Asia (and reports of the virus now being found in birds in Turkey and Romania), concerns about a pandemic are rising.

The good news is there have still been no confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission of the deadly H5N1 virus and the international community has been provided with considerable advance warning to get immunization, quarantine, and evacuation plans in order. The bad news is all the affected countries (and the rest of the world, which could become affected countries overnight) are far behind on accomplishing the time-consuming, expensive preparations required to make themselves better prepared in the event a pandemic develops. In the U.S., President Bush has attached the highest priority to the stockpiling of necessary vaccines and the development of emergency preparedness measures in anticipation of a global human outbreak.

Mahalo!

Finally, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the many individuals and nations in the Asia Pacific region that opened up their hearts (and wallets) to the people of the U.S. after first Hurricane Katrina and then Hurricane Rita caused havoc on New Orleans and much of the U.S. Gulf Coast. Countries throughout the region sent aid and assistance, including teams of disaster relief specialists, to help in the immediate aftermath of the storms. Even the DPRK Red Cross sent a message of condolence. To all those who lent a helping hand, we extend a warm, heartfelt mahalo nui loa or thank you!

Regional Chronology July-September 2005

June 29-July 2, 2005: Korean Minister of Unification Chung Dong-young briefs Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley in Washington on his recent visit with Kim Jong-il.

July 1, 2005: Tariff liberalization program under ASEAN-China Free Trade Area agreement takes effect.

July 1-3, 2005: Chinese President Hu Jintao continues official visit to Russia with formal talks at the Kremlin on July 1.

July 5, 2005: SCO calls on U.S. to set deadline for withdrawing forces from Central Asia.

July 6, 2005: Group of Four – Germany, Japan, Brazil, and India – submits to the General Assembly a resolution to enlarge the 15-seat UN Security Council (UNSC) to 25 seats.

July 6, 2005: Yangon releases 240 prisoners, including political detainees and opposition politicians, but not Aung San Sui Ky.

July 6-8, 2005: G-8 leaders meet in Gleneagles, Scotland.

July 6-13, 2005: Taiwan opposition New Party officials visit Guangzhou, Dalian, Beijing, and Nanjing under the theme of “journey of Chinese nation.”

July 7, 2005: Presidents George Bush and Vladimir Putin meet on sidelines of G-8 Summit.

July 7, 2005: ROK, PRC, and Japan conduct 90-minute joint maritime exercise off Shanghai. U.S., Russia, and ASEAN present as observers.

July 7, 2005: Philippine Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo asks for all her Cabinet ministers’ resignations and receives them.

July 7, 2005: London’s mass transit system is bombed; 50 die and 700 are injured.

July 8-13, 2005: Secretary Rice visits South Korea, China, Japan, and Thailand.

July 9, 2005: North Korea agrees to return to Six-Party Talks.

July 9, 2005: Chinese Communist Party (CCP) delegation visits Laos, DPRK, and ROK.

July 12, 2005: Singaporean PM Lee Hsien-loong meets with Pres. Bush.

July 12, 2005: ROK reveals it has offered the DPRK 2 million kW of electric power, which effectively replaces loss from cancellation of KEDO light-water reactor project.

July 12-14, 2005: PRC State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan visits Pyongyang as special envoy of President Hu Jintao and meets with Kim Jong-il.

July 14, 2005: Japan approves grant of East China Sea exploration rights to Teikoku Oil Company; Beijing lodges protest.

July 15, 2005: PRC Gen. Zhu Chenghu says China may use nuclear weapons against U.S. in a Taiwan conflict.

July 17, 2005: Indonesian and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) agree to Finland-brokered peace treaty ending 3 decades of civil war.

July 18, 2005: Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh meets with Pres. Bush in Washington; Bush agrees to share civilian nuclear technology, pending Congressional approval.

July 18-23, 2005: Vietnam President Tran Duc Long makes state visit to China.

July 19, 2005: PRC and Sudanese militaries agree to increase exchanges and cooperation.

July 19, 2005: Australian PM John Howard meets President Bush in Washington.

July 19, 2005: After a several month delay, the Pentagon releases its 2005 report on “The Military Power of the People’s Republic of China” as mandated by Congress.

July 21, 2005: Chinese central bank revalues yuan by 2.1 percent.

July 24, 2005: CCP delegation visits Vietnam and Laos.

July 24-29, 2005: ASEAN Ministerial Meetings held in Vientiane, Laos; Myanmar announces it will not assume ASEAN chair in mid-2006.

July 25, 2005: Defense Secretary Rumsfeld visits Kyrgyzstan to shore up U.S. base agreement in wake of SCO declaration.

July 26, 2005: Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe receives “red carpet” welcome from Chinese leader Hu during state visit to Beijing.

July 26-Aug. 3, 2005: Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick travels to Laos, Hong Kong, and China for the ASEAN meetings, for a meeting with Hong Kong Chief Executive Donald Tsang, and for the Senior Dialogue in China.

July 26-Aug. 7, 2005: Beijing hosts first phase of fourth round of Six-Party Talks.

July 27, 2005: ASEAN+3 ministers meet in Vientiane, Laos.

July 27, 2005: China’s State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan meets Pres. Bush, Secretary Rice, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, and Treasury Secretary John Snow in Washington.

July 27-30, 2005: Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono visits President Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao in Beijing.

July 28, 2005: ROK and DPRK Foreign Ministers Ban Ki-moon and Paek Nam-sun meet in Vientiane.

July 28, 2005: Tokyo metropolitan board of education approves disputed junior high school Japanese history textbook for use beginning April 2006. Less than 1 percent of Japan’s public and private middle schools (48 out of 11,035) have adopted the controversial textbook.

July 29, 2005: ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meets. Deputy Secretary Zoellick attends in place of Secretary Rice.

July 29, 2005: Chinese FM Li skips ARF; visits Myanmar.

July 29, 2005: Uzbekistan gives U.S. 180 days to vacate base at Karshi-Khanabad.

July 30-Aug. 8, 2005: Twelve-member U.S. House delegation visits China to build relations and promote congressional and national awareness of U.S.-China relations.

July 31, 2005: North Korean FM Paek says Pyongyang will rejoin the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) after the nuclear issue is resolved.

Aug. 2, 2005: CNOOC withdraws its \$18.5 billion bid for Unocal Corp.

Aug. 6, 2005: DPRK calls for a peace treaty with the U.S. to replace the 1953 armistice.

Aug. 9, 2005: Japanese Foreign Ministry protests Chinese pipe-laying operations in the disputed area of the East China Sea.

Aug. 10-14, 2005: Cambodia's King Norodom Shimamoni makes state visit to China and meets President Hu and Premier Wen.

Aug. 11-13, 2005: ROK FM Ban confers with counterpart Li in Beijing on Six-Party Talks prior to visiting Washington.

Aug 14, 2005: DPRK delegates arrive in the ROK to mark the four-day joint celebration of the 60th liberation anniversary.

Aug. 14, 2005: Former opposition leader Kurmanbek Bakiyev vows at his presidential inauguration that Kyrgyzstan will maintain its political independence.

Aug. 15, 2005: Aceh peace treaty formally signed.

Aug. 15, 2005: Koizumi apologizes for Japanese WWII atrocities on 60th anniversary of war's end.

Aug. 15, 2005: ROK grants amnesty to 4.22 million law-breakers including businessmen and politicians.

Aug. 15-19, 2005: U.S., Singapore, Australia, France, Japan, Britain, among others, conduct Proliferation Security Initiative exercise, *Exercise Deep Sabre 2005* to interdict seaborne WMD in Southeast Asian waters.

Aug. 16-17, 2005: U.S. and Chinese textile negotiators hold talks in San Francisco.

Aug. 18-25, 2005: Russia and PRC hold joint military exercise *Peace Mission 2005* in Vladivostok and eastern China.

Aug. 19, 2005: ROK agrees to provide farming technology, including fertilizer and pesticides, and to set-up joint projects with the DPRK to reduce chronic food shortages.

Aug. 19, 2005: Jay Lefkowitz named U.S. special envoy on human rights in North Korea.

Aug. 21, 2005: William Burns replaces Alexander Vershbow as U.S. ambassador to Russia.

Aug. 22, 2005: U.S. and DPRK hold meetings through the New York channel.

Aug. 22, 2005: FM Ban voices support for Iran's peaceful use of nuclear technology in a meeting with Hossein Hashemi, head of the Iran-South Korea Parliamentary Friendship Group.

Aug. 22, 2005: Jakarta pulls out first group of over 1,250 Indonesian troops from Aceh province as part of ceasefire agreement with GAM.

Aug. 22-Sept. 2, 2005: ROK-U.S. stage joint military exercise *Ulchi Focus Lens*, a computer-driven war simulation exercise.

Aug. 24-Sept. 2, 2005: 12th APEC senior ministerial level meeting in Daegu, Korea.

Aug 25-31, 2005: 11th round of North-South separated families reunions at Mt. Kumgang.

Aug. 27, 2005: Hurricane Katrina makes landfall on Louisiana.

Aug. 27, 2005: China begins cooperation with the Philippines and Vietnam in a joint marine seismic study in the South China Sea.

Aug. 27-29, 2005: PRC Vice Minister Wu meets with DPRK FM Paek in Pyongyang to clarify North Korea's position prior to start of next phase of six-party dialogue.

Aug. 29, 2005: Aircraft of U.S. Senators Richard Lugar and Barack Obama is detained in Russian city of Perm. Moscow blames overeager local officials.

Aug. 30-Sept. 1, 2005: Second round of textile trade talks between U.S. and China is held in Beijing; results in no agreement.

Aug. 30-Sept. 3, 2005: U.S. Congressmen Jim Leach (R-IA) and Tom Lantos (D-CA) travel to Pyongyang.

Aug. 31, 2005: Alexander Vershbow nominated U.S. ambassador to South Korea.

Aug. 31, 2005: Taiwan's Executive Yuan submits pared down arms procurement package.

Sept. 1-4, 2005: 20 DPRK athletes travel south for 16th Asian athletics championships held at Incheon.

Sept. 2, 2005: Civil Aviation of China approves regular overflights by Taiwan airlines.

Sept. 3, 2005: President Hu's scheduled Sept. 5-8 visit to Washington is postponed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Sept 3, 2005: DPRK Red Cross sends a message of sympathy to hurricane-ravaged U.S.

Sept. 4, 2005: China and Malaysia sign MOU on defense cooperation.

Sept. 5-11, 2005: Pacific Command chief Adm. William Fallon travels to China to promote more military-to-military contact.

Sept. 6, 2005: Philippines Congress dismisses impeachment charges against Pres. Arroyo.

Sept. 6-8, 2005: APEC finance ministers' meeting in Busan, Korea.

Sept. 7, 2005: Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand agree to conduct joint "eye-in-the-sky" air patrols over the Malacca Strait.

Sept. 11, 2005: PM Koizumi's Liberal Democratic Party wins majority of seats (296 out of 480) in the Lower House and coalition partner New Komeito wins 31 seats.

Sept. 11, 2005: FBI analyst and former top Philippine law official are arrested in New Jersey for passing classified FBI information.

Sept. 11-17, 2005: Russia, U.S., and Canada hold *Arctic Sarex 2005* search and rescue exercise in Alaska.

Sept. 13-19, 2005: The fourth round of Six-Party Talks resumes in Beijing.

Sept. 13-28, 2005: Opening of 60th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA).

Sept. 13, 2005: Presidents Bush and Hu meet in New York on sidelines of UNGA meetings to discuss Six-Party Talks and trade.

Sept. 14, 2005: The International Convention on Suppressing Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is signed by U.S.

Sept. 14-16, 2005: World Summit held at UN in New York.

Sept. 16, 2005: Presidents Putin and Bush meet in Washington.

Sept. 17, 2005: U.S. and Japan announces Strategic Development Alliance to coordinate efforts between the two nations on international aid and development.

Sept. 17, 2005: Labor Party wins narrow victory in New Zealand with 40.74 (vs. 39.63) percent of the vote.

Sept. 19, 2005: Thai PM Thaksin Shinawatra visits Pres. Bush in Washington.

Sept. 19, 2005: Six-Party Talks participants release joint statement that commits DPRK to abandon its nuclear program and to rejoin the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

Sept. 20, 2005: DPRK states it would not dismantle its nuclear facilities until it receives a light-water reactor.

Sept. 21, 2005: Vietnam is removed from U.S. watch list of major drug producing and transit countries.

Sept. 21, 2005: Deputy Secretary Zoellick delivers major speech on U.S.-China relations.

Sept. 24, 2005: Hurricane Rita makes landfall between Louisiana-Texas border.

Sept. 24-25, 2005: Annual meetings of World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund in Washington D.C.

Sept. 24-30, 2005: Former KMT Chairman Lien Chan conducts six-day private visit to Russia.

Sept. 26, 2005: Koizumi government institutes 90-day visa waiver for Taiwan tourists.

Sept 26, 2005: IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei confirmed in office for another four years.

Sept. 26-28, 2005: Third round of textile trade talks ended in Washington between U.S. and China without an agreement. The next round is planned for October.

Sept. 27, 2005: ROK Navy sets up hotline with China to avoid accidental armed clashes in the West Sea.

Sept 27, 2005: PRC launches major annual *North Sword 2005* war games in Inner Mongolia, pitting 16,000 troops against each other in a mock battle observed by military officers from a record 24 nations.

Sept. 27, 2005: Tokyo announces it seeks a cut from 2007 in Japan's payout to the UN budget and a hike in the contributions of the PRC and Russia.

Sept 28, 2005: Asst. Sec. Hill says the next thing DPRK needs to do is tell where its nuclear arms facilities are, noting there could be trouble if DPRK refuses to admit to a uranium enrichment program in the next round of talks.

Sept. 30, 2005: Japan's agriculture minister states Japan will not lift ban on U.S. beef based on political pressure, but on science.

Sept. 30-Oct. 1, 2005: Japan and China hold third round of talks over disputed areas of the East China Sea.