

Japan pitches for C Asian pipeline

Tokyo: Japan wants to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to Pakistan and India through Afghanistan, Japan's top diplomat said on Monday.

Foreign Minister Taro Aso expressed his country's hopes to participate after government ministers from Japan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan met in Tokyo and agreed to strengthen cooperation in fighting terrorism and ensuring the safety of regional oil supplies.

A high official of Afghanistan's government attended Monday's meeting as an observer. "Japan suggested building pipelines from Central Asia running through Afghanistan (to Pak-



Afghanistan's Dadfar Spanta (right) with Japan's Taro Aso

istan and India) to the sea, and Central Asian countries have accepted the suggestion. That's why the Afghan official is here," Aso told reporters.

No concrete plans for the pipeline have yet been drawn up, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

Earlier, Aso and his counterparts from the four Central Asian countries approved an action plan calling for joint efforts to combat drug trafficking, fight poverty, promote human rights and boost trade in the region, the ministry said.

Central Asia, a predominantly Muslim region which borders Afghanistan, saw a spread of radical Islamic groups after the 1991 Soviet collapse.

The statement, issued after the meeting, said ensuring the region's stability and prosperity is vital to preventing terrorism and

drug proliferation.

Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Dadfar Spanta also pledged to cooperate with the five countries. "Afghanistan will take every necessary step for safety and promote cooperation with Central Asian countries and Japan," he said.

Securing a stable oil supply in Central Asia is crucial for energy-poor Japan. The meeting, dubbed the 'Central Asia plus Japan Dialogue' was the second since August 2004.

Aso was to also set to have separate bilateral meetings with each minister from the participating nations to discuss regional and bilateral issues, according to ministry official Keisuke Tamura. AP

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Japan to ✓ consult U.S. on U.N. 271 Council seat

P. S. Suryanarayana 19-11

SINGAPORE: Japan has indicated its intention to consult the U.S. on the best means to secure permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

Last year, Japan had joined India, Germany, and Brazil, under the rubric of

Group of Four (G-4), to press for this status for each of them as part of Security Council reforms. The G-4's move did not gain necessary support during consultations among the U.N. members.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe told journalists in Tokyo on Friday that his country was now evolving, in association with the U.S., a draft resolution on Security Council expansion.

He said Japan had, therefore, not joined the other members of the G-4 when they "resubmitted" the group's collective draft at the U.N. headquarters on Thursday.

He said Japan understood the strategy of the other three to "re-submit" the old draft to keep the issue in focus and gain primacy for it over a possible counter-draft from the African Union.

THE HINDU

23 APR 2006

Truce at last: Japan withdraws East Sea survey plans

AP & Korea Herald/ANN

SEOUL, April 22. — South Korea and Japan defused a tense, high-seas standoff today with a compromise that sees Japan withdraw plans to survey disputed waters and South Korea delay efforts to register Korean names for underwater features in the area, officials said.

Both countries agreed to hold more talks on demarcating their sea boundaries as early as next month, as part of a deal that wrapped two-straight days of negotiations amid concerns of a possible maritime confrontation.

"It's good that we were able to avoid anything unforeseen that could have

occurred if the situation had continued as it was," said Japanese undersecretary for foreign affairs Mr Shotaro Yachi, Japan's lead negotiator.

Sparks flew between the neighbouring countries last Friday when Japan declared its plans to explore the overlapping marine territory in the East Sea.

Describing it as a provocation, President Mr Roh Moo-hyun signalled that Seoul will beef up its traditionally low-key diplomatic approach.

A fleet of Korean patrol ships are currently stationed near Dokdo.

On Tuesday, Tokyo dispatched two vessels to embark on the survey mission. But the bilateral

standoff and huge tides have left the ships anchored near the port of Sakaiminato in eastern Japan.

This is not the first time Japan has entered Korean waters, according to evidence from a Korean organisation.

Data showed that Japan made six unlawful ventures into Korean con-

trolled waters during 2000 and 2001. Within this sea territory, Korea may exercise necessary control to prevent and punish infringement of its sovereign rights.

Japan has invaded Korea's exclusive economic zone on several occasions when ships sought to conduct marine explorations, the organisation said.

5-11-2004

AP & Korea Herald/ANN

Japan warns of sanctions against N Korea

Associated Press

SEOUL, June 23 (AP) — The 50th anniversary of the Korean War passed amid a worsening security crisis today with Japan warning of potentially crippling oil and food sanctions against North Korea if it carries out a long-range missile test.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun told war veterans that the North's apparent move to launch missiles shows that

security on the Peninsula is "still volatile" but stressed that Seoul will continue reconciliation efforts.

Japanese foreign minister Mr. Tarō Aso warned that Tokyo would consider the suspension of oil and food sales if the missile is launched, accusing the North of intimidation.

"All options are on the table," Mr. Aso said on public broadcaster NHK. "I believe public opinion would condone sanctions,

even on oil or food." The 56th anniversary of the still unresolved war came amid alleged actions that analysts say would enable the North to test-launch a missile capable of reaching Japan and parts of the United States.

Both USA and Japan have made clear that sanctions are an option if North Korea refuses to cooperate, and there has been speculation that the United States could try to intercept

the missile with its fledgling missile defence system.

South Korea's Prime Minister Mr. Han Myung-sook urged the North to return to six party nuclear talks as soon as possible, terming the nuclear issue "the biggest security threat" to the South. The talks include North and South Korea, Japan, the United States, China and Russia and have been deadlocked since

November.

"North Korea should fully recognise concerns of the international community and should resolve this issue soon," Mr. Han said during a war anniversary ceremony. North Korea meanwhile vowed to repel any invasion by the United States which the North claims launched the 1950-53 conflict.

"If the American imperialists set another fire of war ... our army and people will

finally settle our battle with them by mercilessly crushing and sweeping out the aggressors," the North's Rodong Sinmun newspaper said in a commentary carried by the official Korean Central News Agency.

Intelligence reports say fuel tanks have been seen around a missile at the North's launch site on its northeastern coast, but officials say it's difficult to determine from satellite photos if the rocket is being

filled.

In Washington the Pentagon's missile defence chief, General Henry A. Obering III, said he has little doubt that U.S. intercept rockets would hit and destroy North Korean missile on flight path if President George W. Bush gave the order to do so.

In New York, US Ambassador to the United Nations Mr. John Bolton said the United States had approached the North

Koreans last weekend and told them that they thought the idea of a launch was a very bad idea." Pyongyang has said it is willing to talk to the United States about its missile concerns repeating its long-held desire for direct meetings with the Americans. Washington, however, has refused, insisting it will only meet the North amid six-nation talks, deadlocked since last November.

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