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briefly

DPRK Official denies policy change

An official of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on Sunday denied any policy change in his country.

The spokesman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea said there cannot be any slightest change in all policies of the DPRK as they are meant to carry forward and accomplish the ideas of past leaders.

For decades hostile forces have been "trumpeting 'reform and opening' to impose their corrupt system upon the DPRK", he said, adding that they now have "hallucination that such move is taking place in the DPRK".

The spokesman recognized that his country is "putting forward new strategic and tactical policies in keeping with the changing and developing situation," but stressed that the present leadership has not "broken with the past".

UGANDA Ebola outbreak claims 14

An outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus that erupted in western Uganda at the start of July has killed 14 people, the World Health Organisation said on Saturday.

The latest outbreak was in Kibaale, around 200 kilometers west of the capital Kampala.

"We have confirmed 20 people who have contracted the virus of which 14 have died," Joaquim Sewaka, WHO Uganda representative, told AFP.

XINHUA—AFP

Diaoyu Islands ad stirs tensions

By WANG CHENYAN
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The Tokyo Metropolitan Government fueled tensions between Japan and China as it took out an advertisement in Friday's Wall Street Journal seeking US support for its so-called purchase plan of the Diaoyu Islands.

Observers said the provocation suggests Japan is anxious to get the United States involved in a dispute with its neighbor.

According to Kyodo News, the advertisement took up two-thirds of a single page in the newspaper. "To the American People from Tokyo, Japan," the advertisement said. "It is with the hope of gaining the understanding and support of the American people for our purchase of the islands that we are running this issue advocacy ad today."

It claimed a developing China is putting pressure on the waters and even warned "failure to support the Asian nations confronting China would result in the United States losing the entire Pacific Ocean".

The advertisement is the latest trick by Japan's right-wing activists since Shintaro Ishihara, the Tokyo governor, announced a plan to buy the islands in April, analysts said.

Shi Yinhong, professor of international relations and director of the Center on



As for the long term, their target is to seize the Diaoyu Islands as Japan's territory, and their recent move shows the government is processing its strategy."

ZHOU YONGSHENG
EXPERT ON JAPANESE
STUDIES AT CHINA FOREIGN
AFFAIRS UNIVERSITY

American Studies at Renmin University of China, said Tokyo expected to arouse "instant sympathy" from American politicians through the advertisement.

"Tokyo ran the advertisement when concerns on China's naval movements flared up not only in Japan but also among some ASEAN members. Those sensational words have amplified Ishihara's voice and provided an updated and specific interpretation of the 'China Threat Theory'. It aims at catering to Washington's strategy on the western Pacific Ocean."

Zhou Yongsheng, an expert on Japanese studies at China Foreign Affairs University, echoed Shi's analysis.

Zhou said Ishihara, the 80-year-old nationalist, might not have a specific goal other than boosting his image and obtaining more political capital.

"The Democratic Party of Japan is using the issue for more votes in the short term. But as for the long term, their target is to seize the Diaoyu Islands as Japan's territory, and their recent move shows the government is processing its strategy."

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said on Friday his government should take "resolute actions" against any "illegal" incursion of neighboring nations into Japan's "territorial waters".

Satoshi Morimoto, Japan's defense minister, also raised the possibility of mobilizing the country's Self-Defense Forces when commenting on the Chinese vessels sailing near the islands in the East China Sea.

Beijing in response expressed serious concern and slammed the statements of Noda and his cabinet members as "extremely irresponsible".

Japan's Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba said on last Tuesday that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton "had confirmed" that the islands fall within the scope of the US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security.



EDLIB NEWS NETWORK / VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

A boy poses for a picture in Maarat al-Numaan, Idlib province, northern Syria. Russia on Saturday said it wasn't "thinking about" granting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad asylum.

Russia 'not thinking about asylum' for Syria's Assad

By AGENCIES
in Moscow and Teheran

Russia has made no agreement to grant Syrian President Bashar al-Assad asylum and is "not even thinking about" doing so, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Saturday.

The remarks fell short of a statement that Russia would not consider taking in Assad but were among Moscow's strongest indications yet that it is not planning to do so.

"We have said more than once publicly that we are not even thinking about this," Lavrov said when asked about media reports Russia was ready to offer Assad asylum.

"There is no agreement, no thought about this issue," Lavrov told reporters on a flight to Mos-

cow from the Black Sea resort of Sochi, where he and President Vladimir Putin met Japan's foreign minister.

"This is all a provocation by those who want to place all the blame for what is happening in Syria on us and on China."

Lavrov reiterated statements by Putin and other Russian officials that Moscow does not have a special relationship with the Syrian government, suggesting it might make more sense for a Western nation to take him in.

"We are not and have not been the closest friends of the Syrian regime. Its best friends are in Europe, and if somebody wants to resolve this issue in such a way, let them think about their capabilities."

Russia has said it is not propping up Assad and would accept his exit

from power in a political transition decided by the Syrian people, but that his exit must be a precondition and he must not be pushed out by external forces.

In Teheran, visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem said on Sunday that his government is committed to implementing Annan's peace plan, at a press conference with his Iranian counterpart Ali Akbar Salehi during his visit to Iran.

He also said that the rebel forces in Aleppo "will definitely be defeated" by the government troops.

"We believe that all the anti-Syrian forces have gathered in Aleppo to fight the government ... and they will definitely be defeated," he said.

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