

Shanghai Cooperation Update

by Paul Wolf, 11 September 2003

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Introduction

I've mentioned this organization before, to suggest a possible US motive in attacking Afghanistan, as well as a motive to have killed Ahmad Shah Massood, the Afghan commander assassinated on Sept 9, 2001. See <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/ShanghaiCO.html> for the background.

You have to read Philippine and Chinese news agencies, translated into English, if you want to learn anything about this. It's not been reported in the western news media at all.

- Paul

RP, China To Push Formation of Asian Anti-Terror Alliance

Phillippine Headline News Online

MANILA, September 1, 2003 (STAR) By Paolo Romero - The Philippines and China will form an anti-terror alliance, along with Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia and four former Soviet republics in Central Asia.

"We must establish strong linkages to put an end to terrorism," said Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. after meeting with Wu Bangguo, chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress of China.

The alliance will also include the Central Asian republics of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, which comprise the Shanghai Cooperation Organization with Russia and China, he added.

De Venecia said it has been established that the Southeast Asia-based Jemaah Islamiyah terrorist group has links with al-Qaeda, which operates in Central Asia.

Wu said his talks with De Venecia covered "a lot of issues" on regional security and terrorism.

The two officials said terrorists and weapons are being moved from Central Asia via Russia and China to Southeast Asia.

The Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia must forge an agreement on cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, they added.

Last year, the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia agreed to exchange intelligence information and training programs, and hold joint patrols on their common borders as part of their campaign against terrorism.

Wu arrived in the country on Saturday, along with other Asian parliamentary leaders to take part in the five-day 4th General Assembly of the 38-nation Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace, which starts today.

Also, Wu proposed yesterday joint oil exploration and development in the disputed Spratlys area of the South China Sea in what has been termed a breakthrough in easing tensions in a potential regional flashpoint.

Wu made the proposal during a meeting with congressional leaders, according to de Venecia.

Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam, as well as China and Taiwan claim the Spratly islands, a potentially oil-rich archipelago.

"Mr. Wu proposed a joint exploration and development programme in the Spratlys" beginning with the Philippines and China and covering the other claimants as well, De Venecia told reporters.

He was speaking at a joint media conference with Wu after the meeting, which also agreed to boost counter terrorism cooperation between Southeast Asia, China, Russia and Central Asia.

Wu described the meeting as an "in-depth exchange of views" but did not give details of his joint exploration and development plan.

He stressed however that "peace and stability is the common task facing every country in the world and is the pre-requisite of economic development and welfare of the people.

"Peace and development carries pragmatic significance," Wu added.

De Venecia said that proposed Spratlys joint development "would lead to a diplomatic breakthrough in this area following the important statement of China earlier and the Philippines and the other ASEAN countries to agree on a common code of conduct in the South China Sea."

The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) last year signed a treaty with China aimed at preventing an escalation of tensions over the Spratlys.

All parties agreed to refrain from activities that would escalate tensions in the region.

The deal involved the four Southeast Asian nations and China, but excludes Taiwan.

Vietnam and China have clashed twice over the Spratlys, in 1988 and 1992, while skirmishes have also occurred between other countries, antagonizing relations while threatening to undermine regional security.

Although it is believed the archipelago sits on top of vast reserves of oil and gas, their commercial potential has never been confirmed. The islands also flank international shipping lanes.

De Venecia said the proposed joint exploration and development program would spur economic development in Southeast Asia.

"These areas are idle and we might as well let them bloom and for joint profit sharing or multiple profit sharing by all," De Venecia said.

Harry Angping, chairman of the trade and industry panel of the Philippine Congress, said it was also agreed Sunday that representatives of a major Chinese oil exploration company be sent to Manila in November to look into joint exploration efforts.

Wu and De Venecia also discussed the possibility of linking anti-terrorism coalitions in Southeast Asia and China, Russia and Central Asia.

Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand have forged a counter-terrorism pact focused on sharing intelligence, resources and personnel to fight terrorism in Southeast Asia.

"Hopefully we can now discuss possible ways of cooperation between the ASEAN powers on the anti-terror front together with China, Russia and new Central Asian republics," De Venecia said.

Wu, who arrived Saturday on a four-day visit to Manila, is also the outgoing president of the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace, whose five-day general assembly begins in Manila today. -- AFP

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R.P., China push new pact vs terrorism

ABS-CBN News, August 31, 2003

The Philippine and Chinese governments agreed Sunday to expand and strengthen efforts to contain terrorism in Asia through the signing of a cooperation agreement between members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization led by Beijing.

This was the highlight of the bilateral talks between Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. and visiting Chairman Wu Bangguo of the standing committee of China's National People's Congress, held at the Manila Hotel.

Wu arrived in Manila on Saturday for the Fourth General Assembly of the Association of Asian Parliamentarians for Peace (AAPP), of which he is the outgoing president.

In a joint press communiqué, de Venecia and Wu pledged continued support for the campaign against international terrorism, as embodied in the agreements initiated by Manila and Beijing.

Through de Venecia's initiative, an antiterrorism agreement was signed among the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. Two more countries -- Cambodia and Thailand -- have signed the accord.

China is also the prime mover of SCO or the so-called Shanghai Six made up of China, Russia and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

De Venecia said the antiterrorism agreement is important in "stopping the flow of terrorists from South Asia and the Southeast Asian region."

The two sides also sealed several bilateral agreements, including a Currency Swap Agreement between Manila and Beijing; and a \$400-million Preferential Buyer's Credit between the Export Import Bank of China and the Department of Finance, to finance the North Luzon Railways project.

Beijing has committed to help to finance the government's ambitious Railways Modernization Program -- to upgrade existing railway systems and build new ones throughout the country.

The currency swap agreement will enable the Bangko Sentral to swap Philippine pesos for China's Renminbi (yuan) up to the equivalent of US\$1 billion, effective for three years for balance of payments and short-term liquidity support.

The two leaders affirmed their countries' commitment to pursuing a peaceful approach and joint economic development and exploration of the disputed Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

They also agreed to step up cooperation in two-way investment and in the aggressive pursuit of drug traffickers and narcotic cartels.

De Venecia and Wu positively assessed the trade and economic relations between Manila and Beijing, with Wu agreeing to help promote tourism and other bilateral exchanges that include the Chinese government's commitment to ensure the welfare of the 250,000 Filipino workers in Hong Kong and Macau.

The AAPP General Assembly formally opens today. One of the conference's highlights is de

Venecia's assumption to the group's presidency, replacing Wu. J. Cadacio

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Foreign Observers Attend Chinese War Games for the First Time

People's Daily Online, August 26, 2003

Military observers from 15 countries Monday watched live maneuvers by Chinese military forces for the first time.

At a military practice base in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, 27 military observers from the United States, Britain, France, Russia, Germany, Canada, Thailand and other countries watched a modern fierce battle drill participated in by 5,000 Chinese soldiers from various branches of the armed forces.

After the six-hour practice, organized by China's Beijing Military Command, Steven Krstic from Britain said it was the firsttime for him to see so much Chinese military equipment as well as so many different kinds of Chinese armaments.

These war games were very successful, and it was good for Chinato invite foreigners to observe them, said Ahmet Celik from Turkey.

The foreign military observers were the first overseas guests to be invited to China's largest tactical drill base.

The purpose of inviting foreign observers to watch Chinese military maneuvers is to adapt to the world new military renovation, and to strengthen exchanges between the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with foreign armed forces, sources with China's Ministry of National Defense said.

On Aug. 6, China and the four other Shanghai Cooperation Organization members -- Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan -- launched their first joint anti-terror military exercises in Kazakhstan and China.

The PLA has established military ties with the armed forces of over 140 countries, and in the past 20 years more than 2,500 foreign military delegations have visited China, according to the Ministry of National Defence.

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