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COLUMN ONE

Japan Eyes Stardom in Space

■ Prospects of traversing the heavens leave the nation moonstruck over the scientific—and commercial—possibilities.

By KARL SCHOENBERGER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

TOKYO—Wataru Tanaka, a science fiction writer and self-described "aerospace exploration commentator," nearly became the first Japanese to venture into space. He hatched an outrageous plan four years ago to bring home a surplus American rocket and blast himself into orbit.

But Tanaka, 58, whose credits include a book titled "The Taste of Lettuce Eaten in Space," gave up his dream after running into a wall of red tape. He counted 26 laws and regulations administered by six government agencies that made his extraterrestrial mission all but impossible.

Tanaka's countrymen are not far behind, though. After decades of quiet, modest research and development that attracted scant notice from abroad, Japan's official—and unofficial—space programs are now reaching critical mass. The effort could open yet another field where Japanese technological prowess translates into an economic challenge.

Already, Japan has become the third country, after the United States and the Soviet Union, to take aim at the moon.

On Jan. 24, a small scientific research institute run on a shoestring budget by the Education Ministry launched "Muses-A," a lunar orbiter that, if successful, next month will become the first object from Earth to approach the moon since the Soviets sent up an unmanned probe in 1976.

And in a peculiar drama that gives a new meaning to the "space race," Japanese government astronauts and private cosmonauts are competing to see who will be the first to take a Rising Sun flag to the heavens.

Japan's primary space agency, the National Space Development Agency or NASDA, is training two men and a woman to serve as payload specialists on the U.S. space shuttle Atlantis in a flight scheduled for June, 1991.

At the same time, a commercial television network, Tokyo Broadcasting System, has paid a hefty sum, reportedly \$10 million, to Moscow for the privilege of sending one of its journalists aboard the Soviet space station Mir in a mission that could come as early as the end of this year.

NASDA, meanwhile, is joining the European and Canadian space agencies in cooperative development of the U.S. space station Freedom. Japan is building a \$2-billion laboratory module for the space station, which is expected to start orbiting the Earth in 1998.

On the immediate horizon, the Japanese are focusing their efforts on commercial satellite launchings and other practical applications, such as last Wednesday's launch of a marine observation satellite by NASDA.

Please see SPACE, A16

Hard Test Lies Ahead for Cheney

By JOHN M. BRODER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

WASHINGTON—During the tense early hours of the failed December coup attempt against Philippine President Corason Aquino, a call came into the Pentagon that still grates on Defense Secretary Dick Cheney.

Rep. Stephen J. Solarz (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asia, wanted to know if an Air Force plane could fly him to Manila so that he could monitor the still-unfolding coup and offer the Administration his unsolicited advice.

The request was denied because Philippine airfields were closed. But it reinvigorated the debate.

Please see DEFENSE, A20

Moscow Offer: All Forces Out of Central Europe

By MICHAEL PARKS
TIMES STAFF WRITER

MOSCOW—The Soviet Union, declaring the Cold War over, on Sunday stated its readiness to withdraw all of its troops from Central Europe, many of them unilaterally, in an effort to accelerate the negotiations now under way on reducing conventional forces in Europe.

In a formal government statement, the Soviet Union said that it expects to conclude agreements shortly with Czechoslovakia and Hungary on the withdrawal of its troops from those countries, that it is willing to reach a similar agreement with Poland and that it wants to speed up its pullout from East Germany.

Moscow, expressing the hope that it could withdraw all of its 555,000 troops from Europe within five years, called for the bolder moves at the negotiations in Vienna between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Pact on military cutbacks.

Noting the growing rapprochement between East and West and attempting to speed the pace of negotiations to match the Kremlin urged other countries "not to miss this historic chance and to supplement political détente by the relaxation of tensions in the military field."

In declaring its readiness to withdraw all its forces from Central Europe, the Soviet Union again sought to set the political and moral priorities in negotiations with the West and to overtake the recent proposal by President Bush that Moscow and Washington reduce their force levels in Central Europe to 195,000 each.

That figure is too high for Moscow to accept as a ceiling, Secretary of State James A. Baker III was told during his discussions with President Mikhail S. Gorbachev here last week, and the Soviet Union is more determined than

Please see TROOPS, A7

'Freedom March Irreversible,' Mandela Tells His Supporters



Nelson and Winnie Mandela acknowledge cheers as they leave Victor Verster Prison near Cape Town.

■ South Africa: Freed black leader declares that 'factors which necessitated armed struggle still exist. . . . Homecoming marred by police clashes with rampaging youths.'

By SCOTT KRAFT
TIMES STAFF WRITER

CAPE TOWN, South Africa—Marking what many herald as a new era in South African politics, a beaming Nelson R. Mandela walked out of prison Sunday, hand in hand with his wife, and told tens of thousands of supporters at a rally later that "our march to freedom is irreversible."

"I stand here before you not as a prophet but as a humble servant of you the people," the 71-year-old black nationalist said, reading his 25-minute speech slowly in a strong, resonant voice that had been silenced since 1964.

"Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today, and I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands," he added.

Mandela sounded the twin themes of conflict and negotiation, saying that "the factors which necessitated the armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue." But he added the hope that "a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement would be created soon, so that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle."

And he urged "our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa. The freedom movement is a political home for you, too."

Mandela's homecoming rally was marred by repeated police clashes with about 100 youths who smashed windows in stores near the parade grounds outside Cape Town's City Hall. More than 100 people, many of them children and bystanders, were injured when police opened fire with shotguns containing birdshot. Police killed one young man as he was breaking into a store.

An estimated 50,000 blacks and whites had gathered on a hot Southern Hemisphere summer afternoon on the unshaded parade grounds to welcome Mandela, and as the afternoon dragged on, many were seen drinking standing water from the concrete pavement.

Police kept a low profile until youths from the rally began breaking into nearby stores, which are closed on Sundays, and stealing everything from soft drinks to shoes. Visibly nervous white officials.

Please see MANDELA, A11

More on S. Africa

■ MAN OF PRINCIPLE—Twenty-seven years in prison have not softened Mandela's support of armed struggle as a tactic for winning racial equality. A11

■ DAY IN COURT—A look back at the day the ANC leader drew a life sentence for a cause he said he would die for. A11

■ L.A. CHEERS—Half a world away, Mandela's triumphant exit from prison has Los Angeles reveling. A13

Weather Aids Cleanup of Two-Thirds of Spill

■ Disaster: But a cold front is coming that could push more oil ashore.

By JIM NEWTON
and DAN WEIKEL
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Blessed with four days of near-perfect weather for cleanup operations, Coast Guard officials estimated Sunday that two-thirds of the crude oil from a 394,000-gallon offshore spill has been recovered or broken up by evaporation and ocean currents.

"From the overall spill, we have picked up and confirmed as oil about 23%," Petty Officer Dennis Hall said. "Another 43% of the spill has either evaporated or naturally disintegrated into the water."

That leaves about 131,087 gallons of oil in the ocean, covering a 60-square-mile area, though much of that is only a light film or "sheen," Coast Guard officials said. The oil in the water still poses serious hazards to environmentally sensitive wetlands along a long stretch of the Orange County coastline and, if a predicted cold front arrives this week, could return to soil beaches.

Wind shifts Sunday evening brought heavy concentrations of oil back to some Orange County beaches. Huntington Beach was



Special Report: Soiled Shores

The Times today presents a comprehensive look at the Southland's worst oil spill in 21 years—including its effect on marine life along the Orange County shoreline and the debate over offshore oil unloading, Section T.

reporting thick oil near the pier and along a 3.5-mile stretch to the north, but Seal Beach and Long Beach.

Please see SPILL, A21

Hopes for Peace Embodied in Freed Leader

By SCOTT KRAFT
TIMES STAFF WRITER

CAPE TOWN, South Africa—When a biographer of Nelson R. Mandela offered the African National Congress a look at her new book a few months ago, rebel leader Oliver R. Tambo asked her to take out the tender love letters that Mandela had written from prison to his wife, Winnie.

"He thought it wasn't dignified for a man of Mandela's stature," recalled author Fatima Meer. But Mandela overruled his former law partner, telling Meer: "You leave it all in. It's true. There's no reason for us to hide these things."

The ANC has attempted for 27 years to polish the image of its jailed and unseen leader, but that exercise ended for good Sunday when the legend, gray-haired and full of vigor, walked out of prison and became a human being again.

As he waded into the tens of thousands who turned out for a glimpse of him, the ANC pondered what role to assign one of the world's best-known political leaders in an organization that favors collective decision-making.

Mandela says that he's a "rank-and-file" member of the ANC. But the world and most black South Africans know better. Not only do they consider the freed Mandela

Please see ANC, A10

THE TIMES POLL

Most Want Coliseum Saved and Wouldn't Miss Raiders

By CATHLEEN DECKER
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Unlike Los Angeles Raiders owner Al Davis, Southern Californians don't want to see the Coliseum demolished, and they wouldn't mind much if Davis made good on his threat to take his football team elsewhere.

If Davis and his Raiders were looking forward to fans clamoring for them to stay, they will be sorely tested by the conclusions of a new Los Angeles Times Poll of 1,901 residents in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

Do you want to raze the Coliseum? No, said 54%.

Would you be upset if the Raiders moved? Not much, said 83%. The Raiders not only have few friends in their effort to demolish

the Coliseum, they also have fewer avid supporters, compared to other local teams. The Lakers, the Dodgers, the Rams—even "I follow no team closely"—rank higher in popularity than the Raiders, although the football team did out-poll the Clippers and the Kings.

The Times Poll, conducted Feb. 3-7, sought to gauge public opinion on two proposals emanating from Davis' public struggle over the fate of the Coliseum and the turf from which he will mount future assaults on the Super Bowl.

The poll, directed by L.A. Lewis, has a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

Under a plan conceived by the stadium's private managers to satisfy Davis, the 67-year-old Coliseum—the only site of two modern

Please see POLL, A26

INSIDE TODAY'S TIMES

FIGHT OVER COURT PAPERS

Lawyers for a Mexican businessman accused in the murder of a U.S. drug agent demand the judge show them court documents or quit the case. A3

BAKER'S MISSION ENDS

Secretary of State James A. Baker III visited Romania, winding up his mission to encourage democratization in three East European nations. A6

PHILIPPINE BASE TALKS

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said the Pentagon wants to keep two key bases in the Philippines but only on terms favorable to the United States. A19

WEATHER: Mostly cloudy skies today and tonight with partly cloudy skies Tuesday. Civic Center low/high today: 50/69. Details: B4

■ INDEX TO FEATURES ON A2



JOE KENNEDY / Los Angeles Times
Wilson addresses supporters.

PETE WILSON ENTERS RACE

U.S. Sen. Pete Wilson officially entered the race for the Republican nomination for governor with strong speeches against crime and criminals. A3

In Black Townships, Time for Rejoicing, Not Sleeping

By JULIE CART
TIMES STAFF WRITER

CROSSROADS TOWNSHIP, South Africa—The sun rose hot on this black township Sunday morning, but its people did not. After a night of joyous celebrations following the news of Nelson R. Mandela's impending release, no one, it seems, had even gone to sleep.

By early morning, this suburban Cape Town settlement was teeming with activity on a day usually reserved for quiet rest and church-going. The scene here and in the neighboring Nyanga township was anything but tranquil. Cars sped through the dirt streets, horns blaring, raised fists jutting from car windows.

Shouts of "Viva! Viva Mandela!" rang out. Residents of this squatter's camp spent a hot summer's day dancing, singing and rejoicing

over the release of the world's best-known prisoner. Mandela was released, after 27 years in prison, Sunday afternoon from Victor Verster Prison in Paarl and traveled by motorcade to Cape Town.

It was all happening miles away, but Crossroads somehow seemed the hub of the universe. This is an area of tin shanties and earthen huts. It is a place where electricity is a costly luxury and the electronic media hardly penetrate. Nevertheless, the news of Mandela's release traveled quite efficiently—township style.

"Oh yes, we ran from place to place, telling everyone," said two schoolboys, who had been debating whether to go to school the next day or stay home and celebrate.

Those who had heard the news via television or radio Saturday evening became carriers of the

Please see TOWNSHIPS, A13