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## chinese surgeon accuses government of hiding extent of virus

By Christopher Bodeen THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING — A prominent Chinese doctor charged Wednesday that the mainland government covered up details of the spread of SARS in Beijing, and an American man with the disease was declared dead in Hong Kong after being driven across the border in an ambulance.

Other parts of Asia nervously invoked extra precautions to contain severe acute respiratory syndrome, which has infected around 2,700 people globally and killed at least 106.

The accusations of a government cover-up from Dr. Jiang Yanyong, retired chief of surgery for a Beijing military hospital, came as news surfaced that one of Beijing's hospitals e women and had shut down because of SARS.

Jiang said doctors and nurses at two other hospitals told him at least seven deaths have occurred in their hospitals and mbing because that there were 106 cases of the disease in Beijing — more nothing to do to than five times the figure announced by authorities. The on allied force Health Ministry reports four deaths and 19 cases in Beijing. Doctors and administrators reached by telephone at the

hospitals cited by Jiang refused to comment. World Health Organization investigators said they met-- are in Afghanist with Health Minister Zhang Wenkang and Vice Premier Wu el fighters from to can regime, al-Qat Yi on Wednesday, discussing "the concern that there are many rumors and no clear answers," said Henk Bekedam, the WHO representative in China.

"They definitely said they will be following up ... and pased at Shkin with this high level of commitment, very soon we'll get is been the target some real answers," Bekedam said.

> At the People's Armed Police General Hospital in Beijing, a receptionist who answered the telephone said the facility had closed five days ago after staff members fell ill. She wouldn't give her name.

> A sign blocking the entrance to the hospital said, "Adjustments being made inside, treatment temporarily suspended, entry forbidden."

Meanwhile, James Salisbury, a 52-year-old U.S. citizen and its priests to stop hearing confessions. English instructor at a polytechnic institute in Guangdong rovince, was taken from a hospital in the border city of Shenzhen to Hong Kong, according to a family friend.

The friend, David Westbrook, said Salisbury showed no signs f life when he was put in an ambulance and driven across the order to Hong Kong. Salisbury's 6-year-old son, Mickey, also Mun Hospital and in stable condition, said a government spokeswoman, Josephine Yu.

Westbrook, said Salisbury had been ill for about a month but thought he had the flu and only sought treatment nine days ago. Salisbury had split his time between teaching in China and Orem, Utah, where he lived, according to one of his daughters.

Another American citizen, Shanghai businessman Johnny Chen, died March 13 in Hong Kong after becoming ill in Vietnam. There have been no SARS deaths in the United States, where there are 149 suspected cases.

The communist government has faced criticism abroad and from ordinary Chinese about its sluggish release of information about SARS. Despite recent pledges of openness by senior officials, the Health Ministry and other offices decline to release details about deaths and cases of infection.

The outbreak has prompted the cancellation of numerous events in China, from rock concerts to trade conventions. On Wednesday the vice premier pledged to help foreign visitors by setting up English hot lines and Web sites in major cities to deal with queries about SARS; hospitals will make special medical services available to foreigners as well, he said.

In the United States, three U.S. medical workers who cared for SARS patients likely have contracted the disease, according to Dr. Julie Gerberding, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. There are 154 suspected cases in the United States.

Other countries took new actions to stop the disease's

- Concerns about possible exposure to SARS prompted health authorities in Toronto to close a high school and put about 200 workers at a business under quarantine. More than 200 probable or suspect cases have been reported in Canada, including 10 deaths and about 50 people who have recovered.

Malaysia stopped issuing visas Wednesday for most Chinese travelers, citing fears of SARS.

- Indonesia warned its citizens to cease spitting in pub-

Singapore's Roman Catholic Church reportedly ordered

Thailand's leader promised to pay \$48,000 to families of anyone who dies from SARS and can prove it was contracted during next week's traditional New Year celebrations. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's unusual offer demonstrated his confidence that "there's no SARS" in his country.

uffering from SARS, was being treated in Hong Kong's Tuen than 200 people go home from quarantine camps after they

SARS may spread much like the common cold Scientists suspect that SARS may be caused by a new form of the coronavirus, the virus that causes the common cold. It appears to spread in a similar way. An infected (2) the virus You inhale particle and it attaches to cells lining the sinuses in your nose 3 The virus attacks the cells in the When viewed sinuses and under a reproduces microscope, The host cells coronaviruses

SOURCES: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: "How Viruses Work"

have a distinctive

crown-like halo.

showed no signs of SARS. But there were two more deaths, bringing the total to 27, and 42 more cases reported there Wednesday as the illness continued its climb in the hardest-

SARS has killed more than 100 people worldwide and sickened more than 2,700.

China has reported 53 deaths — all but 10 of them in the southern province of Guangdong, where officials say the world's first known SARS case occurred in November.

The World Health Organization and several governments have issued warnings against traveling to Guangdong. A team of WHO investigators visited the province over the weekend in hopes of tracing the source of the disease, but said they hadn't found anything conclusive.

Despite the lack of answers, Dr. Meirion Evans, a Welsh epidemiologist and a member of the multinational WHO team, said insights gained there would be invaluable to learning more about the disease.

## U.N. will not censor N.Korea arms plans

By Edith Lederer THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ith, moved to oth UNITED NATIONS — The N. Security Council refused that such a redeple Wednesday to act on a U.S. vulnerable to No request to condemn North des did not disc Korea for pulling out of a because of strong opposition tions as a declaration of war. officials agreed not weaken then from China and Russia.

> expression of concern acceptable outcome." xpressed hope that North Korea will not reject diplomatic efforts address its nuclear program" and warned Pyongyang against my "further escalatory steps."

The only way the problem is going to be solved is direct bilateral dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang.

> - Sergey Lavrov Russia's U.N. ambassador

At the heart of the dispute is orth Korea's insistence on irect talks with the United tates, which it views as a threat to its security.

The Bush administration, which has called North Korea part of an "axis of evil" along with Iran and Iraq, insists that the problem be addressed in a multiateral forum, including countries threatened by Pyongyang's nuclear program.

China, Russia, the European Union and Secretary-General Kofi Annan have tried to get North Korea and the United States to the negotiating table. U.N. envoy Maurice Strong, who

just returned from Pyongyang, said Tuesday both sides now agree to hold direct and multilateral talks, but haven't agreed on the format.

North Korea has warned that any Security Council action would undermine peace efforts and it has reiterated several times troops, Lawlesss treaty to curb nuclear weapons that it would regard U.N. sanc-

With such high stakes, council But U.S. Ambassador John members chose to take no action, hoping to instead find an acceptable framework for talks.

"The council will continue to follow up developments of this matter. There is nothing else to add to this," said council president Adolfo Aguilar Zinser, Mexico's U.N. Ambassador.

China's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday the Security Council had no business discussing North Korea's nuclear program.

Leaving Wednesday's meeting, China's U.N. Ambassador, Wang Yingfan, said, "I think it was a good discussion. All the efforts are being done, and will continue, to promote political dialogue — that's what I stressed."

'The only way the problem is going to be solved is direct bilatdialogue between Washington and Pyongyang, and whatever multilateral formats are used should be in addition to said Russia's U.N. Ambassador, Sergey Lavrov.

The standoff began in October when U.S. officials said North Korea admitted it had a clandestine nuclear program. North Korea's U.N. Ambassador Pak Gil Yon called the report "a rumor.

Washington suspended fuel shipments that were part of a 1994 agreement with the United States that froze North Korea's nuclear program. The North retaliated by expelling U.N. nuclear monitors and withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as of Thursday.



