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South Korean President Lee Myung-bak, left, Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, center, and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao end their summit in South Korea Sunday.

Thailand hunts for political center

BY JAMES HOOKWAY

BANGKOK—Thailand's Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva is launching a charm offensive in an effort to win over the political middle ground after the worst political violence in modern Thai history, saying he is more interested in securing peace than holding onto power.

But the aftermath of May's bloody street battles and a deepening feud with ousted leader Thaksin Shinawatra show that Mr. Abhisit has a long way to go.

Early Monday, Mr. Thaksin's legal team said it had hired a Dutch war-crimes specialist to investigate whether it can prosecute Mr. Abhisit's government overseas for alleged human-rights abuses during the Thai army's May 19 crackdown on opposition protesters. Though it's unclear whether such a case would be accepted, if it were, it could embarrass Thai authorities.

In his weekly televised address Sunday, Mr. Abhisit, 46 years old, said he will invite people from across Thailand's political spectrum to find ways to bridge the economic and social gaps that helped

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China urges easing Korea tensions

BY EVAN RAMSTAD AND JAEYEON WOO

SEOUL—Leaders of China, Japan and South Korea on Sunday left their annual summit meeting divided on how to deal with North Korea's alleged sinking of a South Korean warship.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao didn't give a clear signal whether his country would support South Korea's effort to penalize North Korea at the

United Nations Security Council for destroying the Cheonan in March. China, as one of five permanent members of the council, can veto any action.

"What is most pressing right now is to gradually ease any tension created by the Cheonan incident, and we should avoid a clash," Mr. Wen said at a news conference with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama.

The three countries have long worked together to prod North Korea into giving up its pursuit of nuclear weapons. But they have at various times taken different approaches to working with Pyongyang economically. Now, South Korea's belief that North Korea is responsible for the sinking of its Cheonan warship has become the most urgent security matter in the region. Forty-six South Korean sailors died in the March

26 incident.

South Korea plans to refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council as soon as this week. Mr. Hatoyama on Sunday said that is a "natural course" after such an incident and encouraged South Korea to proceed.

Full-throated support by China was too much to expect, analysts say, because the country is North Korea's chief economic benefactor and political ally. But during his

three days in South Korea, Mr. Wen took small steps to signal that Beijing remains open to learning more about what happened.

Mr. Wen on Saturday offered condolences to the families of the South Korean victims. A day earlier, he said China will review South Korea's investigation, which turned up evidence of a torpedo blast on the salvaged ship and parts of a North Korean

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BP shifts gears as oil-leak fix fails

BY STEPHEN POWER AND MARK LONG

A BP PLC executive said Sunday there was "no certainty" that the company's latest attempt to stem the flow of oil into the Gulf of Mexico would work, following the abandonment late Saturday of "top kill" efforts to stem the oil by pumping heavy liquids into the well.

Meanwhile, a top aide to President Barack Obama said the administration was preparing for the gusher to continue for months.

The company now plans to try to contain the flow with a new type of cap that would siphon oil to the surface. The operation would involve removing a broken drilling pipe, or riser, that lies atop the blowout preventer and cap-



Workers prepare to clean up oil residue in Grand Isle, La., Sunday.

ping the valve with a siphon. BP officials say such an operation has never been carried out in 1,500 meters of water, and Bob Dudley, managing director of BP, told "Fox News Sunday" there was no assurance of success.

"The question is how much of the oil" the company will

be able to contain, Mr. Dudley said. He said he didn't believe the operation would make the spill worse.

Carol Browner, special assistant to the president for energy and climate change, told NBC's "Meet The Press" that the Obama administration was facing the prospect

that none of the measures BP is pursuing, other than relief wells that are several months away, will stop or contain the oil gushing into the Gulf.

In such a scenario, "there could be oil coming up until August when the relief wells...are finished," Ms. Browner said. She added that the spill "is probably the biggest environmental disaster" the nation has faced.

The failure of the top-kill effort followed frustrated attempts to activate the rig's blowout preventer and install a containment dome above the leaking well, which is estimated to be releasing between

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