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I. United States

1. DPRK Asylum Seekers

Reuters ("DIPLOMAT SAYS N.KOREAN ASYLUM SEEKERS LEAVE CHINA FOR SEOUL," Beijing, 10/11/02) reported that twenty DPRK who had sought asylum in the ROK's consulate in Beijing left the PRC on Friday and flew to Manila on their way to Seoul. "The 20 DPRK asylum-seekers departed this afternoon via a third country to the Republic of Korea," an ROK diplomat in Beijing said. Reporters in the Philippine capital later saw the group, which included 13 women and some teenagers, being taken to a transit lounge at Manila airport. The group was the latest in a steady flow of refugees who have sneaked into the PRC and sought passage to Seoul via diplomatic compounds. They bring to about 140 the number the PRC has allowed to leave. It was not immediately clear how or when they had entered the ROK diplomatic compound. Diplomats say at least 100,000 DPRK citizens -- and perhaps as many as 300,000 -- are seeking a living in north-eastern China having fled hunger and political repression.

2. Aum Cult Death Sentence

Agence France-Presse ("AUM CULT'S 'HEALTH MINISTER' SENTENCED TO DEATH IN JAPAN," 10/11/02) reported that a Japanese court sentenced the Aum Supreme Truth cult's former top bio-

chemist to death for murder and other charges related to the deadly nerve gas attacks the group unleashed in the 1990s. After a seven-year trial, the Tokyo District Court sentenced ro death by hanging Seiichi Endo, 42, a central figure in the cult's deadly sarin gas-producing group, in line with prosecutors's demands. He is the ninth Aum cult follower to get the death sentence. It was not immediately known whether he would appeal. Endo was "health and welfare minister" in the doomsday cult's self-styled government and played a key role in its study of sarin, VX-gas, anthrax and other germs and poisons. He was accused of conspiring with Aum guru Shoko Asahara to spray the sarin gas in the central Japanese city of Matsumoto in June 1994 and helping produce the gas used for the attacks on Tokyo subways in March 1995. The Matsumoto gassing killed seven people, while the subway attack left 12 people dead and thousands of others injured. Endo has been in custody since 1995. Endowas also held responsible for two attempted murder cases and helping a wanted Aum follower hide from police.

3. Japan Defense Minister on DPRK

Reuters ("DEFENSE MINISTER CALLS NORTH KOREA 'FEARFUL' AS JAPAN PREPS FOR NORMALIZATION TALKS," Tokyo, 10/11/02) reported that Japan Defense Agency chief Shigeru Ishiba called the DPRK a "fearful state" Friday ahead of normalization talks scheduled to begin at the end of the month. "The Japanese people have come to realize that North Korea is a fearful state," Defense Ministry spokesman Akihiro Kobe quoted Ishiba as saying in a meeting with US Ambassador Howard Baker. Baker cautioned Japan to proceed with care in the upcoming normalization talks with the DPRK, the official said. The talks are scheduled for October 29-30 in Kuala Lumpur, though Japan has said repeatedly that progress on normalization depends upon the resolution of the abduction issue. Japan and the DPRK have never had diplomatic ties. Meanwhile, diplomats from Japan's embassy in Beijing will travel to Pyongyang on Saturday to prepare for a temporary homecoming of the five survivors on Tuesday, according to public broadcaster NHK. Government officials declined to comment on the report.

4. Japan Domestic Economy

The Associated Press (Yuri Kageyama, "FEARS GROW AS JAPAN'S MARKET SLIDES," Tokyo, 10/10/02) reported that fears are growing in Japan that the relentless slide in Tokyo's stock market might topple companies or major banks and further harm the already hobbled economy at a time when the government is finally getting serious about solving the nation's debt mess. The main index on the Tokyo Stock Exchange plunged again Thursday, closing at a new 19-year low for the third time this week. The 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average fell 1.17 percent to 8,439.62 points, its lowest finish since April 8, 1983. "Japan is going to sink and turn into a nation of beggars," said Masaoki Takahashi, 58, whose land development business has been struggling to obtain bank loans. "It's a big mess." Like many Japanese, Takahashi was worried that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi seemed to have no plan to salvage the economy. The stock market has been lagging at 19-year lows for weeks. But the plummet took a turn for the worse shortly after Koizumi picked a new Cabinet on September 30 and placed economy minister Heizo Takenaka in charge of financial services. Takenaka promised to speed up the cleanup of bad debts at the banks in a "quicker, larger-scale and more understandable" way. The promise was supposed to reassure investors and analysts, who have complained that bad debts in the financial sector are a drag on Japan's economy. Instead, Takenaka's comments set off fears that corporate bankruptcies - even of major banks - may be inevitable. Investors have been fleeing in droves. The Nikkei Stock Average, which stood above 9,300 at the end of September, has shed about 10 percent in this month's eight trading sessions.

5. PRC War Games

Reuters ("CHINA ENDS WAR GAMES WITH KYRGYZSTAN, ITS FIRST WITH A FOREIGN COUNTRY," 10/11/02) reported that the PRC wrapped up its first-ever joint war games with a foreign country on Thursday, a two-day anti-terrorism exercise with Kyrgyzstan, involving helicopters and a dozen armored vehicles. The exercise, which was six months in the planning, simulated the entrapment and annihilation of terrorists operating along the two countries' remote mountainous border, according to government broadcaster China Central Television. Earlier reports from former Soviet republic said 80 to 100 soldiers from each country participated in the exercises, held in mountains about 3,000 meters (9,900 feet) above sea level near Irkeshtam in southern Kyrgyzstan. CCTV showed PRC and Kyrgyz troops lying prone side by side, looking at maps and firing Kalashnikov rifles, heavy machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. Other troops roped down from Russian-designed helicopters, charged up barren hillsides and fired anti-tank weapons mounted on jeeps.

II. CanKor E-Clipping Service

1. CanKor # 101 - Special Edition

Rumours of a plan by the DPRK to set up a Special Administrative Region (SAR) in the northwestern border city of Sinuiju have been circulating at least since 1997. While touring industrial plants in Shanghai in January 2001, Chairman Kim Jong Il consulted China's President Jiang Zemin about the Sinuiju plans. Zemin advised against the location, saying that there would be too much competition from the thriving city of Dandong, on the Chinese side of the border. In June 2001, reports began to circulate that "ideologically risky" residents were being expelled from Sinuiju by the tens of thousands. Public announcement of the Sinuiju SAR at the end of September should not have come as a surprise. What was surprising is the appointment of a foreigner, the flamboyant Chinese-Dutch tycoon Yang Bin as Governor, with sweeping powers over the development. Kim Jong Il is reported to have "adopted" Yang Bin as his son. Also surprising are details of the regulations and ordinances that are to be enacted, turning the enclave into a haven for foreign investment more independent of the central control than Hong Kong and Macau. CanKor has compiled facts, figures and some of the most comprehensive news articles on the project. The selection includes descriptions of the urban planning blueprint and the basic law that will govern the SAR. Covered also are the recent arrest of Yang Bin by Chinese authorities, and the efforts undertaken by Pyongyang to secure his release.

For back issues of CanKor, please visit our website at: www.CanKor.ca

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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