# NAPSNet Daily Report August 26th, 2004

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# 1. DPRK Nuclear Issue

The Associated Press ("N. KOREA NUKES MAY NOT BE RESOLVED SOON", 2004-08-26) reported that chirping birds no longer compete for attention with speakers blaring DPRK propaganda across its border with the ROK, and the view across the verdant landscape of the Demilitarized Zone is now uninterrupted by billboards that once boasted "Our General is No. 1!" But despite the recent concessions at the world's last Cold War frontier, the DPRK's war of words with the US has heated up - and is casting doubt on a resolution of the nuclear crisis on the divided peninsula before the November US elections. "There is little benefit for North Korea to make much effort for September's six-party talks since the result of the talks could change if the US administration changes," said Cheong Seong-chang, a research fellow at Sejong Institute, a ROK think tank.

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# 2. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Agence France-Presse ("SOUTH KOREA SEES NO NUCLEAR BREAKTHROUGH BEFORE US ELECTIONS", 2004-08-26) reported that the ROK's top nuclear negotiator said he expects no breakthrough in frustrating the DPRK's quest for nuclear weapons before US presidential elections in November. Such skepticism came from Deputy Foreign Minister Lee Soo-Hyuck who met PRC officials this week to prepare for a new round of six-way nuclear talks due to open in Beijing next month. "Political situations are developing to make it difficult to reach an agreement," Lee told a meeting with South Korean businessmen, according to Yonhap news agency Thursday. "I don't think the situation will allow the United States to reach an agreement one month before the presidential elections, and North Korea is also likely to want to see the outcome of the elections."

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# 3. DPRK Nuclear Issue and US Elections

Korea Times ("KERRY WIN WON'T LEAD TO BREAKTHROUGH TO NUKE TALKS", 2004-08-26) reported that though US Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry shows a more engaging policy toward the DPRK than President George Bush, Kerry?s victory will not forge a swift resolution in the DPRK?s nuclear standoff, according to a recent report. "John Kerry?s win in the Nov. 2 US presidential election is hardly likely to bring a drastic compromise in dealing with North Korea?s nuke ambition," said the report authored by Kim Sung-han, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS). "This is because the US? policy on the Korean peninsula will continue to focus on anti-terrorism and counter-proliferation (of nuclear weapons) regardless of who is elected in the crucial poll," the professor explained. The report, titled "Bush-Kerry Comparison on Diplomacy and Security Policy," also rebuffed the speculation that Kerry will attempt to change the planned reorganization of US military forces, codenamed Global Defense Posture Review (GPR). "However, Kerry will attempt to hold direct negotiations with North Korea as part of the six-nation

negotiations as pledged," the US expert indicated.

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## 4. Ko Young Hee Reported Dead

Tokyo ("WIFE OF N. KOREAN LEADER REPORTED DEAD", 2004-08-26) reported that the ROK officials said Thursday that they have launched an investigation into reports that the woman considered to be DPRK leader Kim Jong Il's most influential wife has died after a long battle with breast cancer. News that Ko Young Hee -- idolized in the DPRK as "the respected mother" of the nation -- apparently succumbed to her illness was first reported Wednesday on the Web site of a leading ROK investigative journalist for the Seoul-based Monthly Chosun magazine. The Japanese-born Ko, 52, has been viewed as the foremost of at three women considered to be among Kim's wives or consorts -- although it remains unclear whether he officially married any of them. Officials in Seoul said they are still trying to confirm her death. Unconfirmed reports in the ROK media indicated that the DPRK has ordered from France a custom-built coffin for her body. "We are now in the middle of investigating the issue" of her reported death, a ROK intelligence source said Thursday.

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## 5. DPRK Telephones

TASS ("NORTH KOREA CUTS OFF PHONES TO STOP LOCALS TALKING TO FOREIGNERS", 2004-08-26) reported that the decision to cut off part of the telephone network in Pyongyang has been made by the National Defense Commission, an informed source close to DPRK political circles told ITAR-TASS today. It was done to prevent undesirable communication by the local population with foreigners living in Pyongyang, the source said. As of 22 August, they cannot phone Korean organizations. "A reorganization of the telephone network is under way in Pyongyang. As a result, only a small number of Korean organizations, for example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will be able to maintain contacts with the foreign diplomatic corps, representative offices and international organizations. The authorities resorted to this measure in order to stop possible leaks of information and tighten control over foreigners' activities," the source said. "Given a shortage of food in the country, the government fears the possible social consequences and uses all means to prevent them," the source said.

Yonhap ("TELEPHONE SERVICE NORMALIZED IN PYONGYANG: U.S. RADIO", 2004-08-26) reported that telephone services in Pyongyang, reportedly disrupted on Monday by technical problems, have remained normal, US international broadcaster Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported Thursday. Citing officials of the World Health Organization's branch office in Pyongyang, the RFA said international calls between Pyongyang and other countries and local calls in the DPRK capital are operating normally as of Wednesday morning.

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## 6. Sino - ROK Relations

Yonhap ("CHINESE OFFICIAL ARRIVES FOR TALKS ON HISTORY DISPUTE, N.K. NUKES", 2004-08-26) reported that a top PRC official arrived in the ROK amid continuing efforts to convene a new round of six-way talks on ending the DPRK's nuclear arms program and lingering anti-Beijing sentiment over its distortion of an ancient Korean kingdom's history. A private jet carrying Jia

Qinglin, ranked fourth in the PRC hierarchy, landed at a military airport in Seongnam, just south of Seoul, in an arrangement to keep it a low-profile arrival. Jia is scheduled to meet President Roh Moo-hyun, Prime Minister Lee Hai-chan as well as National Assembly Speaker Kim One-ki on Friday before returning home Monday.

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## 7. Australia on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Yonhap ("POLICY TOWARD N.K. MUST BE BASED ON ASSUMED NUKES, EXPERT SAYS", 2004-0--26) reported that policy toward the ongoing crisis over the DPRK's nuclear weapons program must be based on an assumption that the DPRK is now capable of producing nuclear warheads, the head of an international organization working to prevent and resolve conflicts said Thursday. Gareth Evans, president of the International Crisis Group (ICG) and former Foreign Minister of Australia, said it was unclear whether the DPRK has "weaponized" its nuclear capabilities.

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## 8. Inter Korean Infrastructure

Yonhap ("N.KOREA, RUSSIA REACH AGREEMENT ON RAIL LINK: S.KOREAN BUSINESSMAN ", 2004-08-26) reported that some sort of agreement was reached between DPRK and Russian leaders on linking an envisioned inter-Korean railway with Russia's Trans-Siberian Railway (TSR), a ROK businessman said Thursday. "I heard the chairman of North Korea's National Defense Commission, Kim Jong-il, and Russian President Vladimir Putin have reached some kind of agreement on linking the railways," Kim Yoon-kyu, head of Hyundai Asan, said at a seminar. He did not specify the details of the agreement. The ROK and DPRK are seeking to reconnect the Donghae (East Sea) rail line, which was severed shortly before the 1950-53 Korean War, and ultimately, link it to the TSR. The Donghae line, if reconnected, would connect the ROK's eastern port city Gangneung across the demilitarized zone to the DPRK's east coast city Chongjin.

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## 9. Inter Korean Economic Cooperation

Financial Times ("KAESONG A MODEL FOR KOREAN CO-OPERATION: PROJECT WILL MELD INVESTMENT FROM THE SOUTH WITH LABOR FROM THE NORTH", 2004-08-26) reported that signs of intensive construction work on the northern side of the inter- Korean border would once have raised alarming questions in the ROK. But today, earth-moving vehicles on a sprawling building site a few miles north of the frontier is no cause for ROK concern. The location is Kaesong - the nearest DPRK city to Seoul - where work is under way to build an industrial park for ROK businesses. The project is part of efforts to increase cross-border economic ties as the two countries gradually improve relations after more than 50 years of enmity. Advocates think it provides a model for broader co-operation with the impoverished DPRK receiving much-needed investment while providing southern businesses with a base for low-cost manufacturing.

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## 10. DPRK Food Aid

Yonhap ("U.N. TO SEND CROP ASSESSMENT TEAM TO NORTH KOREA NEXT MONTH ", 2004-0-

-26) reported that two UN relief agencies will send a joint team to the DPRK next month to conduct a crop assessment in the impoverished DPRK. "A joint FAO-WFP Crops and Food Supply Assessment Mission is scheduled to visit North Korea during the harvest of the main summer crops," the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said Thursday. "The actual period will be Sept. 18 to Oct. 2." The UN agencies are the UN Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Food Program (WFP).

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## 11. Inter Korean Relations

Yonhap ("CIVIC ACTIVISTS TO VISIT N. KOREA TO PROVIDE FARM EQUIPMENT ", 2004-08-26) reported that four representatives from the Seoul-based Korea Sharing Movement will visit the DPRK this weekend to deliver agricultural equipment, the civic group said Thursday. The organization, a leader in providing aid to the DPRK, said it collected the heavy equipment, including 50 combines, from 14 local ROK governments.

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## 12. Russian - DPRK Relations

Yonhap ("N KOREA IMPORTS FARMING TRACTORS FROM RUSSIA FOR FIRST TIME ", 2004-0--26) reported that the DPRK government recently made its first purchase of farming tractors from Russia and intends to purchase 1,000 units in the near future, a government official here said Thursday. The DPRK already purchased 10 Russian tractors and plans to purchase an additional 40 units this year after testing whether they operate adequately under warm weather conditions, the official said.

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## 13. DPRK Polio Issue

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA EYEING TO ERADICATE POLIO BY NEXT YEAR", 2004-08-26) reported that the DPRK has concentrated its research on stamping out the polio virus by next year with the help of the World Health Organization (WHO), according to a DPRK monthly magazine. In its August edition, Kumsugangsan said polio almost disappeared in the DPRK in the mid-1990s, but the virus still remains in some parts of the country, prompting DPRK authorities and the WHO to work together to eradicate it by next year.

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## 14. DPRK Defectors

Joongang Ilbo ("ACTIVIST SAYS NORTH SEIZED DEFECTOR ON HONEYMOON", 2004-08-26) reported that a DPRK defector on her honeymoon in the PRC has been kidnapped and returned to her former homeland, a human rights activist group in Seoul has claimed. The ROK's Foreign Ministry said yesterday it has asked PRC authorities to investigate the report. Jin Myong-suk, 24-year-old woman, whose last name is Jin, and her husband were attacked on Aug. 8 near the PRC's border with the DPRK by a group of men speaking DPRK dialects, said Doh Hee-yoon, secretary-general of the civic group, Coalition for Human Rights of Abductees and North Korean Refugees. Seoul's Foreign Ministry said yesterday that it learned about the apparent seizure immediately after

it took place because the couple's relatives filed reports. The ministry said it asked Beijing to look into the incident, but has so far received no information about it.

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## 15. ROK on Security Law

Yonhap ("CONSTITUTIONAL COURT UPHOLDS SECURITY LAW ", ) reported that the Constitutional Court of Korea Thursday ruled against a plaintiff and upheld the nation's controversial National Security Law, which strictly bans pro-DPRK activities, as constitutional. The full bench of nine justices at the Constitutional Court said in the ruling that Article 7 of the National Security Law, which prohibits verbal praise of the DPRK regime, is constitutional, considering the country's current status in regard to the DPRK. The ruling ran directly counter to a recent recommendation by the state-run human rights panel that the law be repealed because its vagueness is liable to create innocent victims who have nothing to do with the DPRK.

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## 16. ROK - New Zealand Relations

Yonhap ("SOUTH KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER HOLDS TALKS WITH NEW ZEALAND PREMIER", 2004-08-26) reported that the ROK's foreign minister began a three-day visit to New Zealand Thursday with a meeting with the country's prime minister, Helen Clark. Ban Ki-moon had originally been scheduled to meet Clark at her office, but the meeting took place at Wellington International Airport because of a delay in Ban's flight. Clark was on her way to Oakland. New Zealand is the second leg of Ban's three-nation trip, which also includes stops in Thailand and Australia. He is the first ROK foreign minister to visit the two down-under countries in 27 years. Ban and Clark discussed tensions over the DPRK's nuclear program, Iraq and other international issues as well as bilateral ties, according to Park Joon-woo, director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asia-Pacific affairs bureau.

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## 17. Japanese - ROK Relations

Yonhap ("JAPAN TO STEP UP EFFORTS OVER TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH SOUTH KOREA - PAPER", 2004-08-26) reported that Japan plans to step up diplomatic efforts next year to make a stronger case for its ownership of the ROK's easternmost islets and for its claim that the sea between the two countries should be named as it is called in Japan, according to a newspaper. Japan's Foreign Ministry asked for a 780m-yen (7m US dollars) budget for those efforts, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported Thursday (26 August). The move is part of the ministry's decision to place top policy priority on protecting its "national interests", the paper said. Other measures under consideration include increasing resource exploration efforts in the East China Sea, a move that could escalate a territorial dispute with the PRC. The Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry requested 10bn yen for the exploration projects, three times as much as the amount for this year. If Japan puts those plans into action, it is feared to fuel diplomatic tensions in Northeast Asia.

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# 18. Japanese Historical Revisionism

The Associated Press ("TOKYO ADOPTS NATIONALIST HISTORY TEXT", 2004-08-26) reported that a history textbook under attack by critics for omitting Japanese wartime atrocities was approved by educators Thursday for use in a public secondary school in the capital. Tokyo's six-member school board ruled the "New History Textbook" would be used by 160 students in a joint junior high-high school opening in April, when the Japanese school year begins. The "New History Textbook," penned by nationalist scholars, was approved in 2001 by the Education Ministry amid protests from the ROK and PRC. The Japanese scholars issued a statement Thursday lauding the school board's "good judgment" in approving the textbook. Critics say it omits Japanese wartime atrocities, including germ warfare in the PRC and the use of hundreds of thousands of sex slaves for the Japanese military.

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# 19. Singapore on Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA HINTS ROW WITH SINGAPORE OVER, WARNS JAPAN", 2004-08-26) reported that the PRC signaled on Thursday its row with Singapore over a visit by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to Taiwan last month may have blown over, but warned Japan over an unscheduled stop by Taiwan's premier blamed on a typhoon. Lee said on Sunday in his first policy speech since becoming premier the city-state cannot support Taiwan if the PRC attacks the self-ruled, democratic island of 23 million in retaliation for any provocative push for formal independence. "We have taken notice of comments by Singapore's new leader ... which resolutely opposed 'Taiwan independence'," PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said in a statement. "This stand is in line with Singapore's interests ... and conducive to peace and stability in this region," he said.

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# 20. PRC Economy

Washington Post ("CHINA'S REVOLUTIONARY TACTIC: BAILOUT", 2004-08-26) reported that D'Long International Strategic Investment Co. is on the verge of attaining a historic yet unwanted distinction: It is about to become the first private company to be bailed out by the Communist Party government, concluding a scandal that has led to the arrest of its founder and deepened unease about the solidity of the PRC's financial system. According to reports this week in two state-supervised newspapers, the PRC's central bank is preparing loans worth roughly $1.8 billion to prevent the company's collapse. D'Long is to be restructured and run by a government entity set up to oversee the management of failed state firms. Both the asset management company and the central bank declined to comment. The PRC's decision to rescue D'Long is the latest milestone in the economic transformation of a country that only a generation ago persecuted capitalists as counterrevolutionaries. Private firms now play a central role in the economy, so much so that the prospect of D'Long's collapse brought PRC authorities face to face with a familiar paradox of capitalism: Despite a country's commitment to marketplace logic, some firms are simply too big and too entangled to be allowed to fold.

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# 21. PRC Inflation

BBC News ("CHINA'S ECONOMY 'STILL AT RISK'", 2004-08-26) reported that the PRC's leaders should not relax their efforts to cool the country's fast-growing economy, the International Monetary Fund has warned. The IMF's latest health check on the PRC's booming but unbalanced economy found that "a soft landing...is not yet assured". It urged the PRC to introduce a more flexible exchange rate without delay. The IMF now expects the PRC to grow 9% in 2004, beating an earlier forecast of 8.5%, before cooling to 7.5% in 2005. The IMF found signs that Beijing's efforts to curb reckless lending for expansion projects by its undisciplined banking system are paying off. But it remains concerned that the PRC's rapid growth could still tip over into a damaging crisis if pressure on the banks is not maintained.

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## 22. PRC Elegy Sector

Donga Ilbo ("CHINA?S ENERGY CRISIS ", 2004-08-26) reported that the PRC is suffering from its worst energy crisis in 20 years. Emergent measures, including putting a limitation on power transmission, have been arranged, but did not bring much of an effect. The energy crisis is serious enough that industrial production is stumbling. The Financial Times reported that the output of automobile production for July in the PRC was 170,000 due to an energy shortage and shrinking consumer confidence, dropping by 20 percent from June. The major cause for the insufficient energy is that the expansion of energy production is slower compared to the quickly growing economy, and cannot meet up with it. Currently, the energy supply in Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, where factories are concentrated, is at least 30 percent short of total demand.

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## 23. Sakhalin Gas to the PRC

Reuters ("SHELL IN TALKS WITH CHINA ON SAKHALIN GAS DEAL", 2004-08-26) reported that energy giant Royal Dutch/Shell is keen to sell liquefied natural gas LNG from its Sakhalin project to the PRC, as it vies with rivals such as BP to tap the market's potentially explosive growth. But the world's third-biggest oil group Shell will first have to overcome pricing issues and a still tiny market for supplies from the island development off eastern Siberia's coast. Shell, the biggest private supplier of LNG with sales of more than eight million tons per year, is ramping up efforts to tap a gas market expected to boom in coming years as Beijing inches toward cleaner fuels. Rival BP is hard on its heels. Andrew Faulkner, vice president of Shell Gas & Power North Asia, said the Anglo-Dutch major was now in talks with state oil firms. "To come to a complex commercial agreement, involving a large volume of LNG and hence a large volume of money, will take quite a lot of time," he told Reuters. "But given China's proximity to Sakhalin, I imagine that, ultimately, we should get there," he said in an interview.

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## 24. PRC SARS Whistleblower

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S SARS WHISTLEBLOWER TO MISS 'ASIA'S NOBEL PRIZE'", 2004-08-26) reported that a former military doctor who blew the whistle on the PRC's SARS cover-up has been prevented from traveling to the Philippines to receive Asia's equivalent of the Nobel Prize, officials said. PRC authorities refused to grant 72-year-old Jiang Yanyong travel papers and he will be represented at the ceremony on Tuesday by his brother, a spokeswoman for the Ramon Magsaysay international award foundation said Thursday. The award, considered Asia's most

prestigious prize, was named after the Philippines' most popular president, who died in a plane crash in 1957. In the award citation, the foundation said that "in 2003, as the virus called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome swept unacknowledged into Beijing, he (Jiang) broke Chinas habit of silence and forced the truth of SARS into the open."

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## 25. PRC Air Marshals

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S NEW 2,000-STRONG AIR MARSHAL FORCE STARTS WORK", 2004-08-26) reported that the PRC's new 2,000-strong air marshal force has started work on international and domestic routes after nearly three years of preparations triggered by the September 11 attacks, state media said. The plain-clothes force is being deployed on more than 1,000 flights, and on some "sensitive" routes they would be assisted by additional security personnel, the China Youth Daily reported Thursday. Airport security was good already, making hijackings and other acts of terrorism relatively rare in the PRC, which means the air marshals may not have much work to do, the paper said. So they would be charged with additional jobs such as stopping passengers from smoking or using cell phones, or preventing them from taking other passengers' seats, according to the paper.

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## 26. PRC Bird Flu Virus

Agence France-Presse ("WHO URGES CHINA TO CONDUCT MORE STUDIES INTO BIRD FLU IN PIGS", 2004-08-26) reported that the World Health Organization (WHO) urged the PRC to carry out more studies into the presence of a deadly strain of bird flu virus in pigs. The WHO's appeal, published in a statement Thursday, followed the PRC's revelation that it had found H5N1 virus in local swine as early as 2003, long before this year's Asia-wide flu outbreak that has so far killed 27 people. "To better understand the implications of the findings in China, WHO is encouraging that additional studies be conducted on H5N1 and other influenza A viruses in pigs in China, as well as in other countries which have experienced H5N1 avian influenza outbreaks," the statement said. The WHO also said laboratory experiments were needed to gauge the extent to which infection among pigs might mark the first step in a mutation of the virus into a form that could spread more easily to humans.

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## 27. PRC AIDS Issue

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA'S AIDS ORPHANS IN DIRE NEED OF EFFICIENT MEDICATION", 2004-08-26) reported that the PRC's 76,000 AIDS orphans -- children who have lost one or both of their parents and are suffering from the lethal condition themselves -- are in dire need of medication, state media said. No anti-AIDS drugs for children are produced in the PRC, and there are also no systematic imports of from abroad, the China Youth Daily reported. Under the current circumstances, local hospitals have no choice but to give the children AIDS drugs meant for adults in smaller dosages, even though the practice is sometimes considered dangerous. "China has not yet developed a special anti-AIDS drug suited for pediatric use, and even on a global scale it's a problem," said Zhao Hongxin, a doctor at Beijing's Ditan Hospital. State-run media have warned that unless the PRC takes urgent action it could end up with 12 million HIV patients by 2010.

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## 28. 2008 Beijing Olympics

Agence France-Presse ("MEDIA WATCHDOG LAUNCHES WEBSITE CALLING FOR BEIJING OLYMPICS BOYCOTT", 2004-08-26) reported that reporters Without Borders launched a website calling for a boycott of the Beijing 2008 Olympics over the human rights record of "one of the world's bloodiest dictatorships". The Paris-based media watchdog said Thursday the PRC had failed to improve its rights record since being controversially awarded the Games in 2001. "History has shown that totalitarian regimes are more sensitive to a balance of power than to 'constructive dialogue'," the group said on the website, www.boycottbeijing2008.net. "A boycott therefore seems the only strategy to force Chinese authorities to respect human rights before 2008."

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## 29. Tibet Religious Freedom

Reuters ("TIBET BUDDHISM FACES THREAT FROM OFFICIALS, MONEY", 2004-08-26) repeated that to Tibetans, the PRC and the ruling Communist Party seem to have offered them a clear choice -- you are either with us or against us. After the extreme policies of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution when temples were dynamited, Buddhist statues melted down for metal and monks and nuns jailed, the PRC sought reconciliation by allowing Tibet a degree of religious tolerance. However, that freedom does not apply to all in the deeply Buddhist Himalayan region known as the Roof of the World. Recent indications are that party leaders may be trying to limit the numbers further. "Without Communist Party control Tibet would still be poor. We Tibetans have religious freedom," said Nyima Tsering, mayor of the village of Gongzhong near the eastern town of Nyingchi. It has long been a rule that party officials must also be atheist, although in Tibet that regulation had appeared to be more honored in the breach than in the observance. Many have quietly told visitors in recent years that they visit the temple to offer prayers when they can.

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## 30. Typhoon Aere

Reuters ("AT LEAST 15 FEARED DEAD IN TAIWAN LANDSLIDE", 2004-08-26) reported that rescue workers pulled 24 survivors from the wreckage of a mountain village in Taiwan Thursday after a torrent of mud and rock triggered by a typhoon buried the area, leaving 15 people feared dead. Typhoon Aere, the strongest storm to hit Taipei this year, has killed at least 30 people in Taiwan and southern Japan, and destroyed nearly 1,500 buildings in mainland PRC, where almost a million people have been evacuated. The typhoon has weakened to a tropical storm over the southern PRC province of Fujian and is forecast to move west over Guangdong and Hong Kong in the next two days. 15 people were buried by the landslide, including eight villagers and three policemen. The government's disaster relief center revised its figures to say two people were confirmed dead and 13 were missing.

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