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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Issue

Reuters ("S.KOREA'S ROH SAYS NO NEED TO RUSH NORTH ATOM TALKS", 2004-09-22) reported that the ROK sees no need to rush into a further round of talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons ambitions, President Roh Moo-hyun said on Wednesday. Speaking to reporters accompanying him on his three-day visit to Russia, Roh said Russian President Vladimir Putin and he had discussed the DPRK at length but not come up with fresh initiatives to persuade Pyongyang to return to talks. "It is important to take things one step at a time, not to rush things, and to stick to the principle on the question of North Korea's nuclear weapons as long as the situation does not worsen," Roh said at the breakfast meeting with reporters in Moscow's Metropol Hotel near Red Square.

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2. Russia on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Agence France-Presse ("RUSSIA CALLS ON NORTH KOREA TO RESUME NUCLEAR TALKS", 2004-09-22) reported that Russia called on the DPRK to resume talks on abandoning its nuclear weapons program, at the same time as it signed a multi-billion-dollar package of trade and investment deals strengthening ties with the ROK. In a declaration, President Vladimir Putin and his ROK counterpart, Roh Moo-hyun, stressed their commitment to the non-nuclear status of the Korean Peninsula and to six-nation talks on the DPRK's nuclear program. "Our country has consistently called for a non-nuclear status on the Korean Peninsula and for the continuation of the six-nation negotiating process," Putin told reporters after his summit talks with Roh at the Kremlin.

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3. ROK on DPRK Nuclear Talks

Yonhap ("PRESIDENT ROH HINTS N. KOREA MAY SKIP SEPTEMBER NUKE TALKS ", 2004-09-22) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun on Wednesday strongly hinted at the possibility the DPRK will fail to attend another round of six-nation talks to address its nuclear weapons programs due mainly to the upcoming presidential election in the US. "It may be difficult for North Korea to come forward owing to possible changes in the situation after the US presidential election in November," Roh told

reporters.

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Korea Times ("SEOUL SAYS NUCLEAR TESTS WON'T BE DISCUSSED AT 6-WAY TALKS", 2004-0--22) reported that the ROK on Wednesday rebuffed the PRC's claim that Seoul's recently revealed nuclear activities will be on the agenda at the next round of six-party talks aimed at ending the DPRK nuclear crisis. "South Korea's nuclear experiments are not the subject matter to be discussed in the six-way talks," Chung Woo-sung, presidential aide for foreign policy, said in an interview with local radio station MBC. Meanwhile, a senior government official said on condition of anonymity that the PRC's position on the ROK's nuclear experiments as a stumbling block to the six-way talks is exaggerated citing, "The Chinese Foreign Ministry just mentioned the test as one of many difficulties in the talks."

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5. ROK Nuclear Experiment

Chosun Ilbo ("COUNTRIES EXPRESS CONCERN OVER S.KOREA'S NUCLEAR INTERESTS ", 2004-09-22) reported that following the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Japan and the European Union on Tuesday expressed their concern over the ROK's nuclear experiments, during the 48th IAEA general meeting held in Vienna, Austria. In his keynote speech, Japanese Science Minister Toshimitsu Motegi called for an immediate investigation into the ROK's nuclear experiments, saying that it is a serious problem. Dutch Ambassador to the EU Justus de Visser also made a similar remark in his keynote address on behalf of the EU and stressed the need for the ROK to cooperate in achieving nuclear transparency.

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6. Inter - Korean Relations

Joong-Ang Ilbo ("MORE DESIRE TO SEE UNIFICATION ", 2004-09-22) reported that a new national survey of ROK citizens indicates attitudes toward the DPRK are shifting with greater numbers wanting to see the country unified. Sixty-five percent of those interviewed in the poll by JoongAng Ilbo researchers said that unification of the peninsula is desirable, compared with 59 percent last year. In light of strides made in improving the inter-Korean relationship, more people thought unification would come sooner than previously expected. Six percent of those surveyed said the country would be unified within five years, up from 3 percent last year. Twenty-four percent expected unification in the next six to 10 years, also a 3 percentage point gain. And while last year 48 percent thought unification of the peninsula would take place within the next 20 years, this year 58 percent held that view.

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7. ROK Iraq Dispatch

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA TROOPS DEPLOYED TO IRAQ", 2004-09-22) reported that about 2,800 ROK troops have completed deployment to northern Iraq to become the third largest coalition partner after the US and Britain, officials said Wednesday. ROK began the dispatch on Aug. 3, shipping troops first to Kuwait, where they trained for operations. On Sept. 3, the troops began traveling to the Kurdish town of Irbil by land and air. Maj. Gen. Song Ki-seok, a top operations

officer at Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the deployment had been completed on Wednesday without incident. The ROK convoys found and removed two crudely made explosives planted on their route, but could not determine whether the devices were targeted at their troops, Song said during a news conference.

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8. DPRK on ROK Iraq Dispatch

Asia Pulse ("SEOUL'S TROOP DEPLOYMENT TO IRAQ ANOTHER MISTAKE, PYONGYANG SAYS", 2004-09-22) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday demanded ROK stop deploying troops to Iraq, saying the military cooperation with the US will be a mistake like that made in Vietnam 40 years ago. "South Korean troops deployed to Vietnam were a sacrifice for the US," Radio Pyongyang said, and the ROK "should not repeat this, leaving shame and an irretrievable stain and scar on the people." A total of 320,000 ROK soldiers were sent to Vietnam over eight years and eight months up to March 23, 1973, when all were withdrawn. The deployment left 5,000 dead, and 10,900 injured. The ROK became the largest US partner in Iraq after Britain with its troops positioned in and around the Kurdish-controlled northern Iraqi town of Irbil Friday.

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9. DPRK Human Rights Bill

Donga Ilbo ("U.S. SENATE TO DELIBERATE ON THE NORTH KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT NEXT MONTH ", 2004-09-22) reported that the US Senate is planning to deal with the DPRK Human Rights Act of 2004, put before the Senate after being passed unanimously by the House of Representatives in July, within this session, according to a Washington source on September 21. The source added that it is difficult to estimate exactly when the act will be dealt with since the current session, scheduled to end on October 1, could be extended for one or two weeks, and might even meet after the presidential and senate elections on November 2. "The Republicans and Democrats have a common goal of having Congress speak out on the North Korean human rights issue in one voice within this session," he said.

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10. DPRK Abductees

Kyodo News ("JAPAN, NORTH KOREA TO HOLD TALKS ON ABDUCTIONS FROM SATURDAY", 2004-09-22) reported that Japan and the DPRK will hold working-level talks on Saturday in Beijing on the issue of the DPRK's abductions of Japanese citizens, the main obstacle to normalizing bilateral ties, the Japanese government said Wednesday. The meeting is scheduled to end Sunday but it could carry over to Monday depending on how negotiations develop, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told a press conference. The main focus of the upcoming talks is whether the DPRK will provide a satisfactory report on its promised reinvestigation of 10 Japanese citizens whom Japan officially recognizes as having been abducted by the DPRK in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

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11. DPRK Defectors in Cambodia

Agence France-Presse ("SEVEN NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES UNDER PROTECTION IN

CAMBODIA: POLICE", 2004-09-22) reported that seven DPRK refugees have been detained in Cambodia after a long journey in an attempt to resettle in the ROK, a senior police official said Wednesday. Immigration police chief Keat Chandarith told AFP the seven, including two women, were held earlier this month after traveling through the PRC and Vietnam by boat and on foot. "We found them on the 5th (of September), but they arrived some time before we found them. They said they were fleeing from North Korea... and want to go to South Korea," he said.

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12. Sino - ROK Relations

Donga Ilbo ("TRADE VOLUME WITH CHINA EXCEEDS THAT WITH THE U.S. FOR THE FIRST TIME ", 2004-09-22) reported that the PRC has overtaken the US as Korea's largest trading partner for the first time. According to a Beijing official of the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) on September 22, the trade volume between the ROK and PRC in the first seven months of this year stood at $43.89 billion, exceeding Korea's trade volume with the U.S. and Japan of $40.2 billion and $39.28 billion, respectively. The trade surplus with the PRC was also the highest, standing at $12.17 billion over the first seven months of this year, exceeding the surplus with the US of $7.9 billion.

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13. US - ROK Relations

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. AMBASSADOR TALKS FREE TRADE, MISSILES", 2004-09-22) reported that US ambassador to the ROK Christopher Hill said Wednesday he hoped that a free trade agreement between the ROK and the US would be concluded while he is in office. He said that Patriot missiles would soon be deployed in the Gwangju airbase of the ROK/US Combined Forces Command. The missiles have strictly defensive capabilities and would protect Gwangju and the US Air Force. Concerning the matter of visa exemptions for Koreans, ambassador Hill said that as the US ambassador to Korea, he would do his best to include Korea on the list of visa exempted countries.

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14. ROK - US Military Relations

Korea Herald ("KOREA, U.S. EXPECTED TO STRIKE DEAL ON TIMELINE FOR TROOP CUTS", 2004-09-22) reported that the ROK and the US are expected to reach an agreement to delay the planned American troop cuts set for 2005 by one or two years during their talks that opened in Washington yesterday, Seoul officials said. "We expect a good result in the meeting as the two sides narrowed their differences over putting off reduction of key forces one or two years later than scheduled," Yonhap News Agency quoted an unnamed defense official as saying. The two-day meeting will be followed by the annual meeting of defense chiefs from the two countries called the Security Consultative Meeting, which is scheduled to take place Oct. 22.

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15. US Troops Respond to Human Trafficking

The Associated Press ("TROOPS MAY BE TRIED FOR USING PROSTITUTES", 2004-09-22) reported

that US troops stationed overseas could face courts-martial for patronizing prostitutes under a new regulation drafted by the Pentagon. The move is part of a Defense Department effort to lessen the possibility that troops will contribute to human trafficking in areas near their overseas bases by seeking the services of women forced into prostitution. Gen. Leon J. LaPorte, commander of the 37,000 U.S. troops in the ROK, said another initiative started on the peninsula has been to "make on-base military life a more desirable experience, and attempt to diminish the seductive appeal of many of the less wholesome off-duty pursuits."

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16. ROK and US Elections

The Associated Press ("SEOUL SPY SOUGHT KERRY ELECTION ROLE", 2004-09-22) reported that the ROK Embassy official who met with fund-raisers for John Kerry to talk about creating a political group for Korean-Americans was actually a spy for his country, according to ROK and US officials. The official, Chung Byung Man, a consular officer in Los Angeles, worked for the ROK's National Intelligence Service at the time he was meeting with fund-raisers for Kerry's Democratic presidential campaign, they said.

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17. ROK Capital Relocation

Chosun Ilbo ("GNP OPPOSES CAPITAL RELOCATION ", 2004-09-22) reported that the Grand National Party (GNP) decided on a party platform that opposes the relocation of the capital, at its general meeting on Wednesday. The GNP discussed moving seven government agencies to the Gongju-Yeongi area, the site for a new administrative capital, as an alternative to capital relocation, but failed to adopt it as a party platform. Lee Han-gu, the party's policy committee's chairman, said, "We clearly oppose capital relocation whereby the essential parts of the country are transferred. But we agreed that special consideration is needed since citizens in Chungcheong Province have expectations regarding capital relocation."

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18. ROK Space Program

Asia Pulse ("RUSSIA TO SEND S.KOREA JOINT SATELLITE PROJECT PROPOSAL", 2004-09-22) reported that Russia intends to send a proposal to the ROK within a month for cooperation in satellite technology, expecting a synergy effect with the latter's semiconductor and electronics resources, a Seoul official here said Wednesday. The official, accompanying President Roh Moo-hyun on his four-day trip to the Russian capital, said on condition of anonymity that Russia made the proposal when the two countries signed an agreement on space technology transfer the previous day. The space technology transfer agreement will allow the ROK to develop its own rocket to launch satellites into orbit and put one of the country's astronauts in space on a Russian spacecraft in the coming years, ROK officials said.

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19. US - Japanese Relations

Kyodo News ("JAPANESE, US LEADERS DISCUSS BEEF IMPORTS, NORTH KOREA, TROOPS",

2004-09-21) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and US President George W. Bush agreed Tuesday on the importance of resolving the bilateral beef trade dispute as early as possible, a step that would prompt Japan to lift the ban on US beef imports, a Japanese official said. Koizumi and Bush also agreed that the two countries will urge the DPRK to return to the negotiating table of the six-party talks aimed at ending the standoff over its nuclear development program. Koizumi thanked Bush for US response to the case of US Army Sgt. Charles Jenkins, who turned himself in at a US military base near Tokyo to face desertion and other charges filed in 1965.

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20. Japan UNSC Bid

Agence France-Presse ("JAPAN SEEKS UN PAYBACK WITH PERMANENT SECURITY COUNCIL SEAT", 2004-09-22) reported that Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pitched Japan's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat to world leaders, calling it just reward for Tokyo's contributions to global peace and security. "We believe that the role Japan has played provides a solid basis for its assumption of permanent membership of the Security Council," Koizumi said, citing his country's reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and its involvement in seeking a resolution to the DPRK nuclear crisis. Koizumi's address came just hours after Japan, Brazil, Germany and India launched a united campaign for permanent seats on the council, with mutual pledges of support for each other's candidacies.

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21. ROK, DPRK on Japan UNSC Bid

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA MAY NOT WELCOME JAPAN'S BID FOR COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP", 2004-0--22) reported that in discussions to reorganize the Security Council, the Korean government has argued, "It is time not to increase the number of permanent members, but to increase the number of non-permanent members." However, it is too early to expect that the government will vote against Japan when it comes time for countries to express their opinions because it is difficult to predict when the discussion on the reorganization of the Security Council will be over. Meanwhile, the DPRK, which has been negotiating with Japan on issues like building diplomatic relations and compensation for damages caused during Japanese colonial rule, has expressed its opposition on several occasions to Japan's permanent membership on the council, saying that Japan has failed to clear the remnants of its imperialism and has repeatedly distorted history.

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22. PRC on Japan UNSC Bid

The Japan Times ("CHINA MAKES CASE AGAINST JAPAN UNSC SEAT", 2004-09-22) reported that the PRC on Tuesday challenged Japan's campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, saying Tokyo's heavy contributions to the UN budget alone shouldn't buy it such status. "The United Nations is not a board of directors," Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said. "Its composition cannot be decided according to the financial contributions of its members." "The priority should be to consider the representation of developing countries," Kong said. "They are not fully represented in the Security Council." The PRC regards Tokyo as its biggest rival for regional superpower status and frequently invokes the memory of World War II, accusing Japan of failing to atone for its brutal wartime occupation of China.

Kyodo ("JAPAN QUESTIONS CHINA'S RAISING HISTORY OVER UNSC BID", 2004-09-22) reported that Japan's top government spokesman on Wednesday questioned the relevancy of the PRC urging Japan to address its past military aggression if it wants a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. "Various issues are still being raised and we need to talk, but I think the issue of Japan joining the permanent members is different in kind from them," Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said. "We are confident that Japan can contribute to international security in a unique form that is different from other countries and I think there is no doubt about it," he said. "I don't think the other side would refuse to recognize Japan as a peaceful nation unless the issue of history is resolved," Hosoda added.

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23. US Troop Realignment

Agence France-Presse ("US PUSHING JAPAN TO BE BASE FOR FORCE EXTENDING REACH TO MIDDLE EAST: REPORT", 2004-09-22) reported that the US is pushing Japan to become a base for a force that can deploy to the Middle East, a move that exceeds the bounds of their current security alliance, a report said. The realignment plan would make Japan a host for command bases for Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps that could deploy to "the arc of instability" from Africa and the Balkans through the Middle East to Southeast Asia, the Asahi Shimbun reported, citing government officials. Tokyo has been reluctant to adopt a plan it sees as going beyond the scope of the Japan-US Security Treaty, which says American troops are stationed in the country to maintain peace and stability in Japan and the Far East.

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24. Japan on US Troop Realignment

Kyodo ("KOIZUMI HINTS AT RELOCATING U.S. BASES OUT OF OKINAWA", 2004-09-22) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi indicated Wednesday the government may begin considering relocating US military bases in heavily-burdened Okinawa to other parts of Japan as a top priority issue. "It has been the case that local governments where the bases might be relocated voice their opposition when it comes to where to relocate US bases out of Okinawa," Koizumi said in the last event of his three-nation tour to end Thursday. "Including that issue, all Japanese people have to consider the excessive burden on Okinawa," he said, reiterating that reducing the burden of the US military presence on Okinawa is one of his administration's top priorities. But Koizumi refrained from naming any other location to be considered.

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25. Japan Energy

Jiji Press ("JAPAN'S NUKE POWER IN DANGER IF FUEL-RECYCLING PLAN FAILS", 2004-09-22) reported that more than half of Japan's nuclear power reactors will have to be shut down by 2010 if a reprocessing plant in northern Japan immediately stops accepting spent nuclear fuel for storage, according to a recent estimate by a government commission. Of Japan's 52 nuclear power reactors, 30 will be halted by that year because their plants will run out of storage space to keep spent fuel, said the estimate by the Atomic Energy Commission, which was made available to Jiji Press on Tuesday.

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26. Koguryo Historical Revisionism

Washington Post ("CHINA GIVES NO GROUND IN SPATS OVER HISTORY ", 2004-09-22) reported that PRC researchers participating in a government-funded project on ancient societies in northern PRC had concluded that Goguryeo, in its early manifestations at least, was under PRC dominion. ROK scholars insisted that, from beginning to end, Goguryeo was 100 percent Korean. When the PRC Foreign Ministry, heeding its own scholars, eliminated the ROK version of history from its official Web site last April, things got serious. The noisy clash was finally papered over last month in a five-point accord reached in Seoul after protracted discussions between PRC Deputy Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and senior officials in the ROK Foreign Ministry. Both countries pledged to get along better.

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27. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("CHINA ON HIGH ALERT FOR TAIWAN INDEPENDENCE MOVES", 2004-09-22) reported that the PRC is on high alert for moves toward independence by Taiwan as the island's president, Chen Shui-bian, speeds up his efforts to split Taiwan from the motherland, a government spokesman said on Tuesday. The spokesman accused Chen of "accelerating attempts in recent weeks to split Taiwan from China," the official Xinhua news agency said. The mainland was "on high alert for splittist attempts of Chen Shui-bian," he was quoted as saying. Beijing views Taiwan as part of PRC territory and has vowed to bring it back to the fold, by force if necessary.

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28. PRC and G-7 Meeting

Kyodo ("CHINA, OIL PRICES TO TOP AGENDA AT G-7, JAPAN ON SIDELINES", 2004-09-22) reported that the PRC's economic and foreign exchange policies, the continued upswing in crude oil prices and recent rises in global interest rates are likely to top the agenda at an upcoming financial meeting of the Group of Seven nations in Washington, Japan's top financial diplomat said Wednesday. It would be the first time in G-7 history that PRC financial leaders have held talks with their counterparts from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US. The G-7 nations, especially the US, are expected to call for the PRC to relax its fixed currency system. The administration of President George W. Bush is expected to say that the PRC's policy of pegging the yuan to the US dollar gives it an unfair trade advantage and costs US workers jobs.

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29. Sino - Kyrgyzstan Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINESE, KYRGYZ PREMIERS AGREE ON CONTROVERSIAL BORDER", 2004-09-22) reported that the PRC's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao hailed a series of agreements with neighboring Kyrgyzstan including an agreement on the thorny issue of the countries' common border. Wen signed the agreements during a visit to the capital of this former Soviet republic, chief among them an agreement on the demarcation of the countries' so far unratified 1,100-kilometre (680-mile) border. On Tuesday the two premiers also agreed to speed the reconstruction of a dilapidated cross-border road route and Wen promised that the PRC would look seriously at plans

for a railway link from the PRC through Central Asia and onwards, possibly to Iran's Gulf coast.

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30. PRC Foreign Investment

The Associated Press ("U.S. FIRM STAKE OF CHINESE BANK APPROVED", 2004-09-22) reported that Shenzhen Development Bank said Wednesday that banking regulators have approved its transfer of a nearly 18 percent stake to US firm Newbridge Capital Inc. - the second major foreign investment in a PRC state-owned bank in two months. Shenzhen Development Bank said regulators approved the transfer of a 17.89 percent stake to Newbridge from four other shareholders. The bank didn't say how much the deal was worth. Beijing has allowed limited foreign investment in its banks in hopes of improving their management and technology as it prepares to meet commitments to let foreign banks compete on an equal footing with PRC institutions by 2006. Under PRC regulations, a single foreign investor may own no more than 20 percent of a PRC bank.

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31. PRC Flooding

The Associated Press ("CHINA SAYS SUMMER FLOODING KILLED 1,029", 2004-09-22) reported that flooding during this summer's rainy season killed 1,029 people throughout the PRC, many of them in mudslides and mountain torrents, the government announced Wednesday. Heavy rains also destroyed tens of thousands of houses and caused $7.8 billion in damage during the three-month rainy season, which ended Sept. 15, according to the State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters.

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Nautilus Institute
608 San Miguel Ave., Berkeley, CA 94707-1535 | Phone: (510) 423-0372 | Email: nautilus@nautilus.org