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Preceding NAPSNet Report

I. United States

1. ROK Uranium Enrichment Disclosure

Washington Post ("S. KOREAN OFFICIAL ATTEMPTS TO EASE NUCLEAR CONCERNS", 2004-0--08) reported that the ROK's top nuclear energy official on Tuesday denied claims that scientists in his country had produced near-bomb-grade uranium, seeking to ease concern that the previously undisclosed experiments were in apparent violation of international law. "Yes, we did enrich uranium, but an amount so small it was almost invisible and to levels that were not close" to weapons grade, Chang In Soon, president of the government Korean Atomic Energy Research Institute, said in an interview. His description of the experiments appeared to be at odds with testimony that ROK officials are said to have provided last week to the IAEA. Diplomats familiar with the testimony said the ROK officials had reported that they enriched uranium to levels of almost 80 percent -- close to those used in nuclear weapons and far above the single-digit levels typically used in nuclear energy production. Chang, however, insisted the three tests had yielded an average enrichment level of only 10 percent -- with the highest levels not exceeding the average by a large amount.

Agence France-Presse ("SKOREA ADMITS FAILURE TO REPORT URANIUM TEST", 2004-09-08) reported that the ROK admitted that it should have reported an unauthorized experiment to enrich uranium four years ago to international arms control officials. Until now, the government has argued that it saw no wrongdoing despite its failure to report the experiment that produced 0.2 grams (0.007 ounces) of uranium to the nuclear watchdog, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A senior foreign ministry official indicated at a press briefing Wednesday that the government was now stepping back from that position. "This experiment itself was not subject to declarations to the IAEA but we should have declared the nuclear materials," said the official who declined to be named.

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2. DPRK on ROK Uranium Enrichment

The Associated Press ("REPORT: N. KOREA WARNS OF 'ARMS RACE'", 2004-09-08) reported that the DPRK on Wednesday warned of a "nuclear arms race" in Northeast Asia following the recent revelation that ROK scientists enriched a tiny amount of uranium four years ago, a news report said. The DPRK's envoy to the UN, Han Sung Ryol, told the ROK's national news agency Yonhap that the DPRK found the US "worthless" as a dialogue partner because it was applying "double standards" to the two Koreas. The reaction signaled that the DPRK could use the ROK experiment as leverage in

any further talks on US-led international efforts to persuade the DPRK to give up its suspected nuclear weapons development. Han called the ROK's uranium enrichment experiment "a dangerous move that would accelerate a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia," Yonhap said. "We see South Korea's uranium enrichment experiment in the context of an arms race in Northeast Asia," Han was quoted as saying. "Because of the South Korean experiment, it has become difficult to control the acceleration of a nuclear arms race."

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3. ROK on Multilateral Talks

Yonhap ("FOREIGN MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES 'DIFFICULTY' IN CONVENING NUKE TALKS ", 2004-09-08) reported that the ROK's foreign minister on Wednesday acknowledged difficulty in convening a new round of six-way talks on the DPRK's nuclear weapons program before the end of this month, as agreed. Ban Ki-moon made the comment a day before the top nuclear negotiators from the ROK, the US and Japan meet in Tokyo to discuss the scheduling of a fourth round of talks.

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4. US on Multilateral Talks

Washington ("U.S. TO MEET ASIAN ALLIES, CHINESE ON N. KOREA", 2004-09-08) reported that the chief US negotiator on the DPRK will hold discussions in Japan and the PRC in the next few days aimed at organizing a fresh round of six-party talks on dismantling the DPRK's nuclear programs, a State Department official said on Tuesday. Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly will meet ROK and Japanese counterparts in Tokyo on Friday and then hold discussions with PRC officials in Beijing on Sunday, the official said. "We're still trying to arrange a plenary session by end of this month," the official added. The PRC, which has acted as host and facilitator of the six-party dialogue, is hopeful another six-party round can be held this month, but a government spokesman said on Tuesday difficulties were hampering efforts to get the parties together. Joining Kelly in Tokyo for a trilateral meeting with allies the ROK and Japan will be Joseph DeTrani, the special US envoy on the DPRK. Kelly also plans to meet separately with Japanese and ROK officials on bilateral issues.

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5. Japan - DPRK Relations

Kyodo ("N. KOREA MAY RESTATE FATE OF 10 TO CHECK JAPAN'S RESPONSE: NAKAYAMA", 2004-09-08) reported that Kyoko Nakayama, adviser to the Cabinet Secretariat on the abduction issue, said Wednesday the DPRK is seeking a chance to restate to Japan that 10 missing Japanese who Japan says the DPRK abducted are dead or never entered its territory in an attempt to check Japan's response. "North Korea is seeking to check whether the Japanese people will be angered" by such information, Nakayama said in a speech in the city of Nagasaki, Nagasaki Prefecture. Nakayama said the DPRK is seeking to create an environment in which to restate the fate of the 10 missing Japanese. DPRK leader Kim Jong Il said in a summit with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi in Pyongyang in September 2002 that eight of the 10 are dead and the remaining two never entered the DPRK. "The next round of the talks has yet to be arranged, but we will continue to ask (the DPRK) through bilateral contacts to provide the results of the reinvestigations," Nakayama said.

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6. Russian - DPRK Relations

ITAR-TASS ("MIRONOV TO VISIT N KOREA FOR TALKS ON COOPERATION,

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7. Sino - DPRK Relations

United Press International ("CHINESE OFFICIAL TO VISIT NORTH KOREA", 2004-09-08) reported that a senior PRC official will visit the DPRK Friday to discuss Pyongyang's nuclear program as well as bilateral issues, China Daily reported Wednesday. PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said that Politburo Standing Committee member Li Changchun would visit the DPRK from Friday to Monday, in the second high-level meeting between the two countries since DPRK leader Kim Jong-il visited Beijing in April. Kong said the PRC hoped the participants in the talks would keep calm, remain flexible and continue negotiations. "There are some difficulties, but these are not difficulties which have just arisen at this moment," he said. He said a nuclear-free Korean peninsula could be attained "step by step."

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8. Inter - Korean Relations

Donga Ilbo ("ROH'S VIEWS ON NSL ABOLITION SPARK "IDEOLOGICAL CIVIL WAR" ", 2004-09-08) reported that since President Roh Moo-hyun expressed his opinion favoring the abolition of the National Security Law, there has been a burst of behaviors that appear to conform to it. A suspect in the violation of the National Security Law refused to stand trial on Monday, while former junior high and middle school teachers, who are members of the "Senior Teachers Meeting," held a press conference yesterday to confess that they failed to refuse giving anti-communist education while teaching in the past. On the homepage of the National Citizens Solidarity, which consists of about 30 organizations including the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, "A Series of Legends on Kim Il-sung's Family" was posted on Monday and is being spread rapidly on the Internet. Responding to such phenomena, conservative organizations are raising their voices in opposition, making us wonder if our entire society is becoming involved in an ideological civil war. Sixteen local offices of the Korea Freedom League (KFL) posted placards nationwide yesterday saying, "The Republic of Korea needs the National Security Law."

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9. Inter - Korean Economic Cooperation

Asia Pulse ("SEOUL OKS COMPANIES' PLANS TO MOVE INTO N. KOREA COMPLEX", 2004-09-08) reported that the ROK has endorsed plans by a group of local companies to move into the pilot site of a huge industrial park being built in the DPRK's border town of Kaesong. Of the 15 companies that applied, seven won the government blessing because they are involved in garment and other labor-intensive businesses that do not involve strategic materials to run their plants. "The government will continue to provide administrative support to ensure that Kaesong complex will serve as a successful model of an inter-Korean economic project along with the Mount Geumgang

project," a Unification Ministry official said. The eight other companies appear likely to win government approval as soon as Seoul's consultations with Washington over the export of strategic items are concluded.

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10. Sinuiji Economic Complex

Los Angeles Times ("CALIFORNIAN MAY OVERSEE N. KOREA ECONOMIC ZONE", 2004-09-08) reported that Julie Sa would seem a most unlikely candidate to become the economic czar of a special development zone in the DPRK. She is not only a US citizen but also an avid churchgoer and registered Republican - hardly the type usually praised by the DPRK. Although Chinese by ethnicity, she was born and educated in the ROK. Yet this 53-year-old California businesswoman and former mayor of Fullerton is being widely touted in the ROK media as the front-runner to head a special economic zone in Sinuiju, a Yalu River port. "It almost seems like God is trying to make a joke, for me, a US citizen who was born in South Korea, to be involved with this," Sa said in an interview Tuesday in Seoul, where she is holding meetings about the project.

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11. DPRK Defections

Chosun Ilbo ("KIM JONG-IL'S SISTER-IN-LAW DEFECTED TO UNITED STATES: TOKYO SHIMBUN ", 2004-09-08) reported that Japan's Tokyo Shimbun, quoting several sources, reported Wednesday that DPRK leader Kim Jong-il's sister-in-law, Ko Young-suk, defected to the US in October 2001 and was currently receiving special protection. Ko Young-suk is the younger sister of Ko Young-hee, Kim Jong-il's wife who is believed to have recently died. Ko Young-suk was arrested as she tried to enter the US on a fake Japanese passport, and she applied for political asylum, the Japanese paper reported. The paper also reported that she is receiving special protection somewhere in the US, and she appears to have provided intelligence to the US concerning Kim Jong-il that she learned through her elder sister and about internal conditions in the DPRK. The Tokyo Shimbun said that according to the Monthly Chosun, the 46-year-old Ko looked after Kim's sons Kim Jong-chul and Kim Jong-woon when they were in Switzerland, and it's very likely that she knows about the characters of the two brothers and their property abroad.

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12. US - ROK Relations

Agence France-Presse ("US ALLAYS CONCERNS AFTER SOUTH KOREA MISSING FROM BUSH'S COALITION LIST", 2004-09-08) reported that the US moved to allay any concerns over President George W. Bush's failure to identify the ROK as among top allies in the US-led anti-terror coalition at his Republican party convention. Bush, in accepting his nomination for another term and laying out his planned second-term agenda last week, did not mention the ROK, which is dispatching more than 3,000 troops to Iraq, while listing countries that had taken part in the war on terror. Asked to comment on the omission, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said: "I think it's important to remember that on other occasions, the president, secretary of state and others have shown great appreciation for the contribution that the Republic of Korea has made. "There should be no doubt about our gratitude to South Korean troops for their contributions in the coalition," Boucher said amid reported concerns in the ROK over the exclusion.

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13. US on Troop Realignment

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. DEFENSE CHIEF STRESSES NO VACUUM FOLLOWING USFK REDUCTIONS", 2004-09-08) reported that US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld said Tuesday that the removal of 12,500 US soldiers from the ROK would never lead to a security vacuum on the Korean Peninsula. He said that because it was aware of the nature of the DPRK regime, the US wasn't prepared to permit a security vacuum of any kind. Asked if the reduction of 12,500 troops from the ROK would bring about a security vacuum, Rumsfeld responded at a press conference at the Pentagon that it wouldn't, and added that since the Korean Peninsula is an extremely important region, the US had scrupulously analyzed the issue along with the Korean government for the last year. Moreover, he said that those who regarded troop numbers of 21st century militaries as the same as those of 20th century militaries were mistaken, and stressed that in accordance with technological development, battle capabilities have greatly increased even if the number have remained the same.

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14. ROK, US on Troop Realignment

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA, U.S. TO DISCUSS USFK REDUCTIONS ON SEPT. 21~22", 2004-09-08) reported that the Defense Ministry said Tuesday that working group meetings to discuss US Forces Korea (USFK) reductions would be held in Washington on Sept. 21~22. The talks, which will be a combination of the 12th round of Future of the Alliance Talks and preparatory talks for the 36th Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), are scheduled to feature concentrated discussions of the timing and scale of reductions of US forces in Korea; 12,500 troops, along with some Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and Apache helicopter units. The Korean side, with mounting security and deterrent concerns and a schedule to develop independent defense capabilities, is asking that the timing of the reduction be delayed. The US side, on the other hand, is willing to accept certain Korean opinions, but has said the schedule of major reductions would be hard to change. Hence, negations are expected to be difficult.

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15. ROK on Japanese Collaborators

New York Times ("TRYING TO STONE COLLABORATORS, SEOUL PARTY HITS GLASS HOUSE", 2004-09-08) reported that drawing ammunition from Korea's rocky 20th-century history, the ROK's president took careful aim at his most prominent rival, and fired. But when the smoke cleared recently, the leader of his own party lay politically dying. On Aug. 15, the 59th anniversary of end of Japanese colonial rule here, President Roh Moo Hyun, a liberal, announced an official campaign to identify Koreans who collaborated with the Japanese during the 35-year occupation. Liberals say many of their opponents are opportunists whose inherited advantages date back to jobs, businesses and university educations granted by the Japanese during 1910-1945 colonial era. By exposing the dubious origins of the privileged class, government supporters argue, the ROK will move toward a more level playing field. But the only victims of the campaign so far have been Uri Party leaders whose fathers were found to have been military policemen during the occupation.

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16. Fischer Case

Reuters ("CHESS MASTER FISCHER WINS JAPAN DEPORTATION DELAY", 2004-09-08) reported that chess grandmaster Bobby Fischer stayed one move ahead of US authorities on Wednesday when he won a delay in efforts to deport him from Japan. A Japanese court granted an injunction preventing Fischer from being deported until it had ruled on his lawsuit seeking to have the deportation order quashed, his lawyer said. Fisher's lawyer, Masako Suzuki, said the injunction was a big win for Fischer, adding that it usually took about a year for a ruling on a suit seeking cancellation of a deportation order. " Fischer also filed a demand for a US hearing on what his supporters say was an unlawful decision by the State Department to revoke his passport, said one supporter, Tokyo-based Canadian John Bosnitch, in an e-mail. Fischer has made several other moves to avoid deportation, including a request for refugee status in Japan as well as plans to renounce his US citizenship and marry a Japanese woman.

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17. Jenkins Case

Kyodo News ("REPORT: JENKINS COULD SURRENDER SATURDAY ", 2004-09-08) reported that accused US Army deserter Charles Jenkins could check out of his Japanese hospital and surrender to the American military as early as Saturday, a news report said Wednesday. The report by Kyodo News agency cited unidentified sources. Officials at the US Embassy said they could not confirm the timing of Jenkins' surrender. The Japanese government has argued for leniency in his case so Jenkins could live in Japan with Soga, whose plight has inspired widespread sympathy here. Washington, however, has insisted it would press a case against Jenkins, though it has not demanded his handover while he was hospitalized.

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18. East China Sea Gas Project

The Associated Press ("JAPAN PROTESTS CHINA'S REFUSAL TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON EAST CHINA SEA GAS PROJECT", 2004-09-08) reported that Japan protested on Wednesday the PRC's refusal to provide details about a gas exploration project in a disputed area of the East China Sea. Japan and the PRC have yet to work out a border between their respective zones in the East China Sea, where both countries are prospecting for gas deposits. On Tuesday, the PRC rebuffed a Japanese request for the drawing of a border between the two countries' zones and a request for more information about a PRC exploration project there. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda expressed disappointment. "We have been repeatedly asking China to provide information, so it is regrettable that such a remark was made," he told reporters. "Japan conveyed to China that it regretted (that) ... through diplomatic channels and requested once again that information be provided." The PRC is working on an undersea pipeline in the area, and Japan fears the project could breach Tokyo's economic zone.

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19. Japan Typhoon

Reuters ("TYPHOON SONGDA LASHES NORTH JAPAN, 30 REPORTED DEAD", 2004-09-08) reported that a weakening Typhoon Songda lashed northern Japan with high winds and heavy rain

on Wednesday after carving a trail of destruction in wide areas, with media reports saying 30 people had been killed and 19 were unaccounted for. Hundreds were injured as the storm, one of the most powerful to hit Japan in recent years, advanced up Japan's west coast. Damaged buildings included Itsukushima Shrine, a World Heritage site that is at least 700 years old. The Shinto shrine, partly built over water, is on an island in southern Japan. Songda, the region's third typhoon in three weeks, was downgraded to a tropical depression after pounding wide areas of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost main island, with winds of up to 67 miles per hour.

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20. Japanese Nuclear Accident

Yomiuri Shimbun ("KEPCO OPENS MIHAMA REACTOR TO PRESS", 2004-09-08) reported that Kansai Electric Power Co. opened its No. 3 reactor at Mihama Nuclear Power Plant in Mihamacho, Fukui Prefecture, to the press Tuesday, allowing them to see the area where a steam pipe ruptured last month, killing five people and injuring six. Pieces of insulation that once covered the pipes lay scattered across the floor. Railings had been pulled down by workers to protect themselves from the hot water that sprayed from the pipe onto the floor as they attempted rescue their colleagues. On a table under the broken pipe, work gloves and tools lay in the same place they were left at the time of the accident. Flowers, sake and tobacco have been placed on a stand at the building as an offering to the souls of the five workers who lost their lives.

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21. AIDS in Japan

Agence France-Presse ("AIDS WORSENS SLOWLY BUT SURELY IN JAPAN", 2004-09-08) reported that for the last five years, gynecologist Tsuneo Akaeda has been venturing into the heart of Tokyo's clubland to raise the alarm over the spread of AIDS in Japan, a predicament he warns "is soon going to explode". The 60-year-old director of the Akaeda Roppongi Clinic gives out free advice to young people at a bar in Tokyo's pulsating nightlife district of Roppongi. Since 1999, he's seen over 2,000 of them. "Japanese people think that AIDS isn't real, they have no awareness and don't feel directly affected," Akaeda, 60, tells AFP. Japan is the only developed nation in which AIDS is on the increase, and health campaigners like Akaeda are determined to tackle the problem.

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22. Ganda Historical Revisionism

Korea Times ("GANDO NEW SOURCE OF FRICTION SEOUL, BEIJING BRACE FOR FRESH ROUND OF HISTORICAL BOUT", 2004-09-08) reported that a historical row between the ROK and PRC is entering a second round as the dispute over sovereignty of Gando in southern Manchuria, PRC, has emerged as a fresh bone of contention after the two countries had loosely resolved the earlier controversy over the ancient Korean kingdom of Koguryo. Recently, 59 lawmakers from the ruling and opposition parties submitted a resolution to nullify the Gando Agreement signed by Japan and the PRC in 1909. Under the agreement, Japan ceded territorial rights of Gando to the Qing Dynasty of China for exclusive rights to build and control a railway in the area. The Gando area covers much of what is now Jilin and Liaoning provinces in the PRC, near the border with the DPRK.

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23. Cross Strait Relations

Reuters ("TAIWAN MULLS NEW POLICY TO DIFFERENTIATE FROM CHINA", 2004-09-08) reported that Taiwan's foreign ministry is considering a proposal to use the name "Taiwan" more frequently to distinguish the island from rival the PRC, a spokesman said on Tuesday, in a move likely to anger Beijing. While stressing the island's official title remains "the Republic of China," the foreign ministry said it is studying a politically sensitive proposal to give priority to its unofficial name, Taiwan, in less formal arenas. "The main consideration is to tell the external world that we are not the People's Republic of China," said foreign ministry spokesman Michel Lu. "People may confuse the Republic of China with mainland China and give it credit for things we do."

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24. Sino - Saudi Arabian Relations

Agence France-Presse ("SAUDI ARABIA, CHINA AGREE TO FORMAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE", 2004-09-08) reported that Saudi Arabia and the PRC have reportedly agreed to hold regular political consultations. The official SPA news agency reported the memorandum of understanding was signed by visiting PRC Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Saudi foreign ministry undersecretary Nizar Madani in the Red Sea city of Jeddah. In the evening, Li was received by King Fahd and expressed "China's desire to reinforce and develop relations" with Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter. The PRC's energy needs have soared as its economy has taken off and in March state oil company Sinopec signed a deal to explore for gas in the kingdom's vast Empty Quarter.

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25. Hong Kong Elections

Reuters ("HK POLLS HIGHLIGHT CHINA'S SUSPICION OF DEMOCRACY", 2004-09-08) reported that the PRC's Communist Party leaders are watching with trepidation as Hong Kong's close-fought weekend legislative elections bring greater democracy within their borders. Now, Beijing has very modern worries about Hong Kong, the former British colony which votes on Sunday for a new legislature. This dabbling with democracy in what is now a PRC special administrative region makes leaders nervous. Long distrustful of democracy, the PRC has allowed direct elections for only half of the assembly's 60 seats, apparently to prevent pro-democracy candidates from winning a majority. Yet pro-democracy parties appear poised to make gains at the expense of pro-Beijing politicians who espouse the status quo. The PRC is concerned that a swing by voters toward Hong Kong's democrats could influence mainland provinces.

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26. PRC on Hong Kong Elections

Agence France-Presse ("BEIJING USING HONG KONG ECONOMY TO WEAKEN PRO-DEMOCRACY CAMP: ANALYSTS", 2004-09-08) reported that wary over growing support for Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, the PRC has used economic incentives to calm what it fears could become a restive region, according to analysts. Activists warn, however, that as well as the economic carrot, Beijing has also been beating the city with a political stick in the form of threats and violence to silence dissent in the run up to weekend elections. Politically, however, the program of incentives appears not to have worked quite as well. In fact, says Lingnan University assistant professor of

politics Paul Harris, it may even have backfired. "They want a certain level of freedom and a civil society that doesn't exist on the mainland and to which they have grown accustomed."

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27. PRC Transportation Market

The Associated Press ("HONG KONG, CHINA STRIKE NEW AVIATION DEAL", 2004-09-08) reported that in a gradual opening of the PRC's skies, Hong Kong and Beijing agreed Wednesday to give their airlines new flying rights, but the deal keeps Hong Kong's top carrier out of the Shanghai passenger market for at least two years. The PRC recently reached broader aviation treaties with other authorities, including a deal signed in July with Washington that could prove profitable for US airlines clamoring to get into the fast-growing mainland market. The Hong Kong government said in a statement the new deal will allow a second Hong Kong-based airline to start serving Shanghai with passenger flights in October 2006. A second Hong Kong airline can launch cargo flights to Shanghai next month.

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28. PRC Floods

Reuters ("'ONCE A CENTURY' FLOODS KILL 172 IN CHINA", 2004-09-08) reported that the PRC's Sichuan province faced the threat of epidemics on Wednesday after the worst flooding in a century killed at least 172 people and left scores missing, while water levels at the huge Three Gorges Dam swelled. Villages in Hubei province along the Yangtze River downstream of the dam braced for disaster, but officials declared the world's largest hydroelectric project ready to cope with the floodwaters. Police and People's Liberation Army soldiers were bringing relief to 6,000 stranded residents of Dazhou city in southwestern Sichuan and other areas trying to recover from what the official Xinhua news agency described as a "catastrophe which is not likely to happen in a century."

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51. CanKor

CANADA-KOREA ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SERVICE ("CanKor # 178", 2004-09-03) Canada supports the six-party process to solve the DPRK nuclear dispute, says Canada's new Ambassador to the ROK, Marius Grinius. The US Defense Department announces deployment of 15 Aegis destroyers in the Pacific theatre, two of them permanently stationed in the Sea of Japan (a.k.a. Sea of Korea) to counter North Korean missiles. The DPRK has agreed to human rights talks with the UK in a landmark September visit by UK Foreign Office Minister Bill Rammell, accompanied by the UK's chief human rights expert. North Korea will become more open and responsible because cooperation between the two Koreas is now irreversible, says ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon during a visit to Australia. Han Sung-joo, ROK ambassador to the USA, expresses optimism that the next round of six-party talks will take place in September, although "substantial progress" is unlikely before US presidential elections in November. Alleged deserter Charles Jenkins breaks his silence about four decades in the DPRK, recounting a life of fear and censorship. The Geneva-based World Council of Churches (WCC) appeals to the international community to help lift sanctions against the DPRK, to restore humanitarian aid, and to support the six-party peace process. The WCC statement is also critical of the DPRK, expressing concern over reports of human rights violations and denial of access to human rights organizations. Critics of the DPRK claim that religion has been totally eliminated by the atheist regime. North Korean officials claim that religious freedom is guaranteed. The reality

may be somewhat more involved than both these positions. This week's INSIDE DPRK highlights some of the complex issues surrounding the place of Christianity in the DPRK. www.cankor.ca

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