

# NAPSNet Daily Report Monday, May 21, 2007

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## I. NAPSNet

## **1. DPRK at ASEAN**

Yonhap ("NORTH KOREA TO SEND DELEGATION TO ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM", 2007-05-21) reported that the DPRK will send two diplomats to an Asian regional forum opening later this week in Manila, where a senior U.S. official will also be present.

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## **2. DPRK Military Reshuffle**

Associated Press ("NORTH KOREA RESHUFFLES SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS", 2007-05-21) reported that the DPRK has reshuffled senior military officers. Gen. Kim Myong Guk, commander of the 108 Mechanized Corps, was named the operations director of the North's Korean People's Army, to replace Ri Myong Su, a close aide to the North's leader, who recently became a resident member of the National Defence Commission, Yonhap news agency reported, citing unidentified intelligence officials.

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## **3. DPRK Illicit Drug Supply and Demand**

Daily NK ("DUE TO CHINA'S PROTEST, NORTH KOREA'S DRUG PRODUCTION FACILITY PARTLY CLOSED", 2007-05-21) reported that several "well-known sources" relayed that the PRC protested strongly to the illicit drug flow from the DPRK and urged that the Heungnam Pharmaceutical Manufacturer in Hamheung be shut down. The DPRK authorities complied, closing the manufacturer responsible for the production of bingdu (known in the West as "ice"), a central nervous stimulant. Bingdu was administered to many North Koreans living in Hamheung, to combat the effects of malnutrition and lack of medicines. Predictably, the number of addicted persons has climbed to an alarming rate, especially among the young.

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## **4. DPRK Tourism**

Chosun Ilbo ("TRAVEL PACKAGES TO SOUTH, N.KOREA LAUNCHED IN THE U.S.", 2007-05-22) reported that a travel package to South and North Korea was introduced in the US. The Los Angeles branch of the Korea Tourism Organization and the American travel company Geographic Expedition said last Thursday that they are offering the tour twice in August and twice in September. The package is far from cheap, costing between US\$6,500 and \$7,000 a person excluding airfare. But more than 30 people have made reservations.

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## **5. DPRK-Myanmar Relations**

Pravda ("CARGO SHIP FROM NORTH KOREA DOCKS IN MYANMAR SINCE LAST MONTH'S AGREEMENT", 2007-05-20) reported that Myanmar permitted a DPRK cargo ship in distress to anchor at a port in November last year and conducted an inspection on board that "found no suspicious material or military equipment." The incident garnered attention because of suspicions that the DPRK supplies weapons and weapons technology to Myanmar. It was not known what kind

of cargo the Kang Nam I was carrying or whether Myanmar authorities have conducted an inspection of the vessel. Myanmar and the DPRK signed an agreement last month to resume diplomatic ties.

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## **6. ROK, DPRK on Comfort Women Issue**

Yonhap ("ACTIVISTS FROM KOREAS URGE JAPAN TO APOLOGIZE FOR WARTIME SEX SLAVERY", 2007-05-21) reported that civic activists from ROK and DPRK supporting Asian women who were forced into sexual slavery by Japan during World War II urged Japan Monday to apologize and take legal responsibility for the matter. The call was during an international conference on the Japanese wartime sex slavery in a statement issued at the end of the three-day meeting in Seoul. It also said, "The Japanese government should immediately halt the act of threatening world peace by reviving its past militarism."

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## **7. US-ROK Security Alliance**

Chosun Ilbo ("KOREA-U.S. ALLIANCE 'COULD END WITHIN 10 YEARS'", 2007-05-21) reported that the ROK-US alliance could collapse within 10 years, the think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies warns in a report. In the report titled "Congressional Attitudes on the Future of the U.S.-South Korea Alliance", both Republicans and Democrats in Congress are skeptical about Seoul's engagement with toward the DPRK. Most respondents "believed that the ROK's policies toward North Korea were too generous, naïve, and/or dangerous," it said. It notes that Seoul "made troop contribution to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but members of Congress and their staff have paid little attention."

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## **8. ROK Trade Relations**

Korea Herald ("KOREAN TRADE SANDWICHED BETWEEN JAPAN, CHINA", 2007-05-21) reported that the ROK's current trade deficit with Japan is widening while the country's trade surplus with the PRC is contracting, reflecting the growing concern of the ROK being sandwiched between Asia's two largest economies. The ROK's strong dependence on globally competitive Japanese technologies, parts and materials has been blamed for the growing deficit. Competition with the PRC has been growing fierce, as the Chinese rapidly race to catch up with the ROK in terms of product technology, while offering more affordable prices thanks to cheaper labor costs.

[\(return to top\)](#) Korea Times ("PRESIDENT WANTS FREE TRADE PACT WITH CHINA", 2007-05-21) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun stressed the need for signing a free trade agreement with the PRC, following the ROK-US accord struck last month. "I think an FTA with China is inevitable," the head of state said in an interview. He pledged that the government would come up with measures to minimize possible damages to farmers from the trade deal. [\(return to top\)](#) Korea Times ("EU FTA MORE BENEFICIAL THAN KORUS DEAL", 2007-05-21) reported that the ROK is expected to enjoy higher export benefits from a free trade deal with the EU than through the recently signed pact with the US, said a leading private think tank on Sunday. Because the EU's average tariff is set at 4.2 percent, higher than the 3.7 percent of the U.S., according to the LG Economic Research Institute, the ROK's leading exports, including automobiles and flat panel displays, have been faced with

higher tax hurdles. [\(return to top\)](#)

## 9. Japan Constitutional Revision

Kyodo News ("PANEL CHIEF SEEKS REINTERPRETING CONSTITUTION TO DEFEND ALLY IN WAR", 2007-05-21) reported that the chairman of a government panel on the right to collective self-defense called for changing Japan's current constitutional interpretation barring the country from exercising it. Referring to the ongoing buildup of a missile defense system in Japan, Shunji Yanai, a former ambassador to the US said, "We would not be able to utilize the much-awaited missile defense if the conventional constitutional interpretation is maintained." "It is technically difficult to tell if (incoming missiles) are aimed at Japan or the United States."

[\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Presse ("ABE WARNS ON SECURITY AS JAPAN MULLS DEFENCE ", 2007-05-21) reported that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe warned of a "dramatically more severe" security situation Friday as a panel of experts met to study how Tokyo can defend its allies without breaching its constitution. "As prime minister, I have the responsibility of building a constructive security framework able to respond to events," said the premier. [\(return to top\)](#)

## 10. Japan Education Policy

BBC News ("JAPAN SCHOOLS TO TEACH PATRIOTISM", 2007-05-21) reported that Japan's lower house of parliament has approved a new law requiring schools to teach children to be patriotic. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's ruling coalition voted for the law, which cites "loving our country" as a goal of Japanese pupils' compulsory education. The bill will also reinforce the education minister's power over local education boards, and introduce a requirement for teachers to renew their licences every 10 years.

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## 11. Sino-Indian Military Relations

Outlook India ("INDIA, CHINA TO HOLD JOINT MILITARY ANTI-TERRORISM MANOEUVRES", 2007-05-21) reported that seeking to bring their military to military relations to a new high, India and the PRC may soon hold their first-ever joint military exercise-- an anti-terrorism manoeuvre, Army Chief General J J Singh said. "I am going to propose the holding of such manoeuvres," Army Chief told PTI on the eve of his departure for Beijing on a week-long visit. "In principle, the Chinese have agreed to holding of such an exercise," the Army chief said, "but during the visit, we hope to work out the details and whether such a first-ever exercise would be held on Chinese or Indian soil".

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## 12. PRC Rural Unrest

The Associated Press ("FARMERS RIOT AGAINST CHINESE GOVERNMENT", 2007-05-21) reported that thousands of farmers in southwest PRC rioted at a government office after authorities imposed heavy fines on families that had more children than allowed under the country's family planning policy, a newspaper and a villager said. Anti-riot police were called in after villagers set fires and smashed cars Saturday at the Shabi township government office in the Guangxi region, Hong Kong's Ming Pao Daily News said.

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## 13. PRC Activists Arrested

The New York Times ("2 ACTIVISTS ARE UNDER HOUSE ARREST AND BARRED FROM LEAVING CHINA", 2007-05-21) reported that a young PRC couple who have promoted a variety of delicate social and political causes were barred from leaving the country on Friday and placed under house arrest, the couple said. The police barred Hu Jia, 33, and his wife, Zeng Jinyan, 23, from departing from Beijing on a trip to Hong Kong and several European countries, Mr. Hu said. The couple had planned to call attention to what they described as a neglect of AIDS patients and to defend other PRC campaigners for human rights who had been prosecuted in recent months.

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## 14. PRC Bird Flu Outbreak

BBC News ("CHINA CONFIRMS BIRD FLU OUTBREAK", 2007-05-21) reported that the PRC has confirmed a new outbreak of the deadly H5N1 strain of the bird flu virus in the central province of Hunan, state media has reported. More than 11,000 poultry died of the virus in Shijiping village near Yiyang city, the Agriculture Ministry said. Some 53,000 birds have since been culled and officials say that the outbreak is now under control.

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## 15. PRC Space Program

Xinhua ("CHINA AIMS TO LAUNCH FIRST LUNAR PROBE THIS YEAR", 2007-05-21) reported that the PRC was 'losing no time' in preparing its first lunar orbiter, Chang'e I, which will most likely be launched in the second half of 2007, a space official said here Sunday. 'The moon probe project is the third milestone in China's space technology after satellite and manned spacecraft projects, and a first step for us in exploring deep space,' said Sun Laiyan, chief of the China National Space Administration.

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