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I. NAPSNet

1. DPRK at ASEAN Regional Forum

Reuters ("SE ASIA URGES N.KOREA TO RETURN TO NUCLEAR TALKS", 2006-07-25) reported that southeast Asian nations urged the DPRK on Tuesday to rejoin six-party talks this week to resolve fears over its nuclear ambitions, offering to play host. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) wants the six parties to renew stalled talks on the fringe of an ASEAN-sponsored global security forum in Malaysia on Friday.

[\(return to top\)](#) Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREA SEEKS TALKS WITH NORTH", 2006-07-25) reported that the ROK on Tuesday sought talks with the DPRK, which would be their highest-level meeting since DPRK missile tests three weeks ago. ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon said he wanted to meet his DPRK counterpart, Paek Nam-sun, this week on the sidelines of a Southeast Asian regional meeting in Malaysia. "I have proposed to meet, but I have not received any firm confirmation from the North Korean foreign minister," Ban told reporters on arrival at Kuala Lumpur airport. [\(return to top\)](#) Agence France-Presse ("NORTH KOREA HITS OUT AT "IMBECILE" RICE AHEAD OF ASEAN MEETING", 2006-07-25) reported that the DPRK has defended its missile launches ahead of an Asian security forum expected to focus on them, describing US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a "political imbecile" for criticising the tests. The DPRK's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) accused Rice, who called the DPRK a "completely irresponsible" and "dangerous" state for test-firing seven ballistic missiles on July 5, of distorting the facts. Rice and her DPRK counterpart Paek Nam-Sun are due to attend the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur Friday amid international tensions over the missile tests. [\(return to top\)](#)

2. ROK on US DPRK Policy

Chosun Ilbo ("MINISTER LAMBASTES U.S. FOR 'FAILED' N.KOREA POLICY", 2006-07-25) reported that Seoul's top official in charge of DPRK policy on Sunday singled out the US as the nation whose policy toward Pyongyang "failed the most." "China has failed" to prevent the DPRK from test-firing missiles "and we also recognize our own failure," Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok said. "But if it was the U.S. the North tried to threaten the most, the logic goes that it is the U.S. that failed the most."

[\(return to top\)](#) Chosun Ilbo ("ROH DEFENDS MINISTER'S RIGHT TO SLAM U.S. ", 2006-07-25) reported that President Roh Moo-hyun on Tuesday defended Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok against criticism over Lee's attack on Washington's DPRK policies over the weekend. Lee had said on a TV program the US "suffered the biggest failure" when the DPRK test-fired missiles in defiance of international warnings on July 5. Lawmakers from both ruling and opposition parties in the National Assembly on Monday chastised Lee for his "inappropriate" remarks. [\(return to top\)](#)

3. PRC Influence on DPRK

Dong-a Ilbo ("CHINA'S NORTH KOREA OPTIONS LIMITED", 2006-07-25) reported that PRC political experts say that the ROK seems to anticipate the significant role of the PRC in influencing the DPRK, but, in fact, PRC influence on the DPRK is extremely limited and, in turn, Beijing is also in a bind to choose an appropriate policy to deal with the DPRK. Park Chang-geun, a senior fellow of international affairs at Fudan University in Shanghai, PRC, said that the PRC is now under international pressure to push the DPRK more, but unfortunately, the PRC has little understanding and knowledge about the reclusive country.

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4. ROK Military Readiness

Yonhap ("S. KOREA RETURNS TO NORMAL STATE OF MILITARY READINESS AGAINST N.KOREA", 2006-07-25) reported that the ROK's military has returned to its normal state of combat readiness against the DPRK, three weeks after the country launched a salvo of missiles into the East Sea, informed military sources said Tuesday. Since the DPRK test-fired seven missiles on July 5, the ROK has been operating situation rooms around the clock and its military has stepped up its combat readiness near borders such as the Demilitarized Zone and the Northern Limit Line.

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5. ROK on DPRK Human Rights

Yonhap ("SEOUL REFUSES TO DUPLICATE 'HELSINKI PROCESS' ON N.KOREAN HUMAN RIGHTS", 2006-07-25) reported that the ROK's point man on the DPRK on Monday rejected international calls, mainly from the US, for pursuing a multilateral agreement to help improve dismal human rights conditions in the DPRK. "Personally, I oppose a Northeast Asian version of the Helsinki Process," Unification Minister Lee Jong-seok told a parliamentary committee on unification, foreign affairs and trade. The Helsinki Process refers to a 1975 agreement between the US and 34 other Western nations in which the countries pledged to make human rights their top policy regarding the Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries.

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6. DPRK Defectors

Yonhap ("THREE N. KOREAN DEFECTORS HEADING FOR U.S. VIA JAPAN: DIPLOMATIC SOURCE", 2006-07-25) reported that three DPRK defectors who were staying at a US consulate in the PRC left for the US last week via Japan after the US government issued them a travel license, a diplomatic source revealed on Tuesday. "The three defectors left Shenyang for the United States via Japan, not as deportees, but (legally) after receiving their official travel certificates," the source said on condition of anonymity.

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7. UN Secretary-General Candidates

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN, INDIAN CANDIDATES GET BOOST IN RACE FOR NEXT U.N. CHIEF", 2006-07-25) reported that the ROK and Indian candidates to become the next UN secretary-general got a boost when most members of the Security Council encouraged them to stay in the race. ROK Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon did the best, with 12 council nations encouraging him to run, one discouraging him and two giving no opinion.

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8. US-ROK Security Alliance

Chosun Ilbo ("U.S. FORCES KOREA FACE DRASTICALLY DIMINISHED ROLE", 2006-07-25) reported that an Asia specialist with the US Congressional Research Service has presented a report to Congress suggesting the US Defense Department is pushing to change the military command

structure as a means to drastically reduce the role of the US Forces Korea. Larry Nicksch drew up the 16-page report, saying part of the plans is thought to be putting the US Forces Korea under the US Army First Corps. Nicksch's analysis could mean that moves to downgrade the military relationship with the ROK reportedly instigated by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld are well underway.

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9. US-Japan Missile Defense Cooperation

Kyodo ("ARMITAGE CALLS FOR JOINT OPERATION OF MISSILE DEFENSE SYSTEM", 2006-07-25) reported that former US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage told visiting senior Japanese lawmaker Taku Yamasaki in a meeting that Japan and the US should accelerate talks to realize joint operation of their missile defense systems. Armitage also stressed the need for boosting the defense budget for the missile shield to achieve the joint operation in the wake of the DPRK's missile launches.

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10. Japan Iraq Dispatch

Agence France-Presse ("LAST JAPANESE TROOPS RETURN FROM IRAQ", 2006-07-25) reported that the last Japanese troops from Iraq have returned to Japan, bringing an end to the pacifist nation's most significant military operation since World War II. The troops -- who suffered no casualties and never even fired their weapons -- helped reconstruct the relatively peaceful southern province of Muthanna, building water supply facilities and providing medical assistance.

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11. Cross Strait Relations

Agence France-Presse ("CHINA WARNS US NOT TO SELL FIGHTER JETS TO TAIWAN", 2006-0-25) reported that Beijing has warned Washington not to proceed with a reported deal to sell fighter jets to Taiwan, indicating it would impact on regional security and harm Sino-US relations, state media said. The China Times reported on Monday that a Taiwanese delegation had proposed the procurement of 66 advanced fighter planes during an annual military meeting with Washington early this month.

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12. Taiwan Leadership

Agence France-Presse ("TAIWAN PRESIDENT VOWS TO STAY IN OFFICE AS PARTY CONGRESS OPENS ", 2006-07-25) reported that Taiwan's President Chen Shui-bian has vowed to stay in office as his Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) opened its annual congress amid a string of corruption scandals that analysts said have tarnished its image. The president has publically apologised for the turmoil caused by his son-in-law Chao Chien-ming who was indicted on insider trading charges.

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13. Hong Kong Environment

Agence France-Presse ("POLLUTED HONG KONG MULLS LAWS ON IDLING ENGINES ", 2006-0-25) reported that Hong Kong motorists may face fines for leaving their engines idling under legislation being considered to help reduce the city's worsening pollution problem, the government said. The announcement came as air quality monitors recorded "very high" pollution over the city for the second day in a row, a classification that carries with it an automatic health warning to sufferers of respiratory and heart problems.

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14. PRC Researcher Trial

Reuters ("CHINA DELAYS VERDICT ON NYT RESEARCHER: LAWYER", 2006-07-25) reported that a PRC court has failed to give a verdict in the case of New York Times researcher Zhao Yan, accused of leaking state secrets abroad and fraud, although his lawyers said the decision should have come by Tuesday. Zhao's lawyer, Mo Shaoping, told Reuters there appeared virtually no chance the court would deliver its verdict in the legally mandated time.

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15. PRC Typhoon

Agence France-Presse ("TYPHOON HITS CHINA, OVER 500,000 EVACUATED ", 2006-07-25) reported that Typhoon Kaemi struck the southeast coast of the PRC, sparking the evacuation of over 500,000 people in an area still reeling from a tropical storm that claimed over 600 lives. The typhoon struck the PRC's Fujian province at 0750 GMT, Xinhua news agency said.

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