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SOUTH KOREA SETS OUT NORTH KOREA ENERGY AID PLAN

Text of Arirang News report, published in English by South Korean newspaper Choson Ilbo website on 27 September

Seoul has hammered out a possible blueprint for providing electricity aid to North Korea. The plan has yet to secure the consent of both Pyongyang and Washington, but government officials here remain hopeful, claiming that it is a feasible option.

The tentative framework calls on the five member nations of the six-party nuclear talks to begin supplying North Korea with the elements necessary to operate its thermal plants once the North reinstates its obligations to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. At the same time, South Korea is to launch construction work for relevant facilities to allow the transmission of electricity from the South to North Korea. The undertaking is expected to take about three years.

According to the plan, North Korea's completion of its dismantlement process will pave the path for direct transmission of electric power to replace the shipments of fuel oil to North Korea. The project involving the light-water nuclear reactors will commence following this and is estimated to take up a period of between six to ten years.

Once energy is generated by the reactors, South Korea's initial free transmission of electricity to the North will also come at a price, meaning North Korea will be then required to pay for the transmission if needed.

Source: Choson Ilbo website, Seoul, in English 27 Sep 05

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