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I. United States

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1. Alleged DPRK Nuclear Plant Construction

The Wall Street Journal (Robert S. Greenberger, "NORTH KOREA WEAPONS REPORT CLOUDS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR DEAL," Washington, 08/18/98), the Associated Press (John Diamond, "US TO MONITOR NORTH KOREAN PROJECT," Washington, 08/18/98) and the Washington Post (Dana Priest, "ACTIVITY SUGGESTS N. KOREANS BUILDING SECRET NUCLEAR SITE," 08/18/98, A01) reported that Larry Nicksch, a specialist on Asian Affairs at the Congressional Research Service, said that reports that the DPRK may be building an underground nuclear facility could lead Congress to vote against further funding for the 1994 Geneva Agreed Framework. Nicksch stated, "This could be a big factor now in what Congress decides to do." However, US national security officials have reached no conclusions about the project. One anonymous senior defense official said Monday, "For all we know it could be a big underground parking garage." An anonymous State Department official

said the US is monitoring the situation closely and expects the DPRK government "to live up to its commitments under the Agreed Framework. Any violation of those commitments would be considered a serious matter." Two unnamed administration officials said that US special envoy Charles Kartman is expected to demand that all construction at the new site be halted when he meets with DPRK officials on Friday. [Henry Sokolski](#), executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, stated, "That the administration was implementing this understanding and publicly asking for money when they knew this facility existed is outrageous." However, Joel Wit, a Korea expert at the Henry L. Stimson Center, said that if the DPRK intended to break the agreement and restart its nuclear program, it could simply have restarted existing facilities. He speculated that the DPRK could be trying to pressure the US into lifting the economic sanctions. He added that the new construction might also be a way for DPRK leader Kim Jong-il to win support from the military, saying, "He may be even more dependent on them than we thought."

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry ("WHITE HOUSE DAILY BRIEFING, AUGUST 17, 1998," Washington, USIA Transcript, 08/17/98) stated that the US believes that the DPRK remains in compliance with the October 1994 Geneva agreed framework. McCurry stated, "Since 1994, the North's reactor has been shut down, no plutonium has been reprocessed, and these facilities are and have been open to monitoring by the IAEA, the International Atomic Energy Agency." He added, "Of course, we would be concerned if North Korea tried to establish a plutonium production elsewhere. We will continue to monitor North Korean activity closely and will be discussing with our allies any changes that we see on the ground."

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2. DPRK International Trade

Dow Jones Newswires ("JAPAN JETRO: INTL TRADE WITH N. KOREA UP IN 1997," Tokyo, 08/18/98) reported that the Japan External Trade Organization said Tuesday that International trade with the DPRK rose to US\$2.5 billion in 1997 from around US\$2.2 billion in each of the previous three years. DPRK exports rose 21 percent to US\$1.03 billion in 1997, the first time exports were above US\$1 billion in four years, while imports rose 3.5 percent to US\$1.47 billion. The DPRK's trade deficit contracted 22.2 percent from 1996 to US\$447.66 billion. The DPRK's three biggest trading partners in 1997 were the PRC, Japan, and the ROK. Trade with Japan contracted for the second year in row, but the DPRK maintained a US\$78.34 million trade surplus with Japan. However, in the first half of 1998, trade between the DPRK and the PRC, Japan, and the ROK fell 30 percent from the same period a year ago to US\$483.6 million. Exports fell 40 percent to US\$153.0 million and imports dropped 23 percent to US\$330.6 million in that period. The DPRK posted a trade deficit of US\$177.7 million with its top three trading partners in the first half of 1998, suggesting that international trade for the full year will fall as well, the report said.

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3. ROK National Security Law

The Associated Press ("SOUTH KOREAN ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST FACES ARREST," Seoul, 08/17/98) reported that officials said that Reverend Moon Kyu-hyon, an ROK Roman Catholic priest, may face arrest for engaging in political activities during a recent visit to the DPRK. Moon and eight other ROK Catholic priests were allowed to make a week-long visit to the DPRK on condition that they attend only religious functions celebrating the August 15 Korean Independence Day. However, government officials said Monday that Moon attended a series of political functions. Moon was convicted in 1990 of making an unauthorized visit to the DPRK and served three years in prison before being granted amnesty.

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4. ROK Labor Unrest

Reuters (Paul Barker, "SOUTH KOREAN RULING PARTY WILL MEDIATE IN HYUNDAI LABOR DISPUTE," Ulsan, 08/18/98) reported that the ROK ruling National Congress for New Politics (NCNP) said on Tuesday that it would send an eight-member mediation team to Ulsan to try to break a deadlock between Hyundai Motor Company's labor and management on Tuesday evening or on Wednesday morning. Yoon Ho-jung, a spokesman for the NCNP, stated, "Our party believes further efforts should be made to resolve the Hyundai dispute peacefully." Yoon said that police raids would be delayed for the time being. He added, "Our party feels the need to cool down the over-heated atmosphere in Ulsan. The process may take some time." Earlier on Tuesday, the labor ministry said that Minister Lee Ki-ho's efforts to mediate had made no progress due to a lack of cooperation from both the union and the company. Lee Young-shik, a supervisor at the labor ministry's mediation division, stated, "Hyundai's union and management refused to make any concessions on the issue of layoffs." Witnesses said that riot police still looked ready to forcibly evict workers and their families. Riot police abruptly withdrew from the auto plant in Ulsan on Tuesday morning after they were confronted by striking workers wielding lead pipes and surrounded by their families. An unnamed union official said that the union would not accept anything other than a complete withdrawal of the layoff plan. Hyundai spokesman Min Kyung-hwan said management also would not back away from its plan to lay off workers.

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5. Chinese Protests of Indonesian Riots

The New York Times (Elisabeth Rosenthal "BEIJING STUDENTS AND WOMEN PROTEST ANTI-CHINESE VIOLENCE IN INDONESIA," Beijing, 08/18/98) reported that PRC students and women's groups held protests Monday in Beijing over the violence against ethnic Chinese during riots in Indonesia in May. The demonstrations were held despite the denial by the PRC Public Security Bureau for permission to hold organized demonstrations on Monday, Indonesian Independence Day. Zhao Shuqing, a television news reporter, stated, "More than 10,000 demonstrated in Hong Kong -- more than 10,000 signatures were collected in New York. And I wondered, what has mainland China done in this matter?" A group of several dozen students from Beijing University staged a short sit-in outside the Indonesian ambassador's residence and presented a T-shirt signed by more than 100 students protesting the atrocities. Human rights groups have said 1,200 people were killed and 150 women raped in the riots in Jakarta, in addition to the widespread looting of Chinese businesses.

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6. Japanese World War II Atrocities

The Associated Press (P.H. Ferguson, "EX-JAPAN SOLDIERS DESCRIBE WWII," Los Angeles, 08/18/98) reported that four Japanese World War II veterans gave eyewitness accounts of Japan's wartime actions in China during a video teleconference on Sunday. The veterans described attacks with biological weapons, mass executions, and torture of civilian prisoners. The conference audio was carried live on the Internet. The veterans in Tokyo were questioned via satellite by participants watching the video in Los Angeles, and people around the world were able to e-mail questions to the veterans and a panel of experts. Sheldon Harris, a US historian who has researched Japan's World War II biological warfare units, said that he estimates as many as 250,000 people were killed in biological attacks throughout China. He added that no Japanese scientists were prosecuted for war crimes after Japan's defeat because of a deal that allowed US scientists access to the data gathered

in human experiments.

II. Republic of Korea

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1. Alleged DPRK Nuclear Plant Construction

The New York Times reported Monday that the DPRK was building secret underground nuclear facilities northeast of Yongbyon to resume constructing nuclear warheads, according to an intelligence source. It stated that US satellite photographs showed thousands of workers in the area and that Pyongyang has stored enough plutonium to build six nuclear devices. The Times said that it would take from two to six years to complete work at the site and that US officials expressed surprise over the DPRK breaking the Geneva Accord. An ROK government official commented that the US had informed the ROK on the matter and detailed measures have been taken to confirm the issue. He said that the actual use for the facility has yet to be ascertained. (Chosun Ilbo, "NYT REPORTS UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR FACILITIES IN NK," 08/18/98)

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2. ROK Policy toward DPRK

As of Tuesday, the DPRK had given no response to ROK President Kim Dae-jung's proposal to institutionalize dialogue channels at the ministerial level and to exchange presidential emissaries. Kim made the offer at an address given August 15 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the ROK government. This is in sharp contrast to the speech made by former ROK president Kim Young-sam last year, when Pyongyang radio launched an attack on him just one day later. An official from the Minister of Unification said that it is believed that the DPRK is seriously considering the direction of ROK policy following the election of Kim Dae-jung. Additionally, the president's speech contained many points valuable to the DPRK, including agricultural assistance and the Mount Kumkang tour project. (Chosun Ilbo, "NK HOLDS COMMENT ON KIM'S PROPOSAL," 08/18/98)

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3. 1985 Plans for ROK-DPRK Summit

According to the September issue of the Monthly Chosun, the ROK and the DPRK made an agreement back in 1985 to hold a summit meeting. The agreement was made in the DPRK in a two-and-a-half hour meeting held between the then-director of Korea's CIA, Chang Se-dong, and the then-President of the DPRK, Kim Il-sung, on October 17, 1985. In the meeting, the then-President of the ROK, Chun Do-hwan's, request for Kim Il-sung's permission to visit the DPRK for a first-ever meeting between the leaders of the two nations was conveyed. The request also included an invitation for a reciprocal visit to the ROK from Kim Il-sung. Kim Il-sung reportedly expressed appreciation of President Chun's intentions in his desire to come to the DPRK. The Monthly Chosun said that the precise reason for the failure of the meeting to take place remains unknown, but Park Chul-un, who accompanied Chang on his visit as a special assistant, said that there might have been some pressure from the US government to cancel the proposed meeting. (Chosun Ilbo, "1985 PLANS FOR NORTH-SOUTH SUMMIT REVEALED," 08/18/98)

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4. Reunions of Separated Families

People aged 60 or over who have been separated from family members or hometowns in the DPRK may travel there after filing written reports with the ROK Ministry of Unification (MOU) beginning in September, a high-ranking official at the ministry said Tuesday. Previously, an application to visit the DPRK for family reunions had to be approved by the ministry with a letter of invitation from the DPRK attached. This method, however, made it difficult for ROK citizens to visit since the DPRK authorities have never issued letters of invitation for the sole purpose of family reunions. (Chosun Ilbo, "GOVERNMENT ALLOWS MORE PEOPLE TO VISIT NORTH," 08/18/98)

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of [other NAPSNet resources](#).

We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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