

# NAPSNet Daily Report 19 August, 1997

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## **I. United States**

### **1. KEDO Begins Construction of DPRK Reactors**

The Office of the White House Press Secretary ("WHITE HOUSE ON KEDO AND NORTH KOREA GROUNDBREAKING," USIA Transcript, 8/19/97) on August 19 issued the following written statement: "KEDO and DPRK Groundbreaking. Today in North Korea, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the DPRK held a groundbreaking ceremony marking the start of construction of the first of two light-water nuclear reactors to be built in North Korea under the terms of the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework. Ambassador Paul Cleveland, the U.S. Representative to KEDO's Executive Board and Chairman of the Board, attended the ceremony and delivered a message from President Clinton. Groundbreaking for the light-water reactor project marks an important milestone in our efforts, in cooperation with the Republic of Korea and Japan, to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula, contribute to peace and stability in Northeast Asia, and strengthen the international non-proliferation regime. It also occurs against a backdrop of significant progress in other areas of Agreed Framework implementation. North Korea continues to maintain the freeze on its nuclear facilities, under IAEA monitoring, and is nearing completion of a joint project with the United States to safely store its spent nuclear fuel, which would otherwise be available for the production of weapons-grade plutonium. Moreover, the Agreed Framework

continues to provide a foundation for us to discuss issues of bilateral concern with the DPRK and, along with our South Korean and Japanese allies, to engage North Korea in meaningful dialogue and work toward a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula."

The Associated Press ("GROUND BROKEN ON KOREA NUKE PLANTS," Kumho, DPRK, 8/19/97) and Reuters ("GROUND BROKEN IN N.KOREA FOR NUCLEAR PROJECT," Kumho, DPRK, 8/19/97) reported that diplomats from nine nations and the European Union were among the 200 people at the ceremonial groundbreaking for construction of two 1,000-megawatt light-water nuclear reactors in the DPRK under the direction of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Ten KEDO officials, including KEDO director Stephen W. Bosworth, triggered a "symbolic blast" on a nearby hillside that sent puffs of pink, green, orange and yellow smoke into the air. Bosworth said Tuesday's ceremony had political importance because it would help establish KEDO's credibility. "This groundbreaking ceremony...marks the fulfillment of a promise -- a promise made over two years ago by the Republic of Korea, Japan and the United States," Bosworth said at the start of the ceremony. Chang Sun-sup, chief ROK representative for the project, stated, "As we are all aware, the light-water reactor project was initiated to help ensure the peace and security of a denuclearized and war-free Korean peninsula. It is the promising product of a concerted international effort to realize these ideals on the Korean peninsula." However, t

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in the DPRK under the direction of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Ten KEDO officials, including KEDO director Stephen W. Bosworth, triggered a "symbolic blast" on a nearby hillside that sent puffs of pink, green, orange and yellow smoke into the air. Bosworth said Tuesday's ceremony had political importance because it would help establish KEDO's credibility. "This groundbreaking ceremony...marks the fulfillment of a promise -- a promise made over two years ago by the Republic of Korea, Japan and the United States," Bosworth said at the start of the ceremony. Chang Sun-sup, chief ROK representative for the project, stated, "As we are all aware, the light-water reactor project was initiated to help ensure the peace and security of a denuclearized and war-free Korean peninsula. It is the promising product of a concerted international effort to realize these ideals on the Korean peninsula." However, t

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doubtful about the actual implementation of the project." Under the terms of the 1994 US-DPRK Agreed Framework, the two reactors are due to be completed by 2003. However, before KEDO puts the reactor cores in the new reactors, the International Atomic Energy Agency must be satisfied that the DPRK has no weapons-grade plutonium stored from its older, Soviet-designed reactor. "They have to come clean before they get the guts of the reactors," said Joel Wit, deputy director of the US State Department's Office of Korean Affairs. "If they don't come clean, they get a concrete building and that's it," he said.

## **2. ROK Defector to DPRK**

The Associated Press ("KOREAN DEFECTORS' RECORDS SEIZED," Seoul, 8/19/97) reported that on Tuesday investigators of the ROK Agency for National Security Planning (NSP) searched the home of Oh Ik-jae, 68, the prominent former head of the indigenous religious group Chondokyo who defected to the DPRK last Friday. The NSP investigators seized hundreds of bank records and other documents in hopes of finding out why Oh defected. While the investigators claimed in requesting the search warrant that Oh is suspected of being a spy, the national daily Hankyoreh reported that Oh merely wanted to return to his homeland, quoting a letter Oh had sent to his daughter in the North. "Since I will die anyway, I would like to return to my homeland and meet with your mother, whom I love, and be buried in my homeland," the letter said. Oh is a DPRK native who fled to the ROK during the Korean War, and later headed the Chondokyo for six years until 1995. At the time of his defection, he was a member of a presidential advisory group and also served as an adviser to the largest opposition party, the National Congress for New Politics, led by Kim Dae-jung.

## **3. US MIAs in DPRK**

The AP-Dow Jones News Service ("U.S.-N. KOREA TEAM RESUMES SEARCH FOR MISSING SOLDIERS," Seoul, 8/19/97) reported that Mike Sasek, a spokesman for the US Defense Department's Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, said Tuesday that a 10-member US forensics team will travel to the DPRK "in a day or two" and join with DPRK military representatives to resume searching for the remains of US soldiers still listed as missing almost 50 years after the Korean War. The US-DPRK team will search an old battlefield in Unsan county, some 50 miles south of the Yalu river, Sasek said. The search so far has focused on Unsan, where the 8th Cavalry engaged advancing PRC troops in October 1950. Some 350 US soldiers died in the battle. "Ideally we'd love to recover all 350, but that's not going to happen," Susak said. Earlier this month, the DPRK turned over the remains of four US servicemen, the latest to be repatriated since the United States was given access eighteen months ago to look for evidence of US soldiers killed during the war. Some 8,100 US servicemen remain unaccounted for from the Korean War, in which more than 50,000 US troops died. So far, 209 sets of remains have been returned to the US, but only seven have been positively identified. Another recovery operation is scheduled to start October 1 in the same area.

## **II. Republic of Korea**

### **1. ROK View of DPRK-Japan Relations**

The ROK is keeping a watchful eye on the recent moves by Japan and the DPRK toward normalizing bilateral relations. A ROK Foreign Ministry official said Japan and the DPRK appeared to have their own interests in holding a meeting in Beijing this week in preparation for resuming long-stalled normalization talks. "Japan probably feels the need to improve ties with the DPRK in keeping with progress in the four-way Korean peace process and US-DPRK bilateral contacts," he said. For its part, the DPRK is apparently seeking to gain food and economic aid from Japan and thus prompt the ROK and the US to make further concessions, he said. Both Japan and the DPRK have shown an

active attitude toward the upcoming meeting in Beijing to prepare for normalization talks. Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda said the meeting will be elevated to the level of deputy director-general from director level "so as to move the process more efficiently." (Korea Herald, Kim Kyung-ho, "SEOUL KEEPS WATCHFUL EYE ON UPGRADED N.K.-JAPAN TALKS," 08/19/97)

## **2. ROK-US Military Exercises**

Ulchi-Focus Lens (UFL), the annual combined civil, government and military exercises aimed at evaluating and improving the ROK's military preparedness, began August 18 and will continue until August 29. UFL features two segments: Ulchi exercises involving government officials and civilians, and Focus-Lens exercises consisting of ROK-US military forces. In the Ulchi segment, staged over six days, emergency orders were given to all government officials at 4 a.m. August 18 to report to work on short notice. The Focus-Lens drill involves 16,500 US troops and an unknown number of ROK troops. The ROK Defense Ministry said that the predominantly "computer-simulated" exercises also consist of a small number of US troops abroad. "The possibility of the DPRK provoking war is getting ever more likely now," said ROK Defense Minister Kim Dong-jin. "Thus, the troops need to carry out the exercise as if they are engaged in actual warfare." The DPRK had demanded the cancellation of Ulchi-Focus Lens earlier this month, at preliminary four-party talks in New York, charging that the exercises have been increased in recent years and were replacing the former massive "Team Spirit" training maneuvers. "Team Spirit," claimed by the DPRK to be a rehearsal for nuclear war, was halted in 1994 to persuade the DPRK to agree to freeze its suspected nuclear weapons program. (Korea Herald, "1997 ULCHI-FOCUS LENS DRILL BEGINS; TO COPE WITH POSSIBLE WAR PROVOCATIONS BY DPRK," 08/19/97)

## **3. Foreign Investment in the DPRK**

The Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) says that only two or three Korean-Americans have replied to recent advertisements in local papers promoting investment tours to the Rajin-Sonbong Free Economic and Trade Zone (FETZ), indicating that interest among Korean-Americans in investment prospects in the DPRK has cooled off considerably. The interest of Korean-Americans in DPRK ventures peaked last year, as DPRK officials started to organize investment trips to the Rajin-Sonbong FETZ, conducting tours in April, June and September of 1996. The trade body said the three trade missions produced the opposite of the intended effects, with Korean-Americans who visited the area returning to the US and reporting that the DPRK still had too far to go. (Korea Herald, "KOREAN-AMERICANS COOL TO INVESTMENT IN DPRK," 08/19/97)

## **4. PRC-Taiwan Relations**

The PRC Monday sharply dismissed an offer from Taipei to hold official talks, saying no negotiations were possible until the island stopped activities aimed at permanently dividing China. "This is not the first time the Taiwanese side has made such an offer," said an official from the information office of Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office. "Nothing can be discussed until the Taiwanese side returns to the one-China concept," he said. Chang King-yuh, chairman of Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council (MAC), said Saturday that negotiations between the PRC and Taiwan could restart as cross-strait tensions have eased. He said Taipei was also willing to exchange visits by PRC President Jiang Zemin and Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui. Taiwan had previously declined to hold official talks with the PRC unless Beijing dropped what Taipei called Beijing's antagonism towards the island. (Korea Times, "PRC DISMISSES OFFICIAL TALKS OFFER FROM TAIWAN," 08/19/97)

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

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