

## **ROK's Nuclear Experiments: A Successful Case of Alliance Management**

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The startling disclosure by the South Korean (Republic of Korea: ROK) government on September 2, 2004, that a small group of its scientists had conducted secret nuclear experiments in 1982 and 2000 raised immediate concerns about possible implications for the six-party talks to resolve the North Korean nuclear crisis, including relations among three principals in the talks—South Korea, North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea: DPRK), and the United States.<sup>2</sup> The first concern was that the revelations might put a strain on ROK and US relations, stemming from their differing views over the disposition of the ROK's nuclear issue by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nation's nuclear watchdog; and second was that the DPRK might take advantage of the incident to pursue its own self-interested agenda. Of the two, the possible negative impact on ROK-US relations was the bigger concern among many observers. With ROK-US relations showing strain over the proper negotiating strategy toward the DPRK, it was feared that further differences between the ROK and the US over the South Korean nuclear issue might aggravate their relationship, and, thus, impede the progress of the six-party talks.<sup>3</sup>

The unease with which the news of the ROK's secret nuclear experiments was received in many quarters was not surprising, given the sensitivity surrounding the nuclear proliferation issue especially after since 9/11 and the crisis over the North Korean nuclear program. Although a November 26, 2004, chairman's statement issued by the 35-member state Board of Governors of the IAEA, at their quarterly meeting in Vienna to decide whether to refer the ROK to the Security Council, ultimately absolved Seoul of any serious wrongdoing and allayed much of the initial apprehension over the possible fallout from the nuclear experiments, some of the initial concerns have been borne out by subsequent developments.

The ROK nuclear issue has already had a negative effect on the six-party talks. Not surprisingly, the DPRK has placed another obstacle in resolving its nuclear problem by making the accounting of the ROK's nuclear experiments one of the preconditions for opening the next round of the currently stalled talks.<sup>4</sup> This development, unfortunately, may not be the last of the possible negative repercussions arising from the ROK's failure to notify IAEA of its

nuclear activities as part of its safeguards agreement with the agency when the ROK acceded to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1975.<sup>5</sup>

### **Impact of ROK's Nuclear Activities on ROK-US Relations**

The ROK-US conflict over the disposition of the South Korean nuclear issue by the IAEA was set off when the ROK announced in September 2004 that a small group of its scientists had engaged in nuclear experiments to extract plutonium in April and May 1982 and enrich uranium in 2000, without official knowledge or approval.<sup>6</sup> The disclosure came as the result of a mounting inquiry into evidence of nuclear experiments involving plutonium processing and uranium enrichment already uncovered by the IAEA. In addition, there was the possibility of a full-scale and rigorous IAEA inspection of the ROK's past nuclear activities under the Additional Protocol agreement, a supplement to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), that ROK had signed in June 21, 1999, and ratified on February 2004.<sup>7</sup> (This agreement permits inspectors to conduct more intrusive, short-notice inspections of declared and undeclared nuclear facilities than the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), and requires signatories to report significantly more of their nuclear activities, regardless of whether they have military applications.) Once the Korean government publicly admitted that its scientists had conducted unauthorized nuclear experiments, it moved quickly to limit the potential fallout from the incident for fear of exacerbating what many already regarded as a serious violation of the safeguards agreement by ROK.

Seoul downplayed the significance of the incident by strenuously denying that it was harboring a covert nuclear reprocessing or enrichment program, let alone a secret nuclear arms program.<sup>8</sup> It claimed that the failure to report the nuclear activities constituted technical violations of the safeguard agreement but did not violate the main Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty itself. To dispel any suspicions that it had been trying to develop a nuclear capability, it emphasized that its scientists had conducted isolated, small-scale laboratory experiments for the domestic production of nuclear fuel for the country's civilian nuclear program, as well as for pure scientific research.<sup>9</sup> It also claimed that the amount of enriched uranium produced was such an insignificant amount that it could hardly be linked to a nuclear weapons program. To remove any doubt about its intentions, moreover, the ROK government declared it had nothing to hide and promised to cooperate fully with IAEA's investigation of its nuclear activities.

In addition to a vigorous public relations campaign, the Korean government launched an intense diplomatic effort to limit the damage from the public revelations about its nuclear activities. The ROK began lobbying the US government by publicly declaring its opposition to any US move to refer the ROK nuclear issue to the Security Council, as well as sending a trusted aide of South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun—Lee Jong-seok, deputy head of the National Security Council—to Washington to seek personal assurances from high-level officials that the US would not seek to press the ROK nuclear issue with the IAEA.<sup>10</sup> The ROK government also lobbied the IAEA to act expeditiously in resolving the nuclear issue by its Board of Governors without referring the matter to the Security Council for possible sanctions.<sup>11</sup> When IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei visited Seoul in October 2004 in connection with the IAEA's formal investigation of the ROK's undeclared nuclear activities, Unification Minister Chung Dong-young expressed his hope that the issue could be resolved at the Board of Governors' meeting in November 2004, because the controversy surrounding the nuclear experiments was becoming an obstacle to ending the nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula.<sup>12</sup> In addition, the South Korean government dispatched a high-level, 12-member delegation led by Vice Foreign Minister Choi Young-jin to agency headquarters in Vienna to insure a favorable outcome at the meeting of the Board of Governors on November 25.<sup>13</sup>

### **ROK Interests in Containing the Fallout from the Nuclear Experiments**

The ROK government's all-out effort to contain the political fallout from the incident was driven by an overriding concern that the controversy over the nuclear issue might endanger its two paramount policy goals: seeking a speedy, peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis and improving its relations with the DPRK. The ROK was worried that suspicions about its secret nuclear experiments resulting from a long drawn-out controversy over the nuclear issue might seriously damage its reputation and credibility in the international community, and, more importantly, with its other partners in the six-party talks—China, Japan, Russia, and the US.<sup>14</sup> In fact, for the ROK, the prospect of IAEA's Board of the Governors deliberating on whether to refer the ROK to the Security Council was bad enough (so far there have been only five countries whose cases have been discussed by the IAEA's Board of Governors: North Korea, Iraq, Romania, Libya, and Iran), but the possibility of the IAEA's referring the ROK to the Council, which would imply that its nuclear efforts

were on par with the nuclear programs of the DPRK and Iran, was unthinkable given the disastrous impact it would have on the ROK's standing in the international community and among its partners in the six-party talks.<sup>15</sup>

The ensuing damage would undermine the ROK's ability to play a vital role in resolving the DPRK nuclear crisis, since it needed all the good will and credibility it could muster internationally, as well as from its partners, in support of its policy of peacefully resolving the nuclear impasse with the DPRK. In order to win that support, the ROK needed to show its genuine commitment to a nuclear-free Korean peninsula in contrast to the DPRK whose existing nuclear program is threatening to undermine peace and stability in the Korean peninsula. In addition, any loss of credibility would make it even more difficult for the ROK to convince the DPRK that its best interests lie in giving up its own nuclear ambitions. Therefore, the controversy over the nuclear issue would undermine the ROK's ability to influence its partners, as well as the DPRK, in seeking a peaceful, negotiated settlement of the North Korean nuclear crisis by undercutting its legitimacy in urging the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear program.

The ROK's concern that the nuclear issue might have a negative impact on the relations with its partners was partially borne out by their initial, critical responses to the experiments. The sharpest criticism came from Japan, which reacted with alarm and suspicion. Japan's chief cabinet secretary, Hiroyuki Hosoda, called for strict inspections by saying that the experiments were "inappropriate" and that the international community "must not allow this to lead to [the] development of nuclear weapons."<sup>16</sup> China's foreign ministry also responded to the ROK's disclosure by stating that the ROK had engaged in questionable nuclear activities in the 1980s and calling for additional international safeguards, while Russia urged the ROK to cooperate "in an open and transparent manner with the IAEA" in its investigation of the experiments.<sup>17</sup> US State Department spokesman Richard Boucher gave a guarded response by criticizing ROK for having engaged in experiments that it should not have conducted, but praised the ROK government for working in a transparent manner with the IAEA to terminate its nuclear activities.<sup>18</sup> Given these reactions, the ROK's concerns about possible damage to its credibility was not entirely misplaced.

Second, the ROK also feared that the nuclear issue would endanger the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis by setting an ominous precedent for referring the DPRK to the Security Council for sanctions, an action which US had threatened to take if the DPRK did not dismantle its nuclear program. The ROK government

felt that if its violations of the safeguards agreement (considered minor in comparison to the DPRK transgressions) merited referral to the Security Council, the US case for referring DPRK to the Council to impose sanctions would be strengthened. Since the DPRK has declared that it would construe the United Nation's sanctions against the DPRK as a declaration of war, increasing the likelihood of the DPRK's referral to the Security Council would be highly detrimental to the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis—a core South Korean interest.

Lastly, the ROK felt that the nuclear issue might seriously hamper its efforts to improve relations with the DPRK under its engagement policy by giving a pretext for the DPRK to suspend high-level governmental talks, as well as economic cooperation and exchanges with the ROK. This concern, too, has been borne out by Pyongyang's announcement that the improvement of inter-Korean relations is conditional upon thorough accounting of the ROK's nuclear activities in the six-party talks.<sup>19</sup> For the ROK, the possible lack of progress in inter-Korean relations is particularly worrisome since it believes that, quite apart from the importance of improving inter-Korean relations and reducing tensions on the Korean peninsula in the long-term, the lack of progress in inter-Korean relations in the short-term would hinder the speedy, peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis.

### **Conflicting US Interests in Resolving the ROK Nuclear Issue**

While the ROK's interests in the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear crisis and the improvement of ties with the DPRK unequivocally led the South Korean government firmly to oppose the IAEA from possibly referring the nuclear issue to the Security Council, the US interests in opposing nuclear proliferation and, simultaneously, obtaining cooperation of ROK in resolving the North Korean nuclear problem led to a dilemma for the US government over how best to handle the ROK nuclear issue. On the one hand, the US's long-standing policy against nuclear proliferation dictated the strict accounting of the ROK's nuclear experiments that might very well lead to the IAEA's referring the ROK to the Security Council. But, on the other hand, its crucial need for securing the ROK's cooperation in resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis militated against creating undue friction with Seoul and, thus, favored supporting the ROK's position against such a move by the IAEA. Therefore, the US was thrust into a delicate situation that required it to find a compromise between the two opposing interests.

The US desire to hold the ROK accountable for its nuclear activities stemmed not only from its long standing opposition to nuclear proliferation in East Asia as evidenced by preventing the ROK and Taiwan from developing a nuclear capability in the 1970s, but also from the added urgency of the nuclear proliferation problem after 9/11.<sup>20</sup> Made acutely aware of the catastrophic consequences of terrorists carrying out their deeds with weapons of mass destruction, the US government made nuclear non-proliferation one of its highest priorities in its war against terrorism. It concluded that nuclear weapons in the hands of rogue states and the possible transfer of those weapons to terrorists posed an unacceptable threat to US security.<sup>21</sup> This heightened concern led President Bush to declare that the US would not tolerate rogue states such as Iraq, Iran, and the DPRK—the “Axis of Evil”—from threatening the US with nuclear weapons.<sup>22</sup>

In order to ward off such a threat, the US has not only resorted to military action as in Iraq but has been adamant in preventing rogue states from acquiring a nuclear weapons program by threatening to go to the Security Council to impose sanctions as in the case of Iran and the DPRK.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, given the US's avowed commitment to non-proliferation after 9/11, it could neither significantly downplay, much less ignore, the ROK's violations of the safeguards agreement without exposing itself to charges of hypocrisy—that is, applying a double standard by ignoring the nuclear problem for its allies but not for its avowed enemies. This inconsistency would seriously weaken US credibility and, thus, its ability to mobilize international opinion in favor of taking an uncompromising stand against those countries it suspected of developing or possessing nuclear capabilities. Therefore, the logic of the US anti-nuclear proliferation policy demanded strict accounting of the ROK's nuclear activities by the IAEA and, by implication, referring the ROK to the Security Council if found in violation of the safeguards agreements.

While US interests in nuclear non-proliferation pulled it in one direction, there were other equally compelling interests that pulled it in the opposite direction. In order to resolve the North Korean nuclear problem, the US could not afford to alienate the ROK over the disposition of the nuclear issue by the IAEA. In fact, this conflict might not have been so troubling had it not been for the unavoidable fact that US needed the ROK's cooperation and support in resolving the North Korean nuclear crisis. With signs of growing disagreement over the negotiating strategy toward the DPRK as the ROK and China publicly called for greater flexibility on the part of the US in order to persuade the DPRK to return the negotiating table, the US needed more than ever to forge a consensus among the five parties—the ROK,

China, Russia, and Japan—and itself in dealing with a recalcitrant DPRK. Therefore, if the US pressed too hard in demanding an accounting of the ROK's nuclear activities, this action certainly would create friction between the ROK and the US. It would also further risk inflaming Korean public opinion, already critical of the US for what it perceives to be a hard-line policy toward DPRK.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, by alienating Seoul over this issue, Washington would have greater difficulty in eliciting ROK cooperation in dealing with the DPRK as the stalled six-party talks approach a critical juncture.

Given the dilemma faced by the US, Washington tried to balance the conflicting interests by appearing to be firm in its insistence on strict accounting of the ROK's nuclear experiments while, at the same time, circumspect in its support for referring the ROK to the Security Council. Following the incident, US officials claimed they had informed the ROK government that they considered the charges surrounding the nuclear experiments to be serious and would apply the same standards to the South Korean case, as they would to any country found to be violating the NPT.<sup>25</sup> The US Undersecretary of State, John Bolton, underscored this position when he stated that US would not apply a double standard to countries found to have violated the safeguards agreements.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, depending on the IAEA's report of its findings on the ROK's nuclear experiments, the US made it clear that it could not discount the possibility of supporting the IAEA's referral of Seoul to the Security Council.<sup>27</sup> As if to prepare the ROK for this possibility, Bolton even suggested, much to the consternation of the ROK officials, that it might be in the best interest of ROK to have the nuclear issue aired by the Security Council in order to prove that the nuclear experiments were not a part of a weapons program.<sup>28</sup>

While the US was emphatic about its position of not applying a double standard in the South Korean case, it also made clear that it did not consider the gravity of the charges leveled against the ROK's nuclear experiments to be on a par with those of the nuclear programs of North Korea and Iran. US Secretary of State Colin Powell was quoted in the Korean press (in a Korean translation of his remarks in English) as saying "there is no comparison with the secret nuclear experiments previously carried out by South Korea and the ongoing atomic programs in North Korea and Iran (a sentiment echoed by IAEA's director general, Mohamed ElBaradei)," when he met South Korean Unification Minister Chung Dong-young on October 2004.<sup>29</sup> In addition, Powell was quoted as saying that "the [South Korean] nuclear experiments are not something serious."<sup>30</sup> Thus, while the US showed that it was committed to nuclear nonproliferation by declaring that it would not adopt a double standard in dealing with the ROK's

nuclear experiments, it also tried to smooth over any disagreement with the ROK by contrasting the relative seriousness was of South Korea's experiments to North Korean and Iranian nuclear activities.

The US continued to walk a fine line between its commitment to anti-nuclear proliferation and minimizing friction with the ROK government at the meeting of the Board of Governors in Vienna on November 25, 2004. According to press reports, the US initially favored reporting the ROK to the Security Council, not for sanctions but for informational purposes and also as a matter of principle in order not to set a precedent for the Iranian case.<sup>31</sup> But, later, the US retreated from this position and the US chargé d'affaires, George Glass, praised the ROK for its cooperation in working with the IAEA and told the board that the ROK had set an example for "resolving outstanding safeguards issues, cooperation with the agency, not confrontation and delay, transparency not obfuscation."<sup>32</sup> The US made a further gesture in favor of the ROK by supporting "ordinary inspections" rather than the tougher "special examinations" by the IAEA into unresolved issues in the South Korean case.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, by carefully balancing the differing demands placed on the US by its conflicting interests, Washington was able to avoid placing undue strain on its bilateral relations with the ROK at a crucial juncture in the six-party talks.

### **Impact of ROK's Nuclear Issue on Inter-Korean Relations**

The second major concern raised by the ROK's nuclear experiments was that the DPRK might take advantage of this issue to advance its own interests and, thus, complicate the North Korean nuclear problem. This concern to a far greater extent than possible friction in ROK-US relations has been borne out by subsequent actions taken by the DPRK. Pyongyang has tried to parlay the incident not only to deflect criticism of its suspected nuclear arms program by placing the onus on the ROK and the US, but also to create a possible bargaining chip in the six-party talks in order to extract concessions from the other countries. In its first public announcement on this issue, the DPRK accused the ROK of initiating a military arms race on the Korean peninsula and, thus, implying that Seoul was responsible for the DPRK's developing its nuclear capability.<sup>34</sup> It also accused the US of hypocrisy by publicly demanding that the DPRK to dismantle its nuclear program while not only ignoring but also secretly abetting the ROK with its nuclear development.<sup>35</sup> Along with the US, the DPRK has lambasted the IAEA for "applying a double-standard to the two Korea's nuclear activities" and for hushing up the secret nuclear experiments by not fully investigating the ROK's nuclear activities.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, the DPRK has attempted to use the incident to place the

responsibility and blame for the nuclear problem on Seoul and Washington in order to blunt international opprobrium over its suspected nuclear arms program.

In addition, the DPRK has attempted to parlay the incident into a future bargaining chip to extract possible concessions from the other countries by insisting that, unless the ROK's secret nuclear experiments are included on the agenda as top priority issue, it would not participate in the future talks. By using the incident as a pretext for delaying the next round of six-party talks, it is hoping to win significant concessions for its future participation in those talks. Although the ROK initially rejected the DPRK's demand initially, the Unification Minister, Chung Dong-young, stated in December 2004 that the government is willing to discuss fully the nuclear issue in the talks, although the top priority must be given to the North Korean nuclear problem. According to Chung, "at the next round of six-party talks, if and when they are held," the government "can explain all the processes, beginning with our nuclear experiments, the inspection by the U.N. nuclear watchdog and the closing of the issue."<sup>37</sup> The ROK apparently does not want to give the DPRK an excuse either to delay the talks or to place new obstacles in the way of improving inter-Korean relations. It remains to be seen whether the ROK's offer to place its nuclear activities on the agenda will satisfy the DPRK, and, if the issue is placed on the agenda, what impact that will have on the future of the six-party talks.

The palpable unease with which the news of the ROK's secret nuclear experiments was first received in many quarters has now been followed by a collective sigh, in part because the source of the possible friction between the ROK and the US over the disposition of the nuclear issue by the IAEA has been removed by the Board of Governors' decision not to refer the ROK to the Security Council. The intense lobbying by the ROK and the circumspect role of the US in handling the nuclear issue have effected a favorable outcome by the Board of Governors. At the meeting, the Board issued a seven-point chairman's statement, declaring that Seoul's failure to report its nuclear activities in accordance with its safeguards agreement is a matter of serious concern.<sup>38</sup> But the ROK's activities did not warrant the reporting of South Korea to the Security Council because, first, the "quantities of nuclear material involved have not been significant," and, second, "to date there is no indication that the undeclared experiments have continued."<sup>39</sup> Lastly, the Board stated that it "welcomed the corrective actions (including tightening controls on nuclear materials and special training for atomic scientists) taken by the Republic of Korea and the active cooperation it has provided to the agency."<sup>40</sup>

In contrast to the statement by the ROK's foreign ministry that the "the issue of nuclear material experiments was objectively evaluated and properly dealt with in accordance with the nature of the case" by the IAEA, the DPRK's official response to the IAEA decision has been overwhelmingly negative.<sup>41</sup> Unrelenting in its criticism of the ROK, the US, and the IAEA throughout the ROK nuclear affair, the DPRK asserted that it was left with no option but to increase its nuclear deterrence, that the US was "worthless" as a negotiating partner, that it could not abandon its nuclear program or improve ties with the ROK until questions about the ROK's nuclear activities were clearly answered, and that the ROK nuclear issue would have the highest priority at any future six-party talks.<sup>42</sup> Although the IAEA's decision has brought closure to the ROK nuclear issue for the IAEA, the ROK, and the US, it has not done so for the DPRK. It remains to be seen how Pyongyang will use the ROK nuclear issue to gain leverage in future six-party talks.

The ROK nuclear affair has highlighted two important points that five of the principals in the six-party talks—the ROK, Japan, China, Russia, and the US—need to be mindful of in pursuing their common goal of a nuclear-free North Korea. First, it is incumbent on South Korea to insure that North Korea is not given any excuse for justifying its nuclear program by creating even the slightest doubt over the ROK's nuclear intentions, since a nuclear-free North Korea is only possible in the context of nuclear-free Korean peninsula. Second, five countries are more likely to achieve their common goal of a nuclear-free North Korea to the extent that they can maintain internal cohesion and develop a common approach to resolving the nuclear problem. If the countries are divided by sharp differences over their policies toward North Korea, this will encourage North Korea to exploit these differences to its own advantage. Therefore, the five need to work together in building a consensus and in maintaining a common front in dealing with North Korea. In this regard, the efforts of the ROK and the US to resolve their disagreement over the disposition of the nuclear issue by the IAEA have been encouraging in that they have tried to settle their differences through mutual understanding and restraint.

#### Endnotes:

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, the U.S. Pacific Command, the U.S. Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

<sup>2</sup> See Charles Scanlon, "Seoul Faces Fallout From Disclosures," September 9, 2004, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi> (accessed December 3, 2004) and Reuben Staines, "IAEA Begins Final Probe on Lab Tests," November 2, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> South Korea, along with China and Russia, has favored a slow, risk-averse, and pragmatic approach designed to avoid conflict and the possible collapse of the North Korean regime in resolving the North Korean nuclear problem. In contrast, the US, along with Japan, has supported a speedy, uncompromising, and confrontational approach aimed at pressuring North Korea to change its threatening behavior. See Steven Kim, "Resolving the North Korean Nuclear Problem: Status Quo vs. Transformative Approach," Paper presented at the conference on U.S.-Russia Perspectives on Asia-Pacific Security, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, May 2-4, 2005. Even the growing concern that North Korea might be preparing to conduct nuclear tests has not induced South Korea or China to support US policy of applying pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear arms program. See, Norimitsu Onishi, "South Korea Urges The North To Rejoin Talks On Weapons," *New York Times*, May 13, 2005, p. A12, and Joseph Kahn, "China Says U.S. Criticisms Impeded North Korea Arms Talks," *New York Times*, May 13, 2005, p.A12.

<sup>4</sup> See "IAEA Resumes S Korea Probe," September 20, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3672810.stm> (accessed December 3, 2004); and James Brooke, "North Korea Sets 3 Conditions for Returning to Nuclear Talks," October 23, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/23/international/asia/23korea.html> (accessed October 22, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Paul Kerr, "IAEA: Seoul's Nuclear Sins in Past," December 2004, [http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004\\_12/Seoul.asp](http://www.armscontrol.org/act/2004_12/Seoul.asp) (accessed December 12, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> According to the IAEA's report of its findings on the ROK's nuclear activities submitted to its Board of Governors on November 11 by the Director General, Mohamend ElBaradei, "on a number of occasions, starting in 1982 and continuing until 2000, [South Korea] conducted experiments and activities involving uranium conversion, uranium enrichment and plutonium separation, which it failed to report to the agency.'" The South Korean scientists produced .7g of plutonium of weapon-grade 98 percent pure PU-239 isotope and 200mg of uranium enriched to an average level of 10.2 percent and up to the highly enriched level 77 percent, which is close to weapons-grade. See Greg Webb, "South Korea Produced Near Weapons-Grade Uranium, IAEA Says," November 12, 2004, [http://nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004); and "S Korea Chided for Nuclear Tests," November 11, 2004,

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/\\_1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4004865.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/_1/hi/world/asia-pacific/4004865.stm) (accessed December 3, 2004). For a detailed account of the history of the ROK's nuclear experiments, see Jungmin Kang, Peter Hayes, Li Bin, Tatsujiro Suzuki, and Richard Tanter, "South Korea's Nuclear Surprise," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 61, no. 1 (January/February 2005): 40-49, [http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art\\_ofn=jf05kang](http://www.thebulletin.org/article.php?art_ofn=jf05kang) (accessed December 8, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> According to the IAEA's report, the IAEA had long suspected that South Korea was conducting secret nuclear experiments and, thus, had pressed the ROK government for information regarding these activities without much success. Apparently, however, faced with potentially incriminating information acquired by the ongoing IAEA's investigation of ROK's nuclear activities and the certainty of more damaging information being unearthed by the IAEA as the result of the ROK's ratification of the new and tighter safeguards regime—Additional Protocol—on February 2004 that required full accounting of its past nuclear activities by mid-August, the ROK government decided to go public with the information in order to lessen the negative repercussions from the inevitable disclosure of its past nuclear activities by the IAEA. In fact, the ROK government's fears were borne out when IAEA launched a formal investigation of its nuclear activities that it had declared to the IAEA in August 2004 under the terms of the Additional Protocol agreement. See James Brook, "South Koreans Repeat: We Have No Atom Bomb Program," September 4, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/04/international/asia/04korea.html> (accessed September 6, 2004), "Korean Scientist Calls Uranium Test 'Academic'," September 7, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/07/international/asia/07korea.html> (accessed September 6, 2004), and "Report Details South Korean Cover-Up," November 25, 2004, [http://www.iht.com/bin/print\\_ipub.php?file=/articles/2004/11/24/news](http://www.iht.com/bin/print_ipub.php?file=/articles/2004/11/24/news) (accessed December 3, 2004); Paul Kerr, "IAEA: Seoul's Nuclear Sins in Past," "South Korean Nuclear Experiments Occurred at Three Undeclared Sites, ElBaradei Says," September 14, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004); and Greg Webb, "South Korea Produced Near Weapon-Grade Uranium, IAEA Says."

<sup>8</sup> James Brook, "South Koreans Repeat: We have No Atom Bomb Program."

<sup>9</sup> "S Korea in 'secret' nuclear trial," September 2, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3620566.stm> (accessed December 3, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Ryu Jin, "Seoul's Lab Tests Not Linked to Nukes: IAEA," November 12, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> "South Korea Wants to Avoid U.N. Security Council," November 5, 2004, [http://nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> “South Korea Seeks Quick Resolution to IAEA Investigation of Uranium, Plutonium Experiments,” October 5, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>13</sup> See Reuben Staines, “Seoul Bids to Persuade IAEA of Innocence,” November 21, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004); and “IAEA Board Split Over Seoul’s Lab Tests,” November 22, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> “Nuclear Experiments Forgiven,” November 28, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> Ryu Jin, “Seoul Delegation to Prove ‘Purity’ at IAEA,” November 19, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> “South Korea Admits to 1982 Plutonium Extraction, Says Revelation Will Not Damage North Korea Dialogue,” September 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> See James Brook, “South Koreans Repeat: We have No Atom Bomb Program” and “Russia Raps South Korea on Nuclear Experiments,” September 22, 2004, <http://south-korea.news.designerz.com> (accessed December 12, 2004).

<sup>18</sup> “U.N. Probing S. Korea Nuclear Experiment,” September 2, 2004, <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/5898552/print/1/displaymode/1098> (accessed December 12, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> “North Korea Resumes Inter-Korean Dialogue After Three-Month Freeze,” October 7, 2004, <http://north-korea.news.designerz.com> (accessed December 12, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> For a detailed discussion of how the US government quashed South Korean President Park Chung Hee’s efforts to develop the South Korean nuclear bomb, see Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1997), pp. 68-74. See also, Jungmin Kang et al., “South Korea’s Nuclear Surprise.”

<sup>21</sup> “The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,” September 2002.

<sup>22</sup> “Bush State of the Union Address,” January 2, 2002, <http://archives.cnn.com/2002/ALLPOLITICS/01/29/bush.speech.txt> (accessed May 28, 2005).

<sup>23</sup> For the latest US policy on the Iran’s nuclear program, see David E. Sanger and Steven R. Weisman, “U.S. and Allies Agree on Steps In Iran Dispute,” March 11, 2005, *New York Times*, p. A1.

<sup>24</sup> “UN Nuclear Agency Opts Not to Refer South Korea to the UN Security Council,” November 27, 2004, [http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_world/view/119253/1.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/view/119253/1.html) (accessed December 12, 2004). Much of the South Korean news media was critical of the international concerns expressed over the South Korean nuclear experiments and complained that the world was overreacting. See James Brook, “South Koreans Repeat: We Have No Atom Bomb Program” and “South Korea Calls Experiments: Far Below Bomb-Grade Level,” September 4, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/05international/asia/05korea.html> (accessed September 6, 2004).

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Faiola and Dafna Linzer, “S. Korea Admits Extracting Plutonium,” September 10, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (accessed September 10, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> “South Korean Nuclear Experiments Occurred at Three Undeclared Sites, ElBaradei Says,” [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues).

<sup>27</sup> “South Korea Wants to Avoid U.N. Security Council,” [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues).

<sup>28</sup> “Bolton Suggests Referring South Korean Nuclear Case to U.N. Security Council,” October 29, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/2004/10/29](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2004/10/29) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> “Powell Says South Korea Nuclear Experiments ‘Not Serious’: Minister,” October 26, 2004, <http://south-korea.news.designerz.com> (accessed December 12, 2004). See also, Anthony Faiola, “IAEA Chief Doubts S. Korean Arms Plans,” October 8, 2004, <http://www.washingtonpost.com> (accessed October 8, 2004) and “ElBaradei Praises South Korean Cooperation With IAEA Investigation of Nuclear Experiments,” October 6, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>30</sup> “Powell Says South Korea Nuclear Experiments ‘Not Serious’: Minister,” <http://southkorea.news.designerz.com>.

<sup>31</sup> James Brooke, “Report Details South Korean Cover-up.” For a discussion on the linkage between the US interest in referring Iran to the Security Council over its nuclear program and likewise for South Korea, see “UN Agency Meets on Iran and South Korea’s Nuclear Reporting Failures,” November 25, 2004, [http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_world/print/118985/1.html](http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/print/118985/1.html) (accessed December 12, 2004); and Greg Webb, “IAEA Board Considers Iran,

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South Korea, Brazil,” November 26, 2004, [http://nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Channelnewsasia.com. “UN Nuclear Watchdog Expected to Let South Korea Off the Hook,” November 26, 2004, [http://www.Channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp\\_world/view/119173/1/.html](http://www.Channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_world/view/119173/1/.html). See also, Greg Webb, “IAEA Board Considers Iran, South Korea, Brazil” and “IAEA Rebukes South Korea; Does Not Refer to Security Council,” November 26, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>33</sup> Ryu Jin, “Seoul Avoids IAEA Sanctions,” November 26, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004). Further inspection was needed by the IAEA in December 2004 to verify some of the information provided by the ROK on its undeclared nuclear activities. See also Brian Lee, “IAEA Spares Seoul, But is Still Watching,” November 29, 2004, <http://service.joins.com/asp> (accessed December 12, 2004).

<sup>34</sup> James Brook, “North Korea Says Seoul’s Nuclear Experiments Stoke Arms Race,” September 9, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/09international/asia09korea.html> (accessed September 8, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> “N. Korea Attacks South Over Tests,” September 11, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/3647278.stm> (accessed December 3, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Reuben Staines, “Seoul Willing to Explain Lab Tests to Pyongyang,” December 2, 2004, <http://search.hankooki.com/times> (accessed December 20, 2004).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> For the complete transcript of the chairman’s statement, see “Chairman’s Conclusion on Item 4(c), Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Republic of Korea,” Board of Governors, November 26, 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. In addition, South Korea established the National Nuclear Control Agency on October 2004, not only to promote transparency and reliability in its nuclear energy activities, but also to implement a four-part statement on nuclear policy issued on September 2004, in which Seoul pledged not to conduct a nuclear weapons program and to work toward prevention of nuclear proliferation. See “South Korea Creates Nuclear Control Agency,” October 25, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues/](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/) (accessed December 20, 2004).

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<sup>42</sup> See “North Korea Blasts IAEA Decision Against Referring South Korea to U.N. Security Council Over Experiments,” December 1, 2004, [http://www.nti.org/d\\_newswire/issues](http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues) (accessed December 20, 2004) and “IAEA Rulings on S Korea Disgust North,” December 1, 2004, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/200412/s1255951.htm> (accessed December 12, 2004).