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Viewing cable 10SEOUL18, SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; JANUARY 7, 2010

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TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo  
Samsung Highly Likely to Move Next-Generation Battery Business to Sejong City

JoongAng Ilbo  
France's "Betrayal" of Promise; French Court Rejects ROK's Bid to Retrieve Royal Books (from the ancient Joseon Dynasty)

Dong-a Ilbo  
Notebook Computers Can Be Used to Eavesdrop

Hankook Ilbo  
Samsung Hints at Investing Some 3 Trillion Won in Sejong City

Hankyoreh Shinmun, Seoul Shinmun  
Lee Myung-bak Administration's Pursuit of Growth Drags ROK into "Mire of Unemployment;" Number of "Practically" Unemployed Reaches 3.3 Million

Segye Ilbo  
President Lee: "Sejong City Should Not Attract Businesses and Industries that Other Regions are Trying to Attract"

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan, in a Jan. 6 interview with Yonhap News, said that North Korea likely began its uranium enrichment program for nuclear weapons development in 1996, soon after it had agreed to halt its (plutonium-based) nuclear program under the 1994 Geneva Accord. (Chosun, JoongAng, Dong-a, Segye)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

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*courage is contagious*

A senior State Department official told reporters on Jan. 5 that the U.S. will welcome any trip to China by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to help reopen the stalled Six-Party Talks. (Chosun, Dong-a)

MEDIA ANALYSIS  
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-N. Korea  
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Most ROK media covered Foreign Minister Yu Myung-hwan's remarks during a Jan. 6 interview with Yonhap News, in which he said that North Korea likely began its uranium enrichment program for nuclear weapons development in 1996, soon after it had agreed to halt its (plutonium-based) nuclear program under the 1994 Geneva Accord.

Conservative Chosun Ilbo, in a related development, quoted a Foreign Ministry official as saying: "Unlike in early days, when we took the issue of plutonium somewhat lightly, we should deal seriously with the uranium enrichment problem, once the Six-Party Talks resume."

With regard to reports that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il's visit to China is imminent, conservative Chosun and Dong-a Ilbo carried reports quoting a senior State Department official as telling reporters on Jan. 5 that the U.S. will welcome any trip to China by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to help reopen the stalled Six-Party Talks. He was quoted: "Chinese officials have made multiple trips to Pyongyang to make clear to Kim Jong-il what needs to be done now.

If Kim Jong-il comes to Beijing and tells Chinese leaders that he is ready to return to the Six-Party process and move forward, we will welcome that news. Close attention should be paid to what Kim says and how he acts (in China)."

SEOUL 00000018 002 OF 004

Chosun Ilbo, in particular, observed: "Given that diplomats usually do not make comments based on assumptions, this U.S. remark is unprecedented. It is also noteworthy because the remark indicates that Washington thinks it is highly likely that Kim Jong-il will indeed visit China, as has been widely speculated, for a summit with Chinese President Hu Jintao."

OPINIONS/EDITORIALS  
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President Obama Should Come Forward to Promptly Ratify KORUS FTA  
 (JoongAng Ilbo, January 7, Page 34)

We (JoongAng Ilbo) have consistently called for an early ratification of the Korea- U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) because it is a win-win strategy for both countries. We also reaffirmed this position in November 2009 when, during President Obama's visit to the ROK, (President Lee Myung-bak) hinted that he may consider renegotiating the trade accord over the automotive sector. If the deal is renegotiated over the automotive area, the ROK will also raise its concerns over U.S. beef. We are worried that this (situation) may completely derail the FTA.

At this time, Edwin Feulner, president of the Heritage Foundation, a leading U.S. think tank, made the same argument. During a January 4 interview with an ROK media, he said that the KORUS FTA should be swiftly ratified and President Obama should take active action. Feulner said that he hopes that in his January State of the Union Address, President Obama will demonstrate his determination to move the deal forward in a prompt and active manner. He also added that the KORUS FTA is a good and balanced pact and the automobile issue should not be revisited for renegotiation.

We hope that President Obama listens carefully to his argument. The ROK-U.S. FTA is beneficial not only to the U.S. economy but also its entire national interest. Mr. Feulner explained, "With the ROK-U.S. FTA yet to be ratified, if there is further progress on the ROK-China FTA, it will aggravate the situation for the U.S." This means that the U.S., which is wary of China's growing clout over Asia, does not want the ROK to become closer to China. If the ROK-U.S. FTA is not ratified promptly, such concern by the U.S. could likely turn into a reality.

Still, the ROK-U.S. FTA, which was signed three years ago, has yet to come into force due to opposition from the U.S. auto industry and its labor unions and some politicians representing their interests. In addition, there is a problem with the leadership of President

Obama, who is not coping with this opposition properly. Now is the time for President Obama to come forward. We expect that he will exercise at least part of the leadership he showed when he became the first U.S. president to achieve health care reform.

#### Features

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FM Says N. Korea's Uranium Program Likely Began in Mid-1990s  
(Yonhap News, January 7, 2010)

By Reporter Byun Duk-kun

North Korea likely began its uranium-based nuclear weapons program soon after it agreed to give up its nuclear ambitions in a 1994 deal with the United States, South Korea's foreign minister said Wednesday, accusing Pyongyang of using negotiations to buy time for its clandestine nuclear programs.

In an exclusive interview with Yonhap News Agency, Minister Yu Myung-hwan said little is still known about the communist country's s-e-c-r-e-t nuclear program, including how much uranium they have produced or in what stage of development the program is.

"Still, what is certain is that North Korea began its (uranium) enrichment program for nuclear weapons very early on. It appears

SEOUL 00000018 003 OF 004

that North Korea began the enrichment program shortly after signing the Geneva agreement, or at least in 1996," Yu said, referring to the 1994 agreement, better known as the Agreed Framework, signed between Pyongyang and Washington.

Under the landmark deal, Pyongyang promised to freeze its nuclear activities in return for a set of two light-water reactors to be built and financed by an international consortium.

Suspicious over a clandestine uranium program in the reclusive North first flared in late 2002 when then U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, James Kelly, following his trip to Pyongyang, quoted North Korean officials as saying that their country was s-e-c-r-e-t-l-y continuing a nuclear weapons development program.

The North later denied having a uranium-based program, though it entered Six-Party negotiations on ending its plutonium-based weapons program in 2003.

Pyongyang admitted to having a uranium program in September 2009, saying the enrichment program was in its final stage.

Yu's remarks could indicate that the North's uranium program may be closer to completion than earlier suspected.

The minister noted the North may have also used, and is continuing to use, the Six-Party Talks in a similar way to win international concessions while securing enough time and resources to further its nuclear programs.

"There, of course, may have been times when North Korea used its nuclear program as leverage for short-term economic gains, but there is a need to look at it as a more serious issue because, more fundamentally, the North Korea nuclear issue is related to (the survival) of the North's regime," he said.

The multilateral nuclear talks have stalled since late 2008 while the North said in April that it will permanently quit the negotiations, which also involve the U.S., South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

Minister Yu said the North may soon return to the negotiating table for economic assistance, but made clear the other countries will not reward the communist nation for simply returning to dialogue.

"I believe there is always a possibility (North Korea) may return to negotiations to evade its economic crisis. And that is why not only South Korea, the U.S. and Japan, but also China and Russia share a firm understanding that we cannot reward the North for its return to the negotiations alone," the minister said.

In fact, the countries will continue to enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions on North Korea until Pyongyang takes "tangible" denuclearization measures, he added.

Pyongyang agreed in a Six-Party accord signed in 2007 to disable its key nuclear facilities in exchange for 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil or equivalent economic assistance. Vast amounts of the agreed assistance flowed into the impoverished North from 2007, but Pyongyang reversed the disablement process the following year, and has since restored most of its facilities, including a reprocessing plant that produces weapons grade plutonium.

Seeking to avoid the mistake of granting incentives without the North taking any substantive steps to denuclearize, Seoul has proposed a grand bargain that will completely dismantle the key elements of North Korea's nuclear programs in a single step, instead of in phases, in exchange for massive benefits.

Yu said this means the countries will first deal with the most fundamental and serious issue of permanently and completely ridding North Korea of its nuclear capabilities.

SEOUL 0000018 004 OF 004

"The proposal for a grand bargain comes from a belief that it is not logical to have negotiations that only deal with easy issues while leaving difficult ones in a far side corner, negotiations that no one can say how long it will take," he said.

The minister also said his country will reject the North's recent proposal for separate talks to discuss replacing the Korean armistice with a permanent peace treaty if the proposal is only an attempt to stall its denuclearization process.

"If North Korea is sincere about a peace treaty, it will have to first show it with a decision to denuclearize," Yu said.

(This text was provided in English by the news service.)

U.S. "Would Welcome China Visit by Kim Jong-il"  
(Chosun Ilbo, January 7, 2010, Front Page)

By Beijing Correspondent Choi Yu-sik and Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won

The U.S. would welcome a visit by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to China, a senior State Department official said Tuesday. Speaking to reporters, he said that last year, Chinese officials made multiple trips to Pyongyang to make clear to Kim Jong-il what needs to be done, and the U.S. would welcome any visit by Kim to Beijing in return. He added that close attention should be paid to what Kim says and how he acts (in China.)

Given that diplomats usually do not make comments based on assumptions, this U.S. remark is unprecedented. It is also noteworthy because the remark indicates that Washington thinks it is highly likely that Kim Jong-il will indeed visit China, as has been widely speculated, for a summit with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

Security has been tightened, including large reinforcements of police guards at railway stations and other strategic locations, in the Chinese border city of Dandong since late last year, a local source said. The number of North Korean cargo trucks which pass through the Dandong customs office has dropped drastically from 30-50 per day to about 10.

Dandong is a gateway to China for Kim, who prefers train travel. Watertight security was provided at that location for Kim's previous trips to China starting in 2000. Still, others say it may simply be a routine measure taken at the turn of a new year.

(This is a translation provided by the newspaper. We have compared the English version on the website with the Korean version and added some sentences in English to make them identical.)

STEPHENS