

Pyongyang raps reactor reports

Reuter

HONG KONG—North Korea said Monday that any plan to supply it with South Korean-style reactors could jeopardize its nuclear deal with the United States.

According to the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), monitored by the British Broadcasting Corp., a North Korean foreign ministry spokesman quoted "foreign news reports" saying the United States, South Korea and Japan had agreed to supply the North with southern-style reactors.

"If this is true, the agreement is obviously underlaid with a sinister political purpose of some forces including the South Korean authorities who dislike the (North Kore-

an-) U.S. framework agreement and try to obstruct its implementation at any cost," KCNA quoted the spokesman as saying.

"The U.S. side must know that if it delayed the provision of (light-water reactors), joining hands with dishonest forces, it would lose both the crabs and the mesh bag," the spokesman said.

He said the United States understood North Korea's objection to South Korean reactors during the negotiations leading to the agreement.

The United States, South Korea and Japan are leading a consortium to provide North Korea with light-water nuclear reactors to replace current graphite-moderated facilities under an agreement reached

between Pyongyang and Washington in Geneva in October.

The three countries met last week in Washington to discuss the consortium, the Korean Energy Development Organization, but left several issues unresolved for another meeting in Tokyo.

Among these, the South Korean news agency Yonhap said in a dispatch from Seoul during the weekend, would be the specifications—southern-style or otherwise—for the two reactors to be supplied to the North, according to the BBC.

Implementation of the agreement would lead to North Korea freezing its current nuclear program. The United States and its allies suspect the program is aimed at weapons development, al-

though the North insists it has only benign intentions.

The replacement of the graphite reactors would eliminate one international worry about Pyongyang's program—the proposed light-water reactors do not produce plutonium, a key ingredient of nuclear bombs.

South Korean officials have argued the case for supplying Pyongyang with reactors compatible with those in the South. Since both governments seek Korean reunification, they say, using similar power generation systems would speed economic integration.

Under another part of the October accord, the United States agreed to supply North Korea annually with up to 500,000 tons of heavy oil.