

South Korean officials expelled

by UPI

SEOUL - North Korea, reacting to tougher policies of the new South Korean regime, Thursday expelled South Korean officials from a joint industrial park. The action at the joint office in the Kaesong industrial complex, which opened in 2005 just north of the heavily guarded border, comes as South Korea's conservative President Lee Myung-bak plans to take a tougher stand than his liberal predecessors on inter-Korean cooperation. That would include the North making progress in the six-party denuclearization talks, Yonhap news agency reported. Separately, South Korea's Unification Minister Kim Ha-joong last week was quoted as saying it would be difficult to expand the industrial complex without progress in North Korea's denuclearization. A ministry spokesman said the government pulled out 11 officials at the Kaesong complex "after the North demanded their withdrawal." The spokesman said North Korea had cited his minister's remarks as reason for its demand. The reduction leaves only five South Korean civilians at the Kaesong office, Yonhap said. "We express deep concern over the North's unilateral demand. All responsibility resulting from the measure lies with the North Korean side," the spokesman said.

Â© 2008 United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

South Korean officials expelled by UPI