

Diplomacy stressed on NKorea nuclear issue

by UPI

SEOUL -- The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog says diplomacy is needed to go forward on North Korea's denuclearization once the Yongbyon reactor closure is complete. Speaking to reporters in Seoul Thursday, Mohamed ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency said he expects the shutdown of the north's main reactor to proceed smoothly and be completed in a month assuming North Korea acts in a transparent way, the Financial Times reported. Plutonium for the North's nuclear test last year came from this reactor. IAEA monitors are expected in Pyongyang this week for verifying the shutdown. Next week, the Six-party Talks on the denuclearization will resume in Beijing. The group is made up the two Koreas, the United States, Russia, China and Japan. Baradei said moving forward after Yongbyon would depend on the six-member nations. "How smoothly the rest of the operation will go very much depends on how progress will be made in the six-party talks," the Times quoted him as saying. "How and under which conditions (North Korea) will (operate) and the modalities for disabling, when they will come back to the NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), these are still very much open questions," he said.

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