

KOREA

Renewal of the ROK-US Atomic Energy Agreement

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1. Background

The Agreement for Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Korea and the Government of the United States of America concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy (hereinafter ROK-US Atomic Energy Agreement) is scheduled to expire on March 18, 2014.¹ Ever since the ideal known as “Atoms for Peace”² was invoked in the aftermath of dreadful images of atomic bombings, the international community has committed itself to using nuclear science and technology exclusively for peaceful purposes. Nuclear R&D cooperation between Korea and the United States traces back to the mid-1950s when two governments signed the Agreement for Cooperation concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy,³ which was subsequently superseded by the aforementioned ROK-US Atomic Energy Agreement in 1972.⁴ While negotiations are currently underway for the revision of the ROK-US Atomic Energy Agreement,⁵ sharply different views between two governments over the

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¹ Signed on Nov. 24, 1972; entered into force on Mar. 19, 1973. The Amendment in 1974 extended the duration of the Agreement from 30 years to 41 years.

² See “Atoms for Peace” Address before the General Assembly of the United Nations on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy by US President D. Eisenhower on December 8, 1953, available at http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/all_about_ike/speeches/atoms_for_peace.pdf (last visited on Apr. 2, 2013).

³ However, the first major ROK-US nuclear project began operating in 1962 and was later upgraded to a series of peaceful nuclear cooperation agreement signed between 1956 and 1965. See M. Holt, US and South Korean Cooperation in the World Nuclear Energy Market: Major Policy Considerations, CRS Report for Congress at 10, Jan. 28, 2013, available at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R41032.pdf> (last visited on Apr. 2, 2013); Seongho Sheen, *Nuclear Sovereignty versus Nuclear Security: Renewing the ROK-US Atomic Energy Agreement*, 23 KOREAN J. DEF. ANALYSIS 238 (2011).

⁴ ROK-US Atomic Energy Agreement of 1972 art. 14.

⁵ Staff Writer, *S. Korea, U.S. to Resume Talks soon on Revision of Nuclear Accord*, KOREA TIMES, Apr. 8, 2013, available