

## PBNC-5 IN RETROSPECT: A FOREIGN PARTICIPANT'S VIEWPOINT



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*PBNC-5 was an unsurpassed success. It set a new standard of excellence for international conferences throughout the world, both in organization and in content. The theme of "interdependency for a vitalized nuclear industry" was picked up eagerly by foreign and Korean participants alike. By the time of the closing session of this great conference "interdependency" had become a concept to be applied to more than just our common industry interests. Indeed, through a perfectly organized and executed blend of cultural events and "high-tech" sessions, KAIF had demonstrated to its Pacific neighbours that "interdependency" also exists between the high-tech world of nuclear power and the human elements embodied in our various cultures and social values. It was a job superbly done, and the message was clearly understood by all.*

Foreigners came to Korea in large numbers. They came from many countries. Some of those countries had no connection with the Pacific Basin except via the Panama Canal. Yet they came. For many it was the first visit to what they had perceived to be a mysterious country of the Orient. They were curious. It had become common knowledge in North America and Europe that the Pacific Basin is "where the action is" (to use a common English expression). They wondered what makes this part of the world such a dynamic and vital place.

PBNC-5 provided a reason for many to come and satisfy their curiosities. Foreign participants who had been to Korea before were curious to see the changes that had occurred since their last visit. This is a country where change is rapid and progress is fast, and everyone likes to be a part of such developments.

For those who had strictly "nuclear" on their mind, PBNC-5 no doubt left them with the impression that Korea's nuclear industry has come of age. The staging of such a premier conference was merely symbolic of this maturity. A country that this year will be generating close to 30% of its electricity from nuclear plants, a country that has three reactors in operation, one in its power run-up phase, five others under construction, and further units in the firm planning stage, presents the full spectrum of nuclear development to the foreign on-looker. A country that has just delivered its first pressure-vessels, a country that has just decided to embark on indigenous fuel manufacturing, and a country that has announced to the world that "turn-key" projects are the "past," and indigenous projects, with foreign assistance merely on a component basis, are the "present," displays confidence in itself and in the nuclear option for the future.

Of course I also heard some Koreans express self-doubt. Is Korea's nuclear development moving too fast? Can the R and D infrastructure keep pace and provide the necessary support? Is Korea overextending itself financially? Does Korea

have sufficient trained manpower? To some extent such self-doubt is a healthy form of self-examination. To the foreigners, however, who came to PBNC-5, the lasting impression of Korea will be that of a country that knows where it is going, and it is going there very fast.

Most foreigners' participations in PBNC-5 took two forms. They participated as representatives of their companies, and they participated as individuals. I would like to reflect separately on the hopes and realizations for PBNC-5 from a foreign company's and from an individual's point of view.

### Early Planning Stage

The foreign "company's" contact with PBNC-5 started almost four years ago, when the Korean nuclear industry started its preparations for this event. Korea sent a large delegation to the 4th PBNC held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1983, and closer contacts with foreign "companies" and organizations developed (Actually, the Vancouver conference was merely called "PBC." The name was changed to "PBNC" by the Korean organizers to emphasize "nuclear" conference). Numerous meetings were held involving Koreans and foreigners. Many committees were established to conceptualize, plan, organize, and prepare for this great event. I did not personally participate in that phase. However, reports from various foreigners are that they were impressed with the careful and meticulous attention that the Korean organizers showed to every detail. During this period the technical program started to take shape, and many foreign participants started preparations for their papers. Similarly, participating companies started work on their exhibits.

At the "individual's" level, some foreigners casually mentioned to their spouses that they might be going to Korea sometime in the Spring of 1985, and they wondered if "she" might like to come along. This casual comment, I am sure, instilled

immediate excitement and anticipation in those who would later become registered guests at PBNC-5.

### Near Term Planning Stage

During the last few months before PBNC-5 the pace quickened. As an AECL representative in Seoul I found myself getting increasingly involved. Throughout this stage I met only the most competent and co-operative staff among KAIF Secretary General Mr Kim, Jung-Ki's staff. They worked tirelessly in helping with the exhibit planning, in accommodating the hundreds of registrations that flowed in during this period (and of course the almost equal number of changes), in planning the technical tour, V.I.P. protocol, guest program, and uncountable other detail. The Steering Committee, under the very able leadership of its Chairman Mr Kim, Chong Joo and Co-Chairman Dr Chung, Kun Mo set a course which was destined for success.

Dr Lee, Chang Kun, appeared to face the impossible task: to plan and organize the technical program, and to produce a masterful set of proceedings before the opening of PBNC-5. In accomplishing this he undoubtedly set a new high standard for others to follow. He worked around the clock and when I presented him with the "third revision" of a certain unnamed author's paper at a very late stage, he simply commented: "that's my job!" His efforts will not easily be forgotten.

Dr Shin, Ki Jo's exhibit committee was impressive. They had to face an exhibit hall which was being newly constructed, hence untried and unproven. Would the hall be ready in time? Would all the electrical and plumbing services meet the various exhibitors' requirements? As one of those who probably made life difficult for Dr Shin's people I made numerous enquiries and demands specifying certain voltage and power requirements, wondered about the need for voltage regulators to

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keep AECL's neon lights going, tried to get early access to the hall, expressed concerns about transportation and customs clearance of AECL's container, that had arrived at Pusan port three weeks earlier, etc.

Within AECL we worried about organizing our own premier side-line event : a Canadian Barbeque. Wine had to be specially selected and imported, the menu decided, arrangements for a Country and Western band had to be made, the list of invitations composed (which we found a difficult task, with so many prominent participants to consider), the design of the ice-carving, the welcoming banner, name-tags, etc. At one point AECL even considered staging a fireworks display during this event, since Monday, May 20 was Canada's "Victoria Day," which is traditionally celebrated in Canada with fireworks. This idea was however dropped, much to the relief of Sheraton Walker Hill staff, I believe.

In the latter phases of this period various foreign participants also tried to arrange separate meeting with Korean counterparts, to coincide with PBNC-5. We found our Korean hosts most understanding of our requests. I wonder now, however, how each foreigner could be so presumptuous as to think that he was the only one requesting a meeting with the president of this company, the general director of that company, the minister of one government ministry, the vice-minister of another, etc. Again, as a foreigner I was most impressed with the spirit of co-operation shown by all Koreans during this very busy period.

At this stage of preparation the foreign "individuals" and their many accompanying guests made their travel and hotel arrangements. In this connection foreigners became impressed with the large number of international airlines and connections that are now serving Seoul. Foreigners could travel conveniently to Seoul from literally all parts

of the Pacific Basin with the exception of the PRC. A number of foreigners who had visited the PRC just prior to PBNC-5 found themselves having to travel to Seoul either via Hong Kong or Tokyo, a detour which hopefully can be eliminated through further improvements in international relations in the very near future. The foreign "individual" needed a Korean visa and found this simple to obtain at any Korean embassy or consulate abroad. Hotel reservations at the Sheraton Walker Hill were professionally handled, with few exceptions, and the "individual" looked forward to a pleasant trip and sojourn in Seoul. Some foreigners read books on Korean history and culture. Some foreigners even attempted to learn a little of the Korean language in preparation for their visit. In most cases this attempt was abandoned very quickly, as the Korean language is one of the most difficult for foreigners to learn.

### **Arrival at Kimpo**

Entering Korea through Seoul's Kimpo International Airport is for most foreigners the first contact with Korea. Anticipation fills the first time traveller as he disembarks from the aircraft. Immigration and Customs officials were efficient and professional. Very few problems involving foreigners were encountered at this stage (I often wonder whether Korean officials are as cordial to Korean natives, or whether foreigners get "special treatment").

Although I can not speak from personal experience of the V.I.P. reception which was arranged by KAIF for selected foreigners I have heard only positive comments. The very recognition that V.I.P. protocol would be appropriate for selected persons is in itself complimentary to KAIF. Other countries all too often tend to neglect the importance of appropriate protocol when dealing in the international arena.

The PBNC-5 reception desk was a very good

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idea. Foreigners feel very helpless on arrival in Korea, due to the language barrier, and they need all the assistance they can get. From personal experience I did observe, however, that the PBNC-5 reception desk was unmanned during early morning hours (about 6 a.m.) on May 18, when numerous foreigners arrived for PBNC-5. Similarly, it was reported that some foreign participants arriving in the evening on May 16 found the desk closed, could not get a taxi, and ended up riding crowded local buses, with suit-cases and other baggage stacked high on their knees. Initial reactions are often compounded by fatigue after a long flight. When I spoke to those individuals several days later they called it merely an "interesting ride from the airport," and by the time they left Korea they had been totally overwhelmed by many beautiful and pleasant experiences and had forgotten the slight frustrations of their initial experience.

### **Arrival at Sheraton Walker Hill**

The beautiful location of this hotel in the park-like setting impressed everyone. The organizers of PBNC-5 selected well when they chose SWH. I heard no complaints about any of the facilities, and can only surmise that the foreigners and their guests felt completely comfortable in those surroundings. As many Koreans know, Europeans and North Americans, in particular, are somewhat quick to complain when their personal needs are not looked after well. Since there were few, if any complaints, SWH must have done an excellent job in this respect.

In addition to the safe arrival of the foreign "individuals," the foreign companies' exhibit containers also arrived intact and on time at SWH. The Korea Express Company is to be congratulated. Until the moment when I personally saw the ten large containers arrive in the loading area behind the exhibit hall I had my doubts. But they

all made it on time!

The PBNC-5 Registration desk in the lobby was well set-up, and attended by efficiently working young people. At no time was there a line-up and at no time did I see problems of any kind. The specially designed PBNC-5 folder and information kit were excellently selected (One Canadian participant inadvertently forgot his folder when he checked out of SWH and he is still trying to get a spare one—I understand there are none, and no participant is willing to part with his kit and folder, which remain as a perfect record of PBNC-5 for all participants).

The day before the Opening a new level of feverish activity was reached. By now practically all foreign participants had arrived and they all needed attention from the various PBNC-5 organizing staff. Everyone had a special request and thought his was the only one. In the midst of intense pressure from all sides I found the staff in the PBNC-5 Operations room at SWH most co-operative and understanding. I personally went to make a number of requests at that time, expected to be met by staff too busy to even listen to my problems, yet found them eager and willing to help. Some foreigners wanted to schedule media interviews, others wondered about availability of photographers, others wanted their technical presentations re-scheduled, some needed medical attention. The list of requests was endless. Again, this was another aspect of PBNC-5 which was very professionally handled. The staff had obviously been well briefed and instructed. The careful attention to detail shown by PBNC-5 staff made the difference between an average and an outstanding conference.

### **Exhibit Opening**

After many months of preparations and hard work the exhibit hall looked sparkling and awaited the arrival of its first guests. In the last three days

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prior to its opening the exhibit area had undergone a virtual transformation. When the containers were opened and their contents unloaded into the exhibit hall it appeared to be an impossible task. Then came the opening. The ribbon cutting ceremony was conducted with military precision. On time, with everyone in attendance and in position at their exhibits, the V.I.P. delegates inspected the various exhibits. The reception which followed immediately became the "ice-breaker," and foreign and Korean participants began to know each other.

### **Reception**

This social event set the tone for others to follow. An exquisitely decorated reception hall, a menu most carefully chosen to please the tastes of a highly multi-cultural and sophisticated group of guests, the short and very appropriate opening speeches, and a most fascinating traditional Korean cultural show, all combined for a perfect evening. Foreigners came away from this reception full of glow in their faces, from the good food and drink, and their spirits lifted by a most congenial atmosphere.

### **Opening Ceremony**

The event that probably impressed the foreign participants the most was the opening ceremony. Without question, PBNC-5 had set a new standard.

The theme and the need for interdependency of the nuclear industries of the various participating countries was expressed so eloquently by His Excellency Kim, Sung-jin, Honorary Chairman of the 5th PBNC, and Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of Korea. This was followed by the address given by Mr Park, Jung-Ki, Conference Chairman, and President of KEPCO, during which he extended the theme of interdependency to encompass the benefits of nuclear energy

as well as a country's broader cultural and social aspirations. This noble theme expressed itself in the foreigner's mind through Mr Park's use of near poetic language when speaking very sensitively of his country and its warm and friendly people. The message was clear for the delegates from the foreign nuclear industries.

A further new and very appropriate gesture, which was commented on by many foreigners, was the first "passing of the gavel" by Mr James Donnelly, the 4th PBNC Host Organization Representative, and President of AECL. Of special significance to 55 particular foreign participants in the audience was the fact that this gavel was made from the wood of a Canadian maple tree.

The performance by the KEPCO choir and the multi-visual slide show displaying the beauty of Korea particularly impressed the foreign participants. These cultural events blended so perfectly into this conference of high technology that no one could avoid the feeling that the theme of PBNC-5 also aimed to encompass the interdependency of cultural and technological values. For the foreigners this blend of "cultural" and "technological" was a new innovation introduced by the Koreans. They will no doubt wish to follow this example in organizing future conferences.

Lastly, my impressions of the opening day's activities can not fail but to include the masterful Chairman of the PBNC-5 Organizing Committee, Dr Lee, Byong Whi. His statesmanlike presence on the podium on various occasions served to underline the great efforts he personally made in bringing PBNC-5 together.

### **Technical Program**

It is clear that the success of the technical program is mainly due to the personal super-human efforts made by Dr Lee, Chang-Kun, Chairman of the Technical Program Committee, and that of his Co-chairman Dr Yoon, Young-Ku, as w-

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ell as all the other members of the committee. The selection of the technical program topics was obviously made with great care and covers the whole range of nuclear issues. Topics included: initiating a Nuclear Power Project, man-power planning, issues on self-reliance and indigenous capabilities, financing and economics, nuclear safety, waste storage, regional co-operation, small and medium sized reactors, radioisotope production and applications, and nuclear services and maintenance. This range of topics obviously reflects the interests of countries at all stages of development in their various nuclear programs and was therefore very appropriately chosen. Thus, the Koreans again showed sensitivity and understanding for the interests and needs of the foreign participating "company."

The high quality "Proceedings" document is especially to be commended. Its layout, uniform format, and easy readability all contributed to an easier understanding of the various technical sessions. As is often the case, many delegates can not attend all technical presentations, and it is then very helpful to have such excellent Proceedings available, to be read and studied when one's schedule allows. Furthermore, I am certain that these Proceedings also greatly helped those delegates whose native language is not English. Some speakers spoke too fast, and the availability of the Proceedings was an invaluable aid for many delegates.

### **Media Relations**

Television and press interviews were well handled. The foreign participants commented that Korean journalists are less aggressive in their questioning. This was a pleasant experience, as many foreign executives are often put on a "hot seat" in front of TV cameras in their own countries. Foreigners believe that it will, however, be inevitable that Korean society will in future also face

a more powerful press corps.

### **Guest Program**

When I asked various foreign participants about the guest program I received comments such as: "Great," "excellent," "loved it," "first class." Such compliments speak for themselves and need no amplification. Every facet of the program was well conceived and excellently executed. On the informal side, the guests also enjoyed shopping in Seoul and returned to their homes with many treasured articles and souvenirs from Korea.

### **PBNC-5 Luncheons**

What the foreign participants commented on mostly was the excellent choice of menu and the musical highlights. In particular the performance of Professor Baik, Nam-Ock, of the College of Music, Kyung Hee University filled the participants with genuine admiration. The inclusion of her beautiful performance was yet another example of a perfect harmony achieved between the arts, culture, and the world of nuclear technology.

### **PBNC-5 Banquet and Show**

This was a social and cultural event without parallel for the foreign participants. Dr Chon, Wan Yong was a most gracious Master of Ceremony. He added the touch of humour that put everyone into the right spirit to enjoy this occasion. The setting, the menu, the service—all were impeccable.

Professor Hahn, Gap-Soo gave a most interesting and delightful lecture on the history, culture, custom and language of Korea. The inclusion of his lecture into the PBNC-5 program was again perfectly conceived. Once again the conference organizers demonstrated their awareness for the need to also achieve cultural understanding and interdependency among nations.

The Little Angels endeared themselves instantly in the hearts of the foreigners. Who could not lo-

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ve their beautiful costumes, their skillful dancing, their harmonious singing? When the show was over, and the encores had faded away, the participants left the Art Center with a feeling of tenderness and good-will. It was a night that would later become a cherished memory for the foreign "individual."

### **Post Conference Tour**

By the time of the post conference tour foreign participants had come to expect excellence, and they were not disappointed. The concept of combining the tour to include both the Wolsung and Kori sites was applauded by many, especially the Canadian participants. It demonstrated Korea's pursuit of two well proven reactor types, which may set an example that other Pacific Basin countries may wish to follow. The blend of the "cultural" and "technological" was once again so perfectly achieved through the visit to the ancient city of Kyongju.

### **Lasting Impressions**

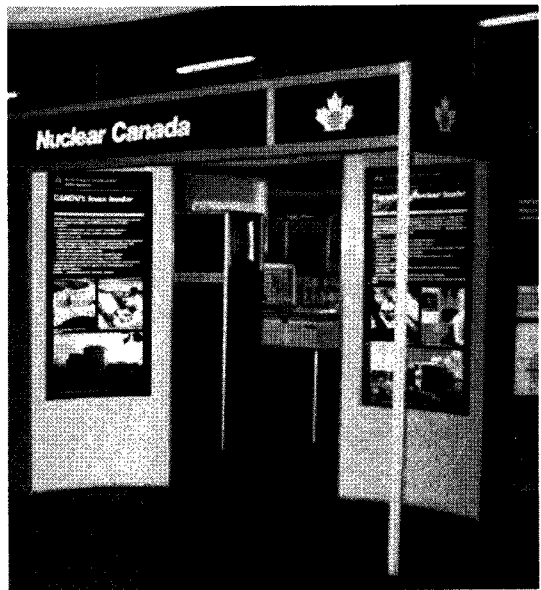
In preparation for this paper I asked many foreigners to send me their impressions of PBNC-5, so that this paper will not only reflect my own views, but that of many. From the the many telexes that were sent to my office in response, I selected the following as being typical:

**Organisation**-it is very difficult to find room for improvement. The next hosts have a tough act to follow.

**Technical Program**-very broad and interesting. A great deal of care had obviously been taken to select the nature of the papers and speakers. The technical papers gave an excellent overview of the key issues in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

**Exhibit**-It was an excellent idea to have a technical exhibit.

**Guest Program**-supper, first class, loved it.



**Banquets and Receptions**-were cultural and culinary highlights. Little Angels were incredible. Reflected the richness of Korean cultural heritage.

**Technical Tour**-appreciated the combination of Wolsung and Kori visits. Perfect blend of technical and cultural content. Provided a hands on view of the very impressive Korean nuclear power program.

**Overall comment**-The 5th PBNC was the best technical conference I have ever attended. The unique combination of culture and technology made it an event I will long remember.

These quotations summarize without doubt the unanimous view of the foreign participant.

PBNC-5 was impressive, successful, and will be difficult to surpass. Korea's nuclear industry has gained the respect of the foreign nuclear "company." Korea, the country and its people, has won the heart of the foreign "individual."

Through PBNC-5 Korea has set a new standard of excellence for international conferences. The Pacific Basin Nuclear Conference must now be considered a world class event, with a long and important future. Thank you Korea.