

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
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O R 300548Z SEP 75  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3086  
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA  
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 7642

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MNUC KS  
SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING PLANT

REF: STATE 226011

BEGIN SUMMARY: I HAVE NOW COMPLETED SECOND ROUND OF APPROACHES TO ROKG ON FRENCH NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING LABORATORY. OVER PAST FEW DAYS, I HAVE PRESENTED BOTH NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE ASPECTS OF US POSITION TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER, AND MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MOST). INITIAL RESPONSES WERE UNEQUIVOCALLY NEGATIVE, INDICATING UNIFORM AND FIRM DETERMINATION TO GO AHEAD WITH PURCHASE OF FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT AND DISAPPOINTMENT AT UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT PREVIOUSLY OFFERED RATIONALE FOR ROK POSITION. WE ARE NOW AWAITING CONSIDERED RESPONSE TO OUR APPROACH. END SUMMARY.

1. ON SEPT. 25, I MET WITH ACTING FONMIN LHO SHIN YONG WHO ACCOMPANIED BY DR. YOON YUNG KU (PRESIDENT KAERI), AND FOLLOWED-UP WITH PRIVATE MEETING SEPT 26 WITH DEPRIMIN NAM DUCK WOO AND SEPT 29 WITH DR. CHOE HYONG SOP (MOST).

2. I BASED PRESENTATION AT ALL THREE MEETINGS CLOSELY ON REFTEL GUIDANCE. I EMPHASIZED FOLLOWING POINTS, GEARED TO ANTICI-  
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PATED ROK SENSITIVITIES, BUT COVERED ALL POINTS IN REFTEL:

A. ROKG EXPLANATION OF REPROCESSING FACILITY APPRECIATED AND CAREFULLY EXAMINED, BUT USG REMAINS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT POTENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF PURCHASING FRENCH FACILITY AND URGES ROK TO CANCEL PURCHASE.

B. US OPPOSITION TO NATIONAL APPROACH ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING IS CONSISTENT POLICY AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY AGAINST ROKG; US STRONGLY SUPPORTS ALTERNATIVE OF MULTINATIONAL REPROCESSING. I PLACED PARTICULAR STRESS ON SECRETARY'S SEPT 22 UNGA STATEMENT TO DEMONSTRATE WE WERE NOT SINGLING OUT ROK.

C. DESTABILIZING INFLUENCE ON SECURITY SITUATION OF KOREA WAS SET FORTH. I POINTED OUT THAT, IRRESPECTIVE OF ROK INTENTIONS, PERCEPTION IN REGION OF ROK CAPABILITY TO SEPARATE PLUTONIUM COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT POLITICAL AND SECURITY RELATIONSHIPS INCLUDING OUR OWN.

D. QUESTIONABLE ABILITY TO OBTAIN CONGRESSIONAL AGREEMENT TO LOANS FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS WAS POINTED UP AS PRACTICAL CONSIDERATION.

E. MAJOR EMPHASIS PLACED UPON CONSTRUCTIVE CARROTS IN PACKAGE, PARTICULARLY SUPPORT FOR FUEL FABRICATION, SET FORTH IN REFTEL, AND I URGED ROKG TO BALANCE THESE PROSPECTIVE ADVANTAGES TO ITS NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM AGAINST LOSS OF ONLY REPROCESSING ELEMENT IN FRENCH CONTRACT.

2. FINALLY, IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION WITH BOTH LHO AND NAM, I EMPHASIZED POTENTIAL NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF KOREAN NATIONAL REPROCESSING ON BROADER US-KOREAN MUTUAL INTERESTS. I TOUCHED ONLY LIGHTLY ON RELATIVE SENSITIVITY OF KOREAN AND JAPANESE PROGRAMS, GIVEN FACT THAT KOREANS AWARE OF MUCH LARGER REPROCESSING PLANT PURCHASED BY JAPAN ALSO FROM FRANCE, GENERAL SENSITIVITY IN REGION TO POSSIBLE JAPANESE NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM AND JAPANESE FAILURE SO FAR TO RATIFY NPT. ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WERE REITERATED AGAIN.

3. REACTION OF ROKG SENIOR OFFICIALS WAS UNIFORMLY NEGATIVE. HIGHLIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS SET FORTH BELOW, BUT SECRET

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KEY POINTS ARE SUMMARIZED ALONG FOLLOWING LINES:

A. ROKG HAD ANTICIPATED US WOULD AGREE TO PURCHASE OF FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY ONCE FULL EXPLANATION PROVIDED.

B. ROKG UNABLE UNDERSTAND US OBJECTIONS SINCE FACILITY ONLY FOR TRAINING, FULL SAFEGUARDS PROVIDED UNDER IAEA, AND ADDITIONALLY COMPLETE US INSPECTION OFFERED. AS LHO PUT IT, ROKG INVITED

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