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NW# : 50997

DocId: 31609400

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04 MAY 2006

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PARM, MNUC, KS, CA, FR

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REF: (A) SEOUL 0026; (B) STATE 305630; (C) STATE 302043

1. WE APPRECIATE VIEWS REF A AND CAN ACCOMMODATE SOME OF YOUR SUGGESTIONS. HOWEVER, OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO SECURE EARLY ROKG CANCELLATION OF REPROCESSING ASPECT OF FRENCH CONTRACT. WE DO NOT INTEND TO BECOME INVOLVED IN EXTENDED DISCUSSIONS OF FUTURE BILATERAL COOPERATION ON NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR MATTERS IN ABSENCE ROKG COMPLIANCE WITH OUR REQUEST.

2. DRAWN OUT BARGAINING WOULD PROTRACT PERIOD OF CONTENTION OVER THIS ISSUE, CARRY RISK THAT OUR SUCCESS TO

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DATE WOULD COME UNSTUCK, AND UNDERCUT PROSPECT OF CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF KORI-II. PROLONGED IMPASSE ON REPROCESSING ISSUE HAS ALREADY MADE IT NECESSARY FOR US TO BE ABLE TO EXPLICITLY ASSURE CONGRESS THAT ROKG HAS DROPPED ITS INTENTION TO ACQUIRE REPROCESSING FACILITY FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE. SIGNIFICANT DELAY IN DECISION TO CANCEL WILL ALSO COMPLICATE OTHER PROBLEMS FOR US ARISING FROM ROK REPROCESSING PLANS AND WOULD PRESENT RISKS TO COOPERATIVE ATTITUDES WHICH FRANCE AND CANADA

HAVE SHOWN.

3. WE DO NOT WISH TO DELAY OUR EFFORTS IN HOPE THAT FRENCH WILL EVENTUALLY BEAR ONUS FOR CANCELLATION. AS RESULT OUR PATIENT EFFORTS, FRENCH HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY COOPERATIVE TO POINT WHERE THEY ARE NOW REVIEWING THEIR POLICY ON REPROCESSING SALE TO KOREA. THE FRENCH HAVE TOLD US WHILE THEY ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT CANCELLATION THEY WILL NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE. WE DO NOT WISH TO IN ANY WAY JEOPARDIZE CONSTRUCTIVE FRENCH ATTITUDE, WHICH HAS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR BROADER COOPERATION IN SENSITIVE NUCLEAR MATTERS. WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO FRENCH FOR MANY MONTHS THAT WE ARE TAKING INITIATIVE TO DISSUADE ROKG FROM GOING AHEAD WITH REPROCESSING PLANT; MOST RECENTLY WE INFORMED FRENCH EMBASSY HERE ON JANUARY 2 IN GENERAL TERMS OF OUR REPLY TO LATEST ROKG PROPOSAL (PER PARA 5 REF B.) ADDITIONALLY, DEVELOPMENT BY ROKG OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY ADVERSELY AFFECTS BASIC U.S. INTERESTS IN NORTHEAST ASIA; FOR THIS REASON AS WELL AS CLOSE U.S.-ROK SECURITY RELATIONSHIP IT THEREFORE IS PRIMARILY A U. S. RESPONSIBILITY TO DETER ROK ACQUISITION OF A NATIONAL REPROCESSING CAPABILITY.

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4. AT SAME TIME, WE FULLY APPRECIATE DESIRABILITY OF OFFERING A FACE-SAVING DEVICE TO ROKG WHICH WOULD MAKE ITS DECISION TO CANCEL MORE ACCEPTABLE. WE THEREFORE ARE PREPARED TO SEND QUALIFIED PERSONNEL FROM WASHINGTON FOR ONE SET OF INFORMAL, PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH ROKG OFFICIALS AS SOON AS FEASIBLE. (FYI AT THIS POINT WE EN-VISAGE SENDING DEPARTMENT AND ERDA OFFICERS, INCLUDING ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER AND EA OFFICER, IN SECOND HALF OF JANUARY. END FYI) PROPOSED DISCUSSION WOULD BE LIMITED TO INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND WOULD

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NOT INVOLVE ANY COMMITMENTS. ANY EXCHANGE WOULD BE STRICTLY PRELIMINARY IN NATURE, SERVING TO REVIEW AND FOCUS IN MORE SPECIFIC TERMS NON-SENSITIVE KOREAN NUCLEAR REQUIREMENTS AND PERMITTING US TO ELABORATE ON POSITIVE ASPECTS OF FUTURE U.S. PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH ROK AS LISTED PARA 2 REF C. IN OUR VIEW, HOWEVER, SUCH DISCUSSION WOULD ONLY BE DESIGNED TO HELP ROKG MAKE EXPEDITIOUS DECISION TO CANCEL. WE WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO GO BEYOND SUCH LIMITED PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION UNTIL ROK HAS CLEARLY COMPLIED WITH OUR REQUEST. IT IS THERE-FOR ESSENTIAL THAT KOREANS CONCLUDE THAT WE WILL NOT ENGAGE IN EXTENDED BARGAINING SESSIONS ON TERMS OF OUR FUTURE ASSISTANCE (DURING WHICH THEY COULD HOLD POSSIBI-LITY OF REACTIVATING REPROCESSING PLANT OVER OUR HEADS) AND THAT WE EXPECT ROKG DECISION TO CANCEL IN CONNec-TION WITH THIS PRELIMINARY EXCHANGE.

5. IN REPLYING TO KIM, YOU SHOULD ACCORDINGLY MAKE CLEAR THAT OUR OVERRIDING CONCERN REMAINS CANCELLATION OF RE-PROCESSING PLANT AND THAT WE WILL NOT GO AHEAD WITH KORI-II IN ABSENCE OF DEFINITIVE DECISION TO THIS EFFECT. AS COUNTERPROPOSAL TO LATEST ROKG POSITION, HOWEVER, YOU MAY INDICATE OUR WILLINGNESS TO HOLD EARLY PROMPT DISCUSSIONS IN SEOUL BETWEEN WASHINGTON OFFICIALS AND ROKG AS CAVEA-TED IN PARA 4.

6. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE USE FOLLOWING TALKING POINTS, BASED ON ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, YOUR SUGGESTIONS, AND REF B INSTRUCTIONS:

A. THE WSG APPRECIATES AND WELCOMES ROKG DECISION TO RECONSIDER REPROCESSING ASPECT OF ITS CONTRACT WITH FRANCE.

B. WE ALSO APPRECIATE ROKG RECOGNITION OF SERIOUSNESS OF OUR CONCERNS AND OF MAJOR BEARING THIS ISSUE HAS ON FUTURE OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP.

C. U.S. AGAIN REQUESTS CANCELLATION AT THIS TIME OF REPROCESSING CONTRACT AND WE HOPE TO RECEIVE A FAVOR-

ABLE RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

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D. AS WE HAVE INDICATED PREVIOUSLY, USG WILL NOT PROCEED WITH KORI-II UNTIL THE ROKG HAS DECIDED TO CANCEL ITS REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT. ROKG SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THAT EXTENDED DELAY IN REACHING A FINAL DECISION ON OUR REQUEST MAY ADVERSELY AFFECT PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS BILATERAL NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH THE ROK. PERCEPTIONS THAT KOREA IS SEEKING AN INDEPENDENT CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE PLUTONIUM HAVE ALREADY RESULTED IN ADVERSE PRESS AND CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT. PROSPECTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE KORI-II LOAN ARE BETTER IF ROKG DECISION TO CANCEL FACILITY PERMITS EXIM REQUEST TO BE MADE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

E. WE APPRECIATE THAT ROKG DESIRES TO HOLD FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ABOUT FUTURE U.S.-ROK COOPERATION ON NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR MATTERS. WHILE NOT SEEKING TO REPLACE NUCLEAR COOPERATION BETWEEN ROK AND FRANCE AND CANADA, WE ARE PREPARED TO SEND QUALIFIED USG PERSONNEL TO SEOUL AT AN EARLY DATE FOR SOLE PURPOSE OF ACHIVING A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ROK PEACEFUL NUCLEAR NEEDS AND DISCUSSING IN A PRELIMINARY, EXPLORATORY FASHION POSITIVE ASPECTS OF FUTURE U.S.-KOREAN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR

COOPERATION AS LISTED PARA 2 REF C. SUCH DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE A SINGLE, INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND WOULD NOT INVOLVE ANY COMMITMENTS ON OUR PART. WE EXPECT THAT THIS SESSION WOULD PERMIT THE ROKG TO REACH AN EARLY DECISION TO CANCEL. ROKG SHOULD UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT WE WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO GO BEYOND THIS UNTIL ROKG HAS CANCELLED. OBVIOUSLY, WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ONCE DECISION TO CANCEL HAS BEEN MADE.

F. (IF KIM RAISES SOVEREIGNTY ARGUMENTS). DECISION TO ACQUIRE OR CANCEL REPROCESSING PLANT IS ONE SOLELY FOR ROKG TO MAKE. TO EASE THIS DECISION, THE U.S. HAS MADE A SERIOUS OFFER TO DISCUSS OUR NUCLEAR COOPERATION IN NON-SENSITIVE AREAS. THE U.S. HAS MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR AND WILL BE AWAITING AN EARLY ROKG DE-

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CISION TO CANCEL SO THAT OUR COOPERATION IN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT CAN CONTINUE.

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7 YOU SHOULD CONVEY ABOVE TO KIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE,
AND WE WILL MAKE PARALLEL REPRESENTATION TO AMBASSADOR
HAHM HERE.

8. SENATE RESOLUTION ON NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION WHICH
YOU REFERRED TO WAS BROADLY WORDED AND DID NOT MENTION
KOREA, ALTHOUGH ACCOMPANING CONGRESSIONAL COMMENT DID.
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