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S/S - MR. ORTIZ

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DEPARTMENT PASS OTTAWA

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TAGS: MNUC, PARM, KS, FR, CA

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REF: A. SEOUL 292 B. STATE 08919

1. DURING JANUARY 14 MEETING WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NAM ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, HE VERY QUICKLY TURNED CONVERSATION WITH ME TO ROK REPROCESSING PLANT. NAM WELCOMED VISIT OF WASHINGTON GROUP JANUARY 22 ABOUT WHICH HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM CHONG-YOM. NAM SAID ROKG HAD COME "LONG WAY" TOWARD REVERSING ITS

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POSITION ON PURCHASE OF FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT MORE THAN ONE ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE FINAL DECISION ON CANCELLATION. HE URGED THAT WE NOT PUSH THE PROCESS TOO FAST. I RESPONDED THAT IN USG VIEW, DISCUSSIONS WITH HIGH LEVEL WASHINGTON GROUP, INCLUDING VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS, SHOULD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION AND THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED FOR FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS UNTIL DECISION MADE TO CANCEL. NAM EXPRESSED HOPE THIS WOULD BE THE CASE BUT REITERATED HIS CONCERNS AND URGED AGAIN WE GIVE IT A BIT MORE TIME SINCE ROKG HAS COME A LONG DISTANCE ALREADY. HE ADDED THAT MINISTER CHOI NOW RECOGNIZES PROHIBITIVE ECONOMIC COST OF NATIONAL REPROCESSING, BUT ROKG STILL NEEDS ASSURANCES ON US POSITIVE ACTIONS.

2. NAM THEN TURNED TO WHAT WAS BASIS FOR HIS MAJOR CONCERN, NAMELY STATUS OF CANADIAN CANDU AGREEMENT. HE SAID THAT CANADIANS HAVE NOW INDICATED MUCH GREATER CONCERN OVER FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY AFTER INITIALLY NOT RAISING THIS ISSUE IN STRONG TERMS. DEADLINE FOR SIGNING CANADIAN AGREEMENT IS JANUARY 26. SINCE US GROUP ARRIVES ONLY ON JANUARY 22, NAM DOUBTS WHETHER ROKG WOULD BE IN POSITION TO CANCEL FRENCH CONTRACT BY THE 26TH, GIVEN TECHNICAL ISSUES INVOLVED AND CURRENT KOREAN EXPECTATION OF NEED FOR FURTHER TALKS WITH USG.

3. NAM SAID THAT HE IS SERIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT REACTION IF CANADIANS FAIL TO SIGN AGREEMENT BY JANUARY 26 AS RESULT FAILURE TO CANCEL REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT BY THEN, ALTHOUGH HE DOUBTS CANADIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD

TAKE THIS ACTION. HE WARNED THAT IF CANADIANS DID INDEED NOT SIGN ON JANUARY 26 FOR THIS REASON, THERE WOULD BE VERY SEVERE REACTION IN BLUE HOUSE AND FULL RESPONSIBILITY WOULD BE PLACED ON US SHOULDERS FOR PRESSURING CANADIANS NOT TO SIGN. ROKG IS AWARE THAT US AND CANADIAN GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN IN CONSULTATION AND WOULD ASSUME CANADIANS ACTING AT BEHEST OF USG.

4. I REBUTTED NAM'S VIEW, POINTING OUT THAT WHILE I DID NOT SPEAK FOR CANADIAN GOVERNMENT I UNDERSTOOD THEIR CONCERN ABOUT PARLIAMENTARY REACTION, PARTICULARLY IF

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CANDU REACTOR AGREEMENT SIGNED BUT KORI II LOAN NOT CARRIED OUT. IN ANY EVENT, CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ACTS ON THE BASIS OF ITS OWN CONSIDERATIONS IN THIS AREA AND WOULD NOT MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON US PRESSURES, PARTICULARLY SINCE WE HAVE BEEN AND ARE STILL COMPETITORS IN NUCLEAR REACTOR FIELD. WHILE I HAD NO IDEA WHAT CANADIAN GOVERNMENT INTENDED TO DO, I URGED NAM TO DISABUSE THOSE WHO MAY BELIEVE CANADIANS ARE ACTING UNDER PRESSURE FROM US. I STRESSED THAT SIMPLEST AND MOST DIRECT WAY TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM REMAINED TO CANCEL FRENCH CONTRACT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SINCE THIS WOULD OPEN WAY FOR US COOPERATION AND OBVIATE ANY PROBLEMS WITH CANADIANS SHOULD THEY ARISE. I ENDED MEETING BY REITERATING CONFIDENCE ROKG WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR CANCELLING FRENCH CONTRACT ONCE THEY MET WITH WASHINGTON GROUP.  
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