

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652:XGDS-1

TAGS:MNUC, PARM, KS, FR, CA

SUBJECT:ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REFS: (A) SEOUL 9662, (B) SEOUL 9663, (C) PARIS 32534

(D) SEOUL 9786

1. DEPARTMENT AGREES THAT REQUEST OF MOST VICE MINISTER
YI FOR DETAILED ANSWERS ON EXTENT OF US WILLINGNESS TO
EXPAND PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION COULD BE INITIAL
INDICATION THAT ROKG SERIOUSLY RECONSIDERING ITS POSITION
ON PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT. IT ALSO POSES RISK THAT ROKG
MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO DIVERT US INTO EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF
DIMENSIONS OF US ASSISTANCE WHILE PILOT PLANT IS MERELY

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QUOTE DEFERRED UNQUOTE. WE THINK IT ESSENTIAL TO FORESTALL

ROKG ATTEMPTS EITHER TO EXTRACT INCREASING US COMMITMENTS OR TO ALLEGE INADEQUACIES IN US PROPOSAL PRIOR TO KEY DECISION WHETHER TO CANCEL, AND TO ENSURE THAT HIGHEST LEVELS OF ROKG UNDERSTAND CLEARLY THAT THEY MUST NOW ADDRESS FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL ISSUE, I.E., WHETHER THEY ARE PREPARED TO PROCEED WITH A REPROCESSING FACILITY OVER THE PROFOUND OBJECTIONS OF THE US, AS YOU NOTED PARA 3 REF A.

2. CONSEQUENTLY, IN THE ABSENCE OF A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST TO CANCEL THE REPROCESSING CONTRACT, YOU SHOULD PROCEED TO CALL ON PRESIDENT PARK AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME, AND MAKE PRESENTATION ON BASIS OF PREVIOUS INSTRUCTIONS.

WE LEAVE TO YOUR JUDGMENT WHETHER YOU FIRST WISH TO APPROACH NEW PRIME MINISTER CHOE. HOWEVER, YOU SHOULD NOT DELAY THESE APPROACHES FOR PURPOSE OF RESPONDING TO YI AND SHOULD AVOID BEING DRAWN INTO EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS ON ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL QUESTIONS AT LOWER LEVELS OF ROKG.

3. IF YOU THINK IT NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH YI'S QUESTIONS, YOU MAY SAY THAT THEY HAVE BEEN REFERRED TO WASHINGTON AND ARE BEING STUDIED; HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY INVOLVE MANY COMPLEX CONSIDERATIONS WHICH CAN ONLY BE MEANINGFULLY EXPLORED OVER TIME AND THROUGH EXTENSIVE BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. IF PRESIDENT SHOULD DECIDE TO CANCEL REPROCESSING FACILITY, WE ARE PREPARED TO ENTER EXPEDITIOUSLY INTO SUCH CONSULTATIONS TO ADDRESS CONCRETELY THE KIND OF QUESTIONS THE ROK HAS POSED. THE US HAS RECOGNIZED THE LEGITIMATE KOREAN INTEREST IN DEVELOPING ITS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR PROGRAM, AND HAS MADE A SERIOUS OFFER TO DISCUSS EXPANSION OF OUR ASSISTANCE IN NON-SENSITIVE AREAS. FOR EXAMPLE, IN EVENT OF CANCELLATION WE WOULD BE WILLING TO ACTIVELY EXPLORE THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL FUEL FABRICATION FACILITIES IN KOREA. IN SO DOING, HOWEVER, WE WOULD NOT WISH TO PREJUDICE FRENCH COOPERATION WITH ROK IN NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR AREAS. HOWEVER, THE BASIC QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER KOREA IS PREPARED TO PUT AT RISK NOT ONLY THIS OFFER BUT MUTUALITY OF INTEREST BY PROCEEDING WITH A REPROCESSING FACILITY OVER WHICH THE US HAS PROFOUND MISGIVINGS.

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4. FYI. WE DO NOT WISH TO PRECLUDE FACE-SAVING QUID IF HIGHER LEVEL OF ROKG FEELS THIS IS NECESSARY, BUT WE PREFER TO RECEIVE PRIOR ROK ASSURANCES OF ITS INTENTION TO ABANDON THIS FACILITY BEFORE ELABORATING ON FUTURE US NUCLEAR ASSISTANCE IN NON-SENSITIVE AREAS. WE ACCORDINGLY DO NOT WISH TO BECOME BOGGED-DOWN IN TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS WITH ROK IN ABSENCE OF ROK ASSURANCES OF THEIR INTENTION

TO ABANDON THIS FACILITY.

5. RE PARA 9 REF A, WE ARE NOT REPEAT NOT SEEKING TO EX-
CLUDE FRENCH OR OTHER SUPPLIERS FROM SHARING IN ROK
NUCLEAR MARKET IN NON-SENSITIVE AREAS, SUCH AS FUEL
FABRICATION AND NUCLEAR REACTORS. FRENCH ARE SERIOUSLY
CONSIDERING OUR APPROACHES (REC C) AND WE DO NOT WISH TO
GIVE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE IN ANY WAY MOTIVATED BY
DESIRE TO SEEK COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGE OVER FRENCH WHEN THEY
ARE COOPERATING WITH US ON AN ISSUE OF MAJOR POLITICAL
SENSITIVITY. END FYI. KISSINGER

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