

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM, MNUC, PFOR, KS

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON VISIT OF MOST ATOMIC ENERGY BUREAU
DIRECTOR

TOKYO PASS ERDA REP HENOCH

1. MOST BUREAU OF ATOMIC ENERGY DIRECTOR LEE BYOUNG WHITE
VISITED WASHINGTON AFTER LEADING ROK DELEGATION TO IAEA
BG MEETING IN VIENNA. LEE MET WITH DEPT OF ICERS
(OES, S/P PM AND EA) ON OCTOBER 2. HE ALSO CALLED ON
NRC, ERDA AND NSC STAFF.

2. IN CALL IN DEPT, LEE EXPLAINED JUSTIFICATION FOR ROK
ACQUISITION OF PILOT REPROCESSING PLANT FROM FRANCE ALONG
STANDARD LINES LEE AND OTHER ROKG OFFICIALS HAVE ARGUED
IN SEOUL.

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3- LEE STRESSED ROK CONCERN OVER LONG TERM RELIABILITY

OF FOREIGN SOURCES OF NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY AS A MAIN REASON FOR ROK DESIRING TO DEVELOP ITS OWN FUEL CYCLE CAPABILITY, PARTICULARLY ONE LEADING TO REPROCESSING AND RECYCLING OF PLUTONIUM TO REDUCE URANIUM REQUIREMENTS, AND NOTED THAT US FUEL CONTRACT FOR KORI-II ASSUMED PLUTONIUM RECYCLE. ROK HOPED EVENTUALLY TO USE EXPERIENCE

OF PILOT PLANT TO PARTICIPATE IN A REGIONAL REPROCESSING CENTER. SOME DISCUSSIONS TO THIS EFFECT HAD ALREADY BEEN HELD WITH JAPAN, PHILIPPINES, AND ROC. SUBJECT WAS DISCUSSED AT 1974 KOREAN-JAPANESE SCIENCE MINISTERS MEETING. WHILE THE INITIAL JAPANESE REACTION WAS ENCOURAGING, LEE SAID JAPANESE ATTITUDE HAD COOLED UNDER NEW JAPANESE MINISTER OF SCIENCE.

4. LEE SAID THAT THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE CONTRACTS BETWEEN KOREAN ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND ST. GOBAIN AND ANOTHER FRENCH COMPANY. THE FIRST, FOR THE REPROCESSING PLANT, HAS A TARGET COMPLETION DATE OF 1979. THE FRENCH WILL SUPPLY IRRADIATED FUEL TO BE REPROCESSED. THE SECOND CONTRACT IS FOR THE FUEL FABRICATION FACILITY, WHICH SHOULD BE COMPLETED BY 1977. LEE DESCRIBED THE PROSPECTS FOR CANCELLATION OF THE REPROCESSING CONTRACT VARIOUSLY AS "IMPOSSIBLE", "ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE" AND "VERY DIFFICULT".

5. IN RESPONDING TO LEE'S EXPLANATION, OES ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER EMPHASIZED THAT, AS LEE AWARE, FOCUS OF US-ROK DISCUSSIONS ON REPROCESSING QUESTION IS IN SEOUL. HE STRESSED OUR GENERAL CONCERN OVER SPREAD OF NATIONAL REPROCESSING FACILITIES AS WELL AS SPECIFIC SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT THE PLANNED KOREAN PLANT. HE ALSO NOTED IN DETAIL ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WHICH COMMERCIAL SCALE REPROCESSING FACILITY WOULD FACE AND ENCOURAGED LEE TO CONSIDER SUCH NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR AREAS AS FUEL FABRICATION FOR ROK COMMERCIAL SPECIALIZATION. IN RESPONSE TO ASSURANCE THAT PLANT WOULD BE SAFEGUARDED BY IAEA AND OPEN TO U.S. INSPECTORS, KRATZER INDICATED THAT KEY ISSUE IS PLUTONIUM FACILITY PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN COUNTRY, NOT QUESTION OF SAFEGUARDS EFFECTIVENESS WHILE IN FORCE.

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6. PURPOSE OF LEE'S VISIT TO SEVERAL DIFFERENT OFFICES WAS CLEARLY NOT ONLY TO EXPLAIN ROK REPROCESSING AMBITIONS BUT ALSO TO ATTEMPT TO DETECT ANY DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES OF USG AGENCIES TOWARD ROK PLANS. IN THIS HE WAS UNSUCCESSFUL. KISSINGER

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