

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, KS, CA, FR

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REF: A. SEOUL 9928; B. SEOUL 9929; C. SEOUL 9961; D. STATE
302043; E. STATE 299089

1. WE HAVE CAREFULLY REVIEWED ROKG POSITION AS PRESENTED
IN YOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF SECRETARY KIM CHONG
YOM, AS WELL AS YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS. KIM'S STATEMENT OF
ROKG WILLINGNESS TO RECONSIDER REPROCESSING ELEMENT OF
FRENCH NUCLEAR CONTRACT AND TO CANCEL REPROCESSING DEAL

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WHEN SATISFIED WITH US RESPONSE TO ROK NUCLEAR REQUIRE-

MENTS IS ENCOURAGING. AS YOU INDICATE, ROKG HAS PROBABLY DECIDED IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO PROCEED WITH REPROCESSING FACILITY UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. WE ALSO AGREE THAT THROUGH KIM WE ARE NOW DEALING FOR PRACTICAL PURPOSES WITH PRESIDENT PARK ON THIS QUESTION, ALTHOUGH YOU SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE PREPARED TO APPROACH PARK IF NECESSARY TO OBTAIN ROK AGREEMENT TO CANCEL PLANT.

2. WHILE WE APPRECIATE THE ROKG PROPOSAL'S FACE-SAVING ADVANTAGES, WE DO NOT WISH TO ALLOW THE ROKG TO POSTPONE A DEFINITIVE REVERSAL OF ITS POSITION ON REPROCESSING PLANT PENDING SATISFACTORY OUTCOME OF BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS

ON FUTURE CIVIL NUCLEAR COOPERATION. FROM OUR STANDPOINT, IT REMAINS VERY IMPORTANT TO FORESTALL ROKG ATTEMPTS EITHER TO EXTRACT INCREASING US COMMITMENTS OR TO ALLEGE INADEQUACIES IN US PROPOSAL PRIOR TO KEY DECISION WHETHER TO CANCEL. FROM STANDPOINT OF KOREA'S CIVIL NUCLEAR PROBLEMS, IT WOULD ALSO SEEM IN ROKG INTEREST TO FACILITATE EARLY CANADIAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT AND CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF KORI II CREDITS, BOTH OF WHICH COULD WELL BE FURTHER JEOPARDIZED BY SUBSTANTIAL DELAY IN DECISION TO CANCEL. FROM FRENCH AND CANADIAN STANDPOINTS, LENGTHY BARGAINING EXERCISE TO DEFINE SCOPE OF FUTURE US NUCLEAR COOPERATION WOULD CARRY OVERTONES OF SEEKING COMMERCIAL ADVANTAGES FOR OURSELVES, CONTRARY TO ASSURANCES WE HAVE PROVIDED PARIS AND OTTAWA. ALSO, WE COULD NOT REASONABLY EXPECT CANADIANS TO READILY DELAY IMPLEMENTATION OF CANDU REACTOR PROJECT BY AS MUCH AS SIX MORE MONTHS AND WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THE RISK OF MOUNTING PRESSURE ON THE GOF TO CARRY OUT REPROCESSING DEAL.

3. WE THEREFORE WISH TO AVOID EXTENDED BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ON POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION PRIOR TO ROKG AGREEMENT TO CANCEL FACILITY. WE BELIEVE THAT US HAS ALREADY CLEARLY INDICATED ITS WILLINGNESS TO REVIEW WITH ROKG KOREAN REQUIREMENTS IN NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR AREAS AND THAT YOUR APPROACHES HAVE PROVIDED ROKG SATISFACTORY ASSURANCES TO THIS EFFECT

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WHICH SHOULD PERMIT EXPEDITIOUS DECISION TO CANCEL, A CONCLUSION WHICH YOU SHOULD UNDERLINE.

4. ACCORDINGLY, YOU SHOULD MEET WITH KIM SOONEST TO REPLY TO ROKG PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSIONS. YOU SHOULD INDICATE THAT YOU FULLY REPORTED YOUR DECEMBER 26 MEETING TO WASHINGTON AND HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED TO REPLY AS FOLLOWS:

-- THE USG APPRECIATES AND WELCOMES ROKG DECISION TO RECONSIDER REPROCESSING ASPECT OF ITS CONTRACT WITH FRANCE

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

-- AS WE HAVE INDICATED PREVIOUSLY, WE ARE PREPARED TO HAVE US EXPERTS DISCUSS WITH THE ROKG HOW ITS FUTURE NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR REQUIREMENTS CAN BEST BE MET. HOWEVER, WE CANNOT PROCEED WITH KORI-II OR ENTER INTO SUCH DISCUSSIONS UNTIL THE ROKG HAS DECIDED TO CANCEL ITS REPROCESSING PLANT CONTRACT.

PON ROKG CANCELLATION WE ARE PREPARED TO SEND QUALIFIED USG PERSONNEL TO DISCUSS WITH ROKG THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF FUTURE US-KOREAN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR COOPERATION AS LISTED PARA 2 REF D. WE DO NOT INTEND, HOWEVER, TO SEEK TO REPLACE NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR COOPERATION BETWEEN ROK AND FRANCE AND CANADA. (FYI: WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT WISH TO COMMIT OURSELVES BEYOND THIS GENERAL FORMULATION WITH RESPECT TO PROSPECTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH ROKG. AT THIS STAGE WE WOULD ENVISAGE SUCH TALKS AS LIMITED TO AN INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS INCLUDING PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS OF POINTS ENUMERATED PARA 2 REF D. MEETINGS WOULD SERVE TO FOCUS IN MORE PRACTICAL TERMS NON-SENSITIVE KOREAN NUCLEAR REQUIREMENTS, BUT WOULD NOT INVOLVE AUTHORITY TO MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. ANY SUCH EXCHANGE WOULD BE STRICTLY PRELIMINARY IN NATURE AND WOULD BE LIMITED TO LISTENING TO ROKG EXPLANATION OF ITS REQUIREMENTS AND ELABORATION OF SPECIFICS UNDER PARA 2 REF D. END FYI.)

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-- 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.

-- WE HOPE TO RECEIVE A FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

-- (IF KIM RAISES SOVEREIGNTY ARGUMENTS). DECISION TO

ACQUIRE OR CANCEL REPROCESSING PLANT IS ONE SOLELY FOR ROKG TO MAKE. TO EASE THIS DECISION, THE US HAS MADE A SERIOUS OFFER TO DISCUSS EXPANSION OF OUR COOPERATION IN NON-SENSITIVE AREAS. THE U.S. HAS MADE ITS POSITION CLEAR AND WILL BE AWAITING AN EARLY ROKG DECISION TO CANCEL SO THAT OUR COOPERATION IN PEACEFUL NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT CAN CONTINUE.

5. WE INTEND TO INFORM FRENCH AND CANADIAN EMBASSIES HERE IN GENERAL TERMS OF OUR REPLY TO ROK PROPOSAL. IN MEETING WITH FRENCH, WE WILL NOTE THAT ROKG HAS TOLD US THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN APPRISED BY GOF OF LATTER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD CANCELLATION. ROBINSON

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