

## Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O R 240436Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3526

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

IAEA VIENNA 108

S E C R E T SEOUL 8278

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS:MNUC, KS

SUBJECT: ROKG REJECTS OUR REPRESENTATIONS ON NUCLEAR  
REPROCESSING

1. ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER LHO SHIN YOUNG CALLED IN AMBASSADOR EVENING OCTOBER 23 TO INFORM HIM THAT, AFTER CAREFUL RECONSIDERATION OF DEPUTY SECRETARY'S AND AMBASSADOR'S VARIOUS REPRESENTATIONS ON PURCHASE FRENCH NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PLANT, ROKG HAD DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO CANCEL FRENCH CONTRACT AT THIS STAGE. LHO SAID HE WISHED TO MAKE CLEAR ONCE AGAIN THAT REPROCESSING PLANT WAS FOR STUDY PURPOSE ONLY AND THAT THROUGH TECHNICAL STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT REPROCESSING CAPABILITY ROKG EXPECTED TO REDUCE ANTICIPATED MAJOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE OUTLAYS FOR NUCLEAR POWER DEVELOPMENT. HE AGAIN WELCOMED THOROUGH U.S. INSPECTION. IN COURSE CONVERSATION HE POINTEDLY ASKED WHY WE HAD NOT RESISTED DEVELOPMENT JAPANESE REPROCESSING CAPABILITY. HE ALSO REPEATEDLY PRESSED AMBASSADOR ON QUESTION WHY U.S. SO SUSPICIOUS OF ROKG INTENT.

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2. IN HIS RESPONSE AND IN COURSE SUBSEQUENT

EXCHANGES, AMBASSADOR BORE IN HARD ON ROKG POSITION. HE SAID HE WE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED BY ROKG REPLY, THAT AS WE HAD REPEATEDLY EXPLAINED SUM TOTAL U.S. VAST EXPERIENCE ARGUED AGAINST ROK DECISION IN ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL SENSE, THAT HIGHLY DOUBTFUL POSSIBLE GAINS ROKG SOUGHT WERE FAR OUTWEIGHED BY RISKS TO FUTURE US/ROK COOPERATION, NOT ONLY IN NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT BUT QUITE POSSIBLY IN MANY OTHER AREAS. HE POINTED OUT THAT ADVERSE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL REACTION MAY VERY WELL NOT BE LIMITED TO REJECTION KORI II LOAN AND SUPPLY OF FUEL ELEMENTS BUT COULD APPLY IN MANY AREAS ROKS NEED U.S. SUPPORT.

3. RESPONDING TO LHO'S JAPANESE COMPARISON AMBASSADOR SAID THERE WERE REAL DIFFERENCES: JAPAN WAS NOT ON DMZ; KOREA IS CRITICAL AREA WHERE NK AND SINO/SOVIET REACTION NEEDED TO BE CONSIDERED; WE KNOW HOW STRONGLY ADVERSE JAPANESE PEOPLE ARE TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT; JAPAN'S REQUIREMENT AT TIME IT INITIATED REPROCESSING DEVELOPMENT LOOKED FAR MORE REAL AND PRACTICABLE THAN KOREA'S. AMBASSADOR PUT ASIDE QUESTION OF U.S. MISTRUST OF ROK ASSURANCES BUT POINTED OUT OBVIOUS PROBLEM OF PERCEPTIONS, THAT THIS WAS WORLDWIDE U.S. POLICY, AND THAT WE HAD OFFERED TO SUPPORT VIABLE ALTERNATIVE MULTINATIONAL APPROACH.

4. SUMMING UP, AMBASSADOR SAID THAT WE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND ROK LOGIC AND THAT ROKG ADOPTING VERY HIGH RISK POLICY. AMBASSADOR URGED AT END AND SEVERAL TIMES DURING CONVERSATION RECONSIDERATION OF ROKG POLICY. LHO STEADFASTLY REJECTED THESE REQUESTS, VOICING CONFIDENCE USG COULD FIND WAY TO COOPERATE WITH ROKG IN NUCLEAR ENERGY MATTERS, IF IT HAD WILL. AMBASSADOR CONCLUDED THAT HE HAD SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT PRACTICABILITY OF POTENTIAL COOPERATION IN THIS AREA.

5. EMBASSY COMMENTS FOLLOW.  
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NNN

## Message Attributes

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Phone: 202/994-7000, Fax: 202/994-7005, [nsarchiv@gwu.edu](mailto:nsarchiv@gwu.edu)