

Exempted, EO 13526, 13A

Declassify after _____

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Declassify Change Classification to _____

IP's by Sullivan/Dunn Date 05/17/05

SM 07/01/13



Department of State TELEGRAM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA PRIORITY

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FOLLOWING IS REPEAT SEOUL 9440, SENT SECSTATE DEC 9:

QUOTE ~~SECRET~~ SEOUL 9440

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DEPT PASS TOKYO OTTAWA PARIS IAEA VIENNA FOR INFO

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC PARM KS FR CA
SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING
REF: A. STATE 285640 B. SEOUL 9402

1. IN ACCORDANCE REF A INSTRUCTIONS, AMBASSADOR CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG PIL DECEMBER 8 TO CONVEY US POSITION ON RE-PROCESSING ISSUE. NOTING THAT HE WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM SECRETARY ON ISSUE OF GREATEST IMPORTANCE TO US/ROK RELATIONS, AMBASSADOR COVERED ALL POINTS IN REF A, PLUS POINTS PREVIOUSLY MADE TO OTHER ROKG OFFICIALS ON THIS ISSUE. SUBSE-
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DECLASSIFIED
Authority NW: 38336
By DuKa NARA, Date 4/10/13



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QUENT TO MEETING, EMBASSY GAVE PRIMIN'S OFFICE COPY OF TALKING POINTS, COPY OF WHICH ALSO FORWARDED TO DEPARTMENT BY AIRGRAM, DECEMBER 9.

2. PRIMIN BEGAN LENGTHY RESPONSE SAYING THAT FINAL DECISION ON US REQUEST THAT ROK CANCEL FRENCH REPROCESSING CONTRACT WOULD BE MADE BY PRESIDENT PARK; IN MEANTIME HOWEVER, PRIMIN WISHED TO EXPRESS HIS OWN VIEWS ON THE MATTER. ROKG, HE SAID, WAS FULLY AWARE US CONCERN ABOUT SECURITY PROBLEM IN NORTHEAST ASIA, COULD NOT EXIST WITHOUT CLOSE COOPERATION OF US WHICH IT DID NOT WISH TO HURT, AND IN NO EVENT WOULD TAKE ACTION CONTRARY TO FUNDAMENTAL LINE OF US THINKING. PRIMIN THEN ARGUED SOUTH KOREA DID NOT HAVE FINANCIAL CAPABILITY TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS. TO ADD NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT TO ROKG MAJOR CURRENT EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN ITS CONVENTIONAL MILITARY POSTURE WAS CLEARLY BEYOND ROK ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CAPABILITY. FURTHERMORE IT WOULD BE STRATEGICALLY DANGEROUS FOR ROK TO DEVELOP SUCH WEAPONS. THEY COULD NOT BE USED AGAINST JAPAN, CHINA, OR THE USSR. TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS FOR USE AGAINST NORTH KOREA WAS ALSO FOOLHARDY SINCE NEITHER KIM IL SUNG NOR HIS MAJOR COMMUNIST SUPPORTERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO SIT IDLY BY IN SUCH EVENT. ROKG WAS, ACCORDING TO KIM, FULLY AWARE OF GRAVE CONSEQUENCES OF DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS ITSELF. WERE ROKS TO NEED SUCH WEAPONS THEY WOULD DEPEND ON US.

3. ASIDE FROM DISCOUNTING ROK INTEREST IN WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT, PRIMIN REPEATED SEVERAL ARGUMENTS WE HAVE HEARD BEFORE. US, HE NOTED, HAD NOT RAISED POSITIVE OBJECTIONS TO JAPANESE DEVELOPMENT OF REPROCESSING CAPABILITY, AND THIS WAS MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN TO KOREA. ALSO CHINA AND OTHERS HAD NUCLEAR CAPABILITY WHICH ALSO GREATLY CONCERNED ROK. WHAT KOREA DESIRED WAS SMALL SIZED PLANT, WHICH MANY OTHERS POSSESSED, FOR KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. MOREOVER, IT WOULD BE VERY AWKWARD TO CANCEL FRENCH CONTRACT AT THIS STAGE. INSPECTION GUARANTEES INCLUDING OFFER OF BILATERAL US INSPECTION SHOULD ELIMINATE US SUSPICIONS. IN VIEW OF ALL THESE FACTORS KIM REITERATED SEVERAL TIMES ROKG SIMPLY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND US SUSPICIONS ABOUT ROKS SMALL REPROCESSING EFFORT. AS LONG AS PRESIDENT PARK WERE TO LEAD ROK AND KIM WERE HIS ASSISTANT, KIM COULD ASSURE US THAT ROK WOULD TAKE NO ACTION

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TO JEOPARDIZE BASIC US INTERESTS. SUCH DANGERS EXISTED ONLY OUTSIDE KOREA AND THE US WAS JUMPING TO WRONG CONCLUSION IN ASSUMING THEY WOULD OCCUR INSIDE.

4. FINALLY, KIM SAID THAT IF THE ADVANCED PROPOSITIONS WOULD NOT SHARE REPROCESSING INFORMATION WITH KOREA THIS WOULD BE GREAT PITY FOR ROK. IT WAS EVEN Sadder IN KOREAN EYES FOR US TO BE SO SUSPICIOUS AS TO THREATEN WITHDRAWAL KORI II LOAN, OTHER FORMS OF NUCLEAR AND SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT, AND BROADER SECURITY SUPPORT IF FRENCH REPROCESSING DEAL WENT THROUGH. IF THE US INSISTED ON EXPANDING ISSUE TO THIS EXTENT THERE WAS, KIM SAID, NO MORE FOR ROK TO SAY.

5. IN ANSWER TO PRIME AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT AREAS OF AGREEMENT WERE SUBSTANTIAL. WE AGREED ON: FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF ALLIANCE AS OUTLINED BY PRIMIN; STRATEGIC DANGERS OF ROK NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT OUTLINED BY PRIMIN; AND ON POSITIVE BENEFIT FROM NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES WHICH ROK INDICATED WAS ITS GOAL. ONLY DIFFERENCE CONCERNED ADVISABILITY OF ROKS LAUNCHING, EVEN ON MINIMAL SCALE, NUCLEAR REPROCESSING PROGRAM. EFFECT OF THIS ACTION ON PERCEPTIONS OUTSIDE KOREA WOULD BE HIGHLY NEGATIVE. WE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BECAUSE OF THE DESTABILIZING EFFECT OF SUCH PERCEPTION AND CONSEQUENT DANGERS OF CONFRONTATION WITH DPRK. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT JAPAN WAS IN DIFFERENT POSITION IN THIS REGARD. WHATEVER JUSTIFICATION ROKS BELIEVED THERE MIGHT BE FOR THEIR REPROCESSING PROGRAM, PROGRAM WAS NOT WORTH MAJOR ECONOMIC COSTS TO ROK AND FURTHER POTENTIAL COSTS IN TERMS OF NEGATIVE US PERCEPTIONS AND BROAD US SUPPORT. AMBASSADOR MADE CLEAR THAT WE HAD NEITHER WISH NOR PLAN TO LESSEN BROAD US SECURITY AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR ROK. BUT PERCEPTION THAT ROKS HAD NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY COULD AFFECT CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES AND MADE OUR CONTINUED SUPPORT FAR MORE DIFFICULT.

6. AMBASSADOR STRESSED, ON OTHER HAND, ROKS COULD OBTAIN SAME OBJECTIVES IN NUCLEAR AREA FROM REGIONAL REPROCESSING CENTER AND DOOR WOULD BE OPEN FOR WIDE SCALE US/ROK COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR AND SCIENTIFIC AREAS. STRESSING THAT OUR OFFER WAS MADE IN THE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION AND CLOSE FRIENDSHIP, AMBASSADOR URGED ACCEPTANCE OF OUR COST EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE.

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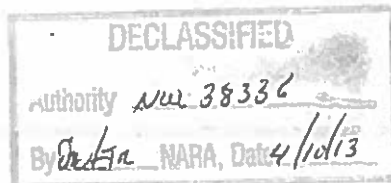
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WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT IT MIGHT BE SOMEWHAT AWKWARD TO CANCEL FRENCH CONTRACT, AMBASSADOR SAID WE WERE CONVINCED FRENCH WOULD UNDERSTAND AND THAT US COULD BE OF SOME HELP IN SMOOTHING WAY TO THIS SOLUTION, IF NECESSARY.

7. IN HIS FINAL REMARKS PRIMIN SAID ROKG STILL WANTED TO PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL EFFORT BUT COULD NOT SEE REASON FOR US OBJECTIONS TO SMALL NATIONAL EFFORT AS WELL. NONETHELESS ROKG WOULD HAVE TO STUDY USG PROPOSITION. IN MEANTIME PRIMIN HOPED THERE COULD BE FOUND MORE REASONABLE AND EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE. AGAIN PRIMIN UNDERLINED POINT THAT ROK DESIRED THAT THERE BE NO CHANGE IN BASIC ROK/US RELATIONSHIP AND ROKG WOULD DO NOTHING TO JEOPARDIZE THIS RELATIONSHIP.

8. AT CLOSE CONVERSATION AMBASSADOR INFORMED PRIMIN THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE POSITIVE ANSWER WITHIN A WEEK. AT THAT TIME, HE SAID, IF QUESTION HAD NOT BEEN RESOLVED HE WAS UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO RAISE ISSUE WITH PRESIDENT PARK PERSONALLY. AMBASSDOR CONCLUDED THAT HE HOPED ROKG WOULD GIVE MOST SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO POSITIVE US ALTERNATIVE PROPOSED WHICH WOULD PROVIDE ROKS WITH KNOWLEDGE THEY NEEDED AT LOW COST AND RISK. SNEIDER UNQUOTE. KISSINGER



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