

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
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S E C R E T SEOUL 0516

EXDIS

DEPT PLS PASS CINCPAC FOR POLAD; PLS PASS AMBASSADOR SNEIDER
AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC PARM KS FR
SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

SUMMARY: IN OPENING MEETING ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING JANUARY
22 BETWEEN US TEAM LED BY ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER
AND ROK GROUP COMPRISED OF MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
CHOE HYONG-SOP AND KAERI, AND MOFA OFFICIALS, MINISTER CHOE
PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDING ROK/US ATOMIC ENERGY COMMIT-
TEE, SISTER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTES,
AND OVERALL SCIENCE AGREEMENT. STRESSING THAT U.S. COMMITMENTS
ON COOPERATION WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW ROK DECISION TO CANCEL
FRENCH REPROCESSING CONTRACT, ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OUTLINED POSSIBLE AREAS OF U.S. COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR ENERGY
FIELD. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD CHARGE LATE JANUARY 21 THAT
HE INFORMED BY MOFA THAT ROKG EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE
CANADIAN FINAL ANSWER ON FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT
AFTERNOON JANUARY 23. END SUMMARY.

1. IN RESPONSE MINISTER CHOE'S WELCOMING REMARKS AND OPENING
COMMENT THAT MEETINGS SHOULD PROVIDE GOOD OPPORTUNITY DISSOLVE
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ANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS REGARDING NUCLEAR REPROCESSING ISSUE,

ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER REVIEWED PAST ROK/US COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR AREA AND RECENT NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENTS IN THE US, THEN OUTLINED AREAS WHERE US AND ROK MIGHT COOPERATE EFFECTIVELY IN FUTURE, PROVIDED ROK DEFINITELY CANCELS REPROCESSING PLANS. IN THIS CONTEXT THE US WELCOMED CURRENT DIRECTION OF ROK THINKING ON PURCHASE FRENCH REPROCESSING PLANT AND HOPED THAT FINAL DECISION TO CANCEL WOULD BE MADE PROMPTLY SO THAT WAY WOULD BE OPEN TO ENLARGED ROK/US NUCLEAR ENERGY COOPERATION IN FUTURE.

2. RESPONDING, SCIENCE MINISTER CHOE REVIEWED BACKGROUND AND REASONING BEHIND FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT, COMING DOWN WITH SOME HEAT ON POINT THAT ROK/FRENCH NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR LONG PERIOD OF TIME PRIOR TO US RAISING ITS OBJECTIONS. CHOE AFFIRMED THAT ROKG HAD NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS, SINCE IT COULD NOT AFFORD SUCH DEVELOPMENT AND IT RELIED COMPLETELY ON US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA.

3. CHOE MADE THREE PROPOSALS FOR: (A) STANDING COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT; (B) SISTER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ROK AND US RESEARCH INSTITUTES; AND (C) OVERALL SCIENCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. NOTING THAT US/ROK STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT HAD BEEN MOST HELPFUL, CHOE SAID SIMILAR COMMITTEE IN NUCLEAR AREA COULD HELP AVOID SUCH PROBLEMS AND MISUNDERSTANDING WHICH HAD ARISEN OVER REPROCESSING ISSUE. ROKG ALSO NEEDED WINDOW HE SAID TO OBTAIN ADVICE, TRAINING AND MATERIAL FROM US NUCLEAR RESEARCH INSTITUTES. RESEARCH INSTITUTE SISTER RELATIONSHIPS SHOULD BE REESTABLISHED WHICH WOULD NOT ENTAIL A GREAT DEAL OF OBLIGATION IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BUT COULD BE MOST USEFUL AS CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION. SCIENCE AGREEMENT CHOE CONCEIVED OF AS "KIND OF FORMALITY" BUT ONE THAT WOULD ALSO BE MOST USEFUL.

4. IN RESPONSE ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY KRATZER INDICATED THAT WHILE WE COULD NOT MAKE SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS THESE WERE KIND OF SUGGESTIONS WE LOOKING FOR, AGAIN STRESSING POINT THAT COMMITMENT TO SUCH ENDEAVORS WOULD HAVE TO FOLLOW RATHER THAN PRECEDE DECISION ON NUCLEAR REPROCESSING.

5. CHOE'S APPROACH WAS CONCILIATORY AND MODERATE, BUT HE AVOIDED SECRET

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DIRECT LINK BETWEEN OUTCOME OF TALKS AND REPROCESSING DECISION. HE DID REFER IN CLOSING REMARKS TO ROK DESIRE TO LOOK FOR "ALTERNATIVES" WHICH MIGHT BE EXPLORED DURING SECOND MEETING SCHEDULED MORNING, FRIDAY, JANUARY 23.

6. CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD CHARGE LATE JANUARY 21 THAT HE INFORMED MOFA THAT ROKG EXPECTED TO BE ABLE PROVIDE CANADIANS FINAL ANSWER REGARDING FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY CONTRACT

AFTERNOON JANUARY 23.
ERICSON

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED.

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