

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION OES-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 FEA-01 SS-15 EB-07 XMB-02

AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 COME-00 /083 W

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P R 200848Z FEB 75 ZDK
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8451
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY TORONTO
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA
AEC GERMANTOWN

S E C R E T SEOUL 1089

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD ENGR PARM NUC TECH KS

SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR PROGRAM

1. DURING PAST WEEK EMBASSY WAS VISITED BY MEMBERS OF GENERAL ELECTRIC (GE) NUCLEAR SURVEY TEAM VISITING KOREA TO ASSESS ROK NUCLEAR PROGRAM AND POSSIBILITY OF GE SELLING GE BWRS FOR KOREAN NUCLEAR PLANTS 5 AND 6. GE TEAM WORKED CLOSELY WITH EMBASSY AND WERE DEBRIEFED PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.

2. GE PLANS FOR SALE OF 600 MEGAWATT NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TO ROK ARE BASED ON SIMILAR OFFER RECENTLY MADE TO EGYPT. PLANT WOULD BE TURNKEY OPERATION WITH TOTAL COST OF DOLS SIX TO SEVEN HUNDRED MILLION WITH FOREIGN EXCHANGE COSTS OF DOLS THREE TO FOUR HUNDRED MILLION. GE EMPHASIZED THAT THEY EXPECT COMPETITION FROM FRENCH, WHO GE SAYS HAVE BEEN "VERY ACTIVE" IN NUCLEAR SALES AND HAVE MOUNTED "MASSIVE" PROGRAM ORIENTED TOWARDS DISPLACING US AND WEST GERMANY IN TERMS OF NUCLEAR EXPORTS.

3. GE TEAM WAS AWARE OF FRENCH NUCLEAR SALES ACTIVITY IN
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ROK INCLUDING POTENTIAL SALE OF 100-METRIC TON A YEAR NUCLEAR

REPROCESSING FACILITY. IN TALKS WITH THE TEAM, ROKG OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN NUCLEAR MATTERS EXPRESSED KEEN INTEREST IN CONCEPT OF KOREA AS REGIONAL REPROCESSING CENTER, SELLING REPROCESSED NUCLEAR MATERIAL FIRST TO JAPAN AND TAIWAN AND EVENTUALLY TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES. KOREA ATOMIC ENERGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KAERI) HAS DONE A STUDY ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL NUCLEAR REPROCESSING FACILITY AND GE TEAM EMPHASIZED THEIR IMPRESSION THAT REPROCESSING WAS OUT OF IDEA STAGE AND NOW A DEFINITE PLAN. GE TEAM INDICATED THAT, ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS, IDEA OF A REGIONAL REPROCESSING FACILITY IN KOREA WAS SOUND AND COST OF PLANT LARGE ENOUGH TO BE COMMERCIALLY SUCCESSFUL MIGHT BE ABOUT DOLS 250 TO 300 MILLION. ROK OFFICIALS RAISED IDEA OF COMBINING JAPANESE CAPITAL AND US TECHNOLOGY FOR SUCH A PLANT.

4. ROKG OFFICIALS RAISED POSSIBILITY THAT, DUE TO POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL PROBLEMS STILL INVOLVED IN CANADIAN SALE OF CANDU UNIT FOR ROK NUCLEAR PLANT 3, GE UNITS FOR ROK NUCLEAR 5 AND 6 COULD BE BUILT FIRST. IN RESPONSE TO ABOVE POSSIBILITY GE TEAM RAISED WITH EMBASSY POSSIBILITY OF US FORESTALLING ENTIRE CANDU PROGRAM THROUGH GE OFFER OF "STRONG" PACKAGE PROGRAM FOR FOUR NUCLEAR PLANTS, THE FIRST OF WHICH COULD COME ON LINE IN LATE 1980. GE TEAM EMPHASIZED THAT THEY WOULD MAKE SUCH AN OFFER IF GE HAD USG SUPPORT, TO INCLUDE SOME EXIMBANK FINANCING.

5. GE TEAM WAS IMPRESSED WITH KNOWLEDGE OF NUCLEAR MATTERS DISPLAYED BY ROKG OFFICIALS WITH WHO THEY MET. ROKG OFFICIALS WERE DESCRIBED AS BEING IN "DECISION FRAME OF MIND." ROKG APPROACH TO NUCLEAR MATTERS CONTAINED REAL "SENSE OF URGENCY" AND GE WAS TOLD DECISION OF NUCLEAR 5 AND 6 WOULD BE MADE THIS YEAR.
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