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Date: 09-21-2018

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

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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, F. STATE 305630

NW# : 50997

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1. SUMMARY: WHILE FULLY COGNIZANT OF CONCERNS SET FORTH REF F, I NEVERTHELESS URGE RECONSIDERATION AND MODIFICATION OF INSTRUCTIONS IN REF F ON GROUNDS POTENTIAL GAINS ARE NOT COMMENSURATE WITH RISKS INVOLVED AND POTENTIAL DISRUPTION TO OUR BASIC RELATIONSHIP. NOR ARE TACTICS CONSISTENT WITH OUR LONGER TERM INTERESTS IN KOREA. I AM CONVINCED THAT USG OBJECTIVE OF DISCOURAGING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION BY BLOCKING REPROCESSING FACILITY IN KOREA CAN BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT FORCING CONFRONTATION [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] END
SUMMARY.

2. NO ONE CAN ARGUE AGAINST DESIRABILITY OF IMMEDIATELY OBTAINING CLEAR CUT, UNAMBIGUOUS ROKG CANCELLATION OF FRENCH REPROCESSING CONTRACT. REAL ISSUE IS WHETHER WE SHOULD PAY THE PRICE OF FORCING THIS POSITION [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] FURTHER WE QUESTION TACTICAL NECESSITY OF REQUIRING KOREANS NOW TO CANCEL REPROCESSING CONTRACT BEFORE AGREEING TO ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS ON NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR COOPERATION;

A. THERE IS EVERY INDICATION FRANCE WILL DECIDE TO CANCEL CONTRACT FOLLOWING ROKG DECISION TO DELAY, BECAUSE OF FRANCE'S

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OWN CONCERNS RE PROLIFERATION. WHY SHOULD THE USG TAKE THE FULL RESPONSIBILITY?

GB. CANADIAN DELAY IN SIGNING CANDU CONTRACT OFFERS ONLY NEGLIGIBLE LEVERAGE. IN FACT, CANADIAN INSTRUCTIONS, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] WERE SO SUBTLE THAT KOREANS WOULD NEVER HAVE SEEN CONNECTION WITH OUR APPROACH ON REPROCESSING HAD I NOT QUIETLY POINTED IT OUT. WE DOUBT THAT CANADIAN DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO SIGN CANDU CONTRACT WILL APPRECIABLY AFFECT ROKG DECISION IN REPROCESSING CONTRACT. KOREAN DECISION WILL CONTINUE TO BE MADE ON FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT BASIS OF BROADER US RELATIONSHIP.

C. DELAY IN CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON KORI II IS RISK KOREANS MUST TAKE AS I RECOMMENDED IN REF C. IN FACT, KOREANS AWARENESS THAT KORI II SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS DEPENDS ON CANCELLATION WILL GIVE IMPETUS TO THEIR DESIRE TO EXPEDITE DISCUSSIONS AND PERHAPS CANCEL REPROCESSING BEFORE COMPLETION.

D. FURTHERMORE, WE SHOULD NOT DELUDE OURSELVES THAT REPROCESSING COULD NOT LATER BE REVIVED, EVEN IF NOW CANCELLED, SHOULD ROKG FIND OUR PROPOSALS INADEQUATE. BUT THERE IS IN FACT LITTLE LIKELIHOOD ROKG WOULD TRY TO REVIVE CONTRACT WHETHER OR NOT THEY CANCEL, GIVEN STAKES NOW PATENTLY CLEAR TO THEM.

E. ON THE OTHER HAND, REJECTION OF THE ROKG PROPOSAL TO INITIATE DISCUSSIONS, DELAYING FORMAL CANCELLATION OF FRENCH REPROCESSING CONTRACT UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION, HAS CLEAR CUT DISADVANTAGES:

A. HIS FACE-SAVING COMPROMISE REJECTED, PARK MIGHT EASILY REACT EMOTIONALLY AND REVERT TO STRONGLY-HELD POSITION OF FOREGOING US NUCLEAR COOPERATION FOR A POLICY OF SELF-RELIANCE. HE REVERSED THIS POSITION ONLY WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE. IT WAS PARK'S DOUBTS ABOUT THE RELIABILITY OF THE US AS A LONG-TERM ALLY THAT INITIALLY LED HIM TO SEEK AN INDEPENDENT NUCLEAR DETERRENT TO REPLACE, IF NECESSARY, THE US DETERRENT. THESE DOUBTS WOULD BE REINFORCED BY OUR REJECTION. TO BRING PARK AROUND AGAIN WOULD THUS NECESSITATE A BITTER CONFRONTATION UNNECESSARILY AFFECTING SUBSTANCE OF OUR TOTAL RELATIONSHIP. SUCH A CONFRONTATION SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR ISSUES ON WHICH THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE.

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B. REJECTION DOES NOT COMPORT WITH OUR LONGER TERM GOAL OF MORE EQUAL AND LESS DEPENDENT ALLIANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH KOREA (IN FACT I QUESTION WHETHER WE WOULD ADOPT SUCH A RIGID POSITION WITH WESTERN ALLY). SINCE OUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS ARE LIKELY FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE TO CALL FOR PROMOTING IN KOREA FRIENDLY POWER, ALLIED TO US, BUT INCREASINGLY LESS DEPENDENT ON US SUPPORT, OUR POLICIES IN SUCH CRITICAL AREA AS NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT SHOULD FOSTER MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE AND RECOGNIZE THAT A STRONGER KOREA EXPECTS MORE GIVE-AND-TAKE, WITHOUT AT SAME TIME COMPROMISING OUR INTERESTS IN PREVENTING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, OR FOREGOING APPROPRIATE DEGREE OF SKEPTICISM ABOUT ROKG INTENTIONS.

C. FINALLY, EVEN IF ROKG BOWS TO OUR PRESSURE, AN EMBITTERED PARK, IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL DISTRUST, COULD WELL TURN OUT TO BE MUCH TOUGHER IN DISCUSSIONS OF NUCLEAR COOPERATION SEEKING TO PINPOINT EVERY CONCESSION AND UNWILLING TO ACCEPT OUR PROFESSIONS OF TRUST.

4. LASTLY, I SHOULD LIKE TO DEAL WITH APPARENT THESIS THAT NEGOTIATIONS/DISCUSSIONS WITH FRENCH CONTRACT POSTPONED, BUT NOT CANCELLED, WILL PLACE USG IN WEAKER BARGAINING POSITION. GIVEN KOREAN CHARACTER AND PAST EXPERIENCE, WE MUST EXPECT SOME TOUGH BARGAINING WHETHER OR NOT CONTRACT CANCELLED. BUT, EVEN IF CONTRACT NOT CANCELLED, WE RETAIN NOT ONLY LEVERAGE OF OUR CLEARCUT NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE, BUT ULTIMATE LEVERAGE REPRESENTED BY ROKG DEPENDENCE ON US MILITARY SUPPORT, WHICH HAS ALREADY PROVED EFFECTIVE. FURTHERMORE, FRENCH ARE NOW LIKELY TO TAKE US OFF THE HOOK. FINALLY, SINCE OUR PROPOSALS FOR COOPERATION ON NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY WERE MADE IN GOOD FAITH, I CANNOT SEE ANY BASIS FOR CONCERN. OUR KOREAN POLICY AND STRATEGIC INTERESTS ARE PREMISED ON BUILDING A POSITION OF STRENGTH IN SOUTH KOREA, LINKED BY AN ALLIANCE BUT WITH LESS DEPENDENCE ON US. THESE LONGER-TERM INTERESTS ARE THEREFORE SERVED BY BEING AS FORTHCOMING AS POSSIBLE, WITHIN OUR FINANCIAL RESOURCES, IN TRANSFERRING NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO KOREA. OUR COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THIS GROWING KOREAN ECONOMY ARE BOUND TO INCREASINGLY BENEFIT AS WELL FROM SUCH COOPERATION. I ALSO ASSUME WASHINGTON

EXPERTS HAVE ENOUGH INGENUITY EASILY TO PROVIDE PROPER REASSURANCES TO FRENCH OR CANADIAN INTERESTS IN THE COURSE OF THESE DISCUSSIONS.

5. TO SUM UP, I URGE THAT WE AGREE TO WHAT MAY PROVE A NOT TOO
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SIGNIFICANT TACTICAL CONCESSION [REDACTED] TO AVOID GREAT COSTS TO OUR LONGER TERM INTERESTS IN KOREA. IN THE WORST CASE SCENARIO, WE WILL STILL HAVE VERY STRONG CARDS TO PLAY PLUS THE GOOD POSSIBILITY OF FRANCE TAKING THE ONUS FOR DELIVERING THE FINAL COUP.

6. I THEREFORE PROPOSE FOLLOWING MODIFICATION OF INSTRUCTIONS AS SET FORTH REF E, PARA 4:

- A. THE USG APPRECIATES AND WELCOMES ROKG DECISION TO RECONSIDER REPROCESSING ASPECT OF ITS CONTRACT WITH FRANCE;
 - B. WE ALSO APPRECIATE ROKG RECOGNITION OF SERIOUSNESS OUR CONCERNS AND OF MAJOR BEARING THIS ISSUE HAS ON FUTURE OF OUR OVERALL RELATIONSHIP;
 - C. US PREFERENCE REMAINS FINAL CANCELLATION AT THIS TIME OF REPROCESSING CONTRACT;
 - D. FAILURE TO CANCEL CONTRACT UNTIL COMPTETION OF DISCUSSIONS WILL FURTHER AROUSE CONGRESSIONAL AND PUBLIC SUSPICIONS AS DEMONSTRATED BY MONDALE/PASTORE RESOLUTION. (APPRECIATE TEXT OF RESOLUTION SOONEST.) UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, USG WILL NOT SEEK CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF KORI II LOAN UNTIL REPROCESSING CONTRACT CANCELLED.
 - E. NEVERTHELESS, GIVEN ROKG CONFIDENCE IN OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST, WE ARE PREPARED TO PROCEED WITH DISCUSSIONS ON NON-SENSITIVE NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH OBJECTIVE OF REACHING EARLY AGREEMENT ON SCOPE OF COOPERATION WHERE FEASIBLE (E.G. DETAILS ON MULTI-NATIONAL FACILITY WOULD HAVE TO WAIT).
 - F. WE ARE THEREFORE PREPARED TO SEND AT EARLY DATE QUALIFIED USG PERSONNEL TO DISCUSS WITH GOKG 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.
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