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SUBJ: NUCLEAR ASSURANCES TO ROKG.

REF: SEOUL 4577

1. IN RECENT DAYS, SEVERAL KEY KOREANS, INCLUDING VERY SENIOR SCIENTIST CONNECTED WITH PEACEFUL NUCLEAR RESEARCH, HAVE SUGGESTED PLACING KOREA UNDER US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA.

2. KOREAN NUCLEAR SCIENTIST, WHO HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN

ABORTIVE FRENCH REPROCESSING OPERATION, URGED MORE SPECIFICALLY THAT WE ADOPT NUCLEAR UMBRELLA POLICY NOW APPLIED VIS-A-VIS JAPAN. HE WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF OFFHAND COMMENTS MADE BY FOREIGN MINISTER (REFTEL) ON KOREAN DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND OF BLUE HOUSE ADVISORS WHO HAVE FAILED TO TELL PRESIDENT PARK HOW EXPENSIVE, TIME-CONSUMING AND RISKY A NUCLEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WOULD BE FOR KOREA.

2. IN RESPONSE TO THESE SUGGESTIONS OF EMBRACING KOREA UNDER US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA, I POINTED OUT THAT IN FACT KOREA, AS ANY ALLY, WOULD BE COVERED BY US NUCLEAR UMBRELLA AND I WAS SURPRISED THAT THERE WAS ANY MISUNDERSTANDING ON THAT POINT

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3. WE MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER, IN LINE WITH THIS SUGGESTION, SOME APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE IN SCM COMMUNIQUE. AT SAME TIME, I AM STRUCK ONE AGAIN BY EVIDENCE OF IGNORANCE AT VERY SENIOR KOREAN GOVERNMENT LEVELS OF EITHER COSTS OR RISKS INVOLVED IN THE WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OVER AND ABOVE SERIOUSLY ADVERSE IMPACT ON US RELATIONSHIP.
SNEIDER

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