

January 14, 1976

US Department of State Cable, ROK Nuclear Reprocessing

Citation:

"US Department of State Cable, ROK Nuclear Reprocessing", January 14, 1976, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, National Security Adviser Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 12, Korea - State Department Telegrams, to SecState - NODIS (10). Obtained by Charles Kraus.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/114604>

Summary:

The American Ambassador to Korea reports on progress in convincing the South Korean government to abandon its plans to purchase a French reprocessing plant.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

NLF MR Case No. 94-146

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TAGS: MNUC, PARM, KS, FR, CA
SUBJECT: ROK NUCLEAR REPROCESSING

REF: A. SEUL 292 B. STATE 08919

1. DURING JANUARY 14 MEETING WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER NAM ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, HE VERY QUICKLY TURNED CONVERSATION WITH ME TO ROK REPROCESSING PLANT. NAM WELCOMED VISIT OF WASHINGTON GROUP JANUARY 22 ABOUT WHICH HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM CHONG-YON. NAM SAID ROKG HAD COME "LONG WAY" TOWARD REVERSING ITS POSITION ON PURCHASE OF FRENCH REPROCESSING FACILITY. HOWEVER, HE FELT THAT MORE THAN ONE ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE FINAL DECISION ON CANCELLATION. HE URGED THAT WE NOT PUSH THE PROCESS TOO FAST. I RESPONDED THAT IN USG VIEW, DISCUSSIONS WITH HIGH LEVEL WASHINGTON GROUP, INCLUDING VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS, SHOULD PROVIDE SUFFICIENT BASIS FOR IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION AND THAT WE ARE NOT PREPARED FOR FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSIONS UNTIL DECISION MADE TO CANCEL. NAM EXPRESSED HOPE THIS WOULD BE THE CASE BUT REITERATED HIS CONCERNS AND URGED AGAIN HE GIVE IT A BIT MORE TIME SINCE ROKG HAS COME A LONG DISTANCE ALREADY. HE ADDED THAT MINISTER CHOI NOW RECOGNIZES PROHIBITIVE ECONOMIC COST OF NATIONAL REPROCESSING, BUT ROKG STILL NEEDS ASSURANCES ON US POSITIVE ACTIONS.

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2.

Section 3.4 (b)(6) of E.O. 12958

STRESSED THAT SIMPLEST AND MOST DIRECT WAY TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM REMAINED TO CANCEL FRENCH CONTRACT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SINCE THIS WOULD OPEN WAY FOR US COOPERATION AND OBTAIN ANY PROBLEMS WITH CANADIANS SHOULD THEY ARISE. I ENDED MEETING BY REITERATING CONFIDENCE ROKG WOULD HAVE SUFFICIENT BASIS

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FOR CANCELLING FRENCH CONTRACT ONCE THEY MET WITH
WASHINGTON GROUP,
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