

SECRET

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FOR SECRETARY CHENEY FROM THE SECRETARY BAKER

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: OVIP (BAKER, JAMES A., III), KO
SUBJECT: DEALING WITH THE NORTH KOREAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM:
IMPRESSIONS FROM MY ASIA TRIP

1. SECRET - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE SCM TALKS WITH THE SOUTH
KOREANS, I WANT TO SHARE WITH YOU MY IMPRESSIONS OF
LEADERSHIP ATTITUDES IN SEOUL TOKYO AND BEIJING ON
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NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM.

3. ON THE BASIS OF DEPUTIES COMMITTEE WORK ON THIS
ISSUE, I APPROACHED MY TALKS IN ALL THREE CAPITALS WITH
THE VIEW THAT WE SHOULD WORK TOWARD A COORDINATED US,
JAPANESE, CHINESE AND SOVIET APPROACH TO BUILDING
POLITICAL PRESSURES ON THE NORTH TO SIGN AND IMPLEMENT
AN IAEA SAFEGUARDS REGIME AND TO WORK OUT WITH THE SOUTH
KOREANS, BASED ON PRESIDENT ROH TAE WOO'S NOVEMBER 8
INITIATIVE, A NORTH-SOUTH COMMITMENT TO FORGO NUCLEAR
REPROCESSING CAPABILITIES. I DID NOT PROPOSE ANY FORMAL
TWO PLUS FOUR APPROACH TO THIS EFFORT. INDEED, I
STRESSED TO PRESIDENT ROH THAT WHATEVER WE WOULD DO WITH
THE MAJOR POWERS WOULD BE IN SUPPORT OF THE NORTH-SOUTH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE IM/IPS/CR/IR *14* Date: *3/3/98*
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() DOWNGRADE T's to () S or () C

TALKS AND WOULD NOT UNDERCUT SOUTH KOREA'S LEAD ON SECURITY AND POLITICAL ISSUES IN DEALING WITH THE NORTH. AND I AFFIRMED OUR INTENTION TO SUSTAIN CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SOUTH.

4. PRESIDENT ROH INDICATED HE IS FULLY PREPARED TO COORDINATE HIS APPROACH TO THE NORTH CLOSELY WITH US. HE STRESSED THAT HIS NOVEMBER 8 INITIATIVE WAS DESIGNED TO REINFORCE THE PRESIDENT'S SEPTEMBER 27 NUCLEAR INITIATIVE. HE APPRECIATED OUR SENSITIVITY TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GERMANY AND KOREA, AND HIS NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR KIM CHONG-WHI MADE IT CLEAR THAT KOREANS DON'T WANT JAPAN OR THE SOVIET UNION INVOLVED IN THE POLITICS OF THE PENINSULA, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE.

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5. KIM LOOKS TO THE US AND CHINA TO PLAY THE MOST ACTIVE ROLES IN SUPPORT OF THE NORTH-SOUTH TALKS. WE WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN MEDIATING BETWEEN THE ROK AND JAPAN AS WE SEEK TO KEEP BOTH ON THE SAME POLICY TRACK REGARDING NORTH KOREA. JAPAN HAS IMPORTANT ECONOMIC LEVERAGE ON THE NORTH WHICH THE SOUTH WILL WANT TO SEE USED EFFECTIVELY; BUT THEIR OWN BITTER HISTORY WITH THE JAPANESE WILL INHIBIT POLICY COORDINATION.

6. I BELIEVE YOUR SLOW-DOWN ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF US FORCES FROM THE ROK, COMBINED WITH ENHANCEMENTS TO SOUTH KOREA'S CONVENTIONAL DEFENSES WHICH YOU MAY WORK OUT IN SEOUL, IS CONSISTENT WITH THE MESSAGES WE BROUGHT TO ALL THESE CAPITALS. WE WANT TO AVOID A LINKAGE BETWEEN OUR FORCE LEVELS AND THE NORTH'S PROGRAM. WE WANT TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE SOUTH KOREANS THAT THE NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION ISSUE IS ONE OF STRONG REGIONAL AND GLOBAL CONCERN, AND THAT THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO GET THE NORTH TO AGREE TO GIVE UP THEIR NUCLEAR PROGRAM WITH THEIR EFFORTS ALONE. THE US REMAINS KEY TO ORCHESTRATING INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES ON THEIR BEHALF. IN MY MIND, THIS ALSO MEANS THAT WHILE WE NEED TO BE SENSITIVE TO SOUTH KOREA'S CONCERNS, THEY NEED TO APPRECIATE THAT OUR SECURITY COMMITMENT AND INTERESTS GIVE US A BIG SAY, TOO.

7. CONCERNING JAPAN'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS, TOKYO'S TERMS HAVE HARDENED SIGNIFICANTLY BECAUSE OF THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. THE NEW MIYAZAWA GOVERNMENT HAS MOVED TOKYO'S POSITION CLOSE TO

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OUR OWN: NORMALIZATION AND ECONOMIC AID REQUIRE NOT
JUST SIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE IAEA FULL-SCOPE

SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT, BUT ALSO FOREGOING A REPROCESSING
CAPABILITY. SOME JAPANESE BUREAUCRATS MAY SEEK TO
NIBBLE AWAY AT THIS POSITION, BUT WE SHOULD HOLD THEM
TO IT. WE MUST CONTINUE TO WORK IN TANDEM WITH JAPAN
ON THIS ISSUE.

8. THE CHINESE STILL WORRY ABOUT NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION
ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. THEY COMMUNICATED THIS
CONCERN TO KIM IL-SONG IN OCTOBER BUT DID NOT PRESS HIM
HARD TO SIGN AND IMPLEMENT THE SAFEGUARDS REGIME OR
FOREGO REPROCESSING. THEY PUBLICLY SUPPORT KIM'S
PROPOSAL FOR A NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE ON THE
PENINSULA, BUT ALSO SAY THE PRESIDENT'S SEPTEMBER 27TH
INITIATIVE IS A POSITIVE STEP. IN SEOUL LAST WEEK,
CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER QIAN STATED PUBLICLY HIS
CONCERN ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON THE PENINSULA, BUT HE
ALSO SAID DIALOGUE RATHER THAN PRESSURE WOULD WORK BEST
WITH THE NORTH. THE CHINESE PROBABLY SEE THE ISSUE
MUCH AS WE DO, BUT BELIEVE THEIR LEVERAGE IS GREATER IF
THEY ARE NOT TOO CLOSE TO THE AMERICANS. IN ADDITION,
THE CHINESE WANT TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO UNDERMINE THE
POSITION OF ONE OF THEIR FEW REMAINING COMMUNIST
BROTHERS.

9. IN BEIJING THE CHINESE PROPOSED CROSS-RECOGNITION
TO EASE PYONGYANG'S FEARS OF ISOLATION AND INSECURITY
AND THUS MOVE THEM TO SIGN ON TO THE IAEA INSPECTION
REGIME. THEY ALSO URGED US TO TALK AT A HIGHER LEVEL

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WITH THE NORTH, AND VOLUNTEERED TO PASS MESSAGES. I
SAID WE MIGHT RAISE THE LEVEL OF OUR CONTACT WITH THE
NORTH ON A LIMITED BASIS--NOT TO NEGOTIATE PEACE
ISSUES, BUT SOLELY TO MAKE CLEAR OUR POSITION AND
EXPECTATIONS ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE.

10. IN SEOUL, KIM CHONG-WHI ASKED FOR TIME TO CONSIDER
ANY SUCH MEETING. WE WILL NEED TO COORDINATE THE
CONTENT AND TIMING OF SUCH A CONTACT WITH THE BLUE
HOUSE. THE CHINESE DID AGREE TO PRIVATE CONSULTATIONS
AND TO A PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT WE WOULD BOTH WORK ON
THE PROLIFERATION ISSUE BASED ON SHARED US/PRC CONCERNS
ABOUT THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM ON THE PENINSULA. WE WILL
BUILD ON THIS BASE WITH BEIJING.

11. I WILL BE INTERESTED IN YOUR OWN READOUT OF YOUR
SCM DISCUSSIONS IN SEOUL. WE ALL KNOW THIS IS AN
URGENT MATTER, AND I THINK AT THIS POINT THAT WE ARE
STARTING TO BUILD THE BASIS FOR A PARALLEL STRATEGY OF
COORDINATED DIPLOMATIC PRESSURES ON THE NORTH--COMBINED
WITH ROK INITIATIVES THROUGH THE NORTH-SOUTH TALKS--AND

OUR DEFENSE REASSURANCES TO SEOUL.

BAKER

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** SECRET