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COMMUNICATION OF 19 SEPTEMBER 1995 RECEIVED FROM THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The letter and the attached paper in the Annex hereto are being circulated at the request of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea.

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
VIENNA

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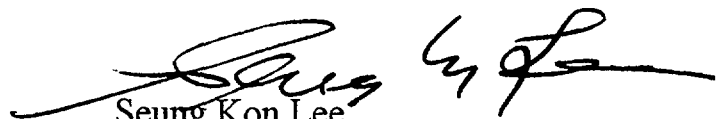
19 September 1995

Dear Dr. Blix,

I have the honour to communicate herewith the position of the Government of the Republic of Korea concerning the geographical name of the sea area surrounded by Korea, Japan, and the Russian Federation, which appears in the Agency's Annual Report for 1994 contained in document GC(39)/3 in connection with the First Joint Expedition carried out by the three countries to the sea in question with a view to assessing the environmental impact of ocean dumping of radioactive waste.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and attached paper circulated as a document of the General Conference under agenda item 7 for the 39th regular session.

Yours sincerely



Seung Kon Lee
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative

Dr. Hans Blix
Director-General
International Atomic Energy Agency
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**The Position of the Government of the Republic of Korea
Concerning the Geographical Name of the Sea Area
in which the First Joint Expedition was carried out by
Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation**

I

1. The Annual Report for 1994 of IAEA reports on three different environmental studies relating to the dumping of radioactive waste in open sea areas. One of them is a joint expedition on environmental radioactivity of the sea area surrounded by Japan, Korea and the Russian Federation. The Government of the Republic of Korea would like to raise a point with regard to the geographical name of the sea area in which the joint expedition was carried out by the three countries.

II

2. The sea area lying between the Korean Peninsula and the Japanese Archipelago is known as "Sea of Japan" at present. However, historically, in the Orient, the sea area in question was referred to as "East Sea", "Sea of Korea", "Sea of Japan", or "Oriental Sea", while in western maps, it was referred to as "Sea of Korea", "Sea of Japan" or "Oriental Sea". All in all, it is difficult to find that one name had been consistently used for designating this sea area.

3. A study of old maps reveals that the names "Sea of Korea" and "Sea of Japan" were used more often than others by cartographers. However, if we put together all instances where this sea had been named, from the beginning of the 18th century to the middle of the 19th century, it is found that "Sea of Korea" appeared on world maps more frequently than "Sea of Japan".

4. It was Japanese colonialism that played the most critical role in spreading the usage of "Sea of Japan". In 1905, Japan deprived Korea of its right to engage in foreign relations, and in 1910, annexed Korea through coercion. Thereafter, increased Japanese influence in the international scene including the 1926 Paris Conference of International Hydrographic Organization led to the fixation of the use of the name "Sea of Japan".

5. The Republic of /

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5. The Republic of Korea believes that it is inappropriate to name a sea area after a single country when it is surrounded by several countries since it may give the wrong impression that the whole area belongs to that one country. In line with this belief, the Republic of Korea, following its independence, decided to refer to the sea area in question as "East Sea" instead of "Sea of Korea", and has opposed the use of "Sea of Japan". However, recognizing the reality that the name "Sea of Japan" is being used at present, the Republic of Korea has proposed that both the names "East Sea" and "Sea of Japan" be used simultaneously to designate the sea area in question until a mutually acceptable solution is found among the countries concerned.

6. When concluding the Fisheries Agreement between Japan and the Republic of Korea in 1965, the two countries agreed that the name "Tonghae" (Korean word for "East Sea") be used in the Korean text of the Agreement while "Sea of Japan" be used in the Japanese text.

III

7. Although there does not exist an international body that has authority over names of geographical features beyond a single sovereignty, the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names has consistently recommended that the countries having a dispute over the name of a shared geographical area should endeavour to seek an agreement through consultation. The Conference has further recommended that the names applied by each country be used simultaneously in the absence of an agreement. Among the related resolutions adopted by the Conference, the resolution 111/20 best expresses the position of the Conference and reads as follows:

The Conference

"Considering the need for international standardization of names of geographical features that are under the sovereignty of more than one country or are divided among two or more countries,

1. Recommends/

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1. Recommends that countries sharing a given geographical feature under different names should endeavour, as far as possible, to reach agreement on fixing a single name for the feature concerned;

2. Further recommends that when countries sharing a given geographical feature do not succeed in agreeing on a common name, it should be a general rule of international cartography that the name used by each of the countries concerned will be accepted. A policy of accepting only one or some of such names while excluding the rest would be inconsistent in principle as well as inexpedient in practice. Only technical reasons may sometimes make it necessary, especially in the case of small-scale maps, to dispense with the use of certain names belonging to one language or another".

8. It should be noted that the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names held in New York in August 1992 made a suggestion to the parties concerned to consult each other when the Republic of Korea raised an issue with regard to the name of the sea in question.

9. At the First Intergovernmental Meeting on the Northwest Pacific Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment held among China, Japan, Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation in Seoul in September 1994, the geographical coverage of the action plan was provisionally designated by its longitudinal and latitudinal position.

IV

10. In their preparations to carry out the joint expedition to investigate the situation of environmental radioactivity in the sea area surrounded by Japan, Korea, and the Russian Federation, a difference of opinion emerged between Japan and the Republic of Korea on the name of the sea where the expedition...../

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where the expedition was to take place. In consideration of the fact that such conflicting opinions should not come in the way of the implementation of the project, the three countries held two experts meetings while Japan and the Republic of Korea carried out separate consultations through diplomatic channels with the aim of resolving their differences. Following a series of consultations, the three countries reached an agreement in February 1994 at a conference held in Vladivostok, where they decided on a *modus operandi* to use a third name, i.e. "far-eastern sea", to refer to the sea area in question.

11. Following the completion of the first joint expedition, the three countries adopted the report titled, "Investigation of Environmental Radioactivity in Waste Dumping Areas of the Far Eastern Sea Areas -- 1994 Results from the First Korean-Japanese-Russian Joint Expedition" in July 1995.

V

12. In reporting the joint expedition of the three countries, the Annual Report for 1994 of IAEA states that the joint expedition was carried out in the "Sea of Japan". This is not in conformity with the above-mentioned special agreement reached among the three countries. In this context, it is the firm position of the Government of the Republic of Korea that "Sea of Japan" should be replaced with "far-eastern sea" in accordance with the special agreement among the three countries involved.