

Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 4379

NODIS CHEROKEE

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LINE 2 PARA 4 CHANGE ROKG TO READ ROK,
LINE 10 PARA FOUR 1ST WORD SHUD READ INTENTION VICE ATTENTION)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MARR KS US
SUBJ: U.S. GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL: CONSULTATIONS WITH
PRESIDENT PARK

SUMMARY: IN TWO AND HALF HOUR MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
PARK, U.S. SIDE OUTLINED OUR THINKING ON GROUND FORCE
WITHDRAWAL AND ATTANDANT ISSUES. WHILE TAKING INITIAL
POSITION THAT HE NEITHER AGREES WITH NOR UNDERSTANDS
USG DECISION TO WITHDRAW GROUND FORCES, PARK ACCEPTED
ESSENTIALS OF WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE AS OUTLINED HOWEVER CALLED
FOR COMPENSATORY MEASURES TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN PARALLEL
WITH WITHDRAWAL OF INITIAL TWO INCREMENTE AND COMPENSATORY
MEASURES TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FINAL
INCREMENT, SO THAT ROK SECURITY IS NOT ENDANGERED.
DESPITE RESERVATIONS ABOUT USG DECISION TO WITHDRAW,
PARK APPEARED APPRECIATIVE OF OUR CONSULTATIVE EFFORT
AND ADOPTED A RESTRAINED, REALISTIC POSITION WITH REGARD
TO SPECIFIC ISSUES. WE PROMISED TO REPORT FULLY
PRESIDENT PARK'S VIEWS AND CONCERNS TO THE PRESIDENT.

1. GENERAL BROWN AND UNDER SECRETARY HABIB MET WITH
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PRESIDENT PARK FOR TWO AND HALF HOUR-SESSION OF U.S.
GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL ISSUE.THEY WERE ACCOMPANIED BY
AMBASSADOR, GENERAL VESSEY, AND O'DONOHUE. PRIM CHOI, FONMIN
PARK, MND SUH, PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM AND PROTOCOL
SECRETARY CHOI WERE PRESENT ON KOREAN SIDE.

2. PRESIDENT PARK OPENED MEETING WITH CAREFULLY

PREPARED PRESENTATION IN WHICH HE MADE CLEAR THAT HE DID NOT AGREE WITH OR UNDERSTAND USG DECISION TO WITHDRAW GROUND FORCES FROM KOREA. PRESIDENT PARK STRESSED THAT, IN CONTRAST TO VIET-NAM EXPERIENCE, PRESENCE OF U.S. FORCES IN ROK WAS "GOOD INVESTMENT FOR U.S." IN TERMS OF ITS OWN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING PEACE AND SECURITY IN KOREA AND NORTHEAST ASIA. PARK ALSO, IN QUIET MANNER, EXPRESSED RESIGNED ACCEPTANCE OVER FACT THAT BASIC DECISION TO WITHDRAW FORCES WITHIN FOUR-FIVE-YEAR TIME FRAME WAS MADE AND PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH ROKG.

3. AT SAME TIME PARK NOTED THAT UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES HE HAD NO ALTERNATIVE TO ACCEPTING USG BASIC DECISION TO WITHDRAW WITHIN FOUR-FIVE YEAR TIME FRAME AS ESTABLISHED FACT. THEREFORE HE INDICATED HE BELIEVED WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON MEASURES TO COOPERATE IN MEETING THIS NEW SITUATION AND ASSURING ROK SECURITY. IN THAT CONTEXT, HE INDICATED THAT BOTH SIDES MUST USE PERIOD OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL TO STRENGTHEN ROK'S MILITARY SELF SUFFICIENCY AND DEVELOP ROKG GROUND FORCE CAPABILITY TO DETER NORTH KOREA WITHOUT INVOLVEMENT OF U.S. GROUND FORCES.

4. WE STRESSED TO PRESIDENT PARK PRESIDENT CARTER'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN ROK SECURITY AND HIS DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN OUR TREATY COMMITMENT. WE NOTED THAT PRESIDENT CHARGED US WITH CONVEYING HIS PERSONAL VIEWS TO PRESIDENT PARK AND AFFORDING PRESIDENT PARK FULLEST OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND DIRECTLY THROUGH US TO THE PRESIDENT. IN DISCUSSING BASIC DECISION ON GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL, HABIB INDICATED PRESIDENT'S
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APPROACH BASED ON RECOGNITION OF ROK'S GROWING MILITARY CAPABILITY AND ITS IMPRESSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH. INDICATED ALSO OUR INTENTION TO PUBLICLY REITERATE OUR CONFIDENCE THAT WITHDRAWAL CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT ENDANGERING ROK SECURITY AS WELL AS OUR DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO ROK AND A STRONG POSTURE IN NORTHEAST ASIA.

5. IN PRESENTING OUR PRESENT THINKING ON GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL, GENERAL BROWN GAVE FOLLOWING OUTLINE:

- A. INITIAL 6,000-MAN INCREMENT BY THE END OF CY1978;
- B. SECOND 9,000 MAN INCREMENT IN 1980;
- C. WITHDRAWAL OF THIRD AND FINAL INCREMENT WOULD BE WITHIN THE FOUR-FIVE YEAR PERIOD DECIDED BY PRESIDENT WITH EXACT TIMING AND MODALITIES YET TO BE DETERMINED.

6. IN ADDITION, WHILE STRESSING NEED FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL, GENERAL BROWN NOTED THAT WE ARE STUDYING THE FOLLOWING COMPENSATORY MEASURES:

- A. SUBJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL ACTION AND APPROVAL, CONTINUATION

OF ADEQUATE LEVELS OF FMS SUPPORT FOR ROK FORCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM;

B. STUDY OF CONCRETE MEASURES TO MEET REQUIREMENTS GENERATED BY WITHDRAWAL OF GROUND FORCES INCLUDING POSSIBLE MIX OF FMS AND TRANSFER OF EQUIPMENT NOW IN EIGHT ARMY INVENTORY OR AVAILABLE ELSEWHERE;

C. WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S ARMS TRANSFER POLICY, CONSIDERATION OF APPROPRIATE SUPPORT FOR ROKG IN DEFENSE INDUSTRY FIELD;

D. CONSIDERATION OF INCREASED EXERCISES AND TEMPORARY DEPLOYMENT SCHEDULES TO DEMONSTRATE OUR INTENTION AND ABILITY TO MEET OUR MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY COMMITMENT.

E. READINESS TO CONSIDER COMBINED COMMAND ARRANGMENTS IN THE FUTURE.

7. IN INTERNATIONAL FIELD, HABIB NOTED THAT WE INTENDED TO MAKE CLEAR, BOTH PUBLICLY AND THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO PRC AND USSR, OUR INTENTION TO FULLY MEET OUR SECURITY COMMITMENTS IN SECRET

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KOREA. HE ALSO SAID THAT OUR POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE UNC AND MAINTAINANCE OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT REMAINS UNCHANGED. WE WILL NOT TERMINATE THE UNC UNLESS THERE ARE ARRANGEMENTS MADE TO MAINTAIN THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT OR OTHER EQUALLY ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. HABIB ALSO NOTED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS STATED THAT WE DO NOT INTEND TO DEAL UNILATERALLY WITH NORTH KOREA IN THE ABSENCE OF THE ROK.

8. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION:

A. GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE: PRESIDENT PARK INDICATED THAT AS A RESULT OF OUR PRESENTATION, HE NOW UNDERSTANDS U.S. CONCEPT WITH REGARD TO GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL. HE ASKED SPECIFIC QUESTIONS AS TO EXACT PERIOD ENVISIONED WHEN WE REFER TO FOUR-FIVE YEAR TIME FRAME. HABIB INDICATED THAT HE BELIEVED PERIOD SHOULD BEGIN WITH CONCLUSION OF OUR CONSULTATIONS AT THE SCM THIS SUMMER BUT THIS WOULD BE CONFIRMED AFTER VERIFYING WITH WASHINGTON. IN HIS QUESTIONING, PARK FOCUSED PARTICULARLY ON IMPACT OF WITHDRAWAL OF INDIVIDUAL INCREMENTS ON THE SECOND INFANTRY DIVISION'S STRUCTURE. GENERAL BROWN EXPLAINED THAT UNDER PRESENTLY PLANNED WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE BULK OF SECOND INFANTRY'S FIGHTING UNITS WOULD NOT BE REMOVED UNTIL FINAL INCREMENT, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD DRAW DOWN A TOTAL OF 15,000 MEN AND SOME OF THE SECOND INFANTRY COMBAT UNITS IN FIRST TWO INCREMENTS.

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B. COMPENSATORY MEASURES: PARK FOCUSED MOST ON QUESTION OF SUPPORT FOR ROK MILITARY SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND STRENGTHENING ABILITY OF ROK TO MEET GROUND FORCE THREAT. IN THAT CONTEXT, HE WAS PARTICULARLY CRITICAL OF EXCLUSION OF ROKG FROM LIST OF COUNTRIES WITH SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO USG UNDER OUR NEW ARMS TRANSFER POLICY. HABIB EXPLAINED THAT PRESIDENT BELIEVES THAT, UNDER PRESENT POLICY, WE WILL BE ABLE TO MEET ROKG'S NEEDS BOTH FOR EQUIPMENT AND IN TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER/DEFENSE INDUSTRY FIELD ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS. HOWEVER, HE PROMISED TO CONVEY TO PRESIDENT, PRESIDENT PARK'S CONCERN ON THIS PROBLEM AND PRESIDENT PARK'S DESIRE THAT ROKG BE SPECIFICALLY INCLUDED AMONG THOSE COUNTRIES HAVING SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH U.S. IN OUR ARMS TRANSFER POLICY.

C. COMBINED COMMAND AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL: PRESIDENT PARK INDICATED READINESS TO CONSIDER COMBINED COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS. IN THAT CONTEXT HE INDICATED THAT HE IS PREPARED TO LEAVE ROK FORCES UNDER U.S. OPERATIONAL CONTROL UNTIL BULK OF THE SECOND INFANTRY DIVISION IS WITHDRAWN (I.E., THE FINAL INCREMENT AS DESCRIBED BY US). HOWEVER, AT THAT TIME OPERATIONAL CONTROL SHOULD REVERT TO THE ROKG. GENERAL BROWN NOTED THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT SHOULD GO INTO OUR STUDY OF COMBINED COMMAND AND OPERATIONAL CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS BEYOND QUESTION OF FORCE LEVEL, FOR INSTANCE U.S. ROLE IN INTELLIGENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS AS WELL AS CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES.

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D. STRENGTHENING OF USAF UNITS: PRESIDENT PARK ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO AUGMENTING USAF UNITS IN KOREA. GENERAL BROWN NOTED THAT THE QUESTION OF FILLING OUT THE U.S. SQUADRONS NOW IN COUNTRY TO A FULL WING IS UNDER STUDY. HOWEVER IN THAT CONNECTION ANY AUGMENTATION WOULD HAVE TO INVOLVE CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL AIR BASE.

E. U.S. SUPPORT IN EVENT OF NORTH KOREAN ATTACK: PARK STATED HE WISHED TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE THE ROKG CAN EXPECT FROM THE U.S. IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR ATTACK AFTER THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL. HE SAID THAT IN THE PAST, ROKG WAS SURE OF QUICK AND FULL U.S. RESPONSE BECAUSE OF PRESENCE OF GROUND TROOPS. HOWEVER WITH THEIR WITHDRAWAL HE BELIEVES IT IMPORTANT THAT ROKG KNOW WHAT IT CAN EXPECT FROM THE USG IN FAIRLY CONCRETE TERMS. HABIB EXPLAINED CAREFULLY CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES AND LIMITATIONS WHILE STRESSING IMPORTANCE OF THE TREATY COMMITMENT. PARK INDICATED HE RECOGNIZED CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS AND CONGRESSIONAL INVOLVEMENT BUT FELT THAT IT IMPORTANT ROKG HAVE SOME WAY OF ASSESSING WHAT U.S. CONTRIBUTION WOULD BE. FOR INSTANCE, WOULD U.S. SEND AIR, GROUND AND NAVAL FORCES IN EVENT OF MAJOR ATTACK BY NORTH KOREA. IF DESPATCH OF GROUND FORCES IS DIFFICULT, THEN WOULD THE U.S. BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT. HABIB NOTED THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THE POINT HE WAS MAKING AND THAT WE WOULD REPORT HIS COMMENTS TO THE PRESIDENT. ALSO SAID THAT IN PRACTICAL TERMS PRESIDENT PARK'S QUESTIONS MAY BE TAKEN CARE OF IN DISCUSSIONS ON COMBINED COMMAND AND PLANNING. PARK APPEARED SATISFIED BY THIS REPOSE, INDICATING THAT WAS WHAT HE HAD IN MIND.

F. SOUTH-NORTH RELATIONS: HABIB ASKED PRESIDENT PARK FOR HIS VIEWS ON SOUTH-NORTH RELATIONS OVER NEXT DECADE. PARK INDICATED THAT AS WE KNOW THERE IS NO DIALOGUE NOW AND THE NORTH KOREAN ATTITUDE WIL BE FURTHER HARDENED BY THE GRBUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL. PARK DID NOT PICK UP ON HABIB'S QUERY AS TO WHETHER WE COULD BE HELPFUL IN FACILITATING DIALOGUE, PARTICULARLY AS WE GET INTO
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SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH PEKING ON NORMALIZATION PROCESS. PARK SIMPLY INDICATED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO FORESEE THE COURSE OF SOUTH-NORTH DEVELOPMENT. HOWEVER ONE THING WAS CLEAR. THE NORTH KOREANS' DESIRE TO UNIFY KOREA BY MILITARY MEANS WILL INCREASE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS AS THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL PROCEEDS AND THIS WOULD BE DANGEROUS PERIOD. IN TEN YEARS, PRESIDENT PARK NOTED, SUTH KOREA'S OVER-ALL STRENGTH AND POWER WILL BE FAR SUPERIOR TO THE NORTH'S WHICH WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO DIRECTLY CHALLENGE THE ROK THEN.

8. IN CONCLUDING COMMENTS, PARK INDICATED HIS APPRECIATION FOR OUR FULL EXPOSITION AND SEEMED GENUINELY APPRECIATIVE. HE INDICATED THAT ON THE BASIS OF DISCUSSION HE COULD AGREE TO THE WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE AND INCREMENT LEVELS PRESENTED UNDER FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPENSATORY MEASURES WULD PARALLEL THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FIRST TWO INCREMENTS AND THAT ALL OF COMPENSATORY MEASURES AGREED UPON WOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE FINAL

INCREMENT IS WITHDRAWN;

B. BULD OF SECOND INFANTRY COMBAT UNITS WOULD REMAIN IN COUNTRY UNTIL FINAL INCREMENT IS WITHDRAWN AND DIVISION HEADQUARTERS AND TWO OF THE BRIGADES WOULD REMAIN UNTIL THAT TIME. PRESIDENT PARK DID NOT QUESTION FIRST WITHDRAWAL INCREMENT. HE ACCEPTED SECOND INCREMENT OF 9,000 MAN WITHDRAWAL IF TWO BRIGADES REMAIN EVEN THOUGH BELOW AUTHORIZED STRENGTH. HE OBVIOUSLY PLACED PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE IN KEEPING TWO BRIGADES PER SE IN KOREA. ALSO RECONGIZED THAT TOTAL OF 15,000 FOR FIRST TWO INCREMENTS WOULD NOT BE CHANGED.

9. COMMENT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK WENT VERY WELL AND AFTER GETTING HIS RESERVATIONS ABOUT OUR BASIC DECISION OFF HIS CHEST, PARK PROCEEDED IN RESTRAINED AND REALISTIC MANNER TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELATED TO U.S. FORCE WITHDRAWAL. NEITHER HE NOR WE DISCUSSED OR RAISED DETAILED COMPENSATORY MEASURES OR ANY COST
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FIGURES. FURTHER, WE MADE PARK FULLY AWARE OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATION AND SUPPORT, POINT PARK HIMSELF WAS KEENLY AWARE OF.

10. SECOND MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK WILL BE TOMORROW AFTER-NOON. WE EXPECT FURTHER ELABORATON OF SPECIFIC ISSUES IDENTIFIED TODAY IN THAT MEETING AND IN SEPARATE SESSIONS WITH FONMIN AND MND.
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