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June 13, 1979

**US Department of State Cable, Korea Trilateral -
Further Discussion with Foreign Minister**

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Summary:

Ambassador Gleysteen reports a meeting in which he broached the idea of tripartite talks taking place between the U.S., South Korea, and North Korea.

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English

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Original Scan

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SITUATION LISTING

DATE 06/20/79//171

SITUATION: NODIS IN OLD
 SUBJECT CATEGORY: FE

MESSAGE / ANNOTATION:

MESSAGE:

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SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 SEOUL 08610

NODIS/CHEROKEE

EO 120651 RDS-3 6/13/99 (GLEYSTEN, WILLIAM) DR-M

TAGS: PEPR, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: KOREA TRILATERAL - FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH
 FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: STATE 151247

1. (S) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR PROVIDED FORNMIN WITH ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED DURING LAST WEEK'S DISCUSSION OF TRILATERAL INITIATIVE. FORNMIN, WHO APPEARED APPRECIATIVE, PROMISED TO PASS INFORMATION TO PRESIDENT. AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT PURPOSE OF UNDERTAKING WAS NOT TO DO EITHER THE US OR ROK A FAVOR, BUT TO TAKE A TIMELY INITIATIVE IN INTEREST OF BOTH SIDES. HE SAID USG RECOGNIZED THE KOREAN LINKAGE OF SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AND ANY DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE. HE DISCOURAGED FORNMIN FROM THINKING THERE COULD BE ANY TRADEOFF IN HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. AS NEXT STEP WE WILL PRESS ROKG FOR MORE DEFINITIVE RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

3. PRIOR TO RECEIPT REFTEL, AMBASSADOR SPOKE ALONG SIMILAR LINES IN A JUNE 12 DISCUSSION WITH FORNMIN PAK REGARDING OUR PROPOSAL FOR A TRIPARTITE INITIATIVE. HOWEVER, WE WILL PROVIDE THE ROKG WITH THE SPECIFIC REFTEL RESPONSES.

4. AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED TO FORNMIN THE FAVORABLE REACTION IN WASHINGTON TO THE POSITIVE CONSIDERATION GIVEN BY THE ROKG. WE WERE AWARE OF THE RELATION OF OUR PROPOSAL TO ACTIONS ALREADY TAKEN BY THE ROK, AND WE APPRECIATED VARIOUS ROK CONCERNS, INCLUDING THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT SUBJECTING OURSELVES TO MANIPULATION BY THE NORTH. HE URGED THAT WE NOT BECOME BOGGED DOWN IN PROCEDURAL DISCUSSIONS BUT FOCUS ON THE TOTAL CONCEPT. THE PURPOSE OF THE UNDERTAKING WAS NOT TO DO EITHER THE US OR THE ROK A FAVOR BUT TO TAKE A TIMELY INITIATIVE GOOD FOR BOTH

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SIDES. EXCEPT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS AREA OUR RELATIONSHIP WAS GOING VERY WELL. IT WAS IMPORTANT THEREFORE THAT WE BEGIN TO FOCUS ON AREAS OF FUTURE POLICY CONCERN, DEAL WITH THEM IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD MANNER, AND WORK HARD TO PRECLUDE THE INITIATIVE FALLING INTO OTHERS HANDS.

5. FORNMIN, WHO SEEMED APPRECIATIVE OF OUR ANSWERS, PROMISED TO PASS THEM ON TO PRESIDENT PARK. HE ASKED IF WE WERE LOOKING FOR A GENERAL OR SPECIFIC STATEMENT IN THE COMMUNIQUE. AMBASSADOR RESPONDED THAT WE WERE THINKING OF A GENERAL STATEMENT SUFFICIENTLY SPECIFIC, HOWEVER, TO INDICATE THAT WE ARE ENGAGED IN A GENUINE INITIATIVE AND NOT MERELY A PROPAGANDA GESTURE. NOTING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT INSTRUCTION, THE AMBASSADOR SUGGESTED THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN SEOUL COULD SPEAK OF HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS INVOLVING THE ROK, DPRK AND US, WITH OR WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBILITY OF SUBSEQUENT ESCALATION TO THE SUMMIT. THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE SO SPECIFIC AS TO SUGGEST THAT WE WERE READY FOR AN IMMEDIATE MEETING WITH NORTH KOREA, BUT WE COULD INDICATE OUR SERIOUSNESS (AS WELL AS THE SPECIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN US) BY STATING THAT THE US AND ROK FOREIGN MINISTERS HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE CONCRETE PREPARATIONS FOR A TRIPARTITE MEETING WITHIN SOME GIVEN TIME. FORNMIN NODDED WITHOUT COMMENT.

6. REFERRING TO FORNMIN'S COMMENTS TO CHARGE STERN REGARDING POSSIBLE LINKAGE TO THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES, THE AMBASSADOR SAID WE APPRECIATED THE ROK'S CONCERN TO HAVE A SOLID SECURITY BASE FROM WHICH TO LAUNCH A DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE. HE SAID WE WERE CONFIDENT THAT OUR POSITION ON THE TROOP WITHDRAWAL ISSUE WOULD BE SOUND EVEN THOUGH THE DECISIONS HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE AND MIGHT NOT BE MADE UNTIL AFTER THE SEOUL SUMMIT. PERSONALLY HE FELT CONFIDENT THAT OUR POLICY WOULD ACCOMMODATE ROK CONCERNS. IN THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE AMBASSADOR URGED THAT THE ROK DROP ANY THOUGHTS OF LINKAGE. WE SAID WE HAD OUR POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS; PRESIDENT PARK HAD HIS POLICY; AND WE WOULD HAVE TO DO OUR BEST IN COPING WITH OUR DIFFERENCES. OBVIOUSLY WE WOULD NOT CONDUCT OURSELVES IN WAYS THAT WOULD COMPLICATE OUR BASIC RELATIONSHIP, BUT THERE WAS NO PROSPECT OF OUR BURYING THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN RETURN FOR PROCEEDING WITH A DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE.

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7. FORNMIN SAID THAT PRESIDENT PARK HAD TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS OPENMINDED ABOUT THE TYPE OF PROPOSAL WE HAD MADE,

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PRESIDENT HAD LISTENED CLOSELY TO THE US PRESENTATION AND THEN ASKED THE FORMIN TO INQUIRE ON THE VARIOUS POINTS PREVIOUSLY RAISED. FORMIN STATED THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND ROK BE FIRM AT THIS TIME AND NOT LEAVE ANY ROOM FOR POSSIBLE MISINTERPRETATION BY THE NORTH. OBVIOUSLY, THE NORTH WAS AWARE OF CHANGE IN THE US/ROK SECURITY RELATIONSHIP. THEY WERE ALSO AWARE OF OUR DIFFERENCES OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. AS A RESULT, THERE WERE THOSE WITHIN THE ROKG WHO FELT THAT THE PRESENT US/ROK POSITION WAS NOT AS STRONG AS IT COULD BE AND THAT ANY DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVE SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A CLEAR STATEMENT BOLSTERING THE RELATIONSHIP.

8. COMMENT: AS A NEXT MOVE WE WILL URGE THE ROKG TO GIVE US A SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO OUR PROPOSAL. AMBASSADOR WILL TALK TO SEC GEN KIM OF THE BLUE HOUSE AND POSSIBLY SENIOR KCIA OFFICIALS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO REBUFF CONCEPT OF A HUMAN RIGHTS LINKAGE, BUT IT WILL BE HARDER TO SET ASIDE ROKG CONCERN OVER THE SECURITY ISSUE IN ADVANCE OF SOME CLEAR INDICATION OF HOW WE ARE GOING TO HANDLE FUTURE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWALS. THUS, WHILE WE MAY BE ABLE TO WORK OUT A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY INITIATIVE FOR USE AT THE SEOUL SUMMIT, WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET FULL ROKG AGREEMENT UNTIL PRESIDENTS CARTER AND PARK PERSONALLY REVIEW THE SECURITY ISSUE. GLEYSTEN

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