

November 18, 1976

Telegram to the Minister from Affairs from the Ambassador in the United States

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Summary:

The ROK ambassador in the United States sends alerts the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the issue of US troop withdrawal from South Korea, highlighting the Carter administration's policies on the issue and the Japanese stance.

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Receiving Telegram

Category :

File No. : USW - 11356 Date : 171850

To : Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cc (copy) : Director of the Korean Central Information Agency

From : Ambassador to the U.S.

Yeon : USW - 11314

1. Yoo Chong-Ha, Counselor of the Korean Embassy to the U.S. met Takakazu Kuriyama, Counselor of the Japanese Embassy to the U.S. in Washington D.C. He asked Counselor Takakazu Kuriyama to what extent the local Japanese Embassy anticipated the U.S. troop withdrawal, what stance the Japanese government took on it, and if the Japanese Embassy contacted the Americans in authorities about the withdrawal issue. What the Japanese Counselor Takakazu Kuriyama answered is as follows:

a. The Carter Administration's stance on the withdrawal of the U.S. forces from South Korea: Counselor Kuriyama told that the Democratic Presidential Candidate, Jimmy Carter's remarks on the issue had been already known, but that it was highly likely to make a grave misjudgment about what measures Jimmy Carter would really take if he were elected to be President. Thus, he concluded that it would be right to assume that only Carter could answer it. However, he carefully assumed that the Carter authorities would probably review if it would be necessary to bring the U.S. Armed Forces back home from South Korea, considering the profiles of the presidential candidate's aides and the position of the Democratic Party. He added that it was his assumption on a short-term basis and that the U.S. forces would leave from South Korea after all on a long-term basis.

b. The stance that the Japanese Embassy to the U.S. takes:

With regard to the issue of the U.S. troop withdrawal, Japan does not worry most the withdrawal itself, but the circumstances under which it would be done. Japan does not oppose the withdrawal if both South Korea and the U.S. consented on it after they calculate their forces needed and estimate the extent of danger that North Korea would cause.

However, Japan would be strongly against it if the U.S. forces leaves the ROK regardless of the strong opposition of the Korean government and then the withdrawal causes both the Korean government and nationals considerable concerns. This stance is not based on the specific instruction from Tokyo, but on the general guidelines of the Japanese authorities.

c. The contact with Jimmy Carter's aides by the Japanese Embassy:

The Japanese Embassy does not have direct conversations with Jimmy Carter's immediate aides; however, the Embassy has had a lot of conversation with important figures close to Jimmy Carter and has been asked a lot from them. They have frequently asked what Japan would respond to the gradual removal of the U.S. forces from South Korea. However, they have always asked with the proviso that only some major parts of the U.S. ground forces would be evacuated from South Korea, and there would be no changes in the mission of the U.S. Air Forces and the U.S. 7th Fleet even if the U.S. forces left South Korea. Japan answered the same response as the mentioned above in b because it is not appropriate for Japan to comment directly on the issue consented by both the ROK and the U.S. The Vice-Minister of Defense of

Japan has already told that he rejects the U.S. forces removal from South Korea. Moreover, the Japanese Ambassador to the U.S. as well as the staffs in the Japanese Embassy to the U.S. have frequently explained Japan's situation whenever they meet those in authorities such as those close to Jimmy Carter, Congressional figures, and academic figures. While he is now on the tour of speech-making in major cities in the U.S., Fumihiko Togo, Ambassador to the U.S. of Japan, mentions that Japan does not want the changes of the current situation because the U.S. troop keeps an important role in guaranteeing the security in the Korean Peninsula.

2. Counselor Yoo suggested that Japan should clarify that she oppose the U.S. troop withdrawal because she had already known that both the Korean government and nationals had been strongly opposing it, rather than that Japan would convey a fine nuance that she would not oppose it if it would be done by the consent of both the South Korean government. The Japanese Counselor asked back if Yoo was sure of that and Yoo reaffirmed that. Then, Counselor Kuriyama worried that such attitude backfired on ROK even if she were desperately against the withdrawal, or lobbied against it, considering the current attitude of the U.S. toward ROK. Then, he stated that it would be better effective for South Korea to express such attitude through diplomatic channels and keep silently in public in order to defend the critics toward the ROK in the U.S.

In that case, it would be more reasonable for Japan to support South Korea from a view of her interests.

(North America Division 1)