

December 28, 1976

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

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Summary:

Report from the ROK ambassador to the US to the ROK Minister of Foreign Affairs on the conversation between Yoo Chong-Ha, the Counselor of the Embassy in the United States, and Director Edward Hurwitz.

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To : Minister of Foreign Affairs

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

From : Ambassador to the U.S.

Yoo Chong-Ha, Counselor of the Embassy in the United States had dinner with Director [Edward] Hurwitz on December 28 and had an exchange of views on a wide range of current issues. Below is the summary of what Hurwitz told:

1. The Office of the Korean Affairs of the U.S. Department of State submitted its report on the Korea to the incoming Secretary of State Cyrus Vance on December 28. The report was originally 30 pages long, but was reduced to 15 pages as directed. The report was made after wide exchange of views with superior authorities and sufficient consultation with the related bureaus within the department. The main ideas of this report are to claim that the basic relationship between the U.S. and South Korea should be maintained, and especially, to propose that it is advisable not to make a drastic change in the issue of the U.S. troop in Korea considering all circumstances.
2. While new personnel of the Department of State including new secretary are taking shape, Assistant Secretary Philip C. Habib is certain to continue in office. His wide jurisdiction, actually, keeps him from being deeply involved in any issues; however, he has been deeply involved in every issue of Korea and has a reputation within the department that his idea and judgment are always appropriate when it comes to issues related to Korea. Accordingly, Secretary Vance seems to heavily rely on Habib in terms of the U.S.-Korean relation; thus, it is expected that policies on Korea would be fairly consistent even under a new secretary.
3. It is hard to clearly state how the Carter administration will deal with the U.S. troops in Korea. However, frequent modifiers, such as "carefully, slowly, methodically, in consultation with ROK and Japanese govts [sic]" [in Carter's remarks] imply that the U.S. troop withdrawal will be difficult to implement. After Carter's remarks on the U.S. troop withdrawal, the Japanese government's concerns and response are so serious that the Department of State is surprised at them. Japan is expected to keep opposing any changes in the U.S. forces stationed in Korea. Instability in the Communist Chinese power structure will be one of the main considerations of the United States.
4. According to the current statement of the Korean Foreign Minister, Korea declared that the Korean government has nothing to do with Park Tong-Sun and that if Mr. Park had done something wrong, he should be dealt with according to the U.S. law. The U.S. welcomes that statement and has the same attitude as that of the Korean government in terms of dealing Mr. Park according to the U.S. law. Thus, it is said that this statement was written well enough to be very helpful to settle the situation.
5. It still remained to be seen what the investigation would discover; however, in my personal opinion, the result would be optimistic. To consider this bribe scandal as crime, first, it has to be proved that Park Tong-Sun has something to do with the Korean government; second, it should be proved that any Congressman who took a bribe from him did some public activities in return for the bribe, which is technically

hard to prove from a view of prosecutor's. Now, all the data that have been collected to prove the relationship between Park Tong-Sun and the Korean government depend largely on intelligence reports; these kinds of data are, by their nature, difficult to be used in the courts. Accordingly, many of the charges against him actually cannot be presented as proof of criminality in court.

6. The United States is not asking Korea to implement drastic political reform that might jeopardize social stability. While the Park Tong-Sun scandal and subsequent issues are causing waves at the moment, the least the United States wants is to aggravate the situation. Also, the United States wishes to see Korean society open gradually and do so in a manner consistent with the prevailing current circumstances. The United States does not want the Korean government to initiate dramatic changes that might compromise current economic development and destabilize the enforcement of regulations regarding the defense of Korean security.

Even though Senator Edward M. Kennedy sent one of his aides to the Department of State recently to question the human rights situation in Korea and call for measures to address them, the Department of State explained to the aide that the Korean situation has been far from the news articles by Mr. John Saar or Mr. Halloran, and that Korea belongs to open societies, basically in contrast with communist societies. Then, the aide asked back if the Department of State knew anything about Korean dissidents' movement and stance. I [Mr. Hurwitz] showed him the report files on contacts with Korean dissidents by officials of the U.S. Embassy in Korea and reiterated that Korea is an open society enough to allow the U.S. Embassy to make close and free contact with its dissidents, which is something that could never happen in communist societies. The same aide noted a report on conversation with Yun Bo-Seon, former President of Korea by an officer of the U.S. Embassy and confirmed that former President Yun Bo-Seon had been able to publicly express his anti-government opinions with a staff of the U.S. Embassy.

7. No matter what American media reports on Korea, many officials in the Department of State view Korea as extremely constructive and promising. One of the factors that play a central role in sustaining social stability in Korea is fair distribution of wealth. Korea is considered a rare case among underdeveloped countries that has relatively succeeded in fair distribution of wealth. The Saemael Movement, reform of bureaucracy, and another special example, keep-green movement are evaluated to be one of the standards to assess the future prospects of a society; yet, extravagance and excessive vanity by high-income groups are still abundant. Thus, the Korean government is advised to make more efforts in correcting them. This would build the internal strength to ultimately resist communism.

8. (Mr. Hurwitz requested to never quote him in answer to the question about why Mr. Halloran of the New York Times is more critical about Korea than any other journalists.) There are many factors to consider why Mr. Halloran is so anti-Korean.

I guess that the most decisive factor is that Mr. Halloran is a Roman Catholic, which connects himself with Korean Catholics such as Bishop Ji Hak-sun and Poet Kim Chi-Ha and makes him dedicated to realizing their ideals.

9. The Rev. Kim Sang-Keun issue (Reported separately.)

(North America Division 1)