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Seoul, Korea

OFFICIAL-INFORMAL

November 29, 1974

The Honorable
Philip C. Habib
Assistant Secretary
EA
Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Phil:

Last Sunday, as a token of his appreciation, President Park invited myself, General Stilwell, and Don Gregg for golf and dinner. I have already reported the major fruits of this outing in Embassy telegram 7877.

There were some additional notes of interest during the chitchat before dinner and during the dinner. Don Gregg and I have assembled our collective thoughts and put together the attached Memorandum of Conversation. I think the memo is worth selective distribution on the 7th floor, INR, as well as EA. I leave that in your and Dan O'Donohue's hands.

It was great to see you, albeit briefly, in Seoul. I think the visit went off well on virtually all accounts including the counsel of political moderation to Park. But, of course, the final account is not in by any means.

Looking forward to seeing you in Honolulu, all best wishes,

Sincerely,

Richard L. Sneider
Ambassador

Enclosure:a/s+1

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Department of State

NOV 26 1974

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TELEGRAM

INDICATE:
 COLLECT
 CHARGE TO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: KS KN OVLP (FORD, GERALD R.) (PARK, CHUNG HEE)

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO KOREA

POL 15-1 FORD V. SIP

DISTRIBUTION

ACTION: SECSTATE WASHDC

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1. ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, PRESIDENT PARK INVITED ME AND SEVERAL OTHER SENIOR AMERICANS FOR ~~THE~~ GOLF GAME AND DINNER AS MEANS OF EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO KOREA. PRESIDENT PARK WAS ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE VISIT. HE ASKED ME TO PASS TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY HIS PERSONAL SENSE OF GRATITUDE FOR THE VISIT, HIS REASSURANCE ON AMERICAN POLICY TOWARD KOREA, AND HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MANY PROBLEMS FACED BY THE PRESIDENT AT THIS DIFFICULT JUNCTURE.

2. ~~REKXNM~~ PRESIDENT PARK SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED PARTICULARLY BY THE "FRIENDLY, OPEN AND FRANK" MANNER DISPLAYED BY THE PRESIDENT AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY WHICH HE CONTRASTED WITH THE "OVERBEARING" NATURE

DRAFTED BY:

AMB:RLSneider:ab

DRAFTING DATE

11/25/74

TEL. EXT.

APPROVED BY:

AMB:RLSneider

CLEARANCES:

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OF THE JAPANESE. HE WAS ALSO IMPRESSED BY THE ENTHUSIASM AND WARMTH OF THE LARGE CROWDS WHICH CAME OUT TO GREET ~~XXXXXXXX~~ PRESIDENT FORD WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS A MARK OF KOREAN PEOPLE'S CONTINUED GRATITUDE TO AMERICA.

3. THE DISCUSSIONS DURING DINNER RANGED OVER WARM RECOLLECTIONS OF EVENTS DURING THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT, PARK'S CONTINUED DEEP CONCERNS ABOUT NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS, THE PROBLEMS OF ASSESSING INTELLIGENCE REGARDING THE NORTH, AND PARK'S DEEP SENSE OF MISSION TO ACCOMPLISH HIS GOAL OF MODERNIZING KOREA IN THE NEXT 3 TO 4 YEARS. DURING A DISCUSSION OF THE AMBIGUITY OF NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS, I SUGGESTED A BROADER AND REGULAR ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ INTELLIGENCE EXCHANGE ON THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND MILITARY SITUATIONS IN THE NORTH, AS WELL AS THE SITUATION IN PERIPHERAL COUNTRIES AFFECTING NORTH KOREAN CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS. UP TO THE PRESENT, WE HAVE ONLY HAD REGULAR EXCHANGES ON THE MILITARY CAPABILITIES. PARK READILY AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO THIS SUGGESTION. WE WILL FOLLOW UP ON THIS PROPOSAL.

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SECRETMEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Japan; North Korea

PARTICIPANTS: His Excellency Park, Chung Hee,
President of the Republic of Korea
Ambassador Richard L. Sneider

DATE: Sunday, November 24, 1974

PLACE: Hanyang Golf Course

On Sunday, November 24, President Park organized a golf game and dinner with myself as the principal guest. Other players were: on the American side, General Richard Stilwell and Mr. Donald Gregg; and on the Korean side, Defense Minister Suh, CIA Director Shin, Secretary General of the Blue House Kim Chong Yom, Army Chief of Staff General Ro, and the Head of the Presidential Protective Force Cha Chi Chol. During the course of the Sunday golf and dinner, President Park and I talked privately together off and on. Park was in a relaxed, talkative mood and very enthusiastic about President Ford's visit. While much of the talk was banter, some points are worth recording:

1. Japan - President Park asked me for my appraisal of the Tanaka succession fight. He was quite interested as I reviewed the various possibilities and ins and outs of factional differences in the Liberal Democratic Party which could affect the election outcome. Park said that as far as he was concerned, either Fukuda or Ohira would be most satisfactory. He characterized both as honest, sincere and trustworthy men. Both had shown a strong and sympathetic personal interest in Korea and he had confidence in either of them. On the other hand, he characterized both Nakasone and Miki as opportunists.

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In any event, President Park said that the replacement of Tanaka would please him. He mentioned one anecdote from his talk with Tanaka, when Tanaka called during the funeral arrangements for his wife. Tanaka, President Park said, sat down and began talking and talked continuously without giving Park an opportunity, as the host, to say anything. At the end of our conversation, Park professed a slight preference for Fukuda, although Ohira would be completely satisfactory.

2. North Korea - At the dinner table, President Park referred to the recently discovered tunnel in the DMZ and cited this as further evidence of North Korean extremism. President Park went on to describe a report he had received from the Australians sourced to Polish and Czech members of the NNSC who had recently visited Pyongyang. According to these NNSC officers, rumors were circulating in Pyongyang that the growth on Kim Il Sung's neck had turned malignant and that as a result, Kim's days were numbered. Park expressed concern that Kim, in a desperate attempt to reunite Korea prior to his death, might undertake extreme actions toward the South. Park also cited reports to the effect that Kim is moving quickly toward transferring his power to his son and expressed some doubts about Kim's ability to make such a transfer without causing instability in the North. In answer to President Park's question about Kim Il Sung's health, it was pointed out to him that the growth on Kim's neck has been noticeable for a number of years and that previous medical analysis has indicated it to be a large but benign tumor. President Park was told, however, that an attempt would be made to get an updated medical evaluation of Kim's health as soon as possible.

Dinner reminiscences revealed that both President Park and I had submitted warnings of the North Korean invasion of South Korea to our superiors in 1950. Both reports had been ignored. President Park cited his continued concern over intelligence indicators and this led to a general agreement that periodic meetings involving KCIA, the CINC/UNC staff and SRF would be held to coordinate improved intelligence exchange, going well beyond military capabilities. The visit of KCIA North Korea Bureau Chief Kang In Tok to Washington and London was cited as a good preliminary step toward improved intelligence exchange.

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3. Park's Role in History - Later in the dinner, President Park was asked to comment on his own view of his role in Korean history. As part of the question, Park was asked if he saw any parallel between his own life and that of Kemal Pasha of Turkey. Park responded that he did not know about Kemal Pasha in detail but had heard that he had modernized Turkey and made it an independent nation in both economic and political terms. Park said he hoped to do the same for Korea but hastened to add that he did not intend to hold on to political power indefinitely. He said that over the years many people had suggested that he resign from power and that during the 100 days since his wife's murder he had reflected sadly upon the fact that had he accepted such advice his wife might still be alive. Park went on to express his ambition to complete the modernization of Korea as rapidly as possible. He believes that the next 3 to 4 years are critical, and that his role during this period would be essential. After that, he felt that he would have made his contribution to Korean history. (Following the dinner, KCIA Director Shin, in an aside to one of the Americans, stated that he had been extremely interested in the question and in Park's reply. It was pointed out to Shin that the question was an interesting one and that probably only a foreigner could have asked it. Shin agreed with this point.)

4. Personal Notes - President Park obviously enjoyed the informal chats, stopping to talk during the golf play and stopping for longer talks after the 5th and 9th holes.

During the drinks before dinner, he mentioned his pleasure at being able to have a drink together with other people. He said that he frankly enjoyed drinking and that his doctor had advised him to take a few drinks before dinner to relax his stomach. He did not enjoy drinking alone, however. When his wife was still alive, she would give him a couple of Scotches and talk with him before dinner. However, after she was killed, he has really not enjoyed drinking before dinner, even though his daughters try to get him to have a drink.

President Park said that he had also been trying to cut down on his smoking, but found that was very difficult. He commented with a smile that if he didn't drink and didn't smoke,

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there would be nothing left to do but watch television. President Park clearly left the impression of a man lonely, anxious for companionship, but too aloof to arrange for it except on occasions such as the golf match and dinner. Perhaps indicative of his problem was that, during the golf game and dinner, almost all of the conversation was between the two of us and that the Koreans present, including Defense Minister Suh, were largely limited to a few almost obsequious remarks.

AMB:RLSneider/SAA:DPGregg:ab

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