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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Presidential Telephone Call with President Kim of South Korea on August 16, 1994 (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Kim
Daniel Poneman
Tong Kim (Interpreter)
Steven Aoki (Notetaker)

DATE AND TIME August 16, 1994, 7:40 - 8:08 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President telephoned President Kim concerning the North Korean nuclear situation. (U)

President Kim: Hello. (U)

The President: Hello, President Kim. I wanted to talk to you about our strategy towards North Korea and about these recent developments. (S)

President Kim: Yes, Mr. President. I'm very pleased to hear your voice. I would like to have your explanation about the Geneva agreements. (S)

The President: First, I'd like to congratulate you on your Liberation Day speech. You've shown great leadership in seeking a positive opening to the North. (S)

I'm sure your have been briefed on our negotiations in Geneva. There are many difficult issues to be resolved. I think the Agreed Statement provides a good framework for resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. They've agreed to important nonproliferation commitments that we have said must be part of any solution to the nuclear issue. (S)

If we work together, we have an opportunity to eliminate the most threatening aspects of North Korea's nuclear program and to lead North Korea to more normal relations with the international community. Our coordinated proposal to offer to replace North

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Korea's graphite reactors with light water reactors is the key to progress. (S)

In coming weeks, we will need to work together to develop a detailed plan. Soon we will discuss with you the financial and technical aspects of such a plan. As always, the most important element of success is close coordination and consultation between your country and the United States. (S)

That concludes what I wanted to say. I want to hear your thoughts. (S)

President Kim: Let me first express my gratitude for your message of congratulations on Liberation Day. That message emphasized the need for close cooperation between the U.S. and Korea. (U)

I listened very carefully as you explained the outcome of the conference in Geneva. We in Korea value positively the efforts of the U.S. government to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue. I think that the real problem begins from this point. We've been dealing with North Korea for many years. Any commitment they make can't be relied on. For example, the Joint Denuclearization Declaration and the promise to stop slandering each other that was agreed between Prime Ministers were not faithfully implemented by North Korea. We can't really trust them to implement their promises. (S)

As I made clear in my Liberation Day speech, in a message to the Korean people and the world, only if we can secure nuclear transparency, then we are willing to provide a light water reactor. The emphasis is on securing complete transparency. This includes special inspections of the suspect nuclear sites at Yongbyon. (S)

In order to induce North Korea to move toward openness, we are willing to provide assistance to North Korea. We are people of the same nation. But to provide assistance, we need the consent of the Korean people. The people must be assured that the nuclear freeze in North Korea will be made without any ambiguity. Only then can we put into effect assistance, including providing capital and technology. (S)

As agreed between the U.S. and Korea, we want to be assured that the type of LWR will be the Korean type. This agreement must be kept. (S)

Also, I took notice of Japan's reaction to my speech. The Japanese Vice Foreign Minister at a press conference quoted my speech and said that the Japanese position was exactly the same

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as the Korean: only if nuclear transparency is guaranteed would LWR assistance be provided. (S)

I know how difficult it is to come to any agreement in principle with North Korea. I can appreciate the patience and value the effort made by the U.S. As we have discussed many times by letter and telephone, we very much trust what you say about our relationship. (S)

With regard to the agreement made in Geneva, the issue of peace on the Korean peninsula is an issue between the Korean people. There was no mention in the Geneva statement of intra-Korean dialogue. This is difficult for Koreans to accept. Some think you should have demanded this point strongly and that the talks turned out the way North Korea wanted. The Korean people have concerns that South Korea is being excluded from the negotiating process. I need to take notice of these views. (S)

But the future is more important than the past. In the future working-level discussions, the U.S. and ROK need to be very close. We should work closely to avoid being deceived by North Korean tactics. I think we need very close, faithful cooperation. (S)

We have to be very careful about what's happening in North Korea following the death of Kim Il Sung. Many things are difficult to predict. (S)

[Line drops]

President Kim: Yes, Mr. President -- there was a cut off of the telephone line. I'd like to continue. (U)

This is a very important moment. It's troubling. We don't see any signs of stability in North Korea after the death of Kim Il Sung. It remains a very unpredictable regime. One of our concerns is that although the junior Kim has all the power, we haven't seen him in public for a month. We have to be cautious with this kind of uncertainty. It's not prudent to rush to any solutions with North Korea. This is my opinion. If we have a chance, we can come back to it. (S)

The President: We are not relying on North Korean good faith. IAEA inspectors must verify their commitments and this will provide transparency. We made very clear in Geneva that they must accept special inspections before they get an LWR. (S)

We worked very hard to persuade North Korea to accept a South Korean LWR and North Korea now seems prepared to accept one if the United States stays deeply involved. (S)

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Lastly, in Geneva we strongly supported and urged North Korea to restate their willingness to implement the North-South Denuclearization Declaration and, as you know, they did so in the Agreed Statement. (S)

Now I agree we must be cautious with regard to the transition to Kim Jong Il and you and I must stay in close touch on this. We must evaluate them by how they perform on their commitments; on what they do, not what they say. (S)

President Kim: Thank you. As I mentioned, the future is more important than the past. We have to make our best efforts not to give North Korea any excuse to break its commitments. There should be no space between our two countries. Cooperation between us is the most important thing. (S)

The President: I agree. We have to work very closely together and make sure both of us feel secure every step of the way. I will send Mr. Gallucci out to see you in early September. (S)

President Kim: Yes, Mr. President. We will welcome Mr. Gallucci's visit to Korea. I want to mention that he performed very well in negotiations with North Korea. I know how hard it is. (S)

Let me raise another issue. In Korea, there is much media coverage of the Cuban refugee issue. We have the impression that Castro is losing control. (S)

The President: We're doing our best to contain it and make sure we don't have a large outflow. We're preparing for any situation. Castro is trying to decide whether to try a new strategy in a bad situation. There's lots of dissension and a terrible economic situation there. I don't know what will happen, but I think we're in pretty good shape and prepared for any development of the situation. (S)

President Kim: Yes, Mr. President, there's no question that we need very close consultation and contact between the United States and Korea. That's the only way we can have a successful outcome. We need to make sure we don't show any schism between us. I assure you we will work very closely with the U.S. government. If necessary, we discuss things again on the phone. (S)

The President: Thanks, and please convey my best wishes to Mrs. Kim. (U)

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President Kim: Thanks and my best to Mrs. Clinton. I very much wish your health care bill will pass soon in the Congress. (U)

The President: Thank you. Good night. (U)

President Kim: Good night. (U)

-- End of Conversation --

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