

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SEOUL 04457 270518Z
ACTION NODS-00

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O 270314Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4178

S E C R E T SEOUL 4457

NODIS CHEROKEE

DEPARTMENT PASS TOKYO FOR HABIB EYES ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SHUM, KS, US
SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK

REF: SEOUL 4441

1. FOLLOWING CONCLUSION DISCUSSIONS ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL WITH PRESIDENT PARK MAY 26 (REFTEL), UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND AMBASSADOR STAYED BEHIND WITH PRESIDENT PARK AND INTERPRETER FOR BRIEF DISCUSSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

2. HABIB AT OUTSET POINTED OUT THAT WE ARE NOT LINKING HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WITH TROOP WITHDRAWALS. PRESIDENT PARK SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS NOTHING BUT FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS HIM. THE U.S. WILL MAKE NO PRE-EMPTORY DECISIONS TOWARDS KOREA AND OUR COMMITMENT TO KOREAN SECURITY, AS WE HAVE STATED, REMAINS STEADFAST. FURTHERMORE, PRESIDENT CARTER IS PREPARED TO GO ALL OUT TO MEET ANY COMMITMENTS WE MAKE WITH ROK WITH REGARD TO ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH THE TROOP WITHDRAWALS. HOWEVER, WE FACE VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS IN OBTAINING THE NECESSARY CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION AND SUPPORT FOR THESE COMMITMENTS. PRESIDENT PARK CAN BE VERY HELPFUL TO

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 04457 270518Z

PRESIDENT CARTER IN THE TASK OF ELICITING THE NECESSARY CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH HIS ACTIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. HABIB FURTHER TOLD PRESIDENT PARK THAT ON INSTRUCTIONS FROM PRESIDENT CARTER NO PUBLIC STATEMENT WILL BE MADE ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE OR HOW IT HAS BEEN HANDLED WITH PRESIDENT PARK IN CONNECTION WITH OUR VISIT.

3. PRESIDENT PARK REACTED TO THIS APPROACH BY FIRST REITERATING HIS POSITION THAT MYZNGDONG INCIDENT IS NOT HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM, THAT MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS VIOLATED KOREAN CONSTITUTION AND LAWS AND WERE TRIED THROUGH DUE PROCESS AND THAT LENIENCY TOWARD THEM AS RESULT U.S. PRESSURE WOULD ONLY ENCOURAGE DEFENDANTS TO VIOLATE KOREAN LAW AGAIN, LEADING TO FURTHER ARRESTS, ETC. ON OTHER HAND, IF WE SOUGHT LENIENCY WITHOUT LINKING MYONGDONG CASE TO HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM, BUT AS A RESPONSE TO SEGMENT OF U.S. PUBLIC OPINION CALLING FOR LENIENCY, THEN SOMETHING POSSIBLE.

4. HABIB POINTED OUT THAT HE IN FACT RAISED QUESTION WITH PRESIDENT PARK AS A POLITICAL PROBLEM IN U.S., WHICH AFFECTS OUR MUTUEL INTEREST. HE TOLD PARK IT WAS NOT ONLY MYONGDONG QUESTION, BUT THERE OTHER THINGS HE COULD DO.

5. PARK RESPONDED THAT HE FULLY UNDERSTANDS THE INTENTIONS OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND RECOGNIZES THAT LENIENT TREATMENT FOR THE MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS WOULD BE HELPFUL TO THE PRESIDENT AND HAVE A GOOD EFFECT ON KOREA'S POSITION IN U.S. IF HE ACTED RIGHT NOW, HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE ASSUMED THAT THIS WAS DUE TO U.S. PRESSURE WITH THE RESULTS HE HAD SET FORTH PREVIOUSLY. HOWEVER, HE THEN INDICATED THAT IF THERE WAS A PERIOD OF QUIET WHEN U.S. PRESSURE WAS NOT PUBLICLY EVIDENT, THEN IT WAS HIS INTENTION TO TAKE ACTION. HE MENTIONED, IN THIS CONTEXT, A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS AT ONE POINT, BUT IN HIS CONCLUDING REMARKS HE ASKED HABIB TO PASS TO PRESIDENT CARTER HIS REQUEST THAT USG NOT PUBLICLY RAISE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 04457 270518Z

SO THAT HE CAN THEN TAKE HELPFUL ACTIONS, WITHOUT SPECIFYING ANY TIME PERIOD.

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