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CHEROKEE

E.O. 12065: RDS-3 11/8/99 (GLEYSTEEN, W.H.) OR-M

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, KS, US

SUBJECT: KOREA FOCUS -- SECRETARY'S DISCUSSION WITH
- ACTING PRESIDENT CHOI KYU-HA NOVEMBER 3, 1979

- 1. (S) ENTIRE TEXT.
- 2. FOLLOWING IS MEMCON COVERING SECRETARY VANCE'S DISCUSSION WITH ACTING PRESIDENT CHOI KYU-HA ON NOVEMBER 3, 1979. OTHER PARTICIPANTS WERE:

KOREAN: FOREIGN MINISTER PARK TONG-JIN

- AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. KIM YONG-SHIK
- FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR AMERICAN
- AFFAIRS YU CHONG-HA

U.S.: MR. CHIP CARTER

- AMBASSADOR WILLIAM GLEYSTEEN
- ASSISTANT SECRETARY RICHARD HOLBROOKE
- NICHOLAS PLATT, NSC STAFF MEMBER
- 3. BEGIN MEMCON:

SECRETARY VANCE: MR. PRESIDENT, I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND TO SECRET

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YOU THE DEEPEST SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES OF THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OVER THE TRAGIC DEATH OF PRESIDENT PARK.

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CHOI: THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA DEEPLY APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS SENT YOU AND THE DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF YOUR DELEGATION TO THIS COUNTRY. IT IS A GENEROUS EXPRESSION OF YOUR FEELINGS. LESS THAN HALF A YEAR HAS PASSED SINCE MY PRESIDENT MET YOU. NOW THAT PRESIDENT PARK IS NO LONGER ALIVE, BIG CHANGES HAVE OCCURRED. WE HAVE BEEN SHOCKED, ASTOUNDED, AND SADDENED BY THE LOSS OF OUR PRESIDENT, A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN OUR HISTORY. THE SORROW OF THE FAMILY AND GOVERNMENT IS GREAT. OUR PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION AND CONCERNED TO MAINTAIN STABILITY AND ORDER.

SECRETARY VANCE: ALL OF US HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE CONTINUED UNITY OF THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. THE DECISION TO IMPOSE PARTIAL MARTIAL LAW HAS ASSURED THE WORLD THAT KOREA WOULD KEEP A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT. LET ME COMMEND YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES.

CHOI: YES, CHEJU ISLAND WAS EXCLUDED FROM MARTIAL LAW. THOUGH IT IS A SMALL ISLAND, ITS EXCLUSION HAS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE LEGALITY OF THIS GOVERNMENT. I AM VERY GRATEFUL THAT OUR MILITARY OFFICERS AND MEN HAVE CO-OPERATED SO WELL TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND TRANQUILITY. THIS WILL CONTINUE.

SECRETARY VANCE: THAT IS VERY ENCOURAGING. LET ME ASSURE YOU AT THE OUTSET THAT THE COMMITMENT OF MY GOVERNMENT TO THE SECURITY OF KOREA WILL REMAIN FIRM AND STAUNCH. IN SECRET

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ADDITION TO THE STATEMENT AND MILITARY ACTIONS THAT WE TOOK AFTER THE ASSASSINATION TO TELL NORTH KOREA THAT WE WOULD NOT TOLERATE ADVENTURISM, WE ALSO MADE OUR INTENTIONS CLEAR TO BOTH THE SOVIETS AND THE CHINESE. TO DATE, THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGNS OF MOVEMENT IN THE NORTH, BUT WE HAVE INTENSIFIED OUR SURVEILLANCE AND THE READINESS OF OUR FORCES AS A DETERRENT. MY JUDGMENT IS THAT THE ORDERLY ACTION OF THE ROK MILITARY TOGETHER WITH THE REAFFIRMATION OF OUR COMMITMENT SHOULD WORK TO DETER AGGRESSION.

CHOI: AT THE VERY OUTSET AFTER THE DEMISE OF MY PRESIDENT, YOUR GOVERNMENT LOST NO TIME IN MAKING STATEMENTS AND TAKING ACTIONS TO SAFEGUARD OUR SECURITY. WE ARE VERY GRATE-FUL. IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING A VERY ADEQUATE STATEMENT, YOU ALSO MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE U.S. AND THE ROK WOULD

COOPERATE EVEN MORE CLOSELY. WE ARE VERY APPRECIATIVE.

SECRETARY VANCE: WE HAVE ALSO BEEN GRATIFIED BY THE SMOOTH FUNCTIONING OF THE COMBINED FORCES COMMAND AND OUR JOINT MILITARY LIAISON MACHINERY. THIS IS VERY ENCOURAGING.

CHOI: SPEAKING VERY FRANKLY, AT MIDNIGHT ON THE DAY PRESIDENT PARK DIED, I WAS IN THE OFFICE OF DEFENSE MINISTER RO. THERE I MET WITH GENERAL LEW, THE DEPUTY COMBINED FORCES COMMANDER, AND TOLD HIM TO NOTIFY YOU OF DEVELOPMENTS. I BELIEVE THAT GENERAL LEW TOOK THE APPRO-PRIATE ACTION. LET ME EXPRESS AGAIN MY APPRECIATION TO YOUR GOVERNMENT FOR YOUR SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE TO THIS COUNTRY. MY COUNTRY IS RESOLVED TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND ORDER IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD. IN FACT, WE HAVE BEEN

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SUCCESSFUL IN NOT IMPOSING UNDUE RESTRICTIONS AND IN-CONVENIENCES UPON OUR PEOPLE DURING MARTIAL LAW. OUR HOPE THAT MARTIAL LAW WILL NOT JEOPARDIZE THE OUTPUT OF OUR INDUSTRIAL AND RURAL WORKERS. IN RURAL AREAS AND SMALL CITIES, FOR EXAMPLE, WE HAVE REDUCED THE CURFEW TO NORMAL HOURS, RESERVING THE SPECIAL CURFEW FOR A DOZEN BIG CITIES ONLY.

I WOULD LIKE TO DO MY BEST WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF EXISTING LAWS AND REGULATIONS. I DON'T THINK IT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THIS GOVERNMENT TO TAKE REVOLUTIONARY ACTION. IF WE FIND THAT THE LAWS AND REGULATIONS UNDER WHICH WE OPERATE ARE INADEQUATE AFTER MAKING A CAREFUL STUDY, WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO IMPROVE THEM. BUT IF WE HURRY TOO MUCH, WE MIGHT MAKE A SERIOUS MISTAKE. SO WE WILL PROCEED CAREFULLY IN CONSULTATIONS WITH THE LEADERS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SEE IF IMPROVEMENTS ARE DEEMED NECESSARY AND CAN BE EFFECTED THROUGH THE PARLIAMENT. IN ANY CASE, I AM DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND STABILITY.

SECRETARY VANCE: SO I GATHER THAT WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO IS STUDY THE SITUATION AND THEN DECIDE WHAT STEPS YOU CAN TAKE.

CHOI: THE IMPORTANT POLITICAL ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN IN SECRET

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ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRESENT LEGAL ORDER. ACCORDING TO THE PRESENT CONSTITUTION, WE MUST ELECT A SUCCESSOR WITHIN THREE MONTHS, THAT IS, BY JANUARY 24, 1980. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY TO TACKLE THIS QUESTION EXCEPT THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS. TIME IS SIMPLY TOO SHORT. IT WILL BE UP TO THE NEW PRESIDENT TO DECIDE WHAT FURTHER IS NEEDED. AS FOR MYSELF, MY TERM HAS LESS THAN THREE MONTHS TO RUN. MY DUTY IS TO ELECT A PRESIDENT BY JANUARY OF NEXT YEAR.

SECRETARY VANCE: WE WOULD HOPE THAT YOU WOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO CONSULT VAROOUS ELEMENTS OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM AS YOU DECIDE WHAT CHANGES ARE NEEDED, INCLUDING AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION.

CHOI: I AM THINKING OF INITIATING CONSULTATIONS IN A QUIET PRUDENT MANNER WITH VARIOUS FACTIONS FROM OUR POLITICAL CIRCLES. IF THIS IS DONE TOO OPENLY, IT MIGHT IGNITE PUBLIC DISTURBANCES.

SECRETARY VANCE: BUT I GATHER YOU WILL BE MAKING A STATEMENT IN THE NEAR FUTURE ABOUT YOUR INTENTIONS AS ACTING PRESIDENT.

CHOI: I AM THINKING OF ISSUING A STATEMENT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK WHICH WILL INDICATE THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF THIS GOVERNMENT.

SECRETARY VANCE: IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO GIVE THE PEOPLE A SENSE OF DIRECTION. WE RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF IN-

STILLING CONFIDENCE IN THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITY. I THOUGHT I WOULD TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TONIGHT BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE UNITED STATES TO EXPLAIN IN PUBLIC SECRET

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THAT WE WILL BE CONTINUING CLOSE ECONOMIC COOPERATION WITH YOUR COUNTRY, THAT THE ONE BILLION DOLLAR EXIM LOAN WILL CONTINUE, AND THAT UNDER SECRETARY COOPER WILL BE COMING AS SCHEDULED FOR ECONOMIC CONSULTATIONS WITH YOUR GOVERNMENT NEXT WEEK. I THINK THAT WOULD HAVE A CALMING EFFECT.

CHOI: WHEN IS COOPER COMING?

SECRETARY VANCE: NOVEMBER 9. HE WILL BE BRINGING ROBERT HORMATS, THE DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR TRADE, WITH HIM. (SECRETARY SHOWED ACTING PRESIDENT TEXT OF HIS PROPOSED DEPARTURE STATEMENT.)

CHOI: I GENERALLY AGREE WITH THIS STATEMENT. I SUGGEST THAT YOU HAVE IT READ "TO PROCEED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER ALONG CONSTITUTIONAL LINES".

SECRETARY VANCE: YOU ALWAYS WERE A GOOD DRAFTSMAN, MR. PRESIDENT. (LOUD LAUGHTER)

CHOI: I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO HAVE THE STATEMENT READ "PRESENT CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT".

SECRETARY VANCE: FINE. I WILL READ THIS BEFORE I LEAVE BUT I WILL ONLY TELL THE PRESS THAT I HAD A GENERAL CON-VERSATION WITH YOU AND LEAVE IT AT THAT.

- MR. PRESIDENT, I GATHER THAT YOU WILL BE CONVENING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON MONDAY.

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CHOI: YES, I WAS GOING TO INFORM YOU OF THAT. I WOULD PREFER TO ACT THROUGH THE PARLIAMENT RATHER THAN TAKE ARBITRARY MEASURES. AS A RESULT, I PLAN TO CONVENE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON MONDAY. I HOPE THE PARLIAMENT WILL AGREE ON A COURSE OF ACTION. THEY NEED TIME TO CONSULT, SO WE WILL START DELIBERATIONS ON NOVEMBER 12. ON NOVEMBER 5, WE WILL RETURN THE RESIGNATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT PARTY WILL MAKE A RESOLUTION NOT TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATIONS. I HOPE THEN THAT QUIET CONSULTATIONS CAN BEGIN. IF DIFFERENCES EXIST, THESE MUST BE KEPT WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF PARLIAMENT. THIS IS MUCH BETTER THAN HAVING THEM AIRED IN THE STREET.

SECRETARY VANCE: YES, MUCH BETTER. MR. PRESIDENT, YOU CAN COUNT ON THE U.S. FOR REALISTIC ADVICE WHEN YOU WANT IT. I REALIZE THAT THE DECISIONS ARE YOURS TO MAKE. BUT IF YOU NEED ADVICE, THE AMBASSADOR AND GENERAL WICKHAM ARE AVAILABLE. WE WILL KEEP OUR COUNSEL PRIVATE, AND MAKE NO PUBLIC CRITICISMS. IN ADDITION, IN OUR CONTACTS WITH THE OPPOSITION WE WILL COUNSEL MODERATION.

CHOI: OUR POLITICIANS ARE QUITE PEPPERY SOMETIMES. THEY LIKE TO IRRITATE EACH OTHER. SO COUNSEL FOR MODERATION SECRET

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WILL BE VERY HELPFUL. I WILL ADVISE OUR POLITICIANS AGAINST PEPPERY STATEMENTS. I WANT TO AVOID BY ALL MEANS AT THIS STAGE ANY SOCIAL DISORDER. PEACE AND STABILITY ARE VITAL TO THE EVOLUTION OF OUR SOCIETY.

SECRETARY VANCE: IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE, MR. PRESIDENT,

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THAT YOU CAN SUGGEST THAT WOULD BE HELPFUL?

CHOI: WE HAVE YOUR DISTINGUISHED AMBASSADOR AND OUR OWN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON PRESENT HERE. THEY HAVE DEVELOPED VERY EFFECTIVE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH WE CAN COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER.

SECRETARY VANCE: WE HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR YOUR AMBASSADOR.

CHOI: THANK YOU AGAIN FOR TAKING THE TROUBLE TO COME TO KOREA. I HOPE YOU WILL VISIT US AGAIN, ON A HAPPY OCCASION. PLEASE CONVEY MY PERSONAL REGARDS TO YOUR PRESIDENT AND THANK HIM FOR HIS KIND WORDS.

SECRETARY VANCE: THANK YOU, I WILL DO THAT.

END MEMCON. GLEYSTEEN

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