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INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 /000 R

DRAFTED BY EA/K:RGRICH:AG
APPROVED BY EA:R HOLBROOKE
S/S: LPBREMER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE

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CHEROKEE DECAPTIONED

E.O. 12065: RDS-1 12/18/99 (HOLBROOKE, RICHARD)

TAGS: PINT, KS, US

SUBJECT: KOREA FOCUS - AMB KIM CONVEYS ROKG ASSURANCES ON
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

REF: STATE 322555

1. (S), ENTIRE TEXT.

2. ROK AMBASSADOR KIM CALLED ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY
HOLBROOKE DEC 18 TO CONVEY OFFICIAL ASSURANCES FROM THE ROKG
THAT THE "PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAM OF GRADUAL POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE EVENTS OF
DECEMBER 12." KIM STRESSED THE OFFICIAL NATURE OF THE
ANSWER AND THAT THE 48-HOUR DELAY IN RESPONDING INDICATED
CAREFUL COORDINATION IN SEOUL.

3. KIM SUPPLIED WHAT IS NOW BECOMING THE STANDARD OFFICIAL
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ROK VERSION OF EVENTS OF DECEMBER 12: THAT THEY RESULTED
FROM THE UNFORTUNATE RESISTANCE OF GENERAL CHUNG'S GUARDS
TO THE OFFICERS SENT TO QUESTION THE CHIEF OF STAFF ABOUT
EVIDENCE POSSIBLY LINKING HIM TO THE ASSASSINATION.

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SUBSEQUENT CHANGES OF CERTAIN MILITARY COMMANDS WERE THEN DESCRIBED AS "INEVITABLE."

4. AMBASSADOR KIM ALSO CONVEYED APPRECIATION OF THE ROKG FOR THE FIRM REAFFIRMATION OF U.S. SUPPORT OF THE ROK AGAINST POSSIBLE AGGRESSION.

5. ASSISTANT SEC HOLBROOKE SAID HE FOUND THE ROKG MESSAGE REASSURING AND HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT THE COMMITMENT TO BROADLY BASED POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. HE ASSURED AMB KIM THAT THE USG WOULD NOT PUBLICLY CONTEST THE ROKG VERSION OF RECENT EVENTS, BUT WE WOULD NOT WISH TO SEE FURTHER MILITARY CHANGES OF COMMAND "KOREA STYLE."

6. WITH REGARD TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS, THE USG AND MANY OTHER OBSERVERS WILL LISTEN TO PRESIDENT CHOI'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS DEC 21 WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST AT THIS TIME AND BELIEVE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE PRESIDENT SET FORTH HIS POLITICAL TIMETABLE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE.

7. THE ROK CAN BE ASSURED THAT WE STAND BESIDE KOREA AS FIRM ALLIES, BUT EFFORTS ARE NOW REQUIRED TO RESTORE ROK MILITARY UNITY AND TO RESTORE THE NECESSARY MUTUAL TRUST BETWEEN THE U.S. AND ROK ARMED FORCES. THIS MUTUAL TRUST HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY DAMAGED BY THE DIRECT ACTION OF SOME GENERALS LAST WEEK.

8. SEC HOLBROOKE INFORMED THE AMBASSADOR THAT, DESPITE THE PRESSURES OF THE IRANIAN CRISIS, THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN

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FOLLOWING THE KOREAN SITUATION VERY CLOSELY. THE PRESIDENT IS ANXIOUS THAT THE COMBINED FORCES COMMAND ARRANGEMENTS REMAIN INVIOATE. THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY BOTH ARE CONCERNED THAT THERE BE NO OVERTHROW OF CIVILIAN RULE IN KOREA AND THAT ORDERLY PROGRESS TOWARD BROADLY BASED POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT CONTINUE. IF THE INTEGRITY OF THE ROK MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE SHOULD BECOME BADLY BREACHED, THIS WOULD OFFER A DANGEROUS OPPORTUNITY FOR NORTH KOREAN INTERVENTION. HOLBROOKE INFORMED KIM THAT WE HAVE GONE TO BOTH THE SOVIETS AND CHINESE TO EXPRESS OUR CONCERN THAT NORTH KOREA NOT TRY TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION IN THE ROK AND THAT DEFENSE SECRETARY BROWN WILL TAKE UP KOREA WITH PRC LEADERS AGAIN ON HIS FORTHCOMING TRIP TO BEIJING.

9. AMBASSADOR KIM EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THESE VIEWS,

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WHICH HE SAID HE WOULD CONVEY IMMEDIATELY TO HIS GOVERNMENT. HE REITERATED THE ASSURANCES THAT POLITICAL PROGRESS WOULD CONTINUE.

10. COMMENT: IN CONVEYING THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENT OF HIS OFFICIAL MESSAGE (PARA 2 ABOVE), AMBASSADOR KIM SAID THAT THE FIRST MESSAGE HE RECEIVED REFERRED TO THE PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED PROGRAM OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT "PROCEEDING CAUTIOUSLY." A SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE HAD AMENDED THAT TO SPEAK OF "GRADUAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT." BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR PARK AGREED THAT "GRADUAL" WAS THE MORE POSITIVE FORMULATION, IMPLYING IN KOREAN A STEADY PROGRESSION FROM A PRE-ARRANGED PLAN, WHILE "CAUTIOUSLY" IMPLIED POSSIBLE TESTING OF THE WATERS AT EACH STEP. VANCE

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