Extent

169 folders, approximately 10,286 pages

Summary

This collection was made available via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. The FOIA request was for records relating to the Republic of Korea (ROK), commonly called South Korea; and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly called North Korea. Specifically the request was for: U.S-South Korea summit talks and bilateral relations, North Korea’s nuclear programs, the advancement of U.S.-North Korea bilateral relations, the South Korean economic crisis in 1997, and U.S.-South Korea mutual defense agreements. This first segment begins with the White House Office of Records Management CF files of Counselor David Gergen and ends with the National Security Council’s Office of the National Security Advisor. Due to the highly sensitive nature of foreign relations with North Korean as well as South Korean and U.S. national security, a large number of these records are closed for national security reasons.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2009-0528-F are a selective, not necessarily all inclusive, body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. This collection is the result of a far reaching and broad request. Due to the highly sensitive nature of foreign relations with North Korean as well as South Korean and U.S. national security, a large number of these records are closed for national security reasons. The request was for records relating to the Republic of Korea (ROK), commonly called South Korea; and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), commonly called North Korea. The request was primarily related to U.S-South Korea summit talks and bilateral relations, North Korea’s nuclear programs, the advancement of U.S.-North Korea bilateral relations, the South Korean economic crisis in 1997, and U.S.-South Korea mutual defense

agreements. This first segment begins with the White House Office of Records Management CF files of Counselor David Gergen and ends with the National Security Council's Office of the National Security Advisor. It is difficult, almost to the level of apologetic, to attempt to summarize, in a form as short as this, the complex bilateral and trilateral relations between the United States and the Koreas during the Clinton Administration. The collection contains planning and policy documents related to a number of financial and trade issues including the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Dialogue for Economic Cooperation (DEC), Automobile trade disputes and the use of Super 301, or Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974. It includes studies of South Korean economic policy and macro and micro economic discussions related to the 1997 financial collapse. The collection includes International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank reports. It includes records related to President Clinton's trips to South Korea in 1993 and 1998. Briefing materials related to other bilateral meetings are included in the collection as are Congressional correspondence related to Korean foreign policy. Correspondence from former President Jimmy Carter related to denuclearization talks he had with Kim Il-sung can be found in the staff and office files. The collection includes records related to sanctions against North Korea and it also includes records related to supply of food to North Korea. The people and cultures of the Korean Peninsula have a long and rich past dating well into Prehistory. While there is historical precedent for separate Korean nations, the modern period did not begin until 1948. Korea's Colonial Period under Japanese rule began in 1910 and ended with the surrender of Japan in September 1945. Under the Cairo Declaration, drafted in 1943, the Korean people would remain a united state, free and independent following the war. At the Yalta Conference Winston Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt, and Joseph Stalin agreed that the Korean Peninsula would be jointly held in trusteeship by the United States and Russia. However competing ideologies led Russia, China, Great Britain, and the United States to disagree on the structure of government in a free Korea. The United Nations ordered the country separated at the 38th parallel with Russian military control of the North and American military control of the South. The two countries were to discuss forming a unified Korean government. Though a number of unification meetings and a Constitutional referendum vote held, the attempts at unification failed. On August 15, 1948 newly elected President Syngman Rhee declared the new state of the Republic of Korea. In response Kim Il-sung was appointed leader of a provisional government in the north and announced the creation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on September 9, 1948. Cold War rhetoric and lingering

disagreements over unification fed a slowly growing hostility between the North and South. The United States maintained a large military presence following the end of military rule and the policy of South Korea toward the North was very closely aligned with the United States. On June 25, 1950, North Korea invaded the South. The United States immediately entered the war under the auspices of the United Nations Command. China also entered the war and by July 1951 the fighting reached a stalemate very near the 38th parallel. Armistice was agreed to in July 1953. Quickly advancing and retreating armies, sometimes battling over the same territory multiple times, brought significant destruction to the country. Recovery from the war was slow and for a number of years marred by political turmoil. South Korea was led by series of military presidents and North Korea established a Soviet Union supported communist dictatorship under Kim Il-sung. Through the 1960s and into the 1980s South Korea's political climate was unstable, though it was period of exceptional economic growth. Following the 1992 elections Kim Young-sam was elected President returning South Korea to civilian rule. Kim was the fourteenth President of South Korea and served one six year term. He was defeated in 1998 by Kim Dae-jung. Kim Young-sam came into office and announced the creation of a new Korea. He undertook a series of financial and trade related changes. In 1994, South Korea began negotiations and legal changes necessary for inclusion in the Organization for Economic Development and Coordination (OECD). This was fully supported by the Clinton Administration as Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced in June 1994, "We hope that South Korea will follow Mexico as a full member [of the OECD]. Also in the realm of finance and trade, Christopher noted at the APEC summit in Seattle, November 1993, that, "In South Korea we have launched a new dialogue that will improve the trade and investment climate for U.S. business." President Clinton hosted the first meeting of Head-of-State level APEC leaders at Seattle in 1993. The APEC meetings would continue to be an important conduit by which South Korea and the United States could negotiate financial regulation and trade issues. In fact Clinton attended six of eight APEC meetings held during his administration. Though some scholars have said the Clinton Administration did not place much importance on the relationship with South Korea, or with Asia for that matter. South Korea was the world's eleventh largest economy in 1995 and the eighth largest trading partner for the United States. The U.S. was the South Korean's largest trading partner and largest export market totaling one fourth of all South Korean exports. So connected were the two that the United States regularly had high level talks with the South Koreans. President Clinton met with

President Kim Young-sam five times including a State Visit to Washington, DC in 1995. Clinton met with President Kim Dae-jung four times including a State Visit to Washington, DC in 1998. Secretaries of State Warren Christopher and Madeline Albright traveled to South Korea six times. While trade issues like the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) or the DEC focused on improving market access, securing intellectual property rights, and limiting agricultural trade restrictions it cannot be ignored that Korea maintained a role central to regional security. In the north, Kim Il-sung had been making gradual efforts at unification and opening dialogue toward that end. Yet, the end of the Soviet Union and the decline of the North Korean economy in the late 1980s and early 1990s fostered a sense of isolation in the DPRK. Joel Wit, Daniel Poneman, and Robert Gallucci note in their book Going Critical that this sense of isolation increased the desire by the DPRK to strengthen their military and to renew efforts toward a nuclear weapons program. Beginning in 1992, and quickly escalating in 1993, was the North Korean's refusal to allow International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections and a rhetoric of war. In 1992, the United States and South Korea announcement of Team Spirit exercises drew the peninsula to the very brink of war. In March 1993, North Korea completely isolated its people, increased anti-American and Korean propaganda, and activated the People's Army and reserves in a state of "semiwar." This was followed by their announcement that they would pull out of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). What followed was a tense year and half of diplomatic meetings with the North Koreans, South Koreans, Chinese, Japanese, and others that resulted in the Agreed Framework of 1994. The Agreed Framework gave North Korea 500,000 tons of heavy fuel oil a year until completion of two 1,000 MWe light-water reactors. A multinational agency, the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO), was created to oversee the construction of the power plants and the distribution of fuel oil. In return the North Koreans agreed to cease plutonium production and to allow IAEA inspectors at various sites. Importantly, the Agreed Framework also formally established a policy of engagement and a very gradual normalization of relations. When the government of North Korea asked the world for humanitarian aid following massive flooding in 1995 the U.S. agreed to provide food aid. Beginning in 1996 the U.S. provided 19,500 metric tons of food aid. The U.S. was North Korea's largest provider of aid in 1999 when it provided almost 695,000 metric tons of food aid. These, listed above, are but a few of the highlights of the U.S.-Korea relations during the Clinton Administration. This scope statement is intended as only the briefest of introductions

to what was a vibrant, tense, and important period of history on the Korean Peninsula. This collection contains a majority of records related to U.S.-Korean relations but it certainly not a complete collection.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in one collection area—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files. White House Staff and Office Files were maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and documents all levels of administrative activity.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2012. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2015-06-16

Container List

View all digitized files in the National Archives Catalog (NAC)

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2009-0528-F:
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Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files
Counselor’s Office
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President’s Trip to Seoul, Korea July 10-11, 1993, Briefing Book [Binder] [1] [OA/ID CF 134]
President’s Trip to Seoul, Korea July 10-11, 1993, Briefing Book [Binder] [2] [OA/ID CF 134]
Council of Economic Advisors
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