

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Young Sam Kim of South Korea

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Young Sam Kim
Interpreter: Tong Kim
Notetakers: Stanley Roth, Matt Miller and Kathi Guekel

DATE/TIME December 29, 1994, 10:01 p.m.-10:26 p.m.

AND PLACE: The White House Study

President Clinton: Hello, President Kim. (U)

President Kim: Hello, President Clinton. I'm pleased to talk with you again since we met at the APEC conference last time.
(U)

President Clinton: It is nice to hear your voice again. I hope you and Mrs. Kim are fine. Thank you for taking the initiative in making this call. It is good to hear from you again. (U)

I very much appreciate your strong support on the incident in which we lost an American helicopter. As you know, it has now been resolved. I believe that the relatively expeditious resolution of this issue has reduced the damage with Congress on the implementation of the nuclear agreement. Congressman Richardson in particular deserves a lot of credit for his role, not just with the North Koreans but with Members of Congress and our media. (C)

I want to emphasize first of all my understanding of the phrase "appropriate forum" in the understanding. It does not, in my opinion, open any new bilateral channels for military contacts with the North. Tom Hubbard made it clear to the North Koreans that General Smith will be attending further contacts in his UN Command capacity. While the North may claim that their general is attending in a bilateral capacity, they know that we do not accept this. Furthermore, you have my assurance that if the North attempts to use these military contacts to negotiate a

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that they eventually want to see the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Korea. This had been their consistent position, and the United States should continue to realize that it is the reason for their position. (C)

As you well pointed out, President Clinton, you have been helped very much by Congressman Richardson. He had a hard time in North Korea. I also met him and he told me his stay was a "hellish" four days. (C)

My impression is that North Korea is in the state of a power vacuum. What is important here is Chief Warrant Officer Hall could have been released even before Christmas, but because of the absence of leadership in North Korea and the absence of a firm North Korean position, with the loose coordination and no person to make a decision on this matter, things became much more complicated. This is why it has taken as long as it has and this is another thing the United States should be aware of. (C)

As we have discussed in the past over the phone and through our meetings in several places, we have to remind ourselves again that North Korea is a regime beyond our imagination. Their regime is most untrustworthy; it is the most unreliable regime in the world. We have had numerous secret and open meetings with them but our conclusion is we can't put any trust in what North Korea says. The helicopter incident reminds us of this. The American and Korean people have once again been reminded of this. The United States should once again recognize how untrustworthy North Korea is. (C)

The day after tomorrow is New Year's Day. For the past 50 years, in January, Kim Il Sung delivered his New Year's message to the Korean people on this day. But I don't think Kim Chong Il will do it this time. I guess someone else will replace him in giving this message. In consideration of these and other things, there is a vacuum in the North Korean leadership. Six months after the death of Kim Il Sung, Kim Chong Il still has not become the official leader of North Korea. This is a very serious situation. (C)

Yesterday, I took notice that you announced you will run again for President. It's a matter of courage. As I told you in Jakarta you can gain victory in the next election if you continue to have confidence, courage and the capability to lead the country. This will lead to electoral victory. You can transform your misfortune into a blessing. (C)

President Clinton: Thanks very much. (U)

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President Kim: With regard to the North Korean nuclear problem, of course we will continue to consult and cooperate with the U.S. Government in order to make sure that North Korea faithfully implements the Geneva agreement. For our part the Korean government will do our best to ensure compliance. Based upon our trust and friendship, we can pursue this closely. (C)

Once again regarding the North Korean intention to abolish the armistice regime, it is important that the United States send a strong message on this point to the entire world and also to North Korea. North Korea is constantly trying to drive a wedge between South Korea and the United States. (C)

President Clinton: I agree and will do that. I believe you will visit us in July. I hope to see you then. (C)

President Kim: Yes. As is scheduled, I will come in July to meet with you and by then much will have been changed again. I'm very satisfied and pleased with the release of Chief Warrant Officer Hall. It's a relief; because its been a "hellish" experience for Mr. Hall. (C)

Best regards and good luck to you and to Mrs. Clinton. (U)

President Clinton: Thank you and good night. (U)

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