

3702-X

INFORMATION

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May 3, 11972

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. KISSINGER

FROM: JOHN H. HOLDRIDGE

SUBJECT: South Korean CIA Director's Further
Comments on His Visit to North Korea
May 2-5 for High Level Discussions

South Korean CIA Director Yi Hu-rak [redacted] 25X1
[redacted] the following additional particulars on his planned visit
to Pyongyang May 2-5 for political discussions: 25X1

-- Yi believes the time is propitious for the meeting: U. S. forces and UNCURK (U. N. Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea) are still in South Korea, the U. N. declaration on Korea* remains in force, and President Park's domestic political position is strong enough to support such an initiative.

State Dept.
review completed

-- Yi believes his discussions could be kept confidential or could result in a joint communique outlining specific areas of agreement. Yi favors the latter, because it would detract from the current North Korean diplomatic offensive and would forestall the development of an adverse political reaction in South Korea. Yi doubts, however, that his own government would go along with the idea of a communique.

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-- Yi said President Park had instructed him to be prepared to commit suicide if the North should detain him. Yi said North Korea would derive no advantage from such a course. Nevertheless, should this come to pass, he said he wanted Washington to have the detailed record of the development of his visit.

-- Yi said President Park asked whether the President is aware of the exchanges with the North and his impending visit. [redacted]

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* Yi probably was referring to the U. N. General Assembly's resolutions of 1948 which recognized the Government of the Republic of Korea as the sole legal government in Korea.

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-- Yi said he thought his Government would welcome strong U. S. Government support should his visit become known publicly, either through a communique or through leaks. U. S. support would help counter domestic criticism in South Korea, as well as improved Seoul's position in dealing with Pyongyang.

Charge Underhill reported that South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Yong-sik told him May 1 of the Yi mission. [Yi had told us earlier that Foreign Minister Kim was not to be cut in on the plans for his Pyongyang visit until Kim's return from the U. S.] Kim said that his Government would want to consult immediately with us in the event that North Korea detained Yi. Kim also pictured Yi's mission as intelligence-oriented, and stressed its non-political nature. [It was not clear whether Kim is only partially informed, or knows better but is taking this line for face-saving reasons.] When asked for his opinion, Underhill said the ROK initiative was bold and courageous, and if made known publicly later should improve Seoul's position in its diplomatic competition with Pyongyang, most immediately as regards the U. N. consideration of the Korean question next fall.

JHH:JAF:pem:5/3/72

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