

September 11, 1984

To: Elliott Abrams

Subject: Kim Dae Jung

Last night I was invited to dinner with Kim Dae Jung and his family. The evening went very well. Kim spoke favorably of you. We discussed his plans to return. And we had a lengthy exchange on USG policy. The more I get to know Kim the more I like him. He is very concerned about the growth of pro-Communist and anti-US feeling among the Korean youth because of the ROKG unpopularity.

Kim would still like to meet with Wolfowitz. Could you support that with a low key phone call?

This morning Kim's aide, Lee Keun Pal, gave me the attached copy of Kim's letter to the Secretary. The original was delivered to the Desk.

George Lister

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cc: Jim Thyden



KOREAN INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

10 September 1984

The Honorable George Shultz
Secretary of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing this letter to inform you of my plan to return home to Korea by the end of this year. I would like, first of all, to express my gratitude to you and the government of the United States for the hospitality extended to my family and myself during the last two years.

Since our arrival here on 23 December 1982, the Reagan Administration has taken numerous steps to ensure our freedom and safety, for which we are deeply grateful. I am also fully aware and profoundly thankful for President-elect Reagan's determined effort in 1980 to save my life and his subsequently successful endeavor as President to have my 20-year prison term suspended after two and a half years.

I realize the potential for danger to my freedom and personal safety which may await me in Korea. In fact, the Korean government's initial response to the news of my plan was negative. I have discussed this danger with a great number of my colleagues and friends both in this country and in Korea and have made a decision on this issue with utmost caution, especially in light of the tragic fate that befell the late Mr. Benigno Aquino. After long deliberations, however, I have chosen to return home for the following reasons.

First, I came to the United States for the purpose of obtaining medical treatment and to accept an invitation to study at the Harvard University Center for International Affairs first extended in 1972. By 30 June 1984, I completed my fellowship tenure at Harvard, as well as my medical treatment.

Second, although I have tried during the last two years in the United States to further as best I could at this distance the cause of human rights and democracy of the Korean people, I now feel a moral obligation to rejoin my people in their struggle for these goals. The time has come, I believe, for me to share with them the hardship and suffering of the battle for the restoration of democracy.

Third, I concur with my colleagues that Korea is in crisis. Our people must make crucial choices in the period ahead which could result either in national tragedy or in the opening up of a new era of democratic progress. At the present time, however, the Korean people are becoming increasingly cynical and alienated, and are losing their strong will to defend our nation's security. There is growing anti-American and anti-Japanese feeling, especially among workers, youth, and intellectuals, among a few of whom extremist inclinations are being increasingly

exhibited. These should not be equated with pro-communism. Rather, these sentiments are the fruit of frustration, indignation, and despair over the destruction by a military-dominated regime of freedom, justice, and human dignity, and the fear that the United States and Japan will acquiesce in or support a succession of such military regimes in the name of "national security" or "anti-communism." I firmly believe that I should return home to engage in dialogue and consultation with our people, especially these angry and frustrated individuals, before the situation grows beyond my ability to influence it.

I do believe real security can be achieved only when we give our people something to secure, namely democratic rights. Our experience in the Korean War and the experience of Israel strongly support this idea that national security can best be protected by democratic freedom.

Fourth, I believe my return can contribute to fostering a unified democratic movement, non-violent struggle, and moderation. Last spring, for example, through my colleagues, I exhorted the leaders of the democratic movement, and especially student leaders, to adopt these three goals. I am pleased to note that their activism has since then been characterized by considerable moderation and prudence. However, it will not be possible for me to continue to exercise such or greater influence unless I return to Korea to face the difficulties and dangers of the struggle for democracy with them.

Fifth, I strongly believe that if the Chun government is genuinely committed to the goals of national reconciliation and political development, and if President Chun truly intends to leave office at the end of his term in 1988, the government must now develop channels for national dialogue and cooperation. At a minimum, for political development to proceed, we need free expression, fair elections, and the end of the ban on political activity by 99 politicians, including myself. Cosmetic steps taken by the government recently will only increase alienation unless they are followed by moves toward national dialogue and genuine democratization. If the government shows interest, I am ready and willing to work toward these objectives in consultation with it.

As I return home for these tasks, I am confident that the United States government will do whatever it can to assure my return contributes to the goal of orderly political progress toward democracy. I have informed the Korean government today of my decision to come back and also of my intention to consult with it about avoiding any trouble when I come home.

The goals of our democratic movement can be summarized as follows: an open, democratic form of government, based on responsiveness to all sectors of the population; a free market economy which protects the rights of workers and consumers; a strong national defense to prevent war, coupled with strong diplomatic efforts to achieve peace in the region; prudent steps toward the eventual reunification of Korea; and strengthened and mutually productive relations with the United States, Japan, and other democratic nations.

I have no doubt that you share with me the hope for my trouble-free return and for my freedom of political activity in Korea. Your concern and care in this respect will be most valuable. I believe and hope that all the people of the

world who are concerned about human rights will be deeply grateful to you and your country.

In closing, I want to thank you for your kind consideration. If you have any advice to offer me, I would be most delighted to consult with you. I would be honored also to convey my feelings of gratitude to President Reagan directly if such an opportunity were available before my departure.

With warmest personal esteem, I am

Sincerely yours,


Kim Dae Jung