

May 31, 1986

To: Dick Schifter

Subject: South Korea: Policy Statement

As you know, South Korean democrats, both here and in Seoul, are extremely upset about the Secretary's recent visit and the manner in which it is being misinterpreted and effectively exploited by the Communists against them and the USG. Kim Dae Jung's friends here have discussed this problem with me. And on Friday I received a visit on the same subject from Woong K. Cho, Kim Young Sam's representative in the U.S. He left the following day for Seoul. All of these Koreans want very much to be our friends. Meanwhile, Sen. Kerry's (D.-Mass.) office is preparing an angry letter to the Department about the Shultz performance.

In view of all of the above I suggest we draft and clear a low key policy statement for the noon briefing, along the following lines: "With reference to recent press comment and speculation concerning USG policy towards South Korea, the State Department wishes to make clear that there has been no change in our policy. We continue to support an early peaceful transition to democracy in South Korea, providing the opportunity for the South Korean people to vote for the candidates of their choice in free and open elections".

Our Korean friends feel such a statement would help to cope with the current Communist propaganda attack, which is proving especially effective in turning Korean youth against the USG. I agree. If need be we could settle for such a statement on an "if asked" basis. I could arrange for the question to be asked. It would be smart to make the statement before the Kerry letter arrives. None of this need make reference to the Secretary. I suggest we play it all very routine.

George Lister

cc: Tom Murphy

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