

December 14, 1995

To: DRL - John Shattuck

From: DRL - George Lister *V*

Subject: South Korean Politics

This morning I had a one hour breakfast with Stephen Costello, local representative of the Kim Dae-jung Peace Foundation. The latter was established about two years ago, and Costello and I have been cooperating closely. He was especially helpful in facilitating my 1994 visit to Seoul, at the invitation of Kim Dae-jung (KDJ). The Executive Director of the Foundation is Young Jack Lee. Dr. Lee and I are also good friends.

Of course you are well aware of the current political crisis in South Korea, involving, among many other things, disclosures of huge political slush fund corruption, along with renewed investigation of the 1980 Kwang-ju "massacre". Two former presidents, Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan, are currently in jail, and there is much political in-fighting and maneuvering. KDJ has admitted receiving \$2.6 million from former President Roh, while President Kim Young-sam is accused of taking at least \$400 million, which he denies. How all this will affect the National Assembly elections next April, and the national elections in December, 1997, remains to be seen.

This morning Costello was mainly concerned with bringing me up to date on all of the above. I will not attempt a summary of his remarks, but I do invite your attention to the following three attachments which he gave me: 1) results of three Korean public opinion polls conducted by Dr. Lee during last August, October and November; 2) copies of some relevant press clips; and, 3) some examples of recent KDJ Peace Foundation responses to press comments. On Saturday Dr. Lee leaves for Seoul to carry out some more public opinion polls.

The good news is that we have a fine Ambassador in Seoul, and EAP maintains good relations with Dr. Lee and Steve Costello. If I were asked to make one recommendation I would urge that we increase and improve our dialogue with South Koreans, especially the left (e.g. note the public opinion polls in attachment 1). Over the past twelve years I have met with hundreds of Koreans, and ignorance and misconceptions regarding our human rights policy are widespread.

cc: Steve Coffey  
Marshall Carter - Mona Sutphen  
EAP - Mr. Rang