

SECRET PTQ4948

PAGE 01 SEOUL 03037 01 OF 02 090911Z  
ACTION SS-00

INFO LOG-00 SAS-00 /000W  
-----60F537 090911Z /38

O 090858Z JUN 00  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8971  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE  
NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
JOINT-STAFF WASHDC//J-5// IMMEDIATE  
COMUSKOREA SEOUL KOR//J-5// IMMEDIATE

APPEALS PANEL ACTION: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
RELEASED B1,1.4(D)

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EXDIS- **DECAPIONED**

Classification Extended on : 09/21/2016 ~ Class: SECRET ~  
Authority: DSCG 11-1 ~ Declassify on: 06-08-2025

SPECAT

DEPT FOR U/S PICKERING, C - AMB. SHERMAN, NP - A/S EINHORN,  
EAP - A/S ROTH, PDAS DEMING, AMB. KARTMAN, AND EAP/K

DEPT PLS PASS NSC FOR LIEBERTHAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: (AFTER KOREAN REUNIFICATION)  
TAGS: PREL, MARR, MNUC, PINR, KS, KN  
SUBJECT: ON THE EVE OF THE INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT

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REF: SEOUL 2380 (NOTAL)

CLASSIFIED BY THE AMBASSADOR. REASONS: 1.5 (B), (D).

1. (S) ON THE EVE OF THE JUNE 12-14 INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT, SOUTH KOREAN PUBLIC EXPECTATIONS ARE HIGHER THAN THE KIM DAE JUNG ADMINISTRATION WOULD LIKE BUT MANAGEABLE. EXPECTATIONS HAVE BEEN LIFTED BY THE DRAMATIC INTERNATIONAL "DEBUT" OF NORTH KOREAN LEADER KIM JONG IL IN BEIJING EMBRACING CHINESE LEADERS AND APPEARING CONFIDENT IN HIS OWN ABILITY TO MANAGE AFFAIRS OF STATE, INCLUDING THE SUMMIT AND KDJ HIMSELF. KDJ, FOR HIS PART, REMAINS CONFIDENT AS WELL, THEREBY SETTING THE STAGE FOR ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS THAT COULD BE VERY BROAD IN THEIR SCOPE EVEN IF POLITICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL CONSTRAINTS ON BOTH LEADERS LIMIT THE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES.

2. (S) AS NOTED REFTTEL, THE INTER-KOREAN SUMMIT PROCESS REPRESENTS A POSSIBLE MAJOR PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE COORDINATED ENGAGEMENT BY THE ROK, THE U.S., AND JAPAN OF

NORTH KOREA, WITH PRIMARY LEADERSHIP OF THE NORTH KOREAN  
ENGAGEMENT IN ROK HANDS

[REDACTED]

IMPROVING THE NORTH-SOUTH KOREAN  
ATMOSPHERE FOR FUTURE IN-DEPTH DIALOGUE -- INCLUDING ON  
REDUCING NORTH KOREA'S CONVENTIONAL AND WEAPONS OF MASS  
DESTRUCTION THREAT -- AS CONFIDENCE IS BUILT.

3. ~~(S)~~ CONSTRAINED POLITICALLY AT HOME BY CONSERVATIVES  
AND AWARE OF THE NUCLEAR AND MISSILE CONCERNS OF THE U.S.

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AND THE ROK, KDJ AND HIS CHIEF LIEUTENANTS HAVE SOUGHT,  
WITH SOME SUCCESS, TO COUNTER "IRRATIONAL EXUBERANCE" AMONG  
THE SOUTH KOREAN PUBLIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF ANY NEAR-  
TERM "GRAND RESOLUTION" OF THE KOREA PROBLEM, OR EVEN  
SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ON ISSUES CLOSE TO THE SOUTH KOREAN  
PUBLIC, SUCH AS REJOINING SEPARATED FAMILIES. THEY HAVE  
EMPHASIZED THAT THIS FIRST SUMMIT MEETING IS IMPORTANT IN  
OF ITSELF EVEN IF LITTLE SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS COULD BE  
MADE.

[REDACTED]

5. ~~(S)~~ KIM JONG IL'S EMERGENCE ON THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC  
STAGE IN BEIJING HAS LED TO SOME POPULAR REVISION ABOUT HIS  
CHARACTER. TO BE SURE, MANY, PARTICULARLY CONSERVATIVE,  
SOUTH KOREANS REGARD HIM AS THE DEVIL INCARNATE, BUT HE IS

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ALSO BEING PORTRAYED, PROBABLY AT THE [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] AS SOMEONE WITH WHOM A CONFIDENT KDJ AND A STRONG  
ROK CAN DEAL. THE SEEMINGLY EASY MANNER WITH WHICH KIM  
JONG IL ENGAGED CHINESE LEADERS HAS PERSUADED MANY KOREANS  
THAT KIM IS NOT, AT LEAST NOW, THE DISSIPATED, DEGENERATE  
"PLAYBOY MADMAN" DELICIOUSLY AND MALICIOUSLY PAINTED FOR  
YEARS IN THE SOUTH'S MEDIA. THE PROSPECT THAT SOME GENUINE  
NEGOTIATION MIGHT TAKE PLACE HAS LED TO A MOOD OF GREATER

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B1

OPTIMISM IN THE SOUTH THAT SOME BREAKTHROUGH IS POSSIBLE. MOREOVER, THAT THE TWO KOREAS' LEADERS CAN MEET AS THE PRIMARY DETERMINERS OF THE PENINSULA'S DESTINY IS A THEME OF POWERFUL RESONANCE HERE.

6. (S) ONE EFFECT OF THIS PHENOMENON HAS BEEN A SHARP DECLINE IN THE SOUTH OF THE PERCEPTION OF THE DPRK THREAT.



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1.4(D)  
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ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO MAJOR CHANGE IN KOREAN PUBLIC SENTIMENTS THAT USFK ITSELF PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN PRESERVING PEACE ON THE PENINSULA.

7. (S) AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, ANY PALPABLE SUCCESS -- FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE ISSUE OF DIVIDED FAMILIES -- COULD ALSO

DEFANG CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION TO AN EVEN MORE EXPANSIVE ENGAGEMENT OF THE NORTH AS THE SUMMIT PROCESS ROLLS ALONG.

8. (S) WHILE THE CURRENT INDICATIONS ARE PROMISING, THE NORTH-SOUTH ROAD AHEAD WILL, AT BEST, BE LONG AND DIFFICULT. MOREOVER, THERE IS NO SMALL RISK THAT, THE DIVISIONS BEING AS DEEP AS THEY ARE, THE PROCESS COULD BE INTERRUPTED IN THE COMING MONTHS OR YEARS. A SUCCESSFUL SERIES OF SUMMITS AND SUPPORTING LOWER-LEVEL INTER-KOREAN DIALOGUE, HOWEVER, WOULD FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGE THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY ENVIRONMENT ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, CREATING THE BEST OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE EVER HAD TO ACHIEVE OUR VITAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES HERE. WE SHOULD BE COGNIZANT OF THE PARADIGM SHIFT THAT APPEARS TO BE OCCURRING AND RECOGNIZE THAT EVEN SOME MODEST SUCCESS IN THE SUMMIT COULD ACCELERATE AND MAGNIFY DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING AN EXAMINATION OF THE U.S. SECURITY ROLE ON THE PENINSULA AND IN THE REGION. THESE POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS BEAR CLOSE OBSERVATION AND COULD FORM THE SUBJECT OF EVEN CLOSER AND MORE IN-DEPTH, POST-SUMMIT U.S. DIALOGUE WITH KDJ AND HIS SENIOR OFFICIALS.

BOSWORTH

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