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THE REDUCTION OF TENSION IN KOREA (U)

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VOLUME I

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SUMMARY (U)

A. BACKGROUND (U)

(U) On August 15, 1970, President Pak Chong-hui made the first significant South Korean move on unification since the 1954 Geneva Conference; Pak stated in a speech that if the North renounced the use of force, and if the United Nations verified observance of that renunciation, then some of the barriers between North and South might be eliminated step by step with a view to eventual peaceful unification. Pak's speech contained some formulations that clearly the North could not accept (especially United Nations verification), but it also for the first time included the approach long favored by the North for various interim measures to ease tension, and it did not demand that the North simply be integrated into the existing polity of the South. A year after Pak's speech, on August 6, 1971, North Korea's Kim Il-song made a reasonably unconditional offer to negotiate with Seoul. Then, on August 14, Seoul and Pyongyang agreed to open "humanitarian" Red Cross talks to discuss ways of reuniting families divided by the Korean war.

(U) On the international scene, the developing détente between the United States and China, followed by a rapprochement between Japan and China and accompanied by the accelerated pace of Japanese and US contacts with the Soviet Union, seemed to demonstrate that the powers were seriously concerned with improving their mutual relations with each other. In regard to Korea itself, the powers' concerns were mostly negative: that Korean issues should not lead to hostilities nor interrupt the progress toward détente (nor give an advantage to either side in the Sino-Soviet dispute). What made these not altogether new factors suddenly appear to be of major significance was the dramatic response of the two Koreas to the new environment of détente in Northeast Asia. In a joint communiqué issued on July 4, 1972, the two Koreas announced that they had agreed to open high-level consultations aimed at easing tension and eventually uniting the country.

(U) There have been no formal agreements since the July 4 communiqué, but tension in fact has abated and the military

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confrontation in the Korean DMZ has eased substantially. Limited as these steps may be, they nevertheless represent a major departure from the preëxisting relationship in which each government displayed an unrelenting hostility toward the other and maintained a rigid, uncompromising posture on the issue of treating with its rival. By entering into these discussions, each government did far more than open a channel of communication to the enemy capital. It acknowledged the existence of the other and thereby compromised its claim to be the sole legitimate Korean government and the core around which a future unified Korea would be formed.

B. THE TWO KOREAS AND ARMS CONTROL (U)

(U) There is a surprising degree of parallelism in the interests of the two Koreas pertaining to arms control. The easing of North-South tension, for example, could (a) provide relief from the economic burden of armaments, (b) reduce the manipulation of Korean developments by the great powers, and (c) lessen both Koreas' dependence on their allies. Each Korea is concerned that tension-reducing measures should not threaten the viability of its political system, and each hopes through such measures to increase its influence and leverage over the other. Neither Korea is willing to formalize the division of the country, and both seek some symbols of unification, although not necessarily the same ones. This mutuality of interests is what has made possible a considerable easing of tension already, but considerable hostility and conflicts of interest still persist.

1. South Korea (U)

(U) The still very strong fear of the Communist North that persists in the South and the political ascendancy of the ROK armed forces reinforce the Pak government's very cautious approach to the North-South talks and its preference for minimal movement on arms-control issues. The sweeping powers that Pak now enjoys and his firm control of the political system, however, should make it possible for him to enter into agreements on humanitarian and cultural exchanges and minor economic matters without arousing fear that he is exposing the country to a serious threat of subversion from the North. Accession to more fundamental economic, political, or military agreements will probably remain very difficult for the ROK government for some time.

(C) Strictly military considerations also contribute to the ROK's cautious approach to arms-control proposals. The South Koreans are understandably concerned about defending the capital, which is located only 30 miles south of the DMZ along a natural

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invasion route. The South is consequently strongly committed to a forward defense strategy. Infiltration from the North, either by sea or across the DMZ, is also of concern to South Korea. As to the balance of military forces on the peninsula, the ROK ground forces substantially outnumber those of the North, while the DPRK's air force is much larger and more modern than that of the South. Arms-control tradeoffs suggested by this situation, however, are counterbalanced so far as the South is concerned by the vested interests that have grown out of the large and politically powerful ground forces and by general suspicions of the North within the ROK military establishment, the one group that President Pak must continue to placate. The US military presence in South Korea partially offsets North Korea's advantage in the air and contributes, by its "trip wire" effect, to the deterrent against aggression from the North.

(U) The external and internal environment and the resulting combination of stimuli that originally contributed to Seoul's agreement to open talks with Pyongyang will probably continue to operate through at least the mid-1970s. At a minimum, therefore, maintaining contact with the North should continue to be to South Korea's advantage. Whether these stimuli will be strong enough to cause the South to compromise its stand on arms control is another question. Suspicion of the North will remain strong and could hinder substantial progress in this area. Yet if changes in the environment led the South to modify its positions once, further changes might do so again.

2. North Korea (U)

(U) The Pyongyang regime has reason to look upon the results of the North-South contacts to date with some satisfaction. North Korea's prestige and diplomatic status have improved substantially, and the burden on the economy of the past excessive militancy and international isolation has been eased. The North may feel optimistic also about the prospect of improving its political image and influence among some sectors of South Korean society. For these reasons, Pyongyang shares Seoul's interest in maintaining the talks but not Seoul's reluctance to propose and discuss a wide range of sensitive issues, including arms control. Pyongyang also probably believes that its improved image will work to increase the pressures upon the United States to withdraw its military forces from Korea.

(S) Military factors may contribute to Pyongyang's seeming receptivity to arms-control proposals, since many types of measures would add more to Pyongyang's security than to Seoul's. Common-ceiling ground force reductions, for example, would end Seoul's advantage in ground forces. The withdrawal of US forces could

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have a greater effect in undermining ROK confidence and in seeming to erode the deterrent against aggression than is suggested by the actual number of troops involved. Both the North and South would benefit economically by an easing of military burdens, but the North, with its smaller population and less-developed economic base, would benefit relatively more. The release of military manpower to the economy would relieve the North's manpower problem--and the North may make some unilateral military force reductions for their propaganda and economic effects. It has been argued in the South, on the other hand, that force reductions could lead to unemployment and political problems, but this is not likely to be a serious obstacle in view of the ROK's high rate of economic growth, and force reductions in fact are being considered also by Seoul.

(U) The present phase of North-South relations may owe much to President Pak's initiatives in his August 1970 speech and his August 1971 proposal for Red Cross talks. However, in regard to concrete proposals, the score still favors Kim Il-song. After his August 1971 speech, Kim told foreign newsmen in a series of interviews that the North would be willing to negotiate directly with the Pak regime; that the ROK relationships with the United States and Japan need not be severed prior to such contacts (or, alternatively, that Pyongyang was willing to abrogate its own alliances with the Soviet Union and China if Seoul would abrogate its treaties with the United States and Japan); that Pyongyang was willing to sign a "peace pact" with Seoul; that there could be a mutual withdrawal from the DMZ and a mutual force reduction that could include--as Seoul had earlier demanded--limitations on the militia as well; and that there could be reductions by a flat 150,000 or 200,000 men on each side, which would greatly favor the South with its much larger armed forces.¹ In the Red Cross talks themselves, Pyongyang also has sought various political understandings, in contrast to the simple emphasis on the original humanitarian aims of the talks by the ROK negotiators. Pyongyang has also shown itself to be much more imaginative and less cautious than the South in the conduct of the North-South Coordinating

1. (U) The North has consistently stated that the ultimate arms-control goal is to reduce the armed forces, North and South, to 100,000 men, with a proportionate reduction in armaments. Recently Pyongyang has suggested that if US forces are withdrawn from South Korea, the North would "of its own accord" reduce its forces to 200,000 men. Pyongyang's dwelling on the theme of force reductions has suggested to some analysts that the North genuinely desires a substantial demobilization and easing of the military burden.

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Committee, which was organized to carry out the aims of the July 4, 1972, communiqué. Whether Pyongyang's less timid approach to the North-South talks contributes to the prospects for arms-control agreements, however, is by no means clear. Its proposals stem from obvious ulterior motives, such as opening the South to Communist influences, undermining the rationale for the US military presence, and gaining various propaganda advantages. That achievement of stable, enforceable reduction of tension and arms control is among Pyongyang's aims has not been demonstrated.

C. THE GREAT POWERS AND KOREAN ARMS CONTROL (U)

(U) Because the great powers all have an interest in avoiding a direct confrontation with one another (or a sharp deterioration of their bilateral relations) as a consequence of a conflict in Korea, they all share a prominent interest in further reducing the already low probability of another war on the Korean peninsula. Opportunities to reduce tension in the area are greater than at any time since the end of the Second World War. If these opportunities are not exploited, they may diminish. The situation in Korea might then return to what it was in the late 1960s, or it might possibly deteriorate further and end by imposing greater costs on the powers than now seems probable. At the same time, the great powers have other interests that differ and often conflict, and those interests would not necessarily be served by specific arms-control or tension-reducing measures.

1. The United States (U)

(U) For the United States, it is most important that arms-control measures for Korea do not lead to a degradation of the US deterrent. It is in the US interest as tensions abate in Korea to achieve a lower level of commitment in South Korea and for that country to handle more of its own defense burden, preferably at a reduced level of armament. The US interest would not be served if arms-control measures in Korea undermined the confidence of South Korea or Japan in the effectiveness of the deterrent against Communist aggression in Korea--or if the DPRK's perception of the effectiveness of the deterrent was weakened.

(U) It would be greatly in the interests of the United States if arms-control measures pertaining to Korea contributed to improved relations between the United States and the other major powers. Arms-control measures that seemed to leave South Korea vulnerable to Communist aggression, or that seemed either to

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place excessive strategic burdens upon Japan or to exclude it from Korean affairs, however, could contribute to strains between the United States and Japan and would therefore be contrary to US interests. Conversely, a balanced arms-control program could provide the opportunity for constructive involvement by the major powers, contribute to the détente between the United States and Japan and the Communist countries, and thereby advance the broader US interest in international stability and relaxation of tension.

2. Japan (U)

(U) Japan's one vital interest related to Korea is that there should not be another war on the peninsula. The Japanese government should therefore be willing to participate in, or give its support to, a tension-reducing program that had a reasonable chance of lowering further the probability of conflict in Korea.

(U) Japan's interests would further be served if the status quo was stabilized in Korea. For this reason it would like the North-South talks to continue because the negotiating process involves the two Koreas in a nonviolent form of interaction and may eventually help to bring about the de facto legitimization of the division of the peninsula.

(U) Japan's participation in tension-reducing initiatives, however, will probably be inhibited by its wariness of becoming involved in situations that entail the risk of military involvement or of seriously provoking one or both of the great Communist powers. It follows that Japan will neither contribute men to a peace-keeping force nor participate in a four-power agreement guaranteeing continued peace on the peninsula if that agreement binds the signatories to the imposition of military sanctions on North or South Korea should one of them attack the other. Moreover, Japan will not enter into a treaty committing it to the defense of South Korea.

(U) As part of its policy of diversifying its contacts in Asia, improving relations with Communist governments, and deriving maximum benefits from the entire Korean peninsula, Japan has displayed increasing interest in expanding contacts with Pyongyang. Movement in this direction has been limited thus far by Japan's desire to maintain good relations with South Korea and to see the North-South talks continue. Any drastic change in Japan's policy toward Pyongyang would antagonize Seoul, place it in a weaker bargaining position with respect to its rival, and incline it to downgrade or even withdraw from the talks. It is probable,

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but by no means certain, that these considerations will cause Tokyo to stop short of extending recognition to North Korea for some time to come.

(C) The most significant potential obstacle to Japanese support for tension-reducing or arms-control measures concerns the stationing of US forces in South Korea. These forces, the Japanese government seems to believe, play an important role in deterring North Korean aggression. Their withdrawal, whether gradual or precipitate, would arouse Japanese anxiety, in part because of the perceived weakening of the deterrent in Korea, and in part because of fear that this move might presage a diminished US interest in the defense of non-Communist Asia in general and Japan specifically. Therefore, if the United States should decide that all or most of its forces should be withdrawn from South Korea, it would be highly desirable that this be carried out in an arms-control context, such as a reduction in the number of men under arms in the North to balance the US withdrawal.

3. The Soviet Union (U)

(C) On balance, there are compelling reasons for the Soviet Union to favor tension-reducing or arms-control efforts. Kim's dependence on Moscow for military supplies will probably inhibit him from undertaking any full-scale military operations in the future. But it is unlikely that the Soviets would have sufficient influence to restrain Kim from undertaking the kinds of risky ventures they were unable to prevent in the late 1960s. At the same time, the Soviets face the prospect of perhaps paying more in material terms for what influence they do have because of Peking's willingness to complement its ideological affinity with North Korea by increasing its military assistance. Most important, to the extent that the Soviet Union seeks amicable and profitable relations with Japan and the United States, any tensions on the Korean peninsula that complicate those relations become commensurately more costly.

(C) Nevertheless, the Soviets will have certain concerns about supporting tension-reducing and arms-control efforts, namely, the impact on their relationship with Kim Il-song and their competition with China. The Soviets will have to be confident that lending more than passive support to tension-reducing and arms-control efforts will not be construed by Kim as great-power interference on their part, about which Kim is most sensitive. A blatant Soviet role would, of course, be counterproductive for Moscow if it impelled Kim to revert to a more militant--and hence more risky--stance or if it strengthened

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Peking's hand in Pyongyang. The China factor will particularly condition the Soviet reaction to measures that would affect Soviet military assistance to North Korea, since the arms lever is important to the USSR's competition with China for influence in Pyongyang.

(C) While these considerations constitute obstacles to Soviet support of tension-reducing or arms-control efforts in Korea, they are not necessarily mutually reinforcing. If the Soviets propose or endorse measures that meet Kim's approval, for example, Soviet concern for China's influence might be substantially eased, since such influence depends so heavily and directly on Kim himself. The same of course would apply to Chinese measures that met with Kim's approval. In this respect, Kim's autonomy vis-à-vis each major Communist power has considerable positive potential in terms of an enactment of tension-reducing or arms-control measures in Korea. In other words, the Sino-Soviet dispute need not represent an insuperable barrier to a significant and active role for most--if not all--of the major powers in the effort to stabilize the Korean environment. What this signifies in the final analysis is that even if the Soviets might be reluctant to take an active role in tension-reducing and arms-control efforts, substantial progress at the major-power level still need not be excluded. For unless the measures agreed upon by the other powers are blatantly contrary to Soviet interests, the Soviets, even as nonparticipants, might be expected to acquiesce in them on the basis of their general interest in finding ways to stabilize the Korean situation.

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4. China (U)

(C) The reduction of tension and arms control in Korea are likely to be seen by China as contributing to its interests. No conceivable arms-control agreement is likely to prejudice the security or political orientation of North Korea as a friendly buffer regime. While arms control could reduce Kim Il-song's dependence upon foreign assistance, his dependence on Soviet aid is likely to be reduced more than his dependence on Chinese aid, which will leave Peking with somewhat more leverage compared with Moscow than before. China probably sees the reduction of tension in Korea as an important part of the developing détente in East Asia generally and would be likely to want to join in an agreement reached in Korea, particularly if the United States and Japan did so. China is more concerned than the Soviet Union about the growth of Japanese influence in South Korea, but might come to view the reduction of tension in Korea as a means of balancing

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that influence through more Japanese contacts with Pyongyang. While the presence of US military forces in East Asia is not currently a major issue for Peking, China, pro forma, supports Pyongyang's goal of expelling the US military presence from Korea; however, China probably sees this as a long-range process and would not want to see it accomplished if it had destabilizing repercussions (such as accentuating a trend toward Japanese rearmament.)

(U) The parallelism between China's interests as currently seen by Peking and the process of tension reduction in Korea was reflected, of course, in the process whereby Pyongyang joined with Seoul in the North-South contacts, a process in which Chou En-lai's advice figured importantly. There is no question that China has seen Pyongyang's recent moves as complementary to its own efforts to establish a détente with the United States and Japan. It is possible in addition that Peking sees Korean arms-control negotiations as potentially supporting other Chinese diplomatic initiatives, such as those pertaining to nuclear weapons (no-first-use and nuclear-free-zone proposals).

(C) If Pyongyang were to abandon the present North-South tactics and revert to a "hard-line" toward Seoul, Peking might or might not support Pyongyang verbally, but Peking is not likely to take the initiative in turning Pyongyang in such a direction, nor is it any more likely than it was in the past to accept military risks in behalf of such a turn of policy. If Peking--but not Pyongyang--were to abandon its détente diplomacy for whatever reason, it might still give quiet support to Korean tension-reducing efforts, or at least not take active measures to block those efforts, in order to retain its influence with the Kim regime and minimize the risks and costs of its new militancy.

D. US OPTIONS IN KOREA (U)

1. Components of Present Policy (U)

(S) There are two aspects of US policy that are particularly relevant to the present discussion--policy regarding the continued division of Korea and policy regarding the continued deployment of US armed forces in Korea. The unification of Korea almost certainly could not be achieved in the foreseeable future without destabilizing effects, including large-scale violence and the likelihood of a very tense military situation in Northeast Asia, both of which are obviously not in the US interest. The United States, then, is faced with the question of how to stabilize the division of Korea. Present policy designed to effect this end includes the US security relationship with the Republic of Korea, economic and military

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aid, support of South Korea in the United Nations, and an exclusive diplomatic relationship with South Korea. SK

(S) Maintenance of the US military presence in Korea represents the most concrete action by the United States to stabilize the status quo. There are five components to the US military presence, which could be retained, reduced, or withdrawn in various combinations: the UN Command, which is an important status symbol for the Republic of Korea, which is a part of the existing armistice machinery, and from which derives some of the potential leverage the United States has over tension-reducing and arms-control related issues; the US ground force deployment (the Eighth Army), which is held in theater reserve and does not figure importantly in the conventional military balance in Korea, but which acts as a "trip wire" for the deterrent and an earnest of the US security commitment to Korea; the US air force deployment (the 314th Air Division), which serves partially to offset North Korea's substantial military advantages in the air; and the US military advisory function (the MAAG and its service sections), which has quasi-diplomatic, nontactical status and is technically not part of US "forces." The final element is the US nuclear capability.

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AB. → The most important aspect of the US presence is its psychological effect in confirming for South Korea (and also for Japan) the seriousness of the US commitment to the ROK's defense. ROK forces alone can now--even though the Force Modernization Plan is still incomplete--hold off an attack by North Korea alone without US ground combat involvement and without the use of nuclear weapons.

2. Options (U)

(C) It can be argued that continuation of the present policy of exclusive US support of the ROK with a substantial military presence in Korea would preserve the gains that have been made in the economic development and political stability of South Korea and in the reduction of tension between North and South. It would, however, still leave the United States more involved in Korean security affairs than is consonant with the Nixon Doctrine. It would also run the risk that the process of North-South negotiations might stagnate, that a competitive military buildup might develop in Korea, or that the North might revert to military action. K

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(C) Either of the two main components of US policy toward Korea, that pertaining to the division of Korea and to the US military presence, could be varied independently. The United States could move diplomatically toward a "two Koreas" position and still maintain its military deployment in Korea. Alternatively, it could withdraw its forces and continue to give full and exclusive diplomatic support to Seoul. An extreme option would be for the United States simultaneously to withdraw its forces and move to a "two Koreas" diplomatic posture. If undertaken precipitously, a move toward the extreme option could be seriously destabilizing--by undermining morale in the South and possibly creating dangerous overconfidence in the North. It could also be very disruptive of the US-Japanese security relationship.

(C) An intermediate and preferable option would be for the United States to maintain its relationship with the ROK and keep its forces in South Korea, but at the same time adopt a more flexible diplomatic posture designed to stimulate the tension-reducing and arms-control process in Korea. After prior consultation with its allies, the United States might demonstrate greater willingness to discuss Korean issues--including the sensitive matter of an eventual US military withdrawal--with Peking, Moscow, and possibly also Pyongyang. As part of this flexible policy, the United States could consider phased military withdrawals from Korea as the process of tension reduction continued.

3. US Leverage (U)

(U) In considering specific arms-control proposals and negotiating procedures, it is important to note the leverage the United States might bring to bear on the measures and parties involved.

(U) The most important US leverage derives from the direct US involvement in many activities bearing on arms-control possibilities. In regard to the management of the armistice, the deployment of its own forces and weapons, the fate of the UN Command, the level of military aid to South Korea, and related matters, the United States can take virtually unilateral action, if required, to bring about particular arms-control results.

(C) The United States also has considerable influence in Seoul due to its security-treaty relationship, military and economic assistance, investment and trade, and the US-ROK diplomatic relationship. Additional leverage accrues to the United States from South Korea's overall psychological dependence upon it; even so strong a political figure as President Pak probably

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cannot repeatedly undertake major actions that would call forth strong and persistent statements of US opposition.

(C) Using these various forms of leverage is not simple. The sanctions the United States could apply (or threaten to apply) against Seoul would not necessarily increase ROK incentives to participate in arms-control measures; on the contrary, loss of confidence in US support might lead the ROK government to terminate efforts in that direction.

(U) With North Korea, US leverage is obviously more limited. On the positive side, Pyongyang desires wider diplomatic acceptance and access to Western and Japanese trade and technology. Even short of direct US-North Korean contacts, the United States is influential over these matters. Further leverage derives from the US military presence in South Korea, which Pyongyang would very much like to see removed--an aim for which it may be willing to pay a price.

(U) With the other powers involved in Korea--China, the Soviet Union, and Japan--US leverage derives primarily from the common desire that Korean developments not lead to hostilities and not interfere with the trend toward détente. Leverage is also provided by the possible "linkage" of Korean measures the United States may desire with unrelated measures one or the other of these powers may desire. To the extent that all of the powers share an interest in stabilizing the status quo in Korea and in forestalling the outbreak of hostilities, their joint influence upon tension-reducing and arms-control developments in Korea may be considerable since each has its own forms of leverage and influence over one or the other Korean regime.

E. A TENSION-REDUCING PLAN (U)

(U) Despite the contacts between the two Koreas during the past year, relatively little has been accomplished other than the North-South dialogue itself. All of the parties involved seem to have something to gain from a reduction in tension and would have more to gain from arms-control measures proper. While the obstacles in the way of reaching agreement are not to be underestimated, arms-control prospects in Korea are sufficiently hopeful to warrant additional initiatives.

(U) The tension-reducing measures analyzed in the course of the study² differ in practicality and in their impact on US interests, but many of them would be acceptable to the United

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States in an appropriately balanced arms-control package. We suggest, therefore, the adoption of a carefully coordinated diplomatic plan in which major substantive concessions would not be made unilaterally by the US-ROK side and in which maximum procedural flexibility would be established.

(C) The tension-reducing plan presented below is built upon the existing contacts between the two Koreas and the two sides in the armistice and offers suggestions as to how those contacts can be made more productive in reducing tensions. Basically, the plan calls for coordinating existing contacts with an effort to engage the other major powers--Japan, China, and the Soviet Union--in the tension-reducing process, initially in a series of bilateral consultations. Arms-control dialogues and tension-reducing negotiations would proceed at several different levels at roughly the same time, and responsiveness by the other side in any of these forums would be followed up vigorously. The resulting interlocking arms-control dialogues could generate stimuli that would encourage agreements between the two Koreas; they might lead also to direct agreement, formal or tacit, among the powers themselves. At a later stage, the United Nations might play a useful role in the Korean arms-control process. OK

1. US-ROK Consultation and Planning (U)

(U) It is essential that US involvement in the arms-control process in Korea begin with a wide range of direct consultations with ROK officials to avoid raising suspicions of US intentions and to create a broader arms-control constituency and a more positive arms-control approach in South Korea.

(S) Tension reduction has in fact a limited constituency in South Korea, and arms control even less. There are, however, some officials in South Korea whose interest in these matters could be stimulated by consultations with US officials. Several Korean scholars--some of whom are also government consultants and part-time journalists--have taken an interest in arms control and have even touched upon the sensitive question of how arms control might be applied to Korea.

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Some ROK foreign office officials also are interested in arms-control matters, but chiefly in their SALT, European, and UN, rather than Korean, aspects. The influential group that is most negative is the ROK military, which tends to see arms control as a threat to its interests and a potentially dangerous concession to Communist blandishments. However, the Ministry of National Defense has initiated force reduction studies for

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consideration by the Minister and the President. Some US observers have recently commented that despite the hard-line position of the ROK military generally, some officers may be able to gain a more balanced understanding of the implications of arms control for ROK interests.

2. North-South Negotiations (U)

(U) The consultations recommended above should have as their first result a more imaginative and less timorous ROK posture in the talks with the North. Specifically, the North-South negotiations should be aimed at (a) achieving some agreements on confidence-building measures, (b) initiating at least a dialogue on the more sensitive issues, and (c) maintaining all the while sufficient flexibility so that the dialogue or negotiations can be shifted into another forum if major roadblocks are encountered. These aims should be pursued in the context of general types of measures, such as those that follow.

a. (S) Confidence-building Measures. The Republic of Korea has prepared its position on some of the confidence-building proposals that have been raised in the North-South talks, such as cultural exchanges and joint fisheries projects. For the moment, negotiations on these measures have been deferred because of the North's insistence on prior acceptance of its "five-point" package proposal, but when this tactic has run its course (possibly after the Fall 1973 UN General Assembly session) agreement on some of these measures may become feasible. pk

b. (S) Military Measures. South Korea reportedly has tentative plans for conditionally agreeing to the formation of a military subcommittee of the North-South Coordinating Committee and for discussing some troop reduction proposals. North Korean Premier Kim Il has put forward a superficially very favorable proposal relating to the withdrawal of US forces, and the South should be urged strongly to explore this offer also.³ In dealing with the question of US forces, the ROK negotiators should be encouraged to direct the talks along as specific a direction as possible and to examine individual components of the US military presence rather than simply dealing with its "expulsion," as Pyongyang tends to put it. WC

3. (U) Kim Il's offer was that North Korea "of its own accord" would reduce its armed forces to 200,000 men if the United States withdrew its forces from Korea.

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(C) The Republic of Korea may be reluctant to enter even into exploratory negotiations on force levels and the presence of US forces. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It should be pointed out to the ROK government that the Kim Il offer could be a means of obtaining a North Korean quid pro quo for US troop reductions that may be inevitable in the longer run in any case. If--as is quite possible--it turns out that the offer is not negotiable (for example, if it is linked to prior acceptance of the five-point package proposal), then U.S. exploration will still have been useful in uncovering the North Korean motivation.

(S) The ROK side should also be encouraged to introduce the question of nuclear weapons into the dialogue with the North, as part of the discussion of the US military presence. The question of a possible Korean agreement to ban the introduction of nuclear weapons into Korea has particularly interesting ramifications. There are no nuclear weapons in North Korea, nor does it appear likely that either the Soviet Union or China has plans to introduce such weapons there. [REDACTED]

* [REDACTED] Furthermore, the political costs of using such weapons even in the event of a massive attack would be enormous. Denuclearization might be for Pyongyang a particularly meaningful achievement, short of a complete US military withdrawal, for which the North might make appropriate concessions in other areas. A denuclearization agreement between the two Koreas in a suitably balanced package could provide a format for great-power endorsement through appropriate protocols.

3. The Armistice Machinery (U)

(U) Concurrently with the foregoing steps to ensure maximum utilization of the ongoing North-South talks, the other major existing communications channel--the Military Armistice Commission (MAC)--could be adapted to more productive use. The MAC channel has some major advantages for an arms-control dialogue. It is the only forum in which the United States and North Korea can meet directly without creating special diplomatic complications. It is also a forum in which China and the United States can meet without the Soviets and without raising problems of Sino-Soviet relations.

a. (C) Arms-control Dialogue. If President Pak responds to US urgings to initiate a dialogue in the Coordinating Committee

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on some specific arms-control topics, and whenever some progress is registered in that dialogue or, alternatively, whenever a specific topic seems to have run into a serious deadlock, the discussion could be supplemented in the MAC. In particular, it is appropriate for the MAC to discuss inspection and supervision issues, since it has at its disposal both the Neutral Nations and Joint Observer Team supervisory mechanisms of the 1953 armistice agreement. (It would be helpful if the MAC could meet in executive session for these discussions.)

b. (S) Revitalization of the Armistice. Measures for revitalizing provisions of the 1953 armistice that have fallen into disuse would clearly be difficult to implement. Nevertheless, it would be useful for the UN side to table some such proposals in the MAC. One step, for example, might be to suggest that the importation of specific, easily identifiable items of military equipment, such as certain types of aircraft, should henceforth be reported to the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) by each side.⁴ The UN side could indicate that for a specific period it will unilaterally make such reports, hoping that the other side will do likewise. If the Communist side responded positively to the UNC reporting initiative, the next step could be for the UN side to announce that it will unilaterally terminate imports of some specified types of equipment for ROK or US forces, expecting that the North would reciprocate by ending imports of some comparable items. (Tacit arms-control by mutual example will be discussed further below.) The UN side should also continue to urge that the MAC resume its function of dispatching Joint Observer Teams to the scene of possible problems within the DMZ, with a view to implementing more rigorously the armistice provisions regarding the DMZ.

c. (C) Atmospheric Measures. In order to facilitate the foregoing dialogue, some measures to improve the tone of MAC meetings should be initiated, either in the form of a MAC agreement or through unilateral action by the UN side. For example, the UN side could suggest that the MAC meet in executive session possibly at UNC headquarters in Seoul in the hope of eliciting a reciprocal invitation to Pyongyang (on the precedent of the North-South talks).

4. (U) The assumption of significant functions by the NNSC or the expansion of the NNSC terms of reference should be proposed only after consultations in the capitals of the neutral countries involved (at a minimum, the two neutrals of the UN side-- Switzerland and Sweden, but preferably also Poland and Czechoslovakia).

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4. Four-Power Diplomacy (U)

(U) The foregoing steps might eventually lead to some confidence-building and "atmospheric" agreements between Seoul and Pyongyang or between the two sides in the armistice. They might also lead to a useful arms-control dialogue. Substantive arms-control agreements, however, will probably require not only a prior vigorous arms-control dialogue between the two Koreas but also some international stimuli comparable to the changes in environment of the two Koreas (e.g., the US-China détente and subsequent Japan-China rapprochement) that helped bring the Korean North-South contacts to their present stage. The four powers have some assets that should be brought to bear on the negotiations: particularly the leverage they may have with each other and with either Korea; their common interest in stabilizing the status quo; and their capability for individual or joint endorsement, inspection, and supervision of various aspects of arms-control agreements that may be reached by the two Koreas. Four-power involvement in the Korean tension-reducing process could not only accelerate that process but also contribute to improvement in US relations with the individual powers.

(U) Because of the absence of any accepted forum for four-power diplomacy comparable to the North-South Coordinating Committee or Military Armistice Commission, we suggest that the effort to involve the powers initially take the form of a series of coordinated bilateral diplomatic efforts, the form and substance of which are outlined below.

a. (C) US-Japan. Despite Japan's interests in Korea, it is inhibited from direct involvement in security-related matters by its antimilitary constitutional and popular bias. At the same time, the exclusion of Japan from decisions and actions pertaining to Korea's future could jeopardize the US-Japanese relationship, particularly in regard to Japan's confidence in US security guarantees and the availability to US forces of Japanese military facilities if required for the defense of South Korea. It is important that the fullest possible consultations continue to be maintained between Washington and Tokyo regarding diplomatic tactics and long-range planning for arms control in Korea.

b. (C) US-China. The US-China channel also holds promise for advancing arms-control objectives pertaining to Korea. Korea could provide an opportunity for both the United States and China to add substance to their developing détente. However, before opening the US-China dialogue on Korea, US consultations should be conducted in Seoul and Tokyo to minimize the impression that the United States is "colluding" with its former enemy, China,

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regarding important interests of its allies. There are four issues that are particularly appropriate for US-Chinese consideration. OK

(C) US Military Presence. China's present relaxed stand on the US military presence in Asia creates an opportunity for the United States to probe Peking's attitude more fully. In the discussions, the US side might present the Chinese with details about the US ground, air, and advisory functions in Korea. For example, the point should be made that US air units in Korea serve partially to offset North Korea's preponderant air strength, and that in the absence of mutual air force limitations this situation might be more stable than the alternative of turning over to South Korea the aircraft now under US control, which would unavoidably increase the ROK's offensive as well as defensive capabilities. It would be interesting to determine whether Peking would come to see the US air units in Korea as more stabilizing in the short run than the corresponding capability in ROK hands, or whether the Chinese would simply see the US presence as part of a "forward-based system" that should be withdrawn. OK

(C) Similarly, the usefulness of the US role in the armistice context--that is, the UN Command--should be stressed, as well as the historical role of the UN Command in checking possibly destabilizing ROK military actions through its operational command of ROK forces. The point could be made to the Chinese that the UN Command entity is separate from US combat forces, such as the Eighth Army, and that in its armistice function the UN Command is analogous to the Chinese People's Volunteers Command, which also continues to be represented at Panmunjom. Peking may very well see an advantage in an arrangement that gives both China and the United States (but not the Soviet Union) a historically based role in Korean arms-control matters. The principal thrust of the argument should be that in the absence of arms-control agreements the various components of the US military presence have specific stabilizing functions. OK

(C) Korea's Diplomatic Status. China may have less interest than the Soviet Union in establishing contacts with Seoul, but it also will want not to be left lagging if Moscow enters into additional informal contacts with Seoul. The United States should stress in exploring this matter with China that US support for Pyongyang's improved diplomatic status and broadened economic contacts is contingent on a degree of reciprocity from Communist countries for Seoul. (The question of Korea's diplomatic status is one that would be suited also to parallel Japanese probes in Peking.) OK

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(C) Tacit Arms Control. In the preceding section it was suggested that the UN side might unilaterally terminate the import into South Korea of some specific types of military equipment in the expectation that the North would reciprocate. Arms control by mutual example could also be accomplished outside armistice channels in direct contacts with Peking and Moscow. The United States could separately inform Peking and Moscow, after consulting with Seoul, that it would unilaterally cease specific military equipment exports to South Korea in the hope that the Communist side would exercise similar restraint. The United States could ask Peking and Moscow to obtain Pyongyang's concurrence, or the demarche could be followed up in the Military Armistice Commission along the lines previously suggested.

(S) Nuclear Weapons. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Peking might be particularly interested in an NFZ agreement pertaining to Korea. However, the format for an NFZ agreement might better be an agreement between North and South Korea, with an appropriate protocol for accession by the nuclear countries, since such an agreement would involve US concessions for which a Chinese (or Soviet) quid pro quo might be difficult to establish. Even so, the diplomatic groundwork for the agreement could be laid in bilateral US-Chinese talks, with each country undertaking to persuade its Korean ally.

(S) North Korea should be asked to make significant military and political arms-control concessions for an NFZ agreement. It is quite possible that Peking would urge Pyongyang to enter into an appropriate agreement, which would represent a political as well as arms-control gain for both China and North Korea (for China, because Peking probably views at least some of the nuclear weapons stored in Korea as potentially usable against Chinese as well as Korean targets).

c. (C) US-USSR. US-China consultations on Korean arms-control measures should be paralleled by US-Soviet consultations, even at the risk of introducing additional complications into the already complex US-Soviet arms-control relationship. An alternative course that amounted to leaving the Soviet Union out of the picture would be much more risky since it would heighten Soviet suspicions. The specific areas to be included in such consultations should be roughly those already outlined for US-PRC consultations.

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(C) Korea's Diplomatic Status. Moscow may be quite receptive to steps to broaden Seoul's diplomatic status. (As in the case of China, Japanese approaches to Moscow regarding this matter would also be useful.) Moscow has had various minor contacts with Seoul and has drawn back from other overtures only when Pyongyang protested. Once the current wave of recognition of Pyongyang has run its course, the inducement of added US or Japanese contacts may persuade Pyongyang to take a more flexible position toward unofficial trade and similar contacts by Communist countries with Seoul. If the United States establishes some contacts with Pyongyang, it may be advisable to do so under Soviet auspices in order to assuage Soviet suspicions of Sino-US collusion on other issues. The development of a more even-handed Soviet position toward the two Koreas could be very important in reassuring South Korea that the North is not benefiting exclusively from the reduction of tension--and would thereby help improve the prospects for arms control generally. *PK*

(C) Tacit Arms Control. Arms control by mutual example, as we have suggested, would require Soviet as well as Chinese cooperation but might find the Soviets less enthusiastic. Nevertheless, the tacit arrangement should be offered to Moscow, which would be reluctant to block a promising avenue of arms reduction if Pyongyang accepts it. *OK*

(C) US Military Presence. The US military presence in Korea is probably not a major concern for the Soviet Union, although Moscow would back any reasonable effort by Pyongyang to obtain a US withdrawal. The question of a North Korean quid pro quo for a US withdrawal could therefore be raised in Moscow when it is raised in Peking. *OK*

7. [(S) Nuclear Weapons. The approaches to Peking regarding nuclear weapons should also be paralleled in Moscow. The drawback of any nuclear agreement for Moscow is that it would detract from Soviet use of the nuclear threat against China. There may be minor advantages for the Soviet Union, however, in that an agreement could edge China closer to a stand against proliferation and in that it would remove US weapons from a forward-based area near the Soviet Union. In these regards, Moscow would be likely to see precedent-setting advantages. *OK*

d. (U) Multilateral and United Nations. If an arms-control agreement is concluded in Korea, a multilateral conference or the General Assembly of the United Nations could usefully pass a resolution endorsing the agreement. The UN General Assembly and Security Council could at that time also take whatever action is required to bring the UN relationship with the two Koreas into

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line with the agreement (e.g., disbanding the UN Command if that is called for by the agreement and admitting the two Koreas to membership if that step has not already been taken).

(C) The United Nations can function usefully in another way-- by moving toward a more even-handed approach to the two Koreas. The United States should not expend negotiating capital to preserve the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK). Nor should it any longer attempt to block participation of both Koreas in the UN General Assembly debate. However, the United States should make a defense of the UN Command as having responsibilities in the Korean armistice that cannot be abandoned. (The UN Command, of course, also has implications that cannot be gone into in a UN debate, particularly the relationship of the UN role to Japan's willingness to support the US military presence in Korea.)

(C) If it becomes necessary to abandon the UN Command, alternatives for its various functions will have to be devised. For purposes of the arms-control dialogue, a continuing US role in the armistice and the MAC would be useful; this could be accomplished possibly through direct agreement with China and North Korea.

(U) Admission of both Koreas to the United Nations can also be useful to the aim of stabilizing the status quo in Korea. Since the South would gain membership along with the North, the move might facilitate the establishment of some contacts between Seoul and various Communist countries, which would balance the improved diplomatic status of the North.

(U) Another potential contribution of the United Nations, formation of a fact-finding or observer mission at the invitation of both North and South Korea, could be useful after the arms-control dialogue has developed between the Koreas or within the MAC, if it does not arouse Pyongyang's conventional response that any UN action in Korea is improper. A finding of arms-control progress in Korea could reduce pressures by the General Assembly for Security Council dissolution of the UN Command. Also, a UN mission would provide a useful device for engaging Japan in the tension-reducing process without creating domestic political problems.

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F. OUTLOOK (U)

(C) Undue optimism is seldom warranted in international politics and least of all in arms-control matters, which normally develop with agonising slowness. In regard to Korea, there are some common interests among the parties involved in reducing tension, but the burden of a quarter of a century of domestic and international conflict and confrontation is not easily shed. The negotiating plan that we present may not lead to major arms-control measures in Korea in the very near future, but at the least we expect that it would contribute to the confidence-building process, that it would tend to stabilize relations between the Koreas, and that the proposed arms-control dialogue would add substance to the developing detente between North and South Korea, the United States and China, the United States and the Soviet Union, and between the Communist countries and Japan. The risks in the suggested plan are not great, since unilateral substantive concessions are not involved; on the other hand, failure to take additional tension-reducing initiatives in Korea could lead to a deterioration of North-South relations that would involve far greater dangers.

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