

Korean-American Diplomatic Relations, 1962-1982*

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I. Introduction

Korea's political history has been shaped by its strategically vital geographical relationship to three major Asian powers: China, Russia and Japan. Because of Korea's location between the islands of Japan and the Asian continents the three powers have always regarded it as essential to their security. It is thus not surprising—after Soviet and American forces occupied Korea in August, 1945—that the governments were unable to agree on a unified Korea.⁽¹⁾

Both Korean regimes are strongly committed to ultimate reunification, but they have confronted each other with hostility and fear ever since the 1950-53 Korean War. Since 1953 the United

States has been formally committed by treaty to help defend South Korea, and Washington now regards this as essential to maintain the credibility of its pledge to defend Japan. Since 1961 both China and the Soviet Union have been formally committed by treaty to help defend North Korea and today they compete strongly for influence over its regime.⁽²⁾ Today, Korea is one of the few places in the world where hostilities involving one or more of the great powers could conceivably break out at any moment.⁽³⁾

The United States, however, is some 6,000 miles away. American military forces deployed in Northeast Asia constitute a "surrogate" presence or, as recent American presidents have been fond of noting, U.S. troop presence ensure

* Prepared for delivery at the 23rd annual convention of The International Studies Association, Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A., March 24-27, 1982.

(1) Stephen P. Gebert, *Northeast Asia in U.S. Policy*, The Washington Paper 71, Sage Publications, London, 1979, p. 37.

(2) A Doak Barnett, *China and the Major Powers in East Asia*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1977, p. 307.

(3) Joseph A. Yager, ed., *Nonproliferation and U.S. Foreign Policy*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1980, p. 47.

that the United States is and will remain a Pacific power.

If the balance in Asia does indeed require the maintenance of the four-nation interactive system, then American political willingness to continue to be a Pacific power is indeed crucial.

On the Korean peninsula two rival states, each possessing formidable military machines and each laying claim to the whole of the peninsula, confront each other over armistice rather than boundary lines. What are the essential elements of current South Korean foreign Policy? Four primary themes are prominently displayed. First, the cornerstone of the Republic's foreign policy continues to be the alliance with the United States, especially as this relates to security matters. Secondly, relations with Japan, normalized in 1965 after stormy internal struggles, have steadily become more important, particularly in the economic field. Thirdly, South Korea has made a determined effort in recent years to expand its relations with a wide range of states and has even begun to relax the rigidity characterizing her earlier attitude towards all Communist states.⁽⁴⁾

Korea has long had a strategic importance out of proportion to her size. Great powers intersect in Korea and reflect their respective national self-interests. However, while the changing international environment in this decade has lessened the potential for violence, none of these powers can exercise "control" over the policies of their Korean ally. Too often, Americans think of Korea only in a vacuum, emphasizing only the military balance between North and South Korea. The crucial point,

however, is that developments in Korea affect all of East Asia, involve several powers, and are potentially destabilizing to the present international equilibrium.⁽⁵⁾

The purpose of this paper is to describe, analyze and evaluate Korea-U.S. relations from the military revolution of 1961 to the present. U.S. relations with South Korea have been close but not always smooth. Rapid economic growth in South Korea during the latter half of the 1960s and improvements in the South Korean armed forces, which sent two divisions to fight in Vietnam during this period, convinced President Nixon that the United States could safely withdraw from South Korea in 1971 one of the two combat divisions it maintained there. The South Korean government at first objected strongly, but eventually acquiesced in exchange for a promise by the United States to provide a large amount of equipment to modernize South Korean forces. Delay in completing this program created skepticism among South Koreans that the military equipment proposed by the Carter administration as compensation for the withdrawal of the remaining U.S. ground forces would be provided as scheduled.⁽⁶⁾

The Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954 is the central document binding the United States and the Republic of Korea. That treaty stipulates that an armed attack upon either country would cause each to "act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional process."

The commitment of the United States to the defense of South Korea remains the primary link between the two countries. However, economic relations are growing rapidly in im-

(4) Robert A. Scalapino, "Korea and Vietnam", in Wayne Wilcox, Leo E. Rose, Gavin Boyd, eds., *Asia and the International System*, Winthrop Publishers, Inc., Cambridge, 1972, p. 150.

(5) *The Republic of Korea: A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations*, United States Senate, Jan. 9, 1978, p. 7.

(6) Ralph N. Clough and William Watts, *The United States and Korea: American Attitudes and Policies*, Potomac Associates, Washington, D.C., 1978, p. 6.

portance as South Korea's economy expands. Twenty-seven percent of South Korea's U.S. \$46 billion foreign trade in 1981 was with the United States. Already South Korea has become the 14th largest trading partner of the United States, buying nearly U.S. \$1 billion in agricultural commodities each year in addition to purchasing civilian aircraft, military equipment, and other high technology products. American private firms have invested some U.S. \$950 million in loans and equity in South Korea.⁽⁷⁾ Korea received U.S. \$5.27 billion in military assistance from the U.S. from 1950 to 1980.

Korea, however, has been not only receptive but also anxious to buy from the United States; the balance of trade deficits must be placed squarely on America's low productivity, inflation, failure to adopt a viable energy policy, and U.S. government constraints on export sectors. Korea, its security tied to American willingness to furnish arms, military training, and to deter aggression through its military presence, wants Korean-American trade to flourish and hopes to reduce its trade surplus with the United States so that economic disagreements will not have the effect of weakening mutual security ties. For, however valuable the American market, it is the security relationship upon which Seoul necessarily places the highest value. To understand this, it will be helpful to place the Korean-American security relationship in historical perspective.⁽⁸⁾

II. Evolution of Korean-American Relations

A. Military Revolution of 1961

The Chang Myon interregnum that followed

the rule of Syngman Rhee which abolished the presidential system and replaced it with a parliamentary system, was the freest period in South Korea's political history. Newspapers proliferated, politicians scrambled for position, and political demonstrators marched daily through the streets of Seoul.

Under such circumstances, the adoption and execution of effective policies was impossible. Industrial production declined, unemployment increased and prices rose rapidly. Dissatisfaction mounted, especially within the armed forces, until the military brought down the Chang government by a military coup in May 1961 after only nine months in office. The ineffectiveness of the Chang government and the self-serving behavior of politicians further discredited party politics in the eyes of many Koreans already disillusioned by politics under Syngman Rhee and made them receptive to the pledges of the military leaders to bring order and progress to the nation.⁽⁹⁾

The United States Embassy in Seoul issued a statement on Tuesday, May 16, expressing strong support for the "freely elected and constitutionally established government" of Premier John M. Chang. The statement came after a military revolutionary group announced it had seized power from the Premier. In Washington responsible Government officials said that the coup in South Korea was not supported by the United States.

Gen. Carter B. Magruder in his capacity of commander in chief of the United Nations command, called upon all military personnel in his command to support the only recognized government of the Republic of Korea (ROK), that headed by Prime Minister Chang.

(7) *ibid.*, p. 6.

(8) Gebert, *Northeast Asia in U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

(9) Clough and Watts, *The United States and Korea: American Attitudes and Policies*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

The statement in Seoul, made public by the United States Embassy's charge d'affairs, Marshall Green said; "The Position taken by the commander in chief of the United Nations Command in supporting the freely elected and constitutionally established government of the Republic of Korea is one in which I fully concur."

"General Magruder expects that the chief of the Korean armed forces will use their authority and influence to see that control is immediately turned back to the lawful governmental authorities and that order is restored in the armed forces."

United States soldiers and civilians were told to remain in their quarters. A spokesman for General Magruder said, "All stations throughout Korea have been placed on an alert for protection from being involved in the present difficulties of the Korean Government. The United States Army is watching the situation."⁽¹⁰⁾

The Revolutionary Committee announced a six-item statement, in which it emphasized anti-communism and the promotion of friendly relation with the United States.⁽¹¹⁾

The military coup had been organized and planned largely by a group of young colonels who moved swiftly to consolidate their power.

"The United States has ruled out any abrupt, direct intervention in Korea," qualified sources said May 16. "The decision to withhold action and detailed comment on Korean developments was made early today by high authorities." Competition sources said no consideration was being given to cutting off United States military and economic aid to South Korea.

Green said he wanted to make it "emphatically clear that the United States supported the

constitutional government of the Republic of Korea."

The State Department said only that that the two Americans' statements in Korea "were made within the scope of their authority in their posts." This implied support for the statements, but it was taken generally as something less than a ringing endorsement.⁽¹²⁾

There was a tendency in some Administration circles to criticize the action of the United States Embassy in Seoul and Gen. Curter B. Magruder, the United States military commander there, for having issued statements on May 16 in support of the Chang Government and critical of the military officers who seized power. The main question appeared to be not what they had said so much as why they had issued statements without clearing them first with Washington.⁽¹³⁾

Officials in Washington were hopeful May 18 that political authority in South Korea would quickly be returned to civilian hands. In Seoul, Gen. Chang Do Young, head of the Junta, reported a stepping up of anti-communist efforts with the arrest of 930 persons on suspicion since the military seized power on May 16.

The news that Premier John M. Chang and his Cabinet had resigned reached Washington in the early hours of May 18. The Premier's move was regarded here as an inevitable development, but not one in the best interests of the U.S. from Washington's standpoint.

The biggest worry in the U.S. was that the intrusion of military men into civilian affairs would become an established pattern in South Korea. The tradition of separation of the army from politics had been cultivated assiduously in South Korea by every United States military

(10) *The New York Times*, May 19, 1961.

(11) *The Hankook Ilbo*, May 17, 1961.

The Korea Times, May 17, 1961.

(12) *The New York Times*, May 17, 1961.

(13) *The New York Times*, May 19, 1961.

commander there since the establishment of the Republic in 1948.

It was feared that this rule, now broken, might prove doubly hard to reestablish. South Korea's military leaders, it was feared, having tasted political power, might find it pleasant and difficult to forgo in the future.

The State Department expressed deep "regret" on May 22 over the suspension of normal democratic processes in South Korea. Lincoln White, State Department spokesman, asserted; "We deeply regret that this group found it necessary to suspend temporarily the democratic and constitutional processes of the Republic of Korea." The Department said that the United States representatives in Seoul were conferring with leaders of the junta and were "exploring the most appropriate and effective means by which the United States can continue to support the Korean people" in their anti-Communist struggles.⁽¹⁴⁾

There was also some conflict between the military junta and the United States authorities here including the disruptive effect of the revolution on the military command. The United Command was dangerously close to being ruined. Nations

Senior Korean officers mutinied against the U.N. Command refusing to accept the authority of General Carter B. Magruder, U.N. Chief of Command as well as being the Commander of United States Forces in Korea.⁽¹⁵⁾ On May 23, South Korea's military junta rejected sections of a draft agreement aimed at ending defiance

by Korean forces of UNC authority.⁽¹⁶⁾

Marshall Green and General Magruder appealed to President Yoon Po Sun to use what power he had to end the coup and get the military forces involved in the coup back into their barracks. President Yoon refused, however, and thus assured that the coup would succeed without bloodshed.⁽¹⁷⁾

In the early stages of the coup, the United States was suspicious of the political ideology of Major General Park Chung Hee, the leader of the coup,⁽¹⁸⁾ since his brother had been a communist and he himself had been involved in a communist-inspired putsch in Yosu several years before.

The arrival of new American ambassador Samuel D. Berger on May 24 signaled a change of policy on the part of the United States towards the military government.⁽¹⁹⁾ Two days later on May 26, the military junta and the UNC issued joint communiques stating that Korean military forces would return to the command of the United Nations.⁽²⁰⁾ On June 28, Ambassador Berger called on General Park and met with Premier Chang in prison, then reconfirmed the continuing support of the United States for the Republic of Korea.⁽²¹⁾

Upon the repeated urgings of Ambassador Berger for liberalization of the regime, General Park released General Lee Han Lim, who had opposed the military take-over, and granted a general amnesty to 15,000 political prisoners.⁽²²⁾ In addition, Park agreed to reduce the period of military rule to 2 years from the previously

(14) *The New York Times*, May 23, 1961.

(15) *The New York Times*, May 23, 1961.

(16) *The New York Times*, May 24, 1961.

(17) *The Choong Ang Ilbo*, February 10, 1982.

(18) *The Choong Ang Ilbo*, February 19, 1982, Interview with Kim, Jung Yol (Former Minister of Defense).

(19) *The Hankook Ilbo*, February 28, 1982.

(20) *The Hankook Ilbo*, May 27, 1961.

(21) *The Hankook Ilbo*, June 29, 1961.

(22) *The Newsweek*, August 28, 1961.

announced period of 5 years. In addition, the American Embassy in Seoul was able to secure the release of imprisoned Premier Chang before Park's visit to Washington in November 1961 by advising a policy of tolerance towards the military leader.⁽²³⁾

Talks between Chairman Park Chung Hee and President Kennedy were termed a "friendly and constructive exchange of views on the current situation in Korea and the Far East....". The two leaders issued a joint communique upon completion of the talks on November 14, 1961 reaffirming "the strong bonds of friendship traditionally existing between the two countries and their determination to intensify their common efforts toward the establishment of world peace based on freedom and justice."

Chairman Park emphasized the positive steps taken by the government for social reform and economic stability, and in strengthening the nation against communism and in eliminating corruption and other social evils. In addition, he reiterated his solemn pledge to return the government to civilian rule by the summer of 1963.

The President welcomed Chairman Park's full exposition of the current situation in Korea and expressed his gratification at the many indications of progress made by the new government of the Republic. He also reaffirmed the determination of the United States to render forthwith and effectively all possible assistance to Korea,

in accordance with the Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America signed on October 1, 1953, including the use of armed forces, should there be a renewal of armed conflict.⁽²⁴⁾ During the visit Kennedy also broached the subject of the possibility of sending Korean troops to Vietnam for the first time.⁽²⁵⁾

Upon completion of the conference relations between the Kennedy administration and the Park regime became much smoother. However the climate changed for the worse when on June 9, 1962,⁽²⁶⁾ the Seoul government initiated currency reform measures without prior consultations with or notice to the U.S. Embassy.⁽²⁷⁾ Six months later, Seoul buckled under to pressure from Washington and repealed the new measures.⁽²⁸⁾

Chairman Park, embroiled in an internal power struggle among the members of the military revolutionary regime and pressure from the United States, was forced to change his stand on the return of the government to civilian rule several times. On February 18, 1963 Park stated that he would not serve as head of a civilian government in the future.⁽²⁹⁾ However, on March 16 of the same year he declared that he would extend the period of military rule from 2 back to 4 years.⁽³⁰⁾ The United States thereupon began to pressure Seoul to reinstate civilian rule. Ambassador Berger on March 21 informed Park of the State Department's

(23) *The New York Times*, October, 19, 1961.

(24) *The New York Times*, October, 14, 1961.

(25) *Ibid.* Interview with Kim, Jae Chun (Former Head of KCIA).

(26) *The Hankook Ilbo*, June 10, 1962.

(27) *The Choong Ang Ilbo*, Feb. 24, 1962. Interview with Chun, Byung Kyo (Minister of Finance at that time).

(28) *The Handbook Ilbo*, June 10, 1962.

(29) *The Hankook Ilbo*, March 17, 1963.

The New York Times, March 21, 1963, Editorial: Dilemma of Gen. Park.

(30) *The Choong Ang Ilbo*, Feb. 26, 1963, Interview with Kim, Jae Chun (Former Head of KCL).

disappointment at the extension of military government and the cancelling of scheduled general elections.⁽³¹⁾

On March 25, State Department spokesman Lincoln White warned that the extension of military rule in Korea would bring about instability and a dangerous state of affairs.⁽³²⁾ On April 2, Ambassador Berger delivered President Kennedy's message to Park urging the transfer of power to civilian control.

Chairman Park responded that such pressure from the American government for a transfer of power would greatly incense military leaders against the United States.⁽³³⁾ Ambassador Berger countered by warning Chairman Park that any anti-American movement or action would not be treated lightly by American authorities.⁽³⁴⁾

At this time, the possibility of a counter-coup against the Park regime became great. Fearing open conflict and the overthrow of the regime, over 150 senior military officers gathered in Seoul without the permission of the United Nations Command to show their support for the regime.⁽³⁵⁾

The United States then decided to try to increase its influence over the Korean military leaders by gentle assuasion. Washington extended invitations to several top military men to visit the U.S., thereby helping to promote their prestige back in Korea. The end result was that the United States was able, with the help of pressure by civilian leaders, to persuade Park

to hold general elections and transfer power to a civilian government on December 26, 1963.⁽³⁶⁾

The American Embassy in Seoul strongly encouraged the transfer of power to civilian hands, asserting that such a move was necessary for stability in Korea. Korean military leaders, however, believed that U.S. could not back up its urgings and demands. Although the American government threatened to cut down the amount of military and economic aid supplied to the Seoul government should the transfer not take place, Korean officials felt that the strategic importance of Korea to the U.S. would preclude such a move and, thus, considered the American threats to be empty.⁽³⁷⁾

American pressure resulted in the holding of presidential elections on October 15, 1963 which Park Chung Hee won by a narrow margin over former president Yoon Po Sun. The United States then encouraged Park to follow the example of his predecessor Yoon Po Sun in constructing a democratically representative government.⁽³⁸⁾

III. The Honeymoon between Korea and the U.S.

Then Secretary of State Dean Rusk met with President Park in Seoul and on January 29, 1964 issued a joint communique strongly encouraging the normalization of relations between Korea and Japan.⁽³⁹⁾ This aroused vociferous

(31) *The New York Times*, March 25, 1963.

(32) *The New York Times*, March 26, 1963.

The New York Times, March 29, 1963.

The New York Times, April 1, 1963.

(33) *The New York Times*, April 3, 1963.

(34) *The New York Times*, April 3, 1963.

(35) *The New York Times*, April 5, 1963.

(36) *The New York Times*, April 7, 1963.

(37) *The New York Times*, April 9, 1963.

(38) *The New York Times*, October 21, 1963.

The New York Times, October 25, 1963.

(39) *The Hankook Ilbo*, January 30, 1964.

resistance and violent protests from students, opposition politicians and intellectuals and finally necessitated the mobilization of troops by the government to maintain order.

At the invitation of U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson, Park Chung Hee visited Washington on May 1, 1965 for a ten-day state visit. The two men reviewed and reaffirmed the vital importance of defense ties between the United States and the Republic of Korea. Johnson stated that the United States would continue to maintain powerful forces in Korea at the request of the Korean government, and assist in maintaining Korean forces at levels sufficient, in cooperation with U.S. forces, to ensure Korea's security.

President Park reviewed the negotiations between Korea and Japan for an agreement to establish normal relations, the components of which had already been initiated and were being drawn up in treaty form. President Johnson praised this achievement and expressed the expectation that this agreement, when completed, would strengthen the free nations of Asia as well as further the mutual interests of the two countries immediately involved. He continued that U.S. military and economic assistance to Korea would continue to be extended as set forth in paragraph 9 of the treaty after normalization of Korean-Japanese relations. President Johnson specifically stated that it was the intention of the United States Government subject to applicable legislation, appropriation and AID policies to help Korean efforts to achieve stable economic growth by (a) contin-

uing supporting assistance for Korea's economic stability; (b) making available to Korea \$150 million in Development Loan funds by the United States Government; (c) continuing technical assistance and training; and (d) providing substantial assistance in agricultural commodities.

Ratification of the treaty normalizing relations with Japan was passed by the National Assembly without the participation of opposition politicians, who boycotted the proceedings, on August 14, 1965.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The ratified treaty was then formally initialled by the two countries on December 19 of the same year.⁽⁴¹⁾

As American military involvement in Vietnam expanded President Johnson decided to request the sending of Korean troops to Vietnam. A message to that effect was sent to President Park on July 25, 1965.⁽⁴²⁾ Park responded on July 29 that Korea was willing to send troops and,⁽⁴³⁾ the National Assembly, again without the participation of opposition legislators, approved the dispatch of troops to Vietnam on August 13, 1965.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The normalization of relations with Japan and the dispatch of Korean troops to Vietnam, moves welcomed and encouraged by the U.S., helped to improve relations between the two countries, a situation which continued until the end of the 1960's. Korea was the only country to send combat troops to Vietnam besides the United States.

At the invitation of President Park, President Lyndon B. Johnson of the United States arrived in Seoul on October 31, 1966, for a state visit

(40) *The Hankook Ilbo*, August 15, 1965.

(41) *The Hankook Ilbo*, December 20, 1965.

(42) *The Dong A Ilbo*, July 25, 1965.

(43) *The Dong A Ilbo*, July 29, 1965.

Korean cabinet meeting had decided to send one combat division of Army to Vietnam on July 2, 1965.

(44) *The Hankook Ilbo*, August 14, 1965.

to Korea. President Johnson and President Park reaffirmed the strong ties of friendship traditionally existing between the Korean and American people.

President Johnson expressed the admiration of the American people for Korea's major contribution to the struggle in Vietnam and reaffirmed the readiness and determination of the United States to render prompt and effective assistance to defeat an armed attack against the Republic of Korea in accordance with the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954. President Johnson assured Koreans that the U.S. had no plan to reduce the level of United States forces in Korea and would continue to support Korean armed forces at levels adequate to ensure Korea's security.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The United States Government reassured Korea that it was secure and stated that Vietnam represented a second front for the Republic of Korea with direct consequences for Korean security. Ambassador Winthrop P. Brown was authorized to send a memorandum to Korea stating that the United States was prepared to take the following measures to see to it that the integrity of Korea's defense was maintained and strengthened and Korea's economic progress further promoted:⁽⁴⁶⁾

The military assistance clause stated that the United States would provide over the next few years substantial items of equipment for the modernization of Republic of Korea forces in Korea and to equip as necessary and finance all additional won costs of the additional forces deployed to the Republic of Vietnam; to release

additional won to the Korean budget equal to all of the net additional costs of the deployment of those extra forces and of mobilizing and maintaining in Korea activated reserves; and to increase technical assistance to the Republic of Korea in the general field of export promotion.⁽⁴⁷⁾ A second memorandum on March 7, 1966 stated that the United States would maintain a strong military presence in Korea in support of Korean national defense.⁽⁴⁸⁾ A third memorandum on March 8, 1966 reassured the strong commitment of the U.S. to Korean security.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The Brown memorandums went a long way towards persuading top Korean officials to send troops to Vietnam, but the one problem remaining was lack of confidence in the American people.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Agreement under Article 4 of the Mutual Defense Treaty between Korea and the United States regarding facilities and areas and the Status of United States Armed Forces in Korea was signed in Seoul on July 9, 1966 and entered into force on February 9, 1967.⁽⁵¹⁾

In 1967, with South Korea enjoying rapid economic growth as a result of President Park's policies, Park was elected to a second term as President by a comfortable margin. But in 1969, he provoked renewed opposition to his rule, even on the part of some members of his own party, when he rammed through the National Assembly a constitutional amendment authorizing a third term for president.

A joint communique was issued by President Park and Mr. Cyrus R. Vance, special envoy

(45) Joint communique issued on November 2, 1966.

The Hankook Ilbo, November 3, 1966.

(46) American Ambassador to Korea, Winthrop P. Brown (from on August 1964 to May 1967).

(47) *The Hankook Ilbo*, March 5, 1966.

(48) *The Hankook Ilbo*, March 7, 1966.

(49) *The Hankook Ilbo*, March 9, 1966.

(50) *The Hankook Ilbo*, July 3, 1976.

(51) *The Hankook Ilbo*, July 10, 1966.

of the President of the U.S. in Seoul on February 15, 1968 stated that the two men fully exchanged views concerning the grave situation that had arisen as a result of the increasingly aggressive and violent actions of the North Korean communists over the past fourteen months in violation of the Armistice Agreement, most recently the attack directed at the official residence of the President and the illegal seizure of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* in international waters. President Park and Mr. Vance recognized the need for continuing modernization of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Korea.

Agreement on such issues as the normalization of Korean-Japanese relations and Vietnam helped to improve relations between the two countries a great deal. The summit conference between the two leaders in Honolulu in 1968 further improved friendly relations. President Johnson reaffirmed the resolve of the United States to act promptly to fulfill its responsibilities under the Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and the R.O.K. The two leaders also agreed on measures to deal with the seizure of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* by North Korea as well as agreeing to hold annual meetings between the defense experts of the two countries.⁽⁵¹⁾

IV. The Nixon Doctrine

When President Nixon took office in 1968 he was aware of growing congressional and popular dissatisfaction in the U.S. with containment in general, and the role of the United States as "world policeman" in particular. The result was the famous "Guam Doctrine", later known as the "Nixon Doctrine", which signalled the

beginning of a process that was to affect significantly America's military posture in Asia.⁽⁵²⁾

In the summit conference held in San Francisco in August of the same year, Nixon and Park announced that a new era was beginning in Asia marked by the increasing strength and prosperity of most Asian countries and that American forces stationed in Korea must remain strong and alert. The two leaders reaffirmed the determination of their governments to meet and repel an armed attack against the Republic of Korea in accordance with the Mutual Defense Treaty. They also agreed that allied nations should continue to work toward securing an honorable and lasting peace in Vietnam. President Nixon affirmed the readiness of the United States Government to continue to extend technical cooperation for further development of science and industry in the ROK.⁽⁵³⁾

The second annual meeting of Korean and American Defense Ministries was held in Seoul on June 3 and 4, 1969. The two sides issued a joint statement saying that the two governments deplored the unprovoked shooting down of the U.S. EC-121 plane over international waters, and concluded that providing additional small arms for the Homeland Defense Reserve Force was essential.⁽⁵⁴⁾

In essence, a "division of security labor" between the United States and its allies was contemplated, in which the United States furnished military aid and training and allied countries furnished troops to maintain the containment positions around the periphery of the communist world. Force savings to the United States, resulting from the division of security labor, would permit the United States to withdraw substantial numbers of troops from around the

(51) *The Hankook Ilbo*, April 18, 1968.

(52) Geber, *Northeast Asia in U.S. Foreign Policy*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

(53) *The Hankook Ilbo*, August 23, 1969.

(54) *The Hankook Ilbo*, June 5, 1969.

world and to reduce the size of American general purpose forces, particularly ground forces.⁽⁵⁵⁾

In 1971 Park Chung Hee was elected to a third term, but by a narrower margin than in 1967. Likewise the government party, the Democratic Republic Party (DRP), was returned with a majority in the National Assembly but no longer a two-thirds majority. Other developments posed new uncertainties for Park's government. The United States withdrew one of its two combat divisions from South Korea and indicated that further withdrawals could be expected as South Korean forces were strengthened. President Nixon's pursuit of detente with the Soviet Union and his sudden announcement that he would visit Peking disturbed both North and South Korea.

In October 1972, President Park declared martial law, suspended certain articles of the constitution and dissolved the National Assembly. Drastic constitutional changes were then adopted through a national referendum in November 1972. They provided for the election of a National Conference for Unification composed of popularly elected non-party delegates who would choose a President for a six-year term. Park was duly elected President by this body for another six years in December 1972.⁽⁵⁶⁾

In Honolulu, September 23~24, at the U.S.-ROK Security Meeting, Secretary Clements reaffirmed that the American government had no plans to reduce the level of United States armed forces in the R.O.K. The two delegates noted that the orderly and expeditious implementation of the modernization program was vital to the security of the Korea and to peace on the peninsula and continued emphasis on

joint U.S.-ROK defense industrial ventures.

President Gerald Ford visited Korea on November 22 and 23, 1974, and affirmed the readiness of the U.S. to continue to render appropriate support for the further development of defense industries in Korea. Both Ford and Park agreed that their two countries should continue to foster close economic cooperation for their mutual benefit.⁽⁵⁷⁾

The problems of human rights violations in Korea along with the so-called "Tongsun Park Scandal" caused Korean-American relations to take a turn for the worse. The accession to the Presidency of Jimmy Carter in 1977 saw relations between two nations become even more troubled.

Beginning in the autumn of 1976 the ramifications of what came to be called "Koreagate" dominated reporting on Korea in the American press. Stories ranged from the financial operations of Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church and Korean CIA activities in the United States to allegations that President Park Chung Hee himself in 1970 had ordered the massive campaign to win support for South Korea from senators and representatives through lavish entertainment and sizeable gifts of cash.

The "Koreagate" revelations strained relations between the United States and South Korea. Americans resented the Korean attempt to buy influence in Congress. Koreans were irritated by demands that their ambassador be compelled to submit to interrogation by foreign authorities and they were outraged when a former American ambassador in Seoul indicated that U.S. agents had bugged President Park's executive mansion in the 1960s.

By the summer of 1978 the various investig-

(55) Gilbert, *Northeast Asia in U.S. Foreign Policy*, op. cit., p. 41.

(56) *The Hankook Ilbo*, December 28, 1972.

(57) *The Handbook Ilbo*, July 22, 1977.

ations into possible illegal or unethical actions by Koreans and members of Congress seemed to be winding down. Tongsun Park's testimony proved anticlimactic, confirming facts previously known but providing little new information.

On July 21, 1977, concerning Carter sent a message to President Park the United States Government's position on American ground force withdrawal plans and security commitment to the ROK. Carter indicated that American ground force withdrawal plans signified no change whatever in the American commitment to the security of Korea, that air force units, military intelligence and logistic support personnel would remain in Korea for the indefinite future and that the U.S. would also continue naval deployments in the area. He said that it was the American intention to seek from the Congress substantial military assistance for Korea in the form of 2nd Division equipment transfers and additional Foreign Military Sales (FMS) credits—so that the withdrawal of U.S. ground troops could be accomplished. The ROK would then be able to assume a greater share of its defense responsibilities.⁽⁵⁸⁾

Richard Holbrooke, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, addressed himself to the problems in Korean-American relations in a speech before the Far East-American Council in New York on December 6, 1973. He mentioned that the Koreans have been making an increasingly important contribution to the alliance while the commitment of our military power to the security of the region continues; second, South Korea's emergence as a country of tremendous economic dynamism; third, the shadow still cast by the formidable threat from the North; and finally

our experience in recent years in coping with great difficulties in U.S.-Korea relations has revealed a reservoir of strength in the relationship that bodes well for our ability to solve the problems of the future.

In his speech, Mr. Holbrooke delineated the "triple-crisis" in Korean-American relations; (1) misunderstandings over American troop withdrawal policy; (2) the set of scandals often referred to as "Koreagate"; and (3) the problem of human rights in Korea.

Holbrooke remarked that "Koreagate" had its origins in misperceptions, misguided actions, and lack of timely or adequate remedial measures. It will still take time to overcome the damage, but we believe that the issue is no longer threatening the very fabric of our alliance.

"While our security cooperation is of crucial importance, many other interests bind us together as well. This new reality is one in which we expect to cooperate as allies and friends on an even more mutually beneficial basis than the past."⁽⁵⁹⁾

During a state visit to Korea in 1979, President Carter reaffirmed that the United States as a Pacific power is vitally engaged in Asia and the Pacific and will continue its best efforts to ensure the peace and security of the region,⁽⁶⁰⁾ and noted the existence of strong bonds of friendship and cooperation and assured President Park that the U.S. would continue to support the efforts of the Korean government to maintain peace and stability in Korea and sustain economic and social development. The two Presidents agreed that ROK-U.S. cooperation in maintaining a high degree of strength and combat readiness to deter and defend against

(58) Clough and Watts, *The United States and Korea*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

(59) *The Hankook Ilbo*, December 7, 1978.

(60) *The Hankook Ilbo*, July 2, 1972.

possible aggression was an important contribution to peace and stability. The two Presidents noted the importance to all nations of respect for internationally recognized human rights. President Carter expressed the hope that the process of political growth in the ROK would continue commensurate with economic and social growth of the Korean nation.

Carter also affirmed that the United States would continue to maintain an American Military presence in the ROK to ensure peace and security. Upon his return to Washington he announced a freeze on the withdrawal of U.S. ground combat troops from South Korea until 1981.⁽⁶¹⁾ This statement was warmly welcomed by the Korean people.

Secretary of Defense Harold Brown told senior South Korean military officials on October 18, 1979 that the United States would increase the firepower of American forces here and help South Korea develop its defense industry. At the same time, Mr. Brown delivered to President Park Chung Hee a letter from President Carter in which Mr. Carter again expressed displeasure over South Korea's continued repression of political activity and human rights. Mr. Brown had two missions; the first and most important was an annual consultation with Minister of Defense Ro Jae Hyun and other officials; the second and more delicate was to represent the President on the political and human rights issues.⁽⁶²⁾ Brown met President Park and according to U.S. officials, gave him a letter from President Carter, which it is believed touched on the government party's expulsion of

Kim Yung Sam, opposition party leader. The expulsion issue caused the temporary recall of American Ambassador William Gleysteen as a sign of Carter Administration disapproval. Carter's letter reviewed some developments there since his state visit in June. His comments were "positive" on the South Korean record in security matters but "less positive" on political developments. Brown's purpose in coming was to attend an annual defense review.⁽⁶³⁾

President Park was assassinated by Kim Jae Kyu, the KCIA director in Seoul on October 26, 1979. The Prime Minister, Choi Kyu Huh, was named acting President after a Cabinet meeting early on the morning of the 27th of October.⁽⁶⁴⁾

North Korea put its forces on heightened alert as a result of the assassination but U.S. intelligence detected no sign of imminent attack, U.S. officials said on October 30, 1979. To be extra sure of getting early warning, Defense Secretary Harold Brown ordered two AWACS airborne command posts to South Korea, as well as ground-based technicians associated with the aircraft.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Washington repeated its pledge for ROK security, saying that the greatest concern of the United States in South Korea was the security problem. Holding Carter, spokesman for the U.S. State Department, reiterated on October 30, 1979 that the security commitment to the Republic of Korea was firm.

The North Korean communist regime showed a sensitive reaction to announcements made by the U.S. government in connection with the

(61) *The Korea Times*, July 21, 1979.

(62) *The New York Times*, October 19, 1979.

(63) *The Washington Post*, October 19, 1979.

The New York Times, October 5, 1979.

The Washington Post, October 5, 1979.

(64) *The Washington Post*, October 27, 1979.

(65) *The Korea Times*, October 31, 1979.

death of President Park Chung Hee. North Korea, in response to U.S. statements reaffirming faithful observance of defense commitment to the ROK, denounced "the U.S. imperialists who are scheming to maintain the 'Yushin' (Revitalizing Reform) System in South Korea."⁽⁶⁶⁾

Gen. John A. Wickham, Jr., commander of U.S. Forces in Korea and the Korea-U.S. Combined Force Command, said on November 1, 1979 that the present increased readiness of forces under his command would quicken responses to an attack on the Republic of Korea. He said that following the death of President Park Chung Hee, the readiness of U.S. Forces in Korea had been increased "as a precautionary measure."⁽⁶⁷⁾

The South Korean National Assembly unanimously adopted a motion at the evening of December 1, 1979 calling on the Government to rescind Emergency Decree 9, which President Park Chung Hee's Government used to control its critics.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Some opponents of the late President were hoping for heavy American pressure to push the interim government toward an immediate amendment of the constitution. The Secretary of State was careful to point out on November 2, 1979 that the United States had overlapping interests in stability and security as well as democratic processes of the long-term Asian ally.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Vance urged South Korean leaders to move in the direction of political reform but would not suggest that they make sharp changes immediately,

South Korea's martial law commander, Gen. Chung Sung Hwa was arrested December 12 and held for questioning in connection with the assassination of President Park, officials announced in Seoul on December 13, 1979.

However, that the South Korean government acted only after the defense security commander, Gen. Chun Doo Hwan, apparently acting without civilian authority, deployed troops against Gen. Chung and other ranking officers who had been widely rumored to be implicated in Park's assassination. By this account, Defense Minister Ro persuaded the force to halt their action when he forced Gen. Chung to resign and placed him and several others under arrest pending an investigation.

With that act, South Korean generals broke a long-standing agreement with American forces by withdrawing front-line troops to assist in their internal power struggle on December 12. That violated a key agreement, long observed by U.S. and South Korean commanders, that neither country's forces could be moved without approval of the other. The unauthorized movement is believed to have deeply angered the American command. A spokesman for the U.S. Eighth Army said it was regarded as "a very serious matter."

The affair was expected to cause friction between U.S. and South Korean forces. Any troop movements were supposed to have been authorized by the Combined Forces Command, which Gen. Wickham headed. The American side was informed only after the fact.⁽⁷⁰⁾

The State Department warned South Korean military leaders against any disruption of the

(66) *The Korea Herald*, October 31, 1979.

(67) *The Korea Times*, November 2, 1979.

(68) *The New York Times*, December 2, 1979.

(69) *The Washington Post*, November 3, 1979.

Vance is Head of American delegation to the funeral of President Park.

(70) *The Washington Post*, December 16, 1979.

democratic government, saying that it would have "severe adverse impact" on relations between the countries. Unnamed U.S. officials had indicated concern because of "uncoordinated movements of troops" in Seoul.⁽⁷¹⁾

"This was the first time the Combined Forces Command was ever flouted, so far as we know, and yet it was set up precisely to avoid haphazard and undisciplined movements of troops that are theoretically under American command." He remarked, troops nominally under American command here were used in much the same way in the military coup that brought President Park to power in 1961.⁽⁷²⁾

The Carter administration was deeply worried over the crisis within the South Korean military but officials maintained that they were still hopeful that the trend toward a more moderate political structure would continue.

The administration's main concern was to get across two messages to the South Korean military: the first being that the United States would strongly oppose any moves to set back the trend toward responsible political leadership; the other being to remind the South Koreans not to permit a situation to develop that would give the Communist regime in North Korea any reason to believe that it could stage a successful invasion.⁽⁷³⁾

Ambassador William Gleysteen met with South Korean officials to deliver the sharp U.S. warning, made public at the State Department in Washington on December 12, 1979, against military intervention in the civilian govern-

ment.⁽⁷⁴⁾ When old technocrat Choi Kyu Hah was inaugurated as South Korean President on December 24, 1979, President Carter, in a letter to Choi, underlined his long-standing desire for the country to become more democratic, wishing the new President success "as you preside over constitutional change and development of a broader political consensus in Korea". The Americans were insisting that the country not slip back into repression.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Upon the resignation of President Choi Kyu Hah, the National Conference for Unification elected Gen. Chun Doo Hwan as new President of South Korea on August 27, 1980.⁽⁷⁶⁾

V. Relations with the Reagan Administration

At the invitation of President Ronald Reagan, Chun made an official state visit to Washington, D.C. from February 1 to 3, 1981. The two Presidents reviewed the world situation and reaffirmed the critical importance of maintaining peace on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia. President Reagan assured President Chun that U.S. ground combat forces would not be withdrawn from the Korean peninsula. The two Presidents announced that they would resume immediately the full range of consultations between the two governments including the ROK-U.S. Security Consultative Meetings which would be resumed promptly at a mutually convenient time later that spring.⁽⁷⁷⁾

The visit to the United States by Chun

(71) *The Washington Post*, December 13, 1979.

(72) *The New York Times*, December 16, 1979.

(73) *The New York Times*, December 16, 1979.

(74) *The Washington Post*, December 14, 1979.

(75) *The New York Times*, December 21, 1979.

(76) *The Yomiwuri Simbun* (Tokyo), August 28, 1980.

(77) *The Hankook Ilbo*, February 4, 1980.

The Yomiwuri Shimbun, February 3, 1980.

presented a new stage in relations between the ROK-U.S.⁽⁷⁸⁾ signaled by the fact that question of human rights in Korea was not raised.

New Ambassador Richard Walker said that Korea still depends on the U.S. security guarantee and is no match for the industrial giants of the Western Pacific. Realistically, the Republic of Korea has nowhere to turn but to the United States for the necessary security guarantees.⁽⁷⁹⁾

VI. Conclusion

Relations between the United States and Korea depend not only on the underlying realities, but also on the views of the American people. The views of Americans towards Korea may be summarized as follows:

Not unexpectedly, in view of "Koreagate" and considerable media attention to reported violations of human rights in the Republic of Korea, Americans are restrained in their warmth toward and support for their ally on the Korean Peninsula. Views toward North Korea are far more negative, however. Americans rank both countries relatively low in terms of their importance to U.S. global interests.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Americans are not well informed about a number of specific issues concerning Korea, especially the relative economic development of both North and South, and the extent of trade between the United States and South Korea.

With American opposition to the May 19, 1961 military coup, relations between the two nations became strained. However, with the realization by the U.S. that real power in Korea has always been wielded by the military, the U.S. recognized the defects in her policies. The

U.S. government then began to try to bring about the transfer of power from military to civilian control through the use of American aid as a policy tool. The U.S., in recognizing the strategic and security importance of the Korean Peninsula finally compromised ideals for the sake of reality and came back to a position of strong support for the government of Korea.

Korean dependence on American defense and security assistance made it inevitable that she would have to accept American advice and pressure. Such was the case with the normalization of Japanese-Korean relations in 1965 and the introduction of Korean combat troops to Vietnam in 1966. Thus, the period of the Johnson Administration was one in which Korean-American relations were the closest.

With the promulgation of the "Nixon Doctrine" in 1969, Korean fears of a total withdrawal of American forces and, thus, abandonment by the United States increased dramatically. To deal with changes in the international and domestic situation President Park took several steps, including suppression of dissent, tightened government controls over the mass media and cracked down on student activities.

The period from the promulgation of the Nixon Doctrine through the Carter Administration represented the most difficult period in Korean-American relations. Should Jimmy Carter have been elected to a second term in 1980, it is possible that mutual relations could have become even worse.

The United States took prompt action to ensure the security of Korea after the assassination of Park Chung Hee on October 26, 1979. This prompt and strong response to the emer-

(78) *The Yomiwuri Shimbun*, February 4, 1980.

The Yomiwuri Shimbun(Editorial), February 4, 1980.

(79) *The Korea Herald*, January 27, 1981. Ambassador Richard Walker's speech at American Women's club in Seoul.

(80) Clough and Watts, *The United States and Korea*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

gency situation was appreciated by all Koreans.

Shortly after the inauguration of newly-elected President Reagan in 1981, President Chun made a state visit to Washington which represented a turning point in U.S.-Korean relations. Reagan's pledge to freeze all withdrawals of U.S. ground forces and his reaffirmation of the United States' commitment to South Korea's defense were welcomed not only by the Korean people, but by America's other Asian allies as well.⁽⁸¹⁾

The geostrategic context of Korea gives added importance to the U.S. alliance with the Republic of Korea. Realistically, the Republic of Korea has nowhere to turn but to the United States for her security needs. However, since Korea is a proud and sovereign nation, she will constantly assert her independence and insist on her own priorities. Therefore, in the period ahead Americans must continue to deal with their allies in Korea as equal partners"⁽⁸²⁾

The anxiety felt by the South Korean officials during the early years of the Carter Administration gave rise to the realization that U.S.-Korean relations were too heavily dependent upon the changing policies of each American administration and that South Korea should be prepared for the contingency that U.S. security assistance might not be as readily forthcoming as it has been.

However, to say that there has been a change in nature of the Korean-American alliance is not to mean either that the continued validity of the alliance is being questioned or that the

relationship between the two countries will develop into one of near symmetry. South Korea will continue to require American arms, air and naval support and intelligence and strategic assistance. A substantial portion of Korea's trade will continue to be carried out with the United States. For the United States, Korea will remain as a strategically important area in its overall military posture in Asia and the Pacific.⁽⁸³⁾

Korea has to become a vivacious liberal democracy with economic affluence to match. Korea has to move itself successfully out of the state of war in which it has been trapped for the past three decades. The threat of war has to be reduced as much as possible, if not eliminated altogether. Free democracy is not possible without civic discipline and sustained economic development. Political stability and continuing improvement in the standard of living are essential for national security and political development. The more political and economic development Korea manages to achieve, the greater will be the importance of Korea to the national interests of the United States.

This is the only way in which Korea can attain the status of a truly equal partner in a relationship characterized by reciprocal benefit, commonality of interests and mutual respect.⁽⁸⁴⁾

We Koreans trust in the American commitment to the security of our country, but wonder why the United States always emphasizes that a military presence in Korea is necessary for the defense of Japan. In addition, we find it impossible to forget the tragic case of South

(81) *The Washington Post*, November 4, 1979.

(82) *The Korea Herald*, January 27, 1982.

Ambassador Richard Walker's speech at the American Women's club in Seoul on January 6, 1982.

(83) Ian Sung-joo, "South Korea and the United States' Past, Present and Future", *The Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, 1982, p. 299.

(84) Iahm Pyong-choon, "Korea U.S. Share Commonality of Ideology", *The Korea Herald*, January 7, 1982.

Vietnam and the more recent severing of relations with Taiwan.

The United States must keep her commitments with sincerity and confidence as a great power. History is the eternal witness; therefore, the United States must respect history as the mirror of her conscience.

Appendix

Korean Export and Import

Year	1980	1981
Export	\$17,505,000,000	\$20,993,000,000
Import	\$22,291,663,000	\$26,132,012,000
For U.S. Export	\$4,607,000,000 (26.3%)	\$5,561,000,000 (26.5%)
From U.S. Import	\$4,890,248,000 (21.9%)	\$6,050,199,000 (23.2%)

Korea-U.S. Summit Conferences

	Korea	United States	Period	Place
1st	Synman Rhee	Dwight Eisenhower (President elected)	Dec. 2, -Dec. 5, 1952	Seoul
2nd	Synman Rhee	Eisenhower	July 25-Aug. 13, 1954	Washington, D.C.
3rd	Hub Chung (Acting President)	Eisenhower	June 9-June 20, 1960	Seoul
4th	Parl Chung Hee (Chairman)	Kennedy	Nov. 11-Nov. 25, 1961	Washington, D.C.
5th	Parl Chung Hee	Johnson	May 16-May 26, 1965	Washington, D.C.
6th	Parl Chung Hee	Johnson	Oct. 24-Oct. 25, 1966	Manila, 7 nations' Summit Conference
7th	Parl Chung Hee	Johnson	Oct. 31-Nov. 2, 1966	Seoul
8th	Parl Chung Hee	Johnson	Dec. 20-Dec. 23, 1967	Canberra (Australia) Funnel of Premier Holt
9th	Parl Chung Hee	Johnson	April 17-April 20, 1968	Honolulu
10th	Parl Chung Hee	Nixon	Aug. 20-Aug. 23, 1963	San Francisco
11th	Parl Chung Hee	Ford	Nov. 22-Nov. 23, 1974	Seoul
12th	Parl Chung Hee	Carter	June 29-July 1, 1979	Seoul
13th	Chun Doo Hwan	Reagan	Feb. 1-Feb. 3, 1981	Washington, D.C.

Korean Ambassadors to the United States

	Name	Period	Duration
1st	Chang Myon	Feb. 2, 1949-Feb. 1951	2 years
Charge d'Affairs	Kim Sei Sun	Feb. 1951-April 1951	2 months
2nd	Yang Yoo Chan	April 1951-April 1960	9 years 17 days
3rd	Chung Il Kwon	May 1960-Sept. 1960	3 months 6 days
4th	Chang Yee Wook	October 1960-June 1961	7 months 16 days
5th	Chung Il Kwon	After Military Coup in 1961 June 16, 1961-April 29, 1963	1 year 10 months
6th	Kim Jung Yul	April 29, 1963-November 2, 1964	1 year 6 months
7th	Kim Hyun Chul	November 12, 1964-October 5, 1967	2 years 11 months

8th	Kim Dong Jo	October 5, 1967-December 3, 1973	6 years 2 months
9th	Hahm Pyong Choon	December 31, 1973-May 1977	3 years 5 months
10th	Kim Yong Shik	May 13, 1977-May 30, 1981	4 years 17 days
11th	Yoo Byung Hyon	June 10, 1981-Present	

American Ambassadors to Korea

	Name	Period	Duration
1st	John J. Muccio	August 23, 1948-Sept. 1952	4 years 1 month
2nd	Ellis O. Briggs	November 1952-May 1955	2 years 7 months
3rd	William S.B. Lacy	May 1955-July 1956	1 years 2 months
4th	Walter C. Dawling	July 7, 1956-Oct. 2, 1956	3 years 3 months
5th	Walter P. McCanaghy	Dec. 1959-April 1961	1 years 5 months
Charge d'Affai s	Marshall Green	April 1961-June 1961	2 months
6th	Samuel D. Berger	June 24, 1961-July 10, 1964	3 years 1 month
7th	Winthrop P. Brown	August 1964-May 1967	3 years 1 month
8th	William J. Porter	August 1967-August 1971	4 years
9th	Philip C. Habib	October 1971-Aug. 19, 1974	2 years 10 months
10th	Richard L. Sneider	Sept. 7, 1974-June 21, 1978	2 years 9 months
11th	William H. Gleysteen	July 16, 1978-June 10, 1981	2 years 11 months
12th	Richard L. Walker	July 31, 1981-Present	Only Political appointee

Annual U.S.-ROK Defense Ministerial Conferences

	Period	Place
1st	May 27-28, 1968	Washington
2nd	June 3-4, 1969	Seoul
3rd	July 21-22, 1970	Honolulu
4th	July 12-13, 1971	Seoul
5th	June 26-27, 1972	Colorado
6th	September 12-13, 1973	Seoul
7th	September 23-24, 1974	Honolulu
8th	August 26-27, 1975	Seoul
9th	May 26-27, 1976	Honolulu
10th	July 25-26, 1977	Seoul
11th	July 26-27, 1978	San Diego
12th	October 18-19, 1979	Seoul
13th	April 29-30, 1981	San Francisco