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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

25 June 1979

Dear Stephen,

CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY MR. KIM JONG PIL, SOUTH KOREAN
PRESIDENTIAL ENVOY, AT 10 DOWNING STREET ON 25 JUNE 1979

The special envoy of the President of South Korea, Mr. Kim Jong Pil, called on the Prime Minister at 1630 today, accompanied by three members of the South Korean Parliament, the Ambassador of South Korea and an interpreter. At the end of half an hour's discussion, of which the following is a summary of the main points, Mr. Kim handed the Prime Minister a letter from President Park of which I enclose a copy.

After thanking the Prime Minister for her kindness in receiving him and congratulating her on her election victory, Mr. Kim said that President Park had instructed him to convey his own warm greetings and his congratulations. The President noted with pleasure the excellent state of relations between the United Kingdom and South Korea and much appreciated the co-operation extended to his country by the British people. Mr. Kim went on to say that the South Korean Government wished to achieve a state of peaceful co-existence between South Korea and her neighbour to the north and to avoid a further war on the Korean peninsula by pursuing a peaceful dialogue. Mr. Kim recalled that initial contacts between South and North Korea had taken place in 1972, on President Park's initiative, but had lapsed after a year. South Korea had repeatedly urged their resumption and in January this year President Park had again proposed a dialogue without pre-conditions. North Korea claimed to have the only lawful Korean Government and refused to recognise South Korea's existence: in fact, however, 108 countries had recognised South Korea and only 97 North Korea.

Mr. Kim explained that South Korea recognised that two Governments existed and hoped that, in due course, they could both enter the United Nations simultaneously. A major difficulty confronting South Korea, however, was the fact that during the past ten years a number of western countries had recognised North Korea, while no Communist country had yet recognised South Korea. South Korea hoped, therefore, to promote in future the principle of reciprocal recognition for each Government. They would like to see a similar situation to that which prevailed

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in Germany, where the Governments of the FRG and the GDR enjoyed an equal degree of recognition. The North Koreans, who had been encouraged to regard themselves as superior to South Koreans, believed that time was on their side and that for so long as they refused to come to the conference table South Korea would become increasingly isolated.

Mr. Kim said that South Korea hoped that the UK, before recognising North Korea, would persuade some Communist countries to recognise South Korea. He had been very glad to hear Lord Carrington say that, even if the UK were to decide that North Korea satisfied the British criteria for recognition, the present policy of non-recognition would nevertheless be maintained; he and his colleagues were very grateful for this. In 1973, Mr. Kim said, he had met the Belgian and Italian Heads of Government who had at that time been persuaded by the Poles and the Romanians to recognise North Korea, and had persuaded them not to do so unless these Communist Governments recognised South Korea at the same time. The Government of South Korea believed that this was the best way to create the conditions of peace and stability which Korea needed. North Korea was endeavouring to deal directly with the United States; but the US Government's basic principle was to avoid direct dealings with North Korea and to avoid doing anything which would be unwelcome to South Korea or affect South Korea adversely. The Japanese Government, Mr. Kim said, worked on the same principle.

Summing up, Mr. Kim said that President Park wished to request the British Government, as a friend of long standing and a world power, to do two things: firstly, to assist in creating favourable conditions for a dialogue between North and South Korea and, secondly, to influence Communist Governments in the direction of recognising South Korea. Mr. Kim said that South Korea understood that the achievement of re-unification would require a great deal of time; but, until that point was reached, peace and stability had to be preserved.

Replying to Mr. Kim, the Prime Minister asked him to convey her warm greetings to President Park and to thank him for sending Mr. Kim to see her as his envoy. The Prime Minister said that the British Government fully agreed with the aim of solving Korea's problems through a peaceful dialogue and hoped that this aim would one day be achieved. The British Government had not yet reconsidered the question of the possible recognition of North Korea. If they were to reconsider, they would of course take South Korea's views, and the views of others including the United States, fully into account. The Prime Minister said that, for this reason, she was particularly grateful to Mr. Kim for explaining the South Korean position so clearly. There could, in any case, be no question of the United Kingdom acting with undue haste in this matter. The Prime Minister said that she fully recognised the importance of maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula and of working to secure a peaceful settlement.

/The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister also expressed to Mr. Kim the British Government's thanks for the help which the Government of South Korea had given in acting as intermediaries with the Taiwanese over the problem of the Vietnamese refugees on the MV Roachbank; she said that she was very grateful for the help which the South Korean authorities had been able to give.

Yours ever,
Gyan Compton.

Stephen Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.