

**December 13, 1979**

**Cable, South Korean Ambassador to the U.S. to the  
South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs 'Meeting  
with Assistant Secretary Holbrooke'**

**Citation:**

"Cable, South Korean Ambassador to the U.S. to the South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs 'Meeting with Assistant Secretary Holbrooke'", December 13, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, South Korean Foreign Ministry Archive.  
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/120832>

**Summary:**

A summary of meeting with Assistant Secretary Holbrooke regarding the December 12th incident. Holbrooke asks for direct communication between the US and South Korean officials, while discussing the possibility of North Korean invasion and media coverage of this issue.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from ROK Ministry of Unification

**Original Language:**

Korean

**Contents:**

Translation - English

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Control Number: 79-2322

Original Copy

Number: USW-12188

Date & Time: 132100

Classification: Urgent

To: Minister [of Foreign Affairs]

CC:

From: Ambassador to the United States

Title: Meeting with Assistant Secretary Holbrooke

PNIO: '79 12 14 12-17

Having held a meeting with Assistant Secretary Holbrooke from [U.S.] Department of State upon his request at 5:30 pm on December 13 for approximately 20 minutes, I report the [meeting] contents as the following.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Sullivan, Korea Section Chief Rich, and Councilor Park Gun-woo attended the meeting.

1. Assistant Secretary Holbrooke stated that he requested the meeting with me that day concerning two issues.

First, it is to ask me to request my government for instructions on the South Korean government's specific stance and inform [him] of the contents [of the instructions] given that according to observations from the U.S. side it is seemed that South Korea's domestic situation is very important. Although [he] has been informed of the contents of the discussion between Ambassador Gleysteen and President Choi on December 13, [he is making this request] because [he] believes that it would be desirable in the U.S. position to communicate the U.S. opinion regarding South Korea's domestic situation to not only the U.S. Ambassador but also the South Korean Ambassador to the United States.

The Assistant Secretary has said that although the U.S. has greatly welcomed the significant improvement in South Korea's political development including the abandonment of Emergency Measure No. 9, the situation after the December 12 [Incident] is of concern, as indicated in the previously-issued U.S. statement.

Second, [he] also wanted to point out that with a sudden change in military system, the military command structure may become agitated, and that if this is the case, it is possible for Kim Il Sung to resort to military adventures. The Assistant Secretary has elaborated [by saying that] in case Kim Il Sung resorts to military adventures, the U.S. government will execute its defense pledge to South Korea, but given the current circumstances, he is concerned that a public opinion unfavorable to South Korea will be on the rise in the United States.

2. I have inquired if the State Department [has noticed] any peculiar military movement inside the North Korean puppet regime. In response, Assistant Secretary Holbrooke has indicated that although there have not been such signs yet, [he is] pointing out the possibility that Kim Il Sung will misjudge the domestic state of affairs inside South Korea. In addition, the Assistant Secretary has said that when an official from the U.S. State Department informed the PRC Embassy of the contents of the statement issued by the Department of State on the evening of December 12, the

PRC side said that it does not believe that the North Korean puppet regime will invade the South, and that PRC seeks peace and stability on the Korean peninsula.

3. Finally, once again explaining the two reasons why he requested a meeting with me, Assistant Secretary Holbrooke said that he earnestly wishes for [me] to inform my government of how the United States harbors such concerns as an ally.

4. Since December 12, U.S. newspapers and broadcasts has been covering the domestic issues in South Korea with great [attention]; the Department of State and Defense, and White House National Security Council is paying careful attention such as continuously holding discussions; and there are strange rumors spreading around. Please consider above issues and □□ the things that may be of reference when communicating with outside.

Note: Declassified on December 31, 1980