

**March 9, 1979**  
**US Department of State Cable, North/South Korean  
Talks**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

U.S. Ambassador William Gleysteen reports on his attempts to reassure South Korea that the United States would not engage in talks directly with North Korea.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

English

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SITUATION LISTING

DATE 06/20/79//171

SITUATION: NODIS IN OLD  
 SUBJECT CATEGORY: FE

MESSAGE / ANNOTATION:

MESSAGE:

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E.O. 12065 IRDS-1 3/9/09 (GLEYSTEN, W.H.) DR-M

TAGS: PEPR, KS, KN

SUBJECT: NORTH/SOUTH KOREAN TALKS

1. (S-ENTIRE TEXT).

2. DURING CONVERSATION WITH ME ON MARCH 8, BLUE HOUSE ADVISER HAHM PYONG-CHON SPECULATED THAT A MAJOR NORTH KOREAN OBJECTIVE IN PERSISTING WITH NORTH/SOUTH CONTACTS AT PANMUNJOM WAS TO ENHANCE THE PROSPECT FOR SEPARATE NORTH KOREAN/US TALKS. HE URGED MOST STRONGLY THAT THE U.S. MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT POLICY ON THIS ISSUE AND ASKED ABOUT THE FIRMFNESS OF OUR RESOLVE.

3. I POINTED OUT THAT OUR POSITION ON NEGOTIATIONS WAS VERY CLEAR AND HAD BEEN AUTHORITATIVELY AFFIRMED BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY. THUS, I WAS CONFIDENT THE U.S. WOULD NOT AGREE TO ANY NEGOTIATIONS ON KOREA IN WHICH THE ROK DID NOT PARTICIPATE ON THE SAME BASIS AS THE DPRK. IN THE CASE OF U.S./NORTH KOREAN CONTACTS, HOWEVER, I COULD NOT BE QUITE SO CERTAIN BECAUSE CONTACTS INVOLVED MANY AMERICANS, AND NOT JUST THE USG. AN INCREASE IN PRIVATE, MEDIA, AND LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS WITH NORTH KOREA WAS QUITE POSSIBLE, EVEN IN THE AREA OF GOVERNMENTAL CONTACTS THERE MIGHT BE PRESSURE TO RELAX OUR "NO CONTACT" POSITION WHICH WAS UNIQUELY STRICT. MOREOVER, IF THE SOVIETS OR THE CHINESE PERMITTED CONTACTS WITH SOUTH KOREA WE WOULD OF COURSE RECIPROCATE WITH NORTH KOREA.

4. HAHM DID NOT SEEM SURPRISED BY MY ANSWERS, BUT HE REITERATED FIRMLY THAT WE SHOULD STICK TO OUR PRESENT POLICY. I SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO DO SO IF THE ROKG AT PANMUNJOM OR PERHAPS ELSEWHERE, SET OUT THEIR OBJECTIVES ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA IN A POSITIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE WAY. IF THEY DID, IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO REMIND PEOPLE THAT OUR POLICY ON

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MESSAGE / ANNOTATION:

DEALINGS WITH THE DPRK WAS NOT AN ARBITRARY POSITION BUT  
RATHER ONE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE GREAT POWER CONTACTS  
WITH BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA ON A BASIS OF RECIPROcity.  
S. DEPARTMENT PASS AMEMBASSY TOKYO FOR ASSISTANT SECRE-  
TARY HOLBROOKE. GLEYSTEN  
BT  
#3550  
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