



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 March 1986

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Dear Charles,

Call by Mr Chun Doo Hwan, President of
the Republic of Korea on the Prime
Minister, 9am, 9 April 1986

President Chun's visit as a guest of the Government is the first visit to the United Kingdom by a Head of State of the Republic of Korea (ROK). Likewise, Mrs Thatcher's visit to Korea in May will be the first by a British Prime Minister. Ministerial visits were infrequent until 1983, the year marking the centenary of formal relations between Britain and Korea. Now with the emergence of the ROK as one of the economic successes of the post-war era there is increasing commercial and economic substance to our relations.

Our interest in continuing stability and peace in the Korean peninsula is considerable, both as the prerequisite for the success of Korea's economy and therefore for our commercial relations, but also as a major strategic interest in an area where the principal burden is borne by the United States.

President Chun, who came to power in 1981 after the assassination of his predecessor, has been trying to open up his country economically and politically. His visit to the UK (and on to Germany, France and Belgium) symbolizes the start of a process of diversification away from close dependence on the USA and Japan.

The Koreans will wish to tell the Prime Minister of the continuing threat they face from the North and to seek our continued support, as they match a firm military stance (backed by American ground forces, stationed under UN command) with an attempt to establish a productive dialogue with the North. They look to the UK as their principal

/supporter in



supporter in Europe and have a high regard for the Prime Minister's stand on East/West relations. They would like our help in continuing to develop diplomatic relations, particularly in Africa, but they are also concerned about developments in the Pacific rim, and in Hong Kong after 1997. (It has been agreed that these points can be covered in discussions between Foreign Ministers).

The Koreans have asked that the President should not be embarrassed by a discussion of internal matters. But we see no reason why the Prime Minister, after listening to the President's hopes for the future in the light of the threat from the North, should not ask him how he sees the internal political scene developing in the run-up to the Presidential elections in 1988, shortly before the Olympic Games. Although the Koreans are highly sensitive to criticism of their internal political system, it is legitimate that we should make our views known, albeit considerately. This could be done by linking our support for the President's efforts to establish the ROK's security, integrity and prosperity with Britain's strong beliefs that people should have a right to certain personal and economic freedoms.

The Koreans have largely resisted our attempts to persuade them to include a significant commercial element in the President's visit. But he is to visit British Aerospace, and he will attend a CBI Reception at Centre Point. He is expecting to discuss international trade matters with the Prime Minister, and the Koreans have been warned that the Prime Minister may wish to draw his attention to one or two specific problems (Scotch Whisky and copyright piracy are what we had in mind).

The President is accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister, three other Ministers, his Chief of Defence Staff and about 30 leading industrialists. Separate programmes have been arranged to make the most of these visitors.

/ I attach a copy of the outline programme for the
/ President (the usual printed version will follow), and of
/ the agenda put forward by the Koreans for the talks (they
/ have been told of the Prime Minister's preference for a more
/ natural, less structured discussion). Lists of those
/ accompanying the President are also attached, as is a
/ Personality Note.

/The Prime Minister



The Prime Minister will see the President for dinner on 8 April, and at the Guard of Honour in the Foreign Office Quadrangle on 9 April shortly before her talks at 9am. Sir Geoffrey Howe and the British Ambassador in Seoul, Mr Spreckley, will attend the talks (President Chun will be accompanied by his Foreign Minister and his Ambassador in London). The President's own man will interpret him into English and a member of our Embassy in Seoul will interpret the Prime Minister into Korean. I attach briefing for the Prime Minister's talks and a draft note for a short speech leading up to the toasts at dinner on 8 April (the Koreans have asked if they might have an advance copy of the text and would of course supply a copy of their President's draft reply).

Finally, I enclose some background material on Korea, prepared by our Research Department principally for Mrs Thatcher's visit to Seoul in May. But you may like to have it now as background reading over the holiday weekend. Please let me know if you would like any structural changes made to it when it is up-dated before the Prime Minister's visit.

I am copying this letter to John Mogg (DTI) and to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever

Robert Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street