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Viewing cable 10SEOUL290, A/S CAMPBELL'S FEBRUARY 3 MEETING WITH NSA KIM

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
10SEOUL290	2010-02-22 08:54	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Seoul

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Monday, 22 February 2010, 08:54  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 000290  
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TAGS PREL, PGOV, SOCI, MARR, ECON, ETRD, KN, KS, CH  
SUBJECT: A/S CAMPBELL'S FEBRUARY 3 MEETING WITH NSA KIM  
Classified By: Ambassador D. Kathleen Stephens. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).  
Summary

¶1. (C) During a February 3 meeting, National Security Adviser Kim Sung-hwan told EAP Assistant Secretary Campbell the ROKG wished to have discussions with Washington about delaying the planned transfer of wartime operation control to Korea. Kim agreed that turbulence in Sino-American relations meant Beijing would be hesitant to call a new round of the Six Party Talks. It was encouraging, however, that veteran DPRK negotiator Kim Gye-gwan was slated to visit Beijing next week. NSA Kim asserted that Kim Jong-il needed to visit China soon in order to get more economic assistance, as the DPRK's internal situation appeared to be significantly more unstable. NSA Kim acknowledged it was important to reach out directly to key DPJ officials like Foreign Minister Okada and Finance Minister Kan. The North Koreans, Kim said, were clearly using several different channels to "knock on the DPJ's door." President Lee may visit a Korean factory in the United States to help sell KORUS to the American public. Kim suggested that President Obama and President Lee pay a joint visit to the Korean War Memorial in Washington to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Korean War. Campbell asked for ROK understanding for U.S. plans to resume MIA remains recovery operations in North Korea. Kim emphasized that President Lee would never "buy" a summit with Pyongyang. End summary.  
OPCON Transfer

¶2. (C) During a February 3 meeting with Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell, ROK National Security Adviser Kim Sung-hwan said he wished to have discussions with the USG on the planned April 2012 transfer of wartime operation control (OPCON) to Korea. Kim agreed with Campbell's observation that it was important for the Korean public to understand that any change that may be considered concerning OPCON transfer timing, and the U.S. Quadrennial Defense Review, would not diminish America's commitment to the ROK's security, and should not be so interpreted. China Unlikely to Call New 6PT Round

¶3. (C) NSA Kim agreed with Campbell's observation that the current turbulence in Sino-American relations meant Beijing would be hesitant to call a new round of the Six Party Talks (6PT) anytime soon. Referring to POTUS' upcoming meeting with the Dalai Lama, Kim said the Chinese were "far too sensitive" about the Tibetan spiritual leader's meetings with foreign officials. A few years ago, Kim related, the PRC had crudely pressured the ROK government into canceling a planned speech by the Dalai Lama at a Buddhist conference on Cheju Island.

¶4. (C) NSA Kim said he was encouraged by reports that veteran DPRK negotiator Kim Gye-gwan was slated to visit Beijing next week at the invitation of Chinese 6PT chief Wu Dawei. NSA Kim said he understood Kim Gye-gwan might also visit New York. Campbell noted it was important for the DPRK authorities to hear from the Five Parties that Pyongyang's attempt to shift the focus from denuclearization to a peace treaty was not working.  
KJI China Trip and Deteriorating Conditions Inside DPRK

¶5. (C) NSA Kim asserted that North Korean leader Kim Jong-il needed to visit China soon in order to get more economic assistance. The PRC was in the process of delivering a portion of the food aid promised during Premier Wen's visit to the DPRK last fall; approximately 6,000 metric tons (MT) of rice and 20,000 MT of soybeans has been delivered, but the DPRK needed a lot more. The situation

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inside North Korea, he added, appeared increasingly unstable. The North's currency replacement had created strong resentment throughout DPRK society, Kim said, adding that DPRK Finance Chief Pak Nam-gi had apparently been sacked. Kim asserted there were credible reports of unrest in the North; according to ROK intelligence sources, DPRK police recently found a bomb on a passenger train en route from Pyongyang to Beijing.

U.S.-Japan Relations

¶6. (C) Kim concurred with Campbell's assessment that the DPJ was "completely different" from the LDP and agreed it was important for the DJP to coordinate with Seoul and Washington as it made preliminary overtures to Pyongyang. The North Koreans, Kim said, were clearly using several different channels to "knock on the DPJ's door." Kim acknowledged Campbell's point that it was important to reach out directly to key DPJ officials like Foreign Minister Okada and Finance Minister Naoto Kan.

FTA Prospects

¶7. (C) It was the ROK government's view, Kim said, that there might be a window of opportunity to pass KORUS immediately after the U.S. Congressional elections this fall. Kim added that the ROK Embassy in Washington was working on a possible FTA event for President Lee during his upcoming trip to the United States for the nuclear summit. One idea, Kim explained, was to have President Lee visit a Korean factory to help underscore to the American public that the FTA was about creating jobs in America as well in Korea. Campbell praised ROK Ambassador Han Duck-soo for his public outreach on KORUS and noted that the U.S. business community needed to "stop being lazy" and help get KORUS through Congress.

Korean War Memorial Visit

¶8. (C) NSA Kim asked if, during the April nuclear summit in Washington, it would be possible to have POTUS and President Lee pay a joint visit to the Korean War Memorial. Campbell acknowledged the powerful symbolism for both the Korean and American audience of such a visit during the 60th anniversary of the Korean War, but cautioned that it would be extremely difficult to arrange during the nuclear summit.

MIA Remains Recovery in North Korea

¶9. (C) Campbell asked for ROK understanding about the U.S. position on resuming MIA remains recovery operations in North Korea. The USG felt strongly, Campbell explained, that this was an important humanitarian issue. Campbell stressed that the U.S. would coordinate closely with the ROK on the issue to "avoid sending the wrong signal" to the DPRK. Pressed by Kim about paying the North Koreans cash to help recover U.S. remains, Campbell agreed it was distasteful; he noted, however, that the United States had made similar payments to the Burmese and Vietnamese governments to facilitate cooperation on MIA issues.

Prospects for a North-South Summit

¶10. (C) On prospects for a North-South summit, NSA Kim clarified remarks that President Lee made in an interview with the BBC in Davos. Kim said that, beginning last fall, the ROK has had contact with the DPRK about a summit. The North, however, has demanded that Seoul provide a certain amount of economic aid prior to any summit. That precondition was unacceptable, Kim stressed, noting that the Blue House had emphasized to the ROK press this week that President Lee would never "buy" a summit with the North. STEPHENS