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## KOREANS REPORT DEAL ON VIETNAM

### Delay on Troop Pullout Tied to U.S. Pledge to Seoul

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SEOUL, South Korea, Sept. 14—Informed Korean sources report that President Park Chung Hee has agreed to a United States request to delay the withdrawal of South Korean troops from South Vietnam.

In return, they say, President Nixon has pledged to keep American ground combat troops in South Korea until at least mid-1973.

Parts of the decisions involved have previously been made public. On New Year's Day, President Park said at a news conference that the 40,000 South Korean soldiers still in Vietnam would be brought home this year.

In June, Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird stated that no United States forces would be pulled out of South Korea during the current fiscal year, ending June 30, 1973.

Last week, the South Korean Government announced that it

#### Time Was Not Specified

would begin pulling its remaining troops out of Vietnam before the end of the year but did not say how long it would take to complete the withdrawal. Korean sources said that no schedule had been set and indicated that it would be slow.

These announcements are linked by the South Korean sources, who said that President Park, by delaying the withdrawal from Vietnam, had obtained the commitment from President Nixon that American ground troops would stay in Korea until at least mid-1973.

[In Washington, a senior United States official said that there was no connection between the reported agreement by South Korea to delay its withdrawal from Vietnam and Washington's willingness to keep its own forces in South Korea.]

#### Seoul Officials' Account

The Korean sources give this account of how President Park's decision to hold up withdrawal from Vietnam developed!

After the North Vietnamese began their major offensive in South Vietnam on March 30, President Nixon sent a letter to President Park asking him not to withdraw South Korean forces.

The Korean soldiers had been assigned a defensive, holding mission, and they might have been needed to help repel the North Vietnamese.

President Park's senior military and civilian advisers reportedly recommended that South Korea go ahead with its withdrawal plan. They argued that it had fulfilled its pledge to the United States in Vietnam and pointed to cuts in American foreign aid to Seoul.

They argued that the United States was continuing its withdrawal from Vietnam and that most other foreign forces had also been pulled out.

In addition, they were stung by criticism of South Korean soldiers and mercenaries who were only said to be earning foreign exchange for Korea.

#### Kissinger Role Criticized

The advisers asserted further that Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's adviser for national security, was not keeping the South Korean Government fully informed on his efforts to negotiate a peace.

This has been a longstanding sore point with the Seoul Government, dating from the Johnson Administration. Officials here have often complained that Koreans were asked to fight in Vietnam but were not consulted on political and diplomatic issues involving Vietnam.

President Park's advisers also contended that South Korea's international standing was being hurt by the continued presence of its soldiers in Vietnam. They were particularly concerned that their image of hawkishness might harm their chances of continued diplomatic support in the United Nations, which has backed South Korea against North Korea since the invasion of 1950.

#### Not an Unpopular Stance

The Government here, however, does not have a domestic political problem with its stationing of forces in Vietnam, in contrast with the controversy over it in the United States. And many Koreans say that because they received outside help during the Korean war, they are obliged to give assistance to allies now.

President Park, whose authority in such matters is unquestioned here, overrode his advisers and ordered a postponement of the withdrawal, and last week's announcement followed.

The South Koreans have long been concerned over the possibility that the United States would withdraw its ground combat troops from their country. The authorized strength was cut in June, 1971, from 63,000 to 43,000, amid indications that further reductions were in store.

Actual United States troop strength is estimated to be about 5000 soldiers less than the authorized total of 43,000.

American military officials here say that United States ground combat forces are no longer needed in South Korea for purely military missions. They add that South Korean ground troops are fully capable of defending their nation against a ground attack from the North.