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FRIDAY

FROM WALT ROSTOW
TO THE PRESIDENT
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E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.1

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~~SECRET~~By Walt, NARA, Date

SEPTEMBER 8, 1967

SUBJECT: TROOPS FOR VIET-NAM: GOOD NEWS FROM KOREA

ON SEPTEMBER 4 KOREAN PRESIDENT PARK TOLD AMBASSADOR PORTER THAT HE FULLY AGREED WITH YOUR MESSAGES CONCERNING THE NEED FOR MORE TROOPS. PARK HAS ORDERED AN EARLY REPORT FROM HIS MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON HOW MANY TROOPS CAN BE RAISED IN KOREA FOR SERVICE IN VIET-NAM. PARK ADDED THAT HE, HIMSELF, WOULD JUDGE WHETHER THE PLAN SUBMITTED TO HIM "MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SITUATION." (PORTER BELIEVES PARK IS DETERMINED TO MEET YOUR REQUEST FOR MORE TROOPS. PERHAPS UP TO ANOTHER DIVISION.)

PARK STRESSED HIS NEED FOR HELP IN MEETING DOMESTIC PROBLEMS FLOWING FROM THE KOREAN CONTRIBUTION IN VIET-NAM. THE PUBLIC AS WELL AS IMPORTANT POLITICAL ELEMENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE INCREASING BELLIGERENCE OF THE NORTH KOREANS. PARK NEEDS TO MEET THIS WORRY BY SHOWING THAT THE COMMUNIST INFILTRATION IS BEING EFFECTIVELY HANDLED AND THAT THE SOUTH KOREAN ARMED FORCES ARE KEEPING FACE WITH THE NEEDS FOR MODERNIZATION. (PORTER TOLD PARK THAT YOU APPRECIATE THE NEED TO DEAL WITH PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION IN CONNECTION WITH MORE TROOPS AND THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO ASSIST HIM IN DEALING WITH HIS PROBLEMS.)

PORTER BELIEVES THAT PARK WILL HAVE TO HAVE SOMETHING OF HIGHLY VISIBLE BENEFIT TO THE KOREAN ECONOMY AND ARMED FORCES. PORTER DOUBTS THAT THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND LOGISTICS PACKAGE (MENTIONED DURING YOUR VISIT TO SEOUL) MEETS THE NEED. THE WHOLE PROBLEM OF HOW WE HELP THE KOREANS HELP US IN VIET-NAM IS NOW UNDER STUDY. PORTER WILL BE COMING IN SOON WITH SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS.

IN THE MEANTIME, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT THERE BE NO LEAK OF THE PROSPECTS FOR ADDITIONAL KOREAN ASSISTANCE, FOR THAT WOULD GREATLY COMPLICATE AND SLOW DOWN THE WHOLE PROCESS.

FINALLY, PORTER WISHES TO ENCOURAGE PARK'S SENSE OF DIRECT CONTACT WITH YOU ON THESE MATTERS. WE ARE DISCUSSING WITH STATE AND DEFENSE WHETHER THIS IS BEST DONE BY WRITTEN OR AN ORAL MESSAGE. WE WILL BE COMING TO YOU WITH A RECOMMENDATION.

~~SECRET~~

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