

#9

DECLASSIFIED IN PART
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: AUG 23 2018

South Korea: Arrested Withdrawals

(U) One country on the Asian mainland still held a sizeable US military presence: the Republic of Korea. Since the start of the Korean War in 1950, US forces had been standing guard there. An American officer exercised operational control over both US and South Korean forces. In 1973 the US military presence in South Korea totalled 42,000 personnel. Major units were: the 2nd Infantry Division; an F-4 wing with 54 aircraft; an air defense brigade; a Hawk surface-to-air missile battalion; [REDACTED]

(2) The 7th Infantry Division had withdrawn from South Korea in 1971, as part of President Nixon's effort to promote regional self-reliance. Simultaneously, Washington agreed to a Five-Year Modernization Program, under which South Korea would receive \$1.5 billion worth of grants, sales, and arms transfers during FYs 1971-1975. Would that program allow the 2nd Division to leave also? In April 1972, through NSSM 154, President Nixon asked for a policy review that would identify US interests and objectives, potential issues, and options open during the next three to five years. That meant examining all aspects of the balance between North and South Korea, the impact of improved Sino-American relations, and possible effects upon Japanese-American ties.^{24/}

(5) Late in 1972, at President Nixon's request, an interagency steering group reviewed progress in the Modernization Program and concluded that South Korea's ground forces could repel a North Korean attack, while relying only upon US air and logistics support. Looking ahead, though, the group foresaw deficiencies in air defense and recommended that the Modernization Program undergo a fundamental review. Concurrently, the US Ambassador in Seoul, Phillip C. Habib, urged the administration to start

24/ NSSM 154 to SecDef et al., 6 Apr 72, JCS 1776/913, S-GP 3, JMF 892/520 (6 Apr 72) sec. 1.

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS
Date: 23 AUG 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 USC § 552
Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: X
Reason: 3.3(b)(5)(G)
MDR: 18 -M- 1617

OSD 33(b)(5)(G)