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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301



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Date: SEP 06 2019

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2 September 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Pak Chung Hee in Seoul, Korea  
27 August 1975

1. US attendees at this private meeting were limited to Secretary Schlesinger, Ambassador Sneider, General George Brown, Admiral Noel Gayler, General Richard Stilwell, and Major General Wickham.
2. After the initial greetings, Secretary Schlesinger told President Pak that President Ford asked him to convey his unequivocal commitment of support for the ROK and assurances that our forces would remain on the Korean Peninsula.
3. President Pak's opening comments focused on the events immediately after the fall of RVN and Cambodia. He said that these events together with the visit of Kim Il-Sung to Peking produced a peak of tension in the ROK. However, the statements of President Ford, Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Schlesinger about the commitment of the US to the defense of the ROK, together with strong public warnings to North Korea, have provided reassurances and therefore the tension in the ROK has eased. President Pak stated his unequivocal belief that the changes in North Korea are merely ones of tactics because their fundamental objective of a take-over in the South remains unchanged. He went on to point out that the best way to prevent reckless aggression by North Korea continues to be to allow no miscalculation about the intent of the ROK and the US should aggression occur. While he believed that the ROK together with the US forces on the ground possess the capability to defend, Kim Il-Sung might misjudge these capabilities and believe that that international situation would be conducive to renewed aggression. Therefore, to prevent any misjudgment two things must be done -

- a. Our intent and determination to defend must be clear to North Korea, and
- b. Deeds must back our statements. We must strengthen our capabilities.

It is for this reason that Secretary Schlesinger's visit is very significant at this time and the Korean people are most appreciative.

Korea 5/1  
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President Pak noted that Secretary Schlesinger's arrival statement together with the Security Consultative deliberations would represent strong deterrent warnings to North Korea and could contribute to substantial improvement over time in the Korean armed forces.

4. President Pak said that he had been fully briefed by MOD Suh on the SCC deliberations and he was pleased with the US understanding of the ROK situation together with the encouraging statements about the US commitment. Then he went on to note that in the past the ROK has been much too reliant on the US for defense. The ROK should now do their utmost to defend themselves and lessen the burden on the US for the defense of the ROK. He indicated that the ROK was working on several measures with this goal. One of these measures involved the Yulook plan which is designed for a self-help defense posture. This plan would permit the ROK to develop a level of defense capability so that the ROK could successfully defend alone against a North Korean attack without any substantial help from the PRC or the USSR. President Pak felt that this capability could be reached in 5 years. He said that the ROK will try to do as much as possible to finance this plan themselves. The Legislature had just approved a defense tax which would be used exclusively to finance this plan. The priority of effort in the plan would be to upgrade capabilities in the Air Force and Navy together with fire power and mobility for the ground forces. In addition, it would be necessary to equip and arm more reserve forces so that they could be put into action should war break out. All of this plan will require support and cooperation from the US. Finally, President Pak noted that the current modernization plan is behind schedule and asked if it could be accelerated.

5. President Pak expanded on the needs of the 5-year plan in terms of defense production capabilities in the ROK. He said that this would require the support and cooperation of the US in terms of technology and co-production assistance. He noted that until the objectives of the 5-year plan were reached, the level of US forces in the ROK must be maintained at the present level. He said that recently he had met with various members of the US Congress who had asked if the US forces could be withdrawn after 5 years. President Pak said that his reply noted that North Korea had alliances with the PRC and the USSR and that these nations would only have to cross a river to assist Korea. Therefore, the role of US forces in the ROK must be to help in maintaining the delicate balance of power in this area of the world and thus a substantial level of US forces still would be required to stay in this area of the world subsequent to the 5-year plan for ROK improvement of its defense capabilities. President Pak said that he felt the US Congressmen seemed to agree with this view.

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6. Secretary Schlesinger said that he concurred with the basic views which President Pak had just laid out. With regard to the level of US forces, we plan no basic changes in the level. While the strength would remain unaffected, we may make some adjustments in particular detail but the purpose of these adjustments would be simply to enhance the common capability. In our judgment the deficiencies to be remedied in the ROK armed forces' capabilities lie principally in close air support, in armor, and in logistics. To the extent that we make adjustments in US forces, these adjustments will be to shore up the deficiencies in the ROK AF. He went on to point out that it would be an illusion for the ROK to become entirely self-sufficient because US forces will be necessary to "hold the ring" against the PRC and USSR. In order to enhance deterrence, we should plan to rotate into the ROK the kinds of equipment most feasible and effective in underscoring the capability of the US to deter the PRC and USSR, e.g., the F-111.

7. Secretary Schlesinger indicated US support for the defense upgrade efforts which President Pak had announced. He said that one of our difficulties in Congress in the past has been perceptions of the extent of the ROK effort to provide for its own defense. To the extent that the ROK increases its own defense effort, it will help with these Congressional and public criticisms. However, he suggested that the ROK must be cautious with its defense improvement program so as to avoid damage to the international economic position of the ROK. It would be important for the ROK to keep its international credit worthiness high, as it is now. Too heavy a commitment on defense self-sufficiency across the board could erode the beneficial foreign exchange position for the ROK. Short term defense objectives should not diminish the long-run economic capabilities for the ROK. Secretary Schlesinger said that we are prepared to help in areas such as logistics, ammunition availability, armor, close air support, and artillery. We can also assist in defense production cooperation.

8. As a final comment, Secretary Schlesinger described his views as to the relationship of the Korean Peninsula to the world strategic situation. He indicated that overall threats in world politics will continue to be influenced by the situation in the Peninsula. After the fall of RVN and Cambodia, it is true that some concern and uneasiness existed in the ROK but there are some favorable results as well and some illusions have been dispelled. The North Koreans should not draw comfort from the current situation. Our plans and public expressions of support for the ROK are indicative. In the US there are attitudes that say "there will be no more Vietnams" -- but this means that we are not going to permit war to blunder along for an extended time. We will have forces and means to deal effectively with war if we are drawn into it. If North Korea miscalculates it would be tragic for them. We plan no more Vietnams. Thus, the Korean Peninsula is an element in the

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larger balance around the world. The Soviets continue to make tactical ploys without changing their basic objectives. Detente can, of course, be misunderstood. For it to be effective, it must rest on the maintenance of an equivalence of forces in the world and here in the Korean Peninsula. In summary, the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula is encouraging.

9. President Pak expressed again his appreciation for the Secretary's understanding of the ROK situation and for his supportive remarks concerning ROK defense capabilities.

(W)

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cf: ✓ DepSecDef  
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