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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Lee Sang Hoon, Minister of Defense of Korea (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Robert M. Gates, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Henry Rowen, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
Karl Jackson, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (Notetaker)

Lee Sang Hoon, Minister of National Defense
Park Tong Jin, Korean Ambassador to the U.S.
Han Mun Sik (Translator)

DATE, TIME July 20, 1989, 11:10 - 11:25am EDT
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President welcomed the Minister of National Defense to the White House and described the ceremonies going on with regard to the twentieth anniversary of the American landing on the moon. (U)

Minister Lee congratulated the President on his successful trip to Eastern Europe and extended greetings from President Roh Tae Woo. (U)

The President inquired about President Roh and said that he wished his visit to Korea had been longer. The President asked whether Minister Lee was optimistic about the general situation in Korea, and especially the situation vis-a-vis the North. (S)

Minister Lee began by expressing his deep appreciation for the excellent arrangements made for the SCM by Secretary Cheney and Admiral Crowe. The Minister thanked the President for the strong

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statement that he had given in Korea regarding the U.S.-Korean security relationship. (U)

The President interjected, reaffirming that commitment. (U)

Minister Lee said based on the President's strong commitment, the SCM was successful and reaffirmed the importance of U.S. presence in the Republic of Korea. The Minister described a previous conversation with Ambassador Lilley. Ambassador Lilley said that in spite of Soviet peace overtures, the Soviets are still providing sophisticated weaponry such as MIG 23s, MIG 29s, and SA-5s to the North. Lilley also felt that the current disturbances in the South would continue for 2-3 years. The Minister said that the North intended to exploit these and that the North still seeks to spread communism to all of Korea. For this reason the importance of the U.S. presence could not be overestimated. (Q)

The President said that the U.S. has no plan to change its policy. On Capitol Hill the Administration needs help from Korea to maintain support for the continued U.S. presence in Korea. The President stated that the United States will continue to resist the attempt to spread communism to South Korea. Except for North Korea, everyone else in the world has embarked upon a different political direction. (Q)

Minister Lee raised the question of anti-Americanism in South Korea. He assured the President that the majority of people in South Korea like and respect the American people and understand the need for U.S. forces to remain in Korea. (Q)

The President said that we do not like to see anti-Americanism but we nonetheless understand it and do not worry about it. (Q)

Minister Lee said that a special committee had been formed consisting of the Minister of Defense, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and high level representatives from the Blue House to develop countermeasures against anti-Americanism. The Minister said that for the sake of peace he hoped to see the USA remain a strong, influential, and dedicated Asian and Pacific power. (Q)

The President replied that the U.S. will continue to be a Pacific power with many friends in the region, including special friends such as Korea. There will be no shift away from this position. The President said that nothing will move us away from our commitment to Asia and the Pacific. The President raised events in China saying that the U.S. was upset by the tragic events like everyone else in the world. (Q)

Minister Lee delivered a letter to President Bush from President Roh which the President opened. The President said he had great

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respect for President Roh and that Minister Lee could tell him that the United States remains firmly committed to a U.S. presence in Korea. He remarked to the National Security Advisor that we should find an opportunity to publicly express the firmness of the U.S. commitment. The President said that there should be no doubt where we stand on this matter. (P)

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