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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Foreign Minister Choi Ho Joong  
of the Republic of Korea (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
The Vice President  
James A. Baker, Secretary of State  
William Clark Jr., Acting Assistant Secretary  
of State for East Asian and Pacific  
Affairs  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Robert M. Gates, Deputy Assistant to the  
President for National Security Affairs  
Karl D. Jackson, Senior Director for Asian  
Affairs

Choi Ho Joong, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Park Tong Jin, Ambassador  
Shin Doo Byong, Director General for North  
American Affairs  
Chung Tae Ik, Political Counselor

DATE, TIME July 24, 1989, 11:00 a.m.-11:15 a.m. EDT  
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

Foreign Minister Choi began by conveying warmest regards from  
President Roh Tae Woo. (U)

The President remarked on the fact that the ROK Defense Minister  
had been in to see him the previous week and that it was a  
pleasure to welcome Foreign Minister Choi. The President opened  
by discussing a new undercurrent of adverse opinion on U.S. troop  
strength in Korea. The President mentioned that Senators Nunn  
and Warner had raised the subject of drawing down U.S. troop  
strength. (U)

Foreign Minister Choi thanked the President for his speech before  
the Korean National Assembly in which he had reaffirmed his  
strong commitment. (U)

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The President replied that this problem needed to be worked on Capitol Hill. He suggested that the Foreign Minister should discuss the matter when he met with particular Congressmen. In addition, the President raised the issue of burden sharing by saying that the more Korea could do to support U.S. troops the better because much of the desire to withdraw U.S. troops is driven by a budgetary rather than a strategic rationale. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Choi said that in his meetings with Congressmen and Senators he would stress continuing the American troop presence and the necessity of close consultation between the ROK and U.S. He indicated that President Roh conveyed his warmest wishes to President Bush and accepted the invitation to visit Washington. He also passed the President a personal letter from President Roh. (Ø)

The President thanked the Foreign Minister for the letter which he said he would answer and discussed the October 17 visit and the possibility of playing some tennis. (U)

Foreign Minister Choi inquired about the possibility of President Roh addressing a joint session of Congress just as President Bush had addressed the National Assembly in Korea. (Ø)

The President said that this would need to be decided by Congress itself. The Executive can weigh in but the Korean side would also need to contact the Speaker of the House and the Majority Leader of the Senate. The President went on to say that the bilateral relationship was a good one. There are some trade problems and we now have the problem of troop strength. (Ø)

Secretary Baker intervened by raising the matter of the relocation of U.S. Army Headquarters from Yongson. He said that what we needed was prompt agreement between the two governments which would diffuse some of the negative sentiments. The matter is driven by the bilateral trade problem as well as by relocation costs for the U.S. Army. (Ø)

Foreign Minister Choi congratulated the President on his successful trip to Eastern Europe and said that the ROK was also trying hard to establish relations with socialist countries. (U)

The President replied that there were still big problems ahead but that he was very pleased with the trip. The change toward democracy is inescapable and it is in everyone's interest to encourage the change. (U)

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Foreign Minister Choji then extended an invitation to the Vice President to visit Korea in conjunction with his attendance at the IDU Conference in Tokyo. (U)

The Vice President accepted the invitation, if it could be worked out within his schedule. (U)

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