

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
The Vice President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Robert M. Gates, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Donald P. Gregg, U.S. Ambassador to Korea
Richard Solomon, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Douglas H. Paal, Director of Asian Affairs, NSC, Notetaker
Chang Lee, Interpreter

Roh Tae Woo, President
Choi Ho Joong, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Park Tong Jin, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
Ro Jae Bong, Secretary General to the President
Kim Chong Hwi, Assistant to the President for Foreign and National Security Affairs
Roe Chang Hee, Senior Protocol Secretary, Interpreter and Notetaker

DATE, TIME June 6, 1990, 10:00 - 11:00
AND PLACE: The Oval Office

The President welcomed President Roh to the White House and the Oval Office.

The President: I am delighted you are here. (U)

President Roh: Thank you. (U)

The President: Your meeting with Gorbachev was a very important meeting -- I want to discuss the details in private. (U)

President Roh: I met Gorbachev yesterday; it was a hectic day, but he seemed quite happy. It seems your visit was quite successful. I was happy to see that. (U)

The President: Hi, Don (Gregg). (U)

Mr. Gates: This is something that the Koreans did on their own with Gorbachev. There is reason to be very proud. (U)

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President Roh: Well Mr. President, I was not so sure the meeting would come up. In the initial stages Don Gregg was so assured. I want to take this opportunity to approve his help and encouragement. (C)

President Bush: Long after the date for your meeting was set, I talked with Gorbachev at Camp David. He said Kim Il Sung will not be too understanding. (S)

President Roh: About that, I also could feel his concern over the reaction of Kim.

The meeting of one hour was very warm and cordial. As far as Kim is concerned, he seemed quite aware. At the end of the meeting, he wanted no TV pictures, only some stills. That much concerned him. I had to convince him we had to have pictures. People throughout the world would be expecting the meeting -- he agreed to pictures. (S)

The President: Any more progress with Soviets -- I was impressed with your Japanese trip. Gorbachev seems more open than before. Gorbachev urged us to do more with Kim. I told him we have big problem with IAEA. If he wants more with us, he needs to get into compliance. (C)

President Roh: Thank you for raising that question -- President Gorbachev mentioned on behalf of Kim -- not his own feeling -- but Kim is always worried about the presence of nuclear weapons in South Korea. I answered that I cannot confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons. I noted progress in his negotiations with U.S. -- and hoped there will be further progress. My position is to hope to do away with nuclear weapons. I mentioned IAEA, and he seemed to share the same views. (S)

In addition, I mentioned North Korea maintained a very definitely superior military force over us. There is no need to take up this issue. (S)

The President: Do you see anything we should be doing with the Kim regime. Your having met with Gorbachev in no way implies that at this point I'll sit down with Kim. I have no idea what such a step might be, but is there anything I can do to help you? (S)

President Roh: Yes, first on the North-South question, Gorbachev asked if he could pass any message to Kim. I mentioned three points -- (1) engage Kim in summit with myself. Kim up to now has refused to negotiate government-to-government, instead negotiating with dissidents that come to North Korea. (2) We need to press Kim to change basic attitudes toward world affairs

and domestic politics. Up to now, refusing to accept worldwide winds of opening and reform. (3) Militarily, I stressed we will never seek superiority. He should tell Kim of our determination. Having spent so much, North Korea can now direct resources to its people. (S)

I hope you will stress these points in your contacts with North Korea. We had no detailed discussions with the Soviets. (S)

I stressed we could provide some assistance -- consumer goods, some technology to our mutual benefit. We agreed governmental officials will discuss this. On this point, I recommend your cooperation, e.g. in joint ventures of U.S.-South Korea firms developing relations with the Soviet Union. I make a request; I know the U.S. has a sense of the resources in the Soviet Far East. I ask that you share info with us. (S)

The President: On the business side, joint ventures would be a plus, we have no hang-ups at all. We also have business problems of our own with the Soviets. No problems with more contacts and free enterprise, open markets. The more the better to keep the whole process of perestroika moving forward. (U)

Joint ventures should be done with private enterprise, Gorbachev is enthusiastic about a consortium headed by Chevron. (S)

If we can go back to Kim Il Sung for one minute, as you know we are not enthusiastic about a group approach to North Korea. The six nation concept has some difficulties, I'm not sure what would come out of it. You mention "your" contacts with North Korea. Would it be helpful for us to have high-level contacts or anything of that nature? (S)

President Roh: Mr. President, I favor America having contacts with North Korea. There are one or two conditions I'd like to stress. As already agreed, the U.S. has to stress IAEA safeguards. Another thing is to force them to abandon their scheme for Communist unification and urge them to engage in constructive dialogue with us. Another point is the U.S. should stress they should prevent any terrorist activities. In these, I am sure you will always continue to have very close consultations. We know best how to deal with them. (S)

The President: Have you encountered any new acts, like tunnels or boats coming in? (U)

President Roh: Take a few examples: A few months ago, we discovered an additional tunnel -- very worrisome. Experts say it is very difficult to detect -- perhaps there may be a dozen more. (S)

The President: They guess there will be a dozen more? (U)

President Roh: Recently hydrofoils were sent to the North. There are new MIG-29s and SAM-5s in forward positions. (Ø)

The President: Have you had preliminary talks to discuss the tunnels? What do they say, for heaven's sakes? (U)

President Roh: On our side a U.S. officer presides, whenever it's raised, North Korea claims nothing to do with it, and says you must have dug the tunnels. (Ø)

The President: Total denial. (U)

President Roh: I would like to say a few words on my visit to Japan. (U)

The President: Please, we view that as extremely important. (U)

President Roh: The basic problem between the U.S. and Japan is trade -- we have similar problems. Additionally, we have historical problems, due to Japan's wrongdoing of the past -- not just Korea, but Northeast Asia has these problems. Without clearing this emotional thing, even if Japan gives economic help, we do not really appreciate it. The primary purpose of my visit to Japan was to get rid of this problem between our two countries. Without that, we cannot hope to build better relations in the future. (Ø)

On this point, I had frank and sincere talks with Kaifu and the Emperor. I was glad that in general, Japanese share the same view as we, and through solutions or agreement on this basic problem, we were able to resolve basic problems concerning the legal status of Korean residents of Japan. Also we reached agreement on reducing the trade imbalance and the need for transfer of Japanese technology. On the whole it was very successful and helpful to improved relations between us. (Ø)

The President: Did you get a sense Japan was eager to improve relations with the Soviet Union? I talked with Gorbachev on the Northern Territories. Did you talk with him about it? (Ø)

President Roh: I had a slight talk with Gorbachev about Japan. But what I felt in Japan was -- put simply -- Japan was rather hesitant on relations with North Korea. The news of my meeting with Gorbachev gave some shock to Japanese, and it might cause them to look again at the problem. Gorbachev asked the identical question of me. (Ø)

President Bush: He's interested. Reaching out all over. I didn't feel he had a sensible solution to the Northern Islands problem. Maybe he has. (Ø)

President Roh: What Gorbachev said to me was "let's see" about it. (U)

The President: Same to us.

Mr. Gates: Yes, sir. (U)

The President: There was no reason to give that away to us. (U)

President Roh: Summing up results of my visit to Japan, I expect relations with Japan will improve quite a lot. This will affect permanently Japan's relations with other Northeast Asia states. I hope it will build trilateral U.S.-Korea-Japan relations. (U)

The President: Let's stay in touch on it. (U)

President Roh: Mr. President, there is not much time left, and already I have had three meetings in one year with you. May we briefly mention bilateral issues? (U)

The President: Please. (U)

President Roh: About trade, through mutual efforts and consultations, I am happy to say there are not any big problems now. There's a big purchasing mission now that will buy an estimated \$4 billion, including some aircraft. As Mr. President is aware, the Korean economy grew rapidly last decade. In the last few years, we've had many difficulties. I am glad the U.S. understood our problems also. (U)

We are now restructuring. I fear we will have some net deficit in our trade around the world. We are ready to discuss support for USFK. The level of readjustment will require close consultations. I will stress that in future we will take more and more of leading role in our defense. (U)

To conclude, Mr. President, I hope the Korean economy will recover in the next year or so, so we can continue to play a more positive role in our bilateral relationship -- not only in military but in economic relations.

Because of the time limit, I regret we cannot enjoy tennis today, I hope to do so in the future. (U)

The President: We will eventually have a tennis date. The Greek Prime Minister is due. Time is tight. I need to talk with the experts for a few minutes. The Vice President told me of his breakfast with you. Senator Lugar talked on the state of play in the U.S. Congress on defense issues, among others. You should leave here knowing the North Korean threat is well understood. Our strategic alliance is as strong as ever. You raised very

generously the idea of Korea playing more of a leading role. Very helpful. We, too, are in trade and budget deficit time. The more Korea can do, the more we can remain in Korea. I understand from Ambassador Gregg and others, that the security relationship is going well. (U)

One last comment, although it was a long sacrifice on your part to come all the way here, it was a very good thing to do. It sends a strong symbol around the world, that after the Gorbachev visit our alliance remains paramount. One never should neglect friends. Thank you for coming so far. (U)

President Roh: Thank you. (U)

-- End of Conversation --