

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Not H.S.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with South Korean Minister of National Defense Lee Jong Koo (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Paul Wolfowitz, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
Carl Ford, Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy for Asia and Pacific Affairs
Douglas H. Paal, Director of Asian Affairs, NSC, Notetaker
Kim Huchun, Interpreter

Lee Jong Koo, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea
Park Tong Jin, Korean Ambassador to the U.S.
Han Mun Sik, Interpreter

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: November 16, 1990, 10:00 - 10:15 a.m. EST
The Oval Office

The President: May I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the silver turtle boat you sent me. It is right there in my office, Mr. Minister. I am very proud of it. I am going on a trip this evening, and we are trying to get a lot done in a hurry. But I am so pleased to see you again. (C)

Minister Lee: Mr. President, I am honored to have the opportunity to meet with you. I have been asked to convey with sincere greetings this letter from my president. (C)

The President: Please convey my respects to him. We have a good friendship. We are very supportive of what he wants to do. I will study this with great interest. I want to glance at this and see if he touches on the Persian Gulf, and he does. I want to say we are pleased with the cooperation there. I want you to tell him that the fact that we are occupied as we are in reversing Saddam Hussein's aggression, we are not losing interest

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in the security of other parts of the world, particularly Korea. It is a very nice letter. Indeed, you can make a connection. By that I mean our success in turning back Saddam Hussein's aggression will teach a lesson against any other aggression. So the connection is I hope that message is not lost on North Korea. But how do you see this relationship? I am anxious to hear your views. (C)

Minister Lee: Before going into a direct answer, I have the honor to convey President Roh's personal message. The Korean people and President Roh deeply appreciate your support for the security of Korea. He wanted me to convey this in person. For my part, Mr. President, yesterday Secretary Cheney and I had a very productive meeting. We reaffirmed US-ROK relations. (C)

The President: I had a report from General Brent Scowcroft and Secretary Cheney and I am very pleased about that. I think we are together on the security question. We are determined to maintain our obligations. I hope I do not have to convey that to him. What is your schedule in the US, what itinerary? (C)

Minister Lee: From here, I will go to DIA. (C)

Mr. Han: From here, we will go to DIA, then to New York City, then home. (C)

The President: I am sorry it has to be so hectic. As you heard from the press, they have already left. I am frantically trying to clean up before leaving. We are signing a treaty, a CSCE arms control agreement. We are off to Czechoslovakia, then to Paris, then to see our people in the Gulf. I am sorry I am short changing you on your visit. I have a ceremony now, and you can see the people out there waiting. I hope the biographical material that preceded this meeting was correct. It says you are a golf player. These are three Presidential golf balls that do not slice, hook or three-putt. I hope you will use them. If not, give them to someone who will. (C)

Minister Lee: I will treasure them. (U)

The President: Listen, I did not intend this to be anything comparable to what you gave me. (U)

Minister Lee: Amidst such busy commitments, you have been very kind. (U)

The President: Do you have any Korean civilians held hostage in Iraq? You offered a medical support team. Very generous. Maybe I should raise that on my trip. (C)

Ambassador Park: All our best wishes go with you. (C)

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The President: I hope our paths cross soon. (U)

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