

~~TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: August 21, 1969
Time: 1615-1815 hours
Place: St. Francis Hotel,
San Francisco

SUBJECT: Talks Between President Nixon and
President Pak

PARTICIPANTS: President Richard Nixon
President Pak of the Republic of Korea
Mr. Sang Ho Cho (Korean Interpreter)
Mr. Victor Lee (U.S. Interpreter)

President Nixon: Before we go into a detailed discussion today, I would like to explain a few items on my new policy toward Korea. Kim Il-Song's regime is one of the most aggressive and unreasonable Communist countries in the world. As you recall, the Pueblo incident occurred before I took over the Presidency. During my election campaign, I noted that to give a warning to North Korea once is sufficient. If North Korea provokes another provocative incident, we will react, are prepared to react and will take measures harsher than the enemy provocation. This message was given to the Soviet Ambassador in the U.S. and I believe it was conveyed to North Korea.

Now I would like to elaborate on my new policy toward Asia. The press overlooked my statement to the effect that the U.S. will fulfill its treaty obligations with the Asian countries concerned. We will honor the U.S. -ROK Defense Treaty. What we must think over is what would be the best way to keep these commitments. We have relaxed our travel restrictions and purchases with regard to Communist China, but we regard Communist China as an aggressive nation. U.S. policy toward Communist China has not changed, and we will not admit the country into the U.N. It is also necessary in this connection to pay attention to the Sino-Soviet conflict. As you know, the Soviet Union has not helped us in solving the issues concerning Communist China, North Korea, the Vietnam War and the Middle East. It is also one of the countries which provide military aid to North Korea.

~~TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5
NAN 02-5711 per Hr. 14 Sept. 07
By BO Date 13 Oct 07

[p. 1 of 7]

We cannot cooperate with the Soviet Union without the latter's reciprocal acts. Under these circumstances, a collective security with the Soviets against Communist China is meaningless. It is first necessary for the Soviets to act with sincerity.

I believe that the non-Communist countries located on the periphery of Communist China must be strengthened since they are threatened by Communist China, North Korea and North Vietnam. The Soviet Union will also become a greater threat than now if it is left alone.

Now with regard to Vietnam, we are aware of various efforts made by the ROK in South Vietnam. We are withdrawing our troops from SVN when we think that the South Vietnamese have built the ability to replace them. As we informed you in advance, I agreed with President Thieu at Midway to withdraw 25,000 troops. During my recent talks with him, we decided to replace more troops in August, but we have been withholding taking the measure due to the enemy offensive of two weeks ago. Probably within about 10 days, President Thieu, General Abrams and other leaders concerned will talk over the subject again. We will inform you in advance the number and time of these troop withdrawals, which will be carried out as long as they do not affect our combat capabilities.

In regard to the Paris talks, I just had a talk with Ambassador Lodge today, who informed me that there has been no progress. As you know, November 1 is the first anniversary of our bombing halt. If I had been the President last November, I would not have halted the bombing. This is just between us; if there is no further progress in the Paris talks, we will re-evaluate the situation about October 15.

I believe that your government's efforts toward military and economic self-reliance are the correct road to take. I hope that other countries in Asia will follow suit. It is necessary for the U.S. to continue to play a great role in Asia. I think that economic and military aid to those countries like the ROK which make self-reliance efforts should be continued. The self-reliance remarks you made this morning (at the Presidio of San Francisco), I think, were good ones for American public opinion to consume. As a private citizen and government official, I travelled a great deal in the Pacific region. I can assure you that we will not retreat from the Pacific area and we will not reduce our commitments, but I think we need intelligent policy, by giving aid to the countries who attempt to help themselves. I have just made a general statement. Do you have any questions on such subjects as military equipment and economic development?

President Pak: I appreciate hearing your firm policy toward the ROK, Asia in general and the Communist Bloc. I would like to make my views clear on these subjects. As you know, Kim Il-Song during the past ten years or so has almost completed war preparations to unify the country by force. He is looking for an opportunity to invade the South. He has not done so because of the U.S. commitments to the ROK and the presence of American troops in our country. Kim will provoke a war if he believes that this American policy toward the ROK is going to change or has changed. Kim's objective in making various provocations is to have American troops stationed in the ROK withdraw as they have done in South Vietnam, alienate the ROK from the U.S. and have the U.S. not intervene when anything happens in Korea. The strengthening of ROK defense would check these provocations of Kim and have him give up the idea of invading the South by force. A way to achieve this objective is to strengthen the equipment and combat capability of the ROK forces rather than to strengthen U.S. forces in South Korea, to the extent that the ROK can singlehandedly resist North Korean invasion, since the U.S. has various commitments all over the world.

President Nixon: If the Soviets or the Chinese invade the ROK, it will be a different ball game. Since you were in the military, I would like to elaborate a little on my decision on the establishment of the ABM network. According to our intelligence, Communist China will have 25 to 50 ICBM's by 1976 which can hit targets in the U.S. We now have about 1,000 but without the ABM network a nuclear-armed China might be able to use nuclear blackmail against non-nuclear countries in Asia and pose a danger to the U.S. That is why this subject is so important for the defense and security of the Free World.

President Pak: To continue my views, the Korean War, anti-guerrilla operations (in the ROK) and Vietnamese War have been carried well with U.S. aid. Concerning Korea, I do not think you have to worry about the Korean problem if our equipment is further strengthened. I believe that we can meet North Korean threats without increasing the present level of U.S. forces in South Korea if (military) equipment is strengthened.

President Nixon: In this connection, we are now studying sympathetically the MAP and other proposals your side has made following Mr. Packard's recent visit to your country. I am aware of the fact that some of the ROK units are equipped with weapons of World War II.

President Pak: I appreciate your explanation of the so-called Nixon doctrine on Asia. I agree in principle with your new policy, especially on the aspect of having those countries which have relied on the U.S. since the end of World War II try to help themselves. Some Asians, however, are apprehensive because of their misconception and misunderstanding of your policy, believing that the U.S. intends to wash its hands of Asia, leaving Asian problems to the Asians themselves. They will naturally dispel this apprehension when they fully understand your new policy. It will be necessary for us to give guidelines and study methods of gradually decreasing the U.S. burdens so as to have these Asian countries able to defend themselves. In this connection, I would like to have the U.S. guide various countries of Asia so they can share the responsibility and burdens in accordance with their respective ability. At present, some countries are sharing excessive burdens beyond their ability and vice versa. The Republic of Korea and Japan are good examples. Korea is not only divided but also is a developing country. Japan, despite its strong economy, is hardly carrying its share of the burdens in Asia. The Japanese are even trying to refuse to provide military bases to Okinawa when it is returned to Japan, thus hindering the unity of Asia. Several Asian countries as well as the people of South Korea are dissatisfied with such a Japanese posture. I do not have the details on the bilateral negotiations for the return of Okinawa to Japan, but I believe that if the island is to be reverted to Japan, the Japanese share of the burdens in Asia must be increased first, before Okinawa is actually returned.

President Nixon: This is a delicate issue because of the constitution of Japan which we helped draft. For a long time I have thought that Japan should play a much more significant role than the present in its defense and collective economic activity. Some progress has been made in the economic aspect. As you are aware, Prime Minister Sato is coming here in November, and we should make every effort to have him survive politically. Free Korea is very important to Free Japan. Japan spends only about one percent of its GNP in its defense, which I believe is too small.

President Pak: The Japanese say that the defense and security of South Korea and Japan are interrelated, but in practice they haven't done anything.

President Nixon: That is true.

~~TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

-5-

President Pak: They think that they do not have to do anything since they have South Korea in front of them and the U.S. in back of them. They need U.S. advice in this regard. For example, most of the "equipment" carried by North Korean guerrillas who have infiltrated into South Korea such as their radios and shoes are made in Japan. Although we made a protest against this, they continue to sell these items to make a profit. Thus the people of South Korea have no good feelings toward the Japanese. Incidentally, there have been reports to the effect that since American troops have been withdrawing, other allied troops might follow suit. It is my thinking that unless we are requested by South Vietnam or the U.S., we will continue to station our troops in Vietnam.

President Nixon: There has been no progress in the Paris talks, and November 1 is the first anniversary of our bombing halt. What do you think our tactics should be? Do you think we should reopen the bombings?

President Pak: It is up to your decision, but I think it is difficult (to reopen the bombings) because of your domestic public opinion. When I was informed by Ambassador Porter regarding the bombing halt, last November, I told him how we would be taking this action without reciprocal action or commitment on the part of North Vietnam.

President Nixon: In the event that we resume our bombings, what do you think the reactions of Asia would be?

President Pak: Free countries in Asia would welcome it. But it is up to your decision.

President Nixon: What is your view on the Sino-Soviet conflict? How deep do you think it is and how long do you believe it might last?

President Pak: We have analyzed the situation a great deal. There is a 50-50 chance a war might break out between the two countries. Some believe that a war will not be staged since both of them know they both would suffer a great deal of damage and a war might be a prolonged one. On the other hand, some interpret that the longer the present conflict continues, the harder for the Soviets to deal with Communist China. We also have information that the Soviet military takes a hawkish attitude. One thing is certain, though -- the present conflict will not be solved in the near future.

~~TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY~~

[NLN 02-57/1:5]

President Nixon: I oppose the view that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. should cooperate to restrain Communist China. Both the Soviet Union and China are our potential enemy, and this view does not make sense. If the Soviet Union sweeps over China, the former will get stronger, posing a greater threat to Asia.

President Pak: I agree with you.

President Nixon: This explains the reason why we have eased the travel restrictions and purchases. We are trying to dispel the Soviet idea of opposing China by cooperating with the U.S. But we will continue to support Free China, and our policy toward Communist China remains the same as before.

President Pak: It would be better for us to remove both powers than have one of the powers get stronger than the other.

President Nixon: The economic growth rate in such countries as South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Free China and Thailand has grown higher than other countries of the world, whereas the economic level of China and North Korea has been lowered. Now the danger is in an area of of subversion. This is acute in the ROK, for example, because of forces lying beyond the parallel. Although, as you know, public opinion here demands reduction of troops we have all over the world, I rejected the idea of decreasing the number of our men staying in the ROK. I will make this view clear to the public to warn Kim Il-Song. I had talks with General Bonesteel, and during the last Cabinet meeting we received a report that the supply of small ships to the ROK Navy has progressed at a fast tempo. Although our defense budget this year is tight, I think we will be able to meet some of the requests the ROK has made. I do not want to give a wrong notion to Kim Il-Song that the U.S. is lessening its responsibility for the defense of the ROK. Now, I know you have various economic programs under way. This will be known in two to three weeks, but I would like to inform you that today the Export-Import Bank has decided to give \$73 million to the ROK for the construction of one power plant and an atomic power plant. Since I heard that your country wants more private investment unlike some of the Asian countries, I plan to encourage this aspect.

President Pak: As I told you in the car (while proceeding to the St. Francis Hotel from the Presidio of San Francisco), the ROK is indebted to the U.S. for its economic growth. Our "financial independence rate" until a few years ago was about 50 percent. It will be 94.8 percent

in the next fiscal year and almost 100 percent in the year after next. We will, however, need surplus agricultural products for the time being. We have encouraged exports to obtain more foreign currency and private investment. The South Korean people have been making efforts to achieve a self-independent economy, and I hope you would consider giving us assistance to achieve this target during the next several years.

President Nixon: I have held the same view since my first visit to your country in 1953. It is difficult with this year's budget, but the ROK is an exception.

President Pak: The U.S. has been imposing a restriction on its import of textiles, but I hope that you make the ROK an exception in the measure so as to help the country achieve its economic independence.

President Nixon: The matter on the textiles mainly concerns Japan. The ROK has entered the textile market only during the recent years. I hope that a reasonable solution can be found to satisfy both the ROK and Japan. We can discuss the matter in detail tomorrow, but this is not an easy problem to solve. I will try to deal with the ROK problem discreetly.

President Pak: I think I have told all the subjects I had in mind.

President Nixon: On the troop matter, I will inform you tomorrow if our government and President Thieu have decided on it. We are partners in our common struggle. I know that for the ROK population, South Korea has sent more troops in percentage than the U.S. has done. I will inform you of all the measures we plan to take on Vietnam as they occur.

President Pak: I appreciate listening to your views on various subjects. I am encouraged to hear your remarks on the Korean problem.

President Nixon: It is a little noisy outside, but please remember that 98 percent of the American people are Korea's friends.