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**March 10, 1977**

**US Presidential Memorandum, Jimmy Carter  
Administration, North Korean Proposal for  
Discussions of Reunification with South Korea**

**Citation:**

"US Presidential Memorandum, Jimmy Carter Administration, North Korean Proposal for Discussions of Reunification with South Korea", March 10, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Jimmy Carter Library, Records of the Office of the National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski's Country Files (NSA 6), Box 43, Korea, Democratic Peoples Republic of, 1/77-1/81. Obtained by Charles Kraus.  
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/114644>

**Summary:**

Zbigniew Brezinski rejects North Korea's proposals for talks with representatives from South Korea as of limited significance.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

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MEMORANDUM

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION

March 14, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB.*  
SUBJECT: North Korean Proposal for Discussions  
of Reunification with South Korea

You raised a question on the attached news report concerning the significance of a North Korean proposal which implied its readiness to discuss confederation with the ROK. Its significance is limited.

The proposal, announced on January 25, was reportedly written by Kim Il-sung. It calls for a "political conference of representatives of all the political parties, public organizations and people.. in the North and South" that desire reunification.

This is not a new proposal; Pyongyang has been calling for such a broadly based conference for at least five years. They have regressed in one important respect. Their original conference proposal -- presented during the North-South dialogue in 1972 -- provided for official South Korean participation. Under the latest version the South Korean Government would be permitted to sit in only if it agrees "to withdraw its 'two-Korea' policy (i. e. give up hopes of a U. N. seat), renounce anti-communism, stop the suppression of patriotic people (in the South) and give up its war policy. Clearly the preconditions are designed to block rather than facilitate a serious government-to-government dialogue.

The immediate North Korean aim in surfacing this proposal was to counter President Pak's January 12 call for a bilateral nonaggression pact between the North and South. Beyond this, Pyongyang probably wishes to highlight the "peaceful unification" theme to forestall moves by the major powers toward a "two Korea" understanding, and to repair the North's tarnished international image -- which suffered greatly last year as a result of massive indebtedness, a smuggling scandal involving its diplomats, and the brutal murder of two Americans at the DMZ in August.

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In short, the North is replaying an old record. Kim still resists direct discussions with the Park Government, and that is an essential prerequisite to any genuine reduction of tensions in the peninsula.

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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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ACTION

March 10, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM: MIKE ARMACOST *MA*

SUBJECT: North Korean Proposal for Discussions  
of Reunification with South Korea

Attached is a memo for the President which responds to his question about the significance of North Korea's January 25 proposal for a political conference to discuss a Korean confederation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you sign the memorandum at Tab A.

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 E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.4(b)  
 WHITE HOUSE GUIDELINES, FEB. 24, 1983  
 BY *[Signature]* NARS, DATE *12/1/96*