

June 8, 1979

Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Nick Platt, 'PRC Meeting on PRM-45 Thursday, June 7, 1979,' June 6, 1979, and Policy Review Committee, 'Korea'

Citation:

"Memorandum for Zbigniew Brzezinski from Nick Platt, 'PRC Meeting on PRM-45 Thursday, June 7, 1979,' June 6, 1979, and Policy Review Committee, 'Korea'", June 8, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, [Meetings--PRC 110: 6/8/79], Box 25, Zbigniew Brzezinski Collection, Subject File, Jimmy Carter Library. Obtained by Charles Kraus <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/144961>

Summary:

Brzezinski sent a summary of the PRC meeting, including a discussion on the inter-relationship between troop withdrawal policy and human rights issues in South Korea.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT

June 8, 1979

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
FROM: NICK PLATT *NP*
SUBJECT: Policy Review Committee Meeting
on Korea (S)

A memo to the President attaching a ^{revised} summary of the PRC meeting on Korea June 8 is at Tab I. (S)

RECOMMENDATION:

That you send it to the President. (U)

NP
This does not reflect
what I said -
the option I will be
maintained - with refinement
of the Defense Committee
+ accommodat:- on make.
ZR.

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REASON _____

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E.O.12958, Sec.3.6
PER *9/10/82 NLC H/RE NLC-97-73*
BY *[Signature]* NARS. DATE 2/12/89

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
SUBJECT: Policy Review Committee Meeting
on Korea (TS) S

I attach for your information a summary of the PRC meeting June 8 to discuss policy toward Korea. The meeting was a preliminary exchange from which no firm conclusions or recommendations emerged. ~~The most striking feature of the discussion was agreement on the inter-relationship between troop withdrawal policy options and virtually all other issues.~~ Adoption of a withdrawal formula that bolstered Park's confidence in the U.S. commitment would

~~pressure the ROK on the nature and scope of force improvement expenditures, proceed with diplomatic initiatives toward the North, supply less sophisticated military hardware to the ROK, and even encourage Park to be more responsive on human rights issues. The reverse effect would flow from a decision which cast doubt on our staying power. (TS)~~

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PRC 110

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

June 9, 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR:

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

FROM:

NICK PLATT *HP*

SUBJECT:

Policy Review Committee Meeting
on Korea (S)

A memo to the President attaching a revised summary of the PRC meeting on Korea, June 8, is at Tab I. (S)

RECOMMENDATION

That you send the memo to the President. (U)

hold for review

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TOP SECRET attachment
Review June 9, 1985

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BY *J* NARS DATE *2/12/99*

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
SUBJECT: Policy Review Committee Meeting on Korea (S)

I attach for your information a summary of the PRC meeting, June 8, to discuss policy toward Korea. The meeting was a preliminary exchange from which no firm conclusions or recommendations emerged. (S)

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Review June 8, 1985

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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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June 6, 1979
 drop withdrawal
 under issue
 F-16's
 delay any indication
 of withdrawal until after
 consultation - follow
 Tokyo / Seoul
 peace
 inter

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI
 FROM: NICK PLATT/AP
 SUBJECT: PRC Meeting on PRM-45 Thursday,
 June 7, 1979

A Policy Review Committee meeting chaired by Cy Vance is scheduled to review PRM-45 at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 7. The key issues to be decided are:

- What adjustments should be made, if any, in the schedule of U.S. ground force withdrawals from the ROK.
- How we relate adjustments in our ground force withdrawal plan.
- The nature and timing of related diplomatic initiatives to reduce tensions on the Korean peninsula.
- The nature of ROK and U.S. measures to improve the military balance.
- The timing and sequence of consultations with our allies and Congress, the decision, and the announcement.

The PRM response (Tab B) is a competent review of the situation. The executive summary, pages i-xvi, covers the substance of the paper adequately. An agenda for the meeting submitted by State and circulated to all participants is at Tab A.

The North-South Balance

The meeting will begin with a brief discussion of the North-South military balance. The basic judgment, made in the PRM

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response and backed by a DOD Military Annex (Tab C) and a CIA Special National Intelligence Estimate (Tab D), state "both now and in 1982, it is doubtful that the ROK, even with timely U.S. air, naval, and logistical support, could halt a major North Korean surprise attack north of Seoul." This stands in contrast to the estimate made in 1977 in response to PRM-13 that "South Korea should be able to defend itself against an attack by the North without the involvement of U.S. ground combat forces if adequate and timely air, naval, and logistic support is provided." What has not changed is the direct role of U.S. ground combat forces in this military assessment: They make little difference in either 1977 or 1979. Their importance is their role in deterrence.

The different judgment in 1979 results from a larger and more precise intelligence community perception of North Korean strength rather than real changes in Pyongyang's military production or deployments. The data base which supported the original estimate was incomplete. However, regardless of whether one is dealing with perceptions or reality, the new judgment places a much higher premium than before on the symbolic deterrent value of the 2nd Division in Korea.

Policy Options -- Ground Force Withdrawals

The PRM response presents four ground force withdrawal policy options, roughly summarized as follows:

- I. Continue with the current schedule.
- II. Stretch out and slow down the current schedule.
- III. Stretch out and slow down the current schedule, making completion of the final stages of withdrawals explicitly contingent upon reduction of tensions and improvement of the military balance.
- IV. Suspend further withdrawals.

All options require a reassessment of the military balance and the political situation in 1981.

These options should be judged by how effectively they support:

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-- U.S. credibility as an ally in Asia and to a lesser extent in the rest of the world;

-- the President's credibility as a decision-maker;

-- incentives for greater ROK self-reliance;

-- incentives for North Korea to reduce tension through diplomatic means.

The option which best serves these objectives is No. II. To continue the current schedule (Option I) in spite of the new intelligence estimate would undermine U.S. credibility in Asia and fuel apprehensions in other parts of the world about our steadiness and staying power. To stop all withdrawals (Option IV) would strongly reassure the Asians, but add significantly to an image of inconsistency and vacillation on the President's part, lower ROK incentives for force improvement and encourage hard-liners in Pyongyang. To stretch out the schedule to a point, leaving final withdrawals contingent on diplomatic progress for ROK force improvement (Option III) would encourage neither development and deprive us of flexibility. Our Asian allies would regard the point at which the withdrawals end and the contingencies became operative as a de facto halt in the withdrawals and be reassured in that perception. Others would regard it as an artful cover for the President reversing a previous decision.

To stretch and slow the current schedule (Option II) preserves our credibility in Asia -- not dramatically, but adequately. Asian policy makers expect some adjustment in the schedule as a result of our intelligence reassessment, and Option II demonstrates that we are sensitive to the responsibilities imposed by our new perception of North Korean strength. It involves no basic change in the President's policy, but simply a postponement of its completion. The ROK are on notice that they cannot relax efforts to improve their force posture, although they have more time. The North Koreans still have some incentives for a policy of patience and diplomatic action.

(Option II has three sub-options calling for withdrawal of 1,300, 2,300, or 4,300 positions in 1980. I favor the second of these because it is the largest withdrawal that can be made without degrading allied combat capability.)

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State and OSD will probably favor Option III, although they may propose a less explicit linkage between final withdrawals, progress toward reduction of tensions, and improvement in the military balance. This is a viable fallback, although I think any linkage deprives us of some flexibility and lowers incentives for action by either Korea. JCS will support Option IV. ACDA had not made up its mind when last I checked. But General Seignious is likely to favor keeping some ground troops in Korea.



Diplomatic Initiatives

Discussion on policy initiatives to reduce tensions will flow from the discussion on troop withdrawals [REDACTED]. The PRM response (pp 33-38) provides a useful review of past negotiations, current strategy, and possible further moves. All agencies agree on the need to keep testing the willingness of both Seoul and Pyongyang to take initiatives to reduce tension. A decision to adjust the withdrawal schedule plus the restored degree of trust and confidence between Seoul and Washington accomplished by the President's visit may permit a deeper degree of consultation on tactics and initiatives to sound out Pyongyang's intentions. Ambassador Gleysteen will report in person on the status of our current initiative.

Improving the Military Balance

The mix of measures we advocate to improve the military balance on the Korean peninsula also depends upon the troop withdrawal decision. Most simply put, the more we adjust

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the troop withdrawal schedule, the more we can ask the ROK to increase their own force readiness and the less compensatory action will be required from us. The PRM response and the Military Annex discuss the problems related to increased ROK defense expenditures without revealing the intensity of the argument within the U.S. Government. DOD favors pressure for a significant increase in the percentage of GNP devoted to ROK defense. The Embassy Country Team, including General Vessey and the State Department, oppose, arguing that major increases in military spending will fuel inflation and encourage militarism in the ROK.

The issues should be brought out at the meeting and the President's feelings in favor of a greater ROK effort made clear. I support pressing the ROK for greater expenditures provided we adjust the withdrawal schedule. The point beyond which the ROK cannot go without causing serious consequences is believed to be 7 percent of GNP. With current expenditures coming to 5.6 percent, there seems to be room for discussion, and you should stimulate it. DOD will also want to outline compensatory measures the U.S. should take, including familiar issues like sale of the F-16, FMS credits, etc.

Timing of Consultations and Decisions

The most sensible sequence for consultations, decision-making, and public announcement would be as follows: following this meeting we will submit to the President a memorandum summarizing PRC findings and obtain the President's response. During his second meeting with Prime Minister Ohira, the President will outline in general terms the trend of his thinking. The President will consult in detail with Park and formulate a final decision upon his return to the United States after consultation with Congress. The decision will be announced in the course of a comprehensive speech on U.S. policy toward Asia.

Others, like Dick Sneider, have argued that the impact of the President's announcement would be increased were he to make it while in Korea. This is unquestionably true, if dramatics are the principal criteria. To choose this course, however, would deprive the President of some flexibility and would change the nature of his Korean visit into an intense negotiating session. It would also deprive him of a chance to consult with Congress.

OMB has seen the PRM response and has no special views to offer. Jim Thompson concurs. *jt*

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POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE

June 8, 1979

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Time and Place: 9:00 a.m.-9:57 a.m.; White House
Situation Room

Subject: Korea

Participants:

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
(Chairman)
Richard Holbrooke, Assistant
Secretary of State for
East Asia
Leslie Gelb, Director, Bureau
of Politico-Military Affairs
Ambassador William Gleysteen

OSD

Secretary Harold Brown
Deputy Secretary Charles Duncan
David McGiffert, Assistant
Secretary, International
Security Affairs
Michael Armacost, Deputy Assistant
Secretary, East Asia, Pacific
& International-American Affairs

JCS

General David Jones
Lt. Gen. J. A. Wickham, Deputy
Director, Joint Staff

DCI

Admiral Stansfield Turner

ACDA

Spurgeon Keeny, Deputy Director
Barry Blechman, Asst. Director,
Weapons Evaluation and Control Bureau

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

NSC

Nicholas Platt, Staff Member, East Asia

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Review June 8, 1979

Classified and Extended by Z. Brzezinski

Reason for Extension: NSC 1.13(f)

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~~TOP SECRET~~~~TOP SECRET~~SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONSPolicy Review Committee Meeting on Korea

The Policy Review Committee, chaired by Cy Vance, met June 8 to consider the response to PRM-45 on policy toward Korea. The meeting was a preliminary exchange from which no firm conclusions or recommendations emerged. It was agreed that the group should meet again after the Vienna Summit and before departure for Asia. (S)

The Military Balance

Discussion began with a brief statement by Admiral Turner that the rate of increase in the North Korean force posture had slowed. The outlook was for modest qualitative improvements over the next few years, barring an increase in military aid from the Soviet Union. Given the North Korean lead and the constraints on ROK defense spending (of which more discussion below), the ROK would not be on equal terms with North Korea until well into the 1980s. (S)

Ground Force Withdrawal Options

The following options were discussed:

- I. Continue with the current schedule.
- II. Stretch out and slow down the current schedule.
- III. Stretch out and slow down the current schedule, making completion of the final stages of withdrawals explicitly contingent upon reduction of tensions and improvement of the military balance.
- IV. Suspend further withdrawals.

All options require a reassessment of the military balance and the political situation in 1981. (S)

No option was foreclosed in the discussion that followed. Secretary Vance asked whether there was support for continuing the withdrawal as planned. Dr. Brzezinski

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Review June 8, 1999

Classified & extended by Z.Brzezinski

Reason for extension: NSC 1.13(f)

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responded that Option I could not be dismissed if accompanied by a strong statement reaffirming our security commitment [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] He agreed that a review in 1981 would convey a useful message. Other participants felt that continuing the withdrawal as scheduled in the face of the new intelligence estimate would undermine ROK confidence in the US commitment, reduce our leverage with President Park on other issues, and cause a storm of Congressional criticism. Vance, Brown and Ambassador Gleysteen favored Option III. ACDA came out firmly for Option II, and the JCS for Option IV. Everybody agreed on the necessity for a review in 1981, regardless of the option chosen. (TS)



ROK Action to Improve Forces

The ROK is currently spending 5.6 pct. of GNP on defense and could go perhaps as high as 6.5 percent. The ROK would not agree to a percentage beyond this, Ambassador Gleysteen maintained. The Korean economy is having growing pains, including fairly severe inflation. Park is being strict about maintaining some spending discipline. The U.S. can, however, press for increases within this range, which, given the size and growth rate of the ROK economy, could represent a considerable increase in the current budget. We are also perfectly justified in making sensible suggestions to the ROK on the nature of their expenditures, urging them, for example, to concentrate on ground forces and to reduce expenditures on submarines, missiles, and aircraft. (C)

On U.S. actions to strengthen ROK readiness, Harold Brown noted that we were committed to sell them the F-16, that the choice of timing was the only decision left, and that we

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could not delay much longer. Ambassador Gleysteen noted that ROK expectations were high on this issue but might be tempered if we adjusted the troop withdrawal schedule. (C)

Diplomatic Initiatives

There was no specific discussion of diplomatic initiatives to reduce tension. The participants agreed, however, that Park's willingness to cooperate and confidence to proceed in pursuing a relaxation of tensions with the North would depend on which troop withdrawal decision was made. (S)

The Timing of Consultations and Decisions

The sense of the meeting was that final decision should await detailed discussions with Park and be announced in a speech on Asia sometime in Mid-July after consultations with Congress and Secretary Vance's trip to Southeast Asia and Australia. When the President sees Ohira in Tokyo on the way to Korea, he need give only a broad description of the options and request Ohira's views. Once he has made a decision, Mike Mansfield could brief the Japanese in detail prior to the announcement. (S)

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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Policy Review Committee Meeting on Korea

The Policy Review Committee, chaired by Cy Vance, met June 8 to consider the response to PRM-45 on policy toward Korea. The meeting was a preliminary exchange from which no firm conclusions or recommendations emerged. It was agreed that the group should meet again after the Vienna Summit and before departure for Asia. S

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Ground Force Withdrawal Options

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- IV. Suspend further withdrawals.

All options require a reassessment of the military balance and the political situation in 1981. S

ideally making

The majority felt that adoption of Option I in the face of the new intelligence estimate would undermine ROK confidence in the U.S. commitment, and reduce our leverage with President Park on other issues. Most participants favored Option III, although ACDA came out firmly for Option II and the JCS for

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No option was foreclosed in the discussion that followed. *Sec Sec*

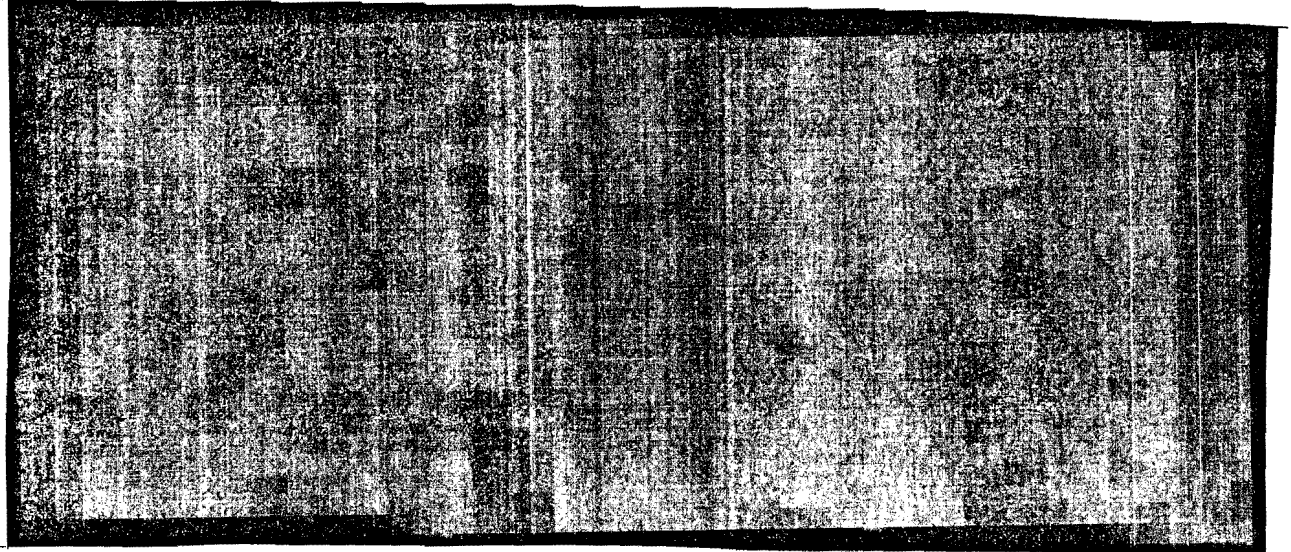
Vance asked whether there was support for continuing the withdrawal as planned. *Dr Brzezinski* responded that Option I could not be dismissed if accompanied by a strong statement reaffirming our security commitment 

He agreed that a review in 1981 would convey a useful message. Other participants felt that continuing the withdrawal as scheduled in the face of the new intelligence estimate would undermine ROK confidence in the US commitment, reduce our leverage with President Park on other issues, and cause a storm of Congressional criticism. Vance, Brown and Ambassador Glaysteen favored Option III. ACDA came out firmly for Option II and the JCS for Option IV. *AS*

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Option IV Everybody agreed on the necessity for a review in 1981, regardless of the option chosen.



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On U.S. actions to strengthen ROK readiness, Harold Brown noted that we were committed to sell them the F-16, that the choice of timing was the only decision left, and that we could not delay much longer. Ambassador Gleysteen noted that ROK expectations were high on this issue but might be tempered if we adjusted the troop withdrawal schedule. S C

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