

October 9, 1992

Ewan Buchanan to Warwick Morris (UK Embassy Seoul), 'U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting'

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Summary:

A telegram from Ewen Buchanan, an arms control specialist with the FCO, to Warrick Morris, the UK Ambassador to Seoul.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

[...]

Unclassified

Fm Washington

To Teleletter FCO

Teleletter NFR

OF 092110Z October 92

and to Teleletter Seoul, Peking, Tokyo

From: FWFN Buchanan, Washington

Following for: W. Morris ESQ, FED, FCO

N. Wicks ESQ, NPOD, FCO

Chanceries: Seoul, Peking, Tokyo

[illegible handwritten notes]

U.S.-ROK SECURITY CONSULTATIVE MEETING

SUMMARY

1. U.S.-ROK security consultations produce no surprises. Continuing concerns over North Korea's nuclear programme prevents move to Phase II of U.S. troop reductions. Preparations continue for Team Spirit to be held in 1993. Increase in Korean share costs of U.S. presence in ROK.

DETAIL

2. The 24th round of the annual U.S./ROK Consultative Meeting was held here in Washington on 7/8 October. Minister of National Defence Choi Jae Chang and Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lee Pil Sup led on the Korean side. Cheney and General Powell played host.

3. Not surprisingly the two sides endorsed the North/South Reconciliation Agreement and the North/South Joint Declaration on Denuclearisation of the Peninsula. On the latter point the two agreed that North Korea's decision to implement its IAEA safeguards was welcome. However, they were concerned over the lack of progress on the North/South bilateral nuclear inspections regime. The proper implementation of the regime was necessary to provide assurances that North Korea had abandoned its nuclear weapons quest. Neither Cheney nor Choi would be precise when questioned as to just how close North Korea was to having the bomb.

4. The continuing concerns over the North's nuclear programme led both sides to conclude that Phase II of U.S. troop withdrawals should not proceed in 1993. The drawdown would only resume once the uncertainties over the North's nuclear programme had been addressed. In addition, the absence of a meaningful improvement in North/South relations (particularly on the bilateral nuclear inspection regime) meant that the preparations for exercise Team Spirit 1993 would continue (a final decision on whether or not it will go ahead could wait until January).

5. It was agreed that peacetime operational control of the ROK armed forces would be transferred back to the ROK no later than 31 December 1994. The question of operational control of forces during wartime (wartime opcon) was not discussed at the meetings but the press were later told that it would follow, in due course, when the ROK felt comfortable in the task and the U.S. had completed its transition from a leading to supporting role in the ROK's defence.

6. On the general subject of U.S. troop strengths in the ROK the Pentagon released the following figures: □ □

□ □ □ □

1990 total strength C44,400. □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

7000 pulled out under Phase I of reductions as per the East Asia Security Initiative. □ □ □ □

□□□ □□□

1992 strength □□□ □□□ □□□

37,400

□□□(27,000 Army)

□□□(400 shore-based Navy)

□□□(500 Marines)

□□□(9,500 Air Force) □□ □□

The Phase II reductions, originally scheduled to run from 93-95, call for a further reduction of 6,500 personnel.

7. Korean assistance to U.S. forces (burdensharing) amounted to some 150 million dollars in 1991 (it was a more than doubling of the previous year's figure). The ROK contribution in 1992 is 180 million dollars. In 1993 it is set to be 220 million dollars. By 1995 this figure is expected to rise to the point where it will be equivalent to one third of the won costs of U.S. troop stationing. In addition to these monetary contributions the ROK authorities provide land at no cost for U.S. bases and training areas. 5,800 Korean personnel augment U.S. forces in the peninsula [handwritten: *under the CFC*]. The ROK also provides an increasing portion of the costs of maintaining the Joint U.S. Military Affairs Group and the maintenance and storage costs of war reserve munitions and supplies.

8. The POW/MIA issue had not been discussed at the meetings. This was still an area that the U.S. was seeking to open up an exchange with the North.

9. In the press briefing after the meetings the U.S. expressed its support for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the ROK and the PRC. It was hoped that the relationship would lead to the PRC playing a more positive role in influencing the North on issues such as nuclear inspections and with the wider aim of bringing about peace and stability on the peninsula. The ROK spokesman was very cautious when asked whether the establishment of relations might lead to PRC/ROK defence cooperation. He preferred to duck the issue and instead expressed the wish that the Chinese would support the ROK in its efforts to realise peaceful unification.

10. A copy of the communique follows by bag to you and Seoul only.

Signed Ewen Buchanan

YYYY

Distribution 2

Main 2

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NPDD//N Wicks

NNNN

Unclassified

SIGNED EWEN BUCHANAN

[...]