

December 10, 1992

Michael Reilly (First Political Secretary, UK Embassy in Seoul) to Ian Bond (FCO Security Policy Department), '1992 US Burden Sharing Report'

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<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/300723>

Summary:

This document dates from the "lame duck" period of the George H.W. Bush administration, and centers on the renegotiating of the US defense position in on the peninsula. Amid pending changes in the early Clinton administration to burden sharing, the British were trying to pin down on what basis estimates of cost were being made on US Forces in Korea.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

BRITISH EMBASSY

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Security Policy Department □ □ □

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Our reference: [blank] □ □ □

Date: 10 December 1992 □ □ □ □

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ROK/US

[handwritten] *Dear Bond,*

1992 US BURDEN SHARING REPORT

1. In his letter to you of 26 October Adam Thomson in Washington expressed an interest in our views on the figures given in the 1992 US Burden Sharing Report for Korean financial contributions under Host Nation support Agreements.
2. I raised this with Jim Pierce, First secretary Pol Mil at the US Embassy here. He said that any suggestion that the figures in the report were in any way inflated was "baloney". The figures have been calculated on standard DOD guidelines and are based on the total cost of maintaining US forces here, excluding salaries and transport costs to and from Korea. As the report also states (page 13-3) certain facilities provided by the ROK, such as the land for the us Bases, over 5000 Korean support troops, known as KATUSAs (who in practice undertake much of the more menial work for the US forces), and certain maintenance and storage costs have not been included in these calculations. Negotiations are also underway to move the main US base in the country from its current site in Seoul city centre to a new location, probably the us Air Base at Osan about 45 miles south of Seoul. The probable costs of this are a separate exercise and have not been included in the calculations of Host Nation support.
3. I should add that the Korean Government produces its own assessment of its contribution under Host Nation Support. Pierce rather dismissively described this as "junk" saying that it includes everything under the sun but I wonder whether the Congressional staffers to whom Thomson refers are aware of this report and whether some confusion may have arisen between the two.
4. Two other points may be relevant. Representative Schroder, a sub-Committee Chairman of the Congressional Armed Services Committee and two other sub-Committee members were here recently and she told the Korean Administration that there was a strong feeling in Congress that Korea should in fact be covering 100% of local costs by 1995, rather than the one third that had been agreed. She claimed that she had successfully persuaded her colleagues to be content with the current arrangement but she said that with 110 new members of the House it might be difficult to prevent amendments to this effect appearing in the Appropriation Bill. Secondly, nt the Defence Attache has also discussed the Burden Sharing Report with American colleagues in the UN Command. They seemed to think that the figures given in the report are generous , claiming that there is little hard evidence of the ROK money actually being spent. They complained that Korean promises of money were often difficult to turn into hard cash and it is quite possible that these sorts of complaints have made their way back to Congress.

[handwritten] *Yours ever,*

[signature]
M D Reilly
First Secretary (Political)

cc: I Davies Esq, FED, FCO
A Thomson Esq, Washington
Chancery, Tokyo