

**September 15, 1975**

**Note for Ltg. Brent Scowcroft from John A.  
Wickham, Jr., "Defense of UNC Controlled Islands"**

**Citation:**

"Note for Ltg. Brent Scowcroft from John A. Wickham, Jr., "Defense of UNC Controlled Islands"", September 15, 1975, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, National Security Adviser Presidential Country Files for East Asia and the Pacific, Box 9, Korea (11). Obtained for NKIDP by Charles Kraus.  
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/114060>

**Summary:**

John A Wickham, Jr., writes to General Brent Scowcroft about the U.S. defense commitment to the five northwest island groups and U.S.-South Korean defense coordination.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan  
Transcript - English

~~SECRET~~

Original Scan

→ Staff 6245 2a  
Scowcroft has a copyOFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

15 September 1975

NOTE FOR LTG BRENT SCOWCROFT, USAF  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Brent -

Attached message has been in the NSC for coordination and based on the SecDef's discussions with MOD Suh, it should be released to initiate detailed planning. This planning can consider the request of MOD Suh to station a U.S. combat liaison team on the Islands. Definitive guidance on this proposal can be the subject of a separate message. What is needed now is to authorize CINCUNC to discuss planning with the ROK. Request prompt clearance.

(W)

Attachment  
asJOHN A. WICKHAM, JR.  
Major General, USA  
Military Assistant

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958 (as amended) SEC-8.3  
MR # 10-128-#50  
OSD letter 1/28/11  
By dal NARA Date 2/28/11



Classified by SEC DEF  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION SCHEDULE OF  
EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652. EXEMPTION CATEGORY 3  
DECLASSIFY ON IMP TO DET

RECEIVED  
DEFENSE OFFICE~~SECRET~~

SEC DEF CONTR No. X-2726



~~SECRET~~

DECLASSIFIED w/ portions exempted

EO 12958 (as amended) SEC 0.2

MFR 10-131-#31

state let 9/17/10; OSD let 11/4/10

del JARA Date 12/8/10

ACTION: ROUTINE SEOUL, CINCUNC

INFO: ROUTINE CINCPAC

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MOPS, PBOR, PINS, KS, US

SUBJECT: DEFENSE OF UNC CONTROLLED ISLANDS

REF: (a) CINCUNC 220935Z May 75;  
(b) CINCUNC 140020Z May 75;  
(c) seoul 3704

1. Appreciate Embassy/CINCUNC comments contained ref A and C.
  2. Assumption is correct that five north west island groups fit definition of territory under ROK administrative control and they therefore come under Article III of the MDT. The forces there are clearly under CINCUNC operational control. We therefore agree that it is unrealistic to maintain present "hands-off" position in which CINCUNC does not have active planning responsibilities.
  3. Consequently CINCUNC is authorized to discuss planning for defense of the Islands with view toward reaching understanding on the following:
    - (a) ROK will not act precipitously and unilaterally in defense of the islands: CINCUNC will exercise OPCON of ROK forces.
    - (b) In event of attack on islands CINCUNC will immediately commit ROK forces to contain and restore situation; however, force commitment must not jeopardize the capability to defend the ROK as a whole.
  4. In any main North Korean attack there would be a US reponse appropriate to the situation.
- 



15 September 15

NOTE FOR LTG BRENT SCOWCROFT, USAF  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Brent -

Attached message has been in the NSC for coordination and based on the SecDef's [Secretary of Defense's] discussions with MOD Suh, it should be released to initiate detailed planning. This planning can consider the request of MOD Suh to station a U.S. combat liaison team on the islands. Definitive guidance on this proposal can be the subject of a separate message. What is needed now is to authorize CINCUNC to discuss planning with the ROK. Request prompt clearance.

JOHN A. WICKHAM, JR.  
Attachment Major General, USA  
as Military Assistant

□

ACTION: ROUTINE SEOUL, CINCUNC  
INFO: ROUTINE CINCPAC  
JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE  
TAGS: PFOR, AMRR, MOPS, PBOR, PINS, KS, US  
SUBJECT: DEFENSE OF UNC CONTROLLED ISLANDS  
REF: (a) CINCUNC 220935Z May 75; (b) CINCUNC 140020Z May 75; (c) Seoul 3704

1. Appreciate Embassy/CINCUNC [Commander in Chief, United Nations Command] comments contained ref A and C.
2. Assumption is correct that five north west island groups fit definition of territory under ROK [Republic of Korea] administrative control and they therefore come under Article III of the MDT [Mutual Defense Treaty]. The forces there are clearly under CINCUNC operational control. We therefore agree that it is unrealistic to maintain present "hands-off" position in which CINCUNC does not have active planning responsibilities.
3. Consequently CINCUNC is authorized to discuss planning for defense of the Islands with view toward reaching understanding on the following:
  - (a) ROK will not act precipitously and unilaterally in defense of the islands: CINCUNC will exercise OPCON [operational control] of ROK forces.
  - (b) In event of attack on islands CINCUNC will immediately commit ROK forces to contain and restore situation; however, force commitment must not jeopardize the capability to defend the ROK as a whole.
4. In any main North Korean attack there would be a US response appropriate to the situation. [Redacted]

