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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON~~TOP SECRET SENSITIVE~~  
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February 7, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI

SUBJECT:

Information Items

Seoul Loosens up Slightly in Human Rights: Seoul, in response to U.S. concern over human rights issues, is loosening, slightly, its constraints against domestic dissent, but the trend could be reversed at any time. The recent favorable signs include Seoul's decision not to carry out the death sentence imposed on a theology student recently convicted of espionage and the slight relaxation of press censorship.

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For President Park and Seoul's leadership, the human rights issue has long posed a fundamental dilemma -- how to maintain a strong, cohesive society in the face of an immediate threat from North Korea while acceding to U.S. pressure to relax domestic repression of dissent. Park feels that the North Korean threat is not adequately understood by human rights critics and that Korea has been unfairly singled out for their criticism. He is not likely to change the essentially authoritarian character of his government or the Korean Central Intelligence Agency's domestic role against dissent.

Cuban Comments in Relations With the U.S.: Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, the Vice President of Cuba's council of ministers and (after Fidel Castro) probably the most authoritative figure in Cuban foreign policy-making, told the BBC in an extensive interview late last month that a change in the U.S. position on Cuba would be welcome and that Havana does not contemplate employing its armed forces on behalf of Rhodesian insurgents or other African revolutionary movements. The State Department believes that Rodriguez' remarks on U.S.-

State Department review completed

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Cuban relations are somewhat less conciliatory than others he has made over the past few months and may reflect a judgment by Havana that the U.S. has already made a decision to engage Cuba in a dialog and a desire by Cuba to avoid compromising its positions before talks are actually underway.

Soviets Expand Military Aid Foothold in Peru: Peru, already a recipient of substantial military aid from the Soviets, continues to show interest in even more Soviet weapons and training. However, the Soviets' military relationship with Peru is unlikely to yield them lasting influence in the absence of any other supporting ties or the succession -- highly unlikely -- of a truly revolutionary regime in Peru. Soviet aid will increase the combat capabilities of Peru's forces, give them a clear military superiority over Chile, and increase the pressure for an arms build-up throughout the region. For the time being, however, there do not appear to be any new markets for Soviet military aid in the region. Peru would oppose any Soviet arms sales to Ecuador or Bolivia, and the countries on the north and east coasts are not likely to become arms clients of the USSR in the near future. The Soviets offer Peru an independent source of sophisticated arms. They also provide the now financially troubled military regime with a way to get quick deliveries of the kinds and numbers of arms they desire on easy terms.

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