EXCISE

DATE: 9/13/93

TEXT:

WASHINGTON, D.C.

TO: SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 6372

FROM:

SECTION 01 OF 03 SEOUL 06264

E.O.: 12065: RDS-3 5/17/00 (GLEYSTEN, W.H.) OR-M

TAGS: POL

SUBJECT: CRACKDOWN IN SEOUL

REF: SEOUL 6262

1. (S//SS) ENTIRE TEXT

2. THE KOREAN MILITARY LEADERSHIP

HAS IGNORED LEGITIMATE

AUTHORITY IN THE ROKG TO INSTITUTE A TOUGH CRACKDOWN ON

STUDENTS AND PROBABLY THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. AN

ALL BUT FORMAL MILITARY TAKEOVER MAY BE IN PROCESS.

THE PRESIDENT AND CABINET HAVE SANCTIONED THE

DECISION.

3. ABOUT AN HOUR AFTER I HAD A SEMI-ENCOURAGING CONVERSATION

WITH THE BLUE HOUSE SECRETARY GENERAL (REFTEL), WE

LEARNED VIA AMERICAN WITNESSES THAT THE KOREAN RIOT POLICE

ENTERED THE ENUCA UNIVERSITY CAMPUS TO BREAK UP THE MEETING

OF STUDENT LEADERS TAKING PLACE THERE. AT LEAST 17

STUDENT LEADERS WERE ARRESTED, WHILE MANY MORE ESCAPED.

IT TOOK US ALMOST AN HOUR OF INQUIRIES WITH THE BLUE

HOUSE, POLICE, AND KCIA TO FIND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

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WHEN WE DID, WE WERE TOLD NOT ONLY THAT THE CAMPUS RAID

OCCURRED BUT ALSO THAT "EXTRAORDINARY MARTIAL LAW" WOULD

BE IMPOSED THROUGHOUT KOREA (INCLUDING CHEJU ISLAND),

TECHNICALLY MEANING THAT THE MARTIAL LAW COMMANDER REPORTS

DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT RATHER THAN TO THE DEFENSE

MINISTER BUT IN SUBSTANCE THAT THE MILITARY HAVE AN EVEN

FREER HAND. SCHOOL CAMPUSES WILL BE CLOSED. WE WERE

TOLD THAT THESE STEPS WERE NECESSARY BECAUSE THE

STUDENT LEADERS, WHILE STATING THAT THEY WOULD COOL IT
UNTIL MAY 22, ISSUED AN ULTIMATUM IF THE GOVERNMENT
DID NOT MEET THEIR DEMANDS, THEY WOULD ENGAGE IN A FIERCE
STRUGGLE. HOWEVER, THE STUDENTS PLANNED A FURTHER MEET-
NING TOMORROW AT A LARGE HIGH SCHOOL, RAISING THE SPECTRE
OF HUGE NUMBERS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS JOINING COLLEGE
STUDENTS IN ANY FUTURE DEMONSTRATIONS.

4. WE WERE GIVEN NO REPEAT NO NOTIFICATION OF THESE
DECISIONS. FROM THE SKIMPY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO US
(INCLUDING MY TWO CONVERSATIONS WITH THE BLUE HOUSE
SECRETARY GENERAL). OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT THE DECISION
WAS TAKEN AS A RESULT OF A MEETING OF MILITARY LEADERS
THIS MORNING. REPORTEDLY, THE MILITARY LEADERS WERE
EXTREMELY UNHAPPY OVER WHAT THEY REGARDED AS EXCESSIVELY
SOFT TACTICS BY THE GOVERNMENT TOWARD THE STUDENTS THIS
PAST WEEK. THEY APPARENTLY DECIDED AT THE MEETING TO
ADOPT THIS TOUGH POLICY, CORRECTLY ASSUMING THE PRESIDENT
AND THE CABINET WOULD ACQUIESCE AFTER THE FACT.

5. OUR VISCERAL REACTION TO WHAT HAS HAPPENED IS OBVIOUS-
LY NEGATIVE. JUST AS THE STUDENTS DID EARLIER THIS WEEK,
THE MILITARY HAVE NOW TAKEN THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS,
IGNORED LEGITIMATE CHANNELS, ONCE AGAIN CUT THE USG OUT
OF THE INFORMATION NETWORK, AND THROWN DOWN THE GAUNTLET TO
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WORLD TROUBLEMAKERS. NOT ONLY DO WE FEAR THAT THE
TROUBLEMAKERS WILL PICK UP THE GAUNTLET AND THROW IT BACK,
BUT WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED THAT THIS LAST IN A SEQUENCE
OF EVENTS WILL ERASE WHAT LITTLE CREDIBILITY THE CHOI
GOVERNMENT HAS CONCERNING ITS POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION
PROGRAM. MAYBE OUR VISCERAL ACTIONS WILL PROVE EXCESSIVE.
IN THE INITIAL STAGES, STUDENT FEAR OF CONFRONTING TROOPS
MAY DETER THEM FOR AWHILE, AND IT IS STILL POSSIBLE THAT
THE GOVERNMENT WILL COUNTER ITS MAILLED FIST WITH SOME
OF THE MORE LIBERAL MEASURES MENTIONED BY CHOI KWANG SOO
(M.R: CHOE KWANG-SOO) YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (SUCH AS

IT IS HARD TO SEE, HOWEVER, HOW
ANY GOVERNMENT ACTION WILL REKNIT THE SHREDDED FABRIC OF
CHOI'S POLITICAL PROGRAM.

6. OUR FIRST REACTION TO THESE EVENTS HAS BEEN ONE OF
FRUSTRATION. ON THE ONE HAND WE ARE MINDFUL OF PROVOCATION
TO THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES FROM THE EVENTS OF THE
PAST WEEK--WHERE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS
RESPONDED SwiftLY TO THE CALLS OF ORGANIZED STUDENT
LEADERS WHO REMAINED OBSCELELY IN THE BACKGROUND WITHOUT
REVEALING THEIR ULTIMATE MOTIVATION. ON THE OTHER HAND,
THE MILITARY LEADERS HAVE SHOWN DISREGARD FOR CONSTITUTED
AUTHORITY IN THE ROK--AND FOR US. WE HAVE BEEN PRESENTED
WITH A FAIT ACCOMPLI SUGGESTING THAT THE MILITARY LEADERS

The old "people pulling strings" image

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EITHER DO NOT KNOW OR CARE ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF TREATING US IN THIS MANNER.

7. THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT WE ARE FACED WITH AN EX-SECRET
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INFO OCT-01  ADS-00  SS0-00  CCQ-00  /031 W
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Z 171632Z WAY 80 ZFF-4
FM AMBASSADOR SEUL
TO SECSTATE HAWHCDF FLASON 6373

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TREMENDOUS ESCALATION OF THE KOREAN CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE PEOPLE IN POWER WHO FEAR TO LET GO, AND THOSE OUT OF POWER WHO HAVE LESS AND LESS COMPUNCION ABOUT RESORTING TO RADICAL MEASURES.

8. WHILE WE NEED TO REACT STRONGLY, WE ALSO NEED TO CONTROL OURSELVES. WE STILL DO NOT KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE CRACKDOWN OR THE DEGREE OF TOLERANCE OR INTOLERANCE THAT WILL BE DISPLAYED BY THE KOREAN PEOPLE TOWARD IT. AS ANGRY AS WE MAY BE, WE ARE STILL DEEPLY ENTHANGLN IN KOREA AND DO NOT REALLY HAVE THE ALTERNATIVE OF WALKING AWAY. IF WE TO THREATEN TO DO SO, WE WOULD NOT ONLY RUN SEVERE DANGERS VIS-A-VIS NORTH KOREA BUT WOULD ALSO DISTRESS LARGE NUMBERS OF SOUTH KOREANS WHO SHARE OUR CONCERN. CLEARLY, A COOLING OF THE US/ROK RELATIONSHIP WILL BE INEVITABLE, BUT WE MUST MANAGE THE PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT IT SERVES A USEFUL PURPOSE.

9. AT THIS POINT I RECOMMEND THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

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-- A. I HAVE ALREADY RECOMMENDED THAT GENERAL WICKHAM RETURN TO KOREA.

B. I DO NOT THINK WE CAN AVOID A PUBLIC STATEMENT AND I THINK ONE WOULD BE USEFUL AT THIS STAGE. A SUGGESTED TEXT, DECrying THE ACTION, URGING RESTRAINT ON THE PART OF ALL CONCERNED, AND WARNING THE NORTH KOREANS, IS SUGGESTED IN PARA 11 BELOW.
-- C.ELIEVE I SHOULD BE INSTRUCTED ON THE HIGHEST AUTHORITY TO CALL ON PRESIDENT CHOI AND PROBABLY THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND MARTIAL LAW COMMANDER TO MAKE A REPRESENTATION ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES: THE USG IS DEEPLY DISTRESSED BY THE DECISIONS TAKEN IN SEOUL ON MAY 17 BECAUSE WE FEEL THEY UNDERMINE THE CREDIBILITY OF THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED GOVERNMENT, FRUSTRATE THE PEOPLE'S HOPE FOR DEMOCRATIC EVOLUTION, RAISE THE THREAT OF CIVIL STRIFE, AND SERIOUSLY INCREASE THE DANGER OF NORTH KOREAN INTERVENTION; THE USG IS DOUBLY DISTURBED THAT THESE ACTIONS WERE TAKEN WITHOUT ANY ADVANCE NOTIFICATION TO THE USG AND APPARENTLY WITHOUT MUCH REGARD FOR CIVILIAN AUTHORITY; THE USG HAS ISSUED A STATEMENT, PARA 11 BELOW; WE WILL NOT DO ANYTHING TO INFLAME THE SITUATION OR UNDERMINE THE ROK'S DEFENSE BUT THE ROKG SHOULD BE ON NOTICE THAT WE WILL BE ENTERING A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD IN OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP; WE HOPE THAT THE ROKG WILL LIMIT THE DAMAGE BY AVOIDING EXCESSIVE ACTIONS OF CONTROL AND BY DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE CONTINUED MOVEMENT TOWARD POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION.

-- D. WE INTEND TOMORROW TO ISSUE A TRAVEL ADVISORY TO URGE THAT AMERICAN CITIZENS WITH NON-ESSENTIAL BUSINESS SECRET
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STAY AWAY FROM KOREA FOR THE TIME BEING, AND WE WILL SO INFORM THE ROKG.

-- E. IF THERE HAS BEEN NO IMPROVEMENT IN THE SITUATION BY MID-WEEK, WE WILL RECOMMEND THAT THE EXIM BANK, OPIC, NEW ORLEANS AND PENNSYLVANIA TRADE MISSION VISITATIONS BE POSTPONED ALONG WITH ALL OTHER SIMILAR VISITS.

10. ONCE WE HAVE A BETTER VIEW OF THE SITUATION WE WILL PROBABLY RECOMMEND A PRESIDENTIAL LETTER AND POSSIBLY ONE ALSO FROM SECRETARY BROWN TO THE MILITARY. IN THESE LETTERS AND IN ALL OUR ACTIONS WE WILL HAVE TO EXERCISE GREAT CARE IN STATING OUR CONCERNS IN WAYS THAT DO NOT ANTAGONIZE LARGE NUMBERS OF KOREANS IN ADDITION TO THE MILITARY NAUGHTS OR FURTHER UNDERMINE OUR INFLUENCE. I REGRET TO SAY AT THIS POINT OUR INFLUENCE APPEARS DISTURBINGLY LIMITED.

11. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SUGGESTED STATEMENT:

WE ARE DEEPLY DISTRESSED BY THE IMPOSITION OF EMERGENCY MARTIAL LAW THROUGHOUT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA, THE CLOSING OF SCHOOLS, AND THE ARREST OF POLITICAL AND STUDENT LEADERS. WE ARE MAKING CLEAR TO THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT THE SERIOUSNESS OF OUR CONCERN.

WE URGE ALL ELEMENTS IN KOREAN SOCIETY TO ACT WITH
TEXT OF TELEGRAM 806264 BOSEUL 006264

RESTRAYN AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME. WE REITERATE OUR STATEMENT OF OCTOBER 26, 1979 THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WISHES TO MAKE CLEAR THAT IT WILL REACT STRONGLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS TREATY OBLIGATIONS TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO ANY EXTERNAL ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION IN

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------------097839    171656Z    /44
Z 171630Z    MAY 80    ZFF-4
FM AMBASSADOE SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 6374

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EXDIS

THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

(NOTE: WE HAVE RUMORS THAT POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE BEEN
ARRESTED INCLUDING THE THREE KIMS. THEREFORE, WE WILL
TRY TO ADVISE YOU BY TELEPHONE WHETHER OR NOT TO USE THE
BRACKETED "POLITICAL AND." )

GLEYSTEEN

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