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TELEGRAM

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AN: DB00259-1148

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ACTION SS-30

SEOUL 06710 01 OF 02 271252Z

INFO OCT-01 AHS-00 SSO-00 /031.W  
-----037960 271255Z /41

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6598

SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 SEOUL 06710

EXDIS

E.O. 12065: RDS-1 5/27/00 (GLEYSTEN, W.H.) OR-M  
TAGS: PGOV, MILI, PINT, KS

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF A ROK COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

EXDIS REVIEW

Cat. A - Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC

Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S

Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by S/S

Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr  
Date: 4-28-93

3-1-A

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: FONMIN PARK INFORMED ME MAY 27 THAT "PRESIDENT CHOI HAS DECIDED" TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS COMPRISED OF TEN CIVILIAN MINISTERS, THE MARTIAL LAW COMMANDER, AND THE SENIOR MILITARY HIERARCHY TO ACT AS A "BRIDGE" BETWEEN THE MARTIAL LAW COMMANDER AND THE CABINET FOR THE DURATION OF EMERGENCY MARTIAL LAW. THE COMMITTEE, WHOSE ACTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED BY THE CABINET AND THE PRESIDENT, WOULD TIGHTEN UP NATIONAL DISCIPLINE AND GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE. PRESIDENT CHOI'S POLITICAL PROGRAM "WOULD CONTINUE UNCHANGED."

3. I ASKED FONMIN HOW LONG MARTIAL LAW WOULD LAST, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND WHETHER THE NEW COMMITTEE WOULD BECOME THE LOCUS OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT DELIBERATIONS. HE DIDN'T KNOW. I SAID I WOULD REPORT TO MY GOVERNMENT AND PASS ALONG ANY OFFICIAL USG REACTION. SPEAKING INFORMALLY, I EMPHASIZED THAT OUR VIEWS

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WOULD BE GOVERNED BY THE REAL AS OPPOSED TO DECLARED EFFECT

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ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT. I FEARED MANY KOREANS WOULD INTERPRET ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE AS A SEMI-PERMANENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN ESSENCE CONFIRMING A MILITARY COUP. POINTING TO THE SERIES OF MILITARY DECISIONS SINCE DECEMBER 12, I STATED THAT THE MILITARY HAD, IN MY OPINION, MADE REPEATED MISJUDGMENTS OF KOREAN PUBLIC REACTIONS AND U.S. PUBLIC REACTIONS. THE COUNTRY NOW HAD THE APPEARANCE AND IN MANY WAYS THE SUBSTANCE OF MILITARY OCCUPATION, UNLESS SITUATION COULD BE PROMPTLY AMELIORATED BY RESUMED PROGRESS IN THE POLITICAL SPHERE, THE EFFECTS ON US/ROK RELATIONS COULD BE PROFOUND. FONMIN

END SUMMARY.

4. FONMIN TONG JIN; PARK (M-R: PAK TONG-CHIN) ASKED TO SEE ME PRIVATELY THIS MORNING (MAY 27) TO GIVE ME ADVANCE NOTICE OF THE "PRESIDENT'S DECISION" TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS DESIGNED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THE MARTIAL LAW COMMANDER AND THE CABINET. THE COMMITTEE, WHICH WOULD BE DISSOLVED IMMEDIATELY ON THE LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW, WOULD BE HEADED BY THE PRESIDENT AND CONSIST OF THE PRIME, FOREIGN, HOME, JUSTICE, EDUCATION, EPB, AND DEFENSE MINISTERS, KCIA DIRECTOR, SYG OF THE BLUE HOUSE, MARTIAL LAW COMMANDER, CHAIRMAN OF THE JCS, CHIEF OF EACH OF THE THREE ARMED SERVICES, DEFENSE SECURITY COMMANDER (PERHAPS MEANING CHUN DOO HWAN (M-R: CHON TU-HWAN) MAY DROP HIS KCIA HAT) PLUS TEN MORE INDIVIDUALS APPOINTABLE BY THE PRESIDENT. IN ADDITION TO THE COMMITTEE, THERE WOULD BE A STANDING GROUP OF 30 MEMBERS DRAWN FROM THE MILITARY AS WELL AS CIVILIAN MINISTRIES.

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5. PARK NOTED THAT THE CABINET WOULD DELIBERATE ON THE ISSUE THIS AFTERNOON; A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT AND FINALIZATION OF THE PLAN WOULD TAKE PLACE SHORTLY. [

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6. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTIONS, THE FONMIN

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7. I TOLD THE FONMIN THAT I WOULD HAVE TO ASK MY GOVERNMENT FOR INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE MAKING ANY OFFICIAL COMMENT ON A MATTER OF SUCH FAR-REACHING SIGNIFICANCE. SPEAKING INFORMALLY, I SUGGESTED OUR REACTION WOULD DEPEND ON OUR VIEW AS TO WHETHER THE NEW COMMITTEE WAS CONSISTENT WITH

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Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6599

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EXDIS

OR CONTRADICTED PRESIDENT CHOI'S REPEATED DECLARATIONS THAT HE WOULD PROCEED ON SCHEDULE WITH HIS PROGRAM OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. I THOUGHT MANY KOREANS WOULD VIEW THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS AS CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT THE MILITARY HAD MOVED IN TO SUPERVISE EVERYTHING IN KOREA, ALL BUT FORMALLY SIGNIFYING THAT AN ARMY COUP HAD TAKEN PLACE. THE GOVERNMENT COULD OF COURSE OFFSET THIS PERCEPTION BY FIRM MOVES TOWARD A MORE BROADLY BASED REGIME--EVEN IF THE RESULT WERE SOMETHING SHORT OF AN IDEAL DEMOCRACY.

B. IN CONCLUSION, I LET GO WITH SOME "EVEN MORE PERSONAL" REMARKS. I SAID IT WAS NO SECRET THAT THE USG HAD BEEN DEEPLY UNHAPPY WITH THE RECENT TURN OF EVENTS IN KOREA. SINCE DECEMBER 12 A GROUP OF ARMY OFFICERS HAD TAKEN POWER STEP BY STEP, EITHER IGNORING OR UNDER-ESTIMATING NEGATIVE REACTIONS WITHIN THE ROK OR ON US/ROK RELATIONS. THE MAY 17 AFFAIR PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN KWANGJU. IN SEOUL THE CITY WAS CALM, BUT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS--TO PUT IT BLUNTLY--ONE OF MILITARY OCCUPATION. AS FOR THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS WHICH SO WORRIED THE GENERALS, I SAID TOUGH MEASURES MIGHT KEEP THE WORKERS IN LINE, BUT THE ACTIONS AND COUNTER ACTIONS OF RECENT WEEKS HAD ERODED THE CONFIDENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY WITHOUT WHICH THE ROK COULD NOT SUSTAIN ITS PRESENT STANDARD OF LIVING. WHILE THE USG HAD WORKED

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AROUND THE CLOCK TRYING TO HELP MAINTAIN STABILITY, RECENT EVENTS COULD ONLY DAMAGE KOREA'S STANDING IN U.S.

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PUBLIC OPINION AND MAKE IT INCREASINGLY HARD FOR US TO EXPLAIN WHY WE WERE HERE.

9. COMMENT: THE FONMIN

10. WE HAVE BEEN WAITING SOME TIME FOR THIS SHOE TO FALL. IT IS MORE CLEVERLY SHAPED THAN I HAD EXPECTED, AND PERHAPS THE THUD WILL BE PADDED A LITTLE IF CHUN DOO HWAN DROPS HIS KCIA HAT. BUT IT STILL IS A RATHER POOR DISGUISE FOR THE MILITARY TAKE-OVER THAT HAS OCCURRED. I WILL BE SENDING IN SEPARATE RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO OUR (A) POSTURE TOWARD THE NEW POWER STRUCTURE; AND (B) OUR HANDLING OF THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT. AT THIS POINT, I URGE WE--AND I INCLUDE MYSELF--THINK HARD BEFORE MAKING AN AUTHORITATIVE RESPONSE. IF WE NEED TO COMMENT IMMEDIATELY IN PUBLIC, I SUGGEST WE SAY WE ARE STUDYING THE DEVELOPMENT.  
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