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IS IS AN INFO REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTEL

(U) CTY: REPUBLIC OF KOREA (KS)

(U) TITLE: JUNIOR OFFICER REACTION TO PROMOTION OF

SG ((CHON)) TU HWAN, ROKA, CG, DSC (U)

(U) DTD OF INFO: 800301-800307

(U) ORIG: "SEE FM LINE"

AGE 1

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AGE 2

(U) SOURCES:

OKA FIELD GRADE OFFICER. SOURCES HAVE PROVIDED RELIABLE DATA IN THE PAST AND BY VIRTUE OF THEIR DUTY POSITION HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH INFORMATION.

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES COMMENTS OF ROK ARMY OFFICERS AT THE COL AND LTC LEVEL CONCERNING THE RECENT PROMOTION OF LTG CHON TU HWAN (KTC: 0356/2435/3562; KSN: 17136; PREFERRED SPELLING: CHUN DOO HWAN), CG, DEFENSE SECURITY COMMAND (DSC). THE THRUST OF THESE COMMENTS SUPPORTS THE PROMOTION; RATIONALE BEING THAT PROMOTION FORMALLY RECOGNIZES AND LEGITIMIZES CHON AS THE LEADER OF THE YOUNGER KMA GENERALS, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE CLASS 11 KMA OFFICERS. SUPPORT FOR THE PROMOTION IS CLEARLY STRONGER AMONG YOUNGER OFFICERS THAN AMONG THEIR SENIORS. MOST OF THE CONCERN WITH CHON'S IMAGE AND RELATED FACTORS MAY BE CONFINED IN THE SEOUL AREA; FIELD UNITS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH TRAINING AND PREPARATION FOR EXERCISE TEAM SPIRIT.

8A. (U) DETAILS:

1. IN RECENT DAYS SEVERAL ROK ARMY OFFICERS AT THE COL AND LTC LEVEL HAVE COMMENTED ON THE 1 MARCH PROMOTION OF DSC COMMANDER, LTG CHON TU HWAN. COMMENTS HAVE IN GENERAL BEEN FAVORABLY INCLINED TOWARD THE PROMOTION. THERE APPEARS TO BE SOME CONCERN HOWEVER, THAT CERTAIN US OFFICIALS WERE NOT IN FAVOR OF THE PROMOTION. THE TONE OF THESE COMMENTS HAS BEEN IN THE NATURE OF UNSOLICITED EXPLANATION AS TO THE REASONS FOR THE PROMOTION AND HAS TENDED TO HAVE A DEFENSIVE FLAVOR. IN AT LEAST ONE CASE THE OFFICER WAS ALMOST APOLOGETIC PRIOR TO MAKING HIS REMARKS.

2. ON 4 MARCH, [REDACTED] STATED THAT LTG CHON'S PROMOTION HAD BEEN THE DECISION OF MINISTER ((CHOO)) YOUNG BOCK AND CHIEF OF STAFF, ROK ARMY ((YI)) HUI SONG (KTC: 2621/3587/1840; KSN: 13565; PREFERRED SPELLING: LEE HEE SONG), AND HAD BEEN DECIDED UPON ONLY AFTER CAREFUL

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CONSIDERATION. THE DECISION TO PROMOTE CHON WAS INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE HIS LEADERSHIP WITHIN THE YOUNGER GROUP OF GENERALS, AND TO ESTABLISH HIM AS NUMBER ONE WITHIN THE KMA CLASS 11 GROUP. (COMMENTS: CHON IS NOW THE FIRST MEMBER OF THAT CLASS TO REACH 3-STAR RANK. CHON'S PROMOTION HOWEVER, WILL PROBABLY BE FOLLOWED WITHIN A YEAR BY 2 OR 3 OTHERS FROM THE CLASS 11, WITH PREPARING OFFICER'S FAVORITE CANDIDATES BEING MG ((KIM)) POK TONG, (KTC: 6855/1788/2639, KSN: 17023; PREFERRED SPELLING: KIM BOK DONG), CHIEF OF STAFF, TROKA, MG ((NO)) TAE U (KTC: 4151/3057/1946; KSN: 17077), CG, CAPITAL SECURITY COMMAND, AND MG ((CHOE)) SONG TAEK (KTC: 1508/1840/3419; KSN: 17107, PREFERRED SPELLING: CHOI SONG TAEK), DIRECTOR, 2ND (INTELLIGENCE) BRIGADE, 1CS, MND). IT IS ALSO DESIGNED TO ENHANCE HIS CREDENTIALS AND UPWARD MOBILITY IN ORDER TO EVENTUALLY BECOME CHIEF OF STAFF, PROBABLY WITHIN THE NEXT 4 OR 5 YEARS. SOURCE STATED THAT IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW, THE PROMOTION HAD COME SOONER THAN HE EXPECTED, BUT THAT IT WAS NECESSARY IN ANY CASE FOR THE "REFORMATION OF THE ROK ARMY" AND IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE LEADERSHIP FOR THE FUTURE. (SOURCE IS A

3. ON 6 MARCH, [REDACTED] STATED THAT THE PROMOTION WAS SUPPORTED BY THE MAJORITY OF OFFICERS AT HIS LEVEL (LTC). SUPPORT AMONG KMA OFFICERS [REDACTED] WAS VIRTUALLY UNANIMOUS, BUT SUPPORT AMONG OFFICERS FROM OTHER SOURCES OF COMMISSION WAS LESS ENTHUSIASTIC. SOURCE COMMENTED THAT CHON WAS GENERALLY WELL THOUGHT OF BY HIS SUBORDINATES, HAD BEEN AN EXCELLENT DIVISION COMMANDER WITH A DEMONSTRATED CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE OF HIS MEN, AND WAS

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DESERVING OF HIS PROMOTION.

4. [REDACTED] ALSO ON 6 MARCH, A REGIMENTAL  
COMMANDER REMARKED THAT LTG CHON WAS FULLY DESERVING OF  
PROMOTION. THIS OFFICER, [REDACTED] WAS  
CRITICAL OF THE PRE-KMA GENERATION OF ROK GENERALS, BUT WAS  
QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT HE AND HIS SUBORDINATES WERE  
"LOOKING NORTH" AND MUCH MORE INVOLVED IN STANDARD MILITARY  
MATTERS THAN INTERNAL ARMY POLITICS. [REDACTED]

88. [REDACTED] THESE REMARKS OF THESE

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OFFICERS ARE PERHAPS SIGNIFICANT SINCE THERE IS REPORTEDLY PRESSURE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE ROK ARMY TO AVOID OVERLY CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH AMERICANS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH INTELLIGENCE-RELATED RESPONSIBILITIES. THIS PRESSURE IS MOST PREVALENT IN THE SEOUL AREA. [REDACTED] RECENT OBSERVATIONS OF FIELD UNITS, IN WHICH COMMAND AND CONTROL TEND TO BE MORE DECENTRALIZED THAN IN SEOUL, INDICATE A MORE BUSINESS-AS-USUAL ATTITUDE, AND LESS CONCERN ABOUT ASSOCIATIONS WITH FOREIGNERS. THE TREND IN THE FIELD UNITS APPEARS ORIENTED TOWARD PROFESSIONAL MILITARY MATTERS. THOSE BATTALION AND REGIMENTAL COMMANDERS WITH [REDACTED] HAS HAD CONTACT IN RECENT WEEKS ARE INVOLVED IN RIGOROUS TRAINING AND PREPARATION FOR TEAM SPIRIT; THERE IS MORE CONCERN FOR A GOOD SHOWING ON THE EXERCISE THAN FOR POWER MANUEVERING IN THE CAPITAL. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THERE IS NOT SUBSTANTIAL SUBTERRANEAN OPPOSITION TO LTG CHON AND HIS FOLLOWERS, PARTICULARLY IN THE AIR FORCE, NAVY AND CERTAIN PLACES IN THE ARMY, BUT IT DOES NOT APPEAR TO HAVE SERIOUSLY SPREAD INTO THE MILITARY HINTERLANDS.

- 9. (U) PROJECT NO: N/A
- 10. (U) COLL MGMT CODES: NONE
- 11. (U) SPEC INST: NONE DIRC: NO.
- 12. (U) PREP BY: [REDACTED]
- 13. (U) APP BY: [REDACTED]
- 14. (U) REQ EVAL: NO
- 15. (U) ENCL: N/A
- 16. (U) DIST BY ORIG: N/A

REASON 3

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