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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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OR-M EC
4-28-93

E.O. 12065: RDS-3 5/29/00 (GLEYSTEN, W.H.) OR-M EC
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PEPR, KS, US
SUBJECT: KOREA FOCUS; ASSESSMENT OF KOREAN REACTIONS TO RECENT EVENTS

REF: SEQU 6801

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. I KNOW THAT THERE WILL BE AN IMPORTANT RDC MEETING ON KOREA AND THAT THE MEMBERS WILL OBVIOUSLY WANT TO KNOW HOW THE KOREAN PEOPLE HAVE REACTED TO RECENT EVENTS BRINGING CHUN DOO HWAN (M-R; CHON TU-HWAN) AND HIS GROUP INTO VIRTUALLY COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT. AS I STATED PARA 9, REFTEL, THIS WILL BE A KEY CONSIDERATION FOR US. IF BY A REASONABLE TEST, MOST KOREANS SEEM WILLING TO LIVE FAIRLY COMFORTABLY WITH THE NEWLY EMERGING STRUCTURE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO AS WELL. IF A MAJORITY MANIFEST THAT THEY CANNOT TOLERATE THE NEW LEADERSHIP AND RESORT TO CONFRONTATION, THERE WILL EITHER HAVE TO BE A CHANGE OR WE WILL HAVE TO DISENGAGE.

3. UNFORTUNATELY WE ARE NOT IN A POSITION NOW TO MAKE ANY RPT ANY RELIABLE JUDGMENTS ABOUT PUBLIC VIEWS BEYOND MY

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TRB Date: 9/13/93

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REFTEL COMMENTS. WE ARE USING EVERY RESOURCE WE HAVE TO GET PRELIMINARY READINGS, AND WE WILL PASS THESE ALONG MID-WEEK NEXT WEEK. A WEEK OR SO LATER WE WILL PROVIDE A MORE CONSIDERED ASSESSMENT. TO ILLUSTRATE THE PROBLEM, MANY AMERICANS HAVE BEEN ASSUMING THAT THERE IS AN OVERWHELMINGLY NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG THE KOREAN PEOPLE, SCATTERED EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THIS MAY NOT NECESSARILY BE SO. I KNOW OF ONE INTELLIGENT KIM DAE JUNG (M-R: KIM TAE-CHUNG) SUPPORTER WHO RECENTLY TOLD ME THAT HE IS FINISHED WITH KIM DAE JUNG BECAUSE KIM PUT HIS PERSONAL AMBITIONS AHEAD OF NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND HE ADDED THAT EVEN THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT CREATED THE SITUATION IN KWANGJU, MOST KOREANS FELT THAT THE UPRISING HAD TO BE PUT DOWN FIRMLY. CONTRARYWISE, SOME PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS HAVE SPOKEN TO ME IN VITUPERATIVE TERMS ABOUT THE MILITARY. KOREANS ARE STILL SORTING THINGS OUT, AND I SUSPECT THAT QUITE A FEW WILL TAKE THEIR TIME TO REACH THEIR CONCLUSIONS.

4. I AM SORRY WE CANNOT DO BETTER, AND I RECOGNIZE THAT OUR REPORTING SCHEDULE WILL CREATE FRUSTRATION. NEVERTHELESS, OUR POLICY MUST BE BASED ON THE REALITY--NOT AN AMERICAN PREDICTION--AS TO HOW THE KOREANS REACT, AND IT IS GOING TO TAKE A LITTLE MORE TIME TO FIND OUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN. GLEYSTEN

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Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr.

Date: 7/20 19 88