TEXT OF TELEGRAM 80SEUL 006463

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ACTION SS-30

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EXDIS

E.O. 12065, RDS-3 5/21/00 (GLEVSTEEN, W.H.) OR-M
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, KS
SUBJECT: THE KWANGJU CRISIS

1. (S - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. THE MASSIVE INSURRECTION IN KWANGJU IS STILL OUT OF
CONTROL AND POSES AN ALARMING SITUATION FOR THE ROK MILITARY
WHO HAVE NOT FACED A SIMILAR INTERNAL THREAT FOR AT
LEAST TWO DECADES. THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE IS OBVIOUSLY THE
EXTENT TO WHICH THE POLITICAL CRACKDOWN HIT KIM DAE JUNG
(M.R.: KIM DAE-JONG) AND OTHER NATIVES OF CHOLLA, BUT BY
NOW ALMOST ALL ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION SEEM TO BE
ENGAGED IN A VIOLENT, PROVINCIAL FREE FOR ALL REFLECTING
DEEP-STATE, HISTORICAL, PROVINCIAL ANTAGONISMS. AT LEAST
150,000 PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED. THERE HAS BEEN GREAT DESTRUC-
TION, AND OUR MOST RECENT INFORMATION IS THAT THE RIOTERS
HAVE BROKEN INTO ARMORIES AND SEIZED WEAPONS, LIVE
AMMUNITION, AND DEMOLITIONS. THE KOREAN ARMY PLANS TO
PULL ITS MILITARY FORCES OUT OF THE CITY TONIGHT, MAINTAIN-
ING ROADBLOCKS AND CONCENTRATING DEFENSE ON TWO MILITARY
INSTALLATIONS AND A PRISON CONTAINING 2,000 LEFTISTS. THE
AUTHORITIES ARE TRYING TO GET A CEASEFIRE SO THAT THEY CAN
TALK TO THE RIOTERS ABOUT THEIR DEMANDS FOR AN APOLOGY,
RELEASE OF PRISONERS, AND REMOVAL OF MARTIAL LAW FORCES.

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WHILE ALL THESE MOVES SEEM INTELLIGENT, THEY HAVE NOT
WORKED SO FAR AND THE DECEMBER 12 GENERALS OBVIOUSLY FEEL
THREATENED BY THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

3. GENERAL WICKHAM HAS AGREED TO A HIGH INTERNAL ALERT
STATUS AGAINST INFRINGEMENT, AND HE HAS INFORMALLY TAKEN
SOME MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH DEFCON 3. HE HAS ALSO URGED
THAT DEFENSE CONSIDER WHAT FORCE AUGMENTATIONS MIGHT BE
POSSIBLE IF WE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE
4. We have discussed, in addition, what we might do. One man who could help if he were willing would be Kim Dae Jung, but he is in jail and probably would not be willing to be helpful unless he could extract far-reaching concessions. No other heroes are likely to step forward. If the rioting gets even more serious, I suggest the department consider reiteration of the May 18 statement focusing it on a call for all concerned to calm the situation, establish a dialogue with each other, and avoid a fissure which could greatly increase external threats. The statement could conclude by taking note of Pyongyang’s protestations of innocence and state that we intend to hold them to their declaration. As of now, I am against any local American statement because it could backfire with charges that we were in collusion with the government. A statement in Washington which balanced the call for moderation to both sides would pose less difficulty. Unfortunately, no American statement in a situation of censorship and rioting is going to be heard by many people. GLEysteen