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by Gleysteen*

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT - PARA 4)

E.O. 12065:RDS-3 3/12/00 (GLEYSTEEEN, W.H.) OR-M
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, MILI, KS
SUBJECT: YET ANOTHER ASSESSMENT OF ROK STABILITY AND
- POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. (S) ENTIRE TEXT.

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC-MINDEDNESS IN THE ROK DURING 1980 ARE FAIR, ALTHOUGH THE GOING WILL GET ROUGHER RATHER THAN EASIER AS THE YEAR CHURNS ON. THE STUDENTS COULD PROVE SPOILERS, BUT CIVIL UNREST WILL PROBABLY BE HELD IN CHECK. DISSIDENTS HAVE NOT FOUND THEIR BALANCE IN THE FACE OF A GOVERNMENT WHICH IS RELAXING RESTRICTIONS; WHILE POLITICIANS ARE BEHAVING CIRCUMSPECTLY FOR FEAR OF PROVOKING THE MILITARY AND DESTROYING THE OPPORTUNITY FOR POLITICAL PROGRESS. FOR THE SHORT TERM WORKERS MAY TAKE A TEMPORARY REDUCTION IN REAL INCOME RATHER THAN RESORT TO STRIDENT DEMANDS AS A RESPONSE TO DEPRESSED ECONOMIC CONDITIONS. THE GOVERNMENT IS OPERATING WITH ENOUGH COMPETENCE TO COPE WITH THE NATION'S PROBLEMS -- AT LEAST TO THE POINT OF NOT PROVIDING A CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT WISH TO TERMINATE ITS PROGRAM OF "ORDERLY DEMOCRATIZATION".

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3. THE ODDS OF AN EARLY MILITARY COUP SEEM TO HAVE RE-CEDED -- IN PART BECAUSE MILITARY OFFICERS ARE COMING TO UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF KOREA'S ECONOMY, THE DELICACY

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OF KOREA'S FOREIGN RELATIONSHIPS, AND THE QUITE APPARENT CONSENSUS OF MOST KOREANS OPPOSING A DIRECT MILITARY ROLE IN POLITICS. THE THREAT OF EARLY INTERNECINE STRIFE WITHIN THE ROK ARMY DOES NOT SEEM AS GREAT AS A FEW WEEKS AGO-- LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE SUBSTANTIAL SHIFT OF KEY TROOP COMMANDERS AND AWARENESS THAT THE USG WOULD NOT SUPPORT AN EFFORT TO UPSET THE CURRENT EQUILIBRIUM.

! But it did

4. WITHIN THE CONTROL STRUCTURE A PARTICULARLY WORRISOME PHENOMENON IS THE GREAT POWER OF CHUN DOO HWAN, WHO HAS SPREAD HIS INTELLIGENCE SECURITY NET THROUGHOUT THE MILITARY STRUCTURE, AND, DESPITE FLAT ASSURANCES AGAINST INVOLVING HIMSELF IN POLITICS (AS HE DEFINES POLITICS), GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN BIDDING HIS TIME TO TAKE OVER CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT EITHER DIRECTLY OR BEHIND SOME FACADE. SHOULD HE TRY TO EXTEND HIS FORMAL POWER TO INCLUDE THE KCIA OR MANIPULATE THE STRUCTURING OF THE NEXT ELECTIONS, HE COULD PRECIPITATE DANGEROUS PUBLIC UNREST AND REACTIVATE STRESSES WITHIN THE ROK ARMY -- EVEN HIS DECEMBER 12 COLLABORATORS MIGHT TURN ON HIM.

5. ANOTHER SOURCE OF SERIOUS CONCERN IS THE DEPTH OF DISTRUST OF THE SENIOR MILITARY LEADERSHIP TOWARD KIM YONG SAM AND KIM TAE CHUNG. SINCE THIS CANNOT BE ERASED IN THE SHORT TIME BEFORE ELECTIONS, THE MILITARY WILL BE TEMPTED TO JOIN A BUREAUCRATIC/BUSINESS COALITION TO PREJUDICE THE CONTEST AND POSSIBLY TO REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE RESULTS IF THE NDP SHOULD WIN. FORTUNATELY, SOME SENIOR OFFICERS RECOGNIZE THAT THE ARMY WOULD JEOPARDIZE ITS

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POPULAR SUPPORT IF IT WERE TO ENGAGE IN CRUDE MANIPULATION BEFORE AN ELECTION OR ATTEMPT TO TOPPLE A POPULARLY ELECTED NDP-LED GOVERNMENT -- AT LEAST BEFORE IT HAD BLOTTED ITS COPYBOOK.

6. HOPEFULLY PRESIDENT CHOI AND HIS GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO CARRY THROUGH CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND DIRECT ELECTIONS MORE OR LESS AS PLANNED WITH A RESULTING GOVERNMENT THAT IS SOMEWHAT MORE LIBERAL THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE. CONCEIVABLY THE CONTEST WILL BE A STRAIGHTFORWARD ONE BETWEEN THE NDP AND DRP KIMS, BUT GIVEN THE NUMBER OF BUREAUCRATS, BUSINESSMEN, AND SOLDIERS WITH AN INTEREST IN THE OUTCOME, THEY MAY TRY TO INJECT OTHER PLAYERS IN THE RACE AND GIVE THEM SPECIAL ADVANTAGES. ALTHOUGH SUCH A MOVE MIGHT DISTURB ROUSSEAU DEMOCRATS, WE SHOULD NOT

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JUMP TO THE CONCLUSION THAT IT WOULD SIGNAL THE RETURN OF YUSHIN OR BE UNACCEPTABLE TO THE KOREAN PUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

7. THE JUXTAPOSITION IN LOCAL MEDIA OF NEWS ABOUT KIM TAE CHUNG'S RECENT RETURN TO POLITICS AND CHUN DOO HWAN'S PROMOTION TO LIEUTENANT GENERAL CONJURES UP CONTRASTING PICTURES OF KOREA. THE FIRST IS OF A COUNTRY PROCEEDING MORE OR LESS ON SCHEDULE WITH PROMISES OF POLITICAL EVOLUTION AND HEADED - RATHER UNBELIEVABLY - FOR TRANSFORMATION FROM THE AUTHORITARIAN ONE-MAN RULE OF THE YUSHIN ERA TO A FULLY DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IN NOT MUCH OVER ONE YEAR. THE SECOND MORE SINISTER PICTURE FOCUSES ON CHUN DOO HWAN'S GRADUAL AGGRANDIZEMENT OF POWER TO THE POINT WHERE MANY FEEL HE ALREADY CONTROLS BASIC GOVERNMENT POLICY. HE HAS WON THE BATTLE OVER HIS THIRD STAR, EXTENDED HIS INTELLIGENCE SECURITY NET THROUGHOUT THE ARMED SERVICES BY MEANS OF A COMMISSAR SYSTEM, AND SET ABOUT DEALING WITH ALL

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KINDS OF PEOPLE IN A MANNER SUGGESTIVE OF A NATIONAL LEADER RATHER THAN SECURITY OFFICER. GENERALLY, HE GIVES THE IMPRESSION OF A MAN BIDDING HIS TIME TO TAKE OVER POWER -- EITHER DIRECTLY OR BEHIND A CIVILIAN FACADE. BOTH PICTURES PORTRAY IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF SOUTH KOREA'S CONTEMPORARY REALITY. ULTIMATELY THE INHERENT CONTRADICTIONS WILL HAVE TO BE RESOLVED; YET NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW AND WHEN THIS WILL OCCUR, AND MOST PEOPLE'S JUDGMENT IS COMPLICATED BY UNCERTAINTY, IGNORANCE, AND RUMOR-

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MONGERING.

8. HOW STABLE IS SOUTH KOREA?

GRANTING THAT THE TOUGHER TESTS LIE AHEAD, THE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC-MINDEDNESS THROUGH 1980 ARE NOT BAD. THE ODDS OF A DANGEROUS DISRUPTION, SUCH AS A MILITARY COUP OR MASSIVE STUDENT/WORKER UPRISING DO NOT SEEM HIGH. AMONG THE MILITARY, THE PROSPECT OF COUNTERACTIONS WITHIN THE ROK ARMY AGAINST THE DECEMBER 12 GROUP HAS RECEDED WITH THE ASSIGNMENT OF NEW (AND FOR THE MOST PART COMPETENT) OFFICERS INTO KEY TROOP COMMANDS. IN RETROSPECT, MOREOVER, THOSE OFFICERS WHO PROBED OUR REACTION TO POSSIBLE COUNTERACTION APPARENTLY HAD FEW TROOPS AT THEIR READY DISPOSAL. DISGRUNTLED FORCES ARE NOT LIKELY TO COALESCE DANGEROUSLY UNLESS SERIOUS SOCIAL UNREST

bad call,
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DEVELOPS. DESPITE HIS FLAT ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY, CHUN DOO HWAN MAY TRY TO EXTEND HIS STRING-PULLING ROLE FROM THE MILITARY TO THE ENTIRE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY, BUT HOPEFULLY WILL STOP SHORT OF CAUSING FEAR AND ANTAGONISMS OF DANGEROUS PROPORTIONS.

9. ON THE CIVIL SIDE, KOREAN SOCIETY WILL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO CONTAIN THE POTENTIAL THREAT FROM STUDENTS WHO ARE SO SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT THEIR "HISTORICAL ROLE" AND OFTEN INSENSITIVE TO THE DANGERS OF EXCESS. OTHER POTENTIAL SOURCES OF UNREST SEEM EITHER OFF BALANCE OR CHASTENED BY FEAR OF MILITARY INTERVENTION. DISSIDENTS ARE GROPING RATHER UNSUCCESSFULLY FOR TARGETS TO ATTACK. POLITICAL OPPOSITION LEADERS -- IN FACT ALL POLITICAL LEADERS -- ARE CONSTRAINED BY LATENT THREATS AND PRE-OCCUPIED BY INTERNECINE WARFARE, WHILE WORKERS AND OTHERS WHO CREATED TROUBLE AT THE TIME OF THE PUSAN/MASAN RIOTS SEEM PREPARED TO ACCOMMODATE TO KOREA'S VERY DIFFICULT ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES BY TAKING SOME REDUCTION IN REAL INCOME RATHER THAN TAKING TO THE STREETS.

workers who
"caused trouble"
so out of touch

10. WHO IS REALLY IN CHARGE?

POWER IN KOREA TODAY IS DIFFUSED. THE MILITARY CONTROL THE RAW POWER WITHOUT THE BUFFER OF A POWERFUL LEADER TO KEEP THEM IN THE TRENCHES; AND WITHIN THE MILITARY CHUN DOO HWAN IS CLEARLY THE MAN TO WATCH. YET THE MILITARY ARE NOT "RUNNING THE COUNTRY". EVEN THOUGH THEY CAN OB-

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TAIN BLUE HOUSE RATIFICATION FOR DECISIONS IN THE MILITARY AND SECURITY AREAS, A CIVILIAN COMPLEX OF BUREAUCRATS, BUSINESSMEN, AND POLITICIANS ARE MAKING AND EXECUTING MOST OTHER DECISIONS. MOREOVER, THE LONGER THESE CIVILIANS REMAIN IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, THE MORE INFLUEN-
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TIAL AND AUTHORITATIVE THEY ARE LIKELY TO BE. THE POWER OF THE POLITICIANS IS STILL MARGINAL, BUT IT WILL PROBABLY INCREASE AS THE COUNTRY HEADS TOWARDS MORE DECISIVE STAGES OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND ELECTIONS. THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS HUNKERED DOWN, WORRYING ABOUT "PURIFICATION" (ANTI-CORRUPTION) CAMPAIGNS AND TEMPTED TO BUY ITS WAY INTO POLITICAL OPERATIONS IN THE STYLE OF EARLIER ERAS.

11: HOW WELL IS THE SYSTEM FUNCTIONING?

THE GOVERNMENT SYSTEM HAS LOST EFFICIENCY, DISCIPLINE, AND MOMENTUM, BUT IT IS STILL RUNNING PRETTY WELL -- PARTICULARLY IF COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OR MEASURED AGAINST THE MAGNITUDE OF CHALLENGE. PRESIDENT CHOI UNFORTUNATELY ALLOWS HIMSELF TO BE SEEN AS A FLABBY, HYPERCAUTIOUS LEADER CONTENT WITH FORMAL ROLE PLAYING. EXCEPT FOR PRO FORMA APPEARANCES, HE TENDS TO KEEP THE MILITARY AT ARM'S LENGTH, AVOIDING ARGUMENT AND CONFRONTATION. HIS GOVERNMENT HAS NOT APPEARED DECISIVE, AND RUMORS OF BUSINESS CORRUPTION AND GENERAL LOOSENING OF STANDARDS ARE PREVALENT. HOWEVER, THESE IMPRESSIONS OVERLOOK THE FACT THAT THE CHOI GOVERNMENT HAS CONDUCTED THE FIRST STAGE OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION WITHOUT LOSING CONTROL AND HAS BEEN FAR MORE DECISIVE THAN MANY ASSUMED -- POLITICALLY, LIFTING EM-9 AND ALLOWING KIM TAE CHUNG BACK ON THE SCENE; ECONOMICALLY, IN CARRYING THROUGH DEVALUATION AND ENERGY PRICE INCREASES; AND SOCIALLY, IN MAKING CHANGES IN CAMPUS ADMINISTRATION WHICH WERE OPPOSED BY THE GUARDIANS OF LAW

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AND ORDER.

12. WHAT ARE THE STRATEGIES OF KEY PLAYERS?

ALTHOUGH THE CHOI GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO A PROGRAM OF "ORDERLY DEMOCRATIZATION" WITH POPULAR ELECTIONS WITHIN THE FIRST HALF OF 1981, MANY PEOPLE -- MYSELF INCLUDED -- ARE WORRIED THAT THE PROCESS WILL BE JEOPARDIZED OR SERIOUSLY COMPROMISED. TO PUT THE PROBLEM SIMPLY: PREVAILING OPINION IS THAT THE NDP WOULD SWEEP ANY ELECTION CONDUCTED IN THE NEAR FUTURE BECAUSE OF A NATURAL REACTION TO THE YUSHIN PERIOD; THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP VIEW THE PROSPECT OF A NDP-CONTROLLED GOVERNMENT WITH SOMETHING BETWEEN DEEP APPREHENSION AND A DETERMINATION TO PREVENT IT; WHILE ALMOST EVERYBODY AGREES THAT THE KOREAN PEOPLE WOULD BE DEEPLY ANTAGONIZED BY EITHER A MILITARY TAKEOVER IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES OR CRASS MANIPULATION OF POPULAR ELECTIONS. NO KOREAN KNOWS HOW THIS DILEMMA IS GOING TO BE MANAGED. THE BEST THEY CAN DO IS TO SORT OUT POSSIBLE SCENARIOS AND CALCULATE THEIR OWN POTENTIAL ROLES -- WHICH ULTIMATELY WILL BE DETERMINED BY THE EMERGING PATTERN OF OTHERS' ACTIONS.

NDP would win

(A) THE MILITARY:

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THERE ARE TWO GREAT PROBLEMS AMONG MILITARY OFFICERS GENERALLY. FIRST, THE UNDISGUISED DISTRUST OF ALL SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS -- PRE- AND POST-DECEMBER 12 HIERARCHIES AS WELL AS RETIRED OFFICERS -- TOWARD KIM TAE CHUNG (BECAUSE OF HIS ALLEGED SOFTNESS AND LEFTISM) AND

*KDJ's
"alleged softness & leftism"*

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KIM YONG SAM (BECAUSE OF HIS ALLEGED GENERAL INADEQUACY). A DISTURBING NUMBER STATE FLATLY THAT THEY WOULD NOT PERMIT EITHER KIM TO COME TO POWER AND WOULD MOVE TO PREVENT IT IN ADVANCE OF AN ELECTION OR BY COUP AFTER THE ELECTION. FORTUNATELY, OTHERS RECOGNIZE THAT THE ARMY COULD DESTROY ITS CRUCIAL RAPPORT WITH THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IF IT WERE TO ARBITRARILY ANNUL THE RESULTS OF A MAJORITY DECISION. SECOND, KOREAN MILITARY OFFICERS VIEW THE PROCESS OF "DEMOCRATIZATION" THROUGH A YUSHIN FILTER, MAKING IT DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO TOLERATE THE DEGREE OF FREE CHOICE AND CRITICISM ASSOCIATED WITH A MODICUM OF DEMOCRACY. DESPITE THESE POWERFUL PREJUDICES, I CONCLUDE HESITANTLY THAT THE MILITARY HIERARCHY: RECOGNIZES WITH SUFFICIENT REALISM THAT A PRE-ELECTION COUP WOULD PIT THE ARMY AGAINST THE PEOPLE IN AN UNACCEPTABLE WAY; WILL THUS BE STRONGLY ATTRACTED TOWARD ANY POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT WHICH MIGHT REDUCE THE PROSPECT OF AN NDP VICTORY; AND, IF THE NDP WERE NEVERTHELESS TO COME INTO POWER, MORE OR LESS UNDERSTANDS THAT THE NDP -- POSSIBLY EVEN KIM TAE CHUNG -- WOULD HAVE TO BE GIVEN TIME TO PROVE ITSELF CAPABLE DR INCAPABLE OF GUIDING THE ROK. IN THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, THE THREAT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION WILL REMAIN A DAMOCLES SWORD OVER KOREA'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SOME TIME.

(B) CHUN DOO HWAN:

WE -- AND I SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE MYSELF -- SHOULD RESIST
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OVERSIMPLIFYING KOREAN POLITICS BY MAKING CHUN DOO HWAN THE SINISTER SOURCE OF ALL EVIL. HE HAPPENS TO BE ONE OF A NUMBER OF KOREANS WHOSE PERSONAL DECISIONS COULD PROVE FATEFUL FOR THEIR COUNTRY. FOR THE SHORT RUN, HE IS STRONGLY CONSTRAINED FROM OPENLY VIOLATING HIS ASSURANCES ABOUT NOT INTERVENING IN POLITICS, AND SO FAR HE HAS WORKED TO CONTROL RATHER THAN STIMULATE THE KIND OF UNREST THAT MIGHT JUSTIFY EXTENSION OF HIS POWER. YET EVEN IF HE CONTINUES TO BIDE HIS TIME, HE WILL WIELD POWER THAT MAKES ALMOST EVERYONE UNCOMFORTABLE. IN STRUCTURING THE NEXT ELECTION, HE MIGHT PLAY A VERY CRUDE ROLE BUT HE MIGHT CONTENT HIMSELF WITH PLAYING THE ROLE OF A BACKSTAGE MENTOR IF HE COULD FIND A COMBINATION OF POLITICIANS BOTH WILLING TO FRONT FOR HIM AND ABLE TO WIN AN ELECTION. MARKING TIME WILL NOT BE WITHOUT PROBLEMS FOR CHUN BECAUSE HIS OPPONENTS MAY SEEK TO EMBARRASS OR

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DESTROY HIM, ESPECIALLY IF HE MISPLAYS HIS CARDS. HE IS ALREADY WIDELY FEARED AND WITHIN THE ARMY EVEN HIS COLLABORATORS OF DECEMBER 12 MIGHT FEEL BETRAYED IF HE WERE TO REACH OUT FOR OVERT POLITICAL POWER. CLEARLY HE IS GOING TO CONTINUE TO BE ONE OF OUR MAIN PROBLEMS.

(C) THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER:

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS TOLD ME QUITE CANDIDLY THAT HE AND THE PRESIDENT BELIEVE THAT MUCH CONFUSION WILL DEVELOP LATER THIS YEAR WHEN THE NDP AND DRP WILL DISCOVER THAT NONE OF THE KIMS IS A SHOO-IN FOR THE ROK'S NEXT PRESIDENT. THUS THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY IS TO GOVERN AS EFFECTIVELY AS POSSIBLE AND TO ALLOW A POLITICAL STALEMATE TO DEVELOP

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BEFORE SUGGESTING A SOLUTION. ONE SOLUTION APPARENTLY APPEALING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, IF NOT THE PRESIDENT, WOULD BE TO ENTER THE RANKS AS A SUPRA-PARTISAN CANDIDATE IN THE ELECTIONS. THIS WOULD BE EASIER IF THE NDP AND DRP WERE BOTH FRAGMENTED BY THIRD PARTY ACTIVITIES, AND THE GOVERNMENT MAY HOPE THAT KIM TAE CHUNG WILL OBLIGE FROM ONE SIDE WHILE SOME BUREAUCRAT/BUSINESS/MILITARY GROUP OBLIGES FROM THE OTHER. I SENSE THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD READILY ENTER THE FRAY IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT I CREDIT HIM FOR BEING UNWILLING TO SERVE AS A FRONT FOR A MILITARY CABAL AND RECOGNIZING THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO WIN IN A FAIR ELECTION. MOST OF THE ESTABLISHMENT WOULD BE RE-

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ASSURED WITH SUCH A PATERNALISTIC ARRANGEMENT IF ONLY THEY COULD FIGURE OUT HOW TO CONVINCING THE VOTERS. IN THE MEANTIME, THE PRESIDENT AND PRIME MINISTER SEEM RELATIVELY CONFIDENT THAT THEIR SCHEDULE FOR POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION AND ELECTIONS CAN BE MAINTAINED. LIKE THE MILITARY, THEY HAVE IN MIND A MORE CONSERVATIVE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY THAN MUCH OF THE URBAN PUBLIC AND THEY MAY ADOPT A MORE INTERVENTIONIST ROLE THAN MANY PEOPLE THINK FAIR FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

(D) THE DRP AND KIM JONG PIL:

KIM JONG PIL RECOGNIZES THAT HIS CURRENT PROSPECTS FOR AN
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ELECTION VICTORY ARE POOR BUT HE OBVIOUSLY HOPES THAT WITH TIME HE WILL HAVE A CIGHTING CHANCE TO WIN. HE WILL WORK ASSIDUOUSLY TO ENCOURAGE FRACTURES IN THE OPPOSITION AND TRY TO REPAIR THE DRP'S IMAGE THROUGH POLICIES DESIGNED TO APPEAL TO FARMERS AND THE URBAN POOR. ABOVE ALL HE WILL EXPLOIT HIS ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE AND HIS RELATIVELY GREATER ACCEPTABILITY TO THE MILITARY THAN EITHER OF THE NDP KIMS. NEVERTHELESS, KIM JONG PIL WILL BE A LONG SHOT UNLESS THE ESTABLISHMENT RALLIES AROUND HIM, WHICH THEY HAVE NOT SO FAR. HE HAS THE LIABILITIES OF PAST CORRUPTION, CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH YUSHIN, AND POWERFUL ENEMIES WITHIN THE DRP. MANY MILITARY OFFICERS SEE HIM SIMPLY AS PREFERABLE TO THE NDP KIMS AND NOTHING MORE.

E. NDP KIM YONG SAM AND KIM TAE CHUNG:

~~THE NDP'S RATHER UNQUESTIONED ADVANTAGE IS THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY WIN DECISIVELY IF A POPULARITY CONTEST WERE CONDUCTED IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND ITS GREAT LIABILITY IS THE UNDISGUISED DISTRUST OF THE MILITARY LEADERS (THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY THE TROOPS). ALTHOUGH NEITHER KIM YONG SAM NOR KIM TAE CHUNG HAS LET WORRY OVERRIDE HIS AMBITION, NDP LEADERS KNOW VERY WELL THAT A PARTY SPLIT WOULD KEEP POWER OUT OF THEIR GRASP. TO A LESSER EXTENT THERE ARE GLIMMERINGS OF AWARENESS THAT OVER TIME THE NDP MAY BE FORCED TO DEMONSTRATE MORE CONVINCINGLY THAN IN THE PAST THAT IT IS CAPABLE OF INTELLIGENT POLICIES AND EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION, NOT JUST OPPOSITION FIREWORKS.~~

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THE STRATEGIES OF THE TWO KIMS REFLECT THESE CONSIDERATIONS. THEY ARE PLAYING RATHER ROUGHLY WITH EACH OTHER
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BUT ARE AT LEAST TRYING NOT TO SPLIT THE PARTY WHILE THEY BOTH BLAME ALL ILLS ON THE CHOI GOVERNMENT AND ARGUE THAT KIM JONG PIL CAN NEVER ESCAPE HIS YUSHIN ASSOCIATION. NEITHER KIM HAS YET DARED TO PURSUE THE CORRUPTION ISSUE WHICH REACHES WITHIN THEIR OWN RANKS, AND, IN A STRIKING BREAK FROM THE PAST, BOTH HAVE COMMENDABLY REFRAINED FROM INFLAMING PUBLIC PASSIONS OR SNIPING AT SENSITIVE ISSUES SUCH AS POLICY TOWARD THE NORTH/SOUTH KOREAN DIALOGUE. THE IMAGEMAKERS OF BOTH KIMS ARE WORKING ON THE PROBLEM OF "POLICY-MINDEDNESS" AND KIM YONG SAM HAS AT LEAST TRIED TO IMPROVE HIS MILITARY TIES. HIS EFFORTS SO FAR HAVE NOT MADE MUCH OF A DENT. KIM TAE CHUNG HAS TAKEN THE PROUD STAND THAT HE IS READY TO CONSULT WITH THE MILITARY IF THEY TAKE THE INITIATIVE, PRESUMABLY AN INDICATION THAT HE EITHER FAILS TO UNDERSTAND HIS PROBLEM OR IS TOYING WITH A DANGEROUS KIND OF CONTEST. THE NDP WILL PROBABLY AVOID A "OVERHEATED" APPROACH FOR A FEW MORE MONTHS TO BUILD UP THE IMAGE OF SOBRIETY, TO AVOID BEING CHARGED WITH ENDANGERING THE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUING CIVILIAN RULE, AND TO SORT OUT THE LEADERSHIP CONTEST WITHIN THE PARTY. AT SOME POINT, HOWEVER, IT WILL ALMOST SURELY TAKE OFF THE GLOVES EVEN AT THE RISK OF A CRACKDOWN BY THE AUTHORITIES.

13. UNLESS THE STUDENTS OR OTHERS GET OUT OF HAND, KOREA IS LIKELY TO REMAIN FAIRLY STABLE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS BECAUSE: THE SOLDIERS KNOW THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT ACCEPT A MILITARY TAKEOVER; GENERAL CHUN HAS PAINTED HIMSELF INTO A CORNER IN TERMS OF EXTENDING HIS FORMAL POWER; THE POLITICIANS KNOW THAT THEIR GRADUALLY EXPAND-

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ING CONTEST IS AT THE SUFFERANCE OF MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITIES; THE CHOI GOVERNMENT KNOWS IT HAS THE CENTRAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR PREVENTING CHAOTIC DEVELOPMENT; AND THE GENERAL POPULACE SEEMS MORE OR LESS SATISFIED OR AT LEAST UNWILLING TO MANIFEST ITS UNHAPPINESS BY DRAMATIC ACTION. THE DISPOSITION OF THE KIM JAE KYU CASE AND THE LIFTING OF MARTIAL LAW WILL BE TRICKY, BUT THE CRUNCH POINTS WILL BE THE FINAL STAGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE NEXT ELECTIONS. THE CHANCE OF VERY SERIOUS CONTROVERSY OVER THESE ISSUES IS GREAT, MAGNIFIED BY A STAGGERING DEGREE OF REGIONAL ANIMOSITY. HOPEFULLY GENERAL CHUN AND LIKE-MINDED MILITARY OFFICERS WILL RESTRAIN THEMSELVES WHILE POLITICIANS WORK OUT COMPROMISES THAT WILL ALLOW AT LEAST SOME PROGRESS IN THE CURRENT ROK EXPERIMENT IN POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL THAT SOUTH KOREA HAS MAINTAINED ITS BASIC COHESION AND WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO DO SO.

14. GENERAL WICKHAM CONCURS IN THIS ASSESSMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICY FOLLOW SEPTTEL.

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