DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRELEASE TEXT OF TELEGRAM 79SEOUL 018150) EXCISE () DELETE Non-Responsive Info ADP285 FOIA Exemptions SECRET PA Exemptions SEOUL 18150 01 OF 04 291032Z PAGE O1 ACTION SS-30 INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W ------029617 291036Z /23 290939Z NOV 79 (FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2678 INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO S E C R E T SECTION O1 OF 04 SEOUL 18150 E.O. 12065; PDS-3 11/29/89 (GLEYSTEEN, W.H.) OR-M TAGS: PGDV, PINT, KS, US SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S POLITICAL ASSESSMENT ONE MONTH AFTER PARK ASSASSINATION

2. BEGIN SUMMARY: LIKE OTHERS I AM IMPRESSED BY THE INTELLIGENCE AND COMPOSURE WITH WHICH THE SOUTH KOREAN PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT HAVE CONDUCTED THEMSELES DURING THE FIRST STAGE OF THE TRANSITION FOLLOWING PARK'S ASSASSINATION ONE MONTH AGO. THE ATMOSPHERE IS FAIRLY RELAXED. AND THERE IS A HEALTHY DEGREE OF CONSENSUS THAT THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE SHOULD BE LIBERALIZED. BUT PARK'S DEATH HAS, NOT BROUGHT A SPIRIT OF CHRISTIAN CHARITY INTO KOREAN POLITICS, AND THERE IS STILL A DANGEROUS DISAGREE-MENT ABOUT +: CW FAR AND HOW FAST LIBERALIZATION SHOULD PROCEED. . THE FIRST SIGNS OF UNRELENTING CONFRONTATION HAVE ALREADY APPEARED IN THE FAMILIAR FORM OF EXTREMIST DEMANDS QUICKLY SUPPRESSED BY EXCESSIVELY NERVOUS POLICE.

3. ACTING FRESIDENT CHOI AND HIS INNER CABINET HAVE PRE-SENTED THE PUBLIC WITH A SENSIBLE PROCEDURE FOR ORDERLY REFORM WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE HAD INITIAL PUBLIC TOLERANCE SECRET SECRET

PAGE 02

1. (S) ENTIRE TEXT.

SEOUL 18150 O1 OF 04 291032Z

IF NOT ACTIVE SUPPORT, BUT HE HAS YET TO DEFINE IT IN TERMS THAT WILL PREVENT SERIOUS CONTROVERSY OVER THE LONGER RUN. IF CHOI AS PRESIDENT FORMS A COMPETENT CABINET, SPECIFIES WITH SUFFICIENT CLARITY THAT HE INTENDS TO STEP DOWN ROUGHLY ONE YEAR AFTER PRESIDING OVER CONSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL REFORM, AND LIGHTENS THE REINS OF POLITICAL CONSTRAINT, THE ODDS ARE THAT HE AND HIS MILITARY BACKERS WILL HAVE A PERIOD OF GRACE DURING WHICH THE HARDBITTEN CONFRONTATIONALISTS IN OPPOSITION/ PAGE NO.

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DISSIDENT QUARTERS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENGENDER MUCH PUBLIC SUPPORT. IF HE IS TOO WOBBLY AND VAGUE, THE CRIES OF FOUL PLAY BY THE DISSIDENTS AND OPPOSITION WILL BE REINFORCED BY POPULAR SUSPICION THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT WILL BY ONE OR ANOTHER MEANS EXTEND THE YUSHIN SYSTEM OF RULE. UNFORTUNATELY CHOI HAS LAUNCHED HIS ENTERPRISE IN A FORMALISTIC MANNER WHICH HAS TROUBLED PEOPLE. IN-CLUDING THOSE WHO HAVEN'T MUCH SYMPATHY FOR THE DISSI-DENTS. HE WILL NEED TO BE FAR MORE VIGOROUS IF HE IS TO SUCCEED.

4. IN THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES, CHOI FACES SERIOUS DIF-FICULTIES APART FROM A CONSTANT NEED TO DEMONSTRATE HIS CREDITABILITY AS A NEUTRAL INTERIM LEADER, HIS GOVERN-MENT MUST COPE WITH THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES OF CONSTI-TUTIONAL REFORM IN SHORT PERIOD AS WELL AS THE TRICKY PROCESS OF EASING POLITICAL CONSTRAINTS (E.G., MARTIAL LAW, EM-9, AND CENSORSHIP) WITHOUT PULLING THE PLUG. IT MAY ALSO BE ATTACKED FOR STACKING THE DECK AGAINST THE OPPOSITION IN ANY FUTURE ELECTION. CHOI AND COMPANY WILL SHARE POWER IN A COMPLEX NEW PATTERN. KIM CHONG P'IL AND THE DRP WILL TRY TO ENHANCE THEIR POSITION AND MAY WEAKEN CHOI OR CROWD HIM TO THE POINT THAT HE APPEARS TO BE A PURRET. THE BASICALLY CONSERVATIVE MILITARY WILL SECRET

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CONTINUE TO WIELD ALMOST ALL RAW POWER, AT A MINIMUM RE-TAINING A VETO POWER OVER ANY DEVELOPMENT AND PERHAPS DRAGGING OUT THE PROCESS OF LIBERALIZATION -- ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NOT SO FAR. THE OPPOSITION, WHICH MAY DIVIDE CONFUSINGLY, WILL ALMOST SURELY PLAY A MUCH LARGER ROLE THAN DURING RECENT YEARS. THE DISSIDENTS, THOUGH THEIR NUMBERS ARE TINY, WILL BE ABLE TO USE OTHER FORCES, SUCH AS THE STUDENTS, AND WILL BE THE MOST LIKELY TRIGGER OF TROUBLE. THE J.S. AND POSSIBLY NORTH KOREA MAY ALSO BE SIGNIFICANT FACTORS.

5. THE OUTCOME OF THIS COMPLEX PROCESS IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT -- EXCEPT THAT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE ROK WILL EITHER BE RIPPED APART BY CHAOTIC DISORDER OR BLESSED WITH AN EASY TRANSITION TO REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT. IF CHOI CAN BE STIFFENED TO MOVE WITH SUFFICIENT SPEED AND TO PRESERVE A RELATIVELY FAIR ATMOSPHERE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION PARTIES, HE MAY BE ABLE TO PULL KOREA THROUGH A VERY DIFFICULT PROCESS. SHOULD HE FAIL, THE SITUATION COULD DETERIORATE TO THE POINT WHERE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE MILITARY WOULD TAKE POWER THROUGH A COUP IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL SELF-PRESERVATION. SO FAR WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND SIGNS OF SUCH A MILITARY MOVE AND ONE IS NOT VERY LIKELY UNLESS AND UNTIL THERE IS A SUBSTANTIAL EROSION OF PUBLIC ORDER. EVEN THEN A MILITARY COUP COULD PROVE HIGHLY UNPOPULAR. IF IT WERE

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TO LEAD TO A CONTEST IN THE STREETS, IT WOULD POSE THE MOST SERIOUS KIND OF DANGER FOR KOREA -- AND FOR OURSELVES. AS OF NOW THIS DANGER SEEMS CONTAINED. END SUMMARY.

6. THE ONLY THING I FEEL SAFE IN SAYING ONE MONTH AFTER SECRET.

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SEOUL 18150 02 OF 04 2910412 PAGE O1 ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W

D 290939Z NOV 79 FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2679 INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 04 SEOUL 18150

EXDIS

PRESIDENT CARK'S ASSASSINATION IS THAT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IS IN MUCH BETTER SHAPE THAN MANY KOREANS AND OUTSIDERS WOULD HAVE ASSUMED -- A TRIBUTE TO THE SUR-PRISING VIGOR OF KOREAN INSTITUTIONS AND KOREAN AWARENESS OF HOW MUCH THEY HAVE TO LOSE FROM CHAOS, ESPECIALLY IN . THE FACE GF FHE NORTH KOREAN THREAT. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THOSE COMMITTED TO POLITICAL COMBAT, THOUGHTFUL KOREANS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO GRASP THE CENTRAL ISSUE FACING THEM: HGW -TO -LIBERALIZE THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE FAST ENOUGH TO SATISFY POPULAR EXPECTATIONS BUT STEADILY ENOUGH TO AVOID THE WANGER OF OVER-REACHING THEMSELVES OR SCARING MILITARY ELEMENTS INTO A MILITARY TAKE-OVER.

7. ALTHOUGH WARNING SIGNS ARE BEGINNING TO APPEAR, THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE IS RELAXED FOR A COUNTRY UNDER MARTIAL LAW AND SO ACCUSTOMED TO POLITICAL TENSIONS. FEW, IF ANY. PEOPLE MARGUE AGAINST SOME DEGREE OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION; THE MILITARY HAVE DISPLAYED CONSIDERABLE STATESMANSHIP IN PLAYING A STABILIZING ROLE AND GOING OUT OF THEIR WAY TO GIVE THE APPEARANCE OF DEFERRING TO CIVILIAN LEADERSHIP; MARTIAL LAW HAS BEEN CONDUCTED WITH SKILL AND A FAIRLY LIGHT TOUCH; THE CIVILIAN BUREAU-CRACY HAS NEVER FALTERED; THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS SENSED ITS GREAT STAKE IN NORMALCY; AND THE GENERAL

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PUBLIC -- SO FAR INCLUDING THE MASS OF STUDENTS AND MOST OF THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION -- HAVE ACCOMMODATED THEM-SELVES TO CURRENT PLANS WITH SOMETHING BETWEEN POSITIVE SUPPORT AND TOLERANCE. THESE DEVELOPMENTS HAVE RE-ASSURED KOREANS AND GENERATED SOME PREMATURE SELF-CON-GRATULATION ABOUT THE ROK'S "MATURITY."

8. YET, THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN AMPLE REMINDERS THAT THIS SOCIETY OF GARLIC AND PEPPER EATING COMBATTANTS HAS NOT PAGE NO. EXDIS REVIEW

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Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr.

Date: 4-2z-93

GED ITS BASIC NATURE. DISSIDENT ELEMENTS AND SOME THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION, GROOVED OVER DECADES INTO TREMIST PATTERNS BY CONFRONTATION WITH AUTHORITY, HAVE REJECTED THE ACTING GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED SCENARIO FOR REFORM AND REITERATED THEIR EXTREMIST DEMANDS FOR IMMEDIATE DISMANTLEMENT OF THE YUSHIN SYSTEM; SOME STUDENT ACTIVISTS. INSTEAD OF WELCOMING THE IMPENDING RETURN OF COLLEAGUES PREVIOUSLY BARRED FROM THE UNIVERSITIES BECAUSE OF EM-9 VIOLATIONS, HAVE BEGUN TO AGITATE FOR PUNISHMENT OF ACADEMIC AUTHORITIES WHO COOPERATED WITH THE PARK GOVERNMENT; ELEMENTS OF THE MILITARY, POLICE, AND OTHER SECURITY AUTHORITIES HAVE RUMBLED ABOUT THE EXCESSES OF THE DISSIDENTS; THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY MADE NEW ARRESTS WHILE FREEING SOME PREVIOUS VIOLATORS; AND. FINALLY, ACTING PRESIDENT CHOI HAS GONE ABOUT HIS "CONSUL-TATIONS" WITH VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION IN A RATHER STILTED CONFUCIAN MANNER WHICH HAS CONVEYED UNNECESSARY OVERTONES OF THE PAST REGIME.

9. THE SCENAPIO FOR THE NEXT STAGE SEEMS FAIRLY CLEAR.
CHOI WILL BE ELECTED NEXT WEEK AS INTERIM PRESIDENT UNDER
YUSHIN PROCECURES, AND HE WILL THEN CARRY OUT A CABINET
RESHUFFLE WHICH WILL LEAVE THE ECONOMY IN THE SAME
TECHNOCRATIC HANDS THAT HAVE LONG GUIDED KOREA AND
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PRESUMABLY ELIMINATE MOST OF PARK'S BAD BOYS. THE SCHEDULE FOR POLITICAL RELAXATION IS LESS CLEAR. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT DECIDED WHEN TO ACT, IT SEEMS COMMITTED TO LIFTING EM-9, FREEING POLITICAL PRISONERS (INCLUDING KIM, TAE CHUNG), AND EASING CENSORSHIP-PROBABLY IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. SO LONG AS IT IS NOT FACED WITH WIDESPREAD AND VIOLENT UNREST, IT WILL ALSO LIFT MARTIAL LAW BUT THIS NOW SEEMS UNLIKELY BEFORE NEXT YEAR. THE FOLITICAL OPPOSITION, AS DISTINCT FROM DISSIDENTS, WILL PROBABLY GO ALONG WITH THIS SCHEDULE, WHILE REGISTERING THEIR OBJECTION TO WORKING UNDER THE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION.

10. AS POLITICAL COMBAT RESUMES ITS NORMAL SPIRIT, THE FIRST TEST WILL BE WHETHER THE CHOI GOVERNMENT CAN ACT WITH SUFFICIENT VIGOR TO CONVINCE THE OPPOSITION AND POPULAR OPINION OF ITS INTERIM NATURE AND LIMITED MANDATE AND THAT IT IS NOT SIMPLY A VARIATION ON THE YUSHIN THEME THE INNATE CAUTION OF CHOI HIMSELF COMBINED WITH FEAR AMONG THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES ABOUT MOVING TOO FAST AND PRESSURE BY POLITICAL FORCES JOCKEYING FOR POSITION, COULD RESULT IN VAGUENESS WHICH COULD QUICKLY SOUR THE PUBLIC MOOD. FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN, KIM CHONG P'IL WILL PRESS CHOI TO BE FORTHRIGHT AND THERE ARE SOME OTHERS AMONG THE CIVILIAN AND MILITARY HIERARCHY WITH SUFFICIEN UNDERSTANDING OF POPULAR FEELING TO PUSH CHOI IN THE

IGHT DIRECTION.

11. ASSUMING THE NEW GOVERNMENT OVERCOMES THIS INITIAL PROCEDURAL OBSTACLE, THE FIRST SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE WILL BE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT SIDE HAS AGREED TO A CONSENSUS PROCEDURE AND 50-50 COMPOSITION OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,

TOTAL FOR STREET, IN CONTRACT IN CONTRACT OF THE SECOND SECOND THE PERSON AND THE PERSON OF PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY OF ALTERIA TOTAL STATE THE WILL BE THE REST OF THE BEST STATE - Carrier of the contract of t COINS THE THE THE SPECIAL SECTION OF THE PARTY OF THE PAR PROPERTY CONTROLS SPAY THE WORK IN BARRIES STREET TO THE REST OF THE REST OF PATRICIAL PROPERTY. CO THE STATE WILL AS LINE WHILE THE DESCRIPTION PROSESSES. TO THE OCCUPANT OF THE PERSON NAMED AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PERSON NAMED AND PARTY OF THE PERSON ACCOUNTS TO SELECT SECURITIES AND ADDRESS TO THE PARTY OF THE SECOND PROPERTY AND ASSESSED FORCES, PROPERTY AND ASSESSED. THE REPORT OF THE PERSON NOT THE PERSON THE REST THE BEST WAS NOT THE PERSON NAMED AND PART OF P

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SEOUL 18150 03 OF 04 291050Z PAGE 01 ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W

D 290939Z NOV 79 FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2680 INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 04 SEOUL 18150

EXDIS

THE POTENTIAL FOR DISAGREEMENT IS LIMITLESS. NO ONE WITH WHOM WE HAYF, TALKED ON EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR OPPOSITION SIDE SEEMS TO APPRECIATE THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MATTER. ANOTHER INEVITABLE ISSUE WILL BE THE PACE OF LIBERALIZATION. IN ADDITION: THERE MAY WELL BE TENSIONS FROM DRP EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE AND MANIPULATE THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, LEADING TO OPPOSITION CHARGES THAT THE DECK IS BEING STACKED.

12. UNLIKE THE PAST WHERE THE BLUE HOUSE WAS SO DOMINATING, POWER WILL. BE DISTRIBUTED IN A COMPLEX PATTERN. FIRST, FORMAL AUTHURITY WILL RESIDE WITH THE INTERIM PRESIDENT WHO WILL REIGH OVER AND PERHAPS CONTROL THE CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY, . THERE IS LITTLE DANGER OF CHOI'S TRYING TO PERPETUATE HIMSELF IN OFFICE, BUT IT IS EASY TO VISUALIZE HIS BEING PUSHED AROUND BY VARIOUS FORCES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITHIN THE HIERARCHY WHO WANT TO KEEP THE BRAKES ON AND THOSE WITHIN THE DRP WHO WANT TO TAKE UNFAIR ADVANTAGE OF THE SETUATEON. THE SECOND AND BY FAR STRONGEST ELEMENT WILL BE THE MILITARY WHO HOLD ALMOST ALL RAW POWER. RETAINING A VETO OVER MOST DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING THE FUTURE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP, AND DECISIONS ON HOW FAST AND HOW FAR THINGS ARE PERMITTED TO LIBERALIZE. THIRD, KIM CHONG P'IL WILL BE EXTREMELY ACTIVE IN BUILDING A BASE FOR A DRP POLITICAL VICTORY IN POPULAR ELECTIONS. SO FAR HE

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HAS WRAPPED HIMSELF IN DEMOCRATIC CLOTHING AND HAS HELP-FULLY PUSHED CHOI TOWARD A MORE COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE OPPOSITION. WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME, HOWEVER, HE MAY PRESSURE CHOI TO THE POINT HE IS CHARGED WITH PULLING THE PUPPET STRINGS. FOURTH, THE OPPOSITION, THOUGH PERHAPS CONFUSINGLY DIVIDED, WILL PLAY A FAR GREATER ROLE THAN DURING PARK'S TIME, IF ONLY BECAUSE SO MUCH OF THE PUBLIC FEELS THEY DESERVE A BETTER DEAL. AND, FINALLY, DISSIDENTS, EVEN WITH THEIR SMALL NUMBERS, WILL BE ABLE PAGE NO.

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USE OTHER FORCES SUCH AS STUDENTS AND WILL BE THE MOST LIKELY TRIGGER OF TROUBLE.

13. FROM THE OUTSIDE, THE U.S. WILL ALSO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT/ROLE. DURING THESE PAST WEEKS OUR INFLUENCE HAS NEVER BEEN HIGHER BECAUSE KOREANS, CONSCIOUSLY OR OTHERWISE, HAVE BEEN REACHING FOR THEIR AMERICAN SECURITY BLANKET AND HAVE BEEN PLEASED BY THE INITIAL COMFORT THIS HAS GIVEN THEM. AS THE SENSE OF CRISIS PASSES, OUR INFLUENCE WILL DIMINISH WHILE AT THE SAME TIME WE WILL BE ASKED TO DO CONTRADICTORY THINGS BY THOSE WISHING TO USE US. FURTHER ALONG THERE MAY BE THE DANGER OF AMERICAN ACTIONS THAT COULD PROVOKE AN UNHEALTHY REACTION WITHIN A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE. ALSO FROM THE OUTSIDE NORTH KOREA HAS THE POTENTIAL OVER THE LONGER RUN TO EXERCISE SOME INFLUENCE ON THE COHESION OF ROK'S BEHAVIOR DEPENDING ON HOW HARD OR SOFT THE LINE IT ADOPTS.

14. GIVEN THE COMPLEXITY OF THE TASK AND THE NUMBER OF ACTORS, IT'IS' FUTILE AND PROBABLY DANGEROUS TO INDULGE IN MUCH PREDICTION. I FEEL REASONABLY CONFIDENT WE WILL NOT SEE EITHER CHADTIC DISORDER OR EASY ACHIEVEMENT OF A DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE. THE POLITICAL COURSE IS LIKELY TO WOBBLE BETWEEN, THESE TWO EXTREMES WITH AN ALMOST INFINITE

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VARIETY OF POSSIBILITIES. THE CHOI GOVERNMENT MAY PRESIDE FAIRLY SUCCESSFULLY OVER A PERIOD OF CONSTITUTIONAL BICKERING WHICH MAY BE MORE OR LESS TOLERABLE TO THE OPPOSITION, OR THE CHOI GOVERNMENT MAY PROCEED SO INEFFECTIVELY THAT THE OPPOSITION WILL BE DRAWN INTO GREATER AND GREATER CONFRONTATION BY POPULAR DISSATISFACTION. GREATER CONFRONTATION MAY DETERIORATE TO THE POINT EVENTUALLY THE SITUATION AND SIGNS OF SUCH A MILITARY MOVE AND ONE FAR WE HAVE SEEN NO SIGNS OF SUCH A MILITARY MOVE AND ONE FAR WE HAVE SEEN NO SIGNS OF SUCH A MILITARY MOVE AND ONE DETERIORATION IN PUBLIC ORDER. EVEN THEN A MILITARY COUP DETERIORATION IN PUBLIC ORDER. EVEN THEN A MILITARY COULD PROVE HIGHLY UNPOPULAR. IF IT LED TO A CONTEST IN THE STREETS, IT WOULD POSE THE MOST SERIOUS KIND OF DANGER FOR KOREA--AND FOR OURSELVES.

15. WHILE I AM MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE ROK'S POLITICAL
FUTURE THAN I WAS DURING THE LAST MONTHS OF PARK'S
BEDEVILED RULE, I AM ALSO MORE DISCOURAGED THAN I WAS TWO
WEEKS AGO, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE EXTREME WING OF THE
DISSIDENT/OPPOSITION WHO SEEM UNWILLING TO EXPERIMENT WITH
COMPROMISE, CONTINUE TO LEAN INTO THE WIND WHEN IT MAY NO
L'ONGER BE BLOWING, AND CHARACTERIZE THE SITUATION TO THEIR
FOLLOWING IN WAYS THAT MAY PROVE A SELF-FULFILLING
PROPHECY. AT A MINIMUM THESE OBSTRUCTIONISTS MUST SHARE
BLAME WITH THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT WHO ARE

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OF TELEGRAM 79SEOUL 018150

RELUCIANT TO RISK SOME LOSS OF INFLUENCE THROUGH MORE GENEROUS IREATMENT OF THE OPPOSITION. NEVERTHELESS, IF CHOI FORMS A COMPETENT CABINET, SPECIFIES WITH SUFFICIENT CLARITY THAT HE INTENDS TO STEP DOWN ROUGHLY ONE YEAR AFTER PRESIDING OVER CONSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL REFORM, AND LIGHTENS THE REINS OF POLITICAL CONSTRAINT, THE ODDS ARE THAT HE WILL HAVE A PERIOD OF GRACE TO COPE WITH THE COMPLEX CHALLENGES HE

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INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 SSO-00 /031 W ------029699 291054Z /11

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S E C R E, T, SECTION 04 OF 04 SEOUL 18150

EXDIS

FACES. MOGT KOREANS SEEM TO SEE THE NEED FOR AN ORDERLY PROCESS OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION, AND THEY APPEAR PREPARED TO GIVE A NEUTRAL GOVERNMENT ROUGHLY A YEAR OR SO TO DEMONSTRATE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD THIS OBJECTIVE. THE OBVIOUS SPOILERS ARE THE HIGH QUOTIENT OF IMPATIENCE AND COMBATTVENESS AMONG KOREANS, THE POSSIBILITY OF A BAD ECONOMIC BREAK, THE POSSIBLE REAPPEARANCE OF CORRUPTION AND OTHER, ADMINISTRATIVE AILMENTS IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG PRESIDENT, AND, FINALLY, THE DESTRUCTIVE POWER IN THE HANDS OF THE DISSIDENTS -- AND DISGRUNTLED MILITARY ELEMENTS, GLEYSTEEN

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EXDIS REVIEW

Cat. A Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC

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

Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by \$75 21c.
Reviewed by Elyah Kelly Jr.