TEXT OF TELEGRAM 79SEOUL 018095

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01  SEOUL 18095  020118Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADS-00 CIAE-00 DODD-00 PM-06 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
HA-05 TRSE-00 IO-14 AID-05 /091 W

R 290431Z NOV 79
FROM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2653
INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO
COMUSKOREA SEOUL KS//SJS
CHUUSMAG SEOUL KS
SA CINCINC KS

CONFIDENTIAL SEOUL 18095

E.O. 12065:  ADS 11/29/85 (CLARK, WILLIAM) OR-P
TAGS:  PINS. SHUM. KS

SUBJECT:  "POLICE DEPLOYED IN DOWNTOWN SEOUL; RUMORED
DEMONSTRATION FAILS TO OCCUR"

REF:  (A) SEOUL 17966, (B) SEOUL 18070/

1.  (C) ENTIRE TEXT.

2.  HUNDREDS OF UNIFORMED AND PLAIN-CLOTHES POLICEMEN
ARMED WITH NIGHT STICKS AND WALKIE-TALKIES PATROLLED
SEOUL'S SUNGKWAN AND DOWNTOWN AREAS THE EVENING OF
NOVEMBER 28. POLICE PRESENCE WAS IN RESPONSE TO THE
CALL AT LAST SATURDAY'S YWCA INCIDENT FOR DEMONSTRATIONS
IN MAJOR CITIES AGAINST THE PLANNED PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.
(ALTHOUGH THE MARTIAL LAW COMMAND (MLC) HAD ALLOWED PUB-
LICATION OF THE DEMONSTRATION CALL, IT HAD FORBIDDEN
MENTION OF THE PROPOSED NOVEMBER 28 DATE.) IN ADDITION
TO NUMEROUS FOOT PATROLS AT STREET CORNERS, BUILDING
ENTRANCES, AND PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASSES, LARGE NUMBERS OF
POLICE, CITY, TOURIST, AND COMMUTER BUSES WITH ADDITIONAL
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02  SEOUL 18095  020118Z

POLICE WERE PARKED LESS THAN INCONSPICUOUSLY ON MANY BACK
STREETS. THE POLICE BEGAN TO DEPLOY AT 1600 AND WERE ON
DUTY THROUGHOUT THE EVENING. THE MOST INTIMIDATING
FEATURE WAS THE POSTING OF APPROXIMATELY 20 ARMED AND
HELMETED SOLDIERS ON THE STEPS OF THE SEJONG CULTURAL
CENTER OVERLOOKING THE MAIN SEJONG-NO THOROUGHFARE.

3.  THIS APPARENTLY WAS THE LARGEST SHOW OF POLICE FORCE
IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA SINCE OCTOBER 1978, WHEN A DEMON-
STRATON WAS REPORTEDLY PLANNED FOR THE YUSIN SYSTEM'S SIXTH ANNIVERSARY. ALTHOUGH IMPRESSIVE IN ITSELF, LAST NIGHT'S POLICE ACTION WAS MUCH LESS FORMIDABLE THAN THAT IN 1978, WHEN POLICE IN FULL RIOT GEAR STOOD SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER ALONG THE STREETS. THIS TIME AROUND, POLICE INTERFERED LESS WITH THE PASSERSBY: ALTHOUGH STUDENT-TYPES WERE ASKED TO IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AND TO OPEN THEIR BAGS AND PACKAGES FOR INSPECTION, POLICE DID NOT TAKE THE COMMON PRECAUTION OF CLOSING THE AREA BUS STOPS. CONSEQUENTLY, CROWDS IN THE KWANGHWAMUN AREA WERE AS LARGE AS NORMAL FOR THE END OF THE WORK DAY.

4. PRESENTLY, THE AUTHORITIES HAD REASON NOT TO EXPECT ANY REAL TROUBLE, SINCE SOME 160 OF THE PERSONS MOST LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN A DOWNTOWN DEMONSTRATION HAVE BEEN DETAINED WITHIN THE LAST WEEK. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, NO INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE LAST NIGHT NO NO ONE WAS ARRESTED. Nevertheless, the preventive action, parti-
cularly after the publication of the call for a KWANGHWAMUN DEMONSTRATION IN THE PRESS, UNDOUBTEDLY DEMONSTRATED TO A LARGE NUMBER OF SEOULITES THAT THE MLC IS SERIOUS ABOUT ITS REPEATED STATEMENTS THAT IT WILL NOT TOLERATE SOCIAL DISORDER.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03

5. COMMENT: WHILE SOME DISSIDENTS CONSIDER MARTIAL LAW AN EXTENSION OF RESTRICTIONS WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE PARK REGIME, MILITARY APPARENTLY VIEW IT AS NECESSARY PRECAU-
TION TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER IN TIME OF POLITICAL UN-
CERTAINTY AND ARE DETERMINED TO PRESERVE RESPECT FOR MARTIAL LAWS. GLESTEEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN