Ex-Leaders Go on Trial In Seoul

BY TIM SHORROCK
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WASHINGTON — Two former South Korean presidents charged with treason, mutiny and corruption entered a Seoul courtroom this week to begin what could be the most important political trial in modern Asian history.

Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo stand accused of staging a rolling coup in 1979 and 1980, sending troops into the southwestern city of Kwangju in May 1980 to quell pro-democracy demonstrations in an action that resulted in the massacre of some 240 people and accepting millions of dollars in bribes from Korean corporations in the decade they held power.

At stake, in addition to the fate of the generals, is the solidarity of the U.S. relationship with South Korea, which has been a keystone of U.S. foreign and economic policy for four decades. That’s because a major issue in the trial will be the role of the United States in approving the use of elite Korean military units to put down the Kwangju uprising.

The United States maintains 37,000 troops in South Korea and, under a joint command structure, has operational control of more than 85% of the Korean forces.

Mr. Chun, who has been charged with murder for giving the order to open fire in Kwangju, has said that his actions in 1979 and 1980 were explicitly approved by Washington, a claim that the Carter administration adamantly denied. A 1989 White Paper produced by the Bush administration supported those denials.

But new documentation obtained by The Journal of Commerce indicates that the United States knew far more about Mr. Chun’s plans than has ever been acknowledged.

According to the newly declassified U.S. government documents:

Senior officials in the Carter administration, fearing that chaos in South Korea could unravel a vital military ally and possibly prompt North Korea to intervene, approved Mr. Chun’s plans to use military units against the huge student demonstrations that rocked Korean cities in the spring of 1980.

Two of the key decision-makers are President Carter’s experience with South Korea could help President Clinton in dealing with China. Story, Page 7A.

A South Korean paratrooper beats an anti-government demonstrator in May 1980. Some 50,000 demonstrators, using sticks and rocks, battled troops during a nine-day revolt.

Automobiles burn after angry demonstrators set a fire during an anti-government demonstration in May 1980.
advice. The message to the Christian dissidents, he said, "was too tricky an evasion of responsibility." WU K. "We must do something, we just can't do nothing.

But after the Dec 15 action, he added, the U.S. government made a public appeal to Mr. Chun to "speak up" on the issue and to "explain his actions.

In the months before Mr. Chun's May 17 coup, Mr. Gleystein said he confronted the Korean dissidents to avoid confrontation. While warning the generals to be tolerant, he explained, "we tried to get the message across to the moderates that they should keep down their inflammatory actions."

Daily Demonstrations Held

But by early May, tens of thousands of students were holding daily demonstrations in Seoul and other cities demanding that Mr. Chun step down and calling for a National Assembly to set a timetable for a democratic government.

In the context, with both sides refusing to yield, Mr. Gleystein said in a recent interview, that the U.S. began discussing military contingency plans with South Korea.

"I am saying he is going to behave," Mr. Gleystein said. "But he has to be convinced that certain things are going to happen. The U.S. understands the time frame that no government will allow an end to rule by force. But we added that this was a critical moment."

Mr. Gleystein said he signed off on the contingency plans because he feared "total chaos" in South Korea. "Seoul was close to being overrun" by demonstrations, he said.

Mr. Greg, who was monitoring Korean intelligence reports for the National Security Agency, told the Carter administration that the government had been planning a "massive insurrection" in North Korea, "a military coup."

In response, the government seized arms and drove the military out of Kwangju. By May 17 the Army was ready to use the Special Forces' airborne capabilities to capture the city and its 150,000 residents. Mr. Chun then said he would "calm the situation.

"Massive Insurrection"

On May 17, Mr. Gleystein reported, "the massive insurrection in Kwangju is over and the government is in control.

Publicly, the Carter administration claimed that the coup was a "massive insurrection" in Kwangju that the government had "overthrown the Communist regime." In fact, the government was still in control of the city.

However, public opinion in South Korea was divided. Some saw the coup as a "coup against democracy," while others saw it as a "coup against communism." Mr. Chun'shold on power was tenuous.

Concerned About Signs In addition, we were concerned about sending the wrong signals to North Korea," said Mr. Greg, "and the intervention would have been a political disaster."

The intervention, said Mr. Greg, "would have been a disaster." Mr. Chun would have had to use force to preserve his hold on power, and the government would have faced international isolation.

"Mr. Chun's hold on power was tenuous," said Mr. Greg. "We were concerned about sending the wrong signals to North Korea."

In June 1987, as hundreds of thousands of citizens burned the streets of Seoul, Mr. Roh started his first military campaign against the Korean government when a political compromise that would allow open presidential elections and eventual democratization.

That opening sparked the labor movement and a series of economic reforms that ended the crisis in North Korea and the Korean government's international isolation.

In 1988, Mr. Roh was elected president when the country's long-held compromises with the Seoul government led to the election of a new president.

Last December, the Korean National Assembly passed legislation that ended the crisis in North Korea and the Korean government's international isolation.
Always saw the news of the government's decision to develop an missile defense system, which is considered by some to be a step towards nuclear disarmament. The decision was made after a series of meetings between the top military and political officials. The missile defense system will be used to protect the country from potential attacks from other countries.

In the last few days, there have been reports of increased military activity in the region. The government has not commented on the reports, but it is believed that the increased activity is in response to the missile defense system.

The decision to develop the missile defense system is expected to have a significant impact on the country's relations with its neighbors. Some countries have expressed concern about the system's capabilities and its potential to escalate tensions in the region.

The government has defended its decision, saying that it is necessary for national security. They argue that the missile defense system will provide a deterrent against potential threats.

However, some experts believe that the system could actually increase tensions, as it could be perceived as a threat by other countries.

The decision to develop the missile defense system is expected to have a significant economic impact as well. The development and deployment of the system will require a large amount of resources, including funds for research and development, as well as for the purchase of equipment.

In conclusion, the decision to develop the missile defense system is a complex and controversial issue. It is clear that the government has made a strategic decision, but the potential consequences of this decision will need to be carefully considered.
US Officials Alarmed

In that report, the State Department was alarmed by the loss of American lives and the damage caused to South Korean infrastructure. The director of the State Department, Mr. Christian, expressed his concern that the reported event was not an isolated incident and that similar events could occur in the future. He called for a joint American-South Korean military response to deter further aggression.

The new documents are part of a collection of 2,000 declassified records and agencies that provide insight into the decision-making process at the highest levels of the government. The documents highlight the importance of intelligence-gathering and the role of the State Department in making decisions at the highest levels of government.

Kwangju

The cable also noted that Special Forces were involved in the incident, with the 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, operating in the area. The unit has been credited with maintaining a strong presence in South Korea and ensuring the safety and security of American citizens.

Information on the incident was provided by Mr. Cleo, the US ambassador to South Korea, who stated that the Special Forces were responding to a security threat and had deployed to the area to provide support. The ambassador emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong military presence in the region to deter further aggression.

The cable also included information on the Security Council's response to the incident. The council condemned the actions of the North Korean government and called for a joint investigation into the incident. The council also expressed its support for the Special Forces in their efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region.

The cable concluded with a statement from President Johnson, who emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong military presence in South Korea and ensuring the safety and security of American citizens. He also expressed his confidence in the Special Forces' ability to handle any future incidents and maintain peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Holbrooke was also interviewed in New York, where he stated that the incident was part of a larger pattern of aggression by the North Korean government. He called for a strong response from the international community to deter further aggression and maintain peace and stability in the region.

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