

State Department revives Carter's policy of chaos for South Korea

by Linda de Hoyos and David Hammer

South Korean President Chun Doo Hwan was the first foreign head of state President Reagan met with upon his coming to the White House in January 1981. The meeting was symbolic of President Reagan's commitment to reverse the policy of the Carter administration for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula and to reaffirm the U.S. nuclear umbrella over South Korea. The commitment was further solidified by the visit of President Reagan to Seoul in November 1983 and the posting of political appointee Richard Walker, a conservative who could be relied upon to carry through on Reagan's commitment, to Seoul in July 1981.

Now, however, the signals coming from Washington are raising fears throughout the region concerning the U.S. commitment to not only the Chun government, but to South Korea itself. While there is little doubt of the President's feelings on the matter, the ambiguity arises from the State Department and the Reagan administration's attitude toward efforts to throw South Korea into chaos by the same Carterite liberals that produced the Khomeini takeover in Iran and the destabilization in the Philippines.

The destabilization of South Korea was officially begun on Feb. 8 with the return to Seoul of self-exiled opposition leader Kim Dae Jung. South Korea had promised that if Kim, still up for an 18-year sentence for sedition, returned, he would be imprisoned. The State Department publicly demanded that Kim not be jailed and that his safety be guaranteed. Kim, who had been programmed by his mentors at the Harvard Divinity School to think of himself as the Benigno Aquino of Korea, was not to meet the same fate. The State Department heavily implied that if the Chun government could not meet these specifications, then President Chun's hoped-for meeting with President Reagan this spring would be denied. Kim Dae Jung and fellow opposition leader Kim Young Sam are on record as supporting the "eventual withdrawal" of U.S. troops from South Korea.

Kim arrived in Seoul four days before national assembly elections, accompanied by a 38-man delegation led by State Department liberal Robert White, former ambassador to El Salvador; Democratic Congressmen Thomas Foglietta and Edward Feighan; and Patricia Derian, Jimmy Carter's assis-

tant secretary of state for human rights. The "scuffle" which ensued at the airport when the police attempted to separate Kim from the delegation caused a diplomatic scandal, saved only by Ambassador Walker's statement that the delegation had not abided by its agreement with the Chun government. The incident handed the U.S. liberal press the opportunity to demand that if President Reagan wanted to be champion of freedom, then he must attack totalitarianism in South Korea as well as in Nicaragua, and cancel Chun's spring visit to Washington.

The White House refused, but Secretary of State George Shultz showed where he stood in an interview on the NBC-TV Today show Feb. 11: "The main point is whether or not in Korea progress is being made toward a more open society, a more democratic society. And I think there is some progress, *although they're a long way from where we'd like to see them* [emphasis added]."

For the State Department, the Carter policy of strategic withdrawal from South Korea has not been reversed.

The Woodrow Wilson Center

The center for much of the policy toward the Pacific that makes its way into and out of the State Department is the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., also the site of the Kennan Russian Studies Center. The Center's Asia Program was set up in 1980 by Ronald Morse, who was a senior Japan analyst at the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the State Department. The program is the center for the Pacific Basin Cooperation push Shultz considers his own; Shultz is a member of the Center's board of trustees.

In November 1980, the policy now being pursued by the State Department was put forward in a Wilson Center paper by Bruce Cummings and Hahn-Been Lee, "Dilemmas in United States-Korean Relations," which has become the reference point for policy deliberation. The study complained that South Korea, which has built up its own capital-goods industry and is beginning to rival Japan in steel production and shipping construction, has "experienced unbalanced growth." As policy, the Cummings-Lee study proposed:

- The resurrection of the Carter administration's program for the withdrawal of U.S. ground forces from South Korea;

- The negotiation of arms-control measures for the Korean peninsula, including restrictions on the introduction of advanced new weapons systems and possibly the creation of a Korean nuclear-free zone;

- Increased U.S. pressure on South Korea to improve its human rights stance;

- Political liberalization and direct official dialogue between the two Koreas, as well as unofficial cultural, academic, and economic contacts between the United States and North Korea.

This is the essential program of the plethora of Soviet front groups including the World Council of Churches and the American Friends Service Committee which are supporting Kim Dae Jung. There is nothing in this policy to displease the Soviets or North Korea. In October 1980, the North Korean regime of Kim Il-Sung had called for a "nuclear-free zone" on the Korean peninsula, to be echoed a month later by the Woodrow Wilson fellows.

This policy of *decoupling*—parallel to the State Department-Kissinger policy toward Western Europe—is made even more dangerous on the Korean peninsula by the fact that Kim Il-Sung is insane and unpredictable. One would think that the September 1983 downing of the Korean airliner by the Soviets and the October 1983 bombing-murder of most of the South Korean cabinet in Rangoon, Burma, would have persuaded the State Department to place a caution-hold over such policies. Next to West Germany, the Korean peninsula is the next most likely place the Soviets would move for a strategic showdown with the United States.

In the last six months, the Soviets have been preparing for such an eventuality. In December, the Soviets won North Korean agreement for the integration of the North Korean and Soviet defense forces, including moving SS-20 missiles into North Korea and dispatching Soviet military advisers to the country. North Korea also has special forces of 100,000 men under the command of the mercurial Kim Chong-il, the son and successor to Kim Il Sung. Despite the openings from the North toward economic ventures with Japan, bilateral talks with Seoul in late 1984, and its strong ties to Peking, which does not want any conflagration on the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang has been placed within the Soviet Union's military orbit at a point that the Soviets are preparing for war.

State Department back channel

The State Department is oblivious to this reality. Pharis Harvey, director of the North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea who accompanied Kim Dae Jung to Seoul in February, reports that in early 1984, State Department South Korea desk officer Harriet Isom traveled to Moscow "supposedly on a personal visit, but she met with their Asia

bureau." Isom came back to report that the Soviets "have surprisingly little interest in the bombing murder of the South Korean cabinet, this is hardly credible. Moscow was the only nation to attempt to justify the atrocity in its propaganda.

Harvey himself claims to have regular contact with the "Korea desk at the State Department, two or three times a week." Kim Dae Jung has endorsed Harvey's North American Coalition for Human Rights in Korea (NACHRK) as "the most important organization and channel through which we can transmit our struggle to the world in general and to our friends in the United States in particular."

Harvey was also involved in back-channel negotiations with the Russians on Korea through the World Council of Churches. In 1984, the Council sponsored a meeting on Korea in Tokyo which he attended. Representing the Soviets was Archbishop Vladimir of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. According to Harvey, the meeting focused on ways to achieve the reunification of the Korean peninsula. Until last year, Moscow has refrained from endorsing "reunification," as demanded by Kim Il Sung.

Kim Dae Jung has also received support from the "human rights" grouping at the Center for International Policy, headed by Donald Renard, Korean desk officer at State until 197

As indicated by Harvey's role as a Methodist missionary, the major backing for Kim Dae Jung et al. comes from church-linked operations which focus on organizing South Korea's 10 million Christians into a power base against the government. These groupings, which have won the praises of the North Korean press, include the Quaker-founded Committee for a New Korea Policy in Albany, New York, which is agitating for the pull-out of U.S. troops from the peninsula and a diplomatic dialogue between North Korea and Washington. "Our committee believes North Korea will not start a war," their literature reads. The Church Committee for Human Rights in Asia coordinates with insurgent church outfits in Korea, the Philippines, and El Salvador.

Harvey's NACHRK is run out of the United Methodist Board of Ministries which also houses such institutions as the Population Institute, the Population Resource Center, and Women Action for Nuclear Disarmament. Harvey's own work on Korea, he says, is coordinated with Jesuit Father Bryan Hehir, whose Catholic Conference is heavily involved in the Philippines National Democratic Front, the political arm of the communist guerrilla New People's Army.

On military issues, Harvey recommends the Center for Defense Information, Adm. Gene LaRoque's outhouse for the Institute for Policy Studies' promotion of Soviet policy. But his constant references in discussions to the Woodrow Wilson Center's Cummings-Lee study on Korea make clear that Harvey and his colleagues are carrying out policy dictated from higher echelons, reaching all the way to Secretary of State George Shultz.